DEEPEN

DROICHEAD: EXPLORING AND ELICITING PERSPECTIVES, EXPERIENCES AND NARRATIVES

FINAL REPORT

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Disclaimer

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Glossary of terms

Associate — An associate is a practising and fully registered teacher who is also an experienced mentor and/or induction workshop facilitator, nominated by the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) to support the *Droichead* process in schools.

Cluster meetings — Cluster meetings are part of the additional professional learning activities undertaken by Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in Droichead and are held in the local Education Support Centre. The meetings are facilitated by NIPT, who in consultation with the NQTs, develop the agenda for these meetings.

Continuum of Teacher Education — This refers to the formal and informal learning in which teachers engage as life-long learners during their teaching career. In Ireland, it encompasses initial teacher education (Céim), Droichead (the integrated professional induction framework), and Cosán (teachers' learning)

Droichead — *Droichead*, the Irish word for 'bridge', is the integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers in Ireland.

Early Career Teacher — A teacher in their first two years of teaching who does not have a permanent contract or permanent teaching certification.

Higher Education Institution — Higher Education Institution (HEI) denotes those colleges, universities and other third level bodies providing one or more accredited programmes of initial teacher education.

Induction — Induction is a programme of teacher education that takes place during the critical period at the beginning of the newly qualified teacher's career, usually the first year after qualifying as a teacher. The purpose of an induction programme is to offer systematic professional and personal support to the newly qualified teacher. The support is primarily school-based and is given at school level by an experienced teacher, usually called a mentor, in collaboration with colleagues and initial teacher education providers. It builds on the experience of initial teacher education and lays the foundation for subsequent professional and personal growth and development.

Induction Workshops — Induction Workshops are a series of workshops, funded by the Department of Education and designed to meet the particular professional development needs of newly qualified teachers. The workshops, coordinated by the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), builds on the learning that took place during initial teacher education. Engagement in the NIPT Induction Workshop Programme is a requirement for all newly qualified teachers wishing to be fully registered with the Teaching Council.

Mentor — A mentor is an experienced teacher who undertakes to support the professional development of a newly qualified teacher and facilitates his or her induction into the school and the profession, in collaboration with colleagues.

National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) — The National Induction Programme for Teachers is a State-funded service that co-ordinates the provision of a multi-faceted induction programme at primary and post-primary level.

Newly Qualified Teacher — In this document, a newly qualified teacher (NQT) refers to all newly registered teachers who are beginning their teaching career, regardless of the date of qualification.

Post-qualification Employment	Post-qualification Employment (PQE) is a condition applied to all newly registered post-primary teachers. To meet the condition of PQE, teachers are required to complete a period of post-qualification employment or *Droichead* (the new pilot model for probation).
Professional Learning Communities	Professional Learning Communities are groups of educators that meet regularly, share expertise, and work collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students. The term is also applied to schools or teaching faculties that use small-group collaboration as a form of professional development.
Professional Support Team	The Professional Support Team (PST) is a team of experienced and fully registered teachers, which works collaboratively to support the newly qualified teacher during the *Droichead* process and his or her entry into both the school and the teaching profession.
Qualified Teacher Status	A person deemed to be a fully qualified teacher has completed a recognised teacher education qualification and programme of induction in the country in which they qualified and can evidence this with a letter from the relevant teacher registration body or Ministry of Education.
DEEPEN Research Advisory Team	The DEEPEN Research Advisory Team (RAT) was representative of a wide range of international education experts with an interest in promoting and supporting initial teacher education and related research. The RAT provided independent expert advice to DEEPEN on identifying and prioritising research outcomes. Its input helped to enhance the quality of both the research process and the research findings through eliciting a broad spectrum of experiences and views. RAT members were experts in their area and were well placed to recognise emerging research ideas and opportunities across Irish teacher education and professional development and to provide advice regarding the research implications of a range of strategic education and policy issues.
Taisce Portfolio	A professional learning portfolio is a document which is developed over time by the newly qualified teacher, to support the process of reflection on his or her practice. The portfolio may provide a focus for the professional conversations which are central to *Droichead* and allow the NQT to identify areas in which he or she may need support or guidance. It may be created as a hard copy or electronic document.

Note to readers: *Quotes from survey participants are included verbatim as they appeared in the survey. The researchers have not changed the language used, with the exception of providing a translation of the Irish language quotes.*

List of Acronyms

B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CAR	Collaborative Action Research
CROÍ	Collaboration & Research for Ongoing Innovation
DEEPEN	Droichead Exploring & Eliciting Perspectives, Experiences & Narratives
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (Schools serving communities of disadvantage)
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DOE	Department of Education
DQA	Droichead Quality Assurance
EBSCO	Elton B. Stephens Co. (A library database service provider)
ECT	Early Career Teacher
ERIC	Education Resources Information Center (an online digital library of educational research and information)
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
H.Dip	Higher Diploma in Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MERC	Marino Ethics in Research Committee
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
NPPTI	National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PME	Professional Master of Education
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
PST	Professional Support Team
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RAT	Research Advisory Team
SCOPUS	Elsevier's abstract and citation database
SEN	Special Education Needs
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Executive Summary

Introduction

In an education context induction is usually referred to as the first one to three years in the teaching profession (Bartell, 2005). It is documented that teacher induction programmes impact on the induction, professional learning, professional development and practice of newly-qualified teachers and other school personnel both positively and negatively. The evidence suggests that there are a number of commonly documented opportunities, issues, tensions, contestations and challenges within teacher induction programmes.

While there is no one set list of required components of an induction programme it is understood and agreed globally that formal induction programmes provide a bridge between the pre-service phase and the in-service phase (Killeavy, 2006) and include elements such as the support of a mentor and opportunities to collaborate with other teachers, observe other teachers and attend professional development programmes with other teachers (Kearney, 2014). Induction programmes aim to help teachers makes the transition from their programme of initial teacher education (ITE) to school life (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), overcome the tensions associated with the first year of teaching and to reduce the rates of teacher attrition (Kearney, 2014).

This executive summary provides a summarised overview of the DEEPEN, (**D**roichead: **E**xploring and **E**liciting **P**erspectives, **E**xperiences, and **N**arratives) research study that sought to explore and elicit perspectives, experiences and narratives of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and other school personnel participating in the *Droichead* process in Irish primary and post-primary[1] schools.

Context

Droichead (the Irish word for 'bridge') forms part of the continuum of teachers' professional development in Ireland (Teaching Council, 2011), comprising Céim (2020) (the Irish word for 'step')[2]: Standards for Initial Teacher Education, the initial teacher education phase; Droichead (2016) the induction phase; and Cosán (2016)[3] (the Irish word for 'pathway'), the framework for teachers' learning. The main objective of Droichead is to 'support the professional learning of NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career' (Teaching Council, 2017, p. 3). An NQT's registration with the Teaching Council is conditional until they have successfully completed the Droichead process. Droichead is now

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[1] Post-primary refers to second level education in Ireland. Post-primary is the official term used by the Department of Education.

[2] Céim (2020) is the initial teacher education phase of the continuum of teacher education, and as a document, it outlines the requirements for providers of initial teacher education in Ireland. It is described as 'a keystone document in the continuum of teacher education' (Teaching Council, 2020, p. 2), with an acknowledgement that 'the Council is concerned that there remains a view that teacher education ends at the point of qualification' (ibid, p.8). Céim focuses on initial teacher education programme standards and graduate teacher standards.

[3] Cosán (2016) is the Teaching Council's framework for teacher learning. It is described as 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' (Teaching Council, 2016, p.2). It covers four dimensions of teachers' learning (formal and informal; personal and professional; collaborative and individual; school-based and external): learning processes; learning areas; planning for learning; reflecting on learning and standards that guide teachers' learning.

(2021) the sole route for induction for primary and post-primary newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in Ireland having evolved from a probation system (primary sector only) to a pilot project on teacher induction, to a national framework for teacher induction for both primary and post-primary sectors.

DEEPEN was commissioned by the Teaching Council[4] to examine and explore the impact of *Droichead,* the National Teacher Induction process in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. Four specific school settings were identified in the Teaching Council tender, DEIS, Small Schools, Irish-medium schools and Special Educational Needs (SEN) settings as settings of interest. While these settings were prioritised in the research, other school settings were also included in the study.

The research participant sample included Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) from three recent graduating cohorts (2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019), primary and post-primary teachers including school leaders who were Professional Support Team (PST) members and primary and post-primary teachers including school leaders who were not members of the PST but were employed in the school.

The Research Study

The DEEPEN research study used a case study approach which was originally planned as a three-phase mixed methods project including a systematic literature review, an online survey, focus groups and visual data collection in targeted settings. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions the project had to be truncated to a two-phase project involving the systematic literature review and the online survey. Phase one of the research, the systematic literature review was underpinned and scaffolded by a Siddaway (2014) five-stage framework. The SLR findings contextualised and informed the design of the Phase two online survey and were central to understanding the lived experience of the teachers in a global context.

The online survey was sent to all primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. The initial invitation to complete the survey was followed up with further reminders through social media posts, Teaching Council ezines, and SMS messages to the NQT cohort. The online survey in this study was the primary empirical research instrument used during the research process. A Braun and Clarke (2006) iterative analysis framework was used to code and analyse qualitative data, while quantitative data was processed and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Methodology

DEEPEN was a two-phase research study that included a systematic literature review and an online survey.

The research questions for the DEEPEN study were constructed by the researchers at the outset of the research aligned to the Teaching Council tender requirements and were retained through to the second phase of the research, despite modifications being made to the overall research design in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

The identified and overarching research questions for the DEEPEN study research included:

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[4] The Teaching Council is the regulatory body for the teaching profession in Ireland.

1. What has been the overall experience of NQTs of the Droichead process across the four selected settings?

2. What has been the overall experience of Droichead school personnel (PSTs and Whole School) of the Droichead process across the four selected settings?

3. How has the Droichead process impacted on teachers' learning and on school culture across the four selected settings?

4. What are the differences in the ways the Droichead model is being applied at primary and post-primary levels?

5. What are the similarities in the ways the Droichead model is being applied at primary and post-primary levels?

6. What are the greatest setting-specific challenges for NQTs and schools in the implementation of Droichead?

7. What are the greatest setting-specific opportunities for NQTs and schools in the implementation of Droichead?

The systematic literature review reported findings from relevant studies that evaluated the effectiveness of teacher induction programmes globally. The initial scoping literature review summarised findings from eighty-one articles across twenty-three countries and were sourced from three online platforms (ERIC, SCOPUS and EBSCOhost) using search terms such as "Induction", "Newly Qualified Teacher", "Beginning Teacher", "Pre-Service Teachers", "Novice Teacher", and "Professional Development. Additional Irish based texts (or "grey literature", e.g. Policy documents, Legislation, National Induction documentation, unpublished theses, reports, papers that may be unique and focus on research areas that are more current and non-commercial) were also identified and scoped out to inform the review. The final review considered thirteen studies.

The online survey was designed and administered using Survey Hero software and was informed by the most dominant themes generated from the qualitative analysis of the findings from the SLR which included the following; Newly Qualified Teacher, Mentor Teacher, Newly Qualified and Mentor Teachers, The Mentoring Process, The Induction Context and Mentoring Approaches. A number of subthemes also emerged. These included, but were not limited to; teacher knowledge and beliefs, mentor knowledge and beliefs, relationships, identities and time, cooperation, communication and collaboration, professional learning communities, leadership in schools, policy development, retention and attrition in the teaching profession and a number of different mentoring approaches.

A Braun and Clarke (2006) iterative analysis framework was used to code and analyse qualitative data from both the SLR and the online survey, while quantitative data generated in the online survey was processed and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Ethical approval for the research was granted by both Marino Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee (MERC) and the School of Education Ethics Committee in Trinity College Dublin.

Literature Review

Literature reviewed in the DEEPEN research study is presented across two chapters in the report. The literature includes international/global literature which was explored and synthesised from the SLR and literature relevant to the Irish context of Teacher Induction. Key themes from the both the international/global and Irish context literature reviews are presented below.

<u>International Context Literature</u>	<u>Irish Context Literature</u>
• Features of effective induction programmes	• The Irish primary and post-primary education system
• Factors related to teacher induction programmes in schools	• The policy & legislative context for Droichead
• The NQT and mentor relationship	• The evolution of teacher induction in Ireland
• The role of the wider school community & Professional Learning Communities	• Reviews of Droichead
• Contribution of school leadership	• Review of the Droichead Teacher Induction Pilot programme 2016
• Influencers in the teacher induction context-policy & funding	• Droichead Quality Assurance
• Retention and attrition	• Irish research conducted on teacher induction by Irish teachers

Findings

Findings in the report are presented across six separate chapters and are drawn from both quantitative and qualitative data generated through the online survey. Chapter five presents a detailed profile of all of the participant data, including NQTs, PST members, School Leaders, non-PST members and data from the four identified settings; DEIS, Small Schools, Irish-medium schools and SEN settings. The quantitative profile data presented in this chapter included age, gender, geographic location, school type and initial teacher education route.

Chapters six, seven, eight and nine present findings from qualitative data on the lived experience of NQTs, PST members, School Leaders and non-PST members while chapter ten synthesises the lived experience of NQTs', PST members', school leaders' and non-PST members' lived experience of the Droichead process in each of the four target school settings: DEIS, SEN settings, Irish-medium and small schools, and more broadly. This serves as a platform from which to explore six key crosscutting observations made across the data sets. These crosscutting observations relate to beliefs about teaching, perceptions about NQT support needs, the perceived quality of Droichead, perceived inclusion in Droichead, the variety of lived experience and the effective use of time for Droichead activities.

Discussion

The Discussion chapter reflects on and synthesises the themes identified (using the Braun and Clarke (2006) framework) from the international literature presented in chapter two, the Irish context overview presented in chapter three, and the lived experience and narratives of the participants in this study as detailed in chapters six through ten relative to the overall research questions. The main themes explored and discussed include;

- Droichead as part of the continuum of the teacher education continuum

- Droichead in an international context

- Teaching as a relational and collaborative profession

- Teaching motivation

- Droichead and leadership

- Diversity in the profession

- Droichead across different school settings

The discussion on the continuum of teacher education, the global context of induction, relationships, motivation, leadership, diversity, and school culture leads to and informs an articulation of recommendations that are presented in the final chapter.

Recommendations

The research utilised a Rolfe et al (2005) framework to propose a number of recommendations for future iterations of the Droichead process. In summary, these include;

1. NQT Orientation

NQTs may benefit from an initial orientation into the Droichead process. This could be achieved by means of a specific suite of activities for NQTs at the start of the Droichead process, which focus on individual needs analysis, philosophical underpinnings of what teaching is, teacher professional identity and linkages with ITE experience. A parallel CPD module should be made available to PST members so that they can complement and support NQTs as part of the professional conversations and mentoring process.

2. Mentoring

The research has demonstrated that teachers both use and embody the concepts and terms 'mentor' and 'mentoring', it is recommended that these be reinstated in the official lexicon of induction in Ireland.

3. Irish language
Given the growth in the Irish-medium school settings, a suite of workshops for NQTs teaching through the medium of Irish at primary and post-primary level, should be developed, and not limited to the teaching of Irish only in primary schools.

4. Sector specific supports

It is recommended that tailored supports for the individual, as opposed to the general needs of NQTs and PST members, in and across primary *and* post-primary settings, should be explored within Droichead.

5. Stakeholder collaboration

Greater collaboration between HEIs, schools and stakeholders in embedding and connecting the phases of the continuum of teacher education (initial teacher education, induction and CPD) could ensure a more connected and consistent discourse and practice between all stakeholders. This would ease and support the transition of teachers as they move from one phase to the next and encourage an ethos of continuous teacher learning across the professional teaching/learning community.

6. ePortfolios

A standardised ePortfolio/digital portfolio that could be used by teachers across the continuum of teacher education for consistency, long term professional development and evidence of teacher professional evolution merits exploration as a way of capturing and documenting learning across all aspects of the continuum including the induction phase.

7. International network

Future development of Droichead should take cognisance of the growing international induction community and research base so as to ensure that future iterations of Droichead are informed by best practice and that Droichead is seen as a continually evolving process with common currency between global and national teaching contexts. A method to achieve this would be for the Teaching Council to lead the development of an International Induction Network/Working Group.

8. PST membership

PST members would benefit from ongoing training, support and renewal to nurture collaborative, supportive, relationships through the Droichead process. All teaching staff in a school should be given an opportunity to serve as PST members within a five-year timeframe as part of their continuing professional development.

9. Postgraduate provision

Provision of a centrally accredited postgraduate course in mentoring and induction leadership, management and approaches may be beneficial and instrumental in ensuring cohesion and consistency of approach and may add quality to the knowledge base on induction in Ireland.

10. Diversity

It is recommended that further research be conducted on the diversity of the teaching profession in Ireland. Whilst diversity is a complex issue which presents in many guises, there is a very specific challenge in Ireland in the fact that the teaching profession is very *feminised*, more so at primary level (85% female); but it is also an issue at post-primary level (69% female). The majority of respondents across all three respondent categories in the DEEPEN research were female (81%). Issues of equity, social justice, interculturalism, intersectionality, equality, power, positionality and privilege are significant factors in the debate on diversity in the teaching profession. Further study is required to explore how diverse the teaching profession actually is and how challenges might be addressed.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Teacher induction can bring together all who have an interest in teacher quality (Bartell, 2005). This report on the lived experience of the Droichead[5] teacher induction process commissioned by the Teaching Council[6] brings together the voices of those who have an interest in teacher quality in Ireland and internationally. Teaching has progressed from a trade learned through apprenticeship to a career with professional status developed across a continuum of initial teacher education, induction and ongoing professional learning. In Huberman's (1993) description of the initial three years of teaching, the 'career entry' stage is characterised as a period of survival and discovery. It is this period that was the focus of the DEEPEN research project.

DEEPEN stands for **D**roichead: **E**xploring and **E**liciting **P**erspectives, **E**xperiences, and **N**arratives. It was a three-year, two-phase research project focusing on the lived experience of the Droichead teacher induction process. The project sought to explore and elicit perspectives, experiences and narratives of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and other school personnel participating in the Droichead process in Irish primary and post-primary schools. The research had a particular focus on the impact of Droichead in four specified settings in the Irish context: DEIS schools[7] (schools serving communities of disadvantage), Special Education Needs (SEN) settings, Gaelscoileanna/ Gaelcholáistí/ Scoileanna Ghaeltachta (Irish-medium schools) and Small Schools. This research builds on previous research (Smyth *et al.*, 2016), and will inform the Council's forthcoming Droichead review.

This introductory chapter outlines the DEEPEN research project phases, provides details of the key concepts central to the research (Induction, Newly Qualified Teacher, Mentor and Mentoring), highlights the importance of exploring global and national perspectives on teacher induction and presents an overview of each chapter of this report.

1.2 DEEPEN Project Overview

The DEEPEN reseach project was initially a three-phase research project consisting of:

1. a systematic review of literature

2. an online survey

3. focus groups with visual data collection in targeted settings

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was truncated to a two-phase project, and the third phase involving focus groups was cancelled. It is envisioned that an innovative dissemination strategy will follow the publication of this report to allow for maximum engagement of key stakeholders with the findings. An overview of the project is provided below:

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[5] Droichead is the National Teacher Induction process in primary and post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

[6] The Teaching Council is the regulatory body for the teaching profession in Ireland.

[7] DEIS - Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools https://www.education.ie/en/schools-colleges/services/deis-delivering-equality-of-opportunity-in-schools-/
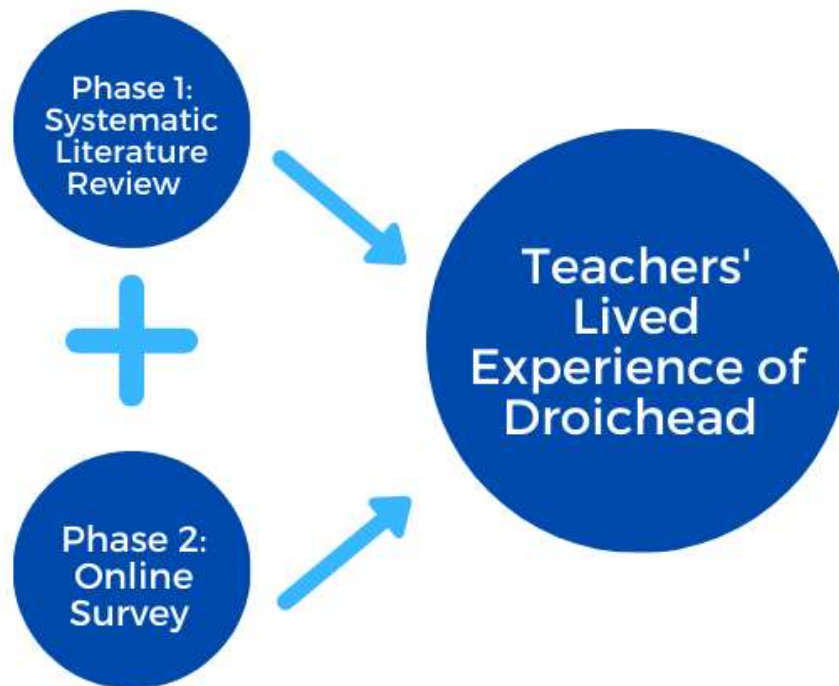
Figure 1.1 DEEPEN phases

1.2.1 Phases of the research

Phase 1 of the research was a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of research on teacher induction. An SLR is described as an "objective, systematic, transparent and replicable" (Siddaway, 2014, p.1) process to locate studies which address specific research question(s) and includes a systematic presentation and synthesis of the characteristics and findings of the search (ibid). A systematic review, in comparison to a traditional literature review, sets out the protocol in advance of the review (Higgins & Green, 2011) and, therefore, the outcome is a more balanced set of findings and is less influenced by any reviewer bias (Antman, 1992; Campbell Collaboration, 2001; Oxman, 1993 in Higgins & Green, 2011).

The Siddaway (2014) five-stage framework was used to formulate the SLR, with the initial literature review summarising findings from eighty-one articles across twenty-three countries[8]. These articles were sourced from three online platforms (ERIC, SCOPUS and EBSCOhost) using search terms such as "induction", "newly qualified teacher", "beginning teacher", "pre-service teacher", "novice teacher", and "professional development". The final review considered thirteen studies in depth, and these are presented in Chapter 2.

The SLR findings contextualised and informed the design of the Phase 2 survey and were central to understanding the lived experience of the teachers in a global context.

Phase 2 of the research comprised an online survey which was sent to all primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. The initial invitation to complete the survey was followed up with further reminders

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[8] US, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Australia, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Namibia, Finland, Canada, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Turkey, Estonia, Israel, Korea, Wales, Romania, Czech Republic and Japan.

through social media posts, Teaching Council ezines, and SMS messages to the NQT cohort. Details of this phase of the research are provided in Chapter 4.

1.3 Key Concepts

The key concepts explored through the research are *induction*, *newly qualified teacher*, *mentor*, and *mentoring*. Each is described briefly below.

1.3.1 Induction

In an education context, induction usually refers to the first one-to-three years in the teaching profession (Bartell, 2005). Internationally, formal induction programmes provide a bridge between the pre-service phase and the in-service phase (Killeavy, 2006) and usually include features such as the support of a mentor, opportunities to collaborate with and observe other teachers and attend professional development programmes (Kearney, 2014). Induction programmes aim to help teachers make the transition from their programme of initial teacher education to school life (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), to overcome the tensions associated with the first year of teaching and to reduce the rates of teacher attrition (Kearney, 2014). Induction programmes are common in other workplace settings such as medicine (Acharya et al, 2016), media (Hendricks and Louw-Potgieter, 2012) and enterprise (Gallagher, 2015).

1.3.2 Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)

Many terms are used, typically interchangeably, to describe a teacher in the early phase of their career. The term 'NQT' is used prolifically in writings from Ireland, the UK and Scandinavia. In New Zealand and Australia there is no consistent term used, with references made to the 'novice teacher', 'new teacher', 'beginning teacher', 'neophyte teacher' and 'early career teacher'. The term 'novice teacher' is used widely in writings from the US, the UAE, Turkey and Israel. For the purposes of this report, the term 'newly qualified teacher' (NQT) will be used throughout.

The challenges faced by NQTs in the early career phase are relatively uncontested in literature, with findings from over three decades ago (Veenman, 1984) concurring with recent publications, such as Glazzard and Coverdale (2018). These include building relationships, classroom management and organisation, assessment, differentiation and the 'reality shock' of moving from a Higher Education Institution (HEI) to the classroom.

In Ireland, initial teacher education is delivered as undergraduate concurrent programmes or as post-graduate consecutive programmes (Teaching Council, 2017a). Although the majority of NQTs are 'first career' teachers, it should be noted that many enter the profession as 'second career' teachers i.e. those who have had careers in other fields and have changed to the teaching profession following a programme of initial teacher education. Research by Newman (2010) found that while second career NQTs brought with them a key skill set from previous employment (such as management, ability to work as a professional, life skills), they tended to be treated the same as NQTs who had come directly from a HEI. Mature NQTs generally exhibited greater confidence in the workplace, which meant that specific teaching-related concerns often went unnoticed.

1.3.3 Mentor

The origin of the word mentor lies in the Greek tale of the *Odyssey* where *Mentor* was one who encouraged, gave advice and supported others. In an education setting, a mentor is one who operates in a space between the classroom teacher and the teacher educator (Field, 2005). The term

'cooperating teacher' is sometimes used in place of 'mentor', but usually in the context of working with student teachers as opposed to NQTs. The term 'coach' can also appear in literature, although usually in a business or industry related field, or as a metaphor for mentoring (Veenman *et al*., 2001). In this context, a mentor is called upon to take on many roles such as motivator, critical friend, advisor, colleague, organiser and expert practitioner (Bubb, 2013). Carroll and Simco (2001) state that teaching mentors require four basic skills to fulfil these roles: active listening, questioning, summarising and managing review and feedback. Casey and Claunch (2005) outline the five phases of mentor development as predisposition, disequilibrium, transition, confidence and efficacy. Despite the complexity of the role of the mentor, research indicates that mentor education internationally, tends to focus on limited professional development, and is usually linked to paperwork and administration as opposed to the type of skills and dispositions mentioned above (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). Piggot-Irvine *et al.* (2009) argue that mentor requirements go beyond a required skill set and that it is somewhat more complex, involving:

- *contextual factors* - time for the mentor to work with the NQT, willingness of the mentor to support an NQT, disposition of the mentor to engage in professional development

- *supportive structures* - co-planning opportunities, welcoming atmosphere, feedback mechanisms

- *systemic induction practices* - knowledge of teacher registration requirements, links with professional learning networks outside of the school, scheduled structured events for the NQT.

1.3.4 Mentoring

Mentoring is one of the key components of an induction programme. According to the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) in Ireland, mentoring as an *action* involves tasks such as:

- providing personal, professional and pedagogical support for the NQT

- coordinating the induction plan and induction activities in collaboration with the Principal and the NQT

- attending mentor professional development

- liaising with the principal in providing short updates at staff meetings on the process of induction of NQTs

- liaising with other staff members in relation to opportunities for the NQT to visit their classrooms and work alongside them

- enabling and empowering the NQT to seek/source answers to questions

- establishing clear boundaries for the mentor-NQT relationship

- clarifying school policies and procedures for the NQT

- working in partnership with the NQT in the classroom e.g. observing and giving feedback

- liaising with other schools in the area for the purposes of observing and sharing practice

- providing support for planning and preparation for teaching and learning by NQTs

- accepting and giving feedback in a constructive, open and professional manner

- engaging in action planning with the NQT

- adopting a professional approach at all times

(NIPT, 2019)

These features highlight the nature of mentoring undertaken by mentors with NQTs in the broader school induction context. This is a complex and multifaceted area. The four key concepts of *induction*, *newly qualified teacher*, *mentor*, and *mentoring* were central to this research project both in their own right and in how they interweave with each other within the Droichead process.

1.4 Teacher Induction – Global and Local

A functioning, knowledgeable, attractive and valued teaching profession is a global need (Price & Weatherby, 2017) and induction programmes, as a feature of education systems in many countries around the globe, strive to address this need within a wider continuum of teacher education. A global mindset is important not only for students, but also for teachers and teacher educators as 'the professional dimension of a global mindset among teachers emphasizes the collective agency and communal power of teachers everywhere, to deeply affect the nature of their work and the learners with whom they work' (Goodwin, 2020, p. 12). It is in this context that both global and national perspectives on teacher induction were pivotal to this research project.

1.5 Chapter Overview

This report is presented in twelve distinct chapters, which are outlined below:

Chapter 1 introduces the report by outlining the DEEPEN research project phases, providing detail on the key concepts central to the work highlighting the importance of global and national perspectives on teacher induction and presenting an overview of each chapter of this report.

Chapter 2 details the international context of teacher induction by presenting the findings of an extensive SLR. The areas explored in this chapter are definitions of induction, features of induction programmes, the impact of induction programmes on teachers and schools and the impact of induction programmes on policy and practice. This chapter highlights the key themes which emerged from the SLR and also outlines how the SLR shaped the survey used in Phase 2 of the study.

Chapter 3 presents a comprehensive overview of the evolution of teacher induction and probation in Ireland. It charts this development over five key phases:

- pre-2002: when there was no formal induction system in Ireland

- 2002: the establishment of the National Pilot Project for Teacher Induction (NPPTI)

- 2010: the move from a pilot project on induction to a National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) including the introduction of Droichead as a pilot programme in 2013

- 2016-2020: the growth phase of Droichead over a five-year period

- Current context: where Droichead is the sole route of induction for all NQTs in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland.

Chapter 4 describes the SLR methodology, and the methodology used in Phase 2 of the project in terms of the online survey design, the impact of the SLR on phase 2, ethical considerations, sampling and limitations.

Chapter 5 provides a profile of survey respondents: NQTs, PST members, school leaders and non-PST members. This chapter also discusses the response rates, completion rates and participation rates for the online survey and reports how respondents are generally representative of the teaching body in Ireland, thus providing a validity to the findings discussed thereafter.

Chapter 6 presents NQTs' lived experience of Droichead. The chapter focuses on five key areas: the influence of the Droichead process on the lived experience of NQTs, relationships, teachers' learning, school culture and finally a specific focus on the NQTs' experience of Droichead in the four target settings of DEIS, SEN, small schools and Irish-medium schools.

Chapter 7 describes the Professional Support Team (PST) members' lived experience of Droichead. The chapter focuses on the five key areas listed above for NQTs and leadership.

Chapter 8 discusses school leaders' lived experience of Droichead. The chapter focuses on four key areas - the key elements of Droichead, relationships, school culture (including its professional learning culture), and school settings.

Chapter 9 outlines the responses from the non-PST participants in relation to, e.g. the quality of Droichead, NQT supports and their perceived inclusion in the Droichead process.

Chapter 10 provides a summary of the lived experience of the NQT, PST, school leaders and non-PST members of the Droichead process, in the context of the four target settings of DEIS, SEN settings, Irish-medium and small schools. This serves as a context for a discussion of six key crosscutting observations from the data related to:

- beliefs about teaching
- perceptions about NQTs' support needs
- the perceived quality of Droichead
- perceived inclusion in Droichead
- the variety of lived experience amongst teachers involved in Droichead
- the effective use of time for Droichead activities

Chapter 11 presents a comprehensive discussion of seven key themes derived from Phase 1 (the SLR) and Phase 2 (the online survey).

Chapter 12 is a concluding reflection structured around the Rolfe *et al.* (2001) framework to present the consolidated findings and propose recommendations for future iterations of Droichead.

The following project map (figure 1.2) shows how each chapter of the report is interconnected:
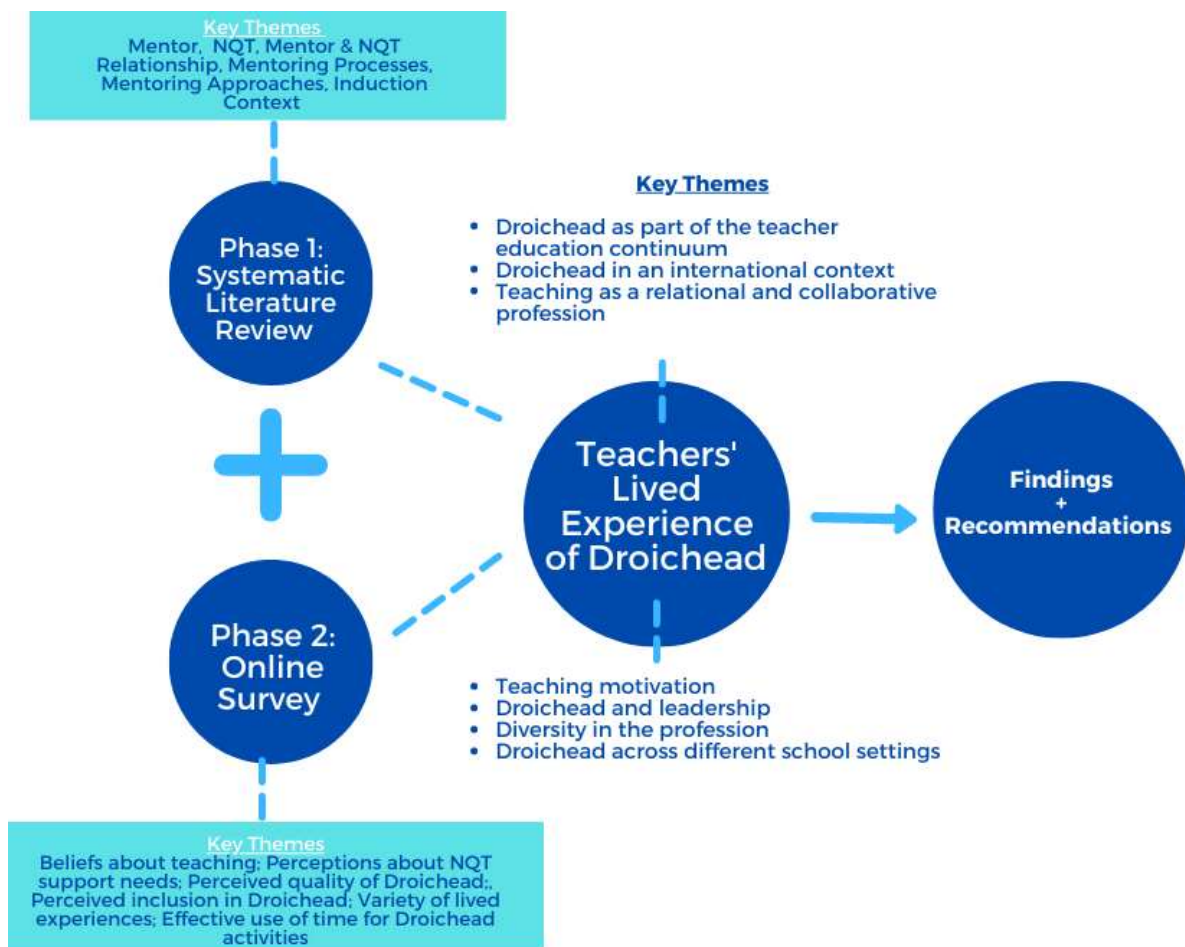
Figure 1.2 Project map

1.6 Conclusion

Induction programmes have evolved over time and whereas, in the not-too-distant past, induction programme discussions were dominated by 'a paucity of fiscal investment by governments' (Mooney Simmie *et al.*, 2017), more recent literature indicates that induction programmes are now visible within national policy landscapes (ibid) and are prioritised and valued. Indeed, induction programmes occupy significant space within continuums of teacher education globally, operating within timeframes of one-to-three year's duration. This represents an important shift in the landscape of teacher education and the teaching profession and indicates positive progression from an era where induction was informal, ad hoc, and occasional, to new formal systems of induction that endeavour to meet the needs of a changing and evolving teaching profession. The next chapter outlines the international context of teacher induction.

Chapter 2. The International Context of Teacher Induction

2.1 Introduction

'The induction of newly qualified teachers in and across workplaces is a global challenge.'

(Kemmis *et al.*, 2014, p.154).

The aim of the DEEPEN project was to investigate teachers' lived experience of the Droichead induction process. Reviewing the concept and practice of teacher induction programmes through an international lens provides a global perspective on how induction impacts the professional development and practice of newly qualified teachers and the whole school. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to describe the current international landscape of teacher induction programmes, in order to situate the lived experience of Irish NQTs, PST members, school leaders and other school staff within an international context.

This chapter presents and discusses findings which are drawn from an SLR of international research on teacher induction and mentoring, including a high-level review of 81 articles (Appendix A) and a detailed review of 13 international studies (Appendix C). Details of the methodology for this SLR are presented in Chapter 4.

This SLR informs an understanding of key areas related to teacher induction, namely definitions of induction, features of induction programmes, the impact of induction programmes on teachers and schools and the impact of induction programmes on policy and practice – with each of these areas being addressed in this chapter. The Irish context of induction is explored separately in Chapter 3.

2.2 Understanding Teacher Induction

Teacher induction programmes are defined as 'more or less a planned and formalised arrangement in which beginning teachers are assisted and supported in becoming competent and effective professionals' (Helms-Lorenz, Grift, & Maulana, 2016, p.180). Mooney Simmie *et al.,* (2017), drawing on the work of Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) extend the understanding of induction to also include the school climate in which the induction is embedded as being central to any understanding of teacher induction. Threshold concepts, or new ways of understanding and viewing teacher induction, come to the fore as induction is seen as a particularly formative but often challenging period of teacher development (Cajkler & Hall, 2012), while skill development and satisfaction appear to surface when beginning teachers experience appraisal, collegiality, encouragement and trust (Blömeke *et al*., 2015). Cochran-Smith (2012) argues that learning to teach is something that happens over time and happens when new teachers work in the company of more experienced teachers who are also continuing to learn to teach. She rejects the perspective that teachers should know how to teach effectively the minute they enter the classroom and that there are 'best ways' to teach, regardless of who the students are and what experiential and cultural resources they bring (2012, p.122).

Definitions and vocabulary, relating in particular to the concept of mentoring, can vary in the international literature. Aspfors and Fransson (2015) state that 'mentor education cannot be studied in full without problematising how mentoring and mentor education are understood and defined' (p.76) with words such as *mentoring*, *coaching* and *supervision* frequently used. Regardless of the term used, most commentaries on mentoring point to the process of 'helping (the NQT) to improve,

defining exactly what the issues were and then helping (them) to improve in that area' (Hudson, 2013, p. 780).

It is interesting to note that there is consistency across the international literature in the use of the word *programme* to describe the suite of induction activities offered to NQTs. Kearney (2014) alludes to the fact that induction is actually a 'collective of programs' (p.5) that offer support, guidance and orientation to NQTs. The most common terminology that emerges across the reviewed articles includes the global concepts and constructs of *newly qualified teacher, beginning teacher, pre-service teachers,* and *novice teacher*. In the Irish context, *Newly Qualified Teacher* is the preferred term, but it is important to have a shared understanding of what these words mean when conversations take place about teacher induction, and when reading international literature.

2.3 Features of Effective Induction Programmes

The components of successful induction programmes, as presented by Kearney (2016), are uncontested across the reviewed articles. They include:

- one-to-two-year mandatory induction programmes
- the provision of mentor support
- possibilities for collaboration
- observation
- reduced teaching load/release time
- workplace learning
- seminars/meetings for NQTs
- professional support networks
- opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Highlighted in his work is the need to support the mentor and the NQT by providing reduced teaching time, release time for mentoring activities and opportunities for training and networking. The international programmes referred to by Kearney (2016) to provide insights into the most significant features of teacher induction, include programmes from the US, New Zealand, Europe, the UK and the Far East. Across all, the most notable features are duration, location and content of the programme, who leads the programme and the nature of the mentoring process and support. In addition to countries that are frequently mentioned in the literature, there are a number of 'emerging countries' referred to across the literature which add a new perspective on induction programmes, e.g. Israel, Belgium, Turkey and Estonia. An examination of these countries' induction approaches provides useful and interesting insights, as their mentoring programmes are at various stages of development, and much can be learned from their progress during these early stages/phases. The initiation and development of these induction programmes also demonstrate the continuing international expansion of a mentoring community. Such programmes are not only designed to alleviate the stress of newly qualified and early career teachers, but also to acculturate them into a profession that is focused on quality teaching and learning in the classroom, personal development and reflection. Some of the key features of international induction programmes are highlighted below:

Country/Region	Hyper link for further information	Duration	Year commenced	Key Features identified in available literature	OECD PISA ranking 2018[9] (Note Ireland = 9)
Shanghai	[Developing Shanghai's Teachers](#)	1 year + 3-year mentor support	2012	• Reduced teaching time for NQTs • One-to-one and group mentoring • Mentor support for three years • Available in all schools • Led by school leaders	1
Singapore	[Empowered Educators](#)	2 years	2011	• Three-day orientation programme • Available in all schools • Mentor support	2
Estonia	[Induction in Estonia](#)	1 year	2004	• Mentor Support • Strong focus on reflective practice • Led by school leaders • University-based induction year seminars	3

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[9] PISA is the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment. PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges ([PISA - PISA (oecd.org)](#))

Japan	Induction in Japan	1 year	1989, revised 2003	• Mentor support • Reduced teaching time for both the NQT and the mentor • High financial investment	4
Korea	Induction in Korea	7 months	2016	• A pre-employment course organised by the local authority • A two-week orientation programme • Mentor support for six months • Two-week follow up training	5
Canada	New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).	1 year	2010 Revised in 2019	• Orientation programme • Mentor support • Professional learning activities	6
Finland	Osaava Verme	1 year	2008	• Peer group mentoring • Groups meet once per month outside of school hours • Mentors trained by teacher education institutions	7
Scotland	Teacher Induction Scheme	1 year	2003	• Led by Scottish Teaching Council/Government • Reduced teaching time • Mentor support • Professional development workshops • Non-compulsory • Flexible completion route	10 (UK)

England	Induction for newly qualified teachers (England)	1 year	2012	• Reduced teaching time for NQTs • Mentor support	10 (UK)
New Zealand	*Induction and Mentoring*	2 years	2011	• Led by the Teaching Council • Mentor support • Professional development workshops	12
Sweden	Teacher Induction in Sweden	1 year	2008	• System was evaluation-based up until 2014 • Mentoring practices now more informal	13
Germany	Teacher Induction in Germany	2 years	2004	• Professional development workshops • In-school supports • Examination leading to accreditation/registration	16
Flanders	Teacher Induction in Flanders	1 year	2021	• Pilot Project • Support for schools to develop induction practices • Aims to tackle high attrition rates • Funded by the EU's Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP)	17

Australia	[National induction guidelines](#)	2 years but can vary	2016	• Focus on professional practices, identity, wellbeing and orientation • Induction app • Research on best practice is ongoing	18
Norway	[The National Strategy for Teacher Education](#)	1 year	In progress	• Mentoring and induction programmes are currently run at regional level • By 2025 there will be a national framework for the induction of NQTs	20
US	[*Californian* Teacher Induction Program](#)	2 years	2009	• School-based individualised induction • Mentor support	22
Israel	[Teacher Induction in Israel](#)	1 year	2003	• Reduced teaching time for NQT • Mentor support • Peer group workshops • NQT is assessed by an assessment committee	n/a
Romania	[EuryDice- Romania](#)	1 year	2011	• Focus on meeting probation and registration requirements	n/a

Turkey	[Induction in Turkey](#)	6 months	2016	• In-class/in-school elements supports • Out-of-school activities, including cultural, civic and volunteering activities. • NQTs are asked to watch films and read books to explore and discuss their education values	n/a
United Arab Emirates	[The Teacher and Educational Leadership Standards](#)	n/a	2017	• All teachers take professional standards examinations and create a portfolio of evidence • Any gaps identified in the examination are to be supported at school level through training and support	n/a

The literature reviewed provides a comprehensive overview of teacher induction programmes, thus allowing a greater understanding of how teacher induction is defined and implemented today. Key nuances are illustrated, for example, by Kearney (2016) who speaks of mentor support, but Richter *et al.,* (2013) highlight the importance of the *quality* of that mentor support, and Hudson (2013) cautions that mentors may lack confidence and competence in *providing* that support.

2.4 Factors Related to Teacher Induction Programmes in Schools

2.4.1 The NQT and Mentor relationship

The key participants in teacher induction programmes are the **Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)** and **Mentors***,* with the relationship between them being a significant feature of programmes*.* The available data across the articles were analysed to thematically dichotomise 'The Newly Qualified Teacher and Mentor Teacher Relationship' from the individual 'Newly Qualified Teacher' and 'Mentor Teacher' themes, on the basis of the individual and distinct properties of each theme. This offers a third perspective on the newly qualified teacher and mentor teacher relationship as a composite theme, with individual properties that enable a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of relationships between NQTs and mentor teachers and how these relationships may or may not impact on the induction process. Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) refer to an overarching concept of *professional capital* that builds on its various forms within the field of education, amplifying the value of conversations, connections and relationships at all levels in the teaching profession. Within the induction space, conversations, connections and relationships between NQTs and mentor teachers are central to the induction process within, and supported by, the culture of the school.

The review of international literature indicates that teacher knowledge, performance, pedagogy and beliefs about teaching are central to the development of the NQT as a professional. The initial phase of teaching is also regarded as presenting a variety of challenges and opportunities for NQTs and the mentor teacher, with knowledge, pedagogy, beliefs, dispositions and positionality being to the fore. A closer look at the relationship between the NQT and the mentor teacher shows that understanding of roles and identities, availability of time for induction activities and workload demands were factors in the success of the relationship. However, the impact of the quality and nature of the relationship of the mentor and the NQT is more frequently cited in the literature as having a positive impact on the induction process (Blomeke *et al*., 2015; Richter *et al*., 2013; Shwartz & Dori, 2016).

NQT and mentor dispositions, characteristics, identities, and temperaments are central to the induction process. The interaction between NQTs' and mentors' dispositions in the induction process can build ways of thinking and doing which are formative in the development of the professional character of the teacher. This growth of dispositions offers further insight into what Bourdieu described as 'habitus' (Grenfell, 2008), leading to an accumulation of Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) 'professional capital' throughout their teaching career. Richter *et al.,* (2013) report that NQTs experience distinct developmental growth patterns in the first year of teaching related to efficacy, enthusiasm, transmissive and constructivist beliefs, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Helms-Lorenz *et al.* (2016) report that it is the quality of the mentoring, and not the duration, that leads to the growth of such dispositions and skills. They report how beginning teachers (in an experimental group during a 3-year induction programme) showed greater improvements in teaching skills compared to teachers in a control group (using a 1-year induction programme). Despite the differences in the induction timeframes of both studies and the consequences for NQTs of different timeframes, there is a congruence between the findings of the studies in relation to the

mentoring/coaching aspect of both induction programmes, in that both studies identify the *quality* of mentoring/coaching rather than the *frequency* to be more important. Shwartz and Dori (2016) emphasise the myriad of roles that the mentor teacher fulfils within three different dimensions: the technical, the professional and the affective; while Abu-Alhija, Fadia and Fresko (2016) argue that induction programmes contribute most to the emotional domain of teaching (motivation, coping strategies) and least to the ecological domain (school culture, non-teaching tasks).

When further investigating mentoring, the international literature orients towards two significant themes: the **Mentoring Process** and **Mentoring Approaches.** The former includes actions such as collaboration, communication and co-operation that guide and lead the NQT and the mentor through the mentoring process together and which determine the quality of such a process. The latter concentrates on the underpinning positionality and ontology of the mentor in the context of induction and how this is operationalised within the dimensions of the induction process. Lines of argument from the international literature centre on mentors being called to 'look within' and to reflect on the approach that they take when working with NQTs. This approach may be transmissive or constructivist in origin (Richter *et al*., 2013); or the mentor may view themselves more as a coach (Helms-Lorenz *et al*., 2016); or the process may be understood as one of apprenticeship (Kearney, 2014). The systematic review found that the underpinning positionality of the mentor informed the types of actions taken as a mentor.

2.4.2 The role of the wider school community/Professional Learning Communities

It is also important to consider how the broader school community (including principals and teachers in the school who are not mentors), aligns with the conceptual framework of induction. Aspfors and Fransson (2015) highlight the need for moral support from principals and colleagues in order for an induction programme to be successful. Several articles in the SLR indicated that effective support from principals and colleagues was evidenced through empathy with new teachers and a greater understanding of their well-being and needs across the school community. The term *Professional Learning Communities* is identified by Hargreaves (2008) as something that is 'ubiquitous' and is used to describe school-based communities of teachers, school management and students working collaboratively to improve student-learning outcomes through effective teaching, while enhancing teacher professional development. Lamb and Geiger (2012, p.3276) define professional learning as 'teachers working as a community in a sustained and intensive way where they use evidence-based learning strategies to improve the effectiveness of their teaching that leads to raising student achievement'. While the literature leans strongly towards a definition of *Professional Learning Communities* in relation to teaching and learning in general, there is also scope to consider the collaborative potential of the Professional Learning Community in the induction of NQTs. Mooney Simmie *et al.,* (2017) use two competing theoretical frameworks: an instrumental standpoint based on performativity and a dialectical standpoint based on a transformative view of good teaching as an advanced specialised practice. The study, which predates the Droichead process, raises important questions about the positioning of beginning teachers' professional learning and meaningful professional learning for all teachers across the continuum of teacher education. Their study focuses on the conceptualisation of teacher professional learning, drawing on Opfer and Pedder's (2011) perspective which argues that teaching and learning are understood to be both contextualised and de-contextualised. Opfer and Pedder (2011) state that 'teachers must recursively consider general principles and specific contexts to learn' (in Mooney Simmie *et al*., 2017, p.381). This is described as a

linear rational discourse of 'what works' and a competing discourse that proposes that teacher professional learning takes place in many ways. Examples of such ways include:

- when teachers learn in ways that require specialist knowledge *for, in* and *of* practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999)

- when teachers have *access to theory* and a *diversity of inquirers* (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008; Timperley *et al*., 2007)

- when good teaching and teacher learning are understood as *advanced specialised practices* (Mooney Simmie *et al*., 2017, p.510)

Cajkler and Hall (2012, p.216) refer to Parkinson and Pritchard's (2005) description of the 'steep learning curve' facing NQTs as they assume full responsibility for whole classes and 'are expected to achieve as much as more experienced colleagues'. They also acknowledge Killeavy's assertion (2006, p.169), which emphasises the need for immediate engagement, in consultation with colleagues, in a culture of professional learning from the outset. In addition, they refer to Williams and Prestage (2002, p.43), who note the critical role played by collaborative cultures in induction. It is of particular relevance to the DEEPEN research project that the school setting may impact the experiences of the mentor and the beginning teacher, e.g. in schools serving communities of disadvantage (Langdon *et al*., 2014) and in multilingual settings (Cajklere Hall, 2012).

2.4.3 The contribution of school leadership

In relation to leadership in schools, the literature framed the leadership role as one that is *ecological* (Abu-Alhija, Fadia & Fresko, 2016), in that it is the leader who creates and evaluates the conditions necessary for effective induction and mentoring (Langdon *et al*., 2014). This understanding of leadership echoes the impact of the positionality and ontology of the mentor on the approach to mentoring, as discussed earlier. Langdon *et al*., (2014) posit that if a school leader has a positive perception of induction, this can influence the quality of the programme offered, and Aspors and Fransson (2015) assert that school leaders are pivotal in providing moral support to mentors.

2.4.4 Opportunities and challenges in induction programmes

The findings from this SLR indicate that in a formal induction programme, there are positive short and long-term outcomes for the NQT, the mentor and the teaching profession. This happens when the mentor, as an experienced and approachable colleague (Bartell, 2005) provides both the instructional and psychological support needed at this stage of development (Gold 1996, in Richter *et al.,* 2013) and where the NQT engages and interacts with the support. Formal induction programmes have the potential to impact affirmatively, constructively and progressively on the teaching profession. There is also evidence within the literature, internationally, of challenges in the implementation of induction programmes, such as justification for an induction programme, quality of mentor education, theory/practice connections, relationship development, balancing support and assessment, and resistance to support from NQTs (Aspors & Frannson,2015). Meristo and Eisenschmidt (2012), drawing on the work of Löfström and Eisenschmidt (2009), state that NQTs, in the absence of a collaborative culture in schools, can be left alone to deal with challenges. Richter *et al.,* (2013) add dealing with the wellbeing of NQTs as a challenge of induction programmes, while Cajkler and Hall (2012) add supporting NQTs in increasingly diverse school contexts as another layer of complexity in induction programmes globally.

However, the single most important focus is the *impact* of induction programmes on the induction, professional learning, professional development and practice of newly qualified teachers and other school personnel. The literature advocates induction and mentoring as vital to the success and development of beginning teachers (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Fulton *et al*., 2005; Wong, 2004 in Kearney, 2014).

2.5 Influencers in the Teacher Induction Context – Policy and Funding
2.5.1 International induction policy

The importance of teacher induction policy development is a thread which runs through each of the reviewed articles. Mooney Simmie *et al.,* (2017) highlight that in several instances, induction programmes are now grounded in national policy, and they set out the key features of induction for each country. Kearney (2014) lists the main features of successful induction policies globally as one-to-two-year mandatory induction programmes, mentor support, possibilities for collaboration, observation, reduced teaching load/release time, workplace learning, seminars/meetings for NQTs, professional support networks and opportunities for CPD. The articles reviewed also showed variances in emphases in policies across different jurisdictions. For example, in Israel, the duration of an induction programme is contested (Abu-Alhija, Fadia & Fesko, 2016); in the UK the importance of workplace learning was a frequent theme (Cajklere & Hall, 2012); and in the US, collaboration between all teachers is seen as crucial in supporting effective induction (Cochran-Smith, 2012).

2.5.2 Funding

The matter of funding and resourcing points to the use of centralised funding to support the work of the mentor and the NQT by providing reduced teaching time, release time for mentoring activities and the provision of training and networking (Kearney, 2014). It is noted by Mooney Simmie *et al.,* (2017) that an awareness of the need for financial investment in induction has improved over time, but as both Kearney (2014) and Aspfors and Fransson (2015) point out, the level of funding varies from country to country. Every study in the review highlighted the complexities and nuances of successful induction programmes, but as Helms-Lorenz *et al.,* (2016) assert, a lack of resourcing can hinder induction arrangements and thus reduce the desired effects of the process. Langdon *et al.* (2014) posit that a well-resourced induction programme makes a positive difference to NQTs. Japan is highlighted by Kearney (2014) as an example of a state which invests significantly in induction and is unique across most case study exemplars of successful induction programmes in relation to the level of funding, which is estimated at $12,000 per newly qualified teacher, compared to $3,200 in California. At the time of writing there are no current figures available for the Irish context.

2.6 Retention and Attrition

Retention and attrition within the profession, and possible linkages between these and teacher induction programmes, is a clear theme in the literature. Kearney (2014) refers to the process of 'acculturating' beginning teachers in their new careers and addressing potential attrition issues through the provision of appropriate and meaningful induction programmes. Helms-Lorenz *et al.* (2016) comment on Ingersoll and Strong's (2011) critical review of the impact of induction and mentoring programmes. They note that, while most studies of induction programmes provide

empirical support for the claim that assistance for beginning teachers has positive effects on teacher commitment and retention, classroom instructional practice and student achievement, this is not always the case. They raise a possible conflation issue around the retention variable, in that teachers removed from a national/centralised database during their early career phase might not leave the profession but 'switch schools' or take a break and return later. This raises an important point in relation to the transfer and updating of teacher records. Therefore, there may in fact be an overestimation of attrition rates and an underestimation of retention rates within the profession. Accurate data is essential in proposing or claiming any or all effects of teacher induction programmes on retention and attrition in the profession. To counter this potential conflation issue, Helms-Lorenz *et al* (2016) reference Smith and Ingersoll's (2004) longitudinal study of 325 beginning teachers, which included 'switchers' and 'leavers', and was controlled for various teacher and school characteristics. This study found that receiving support had a negative connotation, and that beginning teachers might move or leave after one year in the role. The Helms-Lorenz *et al.* study (2016) itself controlled for 'switchers' and 'leavers' and investigated if beginning teacher retention could be increased by induction interventions and if beginning teaching skills (of the stayers) in Year 3 of their intervention were influenced by induction interventions. The 'switchers', 'leavers' and 'stayers' conceptualisation is an important one in this review and in the overarching DEEPEN project.

2.7 Relevance of the SLR to the DEEPEN Research Project

The SLR used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework to code and analyse data from findings in the selected articles in a systematic manner, and an interpretive approach identified six dominant themes from the macro and micro findings, including potential patterns of interest in teacher induction programmes internationally. These were:

- the newly qualified teacher (NQT)

- the mentor teacher

- the NQT and the mentor teacher relationship

- the mentoring process

- mentoring approaches

- influencers in the induction context

These themes informed the structure of the survey used in Phase 2 of the research to gather the views and experiences of NQTs, PST members and non-PST members.

The discussion of the findings of the survey adopts a broad definition of the concept of 'context' as a result of this SLR of international research. The DEEPEN project is centred on four key school settings; DEIS schools, SEN settings, Irish-medium schools and small schools. In the international literature, the concept of 'induction context' does not make specific reference to such settings, but instead includes the more generalisable influencers of policy development and retention in the teaching profession, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), funding/investment and resourcing, leadership in schools, and retention and attrition. These areas also form part of the discussion on induction contexts and settings in Chapter 11.

2.8 Features of Effective Induction Programmes

The table below illustrates the key features of the Droichead process compared with the key features of successful induction programmes globally:

Table 2.1. Features of effective induction programmes

Key features of successful induction programmes globally	Key Features of Droichead
One-to two-year mandatory induction programmes	Typically one year – but a minimum of 60 days for primary, and a minimum of 200 hours for post-primary is mandatory
The provision of mentor support	Professional Support Team (PST), which includes mentoring support
Possibilities for collaboration	Supporting a newly qualified teacher during Droichead is always a collaborative process
Observation	Observation and Feedback Observation by the NQT of other teachers teaching Observations by PST members of the NQTs' practice
Reduced teaching load/release time	Release time for PST training and for the school-based induction
Workplace learning	*Taisce*: Portfolio-based learning Engagement in reflective practice
Seminars/meetings for NQTs	Participation in cluster meetings
Professional support networks	Professional Conversations A range of supports and resources (within and outside school)
Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development	Professional development Participation in professional learning activities
Quality Assurance processes	Consistency/Quality Assurance: Maintaining records of the Droichead process Droichead Quality Assurance Panel

2.9 International Perspectives on Teaching and Learning

Broader international perspectives on teaching and learning are also relevant to the context of the DEEPEN research project. These include the OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS). The most recent TALIS survey was published in 2018. The TALIS 2018 sample consisted of 200 randomly selected schools from 48 different countries, with one school leader and 20 teachers selected from each of the schools, and found that:

- 90% of teachers in the TALIS report stated that they were satisfied with their job.

- The highest ranked motivation for teaching in the TALIS study, was that teaching allowed teachers to influence the lives of children and young people (92%).

- The TALIS report identified five key aspects that predict both job satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy. These are:

  1. selection of candidates with strong motivation and the right attitudes to become lifelong learners and professional workers
  2. a strong focus on induction and mentoring throughout the teacher's career
  3. a strong focus on providing meaningful and impactful opportunities for professional learning
  4. working conditions and a school climate conducive to teacher wellbeing
  5. the importance of a sense of trust and respect

- The TALIS report identified training for teachers working with students with SEN as the greatest learning need of teachers.

2.10 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to identify and synthesise key findings from empirical research conducted on international teacher induction programmes/practice, and to extrapolate themes from the findings. The chapter investigated the perceived impact of induction programmes on the induction, professional learning, professional development and practice of newly qualified teachers and other school personnel. The SLR highlighted features of effective teacher induction programmes whilst at the same time acknowledging some of the documented challenges of international induction programmes. It has shown that induction is a complex and nuanced process and these nuances and complexities have been incorporated in the research. The international literature reviewed has shown that the most commonly cited exemplars of teacher induction programmes are in Scotland, the US, Shanghai, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore but that these countries have been joined by exemplars such as Israel, Belgium and Turkey. This has resulted in a wider range of international comparisons being used in Chapter 11. Clearly identifying the key features of selected international teacher induction programmes makes a significant contribution to the enhancement of our knowledge of teacher induction in a wider setting, and helps to contextualise and provide comparisons with the induction process in Ireland. It is also helpful in illuminating a range of important areas for further consideration across the continuum of teacher education and within the education system, here in Ireland and globally.

Chapter 3: The Irish Context of Teacher Induction

3.1 Introduction

The Irish education system is a high performing system (OECD, 2020), where teaching has been characterised as a well-respected and high-status profession (Conway *et al.*,2009), with distinctive features such as high entry levels to programmes of initial teacher education, low attrition rates and a highly motivated teaching body (Morgan & Burke, 2011). Taking account of these descriptors, this chapter charts the evolution of mentoring and induction in Ireland from an informal, school-led approach to a structured process of induction called 'Droichead' (meaning 'bridge' in Irish) which, since September 2020, is the sole route of teacher induction in Ireland in all State funded primary and post- primary school settings. This chapter contains six sections, each designed to bring clarity to understanding the context for the DEEPEN research project:

- Section 1 contains an overview of the Irish education system at primary and post- primary level.

- Section 2 sets out what Droichead looks like in schools in 2021.

- Section 3 explains the policy and legislative context for Droichead.

- Section 4 charts the evolution of induction and mentoring in Ireland.

- Section 5 presents the findings of national reviews of Droichead.

- Section 6 presents the findings from a sample of research projects conducted by teachers in the area of induction and mentoring.

3.2 The Irish Primary and Post-Primary Education System

The following infographic provides a snapshot of the Irish education system:
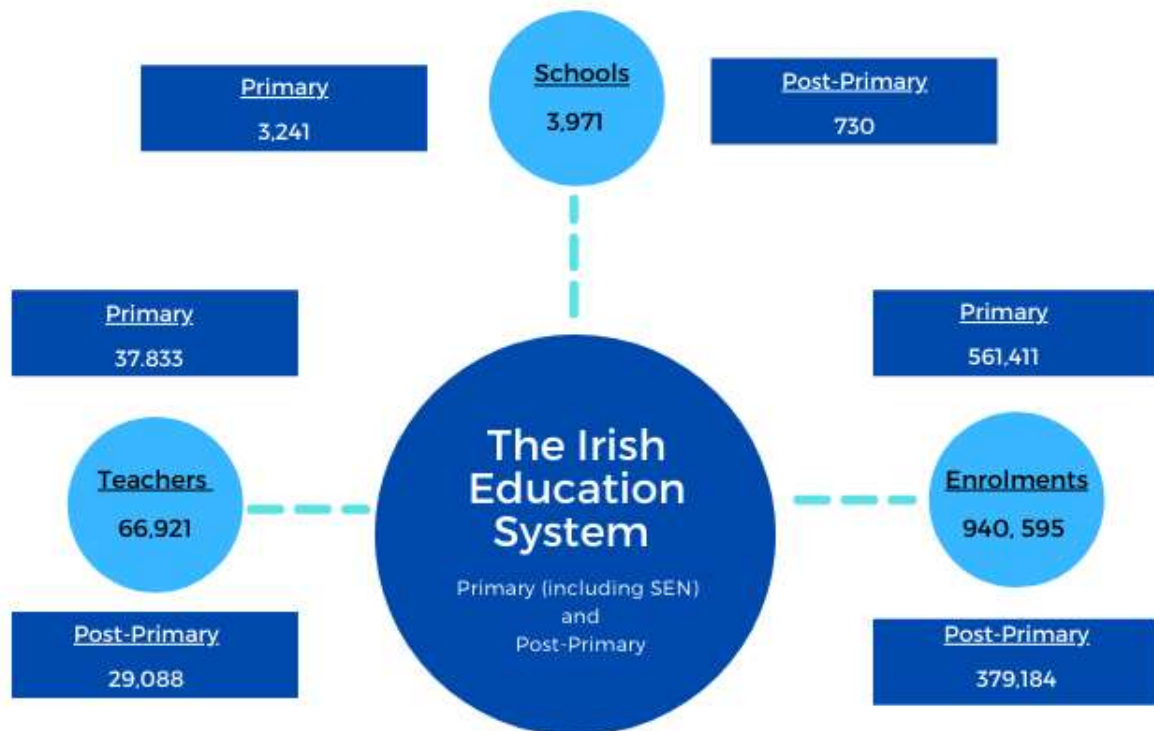
Figure 3.1 The Irish Education System (Primary and Post-primary 2020/21 Figures)[10]

3.3 Droichead Today

Droichead is now (2021) the sole route for induction for primary and post-primary newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in Ireland. The evolution of teacher induction in Ireland from a probation system (primary sector only) to a pilot project on teacher induction, to a national framework for teacher induction is outlined in Section 3.5. Droichead is defined as an 'integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers' (Teaching Council, 2016). It forms part of the continuum of teachers' professional development in Ireland (Teaching Council, 2011), comprising **Céim (2020)** (the Irish word for 'step')[11]*: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*, the initial teacher education phase; **Droichead (2016)** (the Irish word for 'bridge'), the induction phase; and **Cosán (2016)[12]** (the Irish word for 'pathway'), the framework for teachers' learning (See Figure 3.4). The main objective of Droichead is to 'support the professional learning of NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career'

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[10] Figures drawn from https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/055810-education-statistics/#latest-statistical-reports

[11] Céim (2020) is the initial teacher education phase of the continuum of teacher education, and as a document, it outlines the requirements for providers of initial teacher education in Ireland. It is described as 'a keystone document in the continuum of teacher education' (Teaching Council, 2020, p. 2), with an acknowledgement that 'the Council is concerned that there remains a view that teacher education ends at the point of qualification' (ibid, p.8). Céim focuses on initial teacher education programme standards and graduate teacher standards.

[12] Cosán (2016) is the Teaching Council's framework for teacher learning. It is described as 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' (Teaching Council, 2016, p.2). It covers four dimensions of teachers' learning (formal and informal; personal and professional; collaborative and individual; school-based and external): learning processes; learning areas; planning for learning; reflecting on learning and standards that guide teachers' learning.

(Teaching Council, 2017, p. 3). An NQT's registration with the Teaching Council is conditional until they have successfully completed the Droichead process.

Figure 3.2 The continuum of teacher education (Teaching Council)

Droichead can be undertaken in recognised State-funded primary, post-primary and SEN settings. NQTs can be employed on a permanent, temporary or substitute basis and can engage in Droichead once they can meet the requirement to complete a minimum block of 60 days teaching (primary) or 200 hours (post-primary). In a primary school setting, other than in exceptional circumstances, schools should deploy NQTs in a mainstream setting. In certain circumstances, the Teaching Council (2017) states that Droichead can also be completed where NQTs are employed in one of the following roles:

- special class teacher in a mainstream school
- teacher in a Special School
- full-time resource teacher of pupils with low-incidence disabilities
- full-time learning support teacher
- a role which combines both a learning support and a resource teaching post

(Teaching Council, 2017, p. 4)

At post-primary level, NQTs can also complete Droichead where they are employed in one of the following roles:

- a Special School where a proportion of the pupils attending the school are of post-primary age, and where the teacher is teaching a post-primary curricular subject(s) to such pupils
- a Centre for Education where a post-primary curricular subject(s) is being taught

(Teaching Council, 2017, p.5)

Droichead is a system-wide approach to the induction of NQTs. At the *school level*, Droichead activities are centred on the newly qualified teachers themselves, the Professional Support Team (PST), school leaders and the wider school community. At the wider *system level*, Droichead involves the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) (**https://teacherinduction.ie**), the Education Support Centre Network (**https://esci.ie**), subject associations, education conferences and teacher professional learning activities. For Droichead, in-school support is referred to as *Strand A* activities

and additional professional learning activities are referred to as Strand B activities, as shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Strands of Droichead process

Strand A
Within Strand A, NQTs are supported by their PST to: • create a Droichead plan • engage in observations of and by experienced colleagues • engage in professional conversations • give and receive feedback • develop reflective practice skills • complete a learning portfolio called *Taisce*.
Strand B
Within Strand B, NQTs must: • attend one NQT cluster meeting per term • engage in one other professional learning activity, chosen following consultation with their PST.

On completion of the Strand A and Strand B requirements, the NQT meets with the PST to review their professional learning and to identify key areas for further development. 'Form D' is completed and returned to the Teaching Council, who will then remove the Droichead condition from the NQT's registration.

3.4 The Policy and Legislative Context for Droichead

The wider policy and legislative context for Droichead can be summarised as follows:

3.4.1 The Teaching Council Act 2001

The Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis in March 2006 as the professional standards body for teaching. The work of the Teaching Council is legislated for in the Teaching Council Act 2001 and by various statutory instruments. In relation to Droichead, the Act states that two of the functions of the Teaching Council are to 'establish procedures in relation to the induction of teachers into the teaching profession' (Section 7(2) paragraph (f)) and 'establish procedures and criteria for probation of teachers, including periods of probation' (Section 7(2) paragraph (g)). These functions were actualised from September 1st 2012, by means of a Statutory Instrument (S.I. 328/2012 Teaching Council Act 2001 (Commencement) Order).

3.4.2 Droichead policy

The Droichead Integrated Professional Induction Framework, originally approved in December 2016 and updated in March 2017, outlines the procedures and criteria for Droichead in primary and post-primary settings. It also outlines the standards that underpin the Droichead process as discussed below in Section 3.5.4.

3.5 The Evolution of Teacher Induction in Ireland

The evolution of teacher induction in Ireland can be understood by broadly dividing the past two decades into five key phases as follows:

3.5.1 Phase 1: Pre-2002

Up to 2002, there was no formal induction programme for NQTs in Ireland (Teaching Council, 2010). The induction and probation of teachers varied, depending on whether the NQT was teaching in a primary or post-primary school. In a primary school NQTs 'completed a specified period of service within a school and were deemed competent by the Inspectorate, who inspected and formally assessed the performance of the newly qualified teacher (NQT) on two occasions' (Harford & O'Doherty, 2016, p. 47). At the post-primary level however, 'responsibility for probation resided with principals who signed off on the NQT's suitability, once a specified period of post-qualification employment had been completed' (ibid, p.47). According to Morgan and Burke (2011), there were numerous calls for a reform of the supports provided to NQTs in Ireland. The narrative which described Ireland's approach to supporting NQTs at this time was somewhat scathing, with descriptions proffered such as 'ad hoc and incomplete' (OECD, 1991, p.101, in Harford & O'Doherty, 2016, p. 47) and 'inconsistent and in many cases non-existent' (Killeavy & Murphy, 2006, p.20 in Smyth *et al,* 2016, p.2). Summing up this phase, Smyth *et al.,* (2016) describe it as a time of informality, characterised by a focus on the needs of the NQT amidst calls for a policy shift to introduce a more formal system of induction. Research conducted at this time, called for an induction programme in Ireland that integrated learning from the initial teacher education stage, was research-based, focused on structured collaborative and individual professional learning, and was forward looking (Conway et al., 2009).

3.5.2 Phase 2: 2002-2010

In 2002, the National Pilot Project for Teacher Induction (NPPTI) was established. At the time, it provided support to approximately 20% of NQTs in Ireland (Teaching Council, 2010). It was a 'partnership initiative' (Burke & Morgan, 2011, p. 134), which brought together representatives from the Department of Education, the colleges of education and universities, schools, education centres and teacher unions. The aim of this pilot project was to 'develop proposals for an effective national programme of induction for NQTs in primary and post-primary schools' (Teaching Council, 2010, p. 19). This aim was not born out of high attrition rates or poor international results for student attainment, as often seen internationally, but in fact from a desire by teachers, teacher educators and teacher unions to provide a formalised system of support for the next generation of teachers in Ireland (Killeavy & Murphy, 2006; O'Doherty & Deegan, 2009).

The NPPTI developed and expanded over this eight-year period. The initial phases focused on gathering national and international data in order to pilot models of mentoring, which included in-school provision, release time for mentoring activities and professional development for mentors and NQTs. The early development phase focused on expanding both the geographic spread and the number of schools, mentors and NQTs availing of the supports offered. Research conducted during these early phases of the project (Killeavy & Murphy, 2006) indicated that the needs of NQTs in the early weeks of their first teaching job centred on immediately relevant areas such as planning, behaviour management and differentiation, whereas, by the end of that first year, their needs had evolved to include areas more aligned to the whole school, such as policies and resources. Observation was found to be 'a powerful catalyst for active learning and [has] made a strong contribution to the growth of the NQT to a fulltime professional' (ibid, p.66). The mid-project phases explored additional models of mentoring, including clustering and online supports as well as the development of

mentoring resources. The latter phases continued to build mentor capacity so that support could be offered to more NQTs, while at the same time enhancing the support material available through a new website dedicated to induction in Ireland (Morgan & Burke, 2011). Learning from international literature was key to this phase. A sample mentor's guide from 2008 contained 16 research articles from the US, the UK and Australia, focusing on topics such as observation, feedback and roles and relationships (see Appendix G for the full list). Each phase of the work of the NPPTI was based on partnership (Killeavy & Murphy, 2006; O'Doherty & Deegan, 2009), with Smyth *et al.*, (2016) describing this period in the development of a formal system of induction in Ireland as support-focused with an emphasis on the actions of mentoring and professional development.

3.5.3 Phase 3: 2010-2016

In 2010, a circular issued by the Department of Education (Circular 0058/2010) heralded the move from a pilot project on induction to a National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT). This new programme was informed by international research on effective induction programmes, the results of the evaluations of the work of the NPPTI and the specific features of teaching in Ireland (Morgan & Burke, 2011). The NIPT was established in 2010. Its purpose was to support the professional development of NQTs, and its vision was to provide a quality induction programme for all involved, underpinned with the motto 'It is a sign of strength to ask for help' (NIPT, 2010). When it commenced, NQTs' participation in the national induction programme was voluntary (Teaching Council, 2010). This changed in 2012 when NQTs were required to engage in 24 hours of induction workshops outside of school hours in local education centres (Harford & O'Doherty, 2016). A level of flexibility was introduced in 2013 when NQTs could choose 10 from a suite of 12 two-hour workshops (Smyth *et al*, 2016). In conjunction with the workshop elements of the programme, NQTs could also avail of school-based induction support via their mentor, online supports via the NIPT website, professional development activities and a school support service (www.teacherinduction.ie). At this time, NQTs still had to fulfil post-qualification professional conditions, which included the probation phase, approved/signed off by a Department of Education inspector (primary) and teaching hour requirements (post-primary).

The Teaching Council Act (2001) requires the Council to establish procedures and criteria for the induction and probation of teachers (7(2) (f)). In 2012, the statutory instrument which related to these provisions came into effect (Teaching Council, 2013), thus triggering the enactment of the Teaching Council's statutory function to introduce a standard-led, school-based pilot programme of induction. For decades, teacher induction and probation were seen as separate but parallel occurrences in the Irish education system and the Council sought to reconceptualise both through the introduction of the new pilot programme Droichead in 2013 (Teaching Council, 2013). The Teaching Council *Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011) was foundational to the design of the Droichead pilot, in that it was underpinned by innovation, integration and improvement.

The introduction of the Droichead pilot process was described as a 'sea change' (Smyth *et al.,* 2016, p.1) in the Irish education system, as it shifted the responsibility for the recommendation process whereby the NQT gained full teacher status, to the school (Smyth *et al.,* 2016). It was a contested development at the start, due in part to the fact that it disrupted an almost 200-year-old tradition in Ireland, where the Inspectorate made decisions regarding a teacher's competence (Harford & O'Doherty, 2016). However, for the schools which took part in the Droichead pilot phase from 2013-

2015, it was regarded as a system of support, which offered school-based mentoring led by a professional team, observations, professional conversations and an identification of needs, and was built on the supports already offered through the NIPT induction programme (Smyth *et al*., 2016). Media reports referred to the pilot process as a 'gentle immersion' (The Irish Times May 31[st,] 2016) into the education profession. However, the wider contextual issues facing teachers in the system slowly emerging from a period of recession, meant that the introduction of a system-wide process of induction had to be gradual and growth-oriented.

3.5.4 Phase 4: 2016-2020

Following a largely positive review of the Droichead pilot process (Smyth *et al*., 2016) a roll-out plan for the introduction of Droichead to all schools over a five-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21 was introduced as follows:

Table 3.2. Droichead roll-out in primary and post-primary schools

a) Primary Schools

2016/17	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings
2017/18	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings or in large primary schools where there is a principal and 24 or more mainstream teachers
2018/19	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings and in large primary schools with 16 or more mainstream teachers
2019/20	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings and in all primary schools with administrative principals
2020/21	Droichead - the route of induction for all primary NQTs

b) Post-Primary Schools

2016/17	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings
2017/18	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings or in large post-primary schools of 700 or more students
2018/19	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings and in large post-primary schools with 400 or more students
2019/20	Droichead - the route of induction for NQTs in SEN settings and in post-primary schools with 200 or more students
2020/21	Droichead - the route of induction for all post-primary NQTs

(Teaching Council, 2017)

In 2017, standards were established to help guide the work of the NQT and the PST. These set out the three standards to be achieved by NQTs through their engagement in the Droichead process:

1. Engage professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities.

2. Show their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students.

3. Engage in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively.

 (Teaching Council, 2017)

 It was envisioned/envisaged that these overarching standards would be discussed by the NQT and the PST as part of the Strand A in-school activities (as described in Table 3.1) and understood in the context of the school (Teaching Council, 2017). Work on the standards also formed part of the NIPT training, whereby PST members were encouraged to develop indicators of good practice for their setting. Although the early stages of this roll-out plan were contested by the Teacher Unions (Harford & O'Doherty, 2016), agreement was reached following negotiation between the latter and the Department of Education and Skills.

In May 2017, the Teaching Council decided to proceed with the implementation of the revised Droichead policy with immediate effect. The revised policy, (originally approved in December 2016) and associated documentation, made explicit the nature of Droichead as a non-evaluative professional induction framework (Teaching Council, 2017). This represented a paradigm shift from the traditional probation (primary) and post-qualification (post-primary) evaluated and assessed practice that applied previously in schools. At the same time, the Teaching Council identified the resources, which were confirmed by the Department of Education and Skills, to support the growth and implementation of Droichead.

The NIPT, cognisant of this growth period, in collaboration with the schools who were the early pioneers of the Droichead process, created a suite of resources to support NQTs, PSTs and the whole school/education community with the transition to the Droichead process. These included toolkits for planning, observations and classroom management, checklists for meetings, step-by-step guides for meeting Droichead standards, Frequently Asked Questions and informational videos. Supports were also offered in the form of in-school supports, professional development sessions run in collaboration with the Education Centre network, release time for Droichead activities and individual support from Associates and Regional Development Officers. The Teaching Council also provided a range of supports for schools including videos, webinars and e-books. In 2018, the Teaching Council issued an invitation to tender for research into the lived experience of the Droichead process during this growth phase. This report was commissioned as a result of the invitation to tender.

3.5.5 Phase 5: 2020 onwards

Since September 2020, Droichead is the sole route of induction in Ireland in primary, post-primary and SEN settings. All NQTs are now required to complete the Strand A and Strand B elements of Droichead in order to fulfil their Teaching Council registration requirements.

The probationary requirements for primary teachers can be charted through three key Department of Education circulars: the first circular 0140/2006, which was replaced by circular 0058/2010, and the now active circular 0044/2019. It is noted that Droichead-specific details are not outlined in this active circular.

In terms of post-primary teachers, Circular 0085/2007, Circular 0086/2007 and Circular 0087/2007 are the active circulars which refer to offers of employment in post-primary schools being conditional on:

- the production of a Registration Certificate from the Teaching Council
- the teacher 'being compliant with all other requirements in relation to probation, etc.'
- the teacher having educational qualifications recognised
- the teacher being registered to teach a particular subject at post-primary level by satisfying the 'General and Subject Specific Requirements for that subject'.

Sector-specific differences between primary 'probation' and post-primary 'post-qualification employment' (PQE) are evident across the two sets of circulars. One of the most striking differences at sectoral level was that all newly qualified primary teachers were required to undertake probation and be evaluated by a Department of Education inspector in order to satisfy requirements to be fully qualified teachers, following on from an initial teacher education qualification. At post-primary level not all NQTs were observed by an inspector, and those that were observed were not evaluated in the same way as newly qualified primary teachers. At post-primary level there was a greater emphasis on the employment of suitably qualified teachers in curriculum subject areas in compliance with subject-specific requirements set by the Teaching Council, where possible. Post-primary teachers completed post qualification employment (PQE), teaching a set number of hours in their curriculum subject areas but without formal evaluation criteria.

3.6 Reviews of Droichead

3.6.1 Review of the Droichead Teacher Induction Pilot Programme (2016)

The Review of the Droichead Teacher Induction Pilot Programme conducted in 2016, was funded by the Teaching Council, and led by researchers from the ESRI, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College (Smyth *et al.*, 2016). The research design included a literature review, postal questionnaires to schools involved and schools not involved in the Droichead pilot and 12 case studies of primary and post-primary schools. Overall satisfaction with Droichead was found to be high amongst teachers. Structured support for NQTs, the development of NQTs and the fostering of openness and collaboration in the school were identified as the main benefits. The challenges included a lack of time to engage with the various elements of Droichead, workload and the use of release time. The review recommended that Droichead be formalised as the route of induction in Ireland but identified 'a number of implications for the availability and sustainability of this model across primary and post-primary schools as well as the future development of teacher induction policy and practice' (ibid, p. xiii). A full copy of this report is available here.

3.6.2 Droichead Quality Assurance (2017-2021)

To date, five Droichead Quality Assurance (DQA) reports have been published. These report on the 2015/16 school year (published in 2017), the 2016/17 school year (published in 2018), the 2018/19 school year (published in 2019), the 2019/20 school year (published in 2020) and the 2020/21 school

year (published in 2021). These reports were compiled by an independent DQA panel – a three-person panel comprising a chairperson, a teacher from the relevant sector and a person with experience of the support and evaluation of teaching and learning. DQA panels are established by the Teaching Council and have two main functions:

1. To complete an annual national review of Droichead, based on visits to a selection of primary and post-primary schools and meetings with key personnel (school leaders, PSTs and NQTs)

2. To consider requests by NQTs to have their Droichead process reviewed

The sample sizes for each report ranged from 8-28 schools; 24-97 NQTs and 12-65 PST members. Each report contained key findings and recommendations. Common findings across the four reports relate to the formation of the PST, the role of the principal/school management, Droichead standards, release time and the elements of Droichead (professional conversations, observations and *Taisce*). The earlier reports published in 2017 and 2018 had a strong focus on the NQT with later reports focusing more on the PST, whole school and management. In relation to the recommendations of the DQA reports, the first report (2017) made recommendations which, for the most part, related to the need for clear communication about Droichead, the need for shared understandings about what Droichead entailed and the creation of guidelines to support the implementation of Droichead in schools. The later reports (2018-2021) made recommendations related to roles, expectations, standards, training, records, the elements of Droichead and the need for professional development for NQTs. The full DQA reports are available here.

3.7 Exemplars of Research on Induction Conducted by Irish Teachers

The growth trajectory of induction and mentoring-related activities in the Irish education system, along with associated professional development and postgraduate study programmes for teachers, has led to the gradual evolution of an Irish research base in the area. In addition to the Irish studies already mentioned above, this section presents a sample of studies conducted by student teachers, teachers and school leaders, within this ever-expanding area of research.

Doctoral research by Uí Chonduibh (2018) explored how co-teaching could be used in induction and the impact that this could have on the mentor/NQT relationship. This Collaborative Action Research (CAR) study draws on research from both induction and co-teaching, and points to the need to consider the symbiotic nature of the two. The study found that the tensions which sometimes exist in the formation of professional relationships between NQTs and mentors can be alleviated through the reflective, collaborative nature of co-teaching. The study provides a three-phase model for beginning, building and maintaining a professional relationship through co-teaching activities supported by the cyclical process of co-reflection, discussion, change, planning and action which form the CAR approach.

'The model for the development of professional learning and professional relationships, through co-teaching and CAR, creates an opportunity to seize the collaborative and reflective practices asserted by the Teaching Council (2011) and to be truly innovative and effective within the continuum of teacher education.' (Uí Chonduibh, 2018, p. 197)

'There are many factors that support pre-service and newly qualified teachers for inclusive practice, including the school context, collaboration, continuous professional development, SEN based placements and dedicated SEN modules. These supports need to be utilised to ensure preservice and newly qualified teachers increase their confidence and competence levels in order to appropriately support children with SEN in school settings.' (O'Reilly, 2020, p. 59)

Research conducted by O'Reilly (2020) as part of a final year B.Ed. research project used a documentary analysis approach to investigate the challenges experienced by student teachers and NQTs in supporting students with SEN. The literature indicates that Droichead could be foundational in supporting NQTs' growth and development in the area of SEN.

A study conducted by Mulvihill (2017) as part of the John Coolahan Research Support Framework (Teaching Council), explores the impact of Droichead on school culture and staff relations in Small Schools. The research found that Droichead has a positive impact on school culture but that differences in schools in terms of size, number of staff in a school and the resources available, can prove to be challenging in implementing Droichead.

'There was a palpable willingness from participant schools in supporting Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) as they begin their teaching careers. However, the institutional variables of school size, staff size and resources in a school posed significant challenges.' (Mulvihill, 2017)

'Involvement in the Droichead process has a transformational impact on the professional development of the participants. The NQTs welcome the support of their mentor and are integrated socially and professionally into the culture of the school. The experienced teacher feels valued and that they are part of the leadership team in the school. Working with young, enthusiastic teachers helped to rekindle their own enthusiasm for teaching and encouraged them to reflect on their own practice.' (Nally & Ladden, 2020, p.25)

Research by Nally and Ladden (2020) explored the implementation of Droichead in one post-primary school. The study found that the induction process was needed in order to build on the ITE experience of NQTs, especially in their socialisation into the profession. The study also articulates the benefits of Droichead in terms of emotional support, practical support, reflection and professional development. The negative aspects of Droichead are centred on dissatisfaction with cluster meetings and the involvement of school leadership in the process. Overall, the experience of Droichead in the school is seen to be transformative for those involved.

Research conducted by Nisbet (2019), as part of a Master of Education (Leadership) programme, examined leadership approaches to the Droichead process. Seventy school leaders and fifty-five NQTs were surveyed, and follow-up interviews completed with five school leaders and five NQTs. The findings showed that the introduction of Droichead to a school was viewed as a transformative style of school leadership. Principals frequently had to use a form of distributive leadership when elements of the work were delegated to the members of the PST. The study also found that when school leaders combined a mentoring role with a HR role, additional pressure was placed on NQTs and the supportive function of Droichead was sometimes diluted.

'There is little doubt that Droichead is a really positive innovation in Irish schools. It has been a very interesting subject area to study and the process has been very rewarding. As with any innovation, it must be allowed to develop and grow. The tensions between elements of its function should not be left to disrupt it or reduce its effectiveness and it should become embedded practice in a constantly evolving profession.' (Nisbet, 2019 p. 111-112)

'Reflective practice must be more than what appeared as uncritical written essays, created by the majority of the respondents within this study, who (perhaps, subconsciously) conformed to the performative mechanism of the teacher portfolio in Droichead. As indicated in the findings of this research, mandating portfolios will not automatically ensure that reflective practice and critical thinking will take place.' (Corbett, 2019, p.218)

Doctoral research conducted by Corbett (2019) explored NQTs' use of portfolios for teacher learning. The research involved a critical review of policy texts, questionnaires to a sample of ninety-nine NQTs and interviews with a sample of thirteen NQTs, along with research reflections. This research found that the mechanism of a portfolio is a confused concept which, when standardised for all teachers, has limited benefits for teacher learning.

The findings from these exemplars of research conducted in the Irish context speak to the key themes emerging from the international literature (i.e. the lived experience of NQTs and mentors, relationships, mentoring processes, mentoring approaches and the induction context), as well as highlighting areas relevant to this research such as leadership, school culture, reflective practice, ITE and collaboration.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter documented the Irish context for the DEEPEN research project. The themes explored in both the international (Chapter 2) and Irish contexts (Chapter 3) are outlined in Figure 3.5 below.

Figure 3.3 International and Irish context themes

In the Irish context, previous research indicates that a strong policy framework has evolved that supports induction as an integral process as part of a continuum of teacher education, whereas, in the international context, the literature is strong on the relationships and inner workings as professional learning communities (Hargreaves, 2008) within the induction processes and programmes. These two context chapters form the foundation of the DEEPEN research project.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This research utilised a two-phased methodological approach: Phase 1 included an SLR, described previous chapters, while Phase 2 utilised an online survey to generate data relevant to the overarching study research questions. The findings from the SLR informed the design and content of the online survey. The authors used Survey Hero software to design the survey which was initially circulated online to a purposive sample group in a pilot study in November 2019. The purpose of the pilot phase was to test the accessibility, usability and structure of the survey. After analysis of pilot participant feedback and following consultation with the Research Advisory Team (RAT) and the Teaching Council, the survey was edited and amended to take account of feedback and a review of data analytics from the pilot phase.

The research team has chosen to include a large volume of quotes in this report for a number of reasons. Firstly, this reflects their interest in learning about teachers' lived experience of Droichead and their individual and collective stories. Inclusion of a range of direct quotations ensured teachers' voice was given due prominence and added to the richness of the report. Secondly, it took account of the fact that it was not possible to undertake phase 3 of the research (the focus groups). These quotes are particularly important as they illustrate the nature and variety of teachers' views and experiences.

4.2 Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was granted by both Marino Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee (MERC) and the School of Education Ethics Committee in Trinity College Dublin. The principles of informed consent, confidentiality, non-malfeasance and beneficence were central to the participation of the research participants. Participant data was anonymised at the point of survey submission. No personal data was collected from participants and IP addresses were not identified or identifiable on submitted surveys. Data was securely stored with password protected and encrypted access, in line with GDPR regulations. Participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix D).

4.3 Research Questions

Maxwell (2013) argues that the research questions include what the researcher specifically wants to understand by doing the study and that they are 'at the heart of the research design' (Maxwell, 2013, p. 73). The research questions for the DEEPEN study were constructed by the authors at the outset of this research and aligned to the Teaching Council tender requirements. The research questions were retained through to the second phase of the research, despite modifications being made to the overall research design in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

The identified and overarching research questions for the DEEPEN study research included:

8. What has been the overall experience of NQTs of the Droichead process across the four selected settings?

9. What has been the overall experience of Droichead school personnel (PSTs and Whole School) of the Droichead process across the four selected settings?

10. How has the Droichead process impacted on teachers' learning and on school culture across the four selected settings?

11. What are the differences in the ways the Droichead model is being applied at primary and post-primary levels?

12. What are the similarities in the ways the Droichead model is being applied at primary and post-primary levels?

13. What are the greatest setting-specific challenges for NQTs and schools in the implementation of Droichead?

14. What are the greatest setting-specific opportunities for NQTs and schools in the implementation of Droichead?

4.4 Phase 1: SLR Design and Research Approach

Siddaway describes SLRs as being 'objective, systematic, transparent and replicable' (Siddaway, 2014). He says they involve systematic search processes to locate studies which address specific research question(s) and include a systematic presentation and synthesis of the characteristics and findings of the search (Siddaway, 2014, p. 1). Systematic reviews are driven by inclusion and exclusion criteria which are 'objective, explicitly stated and consistently implemented', so that the decision to include or exclude particular studies 'is clear to readers and another researcher using the same criteria would likely make the same decision' (Siddaway, 2014, p. 1).

Siddaway (2014) proposes the following key stages in conducting a systematic review which the researchers opted to adapt in this study.

1. Scoping

2. Planning

3. Identification (Searching)

4. Screening

5. Eligibility

The scoping review for this review was carried out by searching for studies that contained the words and phrases 'induction', 'newly qualified teacher', 'beginning teacher', 'pre-service teachers', 'novice teacher', 'professional development', and by using the Boolean terms: (teacher induction) *AND* (newly qualified teachers) *OR* (beginning teachers) to three assigned databases: ERIC, SCOPUS and EBSCOhost. The initial scoping search identified a total of 1251 articles. The titles and abstracts were screened to determine their relevance to the systematic review and explicitly to the specific settings of the overarching research project (DEIS, small schools, Irish-medium schools and SEN settings).

The SLR was guided by the following overarching research question and two further sub-research questions:

- What is the impact of induction programmes on the induction/professional learning/development and practice of newly qualified teachers and other school personnel?
  (a) What are the documented features of effective teacher induction programmes?

(b) What are the documented issues/tensions/dilemmas/contestations/challenges of teacher induction programmes?

The Inclusion criteria included:

- peer reviewed articles

- dating between 01/05/2009-01/05/2019

- empirical studies relating to induction at primary and post-primary

The Exclusion criteria included:

- documents other than peer reviewed documents

- documents not dated between 01/05/2009-01/05/2019

- documents other than primary and post-primary, e.g. early childhood, 3rd level induction

Following the initial search which yielded 1251 articles, a further filtered search using the inclusion and exclusion criteria yielded **264** results in total: SCOPUS yielded **65** articles, EBSCO yielded **146,** while ERIC yielded **53**. After combining the results and removing duplicates **81** remained for review.

The 81 identified articles (Appendix A) were divided between the researchers who read and screened the titles and abstracts allocated to them, guided by the inclusion and exclusion criteria set out in the planning phase. At the end of the screening process, 37 articles remained eligible for further review. The researchers met and discussed the reasons for excluding or retaining articles. Their decisions were informed by the research questions, planning criteria and the overarching project objectives. The researchers then further reviewed the 37 articles, making preliminary selections for the final review by re-reading abstracts, scanning content and retaining articles that were of most relevance to research questions and identified school settings. Each article was then read in its entirety and evaluated on the basis of alignment to the inclusion criteria and relevance to the research questions. During this phase of the process 19 articles were excluded from the 37 originally included in this phase. On completion of this phase, 18 articles were deemed eligible, by agreement of the researchers, for inclusion for consideration in the final qualitative synthesis. Finally, the researchers applied a final criteria-based filter to the 18 remaining articles, guided once more by the inclusion criteria and the SLR research questions and, by agreement, selected the final 13 articles for inclusion in the systematic review. A 'grey literature' (Appendix B) trawl through relevant sources already known to the researchers, specifically at national level and within a three-year timeframe (2016-2019), identified the grey literature to be included in the review. The selection stages are presented in the PRISMA flowchart below.

Figure 4.1 PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

Identification

Records identified through database searching
(n = 264)

Additional records identified through other sources (Grey Literature) n=11

Records after duplicates removed
(n=81)

Screening

Records screened
(n=81)

Records excluded
(n=44)

Eligibility

Full-text articles assessed for eligibility
(n= 37)

Full-text articles excluded, with reasons
(n=19)

Studies considered for inclusion in the final qualitative synthesis (n=18)

Additional records identified through other sources
(n =11)

Included

13 Articles included in qualitative analysis (SCOPUS (2), EBSCO (6), ERIC (5) plus 11 Grey Literature articles

The researchers set up a construct map as a framework to which the referred while synthesising findings from the articles, and then progressed to a thematic analysis using a Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis framework. Thomas (2009) discusses how this is a form of illuminative analysis, which adopts assumptions of interpretivism. He explains that the basic analytical method of the interpretative researcher is constant comparison, as it stands behind every technique in this paradigm: 'The constant comparative method involves going through your data again and again, comparing each element – phrase, sentence or paragraph – with all of the other elements' (2009, p.198). The outcome of this method of analysis is that you emerge with themes that capture or summarise the contents of the data (Thomas, 2009 cited in Liston, 2011).

Findings from the data synthesised and presented in the discussion chapter of the systematic review informed the survey research design in Phase 2. Mindful of Braun and Clarke's (2006) reference to Ely *et al.*, (1997), who state that thematic analysis is 'also a process that develops over time and should not be rushed' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87), the researchers continued to conduct iterative thematic analyses of the overall project data set (including the SLR data) ensuring a thorough and rigorous final report.

4.5 Survey Research Design

In order to best describe and understand the experiences of research participants, the original research design planned to utilise multiple methods (online survey, focus groups, visual data generation, visual data focus groups), to generate a broad variety of data sets within what is best categorised as a *case study approach* (Blaikie, 2000; Creswell, 2003; Macdonald and Walker, 1975; Merriam and Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Newby, 2010; Yin, 2014). With the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, however, the researchers had to truncate a section of the empirical research design and remove any face-to-face interaction within the data generation phases. In effect, this necessitated the removal of focus groups and visual data generation. Yin (2014) describes the case study as 'a research method used to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena' while Miles *et al.,* (2014) define a case study as being 'a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context' with the case being the unit of analysis. Mindful of the original research intention to explore, describe, understand and explain (Yin, 2014) the phenomenon of teacher induction within the Droichead process, the researchers took a methodological decision to retain the case study approach by using an extensive online survey to construct a profile of the research participants and to generate qualitative data aligned to the research questions. Surveys are amongst the most popular data gathering instruments (Newby, 2010). The Teaching Council's invitation to tender had identified the following school contexts as settings of particular interest;

- DEIS schools
- Irish-medium schools
- SEN settings
- Small Schools

While the above settings were prioritised as being of particular interest, teachers from s all schools (primary and post-primary) that were registered for Droichead were invited to participate in the research. Each school received an email (Appendix F) to the school email address with a link to the

survey (Appendix E) and a request that the email be forwarded to the relevant personnel in their school (NQTs, PST members and non-PST members).

The survey, which was made available in English and Irish, included a generic section to be answered by all participants, and individual sections separated by participant type using a logic model method. The logic model enabled participants to opt for one of the specific options: Newly Qualified Teachers; Professional Support Team Members (including school leaders); non-Professional Support Team Members (including school leaders); and participants completed the section appropriate to them. There was a combination of open and closed questions and the survey was estimated to take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The survey in this study was the primary empirical research instrument used during the research process. A Braun and Clarke (2006) iterative analysis framework was used to analyse qualitative data, while quantitative data was processed and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

4.6 Participant Sample

The research participant sample included NQTs from three recent graduating cohorts (2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019), primary and post-primary teachers including school management who were Professional Support Team (PST) members and primary and post-primary teachers including school management who were not members of the PST but were employed in the school.

4.7 Limitations

This phase of the research had, by the nature of its design and re-design, a number of limitations. This is important to acknowledge in all considerations and interpretations of the research and the research findings. Phase 2 of the research presents a single case study that has been constructed from the data generated from multiple school settings (primary and post-primary) in Ireland, using a single empirical research instrument (online survey). Miles *et al.,* (2014) claim that the generalisability of the case study has been contentious. Their claim refers to the contention arising from a question about the researcher's analytical ability to find levels of universality in the case. Sarantakos (2005), however, refers to how qualitative interpretative researchers are less concerned with the generation of generalisable results but instead are more concerned with *understanding* the *complexities* of the group involved in the study, regardless of its size (Sarantakos, 2013).

Teachers from all four provinces in Ireland were invited to complete the survey. The sampling is theoretically diverse enough to encourage broader applicability when relevant (Miles, 2014). Notwithstanding this potential diversity within the sample, in line with GDPR regulations, researchers sent one original email containing the survey link directly to each school email address and asked that the survey link be circulated by the recipient (School Principal or Administrator) to relevant staff (participants) within each school setting. This is a limitation of the study in that the researchers did not have direct contact with potential participants at the point of instrument circulation but had to rely on a third party to circulate the survey link. Data analytics within the survey indicate (anonymously) that a number of the original email links were not forwarded to potential participants, thereby excluding a number of potential participants and impacting on sample size. Four prompts were sent by email during the survey completion window in order to enhance participation rates. This

had a positive impact; however, a number of the prompt emails were not forwarded. The Teaching Council also sent reminders via SMS and via ezines.

A further limitation arose in the completion rates of the surveys. The majority of participants who commenced the survey completed the first section which contained generic questions; however, not all participants who commenced their individual specific sections (NQT, PST and non-PST) completed these. While this is not unusual in survey completion, it may have impacted on the overall sample size and representativeness. The most significant limitation in the research overall was the truncation of the original research design to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions. It is also significant that teachers were working online and not in their normal working environments. Screen or online fatigue, management of day-to-day teaching, learning and assessment activities online, and potential stress associated with working from home may have affected their willingness or capacity to engage in the research.

4.8 Triangulation

The original research design allowed for the triangulation of methods and data. COVID-19 restrictions resulted in a decision not to proceed with some empirical methods; therefore, triangulation of methods in the overall project was reduced to two phases: an SLR as the initial phase and an online survey as the second phase. Mathison (1988) cautions that a triangulation strategy in itself, does not construct the answers to the questions about a social phenomenon but rather produces a number of outcomes (convergence, inconsistency and contradiction), that can be referred to and considered by researchers while addressing research questions. The survey design ensured that both qualitative and quantitative data would be generated, affording the researchers the opportunity to triangulate data and offering a number of different sources of evidence about the Droichead induction process. Denzin (1970) advocates that 'sociologists must learn to employ multiple methods in the *analysis* of the same empirical event' (Denzin, 1970, p. 13). Creswell (2015) also emphasizes the point that a core assumption of the mixed methods approach is that when a researcher combines 'statistical trends with stories and personal experiences' the collective strength provides a better understanding of the research problem than either single form of data. A comprehensive integrated data analysis framework informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) iterative approach enabled the identification of themes that informed the discussion of findings relative to the research questions.

4.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity within case study research is concerned with representing 'accurately those features of the phenomenon that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise' (Hammersley 1987, p.67). The DEEPEN researchers endeavoured to represent the authentic viewpoints and lived experience of the participants in the reporting of the data, theorising and discussing the identified themes captured in the research questions. Reliability of the empirical phase of the research was ensured through the development of a research instrument (online survey) that was clear, consistent, accurate and deemed repeatable with a similar cohort of participants. Further reliability was ensured by testing and retesting the survey to check for error and/or inaccuracy following the development of several iterations of the survey, incorporating feedback from the Teaching Council and Research Advisory Team and from the pilot phase.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methods and methodology for this study which were operationalised in two phases. Utilising an SLR initially to scope the literature in a considered, systematic and transparent way was very beneficial to the construction and design of the online survey. It was unfortunate that it was not possible to mine the survey data further, through focus groups due to COVID-19 restrictions (as was originally planned); however, the researchers are satisfied that they maximised the analysis and synthesis of data from the online survey in response to the research questions.

Chapter 5: Participant Profile Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents profile data for newly qualified teachers (NQTs), professional support team (PST) members, school leaders and non-PST members who participated in the study. The profile data aims to contextualise the lived experience of these cohorts in subsequent chapters and to determine whether the research participants are representative of the wider population and if the findings are generalisable. The profile data include age, gender, geographic location, school type and initial teacher education route. As the study aims to highlight the lived experience of teachers in four target school settings (DEIS, SEN, small schools and Irish-medium schools), in addition to the overall lived experience across all schools, specific profile data relating to these school settings are also provided.

5.2 Response and Completion Rates

As noted earlier, the online survey was sent to all primary schools (n=3241, including SEN settings) and post primary schools (n= 730) in Ireland, via email. A link to the survey was also sent by the Teaching Council to all NQTs who participated in Droichead in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 (n= 4645).

The survey consisted of four sections. The first section sought to collect general information about the participants, e.g. their age, gender, school level, school type and the category they belong to (NQT, PST or non-PST). The second, third and fourth sections of the survey were designed to collect data from NQTs, PST members and non-PST members, respectively.

A total of 1020 respondents started the survey. However, not all of them completed the entire survey. For that reason, response rate and completion rate are considered separately below.

5.2.1 Response rates

The response rate is defined as the percentage of participants who started but did not complete the survey. From 1020 participants who started the first section (general information) of the survey, 1004 answered the question that sought information about their category (NQT, PST or non-PST). 55% [n= 550] were NQTs, 35% [n=353] were PST members and 10% [n=101] were non-PST members. The response rates for each of the three categories are calculated by utilising the numbers available from the national data supplied by the Department of Education (2020). For example:

- NQT response rate = (Number of NQTs who responded to the survey divided by number of NQTs as per national data) multiplied by 100.

Using this formula, the response rate for NQT participants was 11.8% [n=550]. However, for the PST and non-PST participants, a response rate cannot be provided as the overall sample size of PST and non-PST members in Ireland is currently undefined.

5.2.2 Completion rate

Completion rate indicates the number of participants who completed the survey by filling out the specific section focused on their role in the school (NQT, PST or non-PST). For example:

- NQT completion rate = (Number of NQTs who filled the NQT survey section divided by number of NQTs who participated in the survey) multiplied by 100

The completion rate for each of the three categories of participants in the DEEPEN 2020 survey are illustrated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Survey participants and completion rate

Participant category	Number of participants who started the survey	Number of participants who completed the category-specific survey questions	Completion rate
NQT	550	193	35%
PST	353	210	59%
Non-PST	101	54	53%
Total*	**1004**	457	46%

*Missing responses for participant category = 16

As clear from Table 5.1, 457 participants provided data for their lived experience of Droichead. The following pages examine the profile data of those respondents. An overview of these participants is provided in Figure 5.1.

Overview of DEEPEN participants

457 participants

42% NQTs

46% PST members

12% Non-PST members

81% Women

18% Men

1% Prefer not to say.

4%
4% NQTs
4% PST members
4% non-PST members

9%
7% NQTs
10% PST members
7% non-PST members

64%
65% NQTs
62% PST members
67% non-PST members

23%
23% NQTs
23% PST members
22% non-PST members

ULSTER
CONNACHT
LEINSTER
MUNSTER

- **65%** participants teach in primary schools.
- **35%** participants teach in post-primary schools.

Primary

Post-primary

- NQT
- PST members
- Non-PST members

Primary: 40%, 51%, 10%

Post-primary: 47%, 38%, 15%

Figure 5.1 An overview of participants' profile

5.3 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)

As indicated in Table 5, 193 NQTs provided data for their lived experience of Droichead. These participants comprise three cohorts, i.e. from the academic year 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 of Droichead completion. The age and gender characteristics of the NQT participants are shown in Figure 5.2.
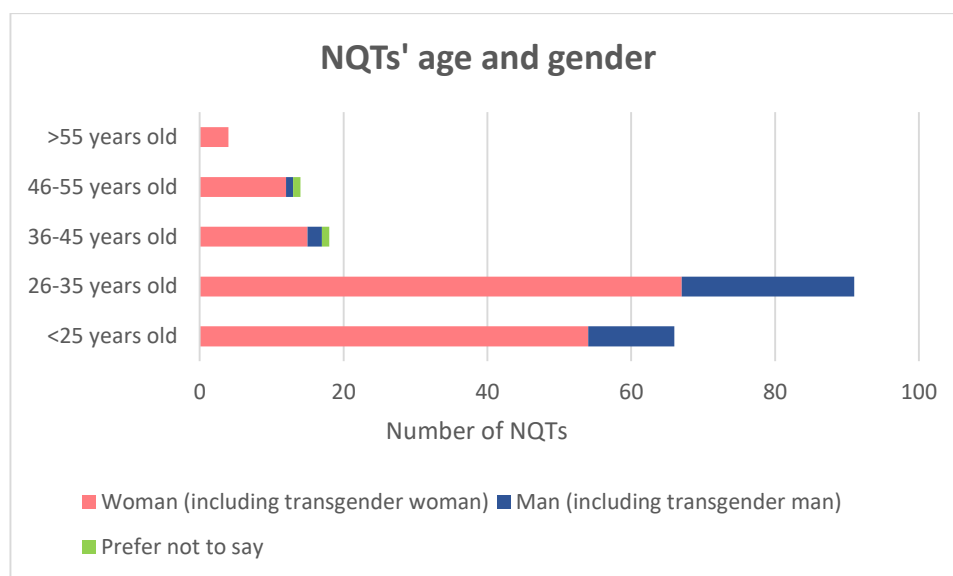
Figure 5.2 Age and gender of NQTs

As depicted in figure 5.2, the majority of participants belong to the age group 26-35 years. Amongst all the age groups, the majority of NQT participants are female. Interestingly, within the age group of 'more than 55 years old', there are only female participants.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of NQT participants belong to schools in Leinster and approximately one-quarter (24%) are from schools in Munster. The percentages of NQTs teaching in Connacht and Ulster are 7% and 4% respectively. Overall, 54% of NQTs teach in a primary school, 39% in a post-primary school and the remaining 7% teach in a Special School. Figure 5.3 shows the percentage of NQTs teaching in primary/post-primary/Special Schools in each of the four provinces.
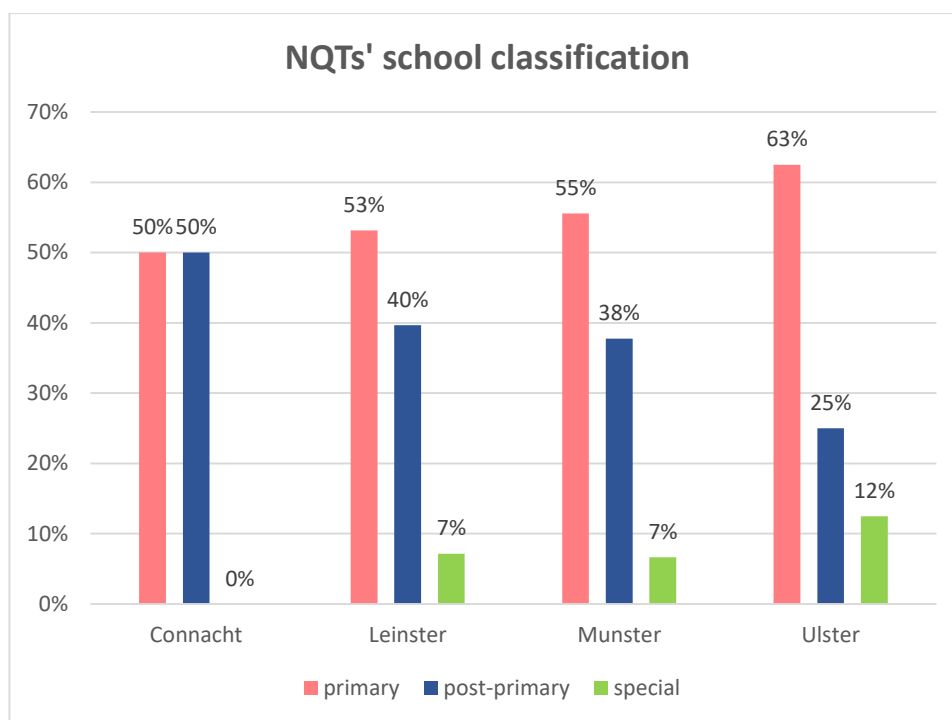
Figure 5.3 NQTs' school classification

In terms of the initial teacher education (ITE) route, the majority of the NQTs completed their ITE degree via the Irish HEI undergraduate level 8 (Primary/Post-primary) or the Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME – primary/post-primary) route (see Figure 5.4).

Initial teacher education route	% of NQTs
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Primary	**32%**
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME) primary	**24%**
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME) post-primary	**22%**
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Post-primary	**13%**
Irish HEI Graduate Diploma in Education Primary	**2%**
Post-primary Irish HEI Higher Graduate in Education	**3%**
Primary and post-primary Education qualification from HEI outside Republic of Ireland	**4%**

Figure 5.4 Initial teacher education route of NQTs

The overall percentage of participants who completed their ITE degree via a professional diploma programme (Graduate/Higher Post-Graduate Professional) is 5% (individual percentages in figure 5.4). Six out of 193 participants (3%) completed their ITE degree in higher education institutions (HEIs) outside the Republic of Ireland.

The majority of NQTs (57%) completed Droichead in the year 2018- 19. 32% of the NQT participants completed the induction process in the academic year 2017-18, while 11% completed the induction in the year 2016-17. Approximately one-quarter of NQTs in each cohort completed Droichead in a rural school. Almost all NQTs within each cohort completed Droichead in a single school. Only 4 out of the total 193 NQT participants completed their induction in a small school. Figure 5.5 presents summary profiles of the NQTs' Droichead experience in terms of year of induction and school type.

Summary of NQTs' school type of Droichead induction programme

Academic year of completion

2016-17

11%
NQTs
(N=22)

- Rural school — 23%
- Urban school — 77%
- Small school — 5%
- Taught special class in a mainstream school — 18%
- # Single school* — 95%

2017-18

32%
NQTs
(N=62)

- Rural school — 24%
- Urban school — 74%
- Both rural and urban — 2%
- Small school — 5%
- Taught special class in a mainstream school — 11%
- # Single school* — 100%

2018-19

57%
NQTs
(N=109)

- Rural school — 23%
- Urban school — 77%
- Small school — 0%
- Taught special class in a mainstream school — 5%
- # Single school* — 98%

*'Single school' means that Droichead induction was completed in one school.

Figure 5.5 Summary profile of NQTs' Droichead experience in terms of school type

5.4 Professional Support Team (PST) Members

A total of 210 PST members completed the survey section specific to their role, Figure 5.6 shows the age and gender of the PST participants.
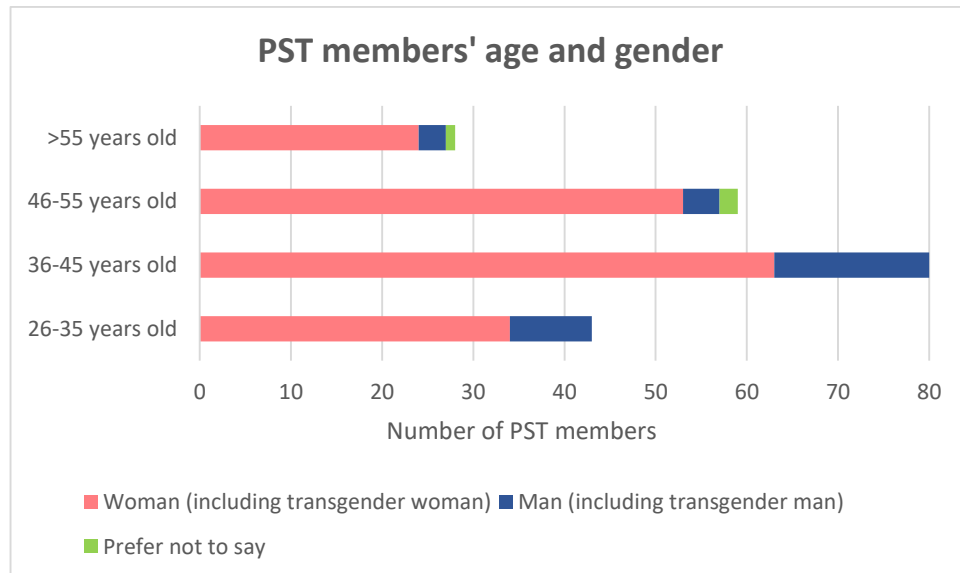
Figure 5.6 Age and gender of PST participants

As can be seen in Figure 5.6, most of the PST participants are females (overall 83%). The majority (n=80) of PST participants belong to the 36-45 age group, although there is also a high representation in the 46-55 age group (n=59). The majority of these participants (63%) are from Leinster followed by those from Munster (23%), Connacht (10%) and Ulster (4%). Overall, 66% of the PST participants are from primary schools, 29% from post-primary schools and the remaining 5% work in Special Schools. Participants from Special Schools are from Ulster (11%), Munster (8%) and Leinster (4%). The individual percentages for school classification of the PST participants based on their school location are shown in Figure 5.7.
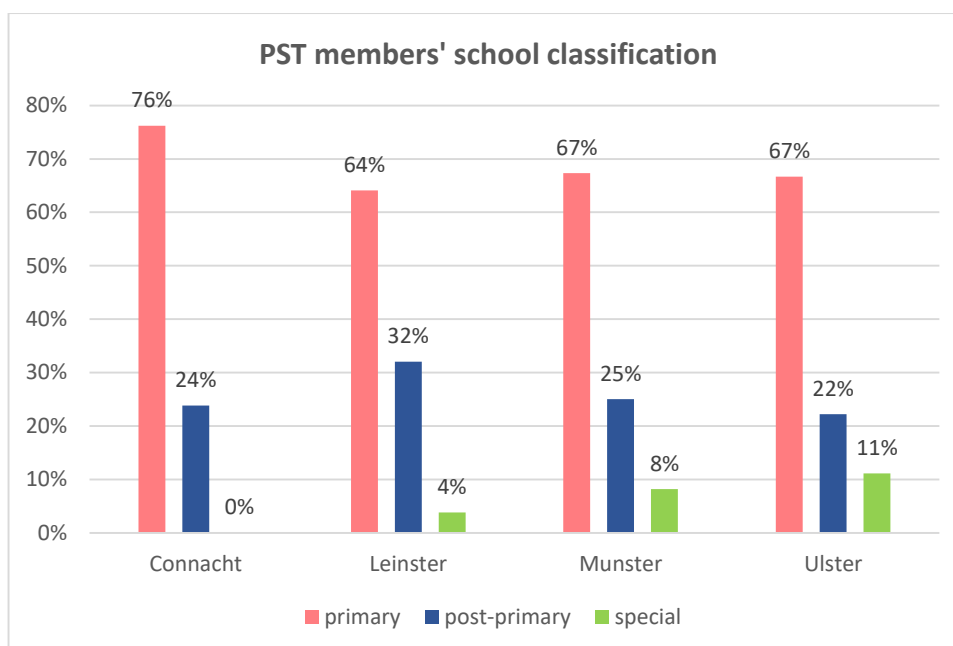
Figure 5.7 PST members' school classification

The majority (48%) of PST participants completed their ITE qualification via the Irish HEI undergraduate degree level 8 route. 9% of the PST participants have completed their ITE qualification outside the Republic of Ireland. Figure 5.8 depicts the ITE route of the PST participants.

Initial teacher education route	% of PST members
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Primary	48%
Irish HEI Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) post-primary	13%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) post-primary	8%
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Post-primary	8%
Irish HEI Graduate Diploma in Education Primary	6%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME) primary	6%
Postgraduate Primary Teacher Education qualification from HEI outside Republic of Ireland	4%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME) post-primary	3%
Primary and post-primary Education qualification from HEI outside Republic of Ireland	4%

Figure 5.8 Initial teacher education route - PST members

There is a mix of participants from urban and rural schools and the number is greater from urban than rural schools. Figure 5.9 provides an overview of the PST participants in terms of their role in the school.
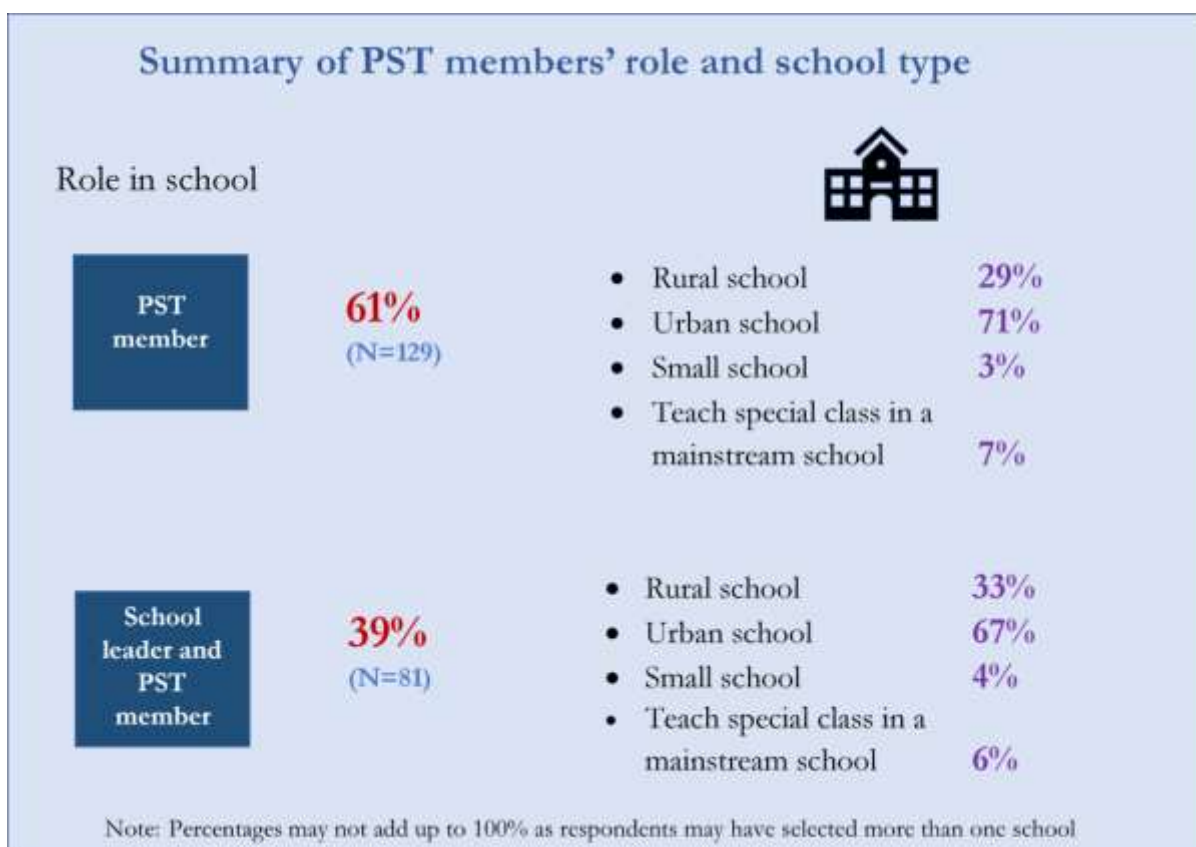
Figure 5.9 Summary profiles of PST participants

5.5 School Leaders

The participant sample of school leaders comprises two sub-samples - (a) school leader and PST member (b) school leader and non-PST member. Overall, 97 school leaders provided data for their experiences with Droichead: 81 PST members and 16 non-PST members.

The sub-sample of PST school leaders included 43 principals and 25 deputy principals while the sub-sample of non-PST school leaders included 11 principals and 4 deputy principals (other school leader roles were also provided such as administrative deputy principal and assistant principal). The age and gender of the two sub-samples of school leaders are shown in figure 5.10.

School leaders' age and gender
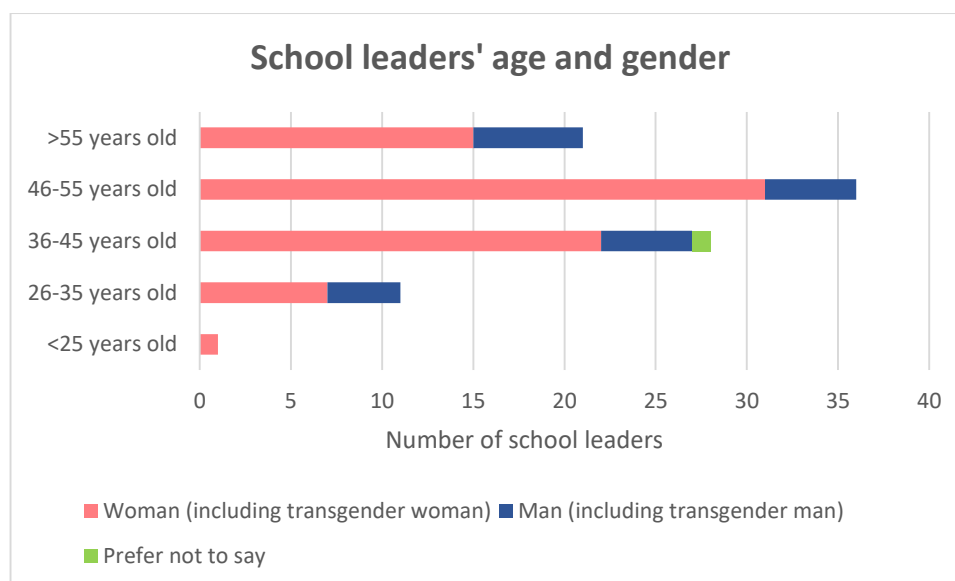
Figure 5.10 Age and gender of participants as school leaders

The majority of participants from both sub-groups are in the age group of 46-55 years. Only a few participants in this group have less than five years' teaching experience. Overall, three-quarters (74%) of school leaders are in primary schools. Of those remaining, 16% are in post-primary schools and 9% of the school leaders are in Special Schools.

School classification (school leaders)
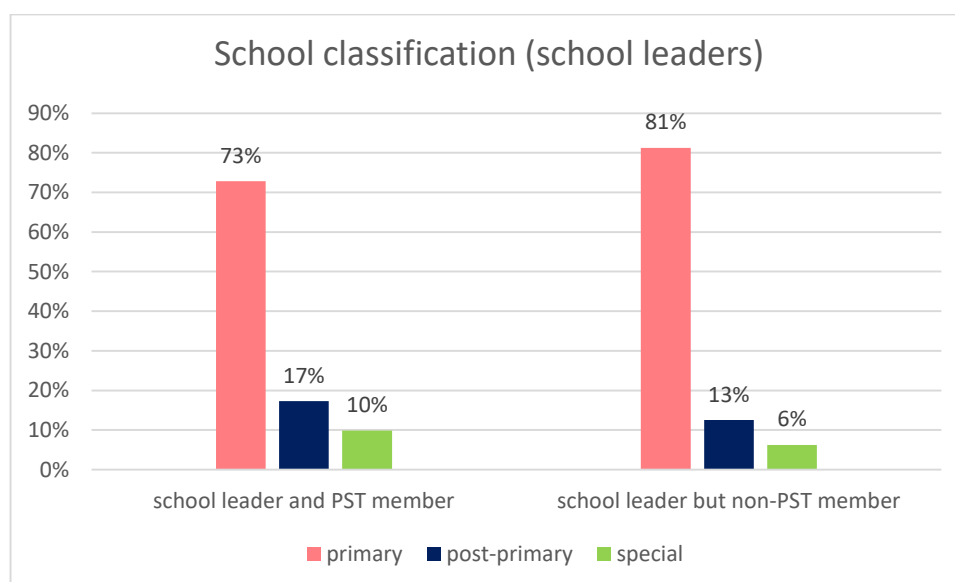
Figure 5.11 Proportion of participant school leaders' school type

The individual percentages for the school type (primary/post-primary/Special) amongst the two sub-samples of school leader participants are shown in Figure 5.11. As can be seen in the figure, the vast

majority are from primary schools in both the sub-samples. The initial teacher education route of all school leaders is presented in Figure 5.12.

Initial teacher education route	School leader and PST member	School leader but non-PST member
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Primary	58%	56%
Irish HEI Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) post-primary	11%	6%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME) primary	9%	0%
Irish HEI Graduate Diploma in Education Primary	6%	19%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) post-primary	5%	0%
Primary Teacher Education qualification from HEI outside Republic of Ireland	6%	13%
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Post-primary	5%	6%

Figure 5.12 Initial teacher education route - School leaders

Most school leaders in both sub-samples completed their ITE via the Irish HEI undergraduate level 8 route. Those who completed their teacher education qualification in HEIs outside of Ireland, comprise 6% of the sub-sample of PST school leaders and 13% of the non-PST school leaders.

The summary profiles of the two sub-samples, in terms of their role in their school, are shown in Figure 5.13.

Summary of school leaders' role and school type

Role in school

School leader and PST member	**83%** (N=81)	• Rural school 33% • Urban school 67% • Small school 4% • Teach special class in a mainstream school 6%
School leader and non-PST member	**17%** (N=16)	• Rural school 12% • Urban school 88% • Small school 0% • Teach special class in a mainstream school 13%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% as respondents may have selected more than one school

Figure 5.13 Summary profiles of school leaders

5.6 Non-PST Members

As mentioned above 54 non-PST participants completed the survey. The age and gender of the non-PST participants are shown in Figure 5.14. The majority of non-PST participants belong to the age group 26-35 years. Similar to the gender distribution across other participant categories, the number of female participants exceeds other gender groups in non-PST participants.
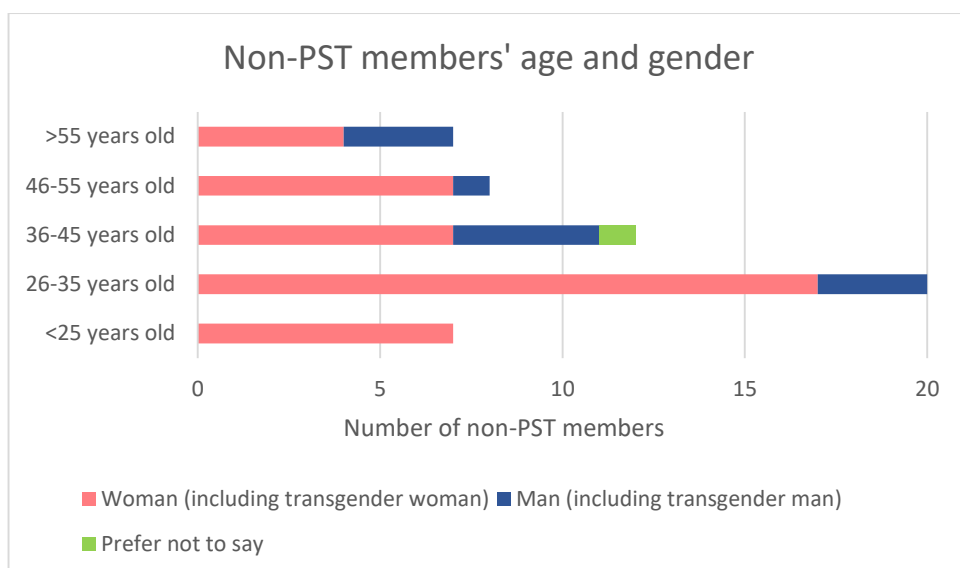
Figure 5.14 Age and gender of non-PST participants

Figure 5.15 gives an overview of the percentage of non-PST participants teaching in primary/post-primary/Special Schools in each of the four provinces. Overall, 52% of the non-PST participants teach in primary schools and 46% teach in post-primary schools.
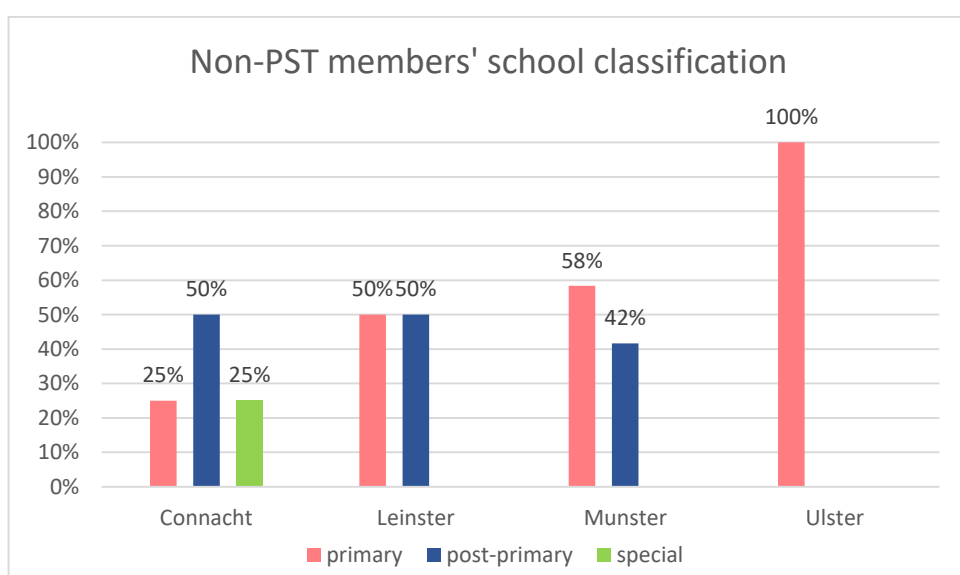
Figure 5.15 Non-PST members' school classification

As depicted in figure 5.15, all participants from Ulster teach in a primary school. There is an equal percentage of participants from primary and post-primary schools in Leinster. Those teaching in a Special School are from Connacht only. Overall, 52% of the non-PST participants teach in primary schools and 46% teach in post-primary schools. The initial teacher education route for the non-PST participants is shown in figure 5.16.

Initial teacher education route	% of Non-PST members
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Primary	26%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME) primary	18%
Irish HEI Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) post-primary	13%
Irish HEI Undergraduate Level 8 Teacher Education degree Post-primary	13%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Master of Education (PME) post-primary	11%
Irish HEI Graduate Diploma in Education Primary	9%
Primary Teacher Education qualification from HEI outside Republic of Ireland	8%
Irish HEI Postgraduate Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) post-primary	2%

Figure 5.16 Initial teacher education route - non-PST members

The majority (26%) of non-PST participants completed their initial teacher qualification via the Irish HEI undergraduate level 8 degree route. Those who completed their degree outside the Republic of Ireland constituted 8% of the participants. Figure 5.17 provides a summary of non-PST participants in terms of their school type and role in school.
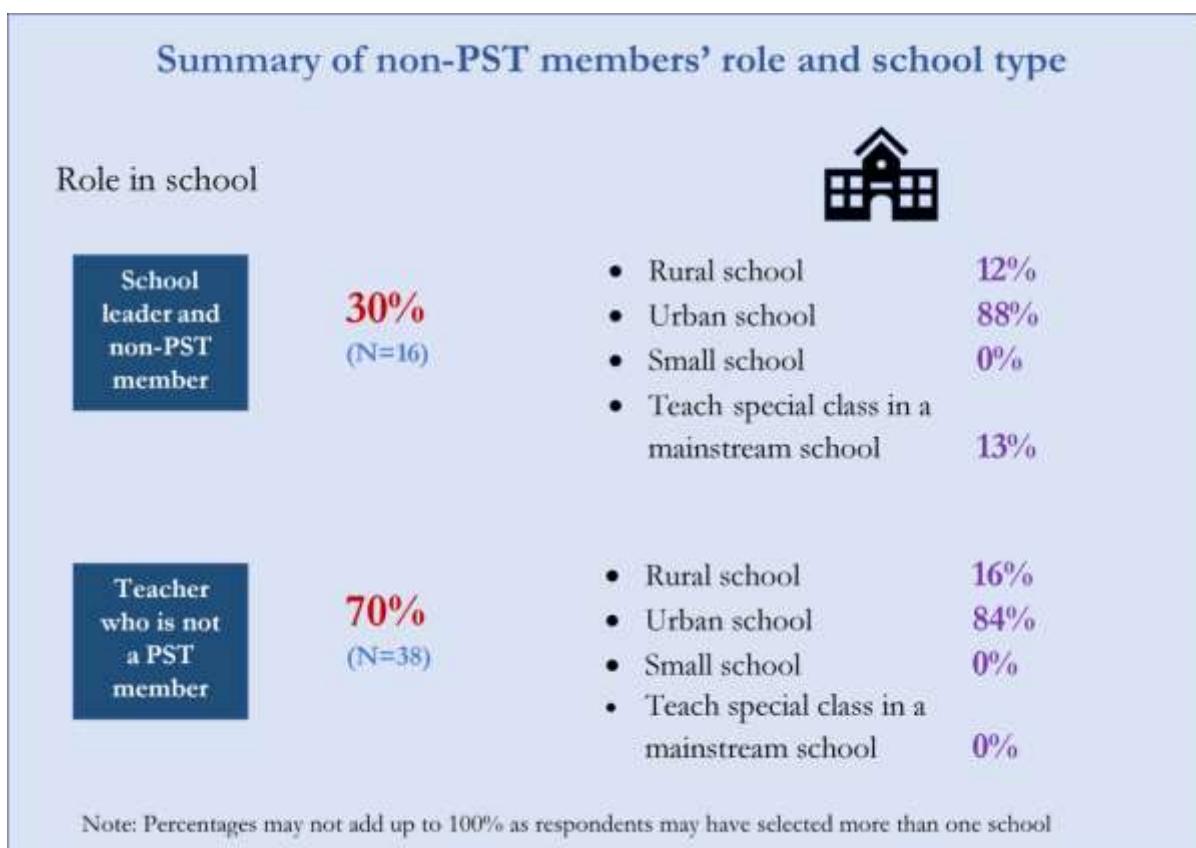
Figure 5.17 Summary profiles of non-PST participants

30% of non-PST participants are school leaders (11 principals, 4 deputy principals including teaching deputy principals) and the remaining 70% are teaching staff. 13% of the school leaders teach in a special class in a mainstream school. There are no participants from the non-PST category who teach in a small school.

5.7 School Settings

The Irish formal education system is both complex and intricate and involves a multi-layered structure that extends from pre-primary settings to higher education settings. The Droichead process operates at primary and post-primary sectoral levels only and therefore the findings of this research should be considered with that in mind. As stated earlier, within the two main sectors (primary and post-primary), this research is particularly concerned with four specific school settings: DEIS, SEN settings, Irish-medium and small schools. A fifth setting by default includes all other school types. It is important to acknowledge that both DEIS schools and small schools may also be categorised within other school types, including, but not limited to, Catholic schools, Education and Training Board (ETB) schools, Voluntary Secondary Schools and Community Schools.

In the online survey, all participants were asked to indicate if they were employed in any of the four specific settings while also being able to select another school type if that was relevant. Thus, there is likely to be a potential overlap of participants belonging to more than one school setting. For example, at post-primary, a participant from a DEIS school could also select an ETB (Education and Training Board) school as an ETB school may also be a DEIS school. Similarly, at primary, a participant from a DEIS school could also select a Catholic school. Responses indicate that overall, 25% (n=112) of all participants are based in a DEIS school, 3% (n=12) are in a Small School setting, 6% (n=29) are based in a Special School, 7% (n= 31) are in an Irish-medium school. Figure 5.18 shows the percentage distribution of NQTs, PST members and non-PST members within these school settings.

Figure 5.18 Proportion of participants in each school setting

The other school settings selected by participants include; Education and Training Board School (ETB), Community National School, Educate Together School, Catholic School, Church of Ireland School, Multidenominational School, Interdenominational School. Figure 5.19 represents the proportion of NQTs, PST and non-PST participants in each of these school settings.
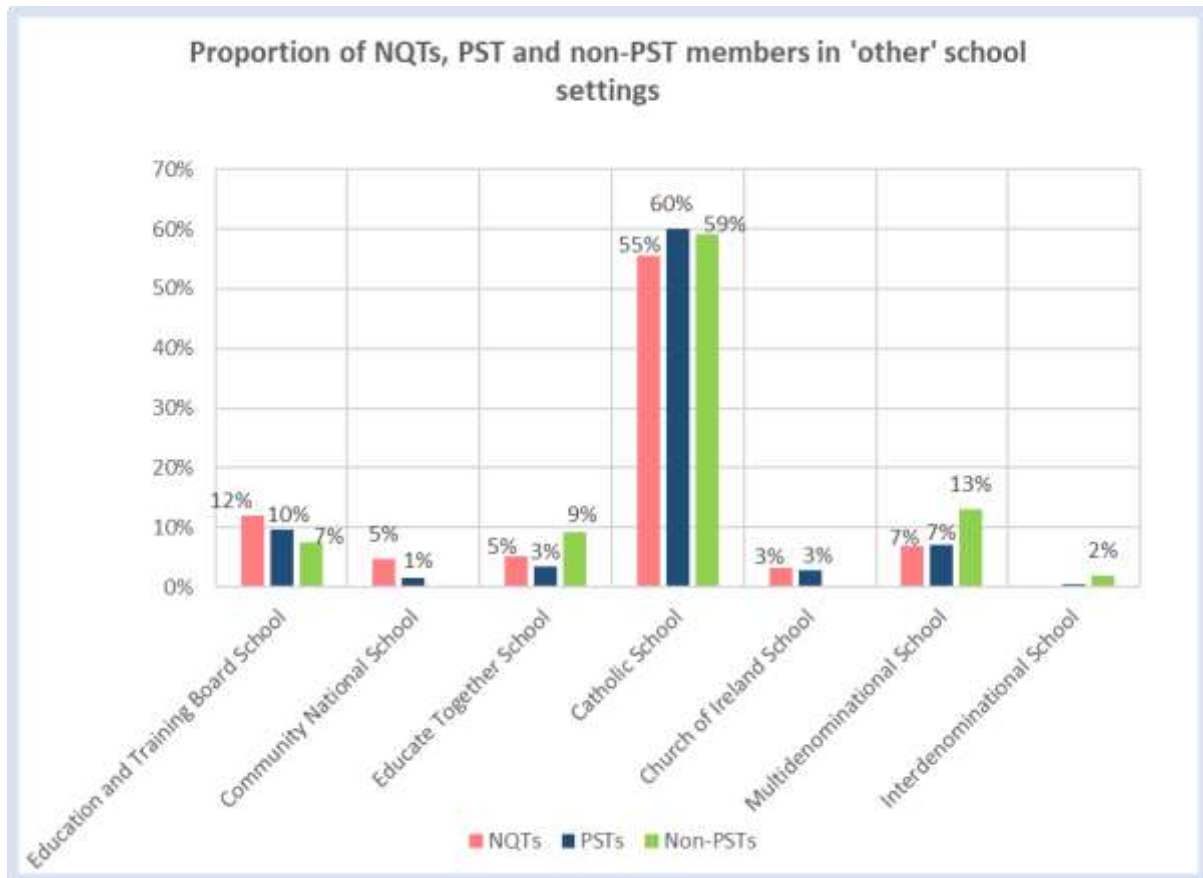
Figure 5.19 Proportion of participants across 'other' school settings

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the profile data for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), Professional Support Team (PST) members, school leaders and non-PST members in order to provide a context for the presentation of the lived experience of these cohorts in subsequent chapters. The profile data presented in this chapter included age, gender, geographic location, school type and initial teacher education route.

Chapter 6: The Lived Experience of NQTs

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the NQTs' lived experience of Droichead is presented. For the purposes of this study the term 'NQT' refers to those teachers who completed the Droichead process during 2018/19, 2017/18 and 2016/17. As detailed in Chapter 5, 193 NQTs provided data for their experiences of Droichead.
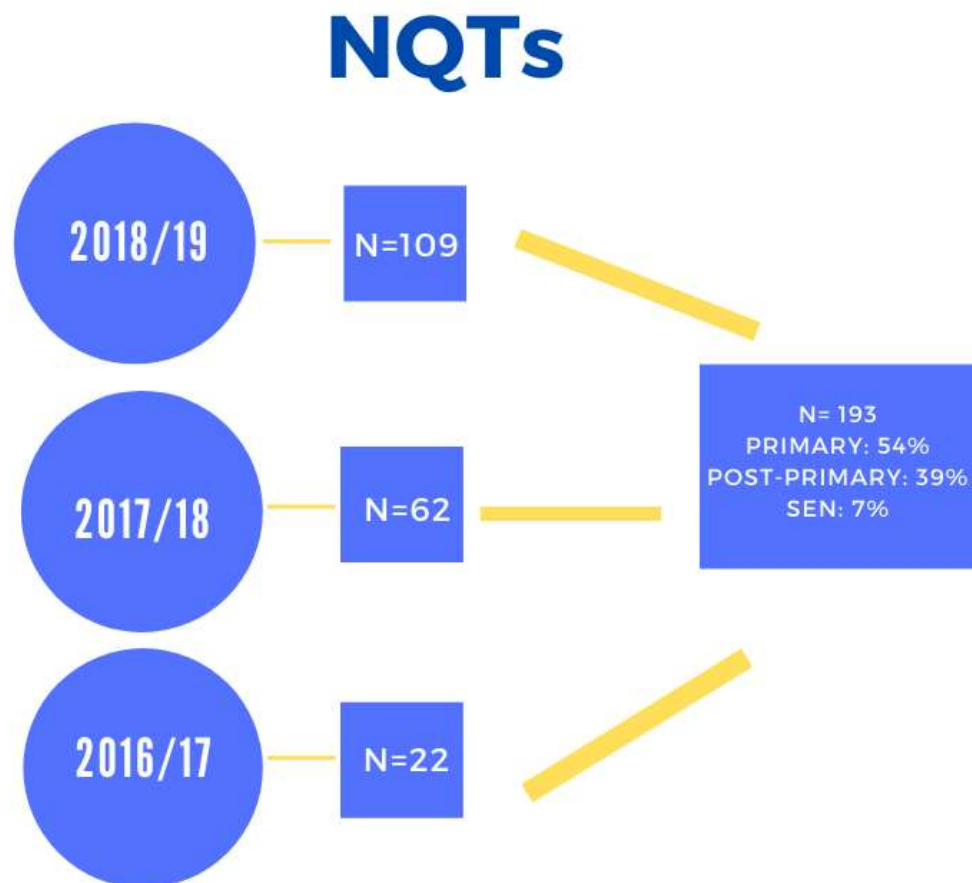
Figure 6.1 NQT overview

The chapter focuses on five key areas –

    I.   The lived experience of Droichead

   II.   Relationships

  III.   Teachers' learning

  IV.   School culture

   V.   School settings

6.2 The Lived Experience of Droichead

6.2.1 NQTs' levels of motivation and satisfaction

Droichead is perceived as a high-quality process by the majority of NQTs (83%) with a small percentage stating a neutral (7%) or negative (10%) view on the quality of Droichead. 64% of NQTs indicated that their motivation as a teacher has been further developed through Droichead. Figure 6.2 shows the percentage of responses for motivation development through Droichead across the 3 cohorts of NQTs (2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19).

Has this motivation been further developed through Droichead?

Year	No	Yes
2016/17	27%	73%
2017/18	37%	63%
2018/19	38%	62%
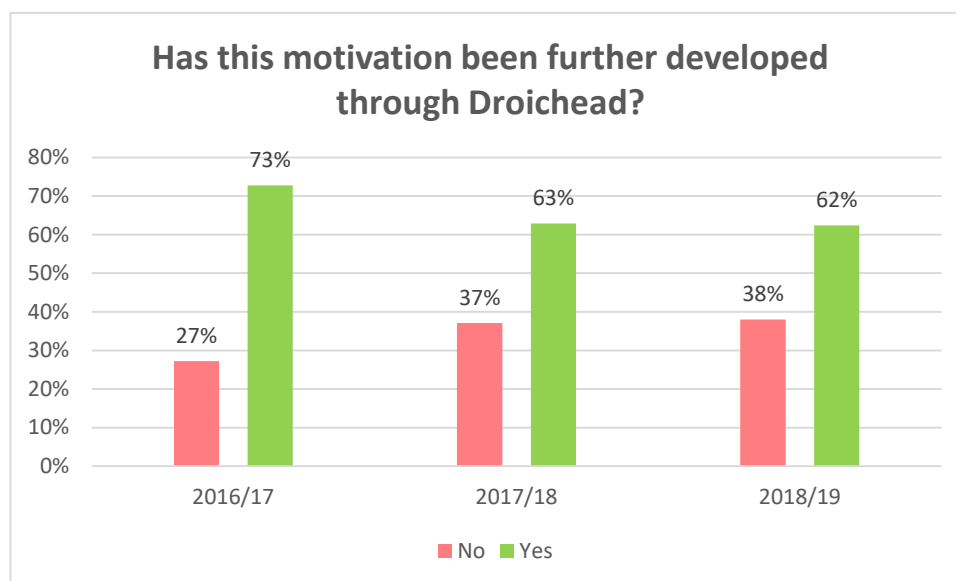
Figure 6.2 NQTs' response to question on further development of motivation by Droichead

NQTs described how Droichead had impacted positively on them as evidenced in the quotes below:

'The Droichead process gave me an opportunity to reflect on my learning and make me more skilled.'

'I received constructive advice from a more experienced teacher which helped me to improve.'

'working with other teachers who are also enthused at helping you to become the best teacher you can'

The vast majority of NQTs (93%) were positive about the impact of Droichead on their level of satisfaction with their current teaching. Only 2% of responses indicated a sense of dissatisfaction while 5% indicated a neutral response. In terms of resonance with their own experience and learning, 72% of NQTs feel positively connected, and 6% indicated a neutral response. Thus, the majority of NQTs indicated that Droichead connected and built on their own experience and learning in initial teacher education while 6% gave a neutral response. 22% of NQTs, however, indicated negative perceptions about the potential of Droichead to connect with their own experience and learning.

6.2.2 School location

Some 73% of NQT participants reflected that their experience of the Droichead process was impacted by the type and location of the school where they teach. The data indicates negative, neutral and positive perceptions by NQTs of the impact of Droichead in relation to the school type. The majority of the responses indicate that Droichead had a positive impact on NQTs in relation to the school type, with 63% of NQTS in DEIS Band 1 schools and 75% of NQTs in DEIS Band 2 schools reporting a positive impact. 79% of respondents in SEN settings reported that Droichead had a positive impact within their school setting, which is quite significant, while 60% of NQTs within the Irish-medium settings reported a negative impact, with 40% reporting a positive impact. Excerpts from the NQTs' responses below illustrate a range of views presented in the data;

'There was excellent support within the school I completed the Droichead process in.'

'The school was very similar to my own school and I felt comfortable with the staff and students.'

'Private school = huge emphasis on academic achievement - very intimidating for an NQT'

'Being in a DEIS school it offered me much needed support in relation to behaviour management.'

'I was in a lovely school where I felt as part of a team. Everyone was so inclusive to me as an NQT.'

'In an urban school with a walking principal and PST members who were supportive and flexible'

6.2.3 Workload

NQTs were asked if participation in the Droichead process had any impact on their workload. More than half (approximately 58%) indicated that their involvement in activities related to Droichead had no impact on their workload. However, 30% indicated that this did have a negative impact on their workload.

6.2.4 Inclusion in the Droichead Process

A large majority (83%) of NQTs reported feeling very included in the process. 9% of NQTs, however, had negative views and did not feel included in the process. The data indicates that 45% of NQTs 'don't know' if their school has developed indicators of good practice. Also, 31% of NQTs indicated that they did not have any input into the development of the indicators of good practice.

NQTs' perceptions of inclusion in the Droichead process were, for the most part, positive. Over 80% of NQTs in DEIS Band 2, special, community national and Catholic schools reported having a positive perception of inclusion. Negative perceptions of inclusion were reported by 30% of NQTs in Educate Together schools and 20% of those in Small Schools. Neutral views were recorded by 60% of NQTs in Irish-medium post-primary settings and by 33% of those teaching in Irish-medium primary settings

6.2.5 Mandatory aspects of Droichead

NQTs were also asked to indicate the extent to which they deemed each of the mandatory aspects of Droichead (Figure 6.3) worthwhile. 'Professional conversations' were seen as being most worthwhile, (94%) followed by the 'professional learning activity' (80%) and 'observations' (79%) process. The 'cluster meetings' and '*Taisce* (Portfolio-based learning)' were seen as less worthwhile at 42%. The majority of the NQTs observed other teachers three to five times and they were observed teaching by PST members three to five times during the Droichead process.
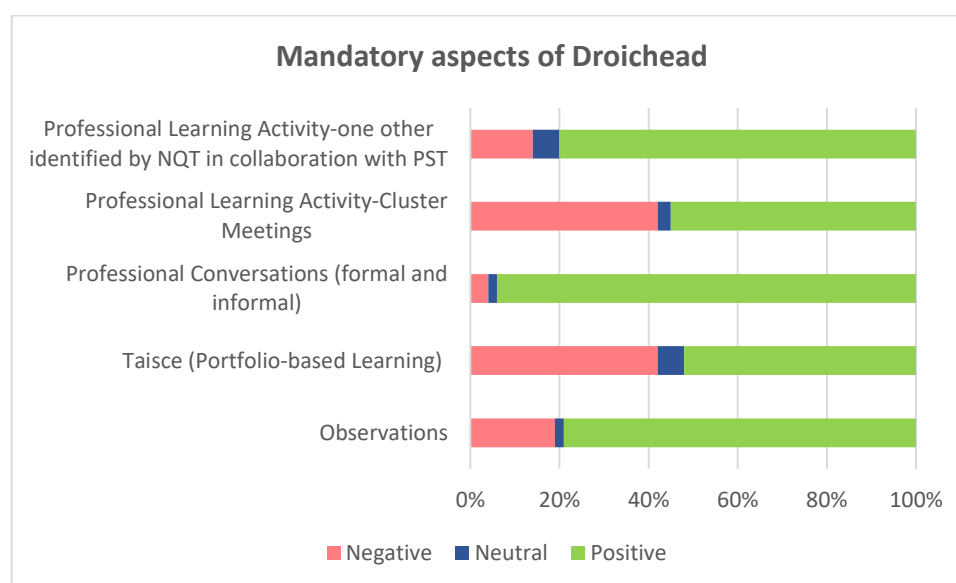
Figure 6.3 NQTs' views on mandatory aspects of Droichead

6.2.6 Comparative analysis of data from the various NQT cohorts

Figure 6.4 illustrates NQTs' perceptions of the Droichead process. Interestingly there are more favourable perceptions overall held by the 2016-17 cohort of NQTs in relation to the areas identified: satisfaction with teaching (95%), relationship with the PST (95%), impact on workload as an NQT 91%), perceived inclusion (95%), perceived quality of Droichead 95%), level of input into development of indicators (59%) and resourcing of Droichead (77%). The perceptions of the 2018-2019 cohort are not significantly different (with the exception of the impact of Droichead on workload) but are nonetheless less favourable in each perception when compared to the 2016-17 cohort. The figures for the 2018-19 cohort are: satisfaction with teaching (93%), relationship with the PST (87%), impact on workload as an NQT (56%), perceived inclusion (79%), perceived quality of Droichead 81%), level of input into development of indicators (40%) and resourcing of Droichead (72%). There is a relatively favourable consensus between the cohorts on satisfaction with teaching, relationship with the PST and resourcing of Droichead as seen in Figure 6.4 below.

In comparison with the 2016- 2017 cohort, NQTs from 2017-18 and 2018-19 had a more negative perception of Droichead in terms of its impact on their workload and the extent to which they were afforded an opportunity to input into the development of indicators of good practice

	Academic year	Negative		Neutral		Positive	
Satisfaction with teaching							
	2016-17		0%		5%		95%
	2017-18		2%		5%		94%
	2018-19		2%		6%		93%
Relationship with PST							
	2016-17		5%		0%		95%
	2017-18		6%		5%		89%
	2018-19		7%		6%		87%
Impact on workload as an NQT							
	2016-17		9%		0%		91%
	2017-18		34%		13%		53%
	2018-19		32%		12%		56%
Perceived inclusion							
	2016-17		5%		0%		95%
	2017-18		0%		13%		87%
	2018-19		15%		6%		79%
Perceived Quality of Droichead							
	2016-17		5%		0%		95%
	2017-18		10%		8%		82%
	2018-19		13%		6%		81%
Level of input into dev of indicators							
	2016-17		27%		14%		59%
	2017-18		23%		37%		40%
	2018-19		37%		23%		40%
Resourcing of Droichead							
	2016-17		5%		18%		77%
	2017-18		6%		23%		71%
	2018-19		11%		17%		72%

Figure 6.4 Perceptions of Droichead within the three cohorts of NQT participants

6.2.7 Challenges faced and supports required by NQTs

The survey asked NQTs to rank, within four categories, the challenges they faced in relation to various aspects of their teaching and non-teaching activities. Figure 6 illustrates the responses of NQTs in order of their ranking. (The values against each bar denote the mean rank of aspects under the four categories.

A — Planning and support (Curriculum)

- Planning for SEN — 3.82
- Planning and Preparation — 3.62
- School self-evaluation and planning — 3.04
- Subject specific support — 2.59
- Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary — 1.92

B — Classroom practices

- Differentiation — 4.67
- Assessment — 4.04
- Feedback — 3.32
- Literacy — 3.27
- Múineadh na Gaeilge — 2.97
- Numeracy — 2.73

C — Classroom management

- Behaviour management — 3.61
- Teacher well-being and resilience — 3.28
- Classroom management and organisation — 3.09
- Inclusion — 2.82
- Developing professionalism as a teacher — 2.19

D — Non-teaching

- Working with parents — 3.16
- Additional responsibilities within the school — 2.77
- Working with colleagues — 2.32
- Travel from home to school — 1.74

Figure 6.5 Challenges reported by NQTs

The greatest challenges reported by NQTs relate to teaching activities and include planning and support (curriculum), classroom practices and classroom management.

In response to the question 'Thinking of your greatest support need, was this addressed in your Droichead process?' the NQTs provided some examples of particular support needs, and the ways in which the Droichead process addressed those needs. Some extracts from the survey responses are included below, by way of illustration;

'Support with Behaviour management'

'Homework/Planning - members of PST were teachers of same subject and could advise me'

'Examples of fortnightly plans. I had never seen the formatting before. I was very grateful.'

'Great support with behaviour management- strategies and interventions when necessary'

'Support in IEP meetings and writing of IEPs + end of year reports'

'Helped planning Gaeilge lessons'

'Catering for students with ASD - lots of support given'

'Extra observations around differentiation for children with educational needs'

The areas in which NQTs perceived they required the most support (in the order of ranking), are shown in the Figure 6.6 below. It is interesting that the greatest challenge for NQTs in the non-teaching activities was working with parents but the NQTs did not identify it as an area in which they needed more support.

A Planning and support (Curriculum)

- Planning for SEN — 3.86
- Planning and preparation — 3.80
- School self-evaluation and planning — 3.02
- Subject specific support — 2.91
- Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary — 1.41

B Classroom practices

- Assessment — 4.41
- Feedback — 3.46
- Literacy — 3.20
- Numeracy — 2.63
- Múineadh na Gaeilge — 2.47

C Classroom management and other

- Behaviour management — 4.43
- Classroom management and organisation — 4.10
- Working with parents — 3.61
- Inclusion — 3.38
- Teacher well-being & resilience — 2.89
- Developing professionalism as a teacher — 2.59

Figure 6.6 Support requirements reported by NQTs

Overall, 64% of NQTs indicated that their greatest support need was fully addressed through Droichead while 24% indicated that it was 'somewhat addressed'. Approximately 12% reported that their support needs were not addressed through Droichead.

6.3 Relationships

NQTs were asked to describe their relationship with the members of the professional support team. 87% of the NQTs described this as positive, 6% indicated a neutral relationship while 7% indicated a negative relationship. The eleven characteristics of an effective NQT-PST relationship, as described by NQTs, are shown in figure 6.7. The most prevalent characteristic identified was 'supportive" (89%) while the least prevalent was 'challenging' (2%). 89% of NQTs identified 'supportive' as the most prevalent characteristic in their relationships, interaction and engagement with the PST members. Other characteristics of interest include 'honest' (44%), 'collaborative' (39%) and 'positive' (31%).

NQTs' views on effective NQT-PST relationship
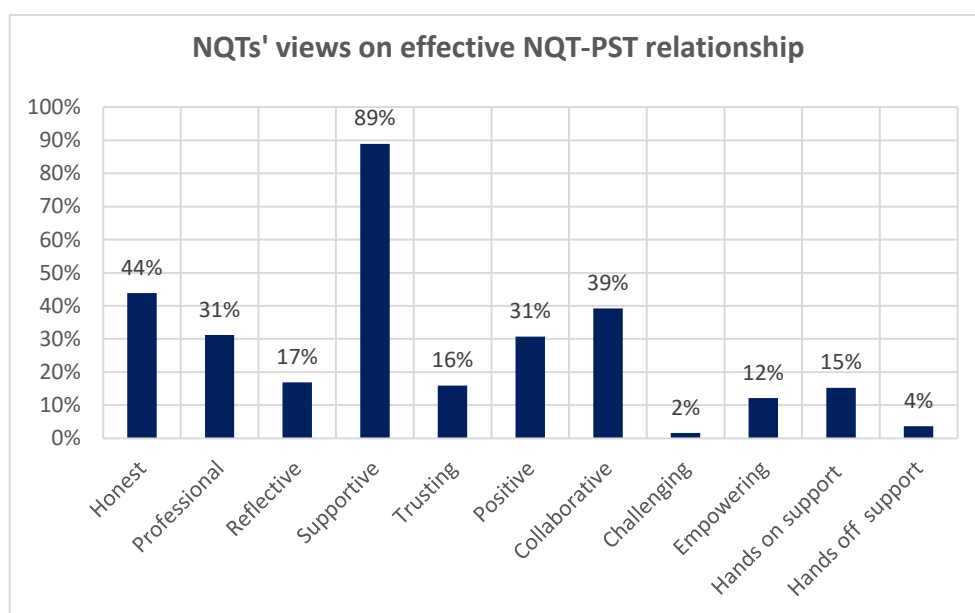
Figure 6.7 NQTs' perceptions of characteristics of effective relationships

The data showed that quality of relationships is an important factor in NQT motivation, well-being, and satisfaction within the lived experience of Droichead. Where the relationship between the NQT and PST is dynamic, inclusive, and supportive, the experience is reported by the NQT as positive, nurturing and beneficial. Figure 6.8 illustrates the intersectionality of core aspects identified by NQTs in the data that build strong and meaningful relationships between NQTs and PST members.
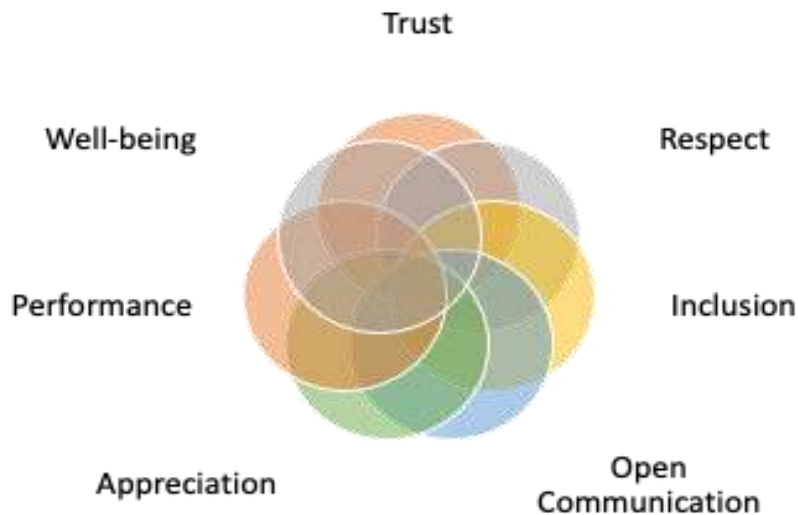
Figure 6.8 Relationships (NQTs & PST)

Excerpts from NQT responses below illustrate some of the very positive perceptions of NQTs regarding the support provided by PST members;

> *'I had an amazing PST who made me feel supported and treated me like a professional.'*
>
> *'My Droichead experience was very good. My mentor was a great support and offered very good advice.'*
>
> *'The PST helped, advised me how to conduct myself professionally and maintained the work/life balance.'*

NQT data indicated that open communication and consistent, constructive feedback created trust between the NQT and PST which is vital for establishing professional relationships. NQTs report that where there is ample communication, they feel valued and appreciated as colleagues:

> *'great rapport developed with colleagues through the experience. It prompted collaboration'*
>
> *'development through observation of others and on-hand constructive feedback of own teaching from PST'*

NQTs also report that when PST members are enthusiastic and engaged in the Droichead process, it fosters a mutual appreciation for knowledge sharing between the NQT and PST. The mentor-mentee relationship evokes feelings of admiration and respect for the PST in the mentoring role. NQTs regard their positive experiences as professional conversations, opportunities for knowledge sharing, and for establishing a culture of continued professional development:

'…I gained the motivation from their (PSTs) experience and sharing their knowledge'

'It's great to get feedback from other teachers that doesn't involve grading. It is very positive'

'My PST members encouraged me to teach to my style and I felt supported to do my best work'

When there is a breakdown or simply a lack in communication between the NQTs and PST members, NQTs do not feel supported and the impact can have lasting consequences for the NQTs:

'I found the experience unhelpful and unorganized and I was very much unsupported by the PST.'

'I had a deeply negative experience with my PST & I am only regaining my teaching confidence since leaving.'

NQTs report that when there is a disconnect with the experience, the process is not valuable:

'Droichead undermined the training, experience and inspections carried out through the PME.'

'She judged my teaching, was extremely critical, did not let me view her lessons, abused the process.'

Whether positive or negative, relationships appear to have an immense impact on the well-being and the lived experience of NQTs during the Droichead process. NQTs who reported positive relationship experiences felt that they could trust the process. They felt valued, respected and included. When the PST members provided constructive feedback, advice, guidance and shared knowledge in a spirit of collaboration and collegiality, the NQTs felt that Droichead provided a firm foundation for their teaching career.

6.4 Teacher Learning

Learning is central to the motivation of NQTs with 54% of the surveyed cohort stating that a love of learning is what motivates them in their role as a teacher. This was the second highest motivating factor articulated (NQTs were most motivated by making a difference to the lives of the students they teach).

'Teaching is… inspiring. Learn from children as much as they learn from you

Teaching is… the catalyst for learning.'

'Teaching is… about lifelong learning and sharing that experience with others.'

The greatest learning needs of the NQT cohort can be drawn from their ranking of the greatest support needs in their first year of teaching. Planning for SEN, differentiation and behaviour management are

the areas where NQTs, across both primary and post-primary settings, perceive that they require the most support. The areas NQTs perceive that they require the least amount of support included supporting the transition from primary to post-primary, múineadh na Gaeilge and developing professionalism as a teacher.

Droichead was a contributing factor in the creation of a culture of CPD for NQTs.

'The Droichead process encouraged me to reflect on my practice & fostered a positive culture of CPD.'

NQTs' learning is multifaceted. The learning experience of Droichead was viewed by many as less formal, less daunting and less stressful than their previous learning experiences in ITE.

'I was helped and encouraged by the Droichead team. I didn't feel nervous or scared that I would fail.'

'I was very impressed with the helpful rather than judgemental aspect of Droichead.'

'Far better than unscheduled inspections from the teaching schools which leads to lots of anxiety.'

In their responses, NQTs articulated very clearly their personal learning experience in the first year, underpinned by a focus on their personal learning needs and collaborative learning with and beyond the PST.

'PST asked initially what I wanted to focus on for each observation, what goals I had etc.'

'Sharing ideas with other teachers in my school allowed me to enhance my passion for teaching.'

NQTs' learning through Droichead was grounded in professionalism, ranging from possessing a feeling of professionalism, to observing professionals, to having professional conversations.

'I found observing other teachers and seeing their professionalism and love of teaching inspiring.'

'I had an amazing PST who made me feel relaxed, supported and treated me like a professional.'

'The PST advised me how to conduct myself professionally and maintain a work/life balance.'

For the most part, learning through Droichead was school-based and immediate with less of a focus on the external opportunities for learning.

'My PST were great at working with me to identify where I need supporting and providing resources.'

NQTs welcomed the reciprocal nature of learning that was afforded through the Droichead process.

Although school-based learning was favoured by NQTs, they all participated in the 'other professional learning activities' strand of Droichead. CPD courses were by far the most favoured form of external learning (86%), compared with the next highest at just 18% for attendance at a conference. Other professional learning activities included a subject association event (16%) attendance at Teaching Council webinar/ online event (10%) and attendance at Féilte (2.6%).

Although the learning experience of NQTs through Droichead was articulated in the data as a personalised experience, and NQTs did feel included overall in the process, more than two out of three respondents stated that they were not involved in the planning of how time was allocated to their Droichead activities.

At a school level, the learning opportunities for NQTs centred predominately on the observation of and by other teaching colleagues, either in mainstream or SEN classes. Learning opportunities about the wider school content were very infrequent with only 4% of NQTs stating that they had an opportunity to observe other personnel such as the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher or school secretary.

Professional focused reflection was a key activity for NQTs in Droichead. However, they did not elaborate in their responses on the impact of these reflections on their practice and on how it contributed to their learning. Collaborative reflection was also a key activity for NQTs in Droichead. Of the 64% who said that their greatest support need was addressed through Droichead, most attributed this to their collaborative, supportive relationships with the PST, which was centred on professional conversations and feedback. There were also issues identified with the collaborative supportive nature of Droichead. Of the 12% who said their greatest support need was not met, most attributed this to lack of support from the PST. Of the 24% who said their need was somewhat addressed, the reasons given related to lack of agreement between PST members and NQTs in relation to their greatest need, frequency of meetings and inconsistencies in levels of support from PST members.

6.5 School Culture

School culture is often defined in terms of the ethos, mission and values of a school. In Ireland, the characteristic spirit and ethos of a school is the responsibility of the patron (further information available [here](#)). The NQT cohort work predominantly in Catholic patronage schools (57%). The traditional understanding of school culture in terms of ethos, mission and values was not something that the NQTs explicitly commented upon with only one mention of the word 'ethos' relating to that of the PST and not the school specifically.

> *'The ethos of the PST and leadership had a very positive influence on my Droichead experience.'*

However, when a broader view of school culture is taken into consideration, the NQTs articulated that the school was an overwhelmingly supportive place for them to be and that positive relationships were central to their lived experience of the school.

NQTs brought shared values to their school culture, with many considering their teaching career to be a vocation or a calling.

> *'Teaching is ...a commitment, a vocation and a passion.'*
>
> *'Teaching is...a vocation. I believe teachers have the opportunity to help every child to reach their potential.'*
>
> *'Teaching is...a vocation and a brilliant career.'*

NQTs also highlighted the importance of contributing to the formation of a positive school culture for their students.

> *'Teaching is ...allowing children to learn in a safe, positive and inclusive environment where they are happy to be.'*
>
> *'Teaching is about providing the environment for young people to learn and challenge themselves.'*
>
> *'Teaching is ... empowering children with a love of learning and a sense of curiosity in a safe, supportive setting.'*

In relation to the culture of Droichead in the school, NQTs felt very included in the process. The concept of community was integral to the NQTs' understanding of school culture.

> *'Becoming part of the school community, e.g. working as a team, helping with extra-curricular activities'*
>
> *'The school community are who make a difference to your experience not the location or type of school.'*
>
> *'Strong sense of school community and care within the school'*

NQTs described the school as a professional learning community where they:

- experienced reflective dialogue

> *It guided me to reflect and have open discussions so that I may continue to learn*

- were focused on student learning

> *really focused in on the learning outcomes and the learning processes*

- had professional interactions with colleagues

> *I had an amazing PST who made me feel relaxed, supported and treated me like a professional*

- engaged in collaborative activities

> *My collaborating colleague was a fantastic support who was always honest and supportive*

Within the 10% cohort of NQTs who had a negative perception of Droichead a small number referenced the term 'power' when describing their lived experience of Droichead and expressed concerns about the impact that power imbalances within the school culture can have on them.

> *'A principal should NEVER be allowed to be a mentor, the power is completely off balance.'*
>
> *'All the power is in the hands of the PST. If they wish to they can make your life miserable.'*
>
> *'My mental health was affected greatly by the principal, PST member. I didn't know who to go to.'*
>
> *'Droichead was extremely uncomfortable and upsetting as my employer (the principal) was my mentor.'*

6.6 NQTs' Lived Experience in the Target School Settings

Findings in this research are representative of both primary and post-primary settings across both urban and rural demographic bases. While this research invited responses from all primary and post-primary school settings on the teachers' lived experience of the Droichead induction programme, findings from the **four** specific settings; Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), Irish-medium schools, SEN settings and small schools, have been prioritised for reporting in this chapter. Not all NQTs completed Droichead in the school in which they were teaching at the time of the online survey. Nonetheless, their lived experience across different settings brings valuable insights to the research. In order to best capture the broad range of responses from these settings, the findings from the research in the four specific settings for NQTs can be grouped under the following themes:

- Teaching is- How does teaching look across the four settings?

- Curriculum and Pedagogy- Primary and Post-primary

- Effect and impact of the NIPT training

- Behavioural/ Relationships

6.6.1 NQTs' perceptions of teaching

NQTs across the four specific settings have a relatively positive disposition towards Droichead and present a positive and constructive set of viewpoints about their lived experience of Droichead. They express a commonality of views about 'what teaching is' across the four different settings, aligned to tightly bound primary and post-primary sectors, mediated through a relatively rigid primary and post primary curriculum.

Responses from NQTs across the four settings describe teaching in various ways, as evidenced in the quotes below:

'a unique and rewarding job' and 'a privilege' (DEIS NQT).

' I really enjoy teaching in Special Class and the fact that I could complete Droichead there was very good.' (An NQT based in a Special Class)

'The opportunity to be the one good adult in a child's life, that sees that child for their potential' and 'The chance to broaden a student's worldview and create empathy for others' (Small School NQT),

'Ceann dos na rudaí is deacra ach fiúntach gan lá céanna a bheith agat faoi dhó.' (Irish-medium setting, NQT) (One of the hardest things, yet worthwhile, is not to ever have the same day twice)

An interesting finding from a settings perspective was where an NQT responded very positively by saying how their experience was enhanced by colleagues and by the setting:

'The people involved and the fact it was a special setting. Completed Irish in the mainstream setting'

The fact that NQTs who complete Droichead in an SEN setting must gain experience teaching Irish in the mainstream setting affords these NQTs a particular opportunity to compare the experience in different settings. Although the findings across the four settings were mostly positive, there were a small number of negative findings of note. The following response from an NQT in a DEIS school exemplifies this:

'Droichead is pointless. It's pointless everywhere' (DEIS NQT)

While this is a negative finding from a DEIS NQT it cannot be attributed to any specific setting as it refers to 'everywhere'. Notwithstanding the challenges it was also acknowledged that *'[I think] whatever setting you are in that each one will produce its own challenges and benefits.'*

6.6.2 Impact of PST mentoring

NQTs across the four settings are positive in the main about the impact of PST mentoring. In the Irish-medium sector, there are a variety of views expressed about this. A primary NQT in the Irish-medium sector describes having supportive mentors and how the mentors support their learning through the observation sessions:

> *'Bhí ceannairí tacúla agam agus chabhraigh siad liom foghlaim tar éis na breathnadóireachtaí.' (I had supportive leaders and they helped me after the observations)*

while another describes how a helpful PST member is supportive:

> *'A relaxed and helpful mentor plays a huge role in helping you feel that you have succeeded in Year 1' (Small School NQT)*

The concept of reflection and the application of reflective practice is evident in a number of NQT responses across the four settings. NQTs reported being supported to be reflective and in the process of reflection through post-observation meetings and at NIPT cluster meetings.

> *'I found the reflection aspect of Droichead really helpful' (DEIS NQT post-primary)*

NQTs reported very positive experiences working with their PST:

> *'Great job satisfaction. My Mentor was superb throughout the Droichead process.' (Special School NQT)*
>
> *'My PST gave me lots of support throughout the year leading to a positive year of learning for me.' (Special School NQT).*

There was evidence also that some NQTs across the four settings were not favourably disposed to Droichead:

> *'At times Droichead seemed like a repeat of what had been learned during the PME in university.' (DEIS NQT post-primary).*
>
> *'There was one PST member who 'had it on for me' - this made the experience very difficult.' (DEIS NQT).*
>
> *'One of them felt it was an evaluative process and it felt undermining as a qualified teacher' (DEIS NQT).*

6.6.3 Behavioural- relationships

The theme of relationships is quite prominent in the findings. Data from the four specific settings evidences a variety of lived experience in relation to relationships and the behavioural aspect of NQTs and PST members. As a non-evaluative process, Droichead is dependent on the development and progression of relationships between NQTs, PST members and non-PST members. Relationships are critical in enabling progression by NQTs through Droichead and in enabling the embodiment of professional dispositions, positionality, norms, approaches and behaviours in the NQTs exemplified through PST and non-PST practice and approaches. PST members and non-PST members are 'critical friends', or 'anamchairde (*advisors*)' and role models for NQTs, not only in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, but more importantly as professional role models who embody and exemplify the role of a professional teacher. NQTs are reliant on how the PST members relate to them and how that

relationship plays out in practice in terms of how they progress. The majority of findings indicate that relationships are positive and durable and that NQTs are mentored in a positive manner.

There are, however, also indications that relationships can become challenging when there is an element of "assessment/observation" of the NQT by the PST members involved:

'worked there for years before completing Droichead. I did not enjoy being assessed by friends.' (DEIS based NQT).

Within the Irish-medium sector there are findings of concern that refer to Droichead as being very stressful, overly demanding and unsupportive.

'Uafásach go deo sa scoil againn. An-strusmhar. I bhfad ró-éilitheach agus níl sé sách tacúil.' (absolutely terrible in our school. Very stressful. Far too elitist and not supportive) (Irish-medium setting, NQT).

'Bhí dualgas orainn i bhfad an iomarca a dhéanamh. Bhí sé an-strusmhar.' (We had to do too much. It was very stressful) (Irish-medium setting, NQT).

6.7 The Impact of Leadership and School Policy on NQTs

Overall, NQTs reported very positive experiences of Droichead across all settings from a leadership and Droichead school policy perspective. It must also be acknowledged that there were a number of responses that indicate challenges experienced by NQTs across all settings with regard to leadership and the *modus operandi* of Droichead in schools. The theme of leadership in the context of Droichead refers to both school leaders and PST members. NQTs were asked if they felt that the type and location of the school in which they are working had any impact on their experience of the Droichead process. Just over 73% of respondents to this question answered yes and when asked for further information, a number of responses related to the positive impact of leadership and to a constructive leadership approach.

Respondents indicated that:

'The atmosphere of the school and the overall leadership and moral [sic] of a staff team impacts hugely' (DEIS based NQT (primary);

'The ethos of the PST team and leadership had a very positive influence on my Droichead experience' (DEIS based NQT);

Respondents also reported some negative experiences in relation to leadership and Droichead implementation;

'Only one leader helped me to get through it. The others made it too overwhelming and unfair.' (DEIS based NQT);

'Scoil thar a bheith claonta í. Níor caitheadh le gach duine mar a chéile agus muid i mbun Droichid.' (It was a very biased school. Those of us involved in Droichead were not treated in the same way) (Irish-medium setting, NQT);

> *'Ní raibh na múinteoirí ná an bhainistíocht tacúil.'*(Neither the teachers nor the management were supportive) (Irish-medium setting, NQT);
>
> *'Droichead was extremely uncomfortable and upsetting as my employer (the principal) was my mentor.' (Small School based NQT);*
>
> *'There was no support or conversations with the PST team. Other colleagues were more helpful. PST seemed to be another post that somebody unsuited for the role took on. There were better people in the school for the same position.' (DEIS based NQT).*

NQTs were asked about their interaction and engagement with members of the professional support team. Responses from these questions also evidence positive experiences of NQTs in particular in relation to school leadership and the implementation of Droichead.

> *'They were amazing and well chosen by principal'*
>
> *'Planning was difficult, I was mentored by the lead PST member.'*

Within the 10% of NQTs who has a negative perception of the quality of their Droichead experience, some reported that interaction and engagement with members of the professional support team was very challenging.

> *'PST was management, no support, all observation, made to feel like employment depended on it' (DEIS based NQT, ETB);*
>
> *'My mental health was affected greatly by the principal, PST member. I didn't know what who to go to.'*
>
> *'Droichead did not begin until January despite the fact that I started in August.'*

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the NQTs' lived experience of Droichead was presented, drawing on quantitative and qualitative data generated in this study. The chapter focused on findings in relation to five key areas: the lived experience of the Droichead process; the quality and importance of relationships, teachers' learning as motivation for teaching, school culture as a supportive environment, and a specific focus on the NQT experience of Droichead in the four target settings of DEIS, SEN, Small Schools and Irish-medium schools. The next chapter illuminates the lived experience of PSTs through the Droichead process.

Chapter 7: The Lived Experience of PST Members

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the PST members' lived experience of Droichead is presented. The PST members include the teachers and school leaders who have a minimum of five years' teaching experience and work to support the NQT during the induction phase. All of the PSTs who participated in this study were school PSTs with no responses from inter-school PSTs (a PST is formed between two or more schools). As detailed in Chapter 5, 210 PST members provided data for their experiences of Droichead.
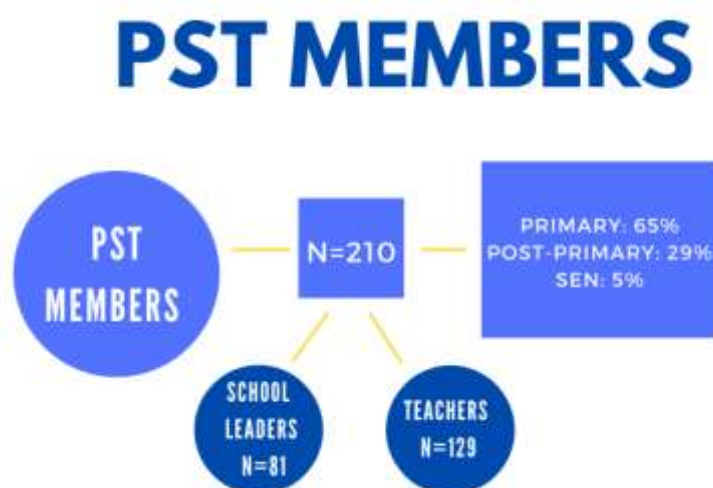
Figure 7.1 PST overview

The chapter focuses on five key areas –

  I.   The key elements of Droichead
 II.   Relationships
III.   Teachers' learning
 IV.   School culture and school community
  V.   School settings

7.2 PST Members' Lived Experience of the Key Elements of Droichead

This chapter discusses the views of PST members in relation to the impact of their involvement and their perceptions of the Droichead process.

7.2.1 Formation of the PST

Participants' views were collected on how the PST was formed in their school and how they became members. For 50% of the PST participants, their involvement in the PST was on an informal/voluntary basis. 43% of the participants reported that PST members were nominated by the principal or other senior leader. 2% of the participants said that the PST members were appointed following a formal selection process. The remaining 5% of the participants said there was a combination of volunteering and the formal selection of PST members, e.g. members volunteered and the selection process took

place from those who volunteered, or the PST team was formed as a combination of volunteering and asking suitable staff members to consider being part of the PST.

7.2.2 Droichead activities

PST participants were asked to rank Droichead activities in terms of the extent to which they represented an effective use of time allocated. Figure 7.2 shows the ranking of the Droichead activities in terms of the 'most effective use of time' as perceived by the PST participants.

PST members' views on effective use of Droichead time

3.97	3.63	3.08	2.99	1.32
Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice	Professional conversations with the PST	Professional conversations with other teachers	Observation of NQT's practice by other teachers	Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)
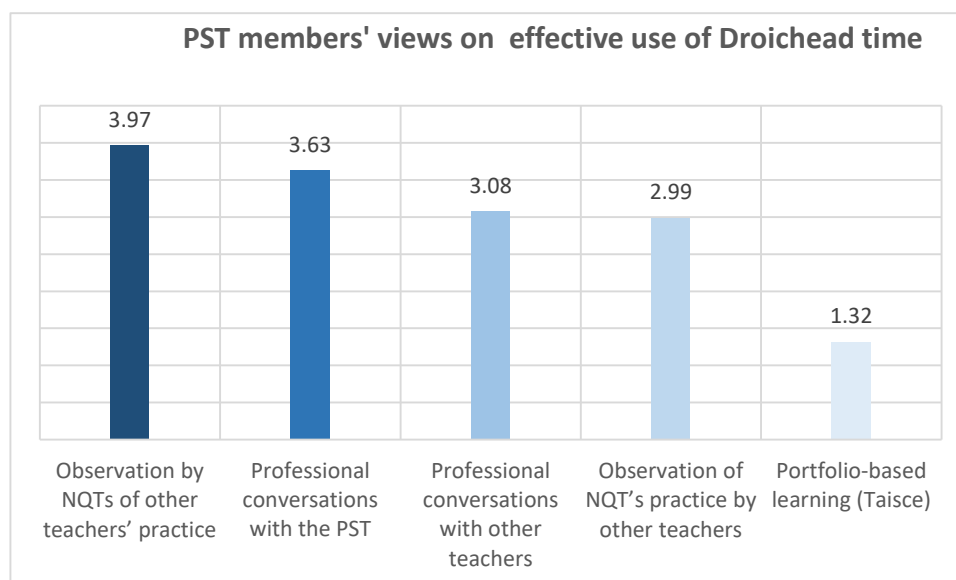
Figure 7.2. Effective use of Droichead time – PST members' views

As evident, PST members consider that the most effective use of time allocated to Droichead is in relation to 'Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice' followed by 'Professional conversations with the PST'. The time devoted to 'Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)' is perceived to be the least effective use of Droichead time.

Figure 7.3 depicts PST members' perceptions of the approach to professional induction activities. The figure presents eleven characteristics ascribed to the approach to professional induction activities. As in the NQT data describing NQT-PST relationships, the characteristic of being 'supportive' is the most prevalent in this dataset (75%), while 'challenging' is the least prevalent. The next two most prevalent characteristics from the PST members' data are 'professional' (62%) and 'collaborative" (46%) which are consistent with similar data from the NQTs' responses in relation to similar questions on effective NQT-PST relationships. The vast majority (95%) of PST members described their relationship with the NQTs as positive, with the remainder describing it as neutral. None described their relationship with NQTs as negative. This aligns well with the data presented in the previous chapter and confirms the views expressed by the NQTs.
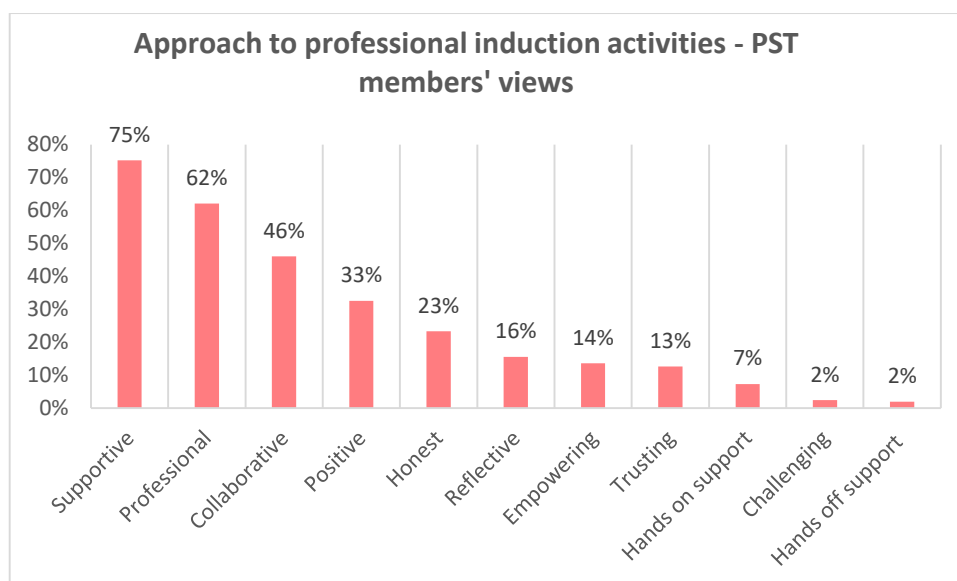
Figure 7.3 Approach to professional induction activities– PST members' views

7.2.3 Impact on workload

Figure 7.4 below illustrates that over half of PST members who are not school leaders spend between 30 minutes and one hour on Droichead each week while 37% of PST members who are school leaders spend 30 minutes to one hour on Droichead. This time should be considered within the overall workload of PST members in their day-to-day work, and the impact that the time involved in Droichead activities may have on overall workloads.
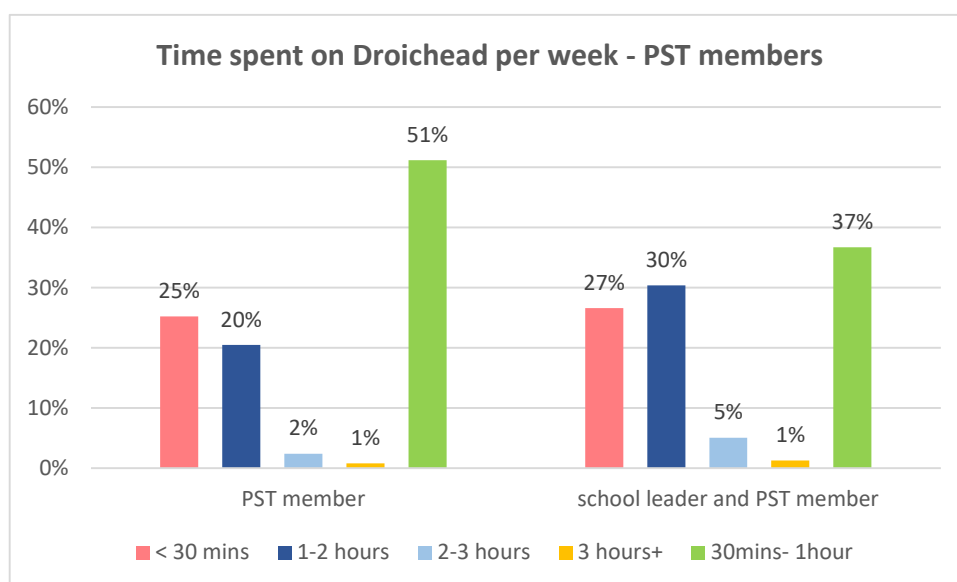
Figure 7.4 Time spent on Droichead- PST members

Figure 7.5 shows that the majority of PST members perceive Droichead to have a positive impact on their teaching, but it had more of a neutral impact on their daily workload.
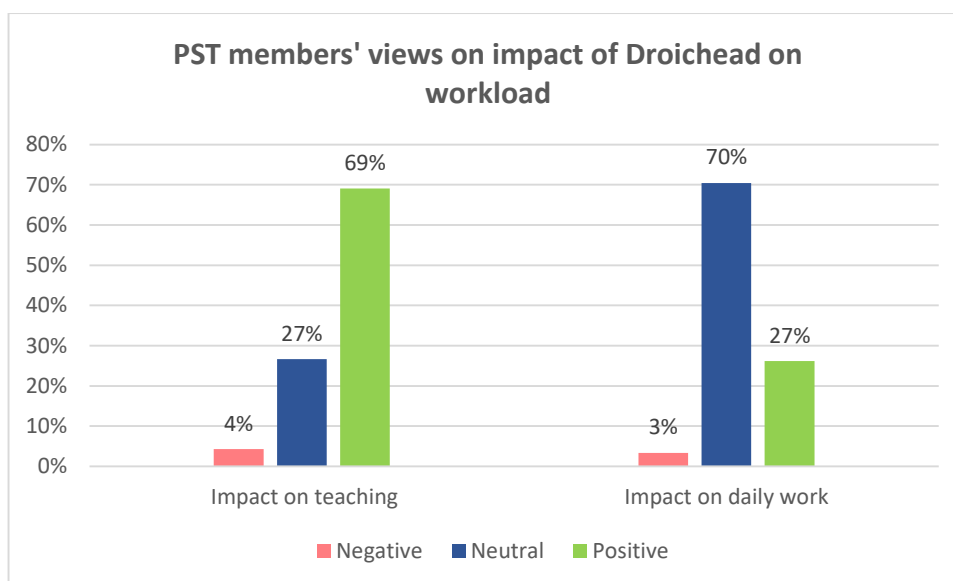
Figure 7.5 PST members views on impact of Droichead on workload

7.2.4 Droichead as a process in schools

PST members were asked for their views on specific aspects of the process of Droichead in their schools such as support from leadership, resourcing, the development of indicators of good practice, the quality of Droichead and their perceived inclusion in the process. Figure 7.6 indicates that PST members were very positively disposed to each of these five aspects of the Droichead process. The data indicated that the most positive views expressed relate to the PST members' inclusion in the Droichead process (95%), closely followed by their views on the perceived quality of the Droichead process (94%). 9 out of every 10 participants were, therefore, satisfied with the quality of Droichead in their school, their inclusion in the process and the supportiveness of school leaders for Droichead. The data indicates that the lowest level of positivity is the figure related to the PST members' perception of their level of input into the development of indicators of good practice; however, the level of positivity in the responses to the specific question is quite high at 70%.
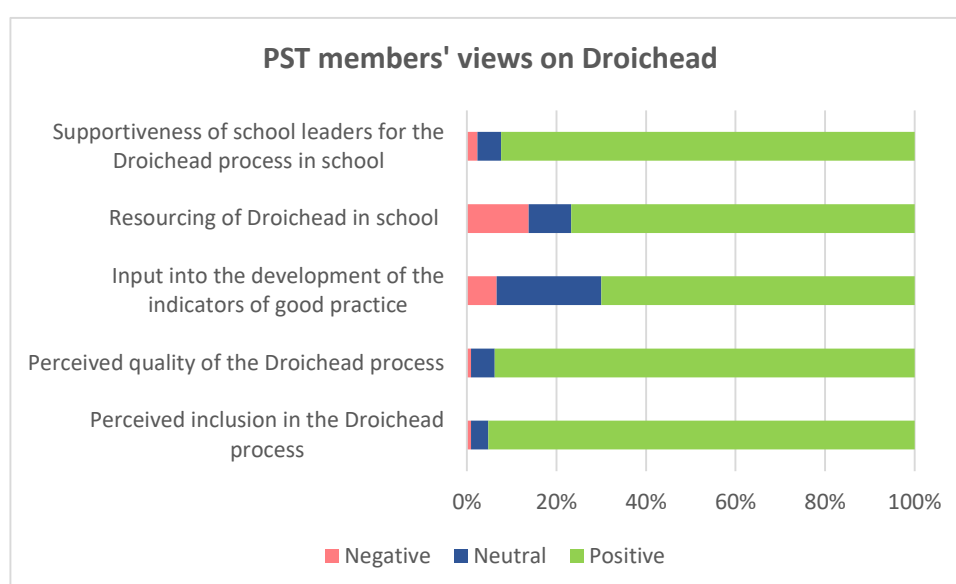
Figure 7.6 Droichead process – PST members' views

The level of negativity about resourcing of Droichead and their contribution to the development of indicators of good practice is quite low overall. Approximately 2% of PST members expressed concerns about the supportiveness of school leaders for Droichead

Aligned to data presented in Figure 7.6 (above), Figure 7.7 (below) presents findings related to PST members who are school leaders and PST members who are teachers. There is no significant difference evident in the perspectives of both groups in relation to: inclusion in Droichead, quality of Droichead, and input in the development of indicators of good practice. A difference does exist with regard to Droichead resourcing in school (teacher PST members 81%, school leader PST members 67% in terms of positive perception; teacher PST members 11% and school leader PST member 18% in terms of negative perception). School leaders who are PST members are therefore not as positive as other PST members about the resourcing of Droichead in school.

Perceptions of	Role in school	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Inclusion in Droichead				
	PST member	2%	5%	93%
	School leader and PST member	0%	6%	94%
Quality of Droichead				
	PST member	1%	6%	93%
	School leader and PST member	1%	8%	90%
Input in the development of indicators of good practice				
	PST member	8%	27%	65%
	School leader and PST member	5%	21%	74%
Droichead resourcing in school				
	PST member	11%	8%	81%
	School leader and PST member	18%	15%	67%

Figure 7.7 PST members' perceptions on aspects related to Droichead

In relation to the resourcing of Droichead, the PST members indicated that the following State-funded resources were availed of by their school (Figure 7.8):
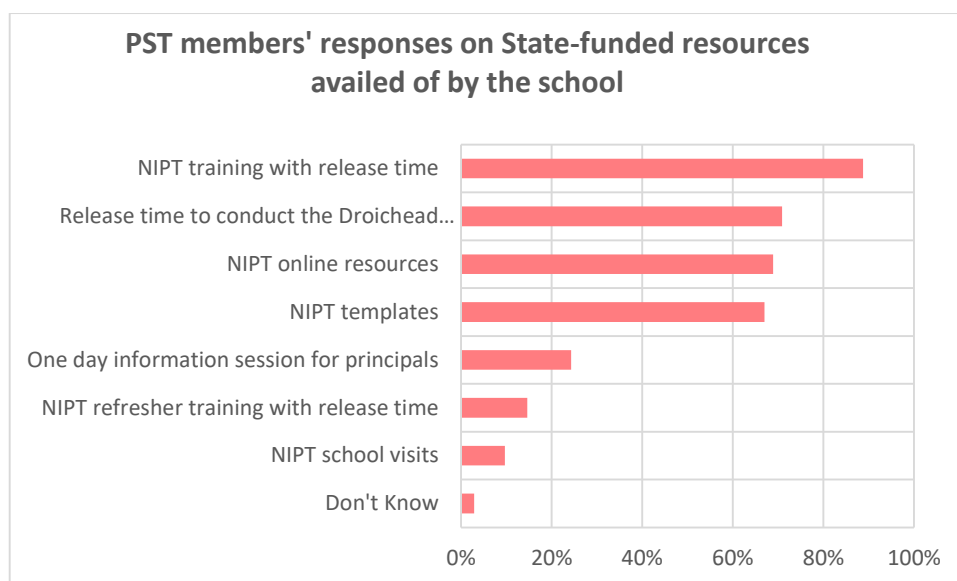
Figure 7.8 State-funded resources availed of – PST members' responses

7.2.5 Supports required by PST members

PST members were asked to rank areas where they felt they needed additional learning opportunities and support in order to fulfil their role as PST members. The data here aligns well with findings from similar questions to the NQTs in terms of their perceived needs for support. Within teaching activities, planning for SEN is most highly ranked by both NQTs and PST members (Mean rank NQT 3.82; mean rank PST 3.56), followed by Planning and preparation (mean rank NQT 3.62; mean rank PST 3.46), School self-evaluation (mean rank NQT 3.04; mean rank PST 3.21), Subject-specific support (mean rank NQT 2.59; mean rank PST 2.75) and supporting the transition between primary and post-primary education (mean rank NQT 1.92; mean rank PST 2.02).

Figure 7.9 presents the perceived support requirements of PST members in order to facilitate and support the needs of NQTs. In relation to non-teaching activities, the greatest learning needs articulated by the PST members across the primary and post-primary sectors were in the areas of planning for SEN, differentiation, teacher wellbeing and reflective dialogue. At primary level, assessment also emerged as an area where further learning was needed; at post-primary level, behaviour management and fostering professional relationships were also noted as areas where further learning was required for the PST.

There was consensus among PST members regarding the learning needs of NQTs; however, differences emerged in how best to address these learning needs, with primary PSTs favouring observation by the NQT of other teachers, and post-primary PSTs favouring professional conversations.

A Planning and support (Curriculum)

- Planning for SEN — 3.56
- Planning and Preparation — 3.46
- School self-evaluation and planning — 3.21
- Subject specific support — 2.75
- Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary — 2.02

B Classroom practices

- Differentiation — 4.5
- Assessment — 4.34
- Feedback — 3.82
- Literacy — 3.12
- Múineadh na Gaeilge — 2.68
- Numeracy — 2.55

C Classroom management and other

- Teacher well-being & resilience — 3.77
- Behaviour management — 3.66
- Developing professionalism as a teacher — 3.51
- Classroom management and organisation — 3.51
- Inclusion — 3.39
- Working with parents — 3.17

D Non-teaching

- Reflective dialogue — 3.04
- Leadership skills — 3.02
- Mentoring skills — 3
- Goal setting — 2.87

Figure 7.9 Support requirement reported by PST members.

7.3 Relationships

Developing relationships is considered an important factor in PST members' motivation and desire to participate and engage in the Droichead process, as was true for NQTs also. NQTs identified trust, respect, inclusion, open communication and appreciation for the knowledge of the PST as being important and formative regarding relationship development. PST members relied on their own previous experience in building relationships with the NQT, alongside a belief in the value of the process, desire to support/help the NQT through the transition and ability/desire to mentor others.

Figure 7.10 Relationships/ Motivation factors- PST

The following extracts from PST members illustrate these aspects:

Prior Positive Experience

'was doing it informally anyway for years so seemed a logical step'

'former mentor for the school with NIPT'

'positive experience of similar process as a trainee in Wales'

Belief in the Process/Desire to Support Help

'I believe all teachers benefit from support and advice, especially NQTs'

'I like to help new staff and it was a natural progression for me and I love that it was self-regulating'

'I wanted to help NQTs settle and foster community'

Ability/Desire to Mentor

'to be in a position to guide, mentor and support an NQT through the initial stage of their career'

> *'I was asked to train as a Mentor in 2012 so the transition to becoming a mentor was an easy decision'*

> *'Was mentor to new teachers in school so Principal asked me if I would be interested, and I was'*

Collaboration and Sharing Knowledge

> *'To share my experience with my colleagues, to support them in those early years'*

> *'Enjoy mentoring staff and building capacity'*

> *'I've a lot of experience teaching, I wanted to mentor NQTs; we both could benefit from the experience.'*

> *'Fresh ideas to my own T&L, sharing, openness culture by normalising other teachers in the classroom'*

PST members reported that they occasionally feel overburdened in their role, which can impact on the quality of the relationship with the NQTs. Where PST members reported a negative experience as a mentor, they articulated a further negative impact on their own teaching or on their relationship with the NQT. Finding adequate time and impact on workload were identified by PST members as challenges to building relationships within the Droichead process.

> *'As I am so busy throughout the day, I feel like I cannot support the NQTs as much as I would like.'*

7.4 Teacher Learning

Professional learning is core to the work of the PST whether that is via the training provided by the NIPT or additional formal CPD programmes. Overall, the PST members feel very positive about the NIPT training and supports provided to them as shown in Figure 7.11 below:
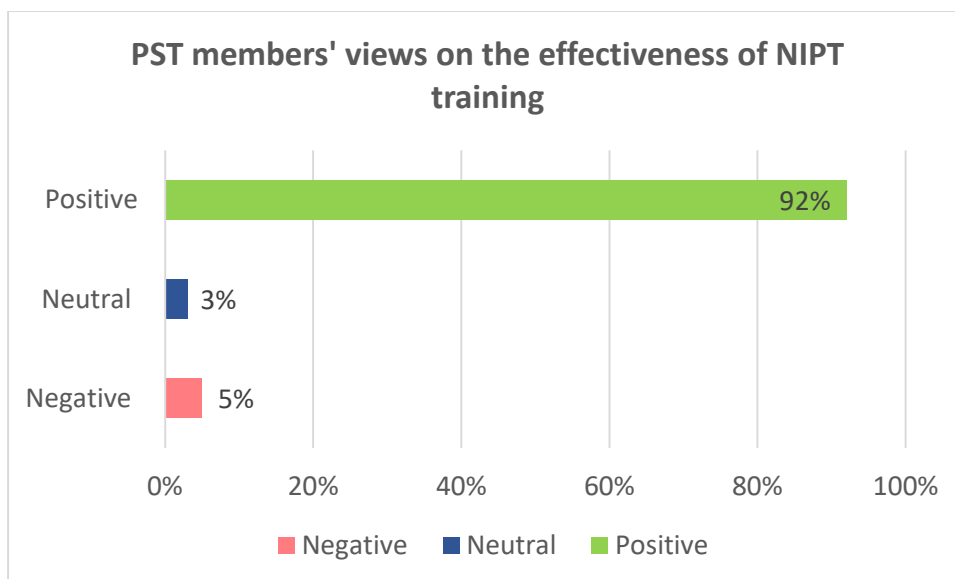
Figure 7.11 PST members' views on the effectiveness of NIPT training

Qualitative data relating to the effectiveness of the NIPT training indicates the PST participants believe they were well prepared to facilitate the Droichead process on completion of the NIPT training, while some PST members did suggest how the training might be further enhanced.

'very good training, would like clearer paper work and documentation however'

'Training days were well delivered and well organised, materials are useful'

'After initial training some aspects of droichead changed & only 1 representative got retrained'

'Very purposeful training as it leads to a development of a structure and a process within schools.'

'The NIPT training was very good but I feel there needs to be a follow up day now.'

A vast majority (90%) of the PST participants stated that they have availed of all the NIPT training/supports offered to them and 30% have also engaged in formal programmes of professional learning other than the NIPT. Examples of professional learning programmes, other than the NIPT training undertaken by the PST participants, are listed in table 7.1.

Table 7.1. Professional learning undertaken by PST participants

Examples of other formal professional programmes undertaken by PST members
▪ Certificate in mentoring
▪ Guidance and Counselling
▪ CSL Mentoring Training
▪ Guidance and Counselling
▪ MA in Educational Mentoring
▪ Post Grad Educational Leadership
▪ Post Grad in Educational Leadership & Management
▪ Professional Diploma in School leadership CSL
▪ Professional Tutor training
▪ Restorative practice training
▪ Associate for NIPT- in service training
▪ PDSL in school leadership under UL
▪ Future Leaders programme, Maynooth University
▪ Grad Cert in Middle Leadership and Mentoring - MIC

Teaching members of the PST rated NIPT training higher (mean response 69.9[13]) than the non-teaching members of the PST (mean response 59.29). A higher satisfaction rating with NIPT training was seen among post-primary teachers (mean response 72.58) when compared to primary teachers (mean response 62.06). The NIPT training was lauded for the space and time it gave to PST members to reflect on their own practice and to share experiences with others. A strong need emerged for refresher training for PST members so that the learning could be sustained and developed. Primary PST members were more likely (93.4%) to avail of all of the training and support provided by the NIPT than their post-primary peers (86%). The reasons cited for not availing of these supports included workload and lack of perceived need for any additional training.

'It was excellent, a space to discuss teaching and learning, and how to support and guide the NQT.'

'It was the highlight and most rewarding CPD of my career. I fully support and believe in the programme.'

'Training was very good – would need to be continuous, not just a once-off.'

A commitment to learning was key to the motivation of PST members to take on the role.

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[13] Where 100 equals a very positive response, 0 is a neutral response and -100 is a very negative response

Figure 7.12 shows the skill sets/knowledge that PST members indicated they have developed or enhanced due to their membership of the PST in their school.
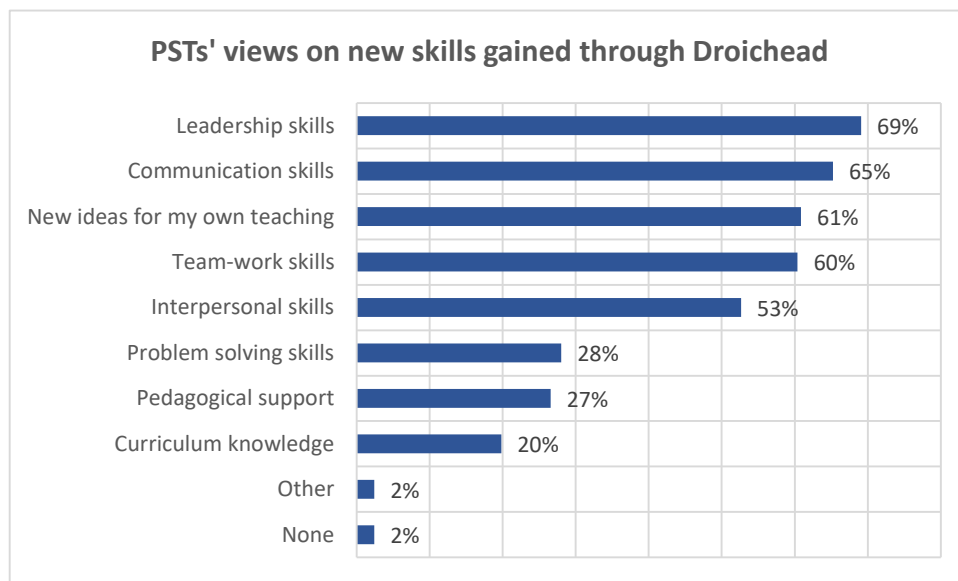
Figure 7.12 Skills gained – PST members' views

PST member members also articulated that the Droichead process has created new opportunities of collaboration and networking between teachers and organisations (Figure 7.13), with the top three opportunities ranked as co-planning, co-teaching and peer observation.

PST members' views on opportunities for collaboration

Co-planning	73%
Co-teaching	66%
Peer observation	62%
Class/ year group clusters	36%
NQT network in school	32%
Subject specific clusters	14%
NQT network outside of school	13%
Other	6%
Observation in nearby Droichead school	5%
Other external network	2%
No opportunities for…	1%
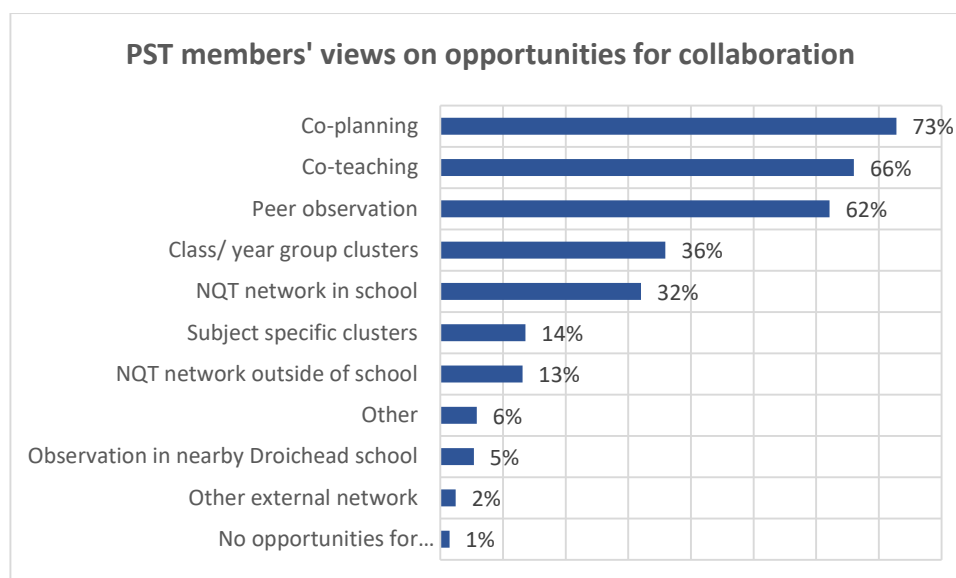
Figure 7.13 Opportunities for collaboration through Droichead – PST members' views

With regard to 'co-teaching' and 'peer observation' more than half of the PST participants feel that their involvement in Droichead has resulted in more opportunities of collaboration and networking.

It is clear from the data that PST members learn from and benefit from their PST work. Being part of the PST has a positive impact on the work of both the teaching and non-teaching members; however, the impact is stronger for those who are teaching (mean response 58.18) compared to those in non-teaching leadership roles (mean response of 27.62). The positive impacts include opportunities for reflection and learning from other teachers.

> *'I reflect more on my own methods, if it works for me it may work for someone else and vice versa.'*
>
> *'I think it allows me to bring back some energy and ideas to my own practice.'*

7.5 School Culture and School Community

Of the PST members that responded to the survey, 28% were from schools where Droichead has been part of the school culture since 2016/17 or before, 26% were in schools where Droichead was in place since 2017/18, and for 46% of the PST respondents Droichead has been part of the school culture since 2018/19. Overall, the PST members reported that Droichead had a positive impact on school culture:

> *'This programme has had a huge impact on the culture in our school - we work collaboratively.'*
>
> *'Fresh ideas to my own T&L, sharing, openness culture by normalising other teachers in the classroom'*
>
> *'It has been a huge benefit to the staff and developed a culture of sharing ideas and resources.'*

The data indicates that when Droichead is part of the school culture for longer periods it does have a particular impact on the lived experience of the PST members. Those PST members from schools where Droichead has been part of the school culture for longer were more likely to have engaged in additional formal professional learning programmes outside of that offered by the NIPT, and they also spend slightly longer per week on Droichead activities compared to the PSTs more recently involved in Droichead. This group also reported that they were more involved in the development of the indicators of good practice than those more recently part of Droichead.

In articulating their motivation to join the PST the respondents spoke of the underpinning beliefs and values that they bring to the Droichead process, and the need for a collaborative culture in which to share these beliefs.

'Belief in the school as the central to the induction of new teachers'

'Belief that the next placed people to help NQTs are practising teachers'

'To help, share and guide newly qualified teachers as they start on their journey'

Related to the school culture is the PST members' desire to share the specific contextual knowledge of the school with the NQTs. When asked what they bring to the Droichead process, the PST members referenced their experience and the specific support they could offer to NQTs.

'An experience in this specific school context and its history'

'Years of experience and an interest in helping teachers to navigate the challenges of the classroom and school.'

'A shared vision for the outcomes of the school'

'Experience and understanding of classroom structures and the needs of the children in the school'

The PST members also speak of their ability to harness the strengths of the school community to support the NQTs and their ability to contribute to a positive learning environment for the NQTs.

'My experience. My knowledge of the strengths within our staff to be able to support the NQTs.'

'I coordinate the process and consult with everyone to ensure that the NQT has a supportive environment.'

'We work as a team and decide together how best to support the NQT.'

A small number of PST members are concerned about the sustainability of the Droichead culture in their schools and they speak of the need to grow the knowledge base of Droichead in the school in order to sustain and develop it.

'It would be very beneficial to extend the PST membership year in year and build a culture of collaboration and professionalism.'

> *'We have trained but haven't experienced Droichead with an NQT yet, we might forget our training.'*

They also express a slight concern about the impact that an underperforming NQT could have on the Droichead culture in the school.

> *'I wonder what kind of experience a PST would have if an NQT wasn't competent.'*

7.6 PST Members' Lived Experience of Droichead in the Target School Settings

Across the four prioritised school settings the majority of responses range from very positive to positive to less than positive. The variety of professional qualifications and achievements of teachers who are members of the PST across all four settings is very broad and includes qualifications in mentoring, guidance and counselling, NIPT facilitating, postgraduate education, coaching, restorative practice training and specific teacher induction training. PST members in the four settings carry out multiple roles including that of full-time teachers. The findings indicate that there are a number of assistant principals (1 and 2), programme coordinators, home school community liaison officers, subject department heads and guidance counsellors who are members of the PST in the four prioritised settings. The data show evidence across the settings that PST members are enthusiastic, interested and committed to their roles on the PST and that they believe in the induction process, in mentoring NQTs and in supporting NQTs to progress through induction. They were recruited to the PST in a number of different ways, but in almost all cases, they were willing and interested and wanted to support newly qualified teachers.

> *'Chuir an príomhoide ceist orm agus ba mhór an onóir é, mar is breá liom foghlaim faoi straitéisí nua.' (The principal asked me and it was a huge honour because I love learning about new strategies) (Irish-medium setting, PST)*
>
> *'Always wanted to be involved in working with NQTs' (DEIS based PST)*
>
> *'I wanted to help new members of staff get acquainted with the school.' (Small School based PST)*
>
> *' I saw how supportive members were to previous NQTs and valued the importance of a mentor.' (DEIS based PST)*

A number of PST members across the settings offered some suggestions as to how NIPT training could be enhanced;

> *'B'fhéidir zoom a eagrú- seisiún 30 nóiméad, gairid chun refresh a dhéanamh agus tuairimí a roinnt' (maybe organise a short 30 minute Zoom session, to refresh and share ideas) (Irish-medium setting, PST)*
>
> *'The workshops were very good, but very dense, even rushed. Spaced sessions would be more beneficial.' (Small School PST)*

'I really enjoyed the training process. I think there should be yearly check in courses.' (Irish-medium setting, PST)

7.7 The Impact of Leadership and Policy on PST Members

From a leadership and policy perspective there is evidence of varying approaches to recruiting PST members and implementing Droichead. The concept of leadership in this report is understood to include a wide range of leadership roles including school leaders and the PST. Findings indicate that release time is planned and used effectively by school leaders for PST members to meet NQTs and to avail of training, but that it can be challenging to get substitute cover to enable PST members to use the release time.

'The release days are used effectively.'

'Sub cover is vital and Droichead is impossible without it.'

'The four days allowed in the scheme facilitated all meetings and observations required.'

These findings indicate that school leaders and PST members are implementing Droichead policy as intended and that release time is being used, albeit in challenging circumstances occasionally, where substitute cover may be difficult to acquire. This demonstrates an overarching strategic and operational approach that is underpinned by effective leadership and management decisions and resourced through the provision of time allocated to the implementation of Droichead.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the PST members' lived experience of Droichead. The chapter focused on data generated from the research in five key areas: the influence of the elements of the Droichead process on the lived experience of PSTs, the collaborative and professional nature of relationships, the importance of continuous teachers' learning, the role that school culture plays in a PST member's desire to contribute to the Droichead process, and finally a specific focus on the PST experience of Droichead in the four target settings of DEIS, SEN settings, small schools and Irish-medium schools. Chapter 8 looks more directly at the lived experience of school leaders within the Droichead process.

Chapter 8: The Lived Experience of School Leaders

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter the school leaders' lived experience of Droichead is presented. This cohort includes some 81 principals and deputy principals who are PST members and 16 principals and deputy principals who are not-PST members. Those school leaders who are PST members will be referred to as 'PST school leaders' and those who are not PST members will be referred to as 'non-PST school leaders'.
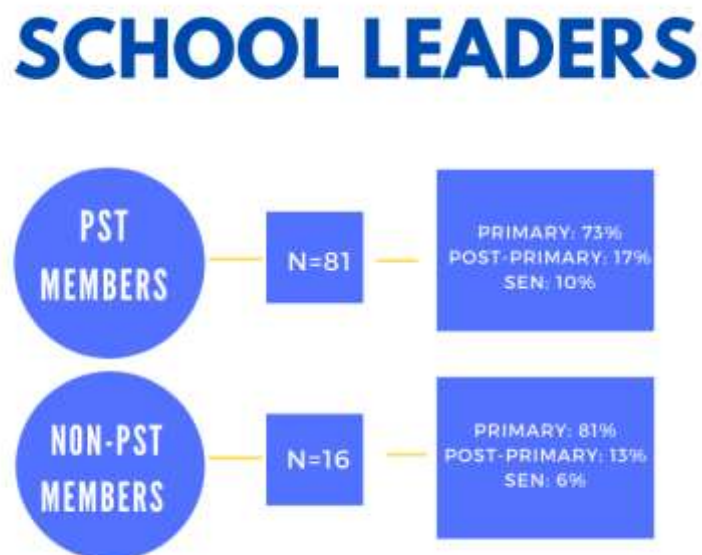
Figure 8.1 School leader overview

The chapter focuses on four key areas:

    I.   The key elements of Droichead

II.   Relationships

III.   School culture and teacher learning

IV.   School settings

8.2 The Key Elements of Droichead

School leaders rate the quality of Droichead highly, with 99% of PST school leaders and 87% of non-PST school leaders giving a positive quality rating. The vast majority (94%) of the PST school leaders feel very included in the overall process and the remaining 6% give a neutral response. There are no negative responses from the PST school leaders in terms of their perceived inclusion in the Droichead process. Perceptions of non-inclusion in the Droichead process are apparent only amongst non-PST school leaders. 20% of these participants give a negative rating to their inclusion in the Droichead process and 27% indicate that they had no input in the development of indicators of good practice in their school. It is perhaps worthy of note that n response to the question 'Has your school developed its own indicators of good practice, based on the Droichead standards?' there are 'Don't know' responses from both sub-samples of school leaders. 20% of the non-PST school leaders and 8% of the PST school leaders indicate a lack of awareness of their schools' progress in the development of indicators of good practice.

Both PST and non-PST school leaders state that the approach to induction in their school could be described as supportive, professional and collaborative. It is interesting to note that only 10% of PST school leaders describe the induction process in their school as 'reflective'. Figure 8.2 compares the perceptions of PST school leaders and non-PST school leaders in terms of the approach to professional induction in their school.

Approach to professional induction	School leader and PST member	School leader but non-PST member
Honest	25%	33%
Professional	62%	60%
Reflective	10%	40%
Supportive	79%	53%
Trusting	11%	20%
Positive	33%	33%
Collaborative	49%	40%
Challenging	1%	0%
Empowering	17%	7%
Hands on support	5%	7%
Hands off support	1%	13%

Figure 8.2 Approach to professional induction - school leaders' views

In terms of the most effective use of time allocated to Droichead activities, 'Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice' is ranked highest by both the groups of school leaders (Figure 8.3 and Figure 8.4). In figure 8.3 for the PST school leaders, the values against the bars denote the mean rank obtained for each activity. While the PST members were asked to rank all activities related to Droichead, the non-PST participants were asked to select only one activity they think to be the most effective use of time. Figure 8.4 therefore presents non-PST school leaders' ranking in terms of percentages.

PST school leaders' ranking of Droichead activities in terms of effective use of time

Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice	Professional conversations with the PST	Professional conversations with other teachers	Observation of NQT's practice by other teachers	Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)
4.06	3.49	3.17	2.97	1.31
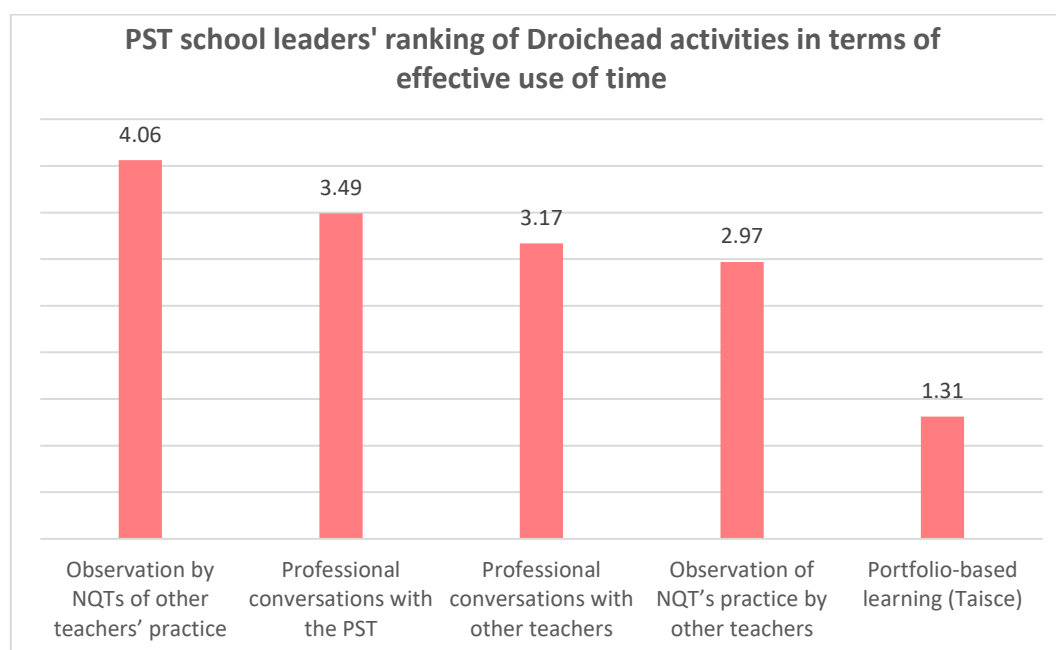
Figure 8.3 Most effective use of time allocated to Droichead - PST school leaders' views

Non-PST school leaders' ranking of Droichead activities in terms of effective use of time

Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice	Observation of NQTs 'practice by other teachers	Professional conversations	Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)	NQT cluster meetings	NQT professional learning activity
60%	33%	7%	0%	0%	0%
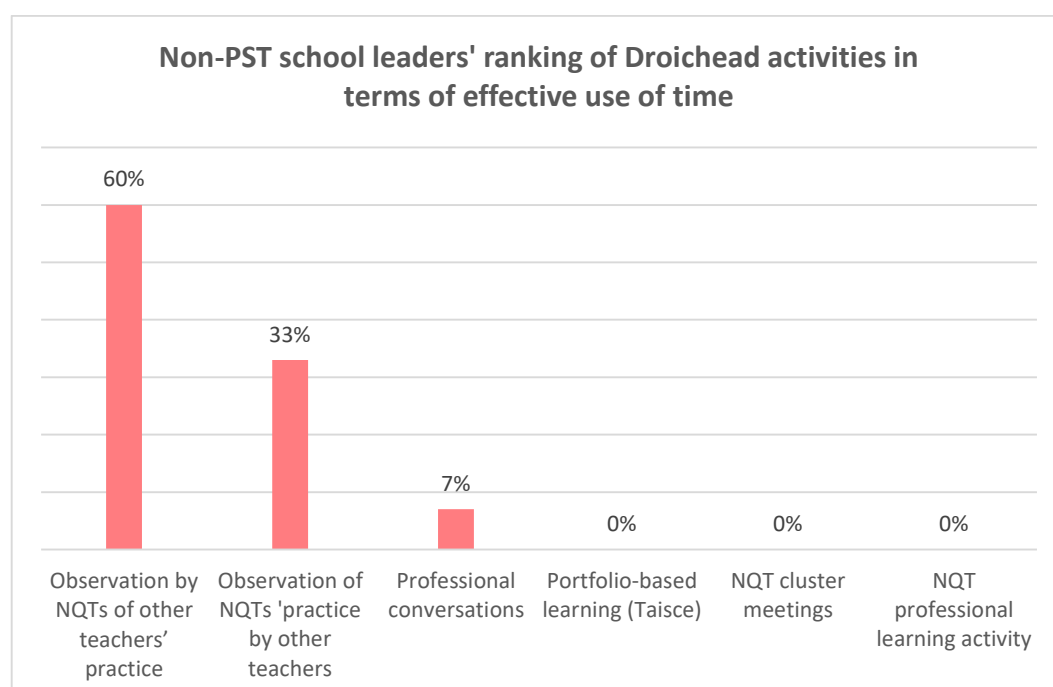
Figure 8.4 Most effective use of time allocated to Droichead - PST school leaders' views

'Observation of NQTs' practice by other teachers' is ranked fourth in terms of the extent to which it was deemed, by the PST school leaders, to be an effective use of time. Non-PST school leaders deem it to be a more effective use of time, ranking it in second place. Both groups of school leaders consider portfolio-based learning (*Taisce*) to be the least effective use of time. The activity 'Observation by NQTs of by other teachers' practice' was selected by majority (60%) of the non-PST school leaders, followed by 'Observation of NQTs' practice by other teachers' (33%) and 'Professional conversations' (7%).

Fewer than one in five PST school leaders express negative views about Droichead resourcing. A more negative picture is presented by non-PST school leaders, 40% of whom indicate negative views about the resourcing of Droichead in their schools. The NIPT training with release time has been availed of by most schools (87%). Funded resources have been used less frequently, including the NIPT refresher training (availed of in the schools of 15% of PST school leaders and 27% of non-PST school leaders) and the NIPT school visits (availed of in the schools of 15% of PST school leaders and 20% of non-PST school leaders).

Similarities emerged among the school leaders in both groups, in terms of their views regarding opportunities for collaboration and networking created by Droichead. The most frequent opportunities for collaboration were seen to be co-planning, peer observation, co-teaching and class/group clusters. The less frequently availed of opportunities for collaboration included observation in a nearby Droichead school, external networks, and subject specific clusters. Similar views appear to be expressed on the potential for Droichead to provide collaborative opportunities in activities related to teaching and learning, e.g. planning, observation and teaching. However, a small proportion of respondents (3% of the PST school leaders and 7% of the non-PST school leaders) believe that no such opportunities are created during the Droichead induction process.

8.3 Relationships

The significance and impact of relationships for school leaders focused on what they perceived their contribution was to the Droichead process.

Figure 8.5 Relationships - Contribution to Droichead

As Figure 8.5 shows, school leaders feel that they make a significant contribution to the relational element of Droichead. This is achieved through professional conversations, sharing of ideas, and being

a trusted confidant. School leaders describe themselves as '*a trusted source of information*', '*a listening ear*' and a '*professional, trusted colleague*'. School leaders draw heavily on their experience when supporting NQTs as evidenced in the quotes below:

> *'giving advice from my personal experience of the Droichead process I had in my previous school'*
>
> *'I bring my experience and organisational skills to the team'*

The school leaders speak of their role in ensuring that the process runs smoothly, with one school leader stating that their role is to *'keep everyone on track'* with another describing it as '*keeping all rolling along*'. Providing support for the NQTs and PST members is important to school leaders and this support includes:

- class-based supports:

> *'I worked closely with NQT in same class level, co-planning, co-teaching, professional conversation…'*

- emotional supports:

> *'experience mentoring, empowerment, encouragement, support. Reminders to well-being…'*

- practical supports*:*

> *'coordinating the process, arranging meetings, offering support…'*

- ad hoc supports:

> *'always available to help in any way'*

School leaders across all school settings see themselves as central to the Droichead process in their schools. There are a number of reasons for this; however, one of the strongest findings points to fact that school leaders consider their participation in the PST to be an integral part of their role as leaders in their schools, and feel that it affords them opportunities to support, mentor and help NQTs, to get to know the staff and to ensure a management input into the mentoring of NQTs.

> *"I felt it was important as principal to show leadership and to develop good relationships with NQTs."*

8.4 School Culture and Teacher Learning

Teacher learning is a key component of the culture that supports Droichead in a school. Of the PST school leaders, 23% were from schools where Droichead has been part of the school culture since 2016/17 or before, 30% were in schools where Droichead has been in place since 2017/18 and for 47% of the respondents Droichead has been part of the school culture since 2018/19. Of the non-PST school leaders, 50% were from schools where Droichead has been part of the school culture since 2016/17 or before, 31% were in schools where Droichead has been in place since 2017/18 and for 19% of the respondents Droichead has been part of the school culture since 2018/19. Within these different cohorts, the main difference that emerges is that school leaders in schools where Droichead was in place since 2016 or earlier are more likely to have completed further study in the area of induction and mentoring.

School leaders frequently speak of the importance of embedding the process of Droichead in the school culture, especially as a new process in the school:

"Joined pilot of Droichead in order to assist in making the process workable and fit for purpose."

"I feel that there is a huge need for the principal of a school to engage with any new process."

The majority of the PST school leaders (74%) are satisfied with the NIPT training provided to them. School leaders value the NIPT training, in particular, as real and meaningful support for optimising implementation of the Droichead process and for enhancing the lived experience of all stakeholders:

"I am involved in Education for nearly 40 years and it was the most comprehensive training I have received."

Although formal training was not provided to the non-PST school leaders, half of the participants (50%) indicate that they attended formal professional learning programmes in relation to mentoring or induction. Their teacher learning included the study and research of leadership and management coaching, mentoring, NIPT facilitator training, NIPT Associate training, restorative practice training and, in some cases, courses accredited in other jurisdictions.

Participation in Droichead, led to enhanced skill development for the school leader cohort. Figure 8.6 indicates the areas where the PST school leaders believe that their knowledge and skills were enhanced as a result of their involvement in the Droichead process.
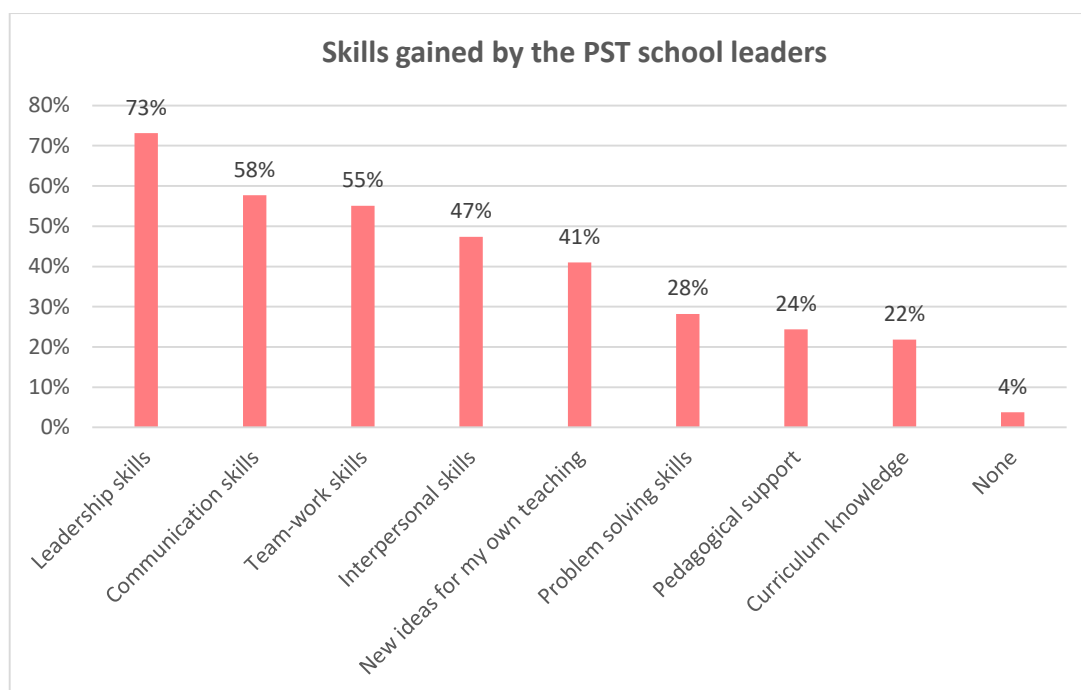
Figure 8.6 PST School leaders' views on skills gained through Droichead

As indicated in Figure 8.6, nearly three-quarters (73%) of the PST school leaders feel they have improved their leadership skills while more than half of the participants indicate that their communication skills and teamwork skills have developed further because of their role in the Droichead process.

Almost half (47%) of PST school leaders had undertaken additional mentor training, compared with only a quarter of non-PST school leaders. Both cohorts undertook similar roles in the process, providing support and guidance and acting as facilitator and overseer. The non-PST school leaders indicate that they had more informal check-ins with the NQTs as opposed to formal meetings.

8.5 School Settings

Across the four prioritised settings (DEIS; Irish-medium schools; small schools; and SEN settings), findings evidence a very positive lived experience of school leaders overall. Notwithstanding the positive responses, there is also evidence in the findings of some challenges experienced by school leaders. In the four prioritised settings, positive responses are characterised by a strong and vibrant interest in, and willingness to participate in Droichead, with a number of different motivating factors presented. Findings demonstrate that school leaders participate in Droichead because they believe it is part of their professional role as leaders. They believe in, and value, the importance of providing support and mentoring to newly qualified teachers. They also believe that by using a coordinated approach to induction, they can build leadership capacity in their schools. Most significantly they 'believe' in induction and in Droichead as a process:

> *"I was asked by the Principal and, as it is appropriate to my role as Deputy Principal, I was happy to help." (Small School based School leader & PST member)*

"I wanted to lead a team of excellent teachers who in turn would provide excellent training." (DEIS based School leader & PST member)

"Tá an scoil seo ag fás gach bliain & mé ag iarraidh tacaíocht a thabhairt do na MNC ar gach bealach." (This school is growing every year and I am trying to support the NQTs in every way). (Irish-medium setting, School leader)

"Tuigim an tábhacht agus an buntáiste a bhaineann le múinteoirí ag tacú lena chéile."(I understand the importance and benefit of teachers supporting each other.) (Irish-medium setting, School leader)

"I truly believe that in-school induction benefits everyone in the school community." (Leader of a Small School)

"The Droichead process is one that I believe in. I think it is a much fairer way to train our NQTs." (Leader of a Small School)

8.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the school leaders' lived experience of Droichead was explored. It focused on four key areas that emerged from the research data: the key elements of Droichead; relationships; school culture and teacher learning; and particular findings in the four prioritised settings. Chapter 9 takes a closer look at the lived experience of teaching colleagues who are not PST members.

Chapter 9: The Lived Experience of Non-PST Members

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter the non-PST members' lived experience of Droichead is presented. This cohort comprises 54 teachers in Droichead schools who, while not members of the PST, may otherwise support NQTs' Droichead process. For example, they may have afforded one or more NQTs the opportunity to observe their practice.
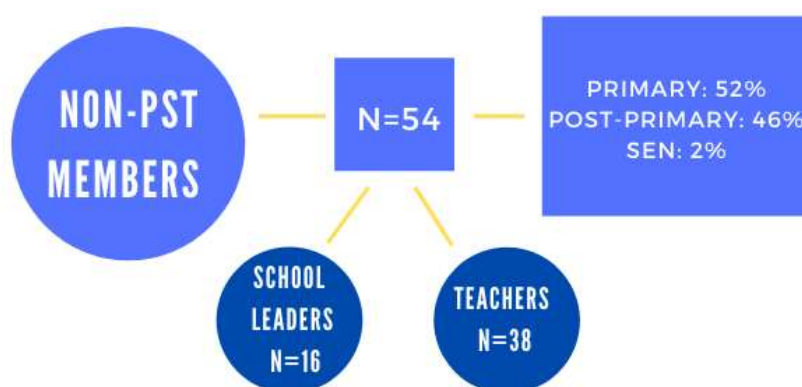
Figure 9.1 Non-PST members overview

The chapter focuses on three key areas:

    I.   Quality of Droichead

    II.   NQT supports

    III.   Inclusion in the Droichead process

9.2 Non-PST Members' Experiences of Droichead

9.2.1 Quality of Droichead

The Non-PST members stated that the approach to induction in their school could be described as supportive, professional, honest and reflective, as shown in Figure 9.2 below:
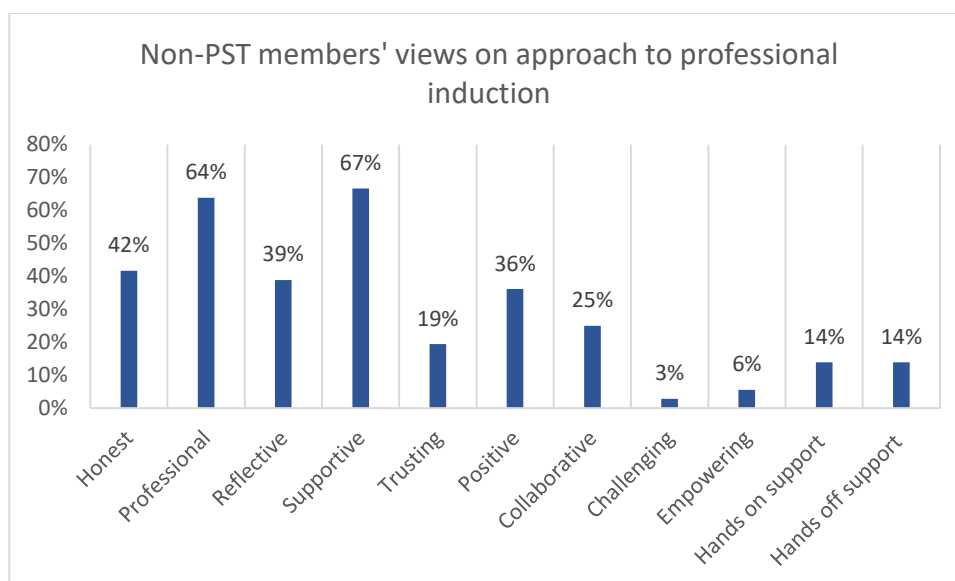
Figure 9.2 Approach to professional induction - Non-PST members' views

The majority (83%) of the participants indicate the Droichead process to be of good quality while 6% are neutral in their responses. 11% have negative views regarding the quality of Droichead.

'The PST members have so much *experience, very approachable and willing to help any staff member.'*

9.2.2 NQT supports

The survey asked non-PST participants to rank the areas where they believe the NQTs may require the most support in relation to their teaching and non-teaching activities. These areas were identified as planning and preparation, differentiation and classroom management.

The best use of the time allocated for Droichead-related activities in school, as indicated by the non-PST participants, is in relation to the observation activities. Non-PST participants favour 'observation by the NQTs of other teachers' practice' as the most effective use of Droichead time, followed by 'observation of NQTs' practice by other teachers' and 'professional conversations', as shown in Figure 9.3. The *Taisce* portfolio, cluster meetings and professional learning activities are not rated by the non-PST members as effective use of Droichead time in school.

Non-PST members' views on most effective use of time allocated to Droichead

Category	Percentage
NQT professional learning activity	0%
NQT cluster meetings	0%
Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)	0%
Professional conversations	22%
Observation of NQTs 'practice by other teachers	27%
Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice	51%
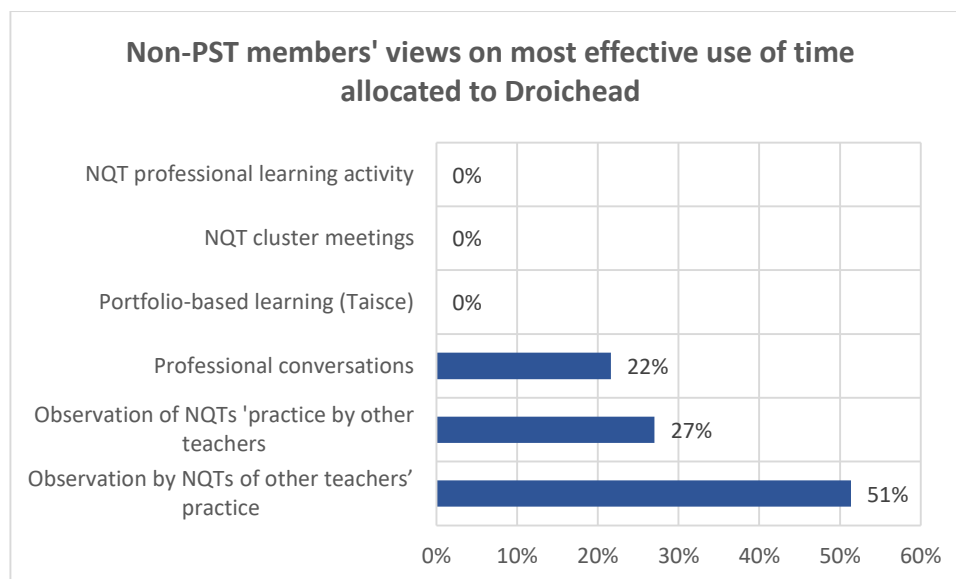
Figure 9.3 Most effective use of time allocated to Droichead - Non-PST members' views

Figure 9.4 depicts the views of participants in relation to the opportunities for collaboration and/or networks created by the Droichead process in their school. The most frequent opportunities for collaboration were seen to be co-planning, co-teaching, peer observation and class/group clusters. The less frequently availed of opportunities for collaboration included observation in a nearby Droichead school, external networks and subject specific clusters.

Non-PST members' views on opportunities for collaboration

Category	Percentage
Co-planning	74%
Co-teaching	63%
Peer observation	60%
Class/Year group clusters	37%
NQT Network in school	29%
Subject specific clusters	14%
No opportunities	6%
Observation in nearby Droichead school	6%
Other external network	6%
Other	3%
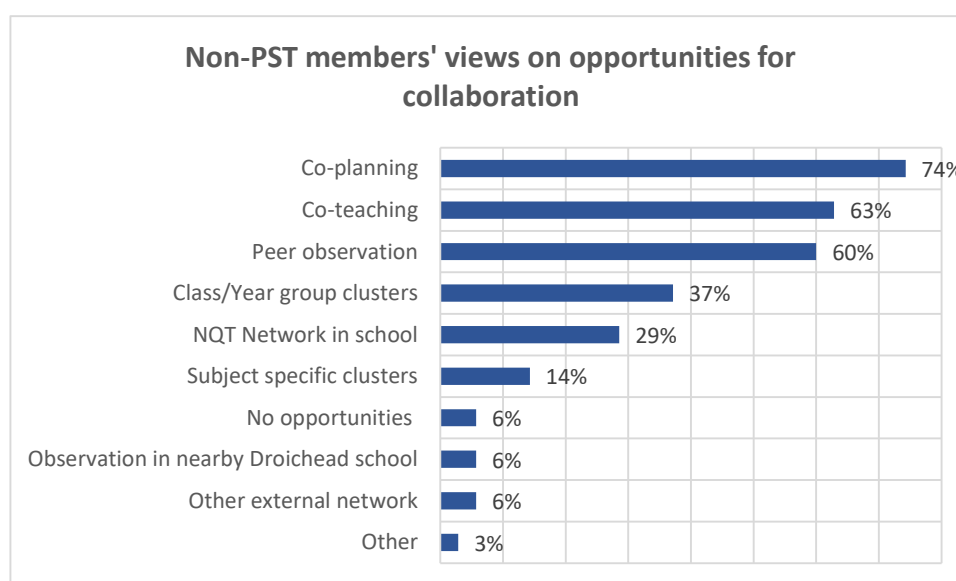
Figure 9.4 Opportunities for collaboration through Droichead - non-PST members' views

9.2.3 Inclusion in the Droichead process

In general, the majority (69%) of the non-PST members feel included in the Droichead process. The respondents spoke of being included by:

> *'giving advice and help to others from my experience of the processes'*
>
> *'I help NQTs in whatever way I can'.*

Reference was made to the level of input that the non-PST participants had into the development of indicators of good practice. This is echoed in the words of one respondent who said:

> *'The Droichead process in my school isn't mentioned to other staff members who are not on the PST'.*

31% of the non-PST participants responded that they had not been involved in the development of the indicators of good practice. 31% fall into the neutral category, while only 39% indicated that they had been involved in the development of indicators of good practice by the school. It is interesting to note that 6% of the participants responded 'Don't know' when asked if their school has developed the indicators of good practice based on the Droichead standards.

9.3 Conclusion

This chapter focused on data generated from non-PST teachers. Views on the quality of Droichead, the supports for NQTs and the extent to which they were included in the process were presented. The next chapter provides a summary and comparison of data generated and presented in chapters six through nine to contextualise themes and inform crosscutting observation from the varied data presented.

Chapter 10: The Lived Experience of Droichead

10.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of NQTs', PST members', school leaders' and non-PST members' lived experience of the Droichead process in each of the four target school settings: DEIS, SEN settings, Irish-medium and small schools, and more broadly. This serves as a platform from which to explore six key crosscutting observations made in the data sets. These crosscutting observations relate to beliefs about teaching, perceptions about NQT support needs, the perceived quality of Droichead, perceived inclusion in Droichead, the variety of lived experience and the effective use of time for Droichead activities.

10.2 The Lived Experience of Droichead

This section provides an overview of the lived experience of NQTs, PST members, school leaders and non-PST members.

10.2.1 The lived experience of NQTs

For the vast majority of NQTs, Droichead was reported as being a positive, affirmative and supportive experience. Across the data, six key indicators demonstrate this satisfaction:
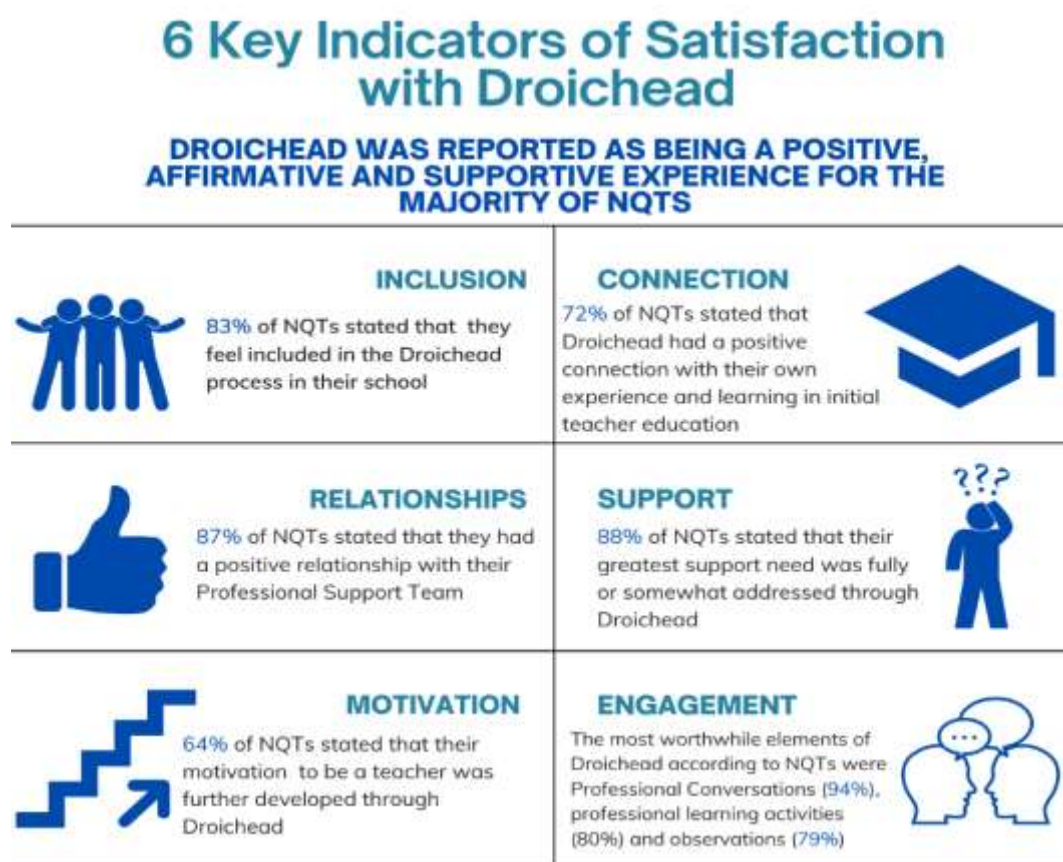
Figure 10.1 6 Key Indicators of Satisfaction with Droichead

For a small portion of NQTs, Droichead was not regarded as a positive or supportive experience. The data evidences six areas where these NQTs reported dissatisfaction with Droichead:

6 Key Areas of Dissatisfaction with Droichead

WORKLOAD
30% of NQTs stated that Droichead had a negative impact on their workload

CONNECTION
21% of NQTs stated that Droichead did not connect with their own experience and learning in initial teacher education

RELATIONSHIPS
7% of NQTs stated that they had a negative relationship with their Professional Support Team

INCLUSION
9% of NQTs did not feel included in the Droichead process

SUPPORT
12% of NQTs stated that their greatest support need was not addressed through Droichead

DROICHEAD ACTIVITIES
41% of NQTs are dissatisfied with Taisce and the cluster meetings

Figure 10.2 6 Key Areas of dissatisfaction with Droichead

The 12% of NQTs who stated that Droichead did not address their greatest support need, report a lower satisfaction rating with their teaching now, compared to those whose needs were addressed by the Droichead process. These NQTs also reported that Droichead had a negative impact on their workload, that they had little involvement in the creation of the indicators of good practice and that, generally, they did not feel included in the Droichead process in their school. In contrast, those NQTs who felt their support need was addressed through Droichead reported that the process had little impact on their workload, that they were involved in the creation of the indicators of good practice, and that they felt very included in the Droichead process.

In addition to showing that the majority of NQTs who participated in the research had a very Droichead positive experience of Droichead, the data indicates that the majority of NQTs are female, teaching in Catholic schools and aged 26-35. This is in line with the national demographic of teachers in Ireland as presented in Chapter 3. However, closer reading of the data shows that, from a lived experience perspective, NQTs are diverse and experience Droichead differently. The data suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach to induction does not work for all, and that the individual experience is as important as the global experience. As one PST member stated *'Droichead has the chance to be extremely effective (but) it needs to aim for specific goals for NQTs'*.

The following quotes capture the variety of the NQT cohorts' lived experience of Droichead:

I am motivated by – The buzz from seeing children learning, the aha moment, no matter how small.

NQT, female, aged >55 years, teaching in a SEN setting in Leinster

I am challenged by....not feeling I am good enough; self doubt

NQT, agender, aged 36-45, teaching in a post-primary DEIS school

Communication between the Droichead team was not adequate. My Droichead process suffered as a result

NQT, female, <26 years, teaching in an Irish-medium primary school in Leinster

Figure 10.3 The variety of experiences of NQTs

10.2.2 The lived experience of PST members

The data shows that the PST members who participated in the research are predominantly female and aged 36-45, which is reflective of the general teaching population in Ireland[14]. Approximately two-thirds of all PST members who responded to the survey work in primary settings, with 29% working in post primary settings and 5% working in Special Schools. Most PSTs (59%) are composed of three PST members and almost all PSTs (97%) are formed exclusively from teachers from within the school. Most PST members reported that involvement in Droichead has a positive impact on their daily work, with members spending on average between 30 minutes and one hour on Droichead activities per week. The NIPT training has a 91% satisfaction rating and almost one in three PST members have engaged in additional formal CPD activities outside the NIPT training. 98% of PST members reported that involvement in Droichead led to additional skill development and 100% of the respondents stated that they had a positive relationship with their NQTs. Overall, the PST members stated that the Droichead process was of high quality and that they felt very included in the process. Although the data is generally in agreement about the positive lived experience of the PST members, certain nuances are also articulated such as those seen in the quotes below:

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[14] https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2016/education/
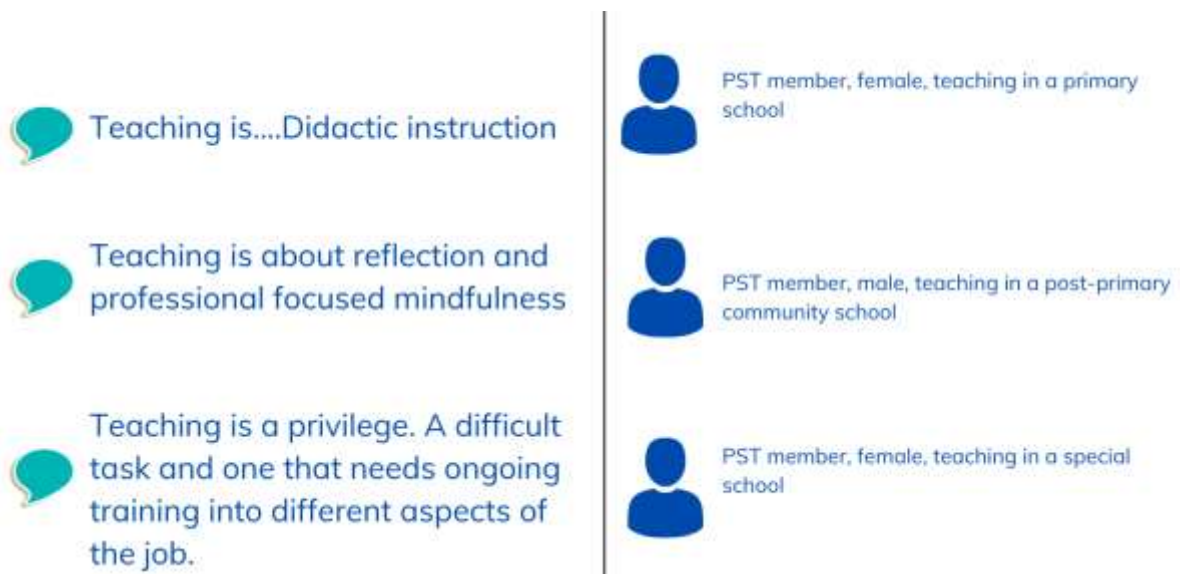
Figure 10.4 The nuances of the PST lived experience

10.2.3 Teacher learning: NQTs and PST members

As shown in previous chapters, the relationship between the NQT and the PST member is a key feature of the induction process. The data shows that both NQTs, as beginning teachers, and PST members, as experienced teachers, share the same support needs in terms of curriculum planning and classroom practices. The greatest planning support needs identified by both NQTs and PST members included planning for SEN, general planning and preparation and planning for school self-evaluation. The greatest classroom related support needs related to differentiation, assessment and feedback. The data shows variances in the support needs of NQTs and PST members in the areas of classroom management and non-teaching support needs. In relation to classroom management NQTs stated that they needed the most support with behaviour management whereas PST members needed support with teacher wellbeing and resilience. In relation to support for non-teaching areas, NQTs required additional support in working with parents and PST members stated that they needed more support with reflective dialogue. These support needs are presented in Figures 10.5a and 10.5b below.

SUPPORT NEEDS OF NQTS AND PST MEMBERS - AREAS OF SIMILARITY

NQTS

The NQTs identified the following areas where they need support in their first year of teaching

Planning & Support (Curriculum)

1. Planning for SEN

2. Planning and preparation

3. School self-evaluation planning

Classroom Practices

1. Differentiation

2. Assessment

3. Feedback

PST MEMBERS

The PST members identified the following areas where they need support in order to help NQTs

Planning & Support (Curriculum)

1. Planning for SEN

2. Planning and preparation

3. School self-evaluation planning

Classroom Practices

1. Differentiation

2. Assessment

3. Feedback

Figure 10.5a Support needs of NQTs and PST members – areas of similarity

SUPPORT NEEDS OF NQTS AND PST MEMBERS - AREAS OF DIFFERENCE

NQTS

Classroom Management

1. Behaviour management

2. Teacher well being and resilience

3. Classroom management and organisation

Non-Teaching

1. Working with parents

2. Additional responsibilities in school

3. Working with colleagues

PST MEMBERS

Classroom Management

1. Teacher well being and resilience

2. Behaviour management

3. Developing professionalism as a teacher

Non-Teaching

1. Reflective dialogue

2. Leadership skills

3. Mentoring skills

Figure 10.5b Support needs of NQTs and PST members – areas of difference

10.2.4 The lived experience of school leaders

The data indicates that the majority of school leaders are female and aged between 36-55. Of the school leaders who responded to the survey, 74% were working in primary schools, 16% in post primary schools and 10% in Special Schools. In general, the lived experience of school leaders across all settings was positive in terms of the perceived quality of the Droichead process and inclusion in the process itself. Some differences did emerge between the lived experience of school leaders and non-PST member school leaders, as follows:

- Perceived inclusion in Droichead: 94% of the PST school leaders felt very included in Droichead compared to 80% of non-PST school leaders.

- Perception of the quality of Droichead in schools: 13% of the non-PST school leaders had negative views, whereas only 1% of the PST school leaders gave a negative response.

- Satisfaction with the resourcing of Droichead: 18% of the PST school leaders indicated negative views about the resourcing of Droichead in their schools, compared to 40% of the non-PST school leaders.

- Input into the development of the indicators of good practice: 8% of the PST school leaders indicated a lack of awareness of their school's progress on the development of indicators of good practice, compared to 20% of the non-PST school leaders.

The school leaders report a high level of skill development through Droichead (96%), with the most frequently mentioned skills being leadership skills (73%), communication skills (58%) and teamwork (55%). As with other cohorts, although the data for school leaders is generally consistently positive, some variances in the lived experience of school leaders are highlighted in the quotes below:
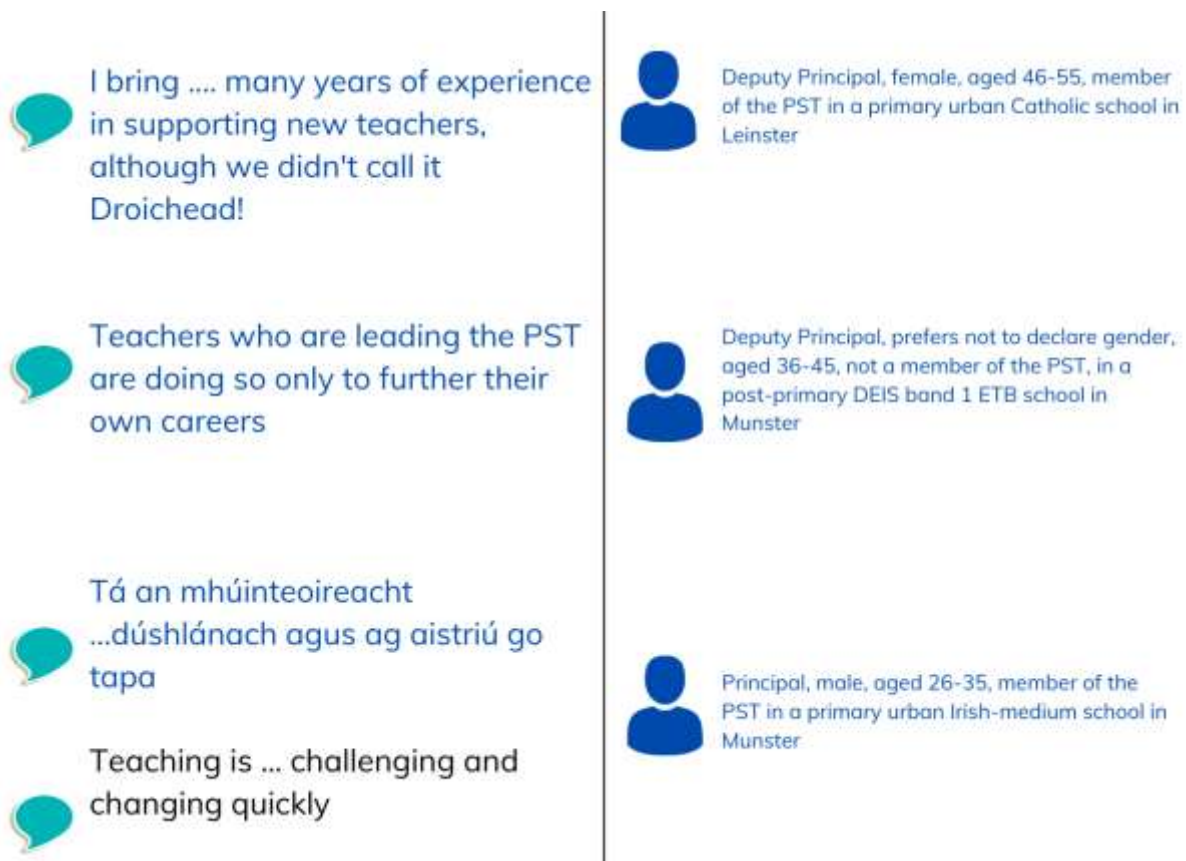
Figure 10.6 The nuances of the school leaders' lived experience

10.2.5 The lived experience of the non-PST members

The non-PST cohort consisted of teaching staff and school leaders. Of the participants, 54% were from primary school settings and 44% from post primary school settings, with the remaining 2% from Special Schools. The majority of the non-PST cohort were female (76%). The data shows that the non-PST participants also had a generally positive perspective on the Droichead process, although in the context of a whole school culture of Droichead, their perceived inclusion in the process was lower than that of other cohorts, in particular in the area of inclusion in the writing of the indicators of good practice.

> As I am new to the school, possibly I have not been made aware of the Droichead process

Non –PST Teacher, female, aged 26-35, teaching in a primary urban Educate Together School in Leinster who does not feel included in the Droichead process

> Currently I contribute nothing but it's an area that I would like to be involved in. I would like to mentor new staff and NQTs

Non –PST Teacher, female, aged 26-35, teaching in a post-primary Voluntary Secondary Catholic School in Leinster who has a positive perception of Droichead

Figure 10.7 The nuances of the non-PST members' lived experience

10.3 The Lived Experience of Droichead in the Key School Settings

This chapter outlines the opportunities and challenges associated with the Droichead process, as articulated by the teachers in each of the four settings of most relevance to this study (DEIS, Irish-medium schools, Small Schools and SEN settings).

10.3.1 DEIS settings

The teachers involved in the Droichead process in DEIS schools were wholly positive in their articulation of the opportunities that engaging in Droichead in a DEIS setting presents. NQTs stated that completing the Droichead process in a DEIS school was more positive and supportive due to the smaller class sizes and the additional support given for behaviour management. Although the setting presented challenges to the NQTs, these were taken as key learning moments, providing an opportunity to add to their skill set as teachers. One of the challenges articulated by a PST member points to the need for teachers in DEIS settings to have a calm and balanced disposition. Another challenge to completing Droichead in a DEIS setting was raised by an NQT who does not teach in a DEIS school; that is the assumption that Droichead, or teaching in general, is more difficult in a DEIS setting. However, this supposition was not echoed by the NQTs teaching in DEIS settings.

Droichead in DEIS Settings

👍 OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES 👎
Being in a deis school it offered me much needed support in relation to behaviour management (NQT)	I was in a lovely country school, if I were in a Deis setting it would have been very different (NQT)
A deis band 1 is a positive place to complete droichead in terms of the class size (NQT)	As A DEIS school there are certain qualities and characteristics that are needed - calm, balanced judgment (PST)
Working in a DEIS 1 school while completing droichead was challenging but helped me learn my role. (NQT)	
As it was a DEIS school there were multiple layers to students and that educated me professionally (NQT)	

Figure 10.8 Droichead in DEIS settings

10.3.2 Irish-medium settings

The teachers involved in the Droichead process in Irish-medium schools identified three key challenges associated with Droichead. These were: the difficulty of recruiting NQTs in Irish-medium settings; the fact that some Irish-medium settings are small schools and therefore the same staff are relied upon for observations; and the need for competency in the Irish language. The main opportunity associated with Droichead in an Irish-medium setting, as articulated by a PST member, was that for new Irish-medium schools which are in a growth phase, opportunities exist for staff to support NQTs as the school grows. Apart from these challenges and opportunities specifically associated with Irish-medium settings, the teachers articulated opportunities and challenges which were not specific to Irish-medium settings, such as differentiation, inclusion, literacy and numeracy.

Droichead in Irish-Medium Settings

👍 OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES 👎
💬 Tá an scoil seo ag fás gach bliain & mé ag iarraidh tacaíocht a thabhairt do na MNC ar gach bealach	💬 Bhí orainn FTG a bheith againn. Ní thiocfadh múinteoirí óga chun na scoile gan Droichead a bheith ann
💬 This school is growing every year and I am trying to support NQTs in every way	💬 We had to have a PST. Young teachers would not come to the school without Droichead
	💬 Scoil aon sraithe atá againn. Bímid ag brath ar na múinteoirí céanna nuair atá MNC ag breathnóireacht
	💬 We are a single stream school. We depend on the same teachers when NQTs are observing
	💬 Cruinneas sa Ghaeilge
	💬 Competence in Irish

Figure 10.9 Droichead in Irish-medium settings

10.3.3 SEN settings

The teachers involved in the Droichead process in SEN settings were strong in their articulation of the challenges that completing Droichead in a special education setting present. These challenges include:

- the lack of preparation at ITE level for teaching specifically in Special Schools
- the difficulty of completing the full Droichead process in one setting, as many primary NQTs had to go to a mainstream school to teach Irish (in order to fulfil all registration requirements)
- the difficulty in transitioning out of a special education setting into a mainstream class post-Droichead
- the need for more CPD for teachers in the area of SEN at both school and NQT cluster meeting level
- the feeling of being overwhelmed by the inter-agency work involved in teaching in a Special School.

A number of opportunities were also identified:

- the supportive nature of the Special School staff

- the fact that many Special Schools are also small schools

- the opportunity to develop teaching skills

- the joy of seeing children in SEN settings reach milestones in their development

- the potential that NQTs could specialise in the area of SEN.

Droichead in SEN Settings

👍 OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES 👎
Working in a specialised special school was a great opportunity to seek advice from a small staff	It was in a special school and my initial teacher training did next to nothing to prepare for that
It was in a special school so my approach and teaching style had to be fine tuned to suit school	I work in a special class now. The transition from mainstream to special class has been challenging.
Teaching is all about the little achievements that are such huge milestones in a special school	I did droichead as a special education teacher and I had no experience with this until Droichead
I really enjoy teaching in Special class and the fact I could complete Droichead there was very good	A lot of cluster meetings etc weren't relative to special needs.
	Challenges in access to OT, Speech and psychologists for children with SEN. Feels overwhelming.

Figure 10.10 Droichead in SEN settings

10.3.4 Small schools

The teachers involved in the Droichead process in small schools were strong in their articulation of the challenges that completing Droichead in a small school setting present. The challenges noted included the difficulty in sourcing substitute teachers to cover Droichead release time, the lack of opportunity to employ NQTs in Small Schools, the lack of staff within the school to support the Droichead activities and the challenge of handling difficulties in the process within a small staff. The main opportunity presented in a Small School was identified as the particularly supportive nature of the smaller staff.

Droichead in Small School Settings

👍 OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES 👎
Small close supportive staff	Substitution for class teachers is important in a small school.
	We have had very little opportunity to engage, small school and few NQT's since training.
	For a small school it is very difficult for NQT's to complete Droichead due to having few staff
	It was a small school so my boss was my mentor which turned into her being my inspector. (NQT)

Figure 10.11 Droichead in Small School settings

10.4 Crosscutting Observations

In this section, six key areas are explored across the data sets in order to see where there is assonance or dissonance in the lived experience of NQTs, PST members, school leaders and non-PST members of the Droichead process.

10.4.1 Beliefs about teaching

As part of the survey, NQTs, PST members, non-PST, and school leaders were asked to complete the statement *'Teaching is…'*. They were asked to provide three different short answer statements. The rationale for asking this question was to identify respondents' teaching philosophy, to establish whether there are collective teaching mindsets in schools and to affirm the foundation of professional teacher identities. The word-cloud graphics for each cohort were generated by inputting the narrative answers for each group into the Word Art word-cloud generator to provide the research with a basic understanding of the data generated as well as a rich visual representation of participants' teaching philosophies. In each word cloud there is a correlation between the frequency of the word in the responses and the size of the word in the graphic i.e. the more frequently used words are in larger print. The individual visualisations are represented below.

 For NQTs, teaching is…

Themes such as helping students to learn and develop, being a positive impact, the importance of lifelong learning, teaching as a rewarding profession, providing care and love, being a positive influence/impact, were dominant terms repeated. Additionally, words and phrases such as challenging, hard work, time consuming, and a 'sometimes thankless job', were regularly repeated among NQTs.

For PST members, teaching is...

Themes such as student learning, teaching students, teaching is constantly evolving, love of learning, privilege, holistic, vocation, fulfilling career, school community, and sharing of knowledge, were dominant terms repeated. Additionally, words or phrases such as sleepless nights, hard and demanding job, and concerns over COVID regulations, were concerns repeated by PST members.

 For School leaders, *Teaching is...*

While many themes indicated by school leaders mirrored those of NQTs and PSTs, many responses focused more on teaching as an administrative role and were less child/student-focused and more self-focused. Terms such as being a curriculum expert, fostering life skills, providing and facilitating a structured induction process, and empowering others, were repeated.

 For Non-PST members, Teaching is...

Words or phrases such as rewarding, being a role model, having a generosity of spirit, a way of life, encouraging social development, and helping students reach their fullest potential were dominant terms used by the non-PST members. Additionally, tough but rewarding, hard work, a stressful occupation were words or phrases used less frequently by the non-PST members.

The beliefs about teaching expressed by all respondents centred on learning, on the student, on the altruistic nature of teaching, on the rewarding aspects of teaching. There was general agreement that teaching can be challenging yet rewarding at the same time. In looking across the four cohorts it can be seen that a frequent interpretation of teaching is that of an active practice where teachers help, provide support, foster, encourage and share. It is interesting to note that only the school leaders referenced the curriculum when describing teaching.

10.4.2 Perceptions of NQTs' support needs

The NQTs stated that their greatest support needs were:

- planning for SEN
- differentiation
- behaviour management

The PST and non-PST members also identified differentiation as one of the areas in which they believed NQTs needed most support. Unlike NQTs, however, they also identified planning and preparation and classroom management/organisation as areas where NQTs required support. These responses show some dissonance between the views of NQTs and those supporting them, in that NQTs were more focused and specific in the type of support needs they had in relation to the planning for SEN in particular and isolating the behaviour management element of classroom management.

10.4.3 Perceived quality of Droichead

The data showed that all participants in the Droichead process gave it a quality rating of 80% or above. As Figure 10.12 below shows, the highest quality rating comes from the PST, with the PST members who are not school leaders giving a quality rating of 93% and the PST members who are school leaders giving a quality rating of 90%. Only 1% of the PST cohort provided a negative response. The NQT and non-PST teachers also rate the quality of the Droichead process very highly, although their ratings are somewhat lower than those of the PST members.
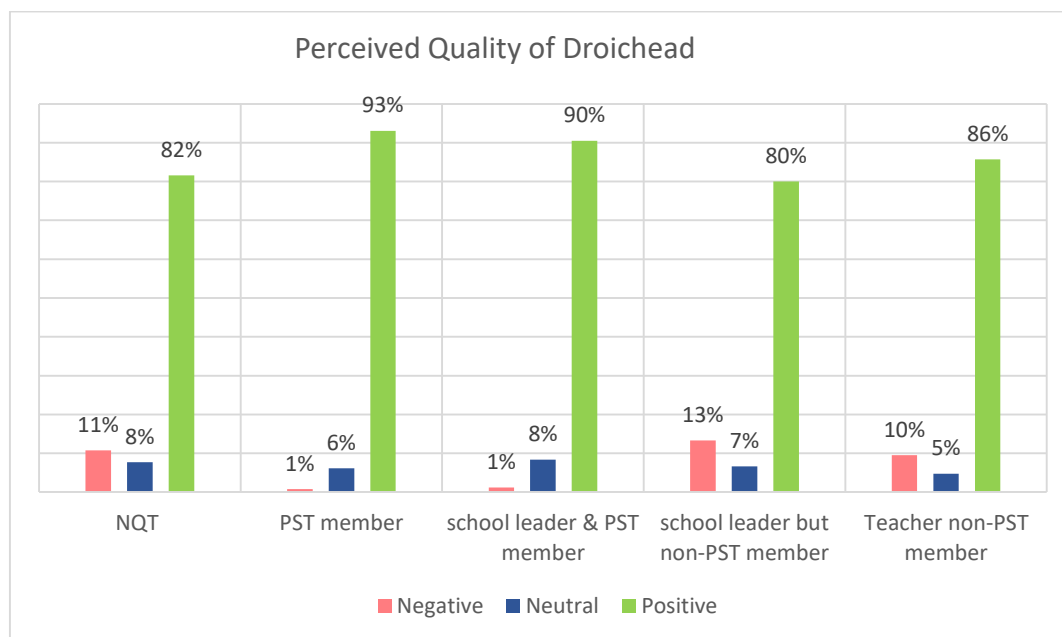
Figure 10.12 Perceived quality of Droichead

10.4.4 Perceived inclusion in Droichead

The vast majority of respondents felt included in the Droichead process. 93% of PST members who are not school leaders, and 94% of those who are school leaders regarded it as an inclusive process, while 82% of NQTs concurred. Teachers not directly involved in Droichead also felt included but not to the same level as NQTs and those on the PST, with 73% of non-PST school leaders and 67% of teachers who were not PST members indicating that they felt included.
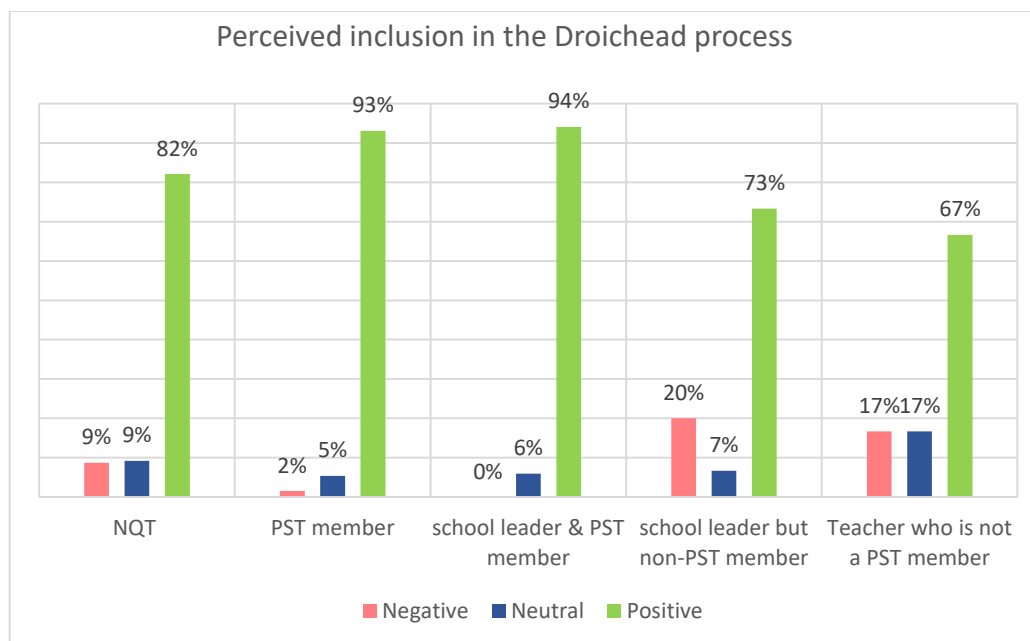
Figure 10.13 Perceived inclusion in Droichead

10.4.5 The variety of lived experience

Overall, the lived experience of Droichead for NQTs, PST members, school leaders and non-PST members was positive, supportive and learning oriented. The data showed that there was a continuum of experiences within each cohort, with a small portion of teachers having a negative perspective of Droichead, some others being neutral about it as a process, and the majority being positive. This means that in any individual school setting, multiple combinations of perspectives could be brought to the fore. Informed by the narratives of the survey respondents, some of these potential lived experiences are described in Figure 10.14:
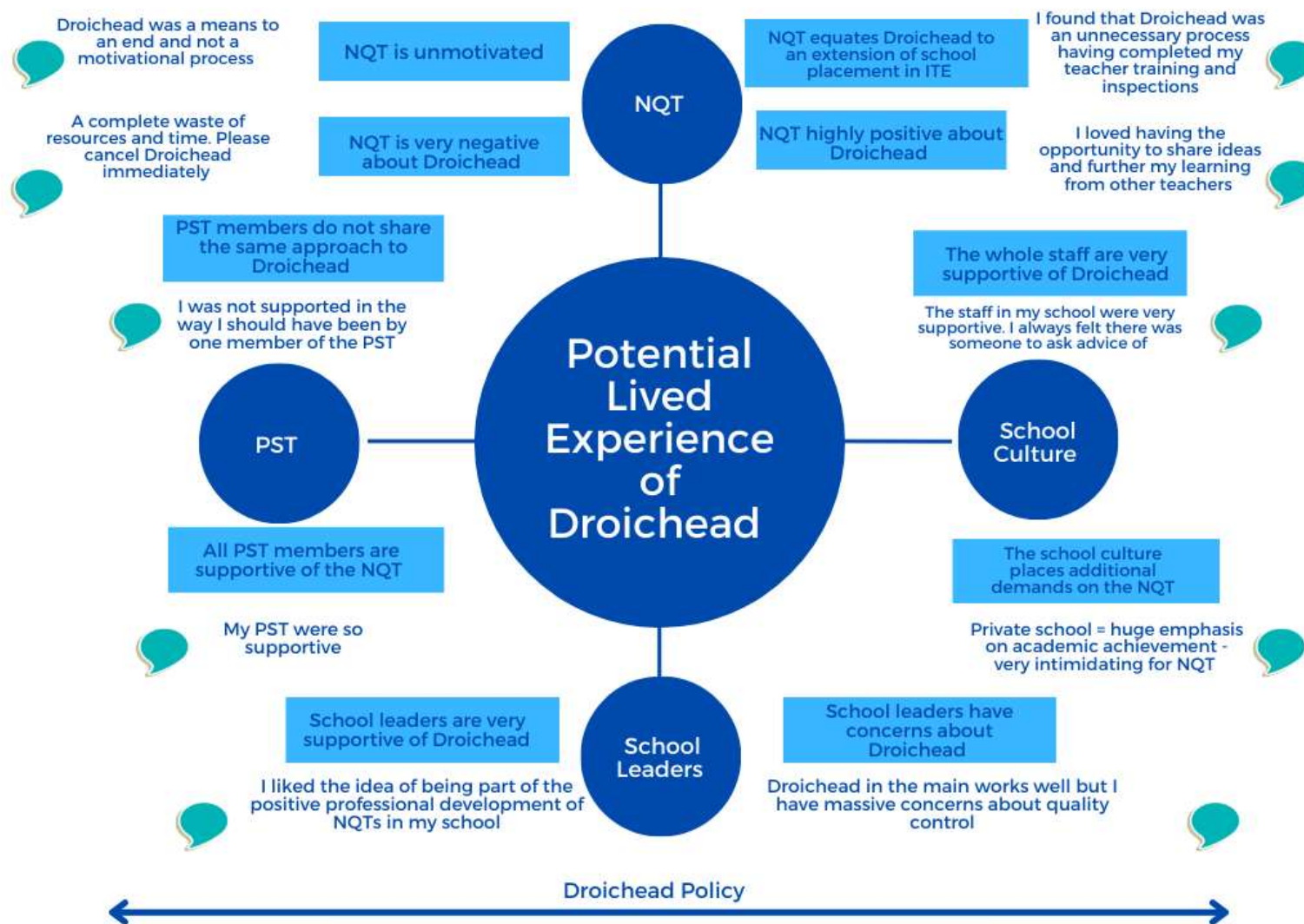
Figure 10.14 The complex nature of the lived experience of Droichead

This visual shows that the lived experience of Droichead is a complex one, informed by the lived experience of the NQT, the PST, the school leader, the school culture and is underpinned by Droichead policy. This shows that although Droichead is a standard process across all settings, the contextual and personal factors in each individual Droichead process need to be considered by those involved.

10.4.6 Effective use of time for Droichead activities

There is general agreement across the three groups (NQTs, PST members, non-PST members), that professional conversations and observations are the most effective use of Droichead time and that the *Taisce* portfolio is the least effective use of time for Droichead activities, as shown in Figure 10.15 below. It is interesting to note that the NQT professional learning activity is regarded as significantly more effective by NQTs than by either the PST or non-PST members

MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF TIME FOR DROICHEAD ACTIVITIES

NQTS

1. Professional Conversations

2. NQT professional learning activity

3. Observations

4. NQT cluster meetings

5. Taisce portfolio

PST MEMBERS

1. Professional conversations

2. Observations

3. NQT cluster meetings

4. NQT professional learning activity

5. Taisce portfolio

NON-PST MEMBERS

1. Observations

2. Professional conversations

=3. Taisce Portfolio/ NQT cluster meetings/ NQT professional learning activity

Figure 10.15 The most effective use of time for Droichead activities

10.5 Conclusion

The lived experience of Droichead is, for the majority of those involved, positive, supportive and learner-oriented. However, closer interrogation of the narratives and experiences of individual NQTs, PST members, school leaders and non-PST members revealed lived experience ranging from very positive to neutral to negative. In general, the data showed that those involved in Droichead have similar foundational beliefs about teaching. Some variances exist between the cohorts in terms of understanding the specificity of NQT needs in the areas of SEN planning and behaviour management, the inclusion of non-PST members in the Droichead process and the value ascribed to the NQT professional learning activities. The congruence of perspectives articulated through the data, validates the Droichead process as it stands and the incongruities identified, point to areas for development as discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 11: Discussion

11.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects on and synthesises the themes identified (using the Braun and Clarke (2006) framework) from the international literature presented in Chapter 2, the Irish context overview presented in Chapter 3, and the lived experience and narratives of the participants in this study as detailed in Chapters 6 through 10.

The themes explored and discussed in this chapter include;

- Droichead as part of the continuum of the teacher education continuum

- Droichead in an international context

- Teaching as a relational and collaborative profession

- Teaching motivation

- Droichead and leadership

- Diversity in the profession

- Droichead across different school settings

11.2 Droichead as Part of the Continuum of Teacher Education in Ireland

The promotion of a seamless continuum of teacher education, which includes Droichead, is a consistent feature of the work of the Teaching Council. The continuum of education is mentioned in the foundational work of Prof. John Coolahan's *A Review Paper on Thinking and Policies Relating to Teacher Education in Ireland* (2007), in early reports such as the Conway *et al.,* (2009) *Learning to Teach* report and the *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011), and in the more recent publications on Céim (2020), Droichead (2016) and Cosán (2017). Symeonidis (2020), commenting on the concept of a continuum of teacher education, and drawing on the European Commission (2015), states that 'the different phases are interlinked in a coherent integrated approach so that every phase gives feedback to the previous phase in order to enhance quality, and is influencing the phase following' (p. 59). Caena (2014), drawing on the work of Eurydice (2011), Vailiant and Manso (2013), Day *et al.,* (2006) Learnovation (2009) and Schneider (2008), suggests four key areas that are needed in a continuum of teacher education:

a. Cooperation and dialogue between all stakeholders (Government, schools, ITE providers, national stakeholders in education)

b. Mentoring of ITE students by experienced mentors from schools

c. Closer school and university collaboration

d. Application of consistent creative and innovative approaches along each stage of the continuum.

In the data, the respondents did not refer to the continuum specifically, but they did refer to the concept of their learning being *continuous.* The core values of respect, integrity, trust and care (Teaching Council, 2016), which are central to each phase of the continuum, were articulated by the teachers in this study. The word integrity was not used specifically, but words such as *honesty, moral*

and *values* were used to convey the concept of integrity. A commitment to the standards which underpin the continuum of teacher education was also evidenced in the data, with respondents commenting that as a result of engagement with Droichead, they were '*more conscious of my own professional conduct*' and '*teaching (has been) enriched by professional dialogue and lesson observations'.* The value of reflective practice is explicit at each stage of the continuum of teacher education. NQTs and PST members all spoke of the importance of reflection in the teaching profession, and teaching was viewed as 'a profession that is constantly evolving and requires constant self-reflection'. However, only 17% of NQTs, 16% of PSTs and 10% of school leaders described Droichead as a reflective process. This perception of Droichead as a reflective process may be a factor in NQTs regarding the mechanism (i.e. a portfolio) by which they are asked to reflect, as '*an unnecessary extra workload'*. This is a conundrum as NQTs are reflecting, and see the benefit of reflection; however, a mechanism for reflection that works for teachers, and can be embedded across the continuum is needed. Reflecting in the context of a post-COVID era may provide an important opportunity to examine how new ways of living, learning and connecting can positively impact on the teaching profession, as Sir Ken Robinson observed:

> "We can reinvent schools, we can revitalize learning, and we can reignite the creative compassion of our communities, if we think differently. We can do this by working together, by continuing to build on collaborations that began during lockdowns. Real social change comes from the ground up, through cultivating the grassroots. Real power is with the people. By recognizing that and by nurturing compassionate collaboration we can redesign and rebuild our normal in a way that is fit for purpose. "(Robinson, 2020, p.9)

Teacher learning is pivotal during each stage of the continuum of teacher education. It is defined as 'all the learning which teachers engage in to support their professional practice and to address the needs of all pupils in their care.' (Teaching Council, 2020, p. 6). In Céim the focus is on the process of learning about being a teacher (ibid, p.8); in Droichead the focus is on professional learning and practice; and in Cosán the focus is on ongoing professional learning processes. In this study, learning was seen as a motivator for teaching, as an experiential part of being a teacher, as a collaborative process, and as something that is sustained across a career in teaching. One respondent summarised this by stating that 'teaching is a catalyst for learning'.

Echoing the work of Caena (2014), the respondents point to areas where there is scope to further embed the continuum of education in the lived experience of teachers. This could be achieved through deeper collaboration between the HEIs and schools and be enacted through:

  i.   Dialogue around identified areas of challenge for NQTs, such as behaviour management, planning and SEN
  ii.   Identification of potential areas of collaboration within school placement
  iii. Dialogue centred on the continuum of professional learning from the initial teacher education phase through to the induction phase

These areas of collaboration between the HEIs and schools would help to strengthen the three '*Is*' of the continuum: *innovation, integration and improvement* (Teaching Council, 2011).

11.3 Droichead in an International Context

In this section, Droichead is considered within an international context by drawing on the data in the context of the international research on induction and mentoring.

11.3.1 Features of induction programmes

As an induction process, Droichead adheres comprehensively to the key features of successful induction programmes identified in the international literature (Kearney, 2016,) in that;

- It is a one-year mandatory induction programme.

- High quality mentor support is provided through the NIPT.

- Collaboration is identified as a feature; observation is rated as an effective element of the process.

- Release time is provided for induction activities.

- Teacher learning is central to the process for NQTs and PST members.

- NQTs engage in cluster meetings.

- Professional support networks and a culture of professional learning are created in the school.

Some additional features of induction programmes identified in the international literature, but not seen in Droichead, could be considered in future iterations of induction in Ireland. These include:

- assigning a mentor to a NQT for three years so that there is continuation of support and acknowledgement of the early career stage beyond the one-year induction programme (Shanghai)

- an extension to the work undertaken by the Teaching Council and NIPT with graduating teachers, to include a pre-employment orientation programme for NQTs to introduce them to the school setting and practicalities associated with working in schools (Canada, Singapore, Australia, Korea)

- reduced teaching time for NQTs to allow more time to be spent on induction activities (Shanghai, Scotland, Japan, England)

- the completion of an individual development chart to detail their own self-evaluation, self-analysis and self-reflection (Estonia)

- engagement with out-of-school cultural, civic and volunteering activities as a catalyst for exploration of educational values (Turkey)

- the use of an induction app, or an online platform, to keep all parties up to date with information relevant to the induction process (Australia)

11.3.2 The lived experience of NQTs

The systematic review of international literature found that the challenges faced by NQTs in the early career phase are relatively uncontested and include building relationships, classroom management and organisation, assessment, differentiation and the 'reality shock' of moving from the university to the classroom (Glazzard & Coverdale, 2018; Veenman, 1984). This current study found that the greatest support needs of NQTS, as identified by them, were planning for SEN, differentiation and behaviour management. Building relationships was not identified as a specific challenge in general, although 7% of NQTs did state that they had a negative relationship with their PST members. It is

interesting to note that all PST members said they had a positive relationship with their NQT, so this may suggest that difficulties in relationships in schools may not always be articulated, reflected upon or acknowledged. The concept of 'reality shock' was not raised by the NQTs in this study. This may be in part due to the fact that, at ITE level, students now spend extended periods of time on school placement and, as such, perhaps do not experience that reality shock in the same way as before.

The international research also raised a question about the vulnerability of the NQT (Day *et al.*, 2006). In general, NQTs were positive about the level of support they received in their first year of teaching and they felt included in this process. Most NQTs also reported a low level of need in the area of support for their wellbeing and resilience. However, responses from a small number of NQTs did suggest a vulnerability emanating from both internal and external pressures, yet there was no indication that this was caused by the 'multitude of stressors found in the early years of their careers' (Vesely, Saklofske & Nordstokke, 2014, p.82).

11.3.3 The quality of induction experiences

Helms-Lorenz *et al.,* (2016) reported that it is the quality of the mentoring, and not the duration, that leads to the growth of positive dispositions and skills. This is not unique to education and is seen in other professions such as medicine (Hee *et al.*, 2020). In this study, the quality of the Droichead process was rated highly by all cohorts. In particular, NQTs perceived their relationships with their PSTs to be of high quality and they favoured the opportunities to engage in professional conversations with colleagues and to be observed by and observe colleagues.

The systematic review found that the underpinning positionality of the mentor informed the types of actions taken as a mentor. Mentoring relationships are grounded in philosophical, historical and sociological factors (Garza & Irby, in Irby *et al.*, 2020). The data showed that the underpinning beliefs of the PST members, NQTs and school leaders were closely aligned, with a strong focus on learning, the needs of the student, the altruistic nature of teaching, the rewarding aspects of teaching and a general agreement that teaching can be challenging yet rewarding. This alignment of beliefs may contribute to the high satisfaction ratings given to the approaches taken to supporting NQTs in the Droichead process.

11.3.4 Investment in induction

The importance of the funding of induction programmes, and the complexities involved in this funding, were highlighted by Aspfors and Fransson (2015), Helms-Lorenz *et al.,* (2016), Kearney (2014), Langdon *et al.,* (2014), and Mooney Simmie *et al.,* (2017). In Ireland, Droichead is State-funded and resourced. According to the OECD (2020), spending on primary and post-primary education in Ireland is in line with the OECD average. The State funds the following resources for induction in Ireland:

- NIPT Training with release time

- NIPT refresher training with release time

- Release time to conduct the Droichead process

- NIPT school visits

- NIPT templates

- NIPT online resources

- Information sessions for principals

There is little agreement between the three cohorts in this study regarding the resourcing of induction in Ireland. 23% of NQTs stated that the funding of Droichead was more than adequate, 9% stated it was totally inadequate, 20% were neutral in their response and 48% felt it was generally acceptable. More than half of the NQTs were unaware of what State-funded resources had been availed of in their school. Those who were aware of the resources used stated that NIPT training, release time for Droichead activities, the NIPT templates and the NIPT online resources were the most frequently used. PST members were much more aware of how resources were used, with only 3% stating that they were unaware of what resources were used. In relation to the adequacy of the funding, 13% of PST members stated that the funding of Droichead was more than adequate, 64% felt it was generally acceptable, 12% were neutral in their response and 13% stated it was totally inadequate. The most frequently availed of State funded resources for PSTs were the NIPT training with release time (89%), release time to conduct the Droichead process (71%), NIPT templates (67%) and NIPT online resources (68%). There was a lack of awareness among the non-PST members about how resources were used for Droichead, with 36% stating that they did not know what resources were availed of. Although there was a general acceptance across all three cohorts that the funding of Droichead is adequate, complexities arise in the narratives provided by the respondents, with the greatest of these challenges being the lack of substitute cover to avail of the funded release time for Droichead activities. One respondent stated that 'Sub cover is vital and Droichead is impossible without it' while another stated that they 'were unable to get sub cover for PST/NQT observations in 2018/2019'.

11.3.5 The TALIS report

Although Ireland has not participated in the TALIS study since 2008, the findings of this study into the lived experience of Droichead resonate with many areas of the most recent report (TALIS, 2018).

- In the TALIS report 90% of teachers stated that they were satisfied with their job. The satisfaction rating for NQTs in this study was similar at 93%.
- The highest ranked motivation for teaching in the TALIS study was that teaching allowed teachers to influence the lives of children and young people (92%). A similar motivation was also ranked as highest in this study with NQTs stating that a desire to enthuse students and make a difference to the lives of learners was what motivated them most in their teaching.
- The TALIS report identified five key aspects that predict both job satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy. These are:
    1. Selection of candidates with strong motivation and the right attitudes to become lifelong learners and professional workers
    2. A strong focus on induction and mentoring throughout the career
    3. A strong focus on providing meaningful and impactful opportunities for professional learning
    4. Working conditions and a school climate conducive to teacher well-being
    5. The importance of a sense of trust and respect

Factors 1, 3 and 5 were largely reflected in this study, with factors 2 and 4 being reflected to a lesser extent.

- The TALIS report identified training for working with students with SEN as the greatest learning need of teachers. This study also identified that the greatest support need of NQTs and PST members was planning for SEN.

Some differences between the TALIS (2018) findings and teachers' lived experience of Droichead are also noteworthy:
- The TALIS report found that 15% of teachers were observed by another teacher more than four times a year. In this study, 58% of NQTs observed another teacher teaching three or more times a year, and 57% were observed by another teacher three or more times per year.
- The TALIS findings indicated that teachers in schools serving communities of disadvantage were more likely to want to change school. The narratives reported in this study showed that, although teaching in a DEIS school can be challenging, it was seen as a rewarding and developmental experience that was supported by the school community and aided by smaller class sizes.
- The TALIS report found that half of newly qualified teachers participated in an induction programme and only 22% had the support of a mentor. In Ireland, all NQTs now participate in an induction process and have access to a professional support team.

11.3.6 National policy statements on mandatory induction

Ireland is in a strong position internationally in that it is among the nations who have a national policy stance on mandatory teacher induction. In Ireland mandatory induction has been in place since 2012. Examples of other jurisdictions with a mandatory requirement for teacher induction are New Zealand, Australia, England, Japan, Finland, Shanghai, Estonia and Singapore.

In other countries, the mandatory nature of induction is more regionally based, for example in the US the approach to induction varies greatly from state to state, with some states having mandatory two-year programmes, such as the California Teacher Induction Program, which is contrasted with over twenty other states that have no requirement for induction support for newly qualified teachers (New Teacher Center, 2016). The situation is similar in Canada, with a mandatory New Teacher Induction Program in Ontario and non-mandatory provincial support in other regions.

11.3.7 Vocabulary of induction

In the systematic review of international literature in Chapter 2, the issue of the terminology used when describing teacher induction was raised. The data showed that teachers in Ireland use the word *process* to describe Droichead more frequently than the internationally recognised term of *programme*. The word *process* was used in the survey responses 161 times whereas the word *programme* was used only 21 times. The terms *novice, beginning* and *pre-service teacher,* which are seen in the international literature, were not used by the Irish teachers at all.

The most frequently used words in the survey responses are shown in the image below. This indicates that the school is central to the conversation on Droichead, with importance being attached to terms such as *teaching, learning, support* and *process*.

Figure 11.1 Most frequently used words in the DEEPEN survey responses

An interesting point to note is that the term *mentor*, or a variation thereof (*mentoring, mentors, mentored and mentorship*) was used by survey respondents 144 times, which suggests that it is a term that teachers associate with the induction process. The term *mentor* is no longer used in the Droichead documentation and parlance, with *PST member* now used. However, PST members are trained as *mentors* by the NIPT. This inconsistency in terminology is worthy of further exploration.

11.4 Teaching as a Relational and Collaborative Profession

The findings of this study showed that teaching is a relational and collaborative profession. The respondents highlighted the importance of trust, respect, inclusion, open communication, sharing knowledge, collaboration and quality teaching /professional relationships. What emerges from the data is an understanding of a professional relationship that is established and maintained by practices that seek genuine collegiate and collaborative interaction among teaching staff. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) refer to an overarching concept of 'professional capital' that builds on its various forms within the field of education, amplifying the value of conversations, connections and relationships at all levels in the teaching profession. Within the induction space, conversations, connections and relationships between NQTs, PST members and school leaders are central to the induction process within the culture of the school.

NQTs reported that relationships, as part of the Droichead process, are 'about building relationships with people thorough positive communication and support' and that Droichead leads to 'a very open-door policy for support and advice'. Open communication and consistent, constructive feedback can establish trust between the NQT and PST that is vital for establishing professional relationships during the Droichead process and developing positive working relationships. NQTs report 'continued support and feedback from PST team' and that when ample communication is afforded, they feel valued and appreciated as colleagues. This results in positive overall experiences of Droichead and lays the foundation for a strong and connected community of practice among teaching professionals. However, some experiences with communication are not positive. As reported, '*Communication between the Droichead team was not adequate. My droichead process suffered as a result*'.

The value that teachers of all abilities draw from working together is well recognised (Edmonson, 2012). Collaboration contributes positively to a culture of collegiality among NQTs and seasoned teaching professionals. Schools with higher levels of teacher collaboration are found to have higher student performance and achievement (Goddard, 2007). There is a need to promote investment in a professional learning community of educators and to develop teaching professionals that are committed to collaborating more deeply to achieve greater impact (Hargreaves, 2018). A focus on improving mentoring and teaching practice through collaboration with each other is essential to foster a strong and fully embraced Droichead process.

11.5 Teaching Motivation

Motivations are inexorably linked to satisfaction and longevity for teaching professionals or, in the words of Watt & Richardson (2012), 'teaching motivation matters' (p. 125). It has long been established in research that experiences during the early years of teaching have long-term effects on teaching professionals and that once teachers secure teaching positions, a vast majority consider it a lifetime career (OECD 2003). Participant responses in this study indicate that teaching is a rewarding profession due to:

- Quality relationships with pupils

The data showed that the opportunity to share knowledge, work with young people, the satisfaction gained from helping pupils, and making a difference are motivational factors in teaching. One teacher articulated their motivation as *'the opportunity to be the one good adult in a child's life that sees that child for their potential'*.

- Professional relationships with colleagues and school leaders

In evaluating motivation and satisfaction, a recurring theme throughout the research is the reporting by participants of positive, quality relationships with their colleagues and mentors during the Droichead process. One NQT described this as '*my Droichead process meant that I had constant support and guidance in my first year teaching*',

- Supportive and collaborative experiences and positive school culture

The data shows that when the school promotes a positive, supporting, and collaborative culture among colleagues and school staff, there can be an overall sense of trust and appreciation. One NQT stated that a '*good rapport developed with colleagues through the experience (and) it promoted collaboration*'. Many participants agreed that, throughout the Droichead process in their schools, there was a collaborative culture characterised by mutual support, whereby most colleagues trusted and appreciated them. These results are consistent with research by Van Maele and Van Houtte (2012), who found that teachers who experienced positive, collegial and collaborative relationships with teaching mentors, co-workers and school staff members, found their teaching and learning effectiveness enhanced, which in turn contributed to satisfaction and a desire to continue teaching as a lifetime career. When teachers support one another in a spirit of collegiality, it creates a natural tendency for continued collaboration that has ripple effects that promote teacher sustainability and longevity.

11.6 Droichead and Leadership

Leadership is an important aspect of any induction programme/process (Langdon *et al.*, 2014). School leaders and members of the PST play a pivotal role in supporting the NQTs, both professionally and morally (Aspors & Fransson, 2015; Harrison *et al.*, 2006). Positive and supportive relationships amongst the school leaders, PST members and the NQTs emerged as a key finding of this study. 93% of the school leaders described their relationship with the NQTs as very positive. The literature describes the strength and nature of these relationships between the mentors and the mentees as an ecological aspect of leadership and asserts that the quality and impact of induction processes are dependent on strong ecological leadership (Blomeke *et al.*, 2015; Richter *et al.*, 2013; Shwartz & Dori, 2016). The research findings indicate evidence of strong ecological leadership within Droichead.

Research establishes that the quality of an induction process depends not only on how it is implemented but also on the beliefs and dispositions of school leaders and mentors (Helms-Lorenz *et al.*, 2016; Langdon *et al.*, 2014). The school leaders and PST members reflected highly positive views about the contribution of Droichead to their own professional development. The enhancement of leadership skills as reported by the school leaders and PST participants, suggests that Droichead has a positive impact on developing strong leadership practices in schools. Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir (2018) posit that good leadership practices help foster a positive organisational culture.

The analysis also reveals differences in perceptions, depending on the role and positionality of participants in their school. School leaders who were also members of PST had more positive views of Droichead than those who were not members of the PST. The non-PST school leaders stated that they felt less included in Droichead and they gave a more negative view of the quality of Droichead when compared to school leaders who were also PST members. As stated earlier, 13% of the non-PST school leaders rated the quality of Droichead as poor, whereas only 1% of the PST school leaders had a negative perception of the quality of Droichead. These divergences raise questions about how a professional learning culture is perceived by those who are not directly involved in Droichead. A plausible explanation for the variations in perceptions could be that the involvement of the PST members in the activities related to Droichead provide them with a better understanding of the process, the challenges or complexities related to it and the nature of support required for NQTs' professional development.

All school leaders, irrespective of their role in school, consider, 'Portfolio based learning (Taisce)' as the least effective use of time for Droichead activities. Overall, school leaders have the most positive views about the Droichead programme compared with other participants. These views are in line with those from Langdon *et al.*, (2014) emerging from a New Zealand survey of induction and mentoring, where perceptions of school leaders were reported as extremely positive when compared to others involved in the induction process.

11.7 Diversity in the Profession

Goodwin (2020) refers to "the collective agency and communal power of teachers everywhere, to deeply affect the nature of their work and the learners with whom they work" (p.12). The DEEPEN research did not seek responses from participants relating to ethnicity, race, ability or disability, income, family circumstances, minority grouping, cultural background, language or health status which is itself a limitation of the findings. Other issues such as silences in the data (What are people not saying?/What would those who did not respond have said?) and how participants understand

their identity (e.g. Does a teacher who completed Droichead in 2016/17 identify as an NQT?); merit consideration when interpreting the data. Further information of this nature would have facilitated a broader discussion on diversity and would have presented a more balanced consideration of the topic of diversity within teacher induction. Notwithstanding the above limitations, the research did explore and investigate some diversity-related factors that offer a perspective on the profile of the participants in the research.

In Ireland, approximately 79% of teachers are female compared to the OECD average of 70% (Government of Ireland). The prevalence of female primary teachers is quite striking (85%) when compared proportionally to male primary teachers, and clearly indicates an unbalanced landscape. In the post-primary sector, the proportion of female to male teaches is also disproportionate (69%), but not to the same extent as the primary sector. The DEEPEN research asked participants to indicate if they were a woman (including transgender woman), a man (including transgender man), if they preferred not to say or preferred to self-describe as agender, non-binary or gender fluid. Findings from this study indicated that the majority of respondents across all three respondent categories were female 81%). Therefore, the DEEPEN research reflects a predominantly female cross sector of NQTs, PST members and non-PST members, including school leaders. The high number of female participants in the research should also be considered in terms of interpretation of the data and in terms of the potential missing voices and viewpoints in the overall data set. The representation, however, of the teaching profession in Ireland as being a feminised profession is validated through the data.

Issues of equity, social justice, interculturalism, intersectionality, equality, power, positionality and privilege are significant factors in determining who accesses the teaching profession at the entry point. Entry to undergraduate programmes of ITE in Ireland is highly competitive and requires very high points at Leaving Certificate (summative assessment at the end of post-primary school) and, in the case of entry to primary ITE (undergraduate and post-graduate), applicants must secure a specific grade in higher level Irish to be eligible for admission to ITE and to graduate to teach. Many aspiring student teachers are excluded from ITE because of barriers that are, for them, insurmountable and some of those who do access ITE face a challenging route to graduate to the induction phase. Not all student teachers progress to the induction phase and, while a significant proportion in Ireland do, the filtering mechanism that begins at the very outset of the continuum is reductive from the start, resulting in a relatively homogeneous teaching profession across the continuum. This research confirms that homogeneity at the induction phase. The majority of participants in the DEEPEN research in the NQT group, the PST group and non-PST group are primary ITE graduates who progressed through an Irish HEI undergraduate level 8 Teacher Education degree. The majority of post-primary teachers who participated in the research as NQTS, PSTs or non-PSTs progressed through Irish HEI undergraduate level 8 Teacher Education degrees with most of the remainder at post-primary undertaking postgraduate diplomas and more recently Professional Master of Education degrees. At primary level, 24% of NQTs undertook a Professional Master of Education (PME) degree while at post-primary 22% took the PME route and graduated to the induction phase.

11.8 Droichead across Different School Settings

Hargreaves' description (2008) of Professional Learning Communities as ubiquitous and as places where school-based communities work collaboratively to improve both student outcomes and teacher professional development, effectively captures the intentions and aspirations of school-based communities globally. This research showed that it is the supportive nature of a school culture and

the strength of a school community that impacts on the lived experience of Droichead for NQTS, PST members and non-PST members. This research was particularly concerned with the lived experience across four settings: DEIS, Small Schools, Irish-medium schools and SEN settings. The research found that school type or setting is not a significant factor in the impact of Droichead. The only outlier to this is in the Irish-medium settings where Strand A activities (i.e. observations and professional conversations) are undertaken through the medium of the Irish language in school and some Strand B activities, e.g. the NIPT workshop programme, are then undertaken externally through the medium of the English language. This represents a mismatch and a misalignment for NQTs and PST members from a language perspective and is contrary to the immersion policy of Irish-medium education. A lack of Droichead-related documentation through the medium of the Irish language is an associated issue.

11.9 Conclusion

This chapter synthesised and evaluated the data from the international literature presented in Chapter 2, the Irish context overview presented in Chapter 3, alongside the narratives and data generated through this research. The discussion on the continuum of teacher education, the global context of induction, relationships, motivation, leadership, diversity, and school culture leads to an articulation of findings and recommendations that are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 12: Concluding Reflection

12.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the research uses a Rolfe *et al.* (2001) reflective model/framework to conclude the research, present the consolidated findings and to propose recommendations for future iterations of Droichead within the teacher induction phase of the continuum. The researchers have opted to use a Rolfe *et al.* framework to frame the conclusion of the DEEPEN research as it offers opportunities to extend beyond "a radical critique of technical rationality" (Rolfe, 2002), and instead extends to engaging in debate, discussion and outlining proposals about future actions and iterations through objective and imaginative discourse. Such discourse requires an open-minded culturally-informed disposition that reaches beyond a mechanical or technicist approach and reflects critically on the totality of the research, including the SLR and the lived experience of all research participants: "reflective learning goes beyond the simple intake of knowledge, and involves a critical awareness of the socio-cultural environment in which the learning takes place" (Rolfe *et al*., 2001). The conclusion presents the learning and findings from the SLR combined with the findings from participants' contributions and responses and proposes possible next steps for teacher induction in Ireland.

Rolfe et al (2001) Framework
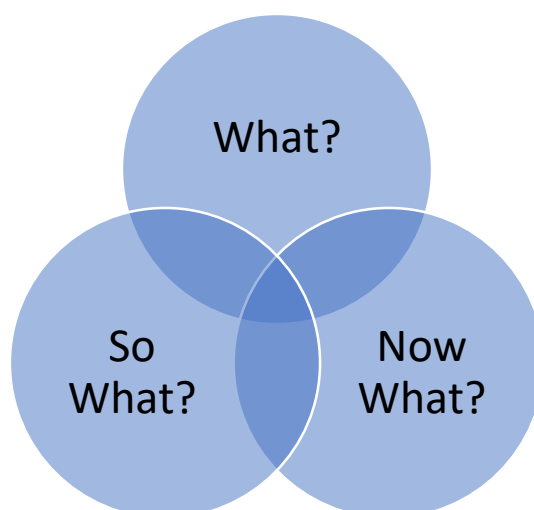
Figure 12.1 Rolfe et al (2001) framework

12.2 What? Droichead and DEEPEN

Droichead is now (2021) the sole route for induction for primary and post-primary Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in Ireland. The antecedents of Droichead included a system of probation and a pilot project on teacher induction from which an '*integrated professional induction framework* for newly qualified teachers' has been developed. Droichead is embedded within the Induction phase of the continuum of teacher education in Ireland. Droichead aims to 'support the professional learning of NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career' (Teaching Council, 2017 p. 3).

Droichead utilises a system-wide approach including school-based elements in the primary and post-primary sectors (NQTs and PSTs) and external elements through the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) (**https://teacherinduction.ie**), the Education Support Centre Network (**https://esci.ie**), subject associations, education conferences and teacher professional learning activities. School-based Droichead activities are referred to as Strand A activities, while external and additional professional learning activities are referred to as Strand B activities. Newly qualified teachers must complete both Strand A and Strand B required activities which are reviewed with the PST. Once the activities have been satisfactorily completed, NQTs are deemed to have met the requirements of Droichead. Their condition of Droichead is then removed from their registration status. NQTs may also attend Induction workshops external to their school-based activities and, while they are not a requirement, many NQTs use them as an *Additional Professional Learning Activity*.

The DEEPEN research set out to explore and elicit perspectives, experiences and narratives of newly qualified teachers, professional support team members, school leaders and other colleagues through a multi-phased (four phases: SLR, online survey, focus groups and visual data collection) research project over a three-year timeframe. Notwithstanding the challenges faced, the research team redesigned the online survey in collaboration with the Teaching Council and the Research Advisory Team to allow it to delve more deeply into the lived experience of NQTs, school leaders, PST members and other colleagues, in order to generate as much data as possible. The online survey design had been informed by the findings from the SLR and yielded a significant amount of data from which the research team gleaned and extracted relevant and rich findings that were interpreted and analysed using a Braun and Clarke framework (2006, 2020).

 The DEEPEN Research was guided by seven overarching research questions;

1. **What** has been the overall experience of NQTs of the Droichead process across the four selected settings?
2. **What** has been the overall experience of Droichead school personnel (PSTs and Non-PSTs/Whole School) of the Droichead process across the four selected settings?
3. **How** has the Droichead process impacted on teachers' learning and on school culture across the four selected settings?
4. **What** are the differences in the ways that the Droichead model is being applied at primary and post-primary levels?
5. **What** are the similarities in the ways the Droichead model is being applied at primary and post-primary levels?
6. **What** are the greatest setting-specific challenges for NQTs and schools in the implementation of Droichead?
7. **What** are the greatest setting specific opportunities for NQTs and schools in the implementation of Droichead?

The research team was guided by these research questions from the outset through the SLR and the online survey and returns to the research questions at this point as a final filter through which to consolidate the findings and propose recommendations.

12.3 So What?

So what does the research tell us about Droichead? The DEEPEN research used a case study approach to explore and elicit information about teacher induction in Ireland and about the lived experience of NQTs, PST members, school leaders and non-PST members. The main findings from the SLR and the

online survey were synthesised and discussed in detail relative to the research questions in the international context chapter and in Chapter 11 of this report.

Using a Braun and Clarke (2006) framework to analyse both the SLR and the online survey data, findings from the selected papers in the SLR and the empirical data from the online survey were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Mindful of Braun and Clarke's advice that themes do not actually emerge from data but are identified by the researchers after undertaking an iterative process of thematic analysis, a number of key themes of interest were identified from both the SLR and the survey relative to the research questions.

The findings have been aggregated collectively in Figure 12.2 below which illustrates the thematic throughput from the SLR and the exploration of the Irish context through the online survey to the overall DEEPEN findings and recommendations.

Key Themes
Mentor, NQT, Mentor & NQT Relationship, Mentoring Processes, Mentoring Approaches, Induction Context

Phase 1: Systematic Literature Review

Key Themes

- Droichead as part of the teacher education continuum
- Droichead in an international context
- Teaching as a relational and collaborative profession

Teachers' Lived Experience of Droichead

Findings (Categories)
1. Teacher learning
2. Continuum of teacher education
3. International context
4. Relationships and collaboration
5. Teaching motivation
6. Leadership
7. Diversity
8. School Settings

Recommendations (Categories)
1. NQT Orientation
2. Mentoring
3. Irish language
4. Sector-specific supports
5. Stakeholder collaboration
6. ePortfolios
7. International Network
8. PST membership
9. Postgraduate provision
10. Diversity

Phase 2: Online Survey

- Teaching motivation
- Droichead and leadership
- Diversity in the profession
- Droichead across different school settings

Key Themes
Beliefs about teaching; Perceptions about NQT support needs; Perceived quality of Droichead; Perceived inclusion in Droichead; Variety of lived experiences; Effective use of time for Droichead activities

Figure 12.2 Droichead phases, findings and recommendations

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The main findings from DEEPEN are set out below:

- Teacher Learning

The lived experience of Droichead is largely positive and very well supported in primary and post-primary schools in all school settings (four prioritised settings and 'other'). The research found that there was a strong commitment to high quality teacher induction and to teacher learning, shared beliefs about teaching and development, and a shared sense of belonging to a professional learning community. The support needs of NQTs are being addressed through the Droichead process notwithstanding the fact that challenges do exist especially in the area of SEN.

- Droichead as part of the continuum

Embedded within the continuum of teacher education in Ireland, which is a consistent feature of the work of the Teaching Council, Droichead reinforces and emphasises the importance of values, standards, reflective practice and teacher learning. Respondents in this research referred to their work as being continuous, and the core aspects of respect, integrity, trust and care (Teaching Council, 2016), which are central to each phase of the continuum, were articulated by the teachers in this study. The research found that there is scope for improvement in embedding Droichead further and more meaningfully in the continuum especially in the use of the portfolio to document reflections on professional learning and the identification of support needs; experiences in different school settings to build on the experiences in School Placement and collaboration with initial teacher education providers on areas such as planning and SEN.

- Droichead in an international context

Droichead observes and aligns to the documented key components of successful induction programmes through the inclusion of mandatory elements. Whilst acknowledging an alignment of induction programme features in Droichead and global induction programmes, there is also scope for wider personal and professional learning activities and inter-school collaboration.

- Teaching as a relational and collaborative profession

Droichead activities promote genuine collegiate and collaborative interaction among teaching staff, and build relational attributes such as trust, respect, inclusion, open communication, sharing knowledge and collaboration. A focus on the continual development of mentoring and teaching practice through collaboration with each other is essential to foster a strong and fully embraced Droichead process.

- Teaching motivation

Teaching is regarded as a rewarding profession and teaching motivation matters. Intergenerationally, teachers are motivated by quality relationships with pupils, by making a difference, by professional relationships with colleagues and school leaders and by a supportive and collaborative school culture.

- Droichead and leadership

Leadership and leadership skill development evolve from participation in the Droichead process and are not confined to teachers who occupy positional leadership roles, but also support development of strong leadership capacity across the school community, and the embedding of leadership in school culture. This highlights the need for, and importance of, a whole-school holistic and inclusive approach to providing support for the induction process.

- Diversity in the profession

Findings from this research depict an image of teachers in Ireland as being predominantly female, completing a four-year undergraduate degree and teaching in a Catholic school. The research highlights that there are missing voices and viewpoints in the lived experience of Droichead, particularly relating to gender and there are other diversity gaps. The gendered nature of the teaching profession in Ireland is replicated in the Droichead process with a predominantly female cross section of NQTs, PST members and non-PST members, including school leaders.

- Droichead across different school settings

The supportive nature of a school culture and the school community impacts more deeply the lived experience of Droichead than does the designated school type or setting. Whilst there is a commonality of experiences across all school settings in the research, some setting specific concerns do exist. In the Irish-medium settings a small number of NQTs articulated concerns about how Droichead was conducted in their schools and about relationships between them and PST members/school leaders. Significant challenges were identified in SEN settings due in part to limited time available within the continuum of education to focus on SEN specific content to support NQTs. Teacher supply was a particular issue for small schools with noted difficulties in securing substitute cover for Droichead activities. The experience of Droichead in DEIS schools was very positive.

12.4 Now What?

Underpinned by Rolfe *et al.*'s framework (2001), and drawing on the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2, the following recommendations are proposed for future iterations of the Droichead process:

1. NQT Orientation

NQTs may benefit from an initial orientation into the Droichead process. This could be achieved by means of a specific suite of activities for NQTs at the start of the Droichead process, which focus on individual needs analysis, philosophical underpinnings of what teaching is, teacher professional identity and linkages with ITE experience. These activities could be delivered asynchronously so that NQTs have autonomy in deciding when they engage with this material. A parallel CPD module should be made available to PST members so that they can complement and support NQTs as part of the professional conversations and mentoring process.

2. Mentoring

As the research has shown that teachers both use and embody the concepts and terms 'mentor' and 'mentoring', it is recommended that these be reinstated in the official lexicon of induction in Ireland.

3. Irish language

Given the growth in the Irish-medium school settings, a suite of workshops for NQTs teaching through the medium of Irish at primary and post-primary level, should be developed, and not limited to the teaching of Irish only in primary schools.

4. Sector specific supports

It is recommended that tailored supports for the individual, as opposed to the general needs of NQTs and PST members, in and across primary and post-primary settings, should be explored within Droichead, e.g. specific supports for the delivery of the primary school curriculum, specific supports for the post-primary subject curricula, specific supports for SEN settings and specific supports for Irish-medium settings.

5. Stakeholder collaboration

Greater collaboration between HEIs, schools and stakeholders in embedding and connecting the continuum of teacher education across the three phases of initial teacher education, induction and CPD could ensure a more connected and consistent discourse between all stakeholders. This would ease and support the transition of teachers as they move from one phase to the next and encourage an ethos of continuous teacher learning across the professional teaching/learning community.

6. ePortfolios

A standardised ePortfolio/digital portfolio that could be used by teachers across the continuum of teacher education for consistency, long term professional development and evidence of teacher professional evolution merits exploration as a way of capturing and documenting learning across all aspects of the continuum including the induction phase.

7. International network

Future development of Droichead should take cognisance of the growing international induction community and research base so as to ensure that future iterations of Droichead are informed by best practice and that Droichead is seen as a continually evolving process with common currency between global and national teaching contexts. A method to achieve this would be for the Teaching Council to lead the development of an International Induction Network/Working Group.

8. PST membership

PST members would benefit from ongoing training, support and renewal to nurture collaborative, supportive, relationships through the Droichead process. All teaching staff in a school should be given an opportunity to serve as PST members within a five-year timeframe as part of their continuing professional development.

9. Postgraduate provision

Provision of a centrally accredited postgraduate course in mentoring and induction leadership, management and approaches may be beneficial and instrumental in ensuring cohesion and consistency of approach and may add quality to the knowledge base on induction in Ireland.

10. Diversity

It is recommended that further research be conducted on the diversity of the teaching profession in Ireland. Whilst diversity is a complex issue which presents in many guises, there is a very specific challenge in Ireland in the fact that the teaching profession is very *feminised*, more so at primary level (85% female); but it is also an issue at post-primary level (69% female). The majority of respondents across all three respondent categories in the DEEPEN research were female (81%). Issues of equity, social justice, interculturalism, intersectionality, equality, power, positionality and privilege are significant factors in the debate on diversity in the teaching profession. Further study is required to explore how diverse the teaching profession actually is and how challenges might be addressed.

12.5 Conclusion

Induction processes in Ireland have evolved over the last number of decades. In echoing Mooney Simmie *et al.'s* words, Droichead, as an induction framework, is now visible within the national policy landscape and is prioritised and embraced by school communities (2017). This DEEPEN research project has explored and elicited the perspectives, experiences and narratives of the NQTs, PST members, school leaders and non-PST members, in order to capture the lived experience of the Droichead process in Ireland today. The findings highlight the contextual factors, supportive structures and systemic induction practices (Piggot Irvine *et al.*, 2009) of Droichead. Notwithstanding the success of the Droichead process to date, we are reminded of Mooney Simmie *et al.*'s call (2017) for continued government investment in teacher education across the continuum, including the induction phase. Continued resourcing and supports are required to sustain the progress of Droichead.

The DEEPEN research has evidenced many examples of excellent mentoring of newly qualified teachers by professional support team members, and valuable insights into relationship building, underpinned by respect, integrity, trust and care (Teaching Council, 2016). With Droichead as the sole route of teacher induction for teachers, considerable professional capital has been accumulated within the teaching profession. The research has highlighted the need to promote and sustain the quality of mentoring and the commitment of teachers to intergenerational learning communities across primary and post-primary sectors.

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Appendix A: DEEPEN Systematic Literature Review References from 81 Articles

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Shwartz, G., & Dori, Y. J. (2016). Looking through the eyes of mentors and novice teachers: Perceptions regarding mentoring experiences. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *228*, 149-153.

Smith, E. R. (2011). Faculty mentors in teacher induction: Developing a cross-institutional identity. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *104*(5), 316-329.

Spooner-Lane, R. (2017). Mentoring beginning teachers in primary schools: research review. *Professional Development in Education*, *43*(2), 253-273.

Stanulis, R. N., Little, S., & Wibbens, E. (2012). Intensive mentoring that contributes to change in begining elementary teachers' learning to lead classroom discussions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *28*(1), 32-43.

Sunde, E., & Ulvik, M. (2014). School leaders' views on mentoring and newly qualified teachers' needs. *Education Inquiry*, *5*(2), 23923.

Thomas, L., Tuytens, M., Moolenaar, N., Devos, G., Kelchtermans, G., & Vanderlinde, R. (2019). Teachers' first year in the profession: the power of high-quality support. *Teachers and Teaching*, *25*(2), 160-188.

Van Zandt Allen, L. (2014). Connecting the continuum: a university-based induction program to improve teacher quality. *Teacher Development*, *18*(1), 65-80.

Appendix B: Grey Literature included in Systematic Literature Review

Title	Author	Country	Year	Document Type	Link
1. Droichead Conditions Quick Guide	Teaching Council	Ireland	2018	Reference document/ support material	https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/_fileupload/Teacher-Education/Droichead/Conditions-Quick-Guide-2018-.pdf.
2. Droichead Quality Assurance Report 2017	Teaching Council (Chair Ciarán Flynn)	Ireland	2018	Annual Report	https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Droichead-Quality-Assurance-Report-2018.pdf.
3. Droichead Quality Assurance Report 2018	Teaching Council (Chair Ciarán Flynn)	Ireland	2019	Annual Report	https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Droichead-Quality-Assurance-Report-2018.pdf.
4. Droichead the Integrated Professional Induction Policy	Teaching Council	Ireland	2017	Policy document	https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Droichead-Integrated-Professional-Induction-Policy.pdf.
5. Information Booklet for NQTs (Induction Workshop Programme) 2019 2020	NIPT	Ireland	2019	Support material	http://teacherinduction.ie/en/supports/induction-programme.
6. Pro Forma for the submission of reconceptualised or new programmes for	Teaching Council	Ireland	2014	Support material	https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Documents/Initial-Teacher-Education-Pro-Forma-for-the-submission-of-reconceptualised-or-new-programmes-for-

	review and professional accreditation by the Teaching Council					reivew-and-professional-accreditation-by-the-Teaching-Council.pdf
7.	Key Points of Information about Droichead	Teaching Council	Ireland	2019	Support material	https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/_fileupload/Teacher-Education/Droichead/Droichead-Key-Points-2018-.pdf.
8.	Policy, Practice and Partnership: An Exploration of the Perspectives of Post-Primary School-Based Teacher Educators in Relation to School Placement	Sarah O' Grady	Ireland	2017	Unpublished thesis	http://doras.dcu.ie/21971/.
9.	School Placement in Initial Teacher Education	Kathy Hall Regina Murphy Vanessa Rutherford Bernadette Ní Aingléis.	Ireland	2018	Commissioned Research Report	https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Research-CROI-/Research-Library/Commissioned-and-Funded-Research/Commissioned-Research/School-Placement-Report.pdf.
10.	Review of the Droichead Teacher Induction Pilot Programme	Emer Smyth Paul Conway Aisling Leavy Merike Darmody Joanne Banks Dorothy Watson	Ireland	2016	Commissioned Research Report	https://www.esri.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2016-03/BKMNEXT303.pdf

11. Teaching Council Act (2001).		Ireland	2001	Legislation	http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2001/act/8/enacted/en/html.

Appendix C: Summary of Findings from Selected SLR articles

	Journal Article	Macro Findings	Micro Findings
1	**Mentoring as professional development: growth for both mentor and mentee.** (Peter Hudson) AUSTRALIA	Mentoring focused on pedagogical practices occurs in the mentoring process. This calls on mentors to evaluate and articulate their own pedagogical practices. Mentors may lack confidence/competence in mentoring certain pedagogical knowledge practices. When mentoring practices in literacy/ numeracy and science were explored specifically it was found that mentors required more CPD in the area of numeracy and more confidence in the science area.	Mentoring enhances communication, leadership and pedagogical skills. CPD for mentors was defined as enabling closer pre-service connections so that mentors could keep up to date with current practices, more time to develop, a more constant in-service programme, greater collaboration with colleagues and specific training in mentoring skills.
2	**Understanding beginning teacher induction: A contextualized examination of best practice.** (Seán Kearney) AUSTRALIA	Successful programmes of induction have the following common features: - One-to two- year mandatory induction programme - Mentor support - Possibilities for collaboration - Observation	Outside of the common features of successful induction programmes certain countries have specific defining elements such as: - Japan: High state investment and action research projects for NQTs - Switzerland: Close alliance with pre-service education

		- Reduced teaching load/ release time - Workplace learning - Seminars/ meetings for NQTs - Professional support networks - Opportunities for CPD.	- Germany/France: Apprentice style approaches. An agreed definition of induction is needed to highlight the best practice elements of induction programmes. Successful induction programmes can substantially increase retention figures.
3	**Does Induction Programme Support Novice Teachers' Intrinsic Motivation to Work?** (Merilyn Meristo Eve Eisenschmidt) ESTONIA	NQTs begin their careers with relatively high levels of intrinsic motivation and generally positive attitudes. Induction programmes may contribute to the maintenance and growth of these positive factors. Over the course of the first year of teaching NQTs learn how to cope with upcoming problems thus reducing their levels of pressure/tension. NQTs express high levels of choice within their career which is linked to the specific choice of teaching as a career and the autonomous nature of the job.	Science and language teachers find their job more enjoyable, more important and requiring more planning than general class teachers of multiple subjects.
4	**How different mentoring approaches affect beginning teachers' development in the first years of practice.**	NQTs experience distinct developmental/growth patterns in the first year of teaching related to efficacy, enthusiasm, transmissive and	NQTs who experience constructivist mentoring and develop constructivist beliefs interact less frequently with their mentor due to the development of skills

		constructivist beliefs, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction.	such as self-efficacy, independence, positive wellbeing, competence and confidence
	(Dirk Richter Mareike Kunter Oliver Lüdtke Uta Klusmann Yvonne Anders Jürgen Baumert) GERMANY	The quality of mentoring as opposed to how frequently mentoring occurs is a determinate of a successful induction programme. A constructivist approach to mentoring is more beneficial that a transmissive approach in terms of the six areas listed above.	
5	**Discursive positioning of beginning teachers' professional learning during induction: a critical literature review from 2004 to 2014.** (Geraldine Mooney Simmie Cathal de Paor Jennifer Liston John O' Shea) IRELAND	Induction programmes have changed over time, in particular in relation to financial investment and grounding in policy. Induction programmes tend to focus on simply what works for the NQT as opposed to being based on deep educational thinking about teacher professional learning. A focus on NQT performance in the first year may reduce the emphasis in induction programmes on enhancing NQT teacher knowledge and professional learning.	Studies on mentoring/induction tend to be atheoretical, focusing more on the knowledge of specific practices and less on the professional learning continuum.
6	**A Retrospective Appraisal of Teacher Induction.** (Alhijia Nasser-Abu	When the views of graduates of an induction programme were compared to NQTs in the midst of their induction programme it was found that with their	Induction programmes contribute most to the emotional domain of teaching and least to the ecological domain.

		experience of teaching post-induction, the graduates of induction programmes rated their experience of induction and its impact on them less favourably than those participating in the induction programme. It is suggested that this is due to the fact that the graduates have a more mature view of teaching and school life than their NQT colleagues. Graduates of induction programmes (one year) believe that programmes of support should be longer.	The emotional domain is defined by the research as: - Coping with discipline problems - Strengthening self-confidence - Coping with frustration - Motivating pupils - Creating a positive classroom climate - Dealing with pupils' personal problems - Promoting motivation to teach - Dealing with parents The ecological domain is defined by the research as: - Familiarity with school rules and regulations - Becoming part of the school team - Relationships with school personnel - Carrying out additional duties - Organization of non-teaching activities
M Fadia Barbara Fresko) ISRAEL			
7	**Looking Through the Eyes of Mentors and Novice Teachers: Perceptions Regarding Mentoring Experience.** (Gabriella Shwartza Yehudit Judy Dori) ISRAEL	The role of the mentor is multi-faceted including activities related to emotional, pedagogical, content and technical aspects of teaching. There are three dimensions of perceptions held by mentors and NQTs related to the induction process: 1. The Technical dimension which includes time, administrative tasks, student assessment and classroom discipline.	The mentor/NQT relationship is important in the induction process. Mentoring should include the technical, professional and affective dimensions.

		2. The Professional dimension which includes pedagogical, content and curriculum knowledge. 3. The Affective dimension which includes positive feelings of friendship and motivation and negative feelings of criticism and disappointment.	
8	**Longitudinal effects of induction on teaching skills and attrition rates of beginning teachers.** (Michelle Helms-Lorenz Wim van de Grift Ridwan Maulana) THE NETHERLANDS	Beginning teachers in an experimental group (3 year programme) showed greater improvements in teaching skills compared to teachers in control group(1 year). Findings concerning the predictive value of induction arrangement elements on the skill level in Year 3 revealed significant school-level effects. Being certified as a teacher and having higher teaching skills at the beginning of the career engenders school retention rates.	The weakness of the intervention and the quality of coaching is an important concern. Observation and mentoring of beginning teachers should be more prominent. In practice daily time constraints of teachers/mentors hinder induction arrangements and reduce the desired effects. revealed significant school-level effects. Workload reduction influenced the skill level negatively, and coaching and observing had a strong positive influence on the skill level in Year 3.
9	**A national survey of induction and mentoring: How it is perceived within communities of practice.** (Frances J. Langdon Patricia A. Alexandera Alexis Ryde	Results indicate that a 2 year national induction and mentoring system was positively reflected in stakeholders' perceptions of induction and mentoring practices. A cohesive well- resourced systemic approach to induction and mentoring	Study highlights the need to further promote leaders' knowledge and understanding of their role in creating in creating and evaluating the conditions for effective induction and mentoring. For beginning teachers in rural and low socio-economic schools the lower

	Peter Baggetta)	makes a positive difference to the majority of novice teachers but not for all.	perception of induction mentoring support may be attributable to isolation, visibility of the programme and inequity of
	NEW ZEALAND	Leaders influence the quality of programmes implemented in their schools. School leaders' higher perception of the induction and mentoring programme could potentially lead to new initiatives or to complacency about work conditions provided and the expectations associated with implementation of induction and mentoring in their schools. Investment in induction and mentoring is of value to building long-term benefits for teacher and student learning and most meaningful when induction and mentoring is embedded in the school policy and is part of a policy regarding the professional development of teachers.	resourcing. There are fewer beginning teachers and therefore mentors employed in rural NZ schools (Elvidge, 2002). Evidence in NZ of a trend for teachers to migrate from low to higher socio-economic schools after 2-3 years of practice (Elvidge, 2002), beginning teachers in low socio-economic schools held lower levels of satisfaction of the induction and mentoring support in their school than their more affluent counterparts. No overall effect for socio-economic level in the study (ascribed to the annual funding base in NZ) but doesn't imply there wasn't some role.
10	**Teacher Change During Induction: Development of Beginning Primary Teachers' Knowledge, Beliefs and Performance.** (Sigrid Blömeke Jessica Hoth Martina Döhrmann	In this study neither changes of primary teachers' beliefs towards traditional ones nor loss in knowledge occurred to a substantial extent in the first 3 years of teaching. General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK) grew significantly and beliefs related to the nature of mathematics developed towards a	Skill development and satisfaction seems to develop best if beginning teachers experience appraisal, collegiality, encouragement and trust. Beginning teachers can then discuss their experiences in an atmosphere without fear. Instead of focusing on the notion of the transition into the profession as a

		dynamic view towards the first 3 years of the profession.	"survival stage" it should be treated as an opportunity.
	Andreas Busse Gabriele Kaiser Johannes König) GERMANY		
11	**Research on mentor education for mentors of newly qualified teachers: A qualitative qualitative analysis.** (Jessica Aspfors Goran Fransson) NORWAY/SWEDEN	Importance of context- is important in separate ways; allocation of time, employment of substitute teachers, payment for literature, moral support of principals and colleagues. Time and effort of mentors in mentor education takes time and energy. Mentor education appears to address the dilemmas and ethical issues experienced by mentors in their relationships with mentees	Not all principals are supportive of mentors and don't support the implementation of the course. Several articles in this study indicate that mentor education contributes to feelings of empathy for new teachers and a greater understanding for their well-being and needs
12	**Multilingual primary classrooms: an investigation of first year teachers' learning and responsive teaching.** (Wasyl Cajklera Bernadette Hall) UK	Learning on the job was a frequent theme but 5 respondents expressed lack of confidence about their approaches. 21 NQTs believed that they had begun to develop responsive forms of teaching supported by and collaboration with colleagues.	Detailed thematic analysis in the study confirmed that NQTs were engaged in reflection about how to respond to diversity, in some cases building on learning from their initial teacher education phase.
13	**A Tale of Two Teachers: Learning to Teach Over Time.** (Marilyn Cochran Smith)	It is not the presence or absence of single factors- age or previous experience, strong subject-knowledge, attendance at a particular institutions,	Communities for teacher learning must be contexts where questions and uncertainty are understood as signs of learning, not signs of failing.

	US	in field or out of field placement, having a mentor or not having one that determines how new teachers fare. To support teacher learning across the continuum and to build capacity for improvement, induction programmes must take into account teachers' multiple identities, positions, roles and ways of knowing.	

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Explanation of terms used in this research:

Newly Qualified Teacher: In this research the term Newly Qualified Teacher refers to beginning teachers who meet the Teaching Council's requirements for registration and who participated in the Droichead Induction process in an Irish primary or post-primary school on one of the following academic years; 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019. The acronym **NQT** is used for the term Newly Qualified Teacher.

School Leader: In this research the term School Leader refers to a School Principal or Deputy Principal   in an Irish primary or post-primary school. The term includes both teaching and administrative Principals and teaching and administrative Deputy Principals. It is understood that the School Leader may or may not be a member of the Professional Support Team. The questionnaire has been constructed to ensure that the specific vies of school leaders are gathered.

Professional Support Team: In this research the term Professional Support Team (PST) refers to a team of fully registered teachers in a school, ideally with five years' experience, including a school leader, who work collaboratively to support and mentor the NQT during school-based induction, in the first stages of their professional journey. The acronym PST is used for the term Professional Support Team.

School PST: This PST is a team of teachers from within the school.

Inter-school PST: This PST is formed between two or more schools. Some small schools suggest this would be useful for them because of the school size. Other schools suggest that they would use this model for further collaboration between schools.

External PST member: A principal may wish to establish a PST, involving internal school staff and one external PST member.

Non-PST staff member: In this research the term Non-PST staff member refers to registered teachers in a primary or post-primary school who are not members of the PST.

DEIS school: In this research the term *DEIS school* (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)) refers to the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion in Schools or the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years).There were 890 schools were included in the programme in the 2019/20 school year. These comprised 692 primary schools (334 urban and 358 rural) and 198 post primary schools.

Gaelscoileanna/Scoileanna Ghaeltachta: In this research the terms *Gaelscoileanna and Scoileanna Ghaeltachta* refers to primary and post-primary schools in Ireland who are Irish language medium

schools, who adopt an immersion approach to language acquisition and teach the primary and post-primary curriculum through the Irish language.

Special Education Needs settings: In this research the term *Special Education Needs settings* refers to school settings where educational provision for children with special needs is made:

- In special schools;
- In special classes attached to ordinary schools;
- In integrated settings in mainstream classes.

The services range from special schools dedicated to particular disability groups, through special classes/units attached to ordinary schools, to placement on an integrated basis in ordinary schools with supports. Children with more severe levels of disability may require placement in a special school or special class attached to a mainstream primary school. Each such facility is dedicated to a particular disability group and each operates at a specially reduced pupil teacher ratio.

Small Schools: In this research the term *Small schools* refers to primary schools having 60 or fewer pupils enrolled and/or four mainstream classroom teachers. At post-primary level the term refers to schools with 200 or less pupils enrolled.

Context: Droichead is an integrated induction framework which is based on a whole school approach in supporting newly qualified teachers' professional learning. Droichead is currently in a growth phase and is now the sole route of induction for all primary and post-primary NQTs.

Purpose of the research: The primary purpose of this project is to undertake research over a period of three years, into teachers' lived experience of the Droichead professional induction process, its contribution to their professional learning, and its impact on school culture.

You have been invited to participate in this research because you are best placed in your role in school to give feedback on your lived experience of the Droichead process. If you are happy to take part, we will ask you to complete an online questionnaire which should take approx. **20mins** to complete.

Future Research: The Teaching Council may conduct or commission follow-up research which would build on the findings of this research. If you are interested in contributing to any such research in the future, please email research@teachingcouncil.ie, and include your contact details in the body of the email.
Please note that any future research is separate to the DEEPEN project and that no personal data will be collected by the researchers in the DEEPEN project at any point.

Ethics:
Ethical approval for this research has been granted by both the Marino Institute of Education and Trinity College Dublin (School of Education) ethics committees. The following points explain how the researchers will comply with good ethical research practices:

- Any information obtained from the questionnaire will be anonymised and treated confidentially.
- As this research is part of a funded project the research findings (not raw data) will be shared with external parties.
- Participation is voluntary.
- All data collected during the study will be held securely and confidentially and in line with GDPR regulations after which it will be completely destroyed.
- The published findings of the research will be publicly available and be included in Teaching Council reports, published in a final project report and used as the basis for academic articles and conference presentations.
- The research is considered to have no risks or relatively low risks involved for participants. This means that the research carries little or no risks or discomfort greater than usually encountered during normal daily life, such as potential fatigue, boredom, frustration or an emotional response to recalling a memory from the past. The questionnaire has been constructed in order to minimise these low-level risks/ responses.
- The research is considered to be of benefit to participants as the responses will inform the future direction of the Droichead professional induction process.

If you have any questions about this research or the management of the research data, please contact the research team at julie.uichoistealbha@mie.ie or deepen@mie.ie

Appendix F: Email sent to schools with online survey link

A Phríomhoide, a chara,

We are contacting you as a Droichead school. As you may be aware the Teaching Council have commissioned a research team, led by Marino Institute of Education and Trinity College Dublin, to conduct research on the lived experiences of teachers of the Droichead process. This research project is called DEEPEN (Droichead: Exploring and Eliciting perspectives, Experiences and Narratives).

We are currently at Phase 2 in the project, which comprises an online questionnaire to all schools (primary and post-primary) who engaged in the Droichead professional induction process up to June 2020. We would be very grateful if you and your colleagues could complete the appropriate sections of the online questionnaire. The questionnaire should not take more than 20 minutes to complete and the findings of the questionnaire will help to inform the future development of Droichead.

We would be grateful if you could circulate this questionnaire (https://surveyhero.com/c/989f80b0) to the following cohorts in your school:

a) newly qualified teachers who the completed Droichead process in 2016/17, 2017/8 or 2018/9, in your school or in another school*
b) members of the Professional Support Team
c) other staff who may have supported the Droichead process in your school.

* This questionnaire is not for NQTs who completed the Droichead process in 2019/20 or who are completing the process this year.

The link will remain live until Friday 4th December 2020.

We understand that this term is very busy in school and we are very grateful to you and your staff for your cooperation in this phase of the research.

Further information about the DEEPEN project can be found at this link: www.mie.ie/DEEPEN. If you have any questions about this process please do not hesitate to contact us at this email address, DEEPEN@mie.ie

Kind regards,

Melanie agus Julie

Appendix G: List of recommended reading from the 2008 *NIPT Mentor Guide*

Achinstein, B., & Athanases, S. Z. (Eds.). (2006). *Mentors in the making: Developing new leaders for new teachers*. Teachers College Press.

Bartell, C. A. (2004). *Cultivating high-quality teaching through induction and mentoring*. Corwin Press.

Bleach, K. (1999). Induction and Mentoring of Newly Qualified Teachers: A New Deal for Teachers (1st ed.). David Fulton Publishers.

Bubb, S. (2007). *Successful induction for new teachers: A guide for nqts & induction tutors, coordinators and mentors*. Sage.

Bubb, S., & Mortimore, P. (2000). *The Effective Induction of Newly Qualified Primary Teachers: An Induction Tutor's Handbook*. David Fulton Publishers.

Carroll, C., & Simco, N. (2001). *Succeeding as an induction tutor*. Learning Matters.

Draper, J., O'Brien, J., & Christie, F. (2004). First Impressions: the new teacher induction arrangements in Scotland. *Journal of In-service Education*, *30*(2), 201-224.

Field, T., & Field, B. (2005). *Teachers as mentors: A practical guide*. Routledge.

Jones, M. (2002). Qualified to become good teachers: A case study of ten newly qualified teachers during their year of induction. *Journal of In-Service Education*, *28*(3), 509-526.

Martin, T. (1995). Giving feedback after a lesson observation. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *3*(2), 8-12.

Portner, H. (2005). Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond. Corwin Press.

Robins, A. (Ed.). (2006). *Mentoring in the early years*. SAGE.

Scherer, M. (Ed.). (1999). *A better beginning: Supporting and mentoring new teachers*. ASCD.

Tickle, L. (2000). *Teacher induction: The way ahead*. Developing Teacher Education.

DROICHEAD: EXPLORING AND ELICITING
PERSPECTIVES, EXPERIENCES AND NARRATIVES

What is the DEEPEN research project?

DEEPEN is an acronym for Droichead: Exploring and Eliciting Perspectives, Experiences and Narratives. The DEEPEN project is researching teachers' experiences of the Droichead professional induction process.

In 2018 a Marino Institute of Education/Trinity College Dublin research consortium, led by Dr Julie Uí Choistealbha and Dr Melanie Ní Dhuinn, was successful in the Teaching Council tender process for conducting research into teachers' experience of the Droichead professional induction process. Teacher Induction can bring together all who have an interest in teacher quality (Bartell, 2005). The research, called "DEEPEN" (Droichead: Exploring and Eliciting Perspectives, Experiences and Narratives) uses a Case Study approach as the overarching research methodology. This MIE/TCD consortium brings together the shared knowledge and expertise of two institutions who have long histories in Initial Teacher Education at both primary and post-primary level, documented excellence in research in education nationally and internationally and a shared vision for a quality continuum of education in Ireland.

The research was originally a 3-phase research project including a Systematic Literature Review, online questionnaires, focus groups and visual data collection. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the research has been truncated into a 2-phase project comprising of the Systematic Literature Review and the online questionnaire. Newly qualified teachers, members of the Professional Support Team (PST) and members of the whole school teaching team who are not NQTs or members of the PST are invited to participate in this research as, by virtue of their role and perspective, they are best placed to provide insights on the lived experience of the Droichead professional induction process. The findings of this research are important to the teaching profession in Ireland and will have a direct impact on the work of teachers by helping to inform the future development of the Droichead professional induction process.

The research includes an online questionnaire to all schools involved with Droichead to date. This questionnaire is for NQTs (who participated in the Droichead Induction process in an Irish primary or post-primary school on **one** of the following academic years; 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019) , Professional Support Teams, school leaders and other staff who may have supported the Droichead process, while not being a member of the PST. There will be a mix of open and closed questions and it will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The researchers will anonymise all data. Data will be securely stored in line with GDPR regulations. All questions marked with an * are required questions.

In summary, this research will involve the use of an *online questionnaire* to construct an overall profile of the Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), Professional Support Team (PST) personnel and Whole School personnel.

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Future Research: The Teaching Council may conduct or commission follow-up research which would build on the findings of this research. If you are interested in contributing to any such research in the future, please email research@teachingcouncil.ie, and include your contact details in the body of the email. Please note that any future research is separate to the DEEPEN project and that no personal data will be collected by the researchers in the DEEPEN project at any point.

Ethics:
Ethical approval for this research has been granted by both the Marino Institute of Education and Trinity College Dublin (School of Education) ethics committees. The following points explain how the researchers will comply with good ethical research practices:
- Any information obtained from the questionnaire will be anonymised and treated confidentially.
- As this research is part of a funded project the research findings (not raw data) will be shared with external parties.
- Participation is voluntary.
- All data collected during the study will be held securely and confidentially and in line with GDPR regulations after which it will be completely destroyed.
- You can withdraw from the research at any stage without prejudice.
- The published findings of the research will be publically available and be included in Teaching Council reports, published in a final project report and used as the basis for academic articles and conference presentations.
- The research is considered to have no risks or relatively low risks involved for participants. This means that the research carries little or no risks or discomfort greater than usually encountered during normal daily life, such as potential fatigue, boredom, frustration or an emotional response to recalling a memory from the past. The questionnaire has been constructed in order to minimise these low-level risks/ responses.
- The research is considered to be of benefit to participants as the responses will inform the future direction of the Droichead professional induction process.

If you have any questions about this research or the management of the research data, please contact the research team at julie.uichoistealbha@mie.ie or deepen@mie.ie

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Please complete the consent options below. These sections are mandatory. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, but at a later stage feel the need to withdraw, you are free to do so.

I have read and understood the information sheet. *

○ Yes   ○ No

I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for. *

○ Yes

○ No

I am fully aware of the phases of the research and of any risks and benefits associated with the study. *

○ Yes

○ No

I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any stage without giving any reason. *

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

I am aware that findings from this questionnaire may be published but my identity will be kept anonymous. *

○ Yes

○ No

I agree and consent to complete the online questionnaire for the DEEPEN research project *

○ Yes

○ No

Section One: Introductory Questions

Please click on the relevant option to answer the following questions

Question 1: *

Age:

- ⦾ <25 years old
- ⦾ 26-35 years old
- ⦾ 36-45 years old
- ⦾ 46-55 years old
- ⦾ >55 years old

Question 2: *

Teaching experience

- ⦾ <5 years
- ⦾ 6-10 years
- ⦾ 11-20 years
- ⦾ 21-30 years
- ⦾ >30 years

Question 3 *

Gender: How would you describe your gender?

- ☐ Woman (including transgender woman)
- ☐ Man (including transgender man)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe as

- [ ] agender

- [ ] non-binary

- [ ] gender-fluid

Question 4 *

Are you teaching in a

- ( ) Primary School

- ( ) Post-primary School

- ( ) Special School

Is your school an Urban school or a Rural school?

- ( ) Urban

- ( ) Rural

If Post-primary, please indicate your school type

- ( ) Voluntary Secondary School

- ( ) Education and Training Board (ETB) School

- ( ) Community School

- ( ) Comprehensive School

Question 5

School Description (tick all that apply) *

You can select multiple options.

- [ ] DEIS Band 1

- [ ] DEIS Band 2

- [ ] Small School (Small schools are defined for statistical purposes by the Department of Education and Skills as schools with 4 mainstream teachers or less with 60 or fewer pupils. Post-Primary small schools are defined as schools with 200 students or less.)

- [ ] Special school

- [ ] Gaelscoil

- [ ] Gaelcholáiste

- [ ] Scoil Ghaeltachta

- [ ] Education and Training Board (ETB) School

- [ ] Community National School

- [ ] Educate Together School

- [ ] Catholic School

- [ ] Muslim School

- [ ] Church of Ireland School

- [ ] Presbyterian School

- [ ] Multidenominational School

- [ ] Interdenominational School

- [ ] Jewish School

- [ ] Methodist School

- [ ] Quaker School

- [ ] Island School

Other School Type: Please State

Please indicate if you teach in a Special class in a mainstream school *

◯ Yes

◯ No

Question 6

Please tick your Initial teacher education route:
*

◯ **Irish HEI Undergraduate** Level 8 Teacher Education degree **Primary**

◯ **Irish HEI Undergraduate** Level 8 Teacher Education degree **Post-primary**

◯ **Irish HEI Postgraduate** Professional Master of Education (PME) **primary**

◯ **Irish HEI Postgraduate** Professional Master of Education (PME) **post-primary**

◯ **Irish HEI Postgraduate** Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) **post-primary**

◯ **Irish HEI Higher Diploma in Education** (HDE) post-primary

◯ **Irish HEI Graduate Diploma** in Education Primary

◯ **Undergraduate Primary** Teacher Education qualification **from HEI outside Republic of Ireland**

◯ **Undergraduate Post-primary** Teacher Education qualification **from HEI outside Republic of Ireland**

◯ **Postgraduate Primary** Teacher Education qualification **from HEI outside Republic of Ireland**

◯ **Postgraduate Post-primary** Teacher Education qualification **from HEI outside Republic of Ireland**

○ Other

Question 7

Where is your school located? *

Please choose... ▼

Question 8

Are you a *

- ○ Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) who completed the Droichead process in 2016/2017, 2017/2018 or 2018/2019.

- ○ Professional Support Team (PST) member

- ○ School leader and PST member

- ○ School Leader but non-PST member

- ○ Teacher who is not a PST member

Newly Qualified Teacher Questionnaire

Please note that this section should only be completed by Newly Qualified Teachers, i.e. NQTS who completed the Droichead Induction process in 2016/2017, 2017/2018 or 2018/2019.

In which academic school year did you complete the Droichead process? *

Please choose... ▼

Did you complete Droichead in a single school (i.e. not across more than one school)? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

Did you complete the Droichead process in an urban or rural school? *

◯ Urban

◯ Rural

◯ Both (if completed in more than one school)

What type of school did you complete your Droichead process in (tick all that apply) *

You may select multiple options.

☐ DEIS Band 1

☐ DEIS Band 2

☐ Small School (Small schools are defined for statistical purposes by the Department of Education and Skills as schools with 4 mainstream teachers or less and/or 60 students or less. Post-Primary small schools are defined as schools with 200 students or less.)

☐ Special school

☐ Gaelscoil

☐ Gaelcholáiste

☐ Scoil Ghaeltachta

	Education and Training Board (ETB) School

	Community National School

	Educate Together School

	Catholic School

	Muslim School

	Church of Ireland School

	Presbyterian School

	Multidenominational School

	Interdenominational School

	Jewish School

	Methodist School

	Quaker School

	Island School

Please indicate if you completed your Droichead process while teaching in a special class in a mainstream school *

○ Yes	○ No

Question 1

I am most motivated in my role as a teacher by: *

You may select three options in order of preference.

	A love of learning

	Being a professional

- [ ] My own positive experience as a student

- [ ] My own negative experience as a student

- [ ] The students I teach/A desire to enthuse students about learning/Making a difference to the lives of learners/Helping others

- [ ] A desire to share love of a subject

- [ ] A desire to share knowledge

- [ ] Compatibility with family life

- [ ] The PST members who supported my Droichead process

Other, Please explain

0 / 100

Question 2

Has this motivation been further developed through Droichead? *

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

Please explain your answer

0 / 100

Question 3

Thinking about your **beliefs** about **teaching,** complete the following sentences

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Question 4

To what extent did the Droichead process connect with your own experience and learning in initial teacher education?   *

not closely connected   very closely connected

0

Question 5

Do you feel that the type and location of the school in which you are working has had any impact on your experience of the Droichead process? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

Please give a reason for your answer

| |
| |

0 / 100

Question 6

Thinking about the progress you made during your Droichead process, how satisfied are you now with your teaching? *

not at all satisfied   very satisfied

0
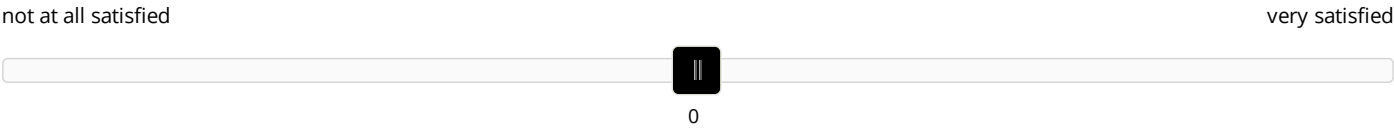
Question 7

Thinking about the mandatory aspects of Droichead (observations, portfolio-based learning (Taisce), professional conversations, professional learning activities including cluster meetings) how worthwhile was each mandatory element?

Observations
*****

not worthwhile at all   very worthwhile

0

Taisce (Portfolio-based Learning) *

not worthwhile at all   very worthwhile

0
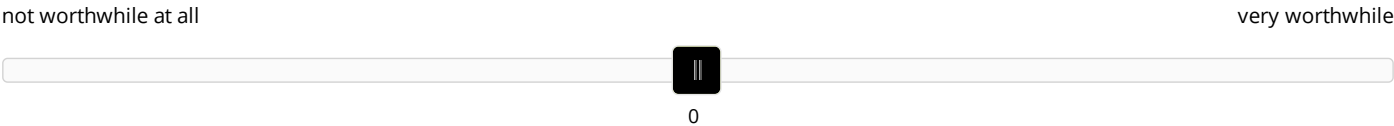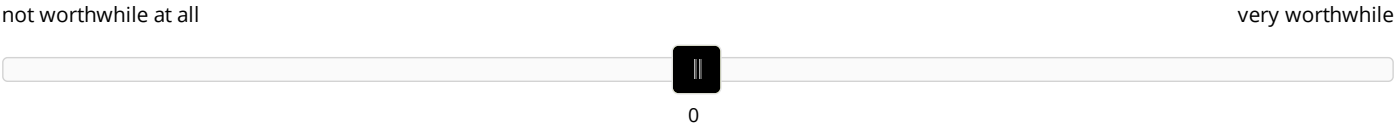
Professional Conversations (formal and informal) *

not worthwhile at all   very worthwhile

0
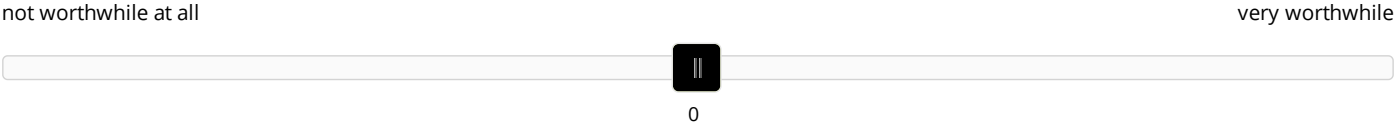
Professional Learning Activity-Cluster Meetings *

not worthwhile at all   very worthwhile

||

0
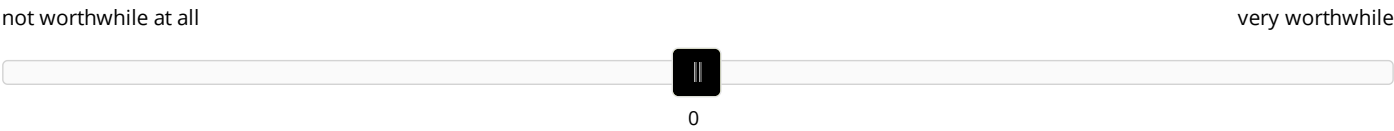
Professional Learning Activity-one other identified by NQT in collaboration with PST *

not worthwhile at all   very worthwhile

||

0
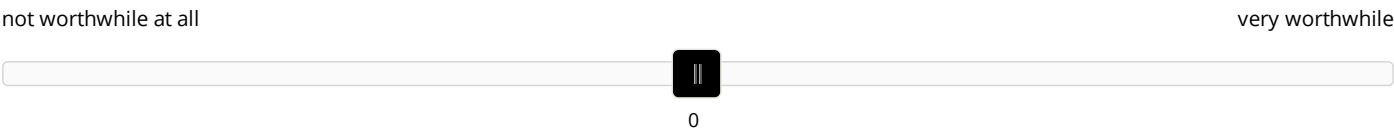
Question 8

What 'other' professional learning event did you choose as part of your Droichead process? *

You may select three options.

☐ Attending a conference

☐ CPD course

☐ Learning event organised by a subject association

☐ Attended a Teaching Council webinar or other online learning event

☐ Attended Féilte

☐ Other

Question 9

In relation to your day to day teaching what are the greatest challenges you face?

Please rank the options in each of the following sections (A, B & C), first being the most challenging. Please note you must rank all of the options in each section to progress to the next section:

Section A

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Planning and Preparation   1.

Planning for SEN
School self-evaluation and planning
Subject specific support
Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary

> (navigation arrow) >

Section B

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Assessment
Differentiation
Feedback
Literacy
Múineadh na Gaeilge
Numeracy

> (navigation arrow) >

1.

Section C

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Behaviour management
Classroom management and organisation
Developing professionalism as a teacher
Inclusion
Teacher well-being & resilience

> (navigation arrow) >

1.

"other" challenges, please explain below

0 / 100

Question 10

Thinking about your non-teaching day to day school activities what are the greatest challenges you face?

Please rank the following in order of importance to you, first being the most important. You must rank all the options to progress onto the next section.

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Working with parents

Working with colleagues

Additional responsibilities within the school

Travel from home to school

1.

"other" challenges, please explain below

0 / 100

Question 11

Thinking about your school, how is time allocated to the Droichead process? *

You may select multiple options.

☐ Decided by NQT

☐ Decided by PST

	Decided by school management/school leaders

	Don't know

Question 12

Thinking about Droichead activities in your school, in your view, what is the most effective use of the time allocated to your school for Droichead? Please rank the following in order of effectiveness, first being the most effective:

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Observation by NQT of other teachers' practice

Observation of NQT's practice by other teachers

Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)

Professional conversations

PST meetings

> 1.

Question 13

Thinking about your interaction and engagement with the members of your professional support team, how do you describe your relationship with them? *

very negative relationship   very positive relationship

‖

0

If necessary please provide further details below

0 / 100

Question 14

What three characteristics best describe an effective NQT/PST relationship? *

You may select up to three options in order of preference.

- [ ] Honest

- [ ] Professional

- [ ] Reflective

- [ ] Supportive

- [ ] Trusting

- [ ] Positive

- [ ] Collaborative

- [ ] Challenging

- [ ] Empowering

- [ ] Hands on i.e. giving direct support frequently

- [ ] Hands off i.e. giving support only when needed

If you listed "Other" please explain below

0 / 50

Question 15

How does your involvement in Droichead activities impact your workload as an NQT in the school? *

very negative effect   no effect at all

0

Question 16

Thinking of supports you received as an NQT, in what aspects did you require the most support?

Please rank the options in each of the following sections (A, B & C) , first being the aspect you required most support.

Please note you must rank all of the options in each section to progress to the next section:

Section A

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Planning and Preparation	1.
Planning for SEN	
School self-evaluation and planning	
Subject specific support	
Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary	

Section B

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Assessment	1.
Differentiation	
Feedback	
Literacy	
Múineadh na Gaeilge	
Numeracy	

Section C

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box *

Behaviour management	1.
Classroom management and organisation	
Developing professionalism as a teacher	
Inclusion	
Teacher well-being & resilience	
Working with parents	

Question 17

Thinking of your greatest support need, was this addressed in your Droichead process? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Somewhat

If Yes, how?

0 / 100

If No, why not?

If somewhat, in what way?

0 / 50

Question 18

As an NQT, did you feel included in the Droichead process in your school?

not included at all   very included

||

0
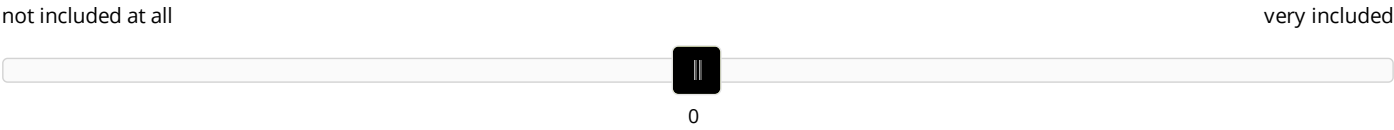
Question 19

How do you rate the quality of the Droichead process in your school? *

very poor quality process   very high quality process

||

0
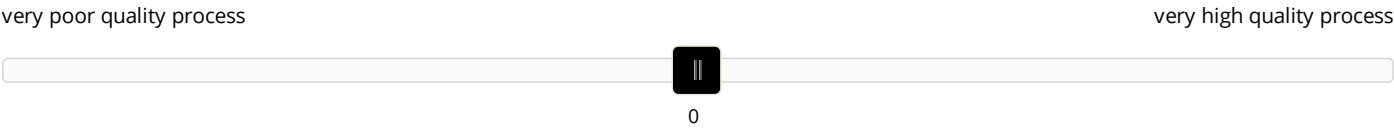
Question 20

Has your school developed its own indicators of good practice, based on the Droichead standards? *

Please select ONE option.

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

Question 21

As an NQT, what level of input have you had into the development of the indicators of good practice? *

no input at all   very significant input

||

0
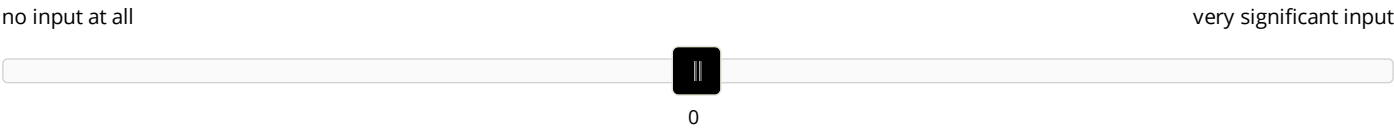
Question 22

Which of the following State-funded resources has your school availed of, in order to facilitate the Droichead process? *

You may select multiple options.

☐ NIPT training with release time

- [ ] NIPT refresher training with release time

- [ ] Release time to conduct the Droichead process

- [ ] NIPT school visits

- [ ] NIPT templates

- [ ] NIPT online resources

- [ ] One day information session for principals

- [ ] Don't Know

"other" please explain below

_____

0 / 100

Question 23

Is the resourcing of Droichead in your school adequate? *

not at all adequate   more than adequate

0

Question 24

As an NQT in your school, what observation activities did you engage in? *

You may select multiple options.

- [ ] As an NQT I was observed by an experienced colleague while teaching in a mainstream setting

- [ ] As an NQT I was observed by other colleagues while teaching in an SEN setting

- [ ] NQT observing in a mainstream setting

- [ ] NQT observing in an SEN setting

☐ Observing school personnel i.e. school secretary, Home School Community Liaison teacher

☐ Other

Question 25

As an NQT in your school, how many times did you engage in the observation of other teachers? *

Please select ONE option.

○ 2

○ 3 to 5

○ 6 to 10

○ More than 10

○ Other

If you listed "other" please explain below

0 / 100

Question 26

As an NQT in your school, how many times were you observed teaching by a member of the PST? *

Please select ONE option.

○ 2

○ 3 to 5

○ 6 to 10

○ More than 10

○ Other

If you listed "other" please explain below

0 / 100

Question 27

In your view, are there any additional supports required by NQTs in your school which you have not previously mentioned? *

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered "yes" above please use the text box below to explain your answer

0 / 100

Question 28

How might these supports provided?

0 / 100

Section 3: Additional Comments by NQTs

Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make about the Droichead process in your school? Please consider context specific comments, eg. language medium of instruction in your school, school ethos, school type, school size, school designation (DEIS/Non-DEIS) *

○ Yes

○ No

Please use the text box below to submit additional comments

0 / 100

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please click 'exit questionnaire' to exit. *

○ Exit questionnaire

Professional Support Team Questionnaire

In which School year did your school commence the Droichead process? *

Please choose...   ▼

Other than the NIPT programme of professional learning for PST members, have you engaged in any formal programme of professional learning in relation to mentoring, induction, or a related field as a registered teacher? *

⚪ Yes   ⚪ No

If you answered 'yes' please identify the programmes of study you have undertaken and what year they were completed.

Question 1

What is your role in the school? *

Please select ONE option.

⚪ School leader– principal (including teaching principal)

⚪ School leader – deputy principal (including teaching deputy principal)

⚪ Other Teaching staff

⚪ [Other-please explain]

Question 2

What motivated you to become a member of the PST in your school? Please answer this question in the text box below *

0 / 100

Question 3

How was the PST formed in your school? *

○ PST members volunteered

○ PST members were nominated by the principal or other senior leader

○ PST members were appointed following a formal selection process

○ Other

How many members are on the PST in your school?

Please choose... ▼

Question 4

In relation to your beliefs about teaching complete the following sentences;

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Question 5

As a member of the Professional Support Team how well do you feel the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) training prepared you to facilitate the Droichead process? *

not very well prepared   very well prepared

0

Do you have any further comments on effect and impact of the NIPT training?

0 / 100

Did you avail of all of the training/ supports offered to you as a PST member? *

◯ Yes   ◯ No

If you answered "No" please explain the reason why you did not avail of all of the training/ supports offered to you.

0 / 100

Question 6

In which of the following areas do you feel <u>you</u> may need additional learning opportunities/support in order to fulfil your role as a member of the Professional Support Team?
Please rank the options in each of the following sections (A, B, C and D) in order of importance to you, first being the most important. Please note you must rank all options in each section to progress to the next section:

Section A

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

Planning and Preparation

Planning for SEN

School self-evaluation and planning

Subject specific support

Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary

> 1.

Section B

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

Assessment

Differentiation

Feedback

Literacy

Múineadh na Gaeilge

Numeracy

> 1.

Section C

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box: *

Behaviour management		1.
Classroom management and organisation		
Developing professionalism as a teacher	>	
Inclusion		
Teacher well-being & resilience		
Working with parents		

Section D

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

Fostering professional relationships		1.
Goal setting		
Leadership skills	>	
Mentoring skills		
Reflective dialogue		

Question 7 If you are in a teaching role, has your role as a member of the Professional Support Team impacted on your teaching? *

| ◯ Yes | ◯ No |

Please explain your answer in the text box below

0 / 100

If you are in a teaching role, use the sliding scale below to describe the impact of your role as a member of the Professional Support Team on your teaching?

very negative impact   very positive impact

| |

0
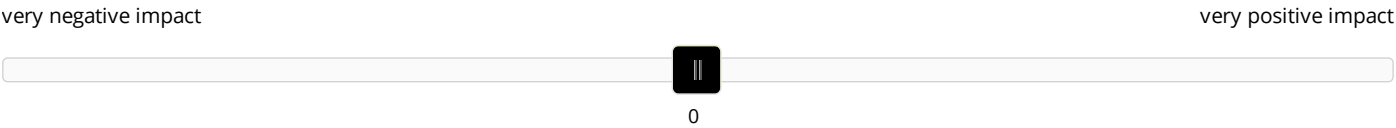
If you are in a non- teaching leadership role, use the sliding scale below to describe the impact of your role as a member of the Professional Support Team on your daily work?

very negative impact   very positive impact

| |

0
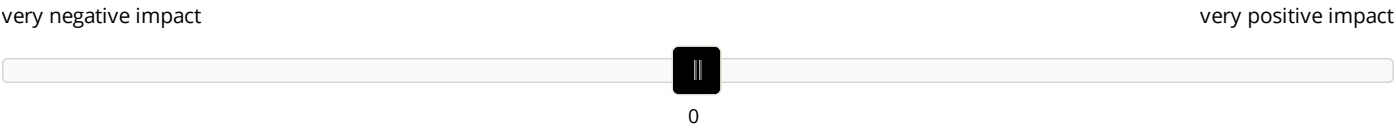
Question 8

Thinking about induction in your school, how is time allocated to the Droichead process? *

You may select multiple options.

☐ Decided by management/school leaders

☐ Decided by PST

☐ Decided by NQT

☐ Don't know

☐ Other

Question 9

Thinking about Droichead activities in your school, in your view, what do you think is the most effective use of the time allocated for Droichead? Please rank in order of effectiveness, where 1 is the most effective, and 5 is the least effective. Please note you must rank all options to progress to the next question.

Select an option in the left hand box an drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice   1.

Observation of NQT's practice by other teachers

Professional conversations with the PST

>

Professional conversations with other teachers

Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)

Question 10
As a member of the Professional Support Team, use the sliding scale below to best describe your relationship with the NQT(S) in your school.

very negative relationship   very positive relationship

||

0
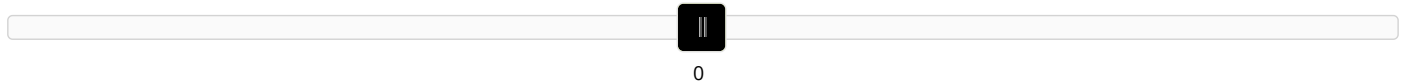
Question 11

What characteristics best describe an effective NQT/PST relationship Please select up to three options in order of importance to you, first being the most important: *

☐ Honest

☐ Professional

☐ Reflective

☐ Supportive

☐ Trusting

☐ Positive

☐ Collaborative

☐ Challenging

☐ Empowering

☐ Hands on, i.e. giving direct support frequently

☐ Hands off, i.e. giving support when needed

Question 12

Thinking about your weekly workload, how much time do you spend facilitating Droichead in your school? *

Please select ONE option

○ < 30 mins

○ 30mins- 1hour

○ 1-2 hours

○ 2-3 hours

○ 3 hours+

Question 13

Thinking about an NQT(s) in your school, where do you believe <u>they</u> require most support? Please rank the options below in with the first being the area in which they need most support. Please note you must rank all options to progress to the next section:

Section A

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

| Planning and Preparation |
| Planning for SEN |
| School self-evaluation and planning |
| Subject specific support |
| Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary |

> 1.

Section B

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

| Assessment |

1.

Differentiation

Feedback

›

Literacy

Múineadh na Gaeilge

Numeracy

Section C

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box.: *

Behaviour management

Classroom management and organisation

Developing professionalism as a teacher

›

Inclusion

Teacher well-being & resilience

1.

Question 14

Thinking about what you have identified as the most common support needs of NQTs in your school, what do you feel has been the most effective way of addressing this support need in the Droichead process? *

You may select multiple options.

☐ Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice

☐ Observation of NQT's practice by other teachers

☐ Professional conversations

☐ Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)

☐ NQT cluster meetings

☐ NQT professional learning activity

Question 15

Thinking about the Droichead process in your school what opportunities for collaboration/networks have been created? *

You may select multiple options.

☐ Co-teaching

☐ Co-planning

☐ Class/ year group clusters

☐ Subject specific clusters

☐ NQT network in school

☐ NQT network outside of school

☐ Other external network

☐ Peer observation

☐ Observation in nearby Droichead school

☐ No opportunities for collaboration/networking

☐ Other

Question 16

As a member of the Professional Support Team do you feel included in the Droichead process in your school? *

not included at all   very included

| ‖ |

0

Question 17

As a member of the Professional Support Team, what do you feel you contribute to the Droichead process in your school?

0 / 100

Question 18

How do you rate the quality of the Droichead process in your school? *

very poor quality process   very high quality process

0

Question 19

What Professional Support Team model is used in your school? *

 Please select ONE option.

○ Internal (the PST was drawn exclusively from staff within my school)

○ Inter-school (members of the PST were drawn from a cluster of schools including my school)

○ External (members of the PST were drawn from staff of the school and the external panel formed by the NIPT)

Question 20

 In which of the follwoing areas have you developed new skills/knowledge or enhanced existing skills/knowledge as a result of your membership of the PST in your school?   *

You may select multiple options.

☐ Communication skills

☐ Interpersonal skills

☐ New ideas for my own teaching

☐ Curriculum knowledge

- [ ] Pedagogical support

- [ ] Problem solving skills

- [ ] Team-work skills

- [ ] Leadership skills

- [ ] None

- [ ] Other

Question 21

Has your school developed its own indicators of good practice, based on the Droichead standards? *

- ( ) Yes

- ( ) No

- ( ) Don't Know

Question 22

As a member of the Professional Support Team, what level of input have you had into the development of the indicators of good practice? *

no input at all   very significant input

|| (slider)

0

Question 23

Which of the following State-funded resources has your school availed of, in order to facilitate the Droichead process? *

You may select multiple options.

- [ ] NIPT training with release time

- [ ] NIPT refresher training with release time

Release time to conduct the Droichead process

NIPT school visits;

NIPT templates

NIPT online resources

One day information session for principals

Don't Know

Other
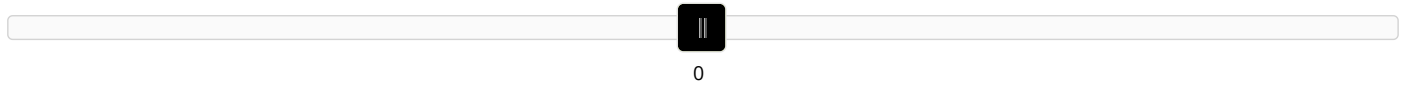
Question 24

In your view is the resourcing of Droichead in your school adequate? *

not at all adequate   more than adequate

0

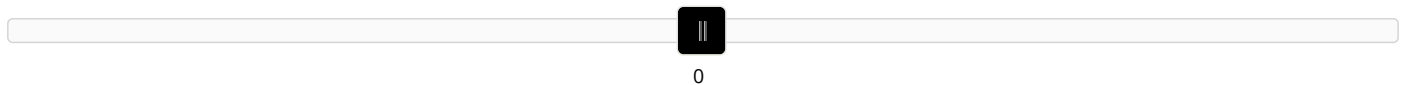## Question 25

In your view, how supportive are school leaders of the Droichead process in your school? *

not at all supportive   very supportive

0

Question 26

Thinking about the <u>approach to professional induction in your school</u> how would you describe this? Please rank the following in order of importance to you, first being the most important: *

You may select up to three options in order of preference.

Honest

Professional

Reflective

- [ ] Supportive
- [ ] Trusting
- [ ] Positive
- [ ] Collaborative
- [ ] Challenging
- [ ] Empowering
- [ ] Hands on i.e. giving direct support frequently
- [ ] Hands off i.e. giving support only when needed

Question 27

How many times is an NQT in your school engaged in the observation of other teachers? *

Please select ONE option

- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3 to 5
- ◯ 6 to 10
- ◯ More than 10
- ◯ [Other- explain]

Question 28

How many times is an NQT in your school observed teaching by a member of the PST? *

Please select ONE option

- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3 to 5
- ◯ 6 to 10
- ◯ More than 10
- ◯ [Other-explain]

Question 29

In your view, are there any additional supports required by NQTs in your school which you have not previously mentioned? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If you answered yes, please list in the text box below

0 / 100

Question 30

How might these supports provided? Use the text box below to give details

0 / 100

Section 3: Additional Comments from PST

Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make about the Droichead process in your school? Please use the text box below to comment. Please consider context specific comments, eg. language medium of instruction in your school, school ethos, school type, school size, school designation (DEIS/Non-DEIS)

0 / 100

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please click 'exit questionnaire' to exit. *

◯ Exit questionnaire

Non-PST staff member questionnaire

In which year did Droichead commence in your school? *

Please choose... ▼

Have you engaged in any formal programme of professional learning in relation to mentoring, induction, or a related field as a registered teacher? *

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered 'yes' please identify the programmes of study you have undertaken and what year they were completed.

0 / 100

Question 1

What is your role in the school? *

Please select ONE option

○ School leader – principal (including teaching principal)

○ School leader – deputy principal (including teaching deputy principal)

○ Other Teaching staff

○ Other

Question 2

In relation to your beliefs about teaching please complete the following sentences;

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Teaching is....(use the text box below to complete your answer) *

0 / 100

Question 3

Thinking about induction in your school, how is time allocated to the Droichead process? *

Please select ONE option

○ Decided by school management/leaders

○ Decided by PST

○ Decided by NQT

○ Don't know

Question 4

Thinking about professional learning activities in your school, what do you think is the best use of time allocated for Droichead related activities? *

Please select ONE option

○ Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice

○ Observation of NQTs 'practice by other teachers

○ Professional conversations

○ Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)

○ PST meetings

Question 5

Thinking about NQTs in your school, where do you believe they require most support? Please rank the following options where the is the area where they need most support Please note you must rank every option to progress to the next section:

Section A

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

| Planning and Preparation |

| 1. |

| Planning for SEN |
| School self-evaluation and planning |
| Subject specific support |
| Supporting the transition from primary to post-primary |

>

Section B

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

| Assessment |
| Differentiation |
| Feedback |
| Literacy |
| Múineadh na Gaeilge |
| Numeracy |

>

1.

Section C

Select an option in the left hand box and drag it across to the appropriate number in the right hand box. *

| Classroom Management |
| Behaviour Management |
| Health and wellbeing of teacher |
| Professional Development |
| Inclusion |

>

1.

Question 6

Thinking about professional learning activities in your school, what do you think is the most effective use of time allocated for Droichead related activities? *

Please select ONE option

- ○ Observation by NQTs of other teachers' practice

- ○ Observation of NQTs 'practice by other teachers
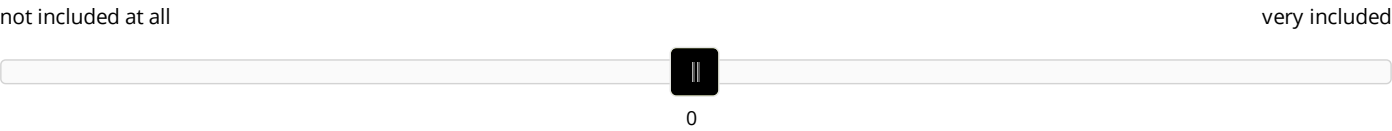
- ○ Professional conversations

- ○ Portfolio-based learning (Taisce)

- ○ NQT cluster meetings
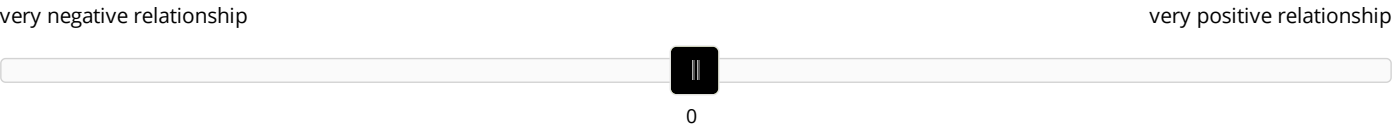
- ○ NQT professional learning activity

Question 7
Thinking about the Droichead process in your school, do you feel included in the process?

not included at all   very included

| ▌ |

0

Question 8
 Use the sliding scale below to best describe your relationship with the NQT(S) in your school.

very negative relationship   very positive relationship

| ▌ |

0

Question 9

What do you feel you currently contribute to the Droichead process in your school? *
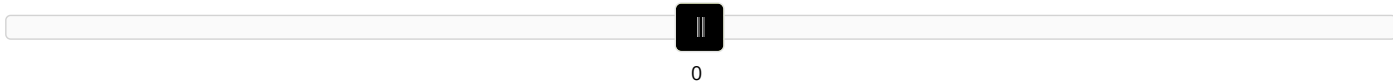
0 / 100

Question 10

Thinking ahead, is there anything you feel you could contribute to the Droichead process in your school in the future? *

0 / 100

Question 11

Using the scale below please rate the quality of the Droichead process in your school

very poor quality   very high quality

0

Please explain your answer regarding the quality of the Droichead process *

0 / 100

Question 12

Thinking about the Droichead process in your school, what opportunities for collaboration/networks have been created?

You may select multiple options.

☐ Co-teaching

☐ Co-planning

☐ Class/Year group clusters

☐ Subject specific clusters

☐ NQT Network in school

☐ Other external network

☐ Peer observation

☐ Observation in nearby Droichead school

☐ No opportunities for collaboration/networking

☐ Other

Question 13

Has your school developed its own indicators of good practice, based on the Droichead standards?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

Question 14

As a member of the school staff, what level of input have you had into the development of indicators of good practice?

no input at all   very significant input

|▐|

0

Question 15

Which of the following State-funded resources has your school availed of, in order to facilitate the Droichead process? *

You may select multiple options.

☐ NIPT training with release time

☐ NIPT refresher training with release time

☐ Release time to conduct the Droichead process

☐ The Teaching Council Droichead Shared Learning Bursary

☐ NIPT school visits

☐ NIPT templates

☐ NIPT online resources

☐ One day information session for principals

	Don't Know

	Other

Question 16

In your view is the resourcing of Droichead in your school adequate? *

not at all adequate

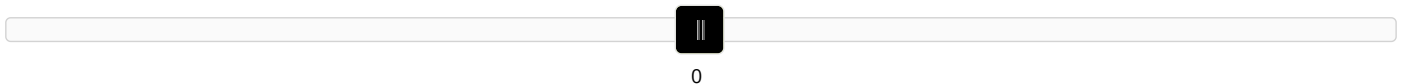more than adequate

0

Question 17

In your view, how supportive are school leaders of the Droichead process in your school? *

not at all supportive

very supportive

0

Question 18

Thinking about the <u>approach to professional induction in your school</u> how would you describe this? Please rank the following in order of importance to you, first being the most important: *

You may select up to three options in order of preference.

	Honest

	Professional

	Reflective

	Supportive

	Trusting

	Positive

	Collaborative

	Challenging

- [ ] Empowering

- [ ] Hands on i.e. giving direct support frequently

- [ ] Hands off i.e. giving support only when needed

Question 19

How many times is an NQT in your school engaged in the observation of other teachers? *

Please select ONE option

- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3 to 5
- ◯ 6 to 10
- ◯ More than 10
- ◯ [Other- explain]

Question 20

How many times is an NQT in your school observed teaching by a member of the PST? *

Please select ONE option

- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3 to 5
- ◯ 6 to 10
- ◯ more than10
- ◯ [Other-explain]

Question 21

In your view, are there any additional supports required by NQTs in your school which you have not previously mentioned? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Question 22

How might these supports provided? Use the text box below to give details

0 / 100

Section 3: Additional Comments All staff

Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make about the Droichead process in your school? Please use the text box below to comment. Please consider context specific comments, eg. language medium of instruction in your school, school ethos, school type, school size, school designation (DEIS/Non-DEIS)

0 / 100

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please click 'exit questionnaire' to exit. *

○ Exit questionnaire