

**Student Experiences of Widening Participation in
Initial Teacher Education in Ireland:
A Bourdieusian Analysis**

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of
Doctor of Education

School of Education
University of Sheffield

January 2014

Abstract

Employing Bourdieu's three-level approach to studying a field, this research investigates student experiences of widening participation (WP) in initial teacher education (ITE) in Ireland. In Bourdieusian terms, ITE is conceptualised as a 'sub-field' and a 'dual-field' at the intersection of two larger fields of practice: higher education and the teaching profession. Positioned as such, ITE has been impacted by policy developments emanating from both the Higher Education Authority as well as the Irish Teaching Council. In 'mapping the field' of ITE with regard to WP, the study finds that participation by mature students in ITE is below the average figure for participation by mature students across all HE programmes; whereas the proportion of students entering ITE via the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is slightly above the average.

In seeking to understand the habituses of non-traditional students in ITE, interviews were conducted with nine students from two higher education institutions (HEIs). The students entered undergraduate programmes to qualify as post-primary teachers via a non-standard entry-route, either as a mature entrant or following successful completion of an Access course. Polkinghorne's approach to narrative analysis (1995), combined with Bourdieu's theoretical framework informed the analysis. A schematic representation of the orientations of students within the field indicated that they were positioned as either '*Adjusting*' or '*Belonging*', and that these positions were independent of entry-route.

It is recommended that awareness-raising among under-represented groups regarding WP entry-routes should remain a policy priority. Within HEIs, efforts need to continue in order to ensure that non-standard entry-routes are 'normalised', as this will serve to enhance the student experience of ITE. Finally, given that a sizeable proportion of HEAR applicants are securing non-designated HEAR places on ITE programmes, this is an issue which needs to be addressed in both policy and practice.

Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks to the students who participated in the interviews for this study and who gave so generously of their time in sharing their stories with me. Without their collaboration, this study would not have been possible.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Mr. Nigel Wright for his expertise, knowledge and encouragement in guiding this work to completion. Thanks are also due to Dr. Simon Warren for introducing me to the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and for guiding the early stages of this research.

Thanks to those staff of Access Offices who took the time to help me by providing data. A special word of thanks goes to Ms. Karen Kenny of the Access Office and to Ms. Charlotte Beech of the Registrar's Office in St. Angela's College for their assistance in providing data. Thanks to Nick O'Sullivan, Librarian, for his help in sourcing material.

My thanks to Ms. Valerie Harvey of the Statistics Section of the Higher Education Authority in Dublin, and to Mr. Ivor Gleeson of the Central Applications Office in Galway, both of whom generously assisted me with statistics on teacher education.

I am very grateful for the financial support of the Teaching Council through the Kieran O'Driscoll Memorial Research Bursary which I was awarded in autumn 2010.

My thanks to Dr. Anne Taheny, President of St. Angela's College for her support during my studies. Very special thanks are due to my Head of Department, Ms. Amanda Mc Cloat for not only facilitating and assisting my studies in practical ways, but for her continuous encouragement and friendship throughout; and to my colleague and friend Dr. Elaine Mooney for her help and support. To all my Ed. D. friends – thanks for your support, encouragement and laughs along the way.

In particular, a very special thank-you goes to my family. To my husband Eric and our three wonderful children: Andrew, Matthew and Jennifer, my most heart-felt thanks for your endless patience, support, love and laughter which have sustained me throughout this process. This work is dedicated to you.

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Acronyms

BERA	British Educational Research Association
BTEA	Back to Education Allowance
CA	Correspondence Analysis
CAO	Central Applications Office
DARE	Disability Access Route
DEIS	Delivering Equality in Schools scheme
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DoE	Department of Education
ECT	European Credit Transfer
EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
ESRC	Economic & Social Research Council (UK)
EU	European Union
FÁS	(Irish translation: ‘grow’) Irish training and employment authority
FE	Further education
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FTMNE	Full-time mature new entrant
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IoT	Institute of Technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
IUA	Irish Universities Association
LC	Leaving Certificate (examination)
MNE	Mature new entrant
NOEOHE	National Office for Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RQ	Research question
SP	School placement
TC	(Irish) Teaching Council
TE	Teacher education
TI	Targeted Initiatives scheme
TP	Teaching profession (as field)
UK	United Kingdom
WP	Widening participation

Chapter 1: Introduction

‘The world isn’t just the way it is. It is how we understand it, no? And in understanding something, we bring something to it, no?’

Yann Martel (2001:302) *Life of Pi*

1.1 Introducing the Study

This is a study about widening participation (WP) in higher education (HE) in the Republic of Ireland (hereafter Ireland). More specifically, it is a study about the experiences of students in one particular field in HE in Ireland. That field is initial teacher education (ITE), and the students who are the focus of the study have all gained entry to full-time, undergraduate ITE programmes via alternative entry routes; the routes arising from the implementation of national policies which are geared towards increasing access and widening participation in HE.

Ireland is similar to many other countries (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007; Osborne, 2003a) in having experienced dramatic increases in participation in higher education over the past three decades. From a baseline where 20% of school-leavers progressed to HE in 1980, by 1998 the proportion had risen to 44%, and by 2004 it had reached 55% (O’Connell et al., 2006a; 2006b). Research indicates that overall, expansion of the system has not been matched with a widening of the socio-economic profile of entrants to the system (Clancy, 1988; 1995; 2001; O’Connell et al., 2006a).

In Ireland as elsewhere, there is recognition that having a highly educated and highly skilled workforce is important for economic growth and competitiveness, as well as attaining social cohesion (Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), 2007; Higher Education Authority (HEA), 2008), and consequently targets for participation have become a feature of HE policy. Endorsing the figure set by the Government’s EGFSN in 2007, the most recent National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013 (HEA, 2008) set a target for a 72% participation rate by school-leavers to be reached by 2020. However, as participation by higher socio-economic groups has reached saturation (Clancy, 2001; O’Connell et al. 2006a), in order to further expand participation in HE, widening participation through targeting

those groups who have traditionally been under-represented has been a policy focus since the beginning of this century (HEA, 2001; 2004b; 2008).

1.2 Why examine widening participation in ITE?

The issue of WP is particularly pertinent for ITE in Ireland given that it has been noted that a prevailing feature of the make - up of the ITE student body is that it remains relatively homogenous, with students from minority ethnic groups and lower socio-economic groups under-represented (Byrne, 2002; Coolahan, 2003; Conway et al. 2009; Drudy, 2006a; Heinz, 2013a). It is also pertinent because undergraduate ITE programmes typically recruit from the top 30% of school-leavers (Hyland, 2012), and entry to the field is described as highly competitive (Aitken & Harford, 2011; Harford, 2008; Mooney et al., 2010). Although the question of attracting under-represented groups into teaching has been raised in several key reports (Byrne, 2002; Kelleghan, 2002; Educational Disadvantage Committee, 2004), for ITE in Ireland, this has not been a policy priority (O'Brien, 2004). More recently, the Teaching Council (2011c:12) has raised the matter of 'facilitating entry to the profession by under-represented groups' as a concern to be addressed. However, despite the lack of specific focus on the issue from within ITE until quite lately, because access and WP to HE has been a policy objective in the broader HE field in Ireland, WP has impacted directly on the field of ITE. Thus, arising from HEA - led policy initiatives aimed at widening and increasing access to HE (HEA, 2004a; 2004b; HEA, 2008), 'non-standard entry routes' (HEA, 2008) into all undergraduate ITE programmes now exist.

In Ireland, teaching qualifications may be obtained by undertaking a post-graduate diploma in education (referred to as the consecutive model) or by taking an undergraduate degree of which education is a main component (concurrent model); and it is students who are pursuing the latter who are the focus of this research. The standard/traditional route of entry into concurrent undergraduate degree programmes for qualification as either a primary or post-primary teacher is via the Central Applications Office (CAO). Structurally, concurrent ITE programmes combine academic and professional studies in the HEI setting, together with a number of assessed school practice placements during four years of study.

As it has been remarked that this ‘dual-field’ experience presents a challenge for students generally (Grenfell, 1996; Murray & Maguire, 2007), it is useful to ascertain how students entering via non-standard entry routes experience such programmes, and this is what this study does. Focusing specifically on non-standard entry-route students from two HEI’s in the west of Ireland who are undertaking a concurrent degree to qualify as post-primary (secondary) school-teachers, the study adopts a Bourdieusian approach in seeking to understand the motivations, attitudes and experiences of the students as they negotiate the ‘dual-field’ that is ITE.

1.3 Why a Bourdieusian approach?

Prior to setting out the aims and research questions in more detail, I think it is important to comment briefly on the significance of the theoretical approach which has been adopted for the study, as this has a direct bearing on how the aims and the research questions have been constructed.

In setting out to identify a theoretical and methodological framework for the study, I was aware that the work of Bourdieu (1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) offered much potential. My awareness was heightened through having previously undertaken a small-scale study in a related area, as a result of which I became more familiar with Bourdieu’s theory and practice (Kelly-Blakeney, 2010). It was already apparent that Bourdieu’s insights on a broad range of socio-cultural issues, including that of unequal educational achievement (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and how amounts and types of capital serve to reproduce educational inequalities would have much to offer the present study. However, it was when I began to look beyond Bourdieu’s key concepts (of field, capital, habitus) as *isolated* concepts, and to consider them as components of Bourdieu’s field theory that I began to recognise the vast potential which his theoretical (and methodological) framework presented for a study which was concerned with student experience of a concurrent ITE programme.

Grenfell and James’ (1998:20) assertion that ‘no field ever exists in isolation’ and that ‘there is the sense of fields within fields within fields’ resonates clearly when the structure of concurrent ITE programmes is considered. From a Bourdieusian perspective, we see that the structure determines that ITE students are required to

negotiate two fields of practice: the HE field and the professional field of teaching (TP) during the course of their studies. These fields do not exist as separate entities, and this is an important consideration: there is overlap between HE and TP as fields of practice for students; the field of ITE is a subfield of HE, and a both HE and TP may be regarded as subfields of the larger field of education. Thus, both HE (and ITE within it) and TP ‘connect with and partially share the principles of the superordinate field, all whilst having their own particular context characteristics’ but they also ‘connect with other fields outside of education’ (Grenfell & James, 1998:20). Therefore, in researching the experiences of students who have entered ITE via non-standard routes, it is necessary to situate those experiences in the context of the wider field(s) in which those experiences take place. This implies that for this study, knowledge of the field of ITE, as well as WP as a policy field and its relationship to ITE are issues which require consideration; thus informing the first aim, as set out hereafter, together with the second aim (which focuses on the student experience) and the research questions generated by each.

1.4 Setting out the Aims and Research Questions

The aims of the study are:

1. To map the field of ITE in Ireland with specific reference to widening participation
2. To understand how non-standard entry-route students perceive their experiences of a full-time concurrent ITE programme

From these aims, more specific research questions (RQ) emerge as follows:

1. To map the field of ITE in Ireland with specific reference to widening participation
 - RQ 1.1 How is the field of ITE constructed within the field of HE in Ireland and what are the other fields which impact on the field’s structure and function?
 - RQ 1.2 How is widening participation and increasing access to ITE enacted in policy and practice?
2. To understand how non-standard entry-route students perceive their experiences of a full-time concurrent post-primary ITE programme

RQ 2.1 What are the motivations of non-standard entry - route students to embark on ITE?

RQ 2.2 What resources do non-standard entry-route students have upon entry to ITE, and what resources do they acquire and draw on during the course of their studies?

RQ 2.3 How do non-standard entry-route students describe their experiences of each of the dual fields which they encounter? How is the transition between the HE field (being a student) and the professional field (being a teacher) negotiated by these students?

RQ 2.4 How do non-standard entry-route students position themselves relative to others whom they encounter (peers, academics, teachers, pupils) in each of the fields (HE/TP) which they experience during the course of their programme of study?

1.5 The research focus: why is a study of widening participation in initial teacher education in Ireland important?

In Ireland, while the research base regarding WP has expanded in recent years to include the issue of WP from the perspective of participants, there are no studies which look at WP in ITE with regard to student experience. In relation to WP, a number of studies have looked at evaluating Access courses in general (HEA, 2004b; 2006; Murphy, 2009); and while student experiences of access-course entry-routes into HE in Ireland has recently been documented by Keane (2009a; 2009b; 2011a; 2011b; 2012); and the experiences of mature students has been investigated by Fleming and Finnegan (2011), none of these studies has considered the experiences of students entering *one particular field* of study.

Indeed, it has been noted that research on the field of ITE in Ireland is sparse overall, particularly in relation to students' experiences (Hall et al., 1999; Heinz, 2008). Existing literature has been largely concerned with entrance patterns to post-graduate ITE (Heinz, 2008); and gender patterns in entrance to primary teaching (Drudy, 2006b; 2008). Until relatively recently, research on the entrants to ITE in Ireland focused almost entirely on those entering the undergraduate primary sector (Drudy,

2006a, 2006b, 2009; Drudy et al., 2005). Recently, the work of Clarke (2009) and Heinz (2008, 2013a; 2013b) has included the socioeconomic profiling of entrants to post-primary teacher education; but both authors look at entrants to *post-graduate* (consecutive) programmes. So while a comprehensive knowledge-base has begun to be developed with regard to entrants to primary concurrent programmes as well as post-graduate entrants to post-primary (secondary) consecutive programmes, a gap exists with regard to the profile of entrants to *post-primary concurrent* ITE programmes in Ireland. This research sets out to commence the process of filling that gap.

Elsewhere, there is a growing body of literature on the experiences of students who have availed of 'alternative' routes into the teaching profession as a result of government policy initiatives over the past 15 years. Again, all studies relate to either post-graduate models of entry or school-based training routes into ITE rather than the undergraduate concurrent model in which this study is situated. A number of studies have looked at the question of *routes* into teaching (Capel, 2001; Griffiths, 2007; Hobson et al., 2005; Raffo & Hall, 2006; Smith & Mc Lay, 2007); these are chiefly concerned with either evaluating a particular route or comparing routes. *Non-completion* has been considered in several papers (Chambers & Roper, 2000; Hobson et al., 2009; Yong, 2010), and again the questions tend to focus on how route impacts on retention. *Ethnicity* in ITE intake has been looked at by Carrington & Tomlin (2000), Carrington & Skelton (2003) and Basit et al. (2006). The personal and academic experiences of *mature* students in ITE have also been the focus of a number of studies (Griffiths, 2002; Kaldi, 2009; Kaldi & Griffiths, 2013; Quintrell & Maguire, 2000). Moran (2008) suggests that in the UK, while few initiatives are geared specifically at recruiting under-represented groups into ITE, expansion of entry routes does appear to have impacted positively on fair access and widening participation.

In the Irish context, it has been highlighted that 'further examination' (Kelly, 2010: x) of the post-entry experiences of students who gain access to HE as a result of WP initiatives is required; and for students embarking on ITE, their 'perceptions, motivations and expectations' (Heinz, 2008:237) has been identified as an area requiring further research. This study adds the voices of students of ITE to the debate

about how HE is experienced by those who have entered via non-standard routes. In adding their voices, the study contributes to the knowledge base of the field of ITE as well as the field of WP in the Irish context, and will be of interest to policymakers as well as practitioners.

1.6 My own ‘sketch for self-analysis’ (after Bourdieu, 2007)

I discovered little by little, mainly through the gaze of others, the particularities of my habitus...

(Bourdieu, 2007:89)

As a researcher for whom the theoretical, conceptual and empirical work of Bourdieu has been instrumental in the execution of this study, and for whom reflexivity has been a defining feature of all stages of this work; it is incumbent on me to end this introduction with a brief insight into my own trajectory. Reluctant though I am to engage in this exercise lest it be construed that I am lapsing into the type of ‘endless textual and autobiographical referentiality’ (Kenway & McLeod, 2004:528) which a Bourdieusian reflexivity seeks to avoid; I feel it necessary to share the salient aspects of my educational and professional trajectory, because I recognise that these have shaped me as a researcher, and they have shaped this work that I now present. So, like Bourdieu (2007:1), ‘I would simply like to try to gather together and present some elements for a self-socioanalysis’, but I do so only briefly.

Certainly it is the case that my interest in researching the experiences of non-traditional students in ITE as a particular field of HE in Ireland came about as a result of having spent a number of years working on an ITE programme in a small HEI. However, now that I am in the final stages of the ‘write-up’ of this thesis, I can also see that my interest in this particular area as an object of research is also linked to my own trajectory. As the above quote from Bourdieu indicates, it has been through the gaze of others - ‘others’ in this instance being other researchers whose work I have encountered and come to know (including that of Bourdieu) as a result of this research study, that have enabled me to peel back the layers of my own trajectory and find the ‘particularities’ of my own habitus. This de-layering has been important: not only has it allowed me to come to a better understanding of myself, but I hope that it has allowed me to come to a better understanding of the participants. It has enhanced my capacity to see things from ‘their point of view’

(Bourdieu et al., 1999:625) – an aspect which Bourdieu identifies as a central element in practising a reflexive sociology (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu et al., 1999).

On completion of my primary education, I was awarded a scholarship to attend a religious-managed secondary boarding school. As a student in this new environment I quickly learnt the ‘rules of the game’, and secondary school was an enjoyable and fulfilling time for me. However, looking back now, I can also remember times when I was aware that as a ‘scholarship girl’ I either felt or was made to feel different. When it came to deciding a direction for my post-secondary education, similar to the participants in this study, I chose teaching. Like all of the participants, I was also a first-generation HE entrant. The lure of an identified career-path and the likelihood of a ‘permanent and pensionable post’ won out over an unknown future attached to the degree programme which I was also offered in an elite university at the same time, but chose not to accept. Following my degree, I spent a short time teaching, completed a Master’s degree; and then found myself back in my alma mater in a lecturing position. This is the same HEI in which I still work and which was one of the two sites from which participants were recruited for the study.

There are a number of levels in which my trajectory becomes important in the process of objectifying my relationship to the object of study (Bourdieu et al., 1999) in this research. At a surface level, within the academic field, I am positioned as ‘lecturer’ and the participant positioned as ‘student’. That is clearly going to have a bearing on the nature of our interaction during the research study (which will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 4). But on another level, I too have been positioned elsewhere: as the ‘student’, negotiating the dual field of ITE; therefore my understanding of the issues which the students encounter has doubtlessly been enhanced. On yet another level, I have had experience of gaining entry to a field which, were it not for an entrance scholarship, I would not have experienced.

Of researchers, ‘the risks of writing’ (Bourdieu et al., 1999:621) and the importance of participant objectification, Bourdieu states:

...it is solely to the extent that they can objectify themselves that they are able, even as they remain in the place inexorably assigned to each of us in the social world, to imagine themselves in the place occupied by their objects

(who are, at least to a certain degree, an alter ego) and thus to take their point of view, that is, to understand that if they were in their shoes they would doubtless be and think just like them.

(Bourdieu et al., 1999:625-626)

So, in now objectifying my relationship with the participants, I recognise that separately, each of the aspects of my trajectory affords me an insight into and on the positioning of myself as well as the non-traditional students who are the objects of this study. Collectively that trajectory has provided me with a perspective that has enhanced my capacity to objectify myself along with them, and in so doing, has perhaps brought me a little closer to understanding all of our positions.

1.7 Structure of Thesis

This first chapter, the introduction, has set out the context and rationale for the study. Chapter two will examine increasing access and widening participation in higher education in Ireland with regard to policy and practice. It will trace the historical development of the concept of ‘equity’ in relation to access to education in Ireland, noting the key role and influence of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as the European Union (EU) in shaping the direction of educational policy-making in Ireland. Moving on to consider the contemporary HE context and the recent *Hunt Report* (DES, 2011a), participation targets and trends are thereafter discussed, and the most recent data on this area is presented.

Chapter three sets out the theoretical underpinnings of the study and explains why Bourdieu’s field theory has been chosen as the guiding influence. I look to Bourdieu’s proponents as well as his critics to gain a deeper understanding of situating Bourdieu’s work epistemologically, and consider how this process has aided me in defining my own positionality. Following an overview of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework, I outline the theoretical assumptions about what it means to research from a Bourdieusian perspective and the implications for the study. These theoretical assumptions are that a three-level approach is employed, with Bourdieu’s concepts used as heuristic devices; that ‘reflexivity’ is central to the approach; and importantly - that thinking ‘relationally’ is at the heart of all stages of the research process.

Chapter four describes the methods employed to conduct the research, using Bourdieu's three-level approach. I begin by providing an overview of level one and two - the field mapping undertaken for the research, before moving on to discuss how I conducted the qualitative interviews - level three. I set out a rationale for narrative inquiry as a methodology for the 'analysis of the habitus of agents'. I explain how I developed an analytical framework which would intertwine Bourdieu's concepts with narrative inquiry in order to make sense of the data; and why Polkinghorne's (1995:12) approach to 'narrative analysis' was chosen as central to this framework.

Chapter five is the first of two chapters in which the findings of the research are presented, and in setting out the outcomes of the first two of Bourdieu's three-level approach, it is thus concerned with the structure and functioning (the mapping) of the field. The two research questions which emanate from the first aim are answered here: the first is concerned with ascertaining how ITE is constructed in HE in Ireland; and the second is to do with how WP and increasing access to ITE is enacted in policy and practice. Following on from an overview of the historical development of the field, I consider recent policy influences which are impacting on ITE both structurally and operationally, and the consequences of these for the field's autonomy. Data on the numbers of non-standard entrants to ITE as a field are contextualised in relation to data concerning the proportions of non-standard entrants to *all* HE undergraduate programmes of study; and in relation to the national WP targets for participation in HE set in 2001, 2005 and 2008.

In Chapter six, the third stage of Bourdieu's three-level field analysis is presented: the analysis of the habitus of agents in the field - who in this instance are the students who have entered concurrent ITE programmes via two non-standard entry-routes. Their habituses are uncovered through narrative accounts which provide an insight into the students' motivations, resources and experiences in the dual-field, and thus, the four research questions (RQ 2.1-2.4) which derive from the second aim are answered. The narratives are situated within one of three possible conceptions of positions in the field which were derived from the participant accounts, based on amounts of capital and practices within the dual fields. The three possible conceptions are: *Belonging*, *Adjusting* and *Struggling*. Of the nine participants, four

are positioned as '*Belonging*', while five are '*Adjusting*'. Following an overview of all of the participants, the narratives of two (a habitus *Belonging* and a habitus *Adjusting*) are presented in greater depth and interpreted through a Bourdieusian lens. Importantly, the narratives illustrate the different ways in which the dual-field of ITE is experienced by non-standard entrants, the complexities of their trajectories, and the impact of this on their positioning in the field.

Chapter seven is the final chapter in this study and it draws together the findings and discusses these in light of recent literature in the field. I move on to outline the contribution of this study to knowledge in the field, indicating how it adds to the knowledge base of both ITE as well as WP in the Irish context. The limitations of the study are noted, and recommendations regarding future research are outlined.

Chapter 2: Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ireland: Context, Policy and Practice

‘The issue of widening participation to higher education (HE) is central to policy debates internationally and manifests itself in a multitude of interventions’

(Osborne, 2003b:44)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider the Irish experience of WP in higher education. It addresses both issues which Osborne refers to in the opening quote, namely: how WP is borne out in ‘policy debates’ in the Irish context, as well as the types of interventions which the policy has informed. A logical starting point is to clarify what exactly is meant by ‘widening participation’, hence I begin by examining the meanings ascribed to the term and related concepts, and move on to trace the discursive development of these in Irish policy documents. The chapter continues by examining the evolution of policy on access and WP in HE in Ireland, before returning to consider the approaches employed in translating the policy into practice. This will involve first, a theorising of the approaches used, followed by an analysis of participation targets and trends.

2.2 Widening Participation: definitions and discourses

It is broadly understood that in higher education policy discourse, the terms ‘*increasing access*’ and ‘*widening participation*’ refer to policy objectives which address the inclusion of those groups who have traditionally been under-represented or excluded from HE (Murphy et al. 2002; Osborne, 2003a; Osborne & Young, 2006). This encompasses a number of issues, including increasing the social diversity of applicants and participants, as well as age, disability, gender and ethnicity (Greenbank, 2006; Hoare & Johnston, 2011). One of the most comprehensive definitions of widening participation is that set out by the UK Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC), which states:

Widening participation is taken to mean extending and enhancing access to and experience of HE, and achievement within HE, of people from so-called under-represented and diverse social backgrounds, families, groups and communities and positively enabling such people to participate in and benefit from various types of HE. These could include people from socially

disadvantaged families and/or deprived geographical areas, including deprived remote, rural and coastal areas or from families that have no prior experience of HE. Widening participation is also concerned with diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, disability and social background in particular HE disciplines, modes and institutions. In addition it can also include access and participation across the ages, extending conceptions of learning across the life course, and in relation to family responsibilities, particularly by gender and maturity.

(ESRC, 2005)

Lynch (2000), provides an overview of the terms commonly encountered in widening participation discourse, and distinguishes between three levels which are apparent in access and WP policies. Lynch denotes '*equality of access*' as representing the 'minimalist conception whereby equality is defined in terms of access to different levels of education for relatively disadvantaged groups'. Thereafter, '*equal participation*' represents a stage beyond access, where equality is measured in terms of participation rates rather than just access rates'; and finally, '*equality of outcome or success*' represents the third and most radical conception of equality which is found within liberal educational discourse' (Lynch 2000:93). In a similar vein, Gidley et al. (2010:131) examine social inclusion from three different ideological perspectives, arguing that these represent degrees of inclusion. The three perspectives are *social inclusion as access* (the neoliberal perspective), *social inclusion as participation or engagement* (the social justice perspective), and *social inclusion as success through empowerment* (the human potential perspective). The question that arises then is - how has access and widening participation evolved in the Irish higher education policy context and to what extent does it reflect the levels which Lynch (2000) and Gidley et al. (2010) have identified?

In tracing the development of the discourse in the Irish context, the White Paper *Charting Our Education Future* (Department of Education (DoE), 1995) can be identified as the first policy document within which the term 'equality of access' is used:

A major policy objective of the Government is to promote equality of access to higher education, irrespective of social class, age or disability, for all who have the capacity to benefit from it.

(DoE, 1995:97)

Some five years after the *White Paper*, it is notable that a HEA - commissioned report explicitly states that in addressing issues concerning access to HE, 'equity' is the central concept:

Terms such as 'access', 'equal opportunity', 'equality of outcomes', 'affirmative action', and 'equity' are frequently encountered in this area of higher education policy and analysis. The key umbrella or organising concept, however, is 'equity' conceived as: fairness; equality of treatment where comparable features and conditions pertain; and opportunity to participate and contribute, without hindrance through prejudice and discriminatory customary practice

(Skilbeck & O'Connell, 2000:14)

Thereafter, in the first *National Access Plan* produced by the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education (NOEAHE) after its establishment in 2003, the purpose of which was to 'present a national action plan to achieve equity of access to higher education in Ireland' (HEA, 2004b:6) a 'working definition' is presented:

Working definition of equity of access: policies and activities to ensure that learners of all backgrounds, identities and abilities are enabled and encouraged to enter, successfully participate and complete higher education
(HEA, 2004b:n.p.)

Four years later, in the *National Access Plan 2008-2013* (HEA, 2008), the 'working definition' has developed into a 'concept', with a footnote aligning it to the definition used by the European Access Network:

In this plan, the concept of 'Access' is understood to encompass not only entry to higher education, but also retention and successful completion. The pursuit of greater equality extends to all levels of higher education.
(HEA, 2008:14)

In both documents, (and despite being denoted as a *working* definition in the first) the emphasis on entry, participation, retention and completion within both statements suggests a leaning towards Lynch's (2000) 'equality of outcome', and is reflective of similar policy trends evident elsewhere (Christie et al., 2005; Clancy & Goastellac, 2007). The definitions alone provide insufficient detail to enable an alignment with any of the perspectives outlined by Gidley et al. (2010), but this issue is one to which I will return towards the end of the chapter in section 2.4.1. Prior to that, the next section will provide a detailed overview of the development of access policy in Ireland, and will situate and contextualise these definitions and the documents in which they originate within the broader policy context.

2.3 Widening Participation in Higher Education: the Irish policy context

2.3.1 The sixties to the nineties

Over four decades ago, the publication of the OECD-commissioned report *Investment in Education* (DoE, 1966) prioritised as a policy objective the elimination of educational inequality in Irish education. For the HE sector however, it was with the setting up of the HEA some five years later that this objective gained prominence. *The Higher Education Authority Act 1971* (Government of Ireland, 1971) established the HEA and defined its responsibilities. As one of its five key objectives, the remit of ‘promoting the attainment of equality of opportunity in higher education’ (Government of Ireland, 1971; Section 3) positioned equity firmly on the agenda of this statutory body; where it sat alongside investment, research and the development of the HE sector as policy priorities.

It was almost a quarter of a century later before the issue emerged again to any large extent in the national policy arena. In the mid-nineties, *Charting our Education Future* (DoE, 1995) the first ever Irish White Paper on Education was published. It brought a renewed focus on equity in higher education, and as stated above, it was in this policy document that ‘equality of access’ first entered the policy discourse. In indicating how the policy objective would be met - charging the HEA with this responsibility - it was also within the White Paper that the first target for increasing participation by a specific population sub-group was set:

The Higher Education Authority, in consultation with third-level institutions, will be asked to advise on the most appropriate and effective means of achieving an annual increase in participation of 500 students from lower socio-economic groups in third level education over the next five years
(DoE, 1995:100)

In the wake of the White Paper, a Steering Committee on the Future of Higher Education was set up by the HEA to look specifically at how matters concerning HE which were raised in the White Paper could be addressed, and the group reported later the same year (HEA, 1995). On the issue of access to HE, the *Report of the Steering Committee on the Future of Higher Education* highlighted three points concerning socio-economic inequality, and advocated that these be a key focus of any future HEA initiatives which sought to address the issue. The three points were

as follows: that students from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to complete second level education; that those who did complete second level tended to achieve significantly lower grades in the Leaving Certificate (LC); and that of students receiving modest grades in the LC, those from higher socio-economic groups have a higher transfer to HE than those from lower socio-economic groups (HEA, 1995).

Importantly, the report also called for a greater degree of public ownership by HEIs of initiatives and schemes put in place at institutional level to tackle access for all under-represented groups. It also suggested that greater supports needed to be put in place by HEIs for students entering HE by various schemes (HEA, 1995). However, as noted by Osborne & Leith (2000:5), the report did not address the crucial issue of how such initiatives might be operationalised in practice, as it 'did not ...set out a template of how such schemes should be structured'. However, in pointing to the need for a more formalised approach for the funding of access, the report did serve as the impetus for the setting up of the 'Targeted Initiatives' (TI) funding scheme by the HEA in 1996, through which a budget was set aside for actions (by the University sector only) geared at improving access to HE for under-represented lower socio-economic groups.

2.3.2 The new Century: three reports

A report of the evaluation of the TI scheme which was commissioned by the HEA in 1999 and published a year later (Osborne & Leith, 2000) was the first of three key studies conducted at the behest of that body over a two year period. Collectively, these could be regarded as highly influential in directing policy in the area of access to HE as Ireland entered the twenty-first century, as I will go on to explain.

2.3.2.1 Evaluation of Targeted Initiatives on Widening Access for Young People from Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds (Osborne & Leith, 2000)

Published in September 2000, this first report entailed an assessment of access activities undertaken by the University sector in Ireland over the three year period since the commencement of the TI, along with a brief appraisal of access approaches used elsewhere in Europe, as well as recommendations for future practice. The report concluded that the universities had 'responded positively to the challenge of creating

a series of activities designed to enhance the opportunities of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds' despite not having managed to achieve the increase in numbers of students initially projected (Osborne & Leith, 2000:33). It also called for a more systematic approach to be put in place towards the achievement of greater equity, and noted that a national strategy needed to include the entire third level sector, not just the universities.

2.3.2.2 Access and Equity in Higher Education: an International Perspective on Issues and Strategies (Skilbeck & O'Connell, 2000)

The second of the HEA - commissioned research studies sought to look beyond the national landscape as its remit was to examine in detail the strategic approaches to widening participation adopted internationally. Additionally, the study aimed 'to identify strategies and procedures that show promise in meeting policy objectives of achieving greater equity in higher education' for the national context (Skilbeck & O'Connell, 2000:10). The report provided a comprehensive overview of the issues and challenges faced elsewhere, with particular reference to those of low socio-economic status, females, mature age and part-time students, ethnic and other minority groups as well as persons with a disability. While reluctant to set out 'general conclusions for future action' due to the 'dearth of evaluative research on the impact of established policies and programmes' (p.49) the report was unequivocal that a more joined-up approach was required for progress to be made as:

All must contribute if policies are to be effective: individuals, institutions, governments, policy makers, special interest groups and those sections of government departments and specialist agencies that have a direct interest in or responsibility for equity in education in all its forms.

(Skilbeck & O'Connell, 2000:67)

2.3.2.3 Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (HEA, 2001)

Following the publication of Skilbeck & O'Connell's report in May 2000, the Minister for Education set up the *Action Group on Access to Third Level Education* in September the same year, and the report of that body was published in May of the following year. The task for the group was 'to advise the Minister on the development of a co-ordinated framework to promote access by mature and disadvantaged students and students with disabilities to third level education' (HEA,

2001:7). Among the 78 recommendations set out in the *Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education* (HEA, 2001), was the proposal for the setting up of a ‘national office’ as a priority, to be put in place within a three month timeframe. Functioning as ‘a single co-ordinating body’ for equity of access, the remit of the national office would be to: ‘draw up policy proposals and to oversee the implementation of measures, in close liaison with the Department of Education and Science and other stakeholders’ (HEA, 2001:124). It was some two years later before this would come to fruition, when the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education (NOEAHE) was set up within the HEA in 2003. It is from this Office that the National Access Plans (HEA, 2004b; 2008) emanated, including the definitions set out in section 2.2.

2.3.3 The contemporary policy context: towards 2030

A discussion on the policy context would be incomplete without reference to the recent suite of policy documents which are concerned with the ‘reconfiguring’ of Irish HE. In January 2011, the policy process commenced with the publication of the *National Strategy for Higher Education* (usually referred to as the *The Hunt Report*) (DES, 2011a), followed by the *Landscape Document* (HEA, 2012a) in February 2012; culminating with the recent publication in May 2013 of the *Report to the Minister of Education and Skills on System Reconfiguration, Inter-Institutional Collaboration and System Governance in Irish Higher Education* (HEA, 2013a) (hereafter called the *Report on Reconfiguration, Collaboration and Governance*). The *Landscape Document* (HEA, 2012a) set out a rationale for the proposed structural change in how Irish HE is configured: while the most recent and final document - the *Report on Reconfiguration, Collaboration and Governance* (HEA, 2013a) effectively sets out how the *Hunt Report* will be operationalised. As signalled by the titles, it is the contents of the *National Strategy* – the *Hunt Report* which is of most direct relevance to the present discussion.

The *Hunt Report* (DES, 2011a) running to 130 pages, set out the goals of government educational strategy for the next two decades. The first part of the policy document outlines the context for the strategy, focusing on ‘a changing society’ (p.30) and ‘planning for future demand’ (p.44). Part two of the document considers ‘the mission of higher education’ (p.51), devoting separate chapters to

‘teaching and learning’ (p.52); ‘research’ (p.63); ‘engagement with the wider society’ (p.74) and ‘internationalising higher education’ (p.80). Part three looks at governance, structures and funding, with separate chapters devoted to each of these three themes. With regard to access and widening participation, the *Hunt Report* included ‘increased participation, equality of access, and lifelong learning’ as one of five high-level objectives, and recommendations in Part 1 and 2 of the policy contain frequent references to how these issues might be addressed. It thus reaffirmed the necessity to continue to focus on this as an issue in higher education, noting the importance of ‘widening and growth in participation’ (DES, 2011a:11) in enabling ‘Ireland to achieve its ambitions for recovery and development within an innovation-driven economy’ (p.10).

2.3.4 The legislative context

Turning now to chart the legislative context for equity in HE, we return again to the nineties as the starting point. As with the policy context, the White Paper on education (DoE, 1995), noting the ‘absence of a legislative tradition in education’, also heralded the introduction of a raft of legislation which dealt with various aspects concerning the structure, governance, organisation and functions of Irish education. Towards the end of that decade, *inter alia*, the Universities Act 1997; the Education Act 1998; the Qualifications (Education & Training) Act 1999; and the Equal Status Act 2000 (Government of Ireland, 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000) all served to enhance the focus on issues of equity pertaining to access and participation in higher education.

The Universities Act 1997 provides ‘a clear and definite statement of the obligation of the universities in Ireland to promote equity’ (Skilbeck & O’Connell, 2000:10). Briefly, the aspects of the Act that refer specifically to the attainment of equity are set out in Sections 14, 18 and 36 of the Act. These Sections outline the duty of the university towards promotion and preservation of equality of opportunity; the development of clear policies concerning how this will be operationalised as well as clear roles for the governing body of the university.

While the Education Act of 1998 is focused on first and second level education, given that its remit includes the promotion of ‘equality of access to and participation in education’, and recognising the importance of the early years of schooling to the

elimination of educational inequality, the Act is regarded as a key piece of legislation towards achieving equity of access to higher education also (Drudy, 2009).

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act of 1999 set out a blueprint for the establishment of a national qualifications authority, the remit of which would include the issues of access, transfer and progression of students between second, further and higher education institutions. Arising from the Act, the National Qualification Authority of Ireland (NQAI) was established in February 2001. The remit of the NQAI included the establishment of a framework of qualifications; the creation of standards of awards for the further and higher education and training sector; as well as the promotion and facilitation of access, transfer and progression across the entire spectrum of training and education provision.

While each of the aforementioned pieces of legislation were broad in their scope, the Equal Status Act of 2000 (Government of Ireland, 2000) was focused specifically on the issue of discrimination. With regard to HE, the Equal Status Act indicates that institutions cannot discriminate in relation to admission on the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community.

When taken together, this legislative framework was clearly instrumental in developing a stronger policy focus on equity in HE in Ireland than had hitherto been the case. Indeed, both of the HEA - commissioned reports by Skilbeck & O'Connell (2000) and that of the Action Group on Access (HEA, 2001) frame their research briefs in the context the statutory obligations of Irish HE to address issues of equity directly as a result of the legislation.

In summary, beginning with the publication of the White Paper on Education in 1995 with its signalling of the centrality of 'equality of opportunity', the period from the mid-nineties to the early years of the twenty-first century saw an unprecedented number of research reports commissioned or funded by the HEA, which dealt with various aspects of access to HE. Around the same time, the passing of several pieces of legislation meant that HE providers were now required by law to ensure that equity moved from being rhetoric to reality, and resulted in a more coherent and co-ordinated approach to access to HE from the late nineties onwards. The extent to

which these developments have impacted on practice will be considered in the sections that follow.

2.4 Policy into practice: approaches to Access and Widening Participation

Clancy and Goastellec (2007:137) set out three successive principles which they identify as determining how access policy has been framed: ‘inherited merit; equality of rights; and equity – defined as ‘equality of opportunity’, noting that it is the latter of the three which now informs the policy context for WP in most countries. Boud (2004) makes the case that strategies for widening access have moved from ‘access by patronage’ through ‘access by objective testing’ to ‘access for target groups’. Oduaran (2006) contends that it is the third of these that has found most favour by policymakers in recent times, noting that the strategies employed tend to use variations of the following: wider entry qualifications accepted by institutions; lowering entry requirements for target groups; provision of access or bridging courses; provision of financial incentives to institutions to recruit target groups; and additional funding directed at institutions situated in areas where target groups are located. More recently, findings from Eurydice (2010) confirm that the most widely employed measures on a European-wide basis are special admission procedures and the provision of financial grants for under-represented groups.

Murphy et al. (2002:3) classify initiatives to widening access into three categories: ‘access as *in-reach*’, ‘access as *out-reach*’ and ‘access as *flexibility*’. Osborne (2003b:46) explains how the *in-reach* category employs mechanisms such as Access courses as well as pre-entry preparatory courses; the *out-reach* category typically employs a collaborative approach with the community, schools and employers, while the *flexibility* category ‘refers to systematic as against discrete provision and includes...structural arrangements’ such as open and distance learning, part-time provision, credits for prior learning and a credit transfer system.

In Irish HE, it is clearly the ‘target group’ approach as indicated by Boud (2004) that has been employed in the national policy context (as section 2.5 will explain); but if WP activity in Irish HE is viewed through the Murphy et al. (2002) categories, there is evidence of both *in-reach* and *out-reach* activities. While approaches differ between sectors, and while practices vary from institution to institution within each

sector, the provision of Access courses has featured prominently, particularly within the universities (HEA, 2004a, 2006; Murphy, 2009; O'Reilly, 2008). While evaluations of Access courses/programmes have lauded the benefits of such provision as a strategy, they have also highlighted concerns. These centre on anomalies in levels of funding between HEA controlled and non-controlled institutions (HEA, 2005), as well as the lack of clear progression routes from the Further Education (FE) sector and HE (Murphy, 2009); the latter of which has been a policy approach used more widely in the UK, with varying degrees of success (Crozier et al., 2008; Parry, 2009). The extension of the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) – a scheme whereby a proportion of places at a lower points than is normally required is set aside for non-traditional students is noted by Eurydice (2010) as a good example of an *in-reach* approach (I will discuss the HEAR scheme in more detail in Chapter 5). With regard to *flexibility*, encompassing part-time and flexible forms of provision, the *Hunt Report* (DES, 2011a) highlighted this as an issue requiring considerably more work. However, the recent publication of a policy document on part-time and flexible HE in Ireland (HEA, 2013b) which sets out a strategy and actions, including details on financial supports for students, is couched in terms of supporting the objectives set out in the *National Access Plan* (HEA, 2008) and is a positive move in addressing this issue.

2.4.1 Policy into practice: ‘vision and interest’

Ball (1990a:22) contends that ‘policies...legitimate and initiate practices in the world, and they privilege certain visions and interest’. If we take this perspective as a starting point for thinking about the policy field of HE in Ireland and specifically, equity and widening access policies within that field; a number of questions arise. The first question has to do with whether access policies have in fact initiated and/or legitimated practices in the world/field of HE in Ireland. The second question, allied to the first, seeks to uncover whether a particular ‘vision and interest’ has been privileged within the discourse.

Coate & Mac Labhrainn (2009) suggest that historically, Irish HE has tended to be guided more by supranational agencies than by national policy makers. It has been remarked that Irish HE policy has been heavily influenced by the EU (White, 2001; Osborne, 2003a; Clancy, 2008), as well as by the OECD (Coolahan, 2007; Clancy,

2008; Sugrue, 2009). Given the acknowledgment of the neo-liberal focus to the EU's HE discourse (Brine, 2006; Davies, 2003; Mayo, 2009; Osborne 2003a), it is useful to consider where access policies sit within this dominant discourse, and the implications, (if any) for practice. Osborne (2003a:7) suggests that while criticisms of EU policy on lifelong learning as 'over-duly instrumental and driven by economic considerations' are valid, there is also recognition 'that the goals of economic development could not be achieved without concomitant social developments to combat exclusions'. Consequently, he posits that a focus on varying forms of 'social inclusion' has become a feature of policy, generally occupying a position alongside 'economic development' in policy documents. Making a similar point, Mayo (2009) contends that in stark contrast to the prevailing neo-liberal thrust of much of its other discourse, the discourse of access to higher education as expressed in EU HE policy communications is perhaps the most laudable.

Given the influence of the EU on Irish educational policy making (this too will be examined further in Chapter 5) it is hardly surprising that a neo-liberal/economic/free market focus is apparent within HE policy discourses in Ireland. As the next section will outline, given that to date HE access/WP policy in Ireland has been overwhelmingly focused on setting projections for participation rates, these points are particularly pertinent. As noted earlier, the most recent *National Access Plan* (HEA, 2008) draws heavily on the projections of the *National Skills Strategy* projections (EGFSN, 2007) in setting targets for various learner types, and these are again endorsed in the *Hunt Report* (DES, 2011a).

But while the argument has been made that the policy focus in Irish HE has been predominantly towards economic ends (Coate & Mac Labhrainn, 2009; Lynch 1999; O'Sullivan, 2005), this is by no means a new phenomenon. In the mid-nineties, around the point when Ireland moved to having a mass higher education system, Clancy (1996:355) commented that 'expansion of higher education in the Republic of Ireland was, to a large extent, legitimated by the needs of the economy'. Elsewhere, he describes how the 1960s are widely regarded as a turning point in Irish history:

The 1960's marked a fundamental policy shift. The pursuit of economic growth was established as the dominant project in Irish political life. Economic development was to be pursued through a policy of rapid

industrialisation...A re-oriented education system was seen as being a key facilitator in this transformation process.

(Clancy, 2008:124)

More recently, several authors have discussed how the ‘knowledge economy’ and ‘the smart economy’ have come to dominate the Irish HE policy discourse (Coate & Mac Labhrainn, 2009; Lolic, 2011; Warren, 2011), and this is apparent in HEA policy documents on WP and access. For example, the first section of the *National Access Plan 2008-2013* (HEA, 2008:14) sets out ‘the evolving rationale for access’. While the social dimension is acknowledged in the first paragraph via reference to the role of HE in attaining social cohesion: ‘education has a key role in promoting equality of opportunity and participation in the civic, cultural and social life of a nation’, the remainder of the ‘rationale’ clearly points to the centrality of economic concerns:

Increasingly, economic sustainability will depend on the learning achievements and skills of all citizens. This has added greater urgency to our pursuit of educational opportunities for all.

(HEA, 2008:14)

Also of interest is the manner in which the rationale for WP is conveyed, whereby achievement of the participation rates for HE is aligned with the targets set by the *National Skills Strategy* (EGFSN, 2007):

Continuing *success in widening participation* will obviously be *crucial* to our achievement of this *key national target*. The fact that widening access to higher education is now *critical to our economic competitiveness* is a very concrete illustration of the complementarity and interdependence of our national social and economic objectives.

(HEA, 2008:15) (emphasis added)

The ‘interdependence’ referred to here is an issue which has been the subject of some discussion elsewhere. Archer (2007), in examining how ‘diversity’ is constructed within New Labour’s HE policy discourse on WP argues that ‘diversity’ has been compromised within the discourse chiefly as a result of the over-arching emphasis on the pursuit of neo-liberalism by New Labour. Furthermore, she suggests that the *presence* of greater diversity in HE should not be read as ‘an indicator of greater equality within the system’ (Archer, 2007:637). Roulstone & Prideaux (2008:15) echo her sentiments, and their point that ‘more policies’ does not necessarily equate ‘more inclusion’ is useful in considering the approach taken to access in Irish HE. For example, in the mid-eighties while it was noted by the OECD in its *Review of*

Higher Education in Ireland (2004) that that the legislative activity as well as the array of reports in the area (which I have outlined in section 2.3) ‘provide[d] clear evidence of the extent of official concern to rectify social disparity in access to tertiary education’ (OECD, 2004:29), the same body also commented that their impact on the system had been minimal. The extent to which this still holds, almost ten years on, will be examined in the next section.

2.5 Policy into practice: participation targets and trends

2.5.1 An overview of the structure of the HE system in Ireland

A brief overview of the structure of Irish HE is useful at this juncture. Described as a binary system (Osborne, 1996; Clancy, 2008) HE in Ireland comprises institutions which belong, in the main, to either the University sector or the Institute of Technology (IoT) sector (Mc Coy & Smyth, 2011), both of which are largely publicly funded. The University sector comprises seven institutions, along with a small number of colleges of education and recognised colleges, while the IoT sector comprises fourteen institutions. A small number of privately funded institutions also exist. The IoT institutions were initially established as Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) from the late sixties, their establishment arising directly as a result of a recommendation of *Investment in Education* (DoE, 1966) with its focus on ‘technological development and economic growth’ (Clancy, 1996:356). In the context of the present discussion, it should be noted that much of the expansion which has occurred in HE in Ireland has been in the IoT sector (Clancy, 1996; 2008; Osborne, 1996) as illustrated in Table 2.1 below.

Sector	1967/68	1983/84	1999/2000
University	77.7% (n= 16,881)	52.3% (n= 26,040)	54.0% (n= 66,057)
RTC/IoT	5.5% (n= 1,202)	37.7% (n= 18,771)	37.9% (n= 46,424)
Colleges of Ed.	7.1% (n= 1,543)	6.2% (n= 3,068)	2.3% (n= 2,776)
Other Colleges	9.7% (n= 2,111)	3.9% (n= 1,935)	5.8% (n= 7,138)
Total	100% (n= 21, 723)	100% (n= 49, 814)	100% (n= 122, 395)

Source: Clancy (2008:130)

2.5.2 Participation in HE: trends and targets

In 1980, 20% of school-leavers progressed to HE and by 1992, that figure had increased to 36%. By 1998, participation in HE in Ireland had grown to 44%, and by 2004 it had reached 55% (O’Connell et al., 2006a; 2006b). The most recently available data on participation in HE by socio-economic group (O’Connell et al., 2006a) outlined in Table 2.2 indicates both continuity and change in entry patterns between the years 1998 and 2004.

	1998	2004
Higher professional	100%	100%
Farmers	65%	89%
Own account workers	39%	65%
Lower professional	63%	65%
Employers and managers	65%	65%
Skilled manual	32%	50%
Semi + unskilled manual	23%	33%
Non -manual	29%	27%
Total	44%	55%

Sources: Clancy (2001); O’Connell, Mc Coy & Clancy (2006a)

For the higher socio-economic groups, continuity is apparent, with entry rates for students from ‘higher’ and ‘lower professional’ backgrounds, and ‘employers/managers’ remaining relatively unchanged over the two periods. The change is most apparent with regard to the lower socio-economic groups, namely ‘skilled manual’ and ‘semi-and unskilled manual’, with some increases in participation evident for both groups. An increase is also apparent in participation by those from farming backgrounds. However, another change, manifested by a reduction in participation by the ‘non-manual’ group has been noted as ‘a particular area of policy concern’ (O’Connell et al. 2006a:10). That concern prompted an in-depth study on the issue, the findings of which indicated that the cultural and social

contexts of students from this socio-economic group is a key determinant of whether or not they progress to higher education, as well as on their retention when they get there (Mc Coy et al., 2010).

Clancy and Goastellec (2007:139) make the point that:

Traditionally, each society has one legitimated category, which is dominant in framing the way in which social diversity is defined and equality of opportunity is assessed.

According to Bernard (2006:20), in Ireland, the terms ‘widening or increasing access’ are generally employed to mean ‘increasing the number of socio-economic disadvantaged students in higher education’. Thus, it could be said that the ‘legitimated category’ which Clancy & Goastellec (2007) reference has traditionally been that of socio-economic groups. However, more recently in Ireland, similar to other jurisdictions (Osborne, 2003a; 2003b), the category has broadened to include persons with a disability, ethnic minorities and travellers (HEA, 2004b; 2008). These broader categories are reflected in the most recent targets for participation as set out in the *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013* (HEA, 2008). As mentioned previously, in the *National Plan* the HEA endorsed the participation target set a year earlier by the EGFSN (2007). That target was for participation in HE by school-leavers to reach 72% by the year 2020, thus requiring increases in participation by that group of approximately 1.1% per annum in order for the target to be achieved, as illustrated in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Targets for overall entry rates to higher education (as % of 17-18 year olds in population)							
1980	1986	1992	1998	2004	2010	2013	2020
20%	25%	36%	44%	55%	61%	65%	72%

Source: Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2007)

The *National Plan* recognised that in order to achieve this target, socio-economic groups which were under-represented in HE would need to be targeted. As exemplified in Table 2.2., according to the 2004 data, these groups were the skilled manual (50% participation rate), semi-and unskilled manual (33%) and non-manual (27%); each of which was below the national average of 55%. With regard to

levelling out the participation rate across all socio-economic groups, the *National Plan* set a target that ‘no group should have an entry rate to higher education that is less than three-quarters of the national average by 2020’ (HEA, 2008:59). On the basis that the skilled manual group were nearing the national average, the *National Plan* committed to focus on the latter two groups, setting target entry rates of at least 54% for both groups to be achieved by 2020. These targets, together with the interim targets for 2013 are set out in Table 2.4 below.

Socio-economic group	2004 actual	2010 target	2013 target	2020 target
Non-manual	27%	37%	42%	54%
Semi + unskilled manual	33%	41%	45%	54%

Targets for mature students, students with disabilities as well as flexible/lifelong learning targets and alternative entry routes were also outlined in the *National Plan*. This latter target set out a figure for participation by students via ‘non-standard’ entry routes of 27% by 2010 and 30% by 2013, from a baseline of 24% in 2006 (HEA, 2008). While there has been some increase in participation, a mid-term review of the plan (HEA, 2010) indicated that the targets set for 2010 for overall participation as well as for participation by sub-groups have, for the most part not been achieved (as illustrated in Table 2.5 below). The 2010 participation figures for non-standard entry-route students as well as mature students each show only marginal increases since 2006. In 2006, for students entering via non-standard entry-routes the participation rate was 24% and this had increased to 25% in 2010 (against the target of 27% set in 2008). Mature student participation increased by less than one per cent – moving from 12.8% in 2006 to 13.6% in 2010 (against the target of 17% which was set in 2008).

Table 2.5: Targets for participation by sub-groups 2010 and 2013 (HEA, 2008) vs. actual participation 2006 and 2010 (HEA, 2010)

Category	2006 actual	Target for 2010	2010 actual	Target for 2013
Mature FT students	12.8%	17%	13.6%	20%
Mature FT & PT students combined	17.0%	23%	19%	27%
Flexible/PT Provision	6.6%	12.5%	14.1%	17%
Non-standard entry-route	24%	27%	25%	30%
Lifelong Learning (aged 25-64)	7.2%	12.5%	7.3%	17%
Students with a disability	393 students	699 students	668 students	932 students

Source: HEA (2008; 2010)

2.6 Summary

Clancy and Goastellec (2007) note that internationally, there are both similarities and differences between countries in how access and equity in higher education are defined, and how policies have evolved. This chapter has traced each of these with regard to HE in Ireland, and considered how policy has impacted on practice. I have outlined how the period from the mid-nineties to the early years of the noughties saw the HEA commission a number of reports which dealt with various aspects of access. Around the same time, the passing of several pieces of legislation meant that HE providers were now required by law to ensure that equality moved from being rhetoric to reality. Collectively, these set the scene for the creation of a more co-ordinated and coherent approach to access to HE from the late nineties onwards. The *National Access Plans* (2004b; 2008) set clear targets for participation in higher education by under-represented groups. However, as highlighted by the most recent data on participation (HEA, 2010), notwithstanding improvements for some groups, disparities continue to exist, particularly with regard to participation by lower socio-economic groups, as well as mature-students and persons with disabilities. Despite

the development of non-standard entry-routes into HE in Ireland, entry via these routes has not progressed according to the targets set. These figures will be revisited in Chapter 5 when participation in ITE is examined in detail. Prior to that, the next two chapters are concerned with the theoretical and methodological basis of the study. Chapter 3 sets out the theoretical underpinnings, and explains why Bourdieu's field theory was chosen as the guiding influence, while Chapter 4 describes the methods employed to conduct the research.

Chapter 3: Theoretical underpinnings: epistemology, theory and methodological approach

‘...any significant work done in the metier, or trade of sociologist requires clarity about the philosophical underpinnings of empirical enquiry and a reappraisal in this light of the tools to be used to understand human actors’

(Fowler, 1996:2)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the theoretical and epistemological basis of the study. As indicated in the opening quote, the issue of positioning ones work philosophically and theoretically is a key concern for any researcher engaged in undertaking research in the social sciences, as such positioning will have a direct effect on the approach and methods employed. Given that the work of Pierre Bourdieu has been highly influential in providing the epistemological and methodological resources which have been adopted for this study, the chapter commences with an exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of Bourdieu’s approach to sociological research. Hatch (2002:38) suggests that methodological theory is important as it ‘places the proposed study in a research paradigm and identifies what kind of study is being planned’. Thus, the next part of the chapter is concerned with an appraisal of the paradigm in which Bourdieu himself situated his work, as well as the paradigms in which others situate it. Thereafter, with a view to exemplifying the relevance of Bourdieu’s theoretical and methodological approach to this particular study, I explain how the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 have been framed by the theoretical stance being adopted. The chapter concludes with a commentary of my own positioning, and what this means for the study.

3.2 Origins of Bourdieu’s theory of practice

...consistent with his philosophical position, by continually practicing sociological method Bourdieu has, over 35 years, generated descriptions of education and society which, although tentative, partial or exploratory, have acquired prescriptive, objective status.

(Robbins, 1998:28)

In order to arrive at a fuller understanding of Bourdieu’s epistemology, it is useful to consider the theoretical perspectives and paradigms which influenced Bourdieu in constructing his particular viewpoint. Hatch (2002:19) posits that paradigms are

‘competing ways of thinking about how the world is or is not ordered, what counts as knowledge, and how and if knowledge can be gained’. Writing at a time during which much debate was taking place concerning paradigms (Denzin, 2008), Bourdieu categorised himself as a ‘structuralist constructivist or constructivist structuralist’ (Bourdieu, 1989:14). The issue of how he arrived at this stated position, as well as the implications of this positioning for his subsequent work has been extensively documented (Grenfell, 2006; 2008; Grenfell & James, 1998; Kauppi, 2000; Robbins, 1993; 1998; 2000; Webb et al., 2002).

It is possible to summarise the major influences on Bourdieu into two components: first, his personal and academic background; and second, the influence of the intellectual traditions which prevailed at the time when he was writing and researching. Grenfell (2006, 2008) provides a comprehensive account of Bourdieu’s early biography, describing his modest beginnings in a rural French village, how he went on to become a boarder at a renowned second-level school, following which he completed his degree in philosophy at the *École Normale Supérieure*. Grenfell (2006:225) suggests that the shift ‘from rural-traditional life to modern-urban’ is of consequence as ‘it is this juxtaposition between the old and the new which seems to be the common preoccupation in his earliest work’. Bourdieu’s military service, which he undertook following a year teaching, saw him posted to Algeria in 1955. Grenfell (2008:17) surmises that Bourdieu’s experience there, where ‘he saw traditional society in opposition to the modern world, and the consequences it had for the individuals involved...precipitated his move from philosophy to sociology’. Returning to France and the University of Lille in 1960, Bourdieu’s work encompassed three main areas: education, art and culture, and methodology, and he published widely on all of these. That his own life history has been an influencing factor in his work is noted by Bourdieu in his interviews with Loic Wacquant when he explains:

My sociological discourse is separated from my personal experience by my sociological practice, which is itself part of the product of a sociology of my social experience.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992)

With regard to the intellectual traditions which influenced Bourdieu, Grenfell (2008) notes that reflections of Marx, Weber and Durkheim are all found in Bourdieu’s

work. At the time when Bourdieu was growing up in France, the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre on existentialism and those of Claude Lévi-Strauss on anthropology had gained widespread popularity, as had the philosophical work of the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The work of each of these played a role in the development of Bourdieu's own unique epistemology (Grenfell, 2008; Kauppi, 2000). Despite Bourdieu's move into sociology, philosophy continued to be an important influence on his work. Indeed Grenfell (2008:24) indicates that the development of his 'key concepts' in a philosophical language 'would act as an antidote to everyday language and thus the way it occulted the social processes that had produced it'. Of note also is the fact that Bourdieu did not develop theory for theory's sake, but 'he saw his conceptual 'thinking tools' as emerging as part of an imminent necessity when engaging in practical social issues' (Grenfell, 2006:234).

3.3 Bourdieu's theoretical framework: field, habitus and capital

Grenfell & James (1998:156) posit that it is the 'continuous use of a set of conceptual metaphors' which sets Bourdieu's approach apart from others. These concepts are complex, but they enable researchers 'to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures...and everyday practices' (Webb et al., 2002). In stating that 'social agents are incorporated bodies who possess, indeed are *possessed* by structural, generative schemes which operate by orientating social practice' Grenfell & James (1998:12) sum up Bourdieu's theory of practice. The three key concepts which are central to understanding this theoretical stance are field, habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977); and as both Thomson (2008) and Grenfell (2009) note, Bourdieu intended that these be considered together rather than separately by researchers: a principle which this study endeavours to adhere to.

First, field is the space within which social practice occurs, it is 'a structured system of social relations ...[where] individuals, institutions and groupings ...all exist in structural relation to each other in some way' (Grenfell & James, 1998:16). Fields are not static, there is constant change, each field establishes its own set of values and is self-regulating; it possesses 'a patterned system of objective forces' which will impact on those entering the field; and it operates 'simultaneously [as] a space of conflict and competition' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:17).

The concept of habitus may be understood as ‘an open system of dispositions [of agents] that is constantly subjected to experiences’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:133), so that habitus as a structure is continually being either reinforced or modified within a field. Field and habitus are related in two ways: ‘the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field’ and ‘habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one’s energy’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127). Bourdieu states that ‘habitus reveals itself ...only in reference to a definite situation’ (ibid.:135), and in this regard, the usefulness and possibilities of habitus as a conceptual tool in empirical research become apparent. Indeed, Maton (2008:50) suggests that habitus is ‘a concept that orients our ways of constructing objects of study, highlighting issues of significance and providing a means of thinking relationally about those issues’.

Finally, regarding capital, Bourdieu (1986:241) postulates that ‘it is impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms’. Bourdieu explains:

...capital can present itself in three different guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible on certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (‘connections’) which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital.

(Bourdieu, 1986:243)

Cultural capital can be found in three forms: first, in an ‘embodied state’ which encompasses aspects such as accent and mannerisms appropriate to a given social situation; second, in an ‘objective state’ through an appreciation of cultural activities and possessions; and finally, in an ‘institutional state’ via academic achievements and the acquisition of formal qualifications (Grenfell, 2009; Moore, 2008). Bourdieu states that social capital ‘is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group’ arising as a result of ‘possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:119). Webb et al. (2002) explain how Bourdieu employs the terms ‘reproduction’ and ‘transformation’ to describe the competition

for capital within fields, and much of Bourdieu's work on the areas of education and culture focused on the role of education in reproducing cultural and social classification.

3.4 Situating Bourdieu

As indicated earlier, epistemologically, Bourdieu positioned his work as 'constructivist structuralism' or 'structuralist constructivism'. He clarifies this position further by explaining what each term means in practice:

By structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems (language, myths, etc.), objective structures independent of the conscious and will of agents, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a twofold social genesis, on the one hand of the scheme of perception, thought, and action which are constitutive of what I call habitus; and on the other hand of social structures, and particularly of what I call fields and of groups, notably what we ordinarily call social classes.

(Bourdieu, 1989:14)

That Bourdieu employs the terms 'structuralism' and 'constructivism' not as separate but as connected entities is important, as it represents his view that aspects of both objectivity and subjectivity could each usefully contribute to social science research. Wacquant (1992) refers to Bourdieu's approach as neither '...an objectivist physics of materialist structures or a constructivist phenomenology of cognitive forms' but a 'genetic structuralism' which transcends both. Bourdieu writes of how his concern about how to overcome the 'opposition between objectivism and subjectivism' (Bourdieu, 1988b:780) led him to seek a way of combining the two:

As I have tried to demonstrate throughout most of my work, I believe that true scientific theory and practice must overcome this opposition by integrating into a single model the analysis of the experience of social agents and the analysis of the objective structures that make this experience possible.

(Bourdieu, 1988b:782)

The objectivism which Bourdieu refers to is a feature of a research approach which is characteristic of the positivistic paradigm (Fox et al., 2007). Hatch (2002:12) indicates that ontologically, 'positivists are realists who believe in an objective universe that has an order independent of human perception'. The forms of knowledge which are produced in research which is informed by this paradigm include facts, theories and laws. On the other hand, the subjectivism which Bourdieu

alludes to is a reference to the constructivist paradigm. Ontologically, constructivists 'assume a world in which universal, absolute realities are unknowable' (Hatch, 2002:15). Research approaches which are informed by this paradigm are focused on finding out about 'subjective meanings of experiences' (Creswell, 2003:8) of individuals, and how they interact in the society where they live.

Bourdieu took the view that neither subjectivism nor objectivism alone were sufficient as a basis for the explanation of human behaviour (Griller, 2000), but that the 'dialectic of objectivity and subjectivity' brought about a capacity to '...contaminate and reinforce each other to shape the practice and products of social science' (Bourdieu, 1988b:780). Crucially, Bourdieu developed the concept of habitus as a mechanism 'to capture and encapsulate' this dialectical relationship between objectivism and subjectivism:

The habitus, being the product of the incorporation of objective necessity, of necessity turned into virtue, produces strategies which are objectively adjusted to the objective situation even though these strategies are neither the outcome of the explicit aiming at consciously produced goals, nor the result of some mechanical determination by external causes.

(Bourdieu, 1988b:782)

This concept of habitus, together with others including field and capital have been widely employed by many researchers in a variety of fields, including higher education (e.g. Crozier et al., 2008; Maton, 2005; Mills & Gale, 2007; Reay 1998b; Smyth & Banks, 2012). However, my reading of much of this work is that despite widespread reference and use of Bourdieu's theory and (to a lesser extent) method, few of the researchers employing Bourdieu's concepts purport to identify directly with his positionality. I am not suggesting that this is particularly problematic. It is probably true to say that the work of all of those employing his theory and framework (either in whole or in part) can be categorised as interpretive in nature, and indeed this term has been used to categorise Bourdieu's approach, particularly with regard to his later work (Parkhurst-Ferguson, 1999). Both theorists and practitioners have classified Bourdieu's theory using a variety of terms and have sought to situate his work in a range of paradigms. Indeed, much of the criticism levelled at Bourdieu centres on how his theory (despite his assertion to the contrary) positions him within the positivistic paradigm. The next sections will examine some of these classifications and criticisms of Bourdieu's theory and concepts. Regardless of

whether they purport to align with or counter Bourdieu's perspective, the exercise of shedding light on how others view Bourdieu is useful because it invariably provides insights into aspects of his epistemology that may not be provided through less critical readings of his work.

3.4.1 Classifications of Bourdieu

There are two bodies of literature which are useful to consider here. The first comprises those who are concerned with philosophical and theoretical matters concerning Bourdieu's work; this includes papers which have focused on capital (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Kilpatrick et al., 2003; Grenfell, 2009); habitus (King, 2000; Maton, 2008); and reflexivity (Mouzelis, 2007; Kenway & McLeod, 2004; Frangie, 2009; Kim, 2010). It also includes work of a theoretical nature which is chiefly concerned with questioning the degree to which Bourdieu's theory actually transcends the objective/subjective divide (Vanderberghe, 1999; Mouzelis, 2000; Jenkins, 1992; Lizardo, 2010). The second body of work relates to those who have employed Bourdieu's theoretical framework in the execution of their own empirical research, and it is to these that I first turn. Thus, the intent here is to briefly examine the perspectives adopted by some of these researchers with regard to the extent to which the stance adopted corresponds or differs to that of Bourdieu; and to consider whether this has a bearing on the execution of the research. As the body of research to which I am referring is extensive, I will limit my discussion to research related to WP and/or ITE.

The research conducted in England over the last decade by Diane Reay and colleagues (Reay, David & Ball, 2001; 2005; Crozier et al., 2008; Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2010) has sought to address the issue of higher education 'choice-making' by different groups of students. Bourdieu's theoretical framework is employed to illustrate how habitus and cultural capital provide a mechanism for understanding decision-making by higher education applicants, their experiences in HE and the interrelation of learner and cultural identities. A mixed methods approach is employed, with grounded theory used in analysing the qualitative data. Reay (1998a) identifies herself as a feminist, and she describes her experience of first using cultural capital as a theoretical tool, moving on to employ habitus as a concept to inform her work. In the Irish context, a constructivist grounded theory approach was

employed in a recent study by Keane (2009b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). The study examined the relational experiences of under-represented students in one HEI and the theoretical framework of Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) is drawn on in the discussion of findings.

In examining processes of middle-class reproduction in a graduate teacher employment scheme, Smart et al. (2009) employ a multi-dimensional ethnographic approach, focusing on Bourdieu's theory of capital throughout. The importance of discourse analysis would suggest a post-structuralist leaning. Also employing an ethnographic approach, Raffo & Hall (2006) examine transitions to becoming a teacher on an initial teacher education and training programme. There is evidence of multi-paradigmatic influence here. Importantly, they state their stance as being socio-cultural, informed by Bourdieu's notions of habitus and cultural capital, juxtaposed with Lacan's (1979) concepts of the symbolic, imaginary and real.

The work of Watson (2013) and Watson et al. (2009) sets out to understand the academic experiences of non-traditional entrants to HE, focusing specifically on their early experiences following the transition to higher education. A variety of tools were employed in data collection, and Bourdieu's conceptual tools are drawn on in analysis of data. Importantly, a field mapping exercise is employed in order to illustrate the field positions of participants. The approach employed in this instance could be regarded as being more 'loyal' to Bourdieu's theoretical framework – with field analysis and mapping of positions regarded as a central tenet of the analysis.

In each of these studies, it is apparent that the positioning of the researcher(s) vis-à-vis Bourdieu has not been an issue for them, and it is clear that they are all comfortable with what Bourdieu's theory has to offer them, regardless of their own positionality. The observation by Hatch (2002:20) that 'most kinds of qualitative research fit within multiple paradigms, excluding the positivist', would seem to hold true here. Collectively, the research illustrates the potential for Bourdieu's concepts to be employed singularly, together, or combined with others. Elsewhere, other researchers have been more explicit in offering a view on positioning Bourdieu, and it is also useful to consider some of these. Acknowledging that 'Bourdieu is rarely mentioned with traditional post-structuralist writers', Grenfell (1996:288) argues that

Bourdieu's focus on the subjective experience of subjects as well as his interest in language and discourse is analogous to those of post-structuralists. Also reading Bourdieu as post-structuralist, Mills & Gale (2007:434) contend that since Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field are the mechanism through which social inequalities are explored, he may be regarded as a 'socially critical theorist'; and Lynch (2000) also suggests that Bourdieu's work falls within this category.

Fowler (1996:7) argues that Bourdieu's philosophical stance is akin to that of 'new realism' or 'transcendental realism'. She rests her argument on the point that in *The Logic of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1990) and *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) Bourdieu's 'approbatory use of the concepts 'materialist' and 'genuinely materialist' entails a realist theory, or more precisely, a perspectively enriched realism'. This distinction is important as it moves him away from the positivist paradigm. Fowler acknowledges that Bourdieu's term 'constructivist sociology' relates to the manner in which 'the habitus both constitutes the world and is constituted by it'. Furthermore, she makes the point that Bourdieu's later preoccupation with reflexivity - which I will return to in section 3.5.2 - is 'his philosophical refuge from the scourge of relativism' (Fowler, 1996:10-11).

This section has highlighted that researchers having different world views can find a common ground in Bourdieu, and as Grenfell (2008:2) indicates: 'this applicability and adaptability is in many ways a measure of the value of Bourdieu's approach to the social sciences'. I would add that it is perhaps also indicative of the capacity of Bourdieu's theory to not only transcend the objective/subjective divide as he initially intended, but to transcend divides within subjectivism itself.

3.4.2 Criticisms of Bourdieu

A discussion of Bourdieu's theoretical approach would be incomplete without a brief mention of the criticisms which have been levelled against it. Chief among these is the argument that Bourdieu's concept of habitus harbours structural determinism. Jenkins (1982, 1992), along with criticising Bourdieu for his use of overly complicated language, argues that '...his scheme remains essentially deterministic and circular' (Jenkins, 1982:270) because 'structures produce the habitus, which generates practice, which reproduces the structures'. Others, such as Mouzelis

(2000:1) while also labelling Bourdieu's theory more deterministic than transformative, offers a suggestion for how Bourdieu's theory might be restructured in order to take into account the 'interactive dimension of social games'.

I think Schwartz (1997) is correct when he makes the case that critics of Bourdieu's concept of habitus tend to take too narrow a view of it, looking at it as an isolated concept rather than along with and as part of the concept of field. Pointing to habitus as a 'mediating' concept which has the capacity for modification and change, Swartz explains:

My own view is that habitus represents a mediating concept between practices and structures rather than a structurally determinative construct. Since its operation occurs through time and across situations that can differ in structural conditions from those in which habitus was formed, there is room for modification and change, as Bourdieu claims.

(Swartz, 1997:212)

Reiterating Bourdieu's explanation that 'to think in terms of field is to think relationally' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:96), Swartz (1997:213) sets out how 'the scope of Bourdieu's theory of action is not complete without the idea of fields', and how, consequently, in putting both the concepts of habitus and field to work in research, the researcher needs to 'think relationally'. He points out that this is different from a structuralist way of thinking and that 'what exist in the social world are relations – not interactions between agents or intersubjective ties between individuals'.

So the question remains – is it possible (or necessary?) to fit Bourdieu into a paradigm other than that of 'constructivist structuralism' in which he fitted himself? That his philosophy goes beyond an acceptance of structuralism and positivism is clear, and his concept of habitus is what moves it out of the boundary. Grenfell (1996:291) suggests that Bourdieu's approach of articulating the relationship between the habitus in the field – which Bourdieu expresses as 'ontologic complicity' – is evidence of how his epistemology goes beyond 'traditional structuralism', and I am in agreement with him on this.

3.5 Employing a Bourdieusian approach: theory as practice and theory into practice

For a researcher, what does adopting a Bourdieusian approach mean? Grenfell (2008:223) provides a comprehensive overview of the implications of adopting this stance for the research process, and suggests that in employing a Bourdieusian approach, the conceptual framework for research is formed by ‘the links between individuals, (habitus), field structures, and the positionings both within and between fields’. Drawing on the writings of Bourdieu, he summarises the three principles which should guide the process:

1. The construction of the research object
2. A three-level approach to studying the field of the object of research
3. Participant objectivation

(Grenfell, 2008:220)

The first principle concerns how the researcher makes use of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools such as habitus, field and capital in undertaking the construction of the research object. Implicit in this is a requirement to think ‘relationally’ to which I have referred previously, and which Grenfell (2008:221) explains as ‘seeing events in relation to people, organisations, time and place...in other words, the field site or context’. The second principle concerns Bourdieu’s methodological approach which is central to empirical research. In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) Bourdieu describes the three stages inherent in studying a field:

First, one must analyse the position of the field vis-à-vis the field of power...Second, one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority for which this field is the site. And third, one must analyse the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find in a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualised.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:104-105)

The third of the guiding principles: that of ‘participant objectivation’ denotes Bourdieu’s reflexivity which Grenfell (2008:225) describes as being ‘at the heart of Bourdieu’s method’. Webb et al. (2002:52) suggest that for the researcher, this implies a need for ‘a self-reflexive understanding of the person’s own position and resources within the field(s) or institution(s) in which they are operating’ – the

upshot of this being that ‘research activity be understood in terms of an ethical imperative’. I will address this in more detail in section 3.5.2.

To return to the second principle of the Bourdieusian approach, it is apparent that for a researcher embarking on empirical research, this three stage process offers a theory and method (Grenfell, 2008; Grenfell & James, 1998) for the analysis of the previously constructed object of research. In a comprehensive outline of the process, Grenfell & James (1998:169) emphasise the interrelatedness of each of the stages (which they refer to as ‘levels’), while also acknowledging the methodological challenge associated with ‘present[ing] analyses of each level simultaneously’.

As to whether it is necessary to follow the levels in the order in which they are set out, Grenfell (2008) suggests that the gathering of data for the analysis of the habitus implicit in level three might be a logical starting place. In indicating this however, he is at pains to stress that ‘biographical data are not enough on their own’ but that they need to be considered with regard to ‘field positions, structures and their underlying logic of practice; and most importantly, the relationship between field and habitus – not just the one and/or the other’ (Grenfell, 2008:224). Adhering to this principle was a key consideration in designing the study, and this will be illuminated further in the next section.

3.5.1 Methodological implications: framing the research questions from a Bourdieusian perspective

As the previous sections have explained, applying Bourdieu’s concepts to practice is about looking at the object of research in a manner which uncovers all the ‘multitudinal layering and interconnecting links’ as Grenfell & James (1998:168) so aptly put it. In this section, while describing how I put Bourdieu’s concepts to work in the study, I also explain how the research questions have been framed by the theoretical stance being adopted, and in so doing, I draw on relevant literature from related studies which have also employed these concepts. I do this not to pre-empt the data that may emerge from the study, but rather to explicate the potential which the concepts offer.

The first principle which calls for the construction of the object of research has been conveyed in the title presented at the outset, together with the research questions (RQs) outlined in Chapter 1, along with a rationale and a context for the object of research. Attending to the second principle requires us to return again to the first in order to further expound the research questions vis-à-vis the three stage (level) analysis described previously. The first aim and the two research questions (RQ1.1, 1.2.) which derive from it are concerned with a general mapping of the field of ITE in Ireland, and more specifically, mapping the effects of the policy field of WP within that field. In this study, this process will focus more on the first stage (analysing the field relative to the field of power) and less to the second (i.e. mapping of the objective structure of relations between positions) as suggested by Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). My chief concern here is to maintain a focus on the non-standard entry-route students, however, bearing in mind Bourdieu's advice that 'it is the field which is primary and must be the focus of the research operations' (ibid:107); in order to understand the experiences of these students, what is important to the study is knowledge of those aspects of the field that impinge directly on 'their *point of view* or position ... from which their particular vision of the world ... is constructed'. In that regard, a mapping of the field of power is pertinent. In undertaking the mapping of the field, I will be guided by the approach to field analysis offered by Grenfell (1996), Grenfell & James (2004) and Warren & Webb (2007).

The third level of Bourdieu's approach to studying a field - the analysis of the habitus of the agents - is the main focus of the research as indicated in the second aim and the RQs generated accordingly, and face-to-face interviews will be employed for this component. RQ 2.1 seeks to uncover how habitus influences how non-traditional students construct choice to become a teacher. Decision-making and choices of HE applicants has been looked at from a Bourdieusian perspective by a number of authors. Hodkinson (1998) explains how habitus as a concept was useful in understanding the career decisions of young people in the field of youth training. From a methodological perspective, his comment that '[our] data only made sense if the interactions in the field and the pragmatically rational decision-making of the young people were treated as inseparable' (Hodkinson, 1998:558) is useful as it again highlights the interrelatedness of the concepts from the perspective of practice.

The work of Reay, David & Ball (2005), Crozier et al. (2008) and Reay, Crozier & Clayton (2010) is also about decision making – in particular how HE choice is exercised in different ways for different groups of students. Of note here is that they employ ‘institutional habitus’ as well as individual habitus in order to examine the experiences of working class and middle class students in various types of HEIs in England. In yet another study on education and career decision making, Heath et al. (2008:221) employ capital and habitus in order to theorise how decision making may be ‘construed as a socially embedded practice’.

RQ 2.2 which is concerned with identifying the resources of students will facilitate an exploration of agents within the field with respect to their individual habitus. The nature and forms of capital (in particular social and cultural capital) which non-traditional entry-route participants bring with them, as well as that which they acquire as a result of academic and social experiences during a concurrent ITE degree will be the focus here. Evans (2009:342) proffers that capital as a concept ‘continues to provide a useful framework for sociologists interested in social inequalities in educational outcomes and practices’. In research in the field of ITE, social and cultural capital has been employed in a number of studies. Mandzuk et al. (2005) document that the development of social capital during their pre-service programme is important in the development of skills of student teachers which will be of benefit throughout their teaching career. Smart et al. (2009) also draw on Bourdieu’s theory of capital and use a multi-dimensional approach to investigate participants on a teaching graduate employment scheme, highlighting how the programme served to reproduce the middle-class values of participants.

RQ 2.3 and RQ 2.4 are interlinked and focus on a unique feature of concurrent ITE: the dual-fields encountered by participants, and how these are negotiated. Bourdieu’s take on how each field defines itself by having ‘specific stakes and interests, which are irreducible to the stakes and interests specific to other fields...and which are not perceived by someone who has not been shaped to enter that field’ (Bourdieu, 1993:72) is an important consideration here. In this instance, the object of study is participants who have entered the field by alternative entry routes - potentially they have not been ‘shaped’ as others who have entered by the standard CAO route. The question that arises here is whether and how habitus develops as a consequence of

these dual-field experiences for non-standard entry-route students. Related to this is the question of how habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) influences position-taking (in the HE field as a student and in the TP field as a teacher) by the students. Grenfell (1996:292) provides an insightful account of teacher training as a field in which students' habitus is located, suggesting that 'habitus confronts what is demanded from students in the training field, which has specific outcomes for developing individuals professional competence'. Similarly, in a study which looked specifically at the importance of the school placement in the transition to becoming a teacher, Raffo & Hall (2006) argue that the dispositions of pre-service teachers as revealed through their placement experiences are reflective of Bourdieu's concept of habitus.

3.5.2 Bourdieu's participant objectivation: Reflexivity

As indicated previously in section 3.5, 'participant objectivation' is one of three principles which are the hallmark of a Bourdieusian approach to research, and it denotes Bourdieu's attention to reflexivity throughout the research process. Increasingly, emphasis has become to be placed on the practice and process of reflexivity in socially critical research, and this is widely acknowledged (Grace, 1998; Finlay, 2002; Pillow, 2003; Sinding & Aronson, 2003; du Preez, 2008). Smyth & Shacklock (1998:1) suggest that as such, it is testimony to the struggles experienced by researchers - regardless of the stage of their career - which sees them concerned with 'the epistemological, methodological, and political issues that are always inherent in critical qualitative research in educational and social settings'. Finlay (2002:213), in attempting to categorise the approaches to reflexivity taken by researchers from different traditions, points out that 'each variant of reflexivity carries its own strengths and weaknesses, and offers particular opportunities and challenges'. While Pillow (2003:176) notes that 'most researchers use reflexivity without defining how they are using it', this is not a criticism that can easily be levelled at Bourdieu. Indeed, Bourdieu is quite vocal in his criticism of poststructural/postmodern readings of the practice and is keen to distinguish his notions of reflexivity from the practices of '...certain anthropologists...which consists in observing oneself observing, observing the observer in his work of observing or of transcribing his observations...' (Bourdieu, 2003:282). In essence, what Bourdieu suggests is that reflexivity has to be more than '...endless textual and autobiographical referentiality' (Kenway & McLeod, 2004:528). Wacquant (1992:

44-45) states that 'Bourdieu's concern for reflexivity finds its roots in his social and academic trajectory, and expresses the conditions of constitution of his early scientific habitus'; citing his move into the French academic field from modest beginnings, the Algerian war of liberation and Bourdieu's shift from philosophy to sociology as the three key influences.

It would appear that Bourdieu's take on reflexivity is inextricably bound up with his stance of advocating the adoption of empirical over theoretical (Bourdieu et al., 1999). For the researcher, this implies the need to appreciate the nature of the interaction that occurs with research participants as a 'social relationship' (Bourdieu et al., 1999:608), as a result of which, an engagement in on-going reflexivity is required throughout the process. Wacquant summarises this nicely when he explains how reflexivity 'fastens not upon the private person of the sociologist in her idiosyncratic intimacy but on the concatenations of acts and operations she effectuates as part of her work' (Wacquant, 1992:46). Given the centrality of reflexivity to the Bourdieusian approach, in outlining the data collection methods in the next chapter, I will illustrate throughout how I have endeavoured to practice a reflexive sociology.

3.6 Summary and positioning this study

In particular, I was impressed by the ways Bourdieu's approach seemed to go beyond the traditional concepts and notions in which many sociologists had got themselves bogged down: definitions of class, status and power, control/direction, rules, roles, subjectivity/objectivity, etc. Once one adopted a Bourdieu position, many of these debates became obsolete.

(Grenfell, 1998, in: Grenfell & James, 1998:129)

In many respects, Grenfell's description of his experience outlined above mirrors my own experience of 'finding' Bourdieu. In an earlier assignment (Kelly-Blakeney, 2010) I described how through the process of critically engaging with the work of Bourdieu, I developed a more meaningful understanding of epistemology and methodology, and how this engagement enhanced my identification of myself as 'researcher'. Embarking on this thesis, I was aware that I needed to explore further Bourdieu's theoretical perspective in order to more fully 'own' *my* perspective. Therefore, despite approaching the research with a view to employing Bourdieu's epistemology, theory and methodology, my approach has not been one of unquestioning and blinkered acceptance. Exploration of a broader literature on

Bourdieu, theoretical and empirical, critical and complementary, has forced me to consider the possibilities which Bourdieu offers this research.

I locate this study in the interpretive paradigm wherein I adopt a Bourdieusian approach to the research study. The study is situated in the field of ITE in Ireland (itself a sub-field of higher education), and sets out to examine the experiences of agents within the field who have entered it as a result of the influences of a policy field in HE - that of WP. In adopting a Bourdieusian approach, the study employs Bourdieu's three stage process which offers both a theory and method for empirical research, which this chapter has clearly outlined. I am cognisant that this approach has implications for how the research work will be undertaken; for the nature and form of data that will emerge, and importantly, for how the data will be treated and analysed. All of these issues will be discussed in depth in the next chapter - Chapter 4 - where the methods which were employed to conduct the research are outlined in detail.

Chapter 4: Methodology

‘We must try, in every case, to mobilise all the techniques that are relevant and practically usable, given the definition of the object and the practical conditions of data collection.’

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:227)

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I have outlined the theoretical assumptions about what it means to research from a Bourdieusian perspective. Moving on to conduct the empirical work and with these as guiding principles, in this chapter I describe the methods which I employed to conduct the research, using Bourdieu’s three level approach. I begin by providing an overview of levels one and two - the field mapping, before moving on to discuss how I conducted the qualitative interviews - level three. With regard to each of these facets of the empirical work, I will provide where appropriate, further insights on the theoretical basis with specific reference to the relevance of theory to practice (i.e. method). As my intention is for the mapping process to serve to connect the field of ITE with other fields, and field with habitus, in the manner suggested by Bourdieu (Grenfell, 2008), the chapter concludes with an overview of the framework I used in analysis to bring together these two levels of inquiry in a meaningful way.

4.1.1 Ethical approval

I submitted an application for ethical approval for the proposed study to the University Of Sheffield School Of Education on 02 December 2010, by completing the School’s *Research Ethics Application Form*. Part A of the form provided an overview of the proposed area of research, as well as details on identification and recruitment of participants; how informed consent would be managed; and proposed measures to ensure confidentiality of personal data. The proposed *Participant Information Sheet* and *Participant Consent Form* were appended to the form. Part B comprised the ‘Signed Declaration’, which was duly completed and submitted. An email correspondence from the School Of Education received on 09 December 2010 indicated that ethical approval for the research study had been granted.

4.2. Field mapping

4.2.1. Conducting field analysis within a Bourdieusian approach

This section will outline the methods which I employed in addressing the first aim of the study:

To map the field of ITE in Ireland with specific reference to widening participation

Grenfell (2008:223) emphasises the centrality of field analysis in Bourdieu's approach to research and stresses that 'the structure of fields, their defining logic, derivation, and the way such logics are actualised in practice are important'. The question of how to go about such field analysis is explained by Thomson (2008:74) when she points to the need for Bourdieu's concept of field to be considered a 'scholastic device'; a device which she describes as: 'an epistemological and methodological heuristic - which helps researchers to devise methods to make sense of the world'.

In setting about to employ field as a mechanism to understand ITE as a social space, and thereafter to consider how WP as a policy field has impacted on practices within the field, I sought to avoid the type of 'abstraction' which Maton (2005:688) suggests is commonplace when a component of a field is investigated. As such, my intent was to move beyond thinking of field as being concerned only with 'site contexts' (Grenfell, 2008:218), but rather to embrace it as a key component of the empirical work. This implied that the policy analysis which I set out to conduct as part of the field mapping exercise was not to be viewed as a preliminary to the fieldwork - it was part and parcel of it. Applying this to my study - in undertaking policy analysis *within* Bourdieu's theoretical framework (level one and two), a picture of the social space that is WP in ITE in Ireland would emerge: importantly, this would enable a more nuanced understanding of the habitus (level three) of those occupying the space (i.e. non-standard entry-route students) because, as indicated by Bourdieu & Wacquant:

It is knowledge of the field itself in which they evolve that allows us best to grasp the roots of their singularity, their *point of view* or position (in a field) from which their particular vision of the world (and of the field itself) is constructed.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:107)

4.2.2. ITE: Why field mapping?

Bourdieu indicates that ‘whenever one studies a new field...one discovers specific properties that are peculiar to that field’ (Bourdieu, 1993:72). I have indicated briefly in Chapter 1 how ITE is positioned at the intersection of two larger fields, but that does not preclude it being analysed as a field in its own right. In Chapter 5, I will explain why I am designating ITE as a ‘sub-field’ and a ‘dual-field’ at the intersection of the larger fields of higher education (HE) and the teaching profession (TP), and how this sub-field dual-field status is important in determining the particular properties of the field. As a social space, a field has certain characteristics: it is bounded, has rules, has players, has a history, and capitals emerge from both the processes which occur within the field as well as being a product of the field itself (Thomson, 2008). In keeping with stage two of Bourdieu’s three-level approach for studying a field, these characteristics will form the genesis for the mapping of the field of ITE in Ireland with regard to WP policy and practice. Bourdieu states:

We cannot grasp the dynamics of a field if not by a synchronic analysis of its structure and, simultaneously, we cannot grasp this structure without a historical, that is, genetic analysis of its constitution and of the tensions that exist between positions in it, as well as between this field and other fields, and especially the field of power

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:90)

Therefore, guided by Bourdieu, the mapping of the field of ITE will commence with an overview of the history of ITE in Ireland. The historical context serves as a useful starting point for the exercise of mapping because in charting how particular HEIs emerged as providers of programmes, as well as illustrating the evolution of programmes types, the particular properties of the field begin to emerge. Naidoo (2004:467) points out that Bourdieu’s field theory aids in understanding ‘the relationship between macro socio-political forces and universities’ as well as understanding why similar institutions respond in divergent ways to pressures exerted from outside the HE system. Applying this to the field of ITE, the analysis will move on to consider the macro forces which come to bear on ITE as a field, focusing on recent policy developments - both national and international - which are altering the structure and functioning of the field.

4.2.2.1 ITE and WP

Given the focus of this research study, the mapping will thereafter be extended to consider how one policy field - WP - has impacted on undergraduate post-primary ITE provision in Ireland. It was envisaged that the mapping would serve to illustrate associations between nature of WP initiatives undertaken and types and size of ITE provider. Following Bourdieu, it was intended that the technique of correspondence analysis (CA), a statistical method would be employed in order to show the manner in which these fields as social spaces are constructed (Grenfell & James, 1998). Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:96) describes correspondence analysis as ‘...a relational technique of data analysis whose philosophy corresponds exactly to what, in my view, the reality of the social world is’. De Nooy (2003) points out a number of features of CA which are central to viewing it as a relational technique, in keeping with Bourdieu’s field theory. He explains that CA employs qualitative data, and utilises ‘concrete properties rather than more or less abstract variables’ (De Nooy, 2003:309). I considered that this exercise would show the extent to which WP initiatives have impacted on entry-routes into the field of ITE, and would highlight whether WP has changed the nature of the field of ITE and whether there are differences between types of HEIs with regard to this. By providing visual maps of associations between variables, we can more easily understand the content of the associations (de Nooy, 2003), and we can begin to get ‘beneath’ the structures in the manner suggested by Grenfell (1996:293). However, arising from difficulties in acquiring the details that I needed in order to subject the data to this level of analysis, I had to modify my initial plan with regard to this component of the research; the details of which are set out in the following sections.

4.2.3 Data gathering

The Irish Teaching Council maintains a database of all HEIs which provide teacher education programmes at both undergraduate and post-graduate level in Ireland (Teaching Council, 2011a). This database was used as the basis for drawing up a list of all undergraduate concurrent post-primary ITE providers in Ireland as of January 1 2011. I initially contacted the Statistics Section of the HEA by email to ascertain whether it was possible to obtain information regarding the numbers of students entering these concurrent ITE programmes as mature students or following completion of an Access course. In their reply, they indicated that they had ‘no

identifier' for students entering via Access courses in the Student Record System which all HEIs are required to return annually to the HEA. I decided that making direct contact with each of the HEIs involved would be the best method to obtain the specific information I required.

4.2.3.1 Data from HEIs

At the time of the commencement of the study, fourteen publicly-funded institutions provided programmes for post-primary teaching, and of these, three employed the concurrent model (i.e. an undergraduate degree in teacher education) only, three provided the consecutive model (i.e. a post-graduate diploma in education) only, and eight provided programmes using both models. As my study sought to elicit the experiences of non-standard entry-route students on concurrent post-primary ITE programmes, it was first necessary to identify what non-standard entry routes were available for such programmes. The *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education* (HEA, 2008) lists the following as 'non-standard' entry routes (and further details of each of these will be provided in Chapter 5, section 5.5.2):

- The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)
- the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)
- mature entrants
- entrants from Access courses in further and higher education

Prior to making contact and in order to procure background information, the website of each of the eleven relevant providers was consulted in order to get a sense of the types of WP activities undertaken by the institution. I considered the Access Office to be the most relevant point of contact for the procurement of details concerning non-standard entry into the relevant ITE programmes. For those HEIs with an Access Office, the name, email contact details and telephone number of the Access Officer was noted. Two institutions did not have an Access Office, and in these cases, the Admissions Officer details were noted. In November 2011, I sent an email to the identified contact person in each HEI outlining in some detail the purpose of my research and seeking their assistance in compiling the following information with reference to the named ITE programmes (I used the Central Applications Office (CAO) codes and title of programmes) offered by the institution:

- types of non-standard entry-routes available
- whether quota of places was set aside annually for entry via these routes

- numbers of students entering via each route for academic years 2005+

In the email, I indicated that the study had received ethical clearance and I stressed that all information received would be treated in the strictest confidence, and that individual institutions would not be named in the write-up. I provided a contact telephone number as well as my email address and encouraged the recipient to contact me should they require clarification on anything.

The response to my email was disappointing – after two weeks, I had received replies from only four institutions, three of which indicating a willingness to provide the information and one which indicated that they were unable to release details concerning numbers of non-standard entrants, but indicating (in percentages) the quota for each target group. I waited another week (during which I received no further replies) and set about telephoning the contact person for each HEI which had not responded. Two institutions directed me to another contact person, to whom I duly sent the ‘information request email’. After another week, I telephoned the new contacts, but was told that they did not have the specific details that I requested. I continued to telephone and repeatedly left messages for those who had not responded to my email. When I eventually got to talk to the contact person in one of the larger HEIs which provides a number of ITE programmes, I was told that the ‘information is not available at this time to third parties’ as it was being used for an in-house research project. Four HEIs did not respond to either my emails or my telephone calls. After four months, I had information from four HEI’s, partial information from three others (some programmes had commenced relatively recently) and no information from four.

When I reviewed the data which I had obtained for this section of the research study, it became apparent to me that my data was nowhere near sufficient to provide the type of field-mapping which I had planned. Ball (1990b:168) refers to the tendency for researchers to focus on ‘the technical aspects of data collection and analysis’, noting that the ‘stresses and tensions of fieldwork process get much less attention’. In the interest of presenting as full and as accurate account of the process as possible, I am going to comment briefly on the ‘stresses and tensions’ that I experienced. There is no denying that I was quite disappointed that this element of my data collection had not proceeded as planned, and that I was frustrated by the lack of co-operation I

encountered. However, I began to realise that I had to reappraise first, the nature of the data I required; second, the mechanism of acquiring the data; and third, to consider the implications of the situation for my vision of how the data was to contribute to the study.

Beginning with the third issue, while it was tempting to consider abandoning the 'field mapping' altogether, this was no more than a fleeting thought as my stance was to remain firmly committed to adopting a Bourdieusian approach. If I were to drop the field mapping, then not only would I be losing an important aspect of the research, I would be abandoning a position which had come to shape and inform every aspect of the study. Not willing to compromise, I went back to the sub-question to reconsider what other approaches I could employ. Given that the focus of the sub-question was concerned with 'how one policy field - WP - has impacted on undergraduate ITE provision' I began to think about and explore how I might go about acquiring data from secondary sources which would present a picture of this.

4.2.3.2 CAO data

I was aware that the CAO, through which applications for the HEAR supplementary admissions route had been processed since 2010 might have some data which could help shape the picture. I telephoned the CAO office and was fortunate to get to speak with the Chief Executive to whom I gave a brief outline of my study, and enquired whether the CAO would be able to assist me. He helpfully indicated that they would, but requested me to provide him a letter of introduction from a member of the senior management in my institution (a letter from the University of Sheffield was not deemed adequate as the institution is outside Ireland), together with a letter outlining in more detail the specific information I required. I obtained the letter of introduction from the College President; and in a separate letter, along with a background to the study and using the CAO codes for the post-primary ITE programmes for which I was seeking details; I requested assistance with the following information:

- total numbers of HEAR acceptances for the subject area '14 Education' (this is the CAO identifier code for the field – there are 17 separate fields listed) for years which data was available
- proportion of HEAR acceptances as a percentage of all net acceptances for that subject area for available years

-proportion of HEAR acceptances for all subject areas (i.e. 01 to 17) as a percentage of all net acceptances for available years.

A short time later, I obtained all of the information which I had sought for the years 2010/11 and 2011/12, as these are all that were available at the time of my initial request. In April 2013, in order to update the data, I emailed the CAO office again and received the details for admissions for the academic year 2012/13.

4.2.2.3 HEA data

The HEA became my second source for obtaining data. While I had been in contact with the HEA at an earlier stage of the research and they were unable to provide me with the required data, I had noted from their more recent report: *Key Facts & Figures 10/11* (HEA, 2012b) that useful (general) information regarding mature entrants had begun to be compiled by them. I decided therefore to contact the Statistics Section by email to request details on mature entrants for ITE as a field of study. The information which I sought was as follows:

- % of full-time (FT) mature entrants to Education as a field of study
- socio-economic groups of new entrants to Education (encompassing both FT mature and FT non-mature)
- socio-economic groups of FT mature entrants to Education
- socio-economic groups of FT non-mature new entrants

Additionally, as I had noted that the published data was categorised according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) codes, I asked that if possible, the requested information be presented according to codes 142, 144 and 145. As ISCED codes 142 and 145 pertain to post-primary ITE, while code 144 pertains to primary ITE, this would allow me to extract the data on mature entrants to post-primary ITE, while also obtaining a picture on the broader field of education.

The initial reply which I received from the HEA indicated that the Statistics Section were unable to deal with research requests at that time due to staff shortages. I decided to telephone the office and explain my request in more detail to see whether it would be possible to obtain any of the information which I had requested. Following this discussion and further email communication, I obtained a detailed

breakdown of full-time mature new entrants (FTMNEs), as per ISCED codes for the academic years 2004/05 to 2011/12.

In summary – I now had data on entrants to post-primary ITE via the two main non-standard entrance routes. Acknowledging that this data was not as complete nor as detailed as that which I had originally set out to obtain, it was nevertheless comprehensive enough to provide a picture of how WP had impacted on ITE, and importantly, it would also illustrate how WP in ITE compared to WP in the field of HE in its entirety (a comparison I wouldn't have been able to do with the data I had initially sought) – thus allowing the field to be viewed in a 'relational' manner.

4.3 Qualitative Interviews

I turn now to outline the methods employed in addressing the second and main aim of the study, namely:

To understand how non-traditional entry-route students perceive their experiences of a full-time concurrent ITE programme.

Mills & Gale (2007:438) suggest that Bourdieu's approach is 'guided by a particular philosophical stance but not method prescriptive'. Bourdieu himself points to the need for researchers to 'not so much refine the observing and measuring instruments as question the routine use that is made of the instruments' (Bourdieu et al., 1991:62). Exemplifying this point, Webb et al. (2002:79) suggest that researchers need to 'consciously think through the presuppositions of each research method or technique used'.

The turn to biographical and narrative methods in qualitative research has been well documented (Chamberlayne et al., 2000; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and the interview is widely employed as the primary means of data collection within these methods (Hammersley and Gomm, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1995; Wengraf, 2001). As indicated in Chapter 3, qualitative face-to-face interviews were identified as a methodology for the 'analysis of the habitus of agents' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This section will present a detailed account of how I went about this process, and how interviews were employed in order to generate narratives. Prior to that, in the realm of 'questioning' how to plan and undertake the interviews within a Bourdieusian

approach, it is useful to briefly consider further what insights and guidance Bourdieu provides on the issue.

Given that Bourdieu describes the volume as a compilation of ‘accounts that men and women have confided [to us] about their lives’ (Bourdieu et al., 1999:1) it is unsurprising that it is in *Weight of the World* that Bourdieu provides his most comprehensive account of the theory and practice of interviewing. In the book, Bourdieu devotes the final chapter to addressing the method which he and his co-authors employed in gathering the material for the volume. As De Marris (2004) highlights, different theoretical perspectives will impact on interview approach and practice. In *Weight of the World*, Bourdieu characterises his particular approach as being ‘as far removed from the pure laissez-faire of the non-directive interview as from the interventionism of the questionnaire’ (Bourdieu et al., 1999:609). My reading of this suggests a leaning towards an open-ended approach having features closer to the ‘narrative’ interview which Merrill and West (2009) differentiate from the ‘interactive’ interview. It suggests a degree of input by the interviewer, yet, it simultaneously suggests a degree of fluidity. I will discuss further the implications of this later.

4.3.1. Recruitment of participants

4.3.1.1. Identification of participants

As the HEAR and DARE supplementary entry routes had only just been formalised when the study commenced, I decided that only students from the latter two non-standard entry routes outlined in 4.2.3. i.e. mature entrants and entrants from Access courses would be recruited as participants for the study. Further, as both HE and school placement (SP) field experiences would be addressed during the interview, and accounting for the fact that SP in some programmes does not take place until year three, I sought to recruit only students who were enrolled in years three and four of concurrent ITE programmes. It was envisaged that these students would provide a richer insight to the research questions compared those who had been on the programme for two years or less. Thus, the sampling approach employed was purposeful in nature because both the sites and the individuals within these sites were selected as they were identified as those best positioned to ‘purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2007:125).

As figures for the total number of non-standard route entrants in years three and four in each of the selected locations would only become available to me in the course of the data gathering for the field mapping exercise, at the commencement of the study I was not in a position to estimate what the total number of participants was likely to be. However, it was envisaged that these would number approximately eight to ten, and that both access-route and mature-route students would be represented within this cohort.

4.3.1.2. Accessing and recruiting participants

I set out to recruit participants from two HEI's which provided concurrent post-primary ITE programmes: the institution where I worked (HEI 1) along with one other (HEI 2). The decision to use two institutions was based on a number of reasons. First, I was aware that the number of non-standard entry-route students who met my criteria for selection (i.e. in years three or four) in my home institution might not provide me with a large enough sample. Second, I considered that the identity of participants would be better protected because by increasing the number of institutions and the range of programmes from which potential students could be drawn, the likelihood of a programme being identified would be lessened, and the likelihood of a participant being identified in relation to a particular programme would also reduce. Third, I felt that participants might be more willing to become involved in the research when more than one site was being used as the potential for identification of students from within a particular institution was less likely.

4.3.1.2.1 Recruiting participants from HEI 1

The process by which I negotiated access to potential participants differed between my home institution (HEI 1) and HEI 2. As might be expected, this process was more easily navigated in my home institution. As a matter of courtesy and to ensure I was not contravening any ethical guidelines set down by the institution, I wrote by email to the Chair of the Research and Ethics Advisory Committee of the institution and provided details of the proposed research. I supplied details of the ethical clearance received from the School of Education, University of Sheffield, and indicated when I intended to undertake the study and with whom. I received a reply via email indicating that the Committee had no objections in my proceeding as outlined.

Thereafter, in order to identify potential participants, I made contact with the Access Office, and I was provided with the names of students registered on the B.Ed. programme who had entered the programme via the Access Course. I also contacted the Admissions Office which provided me with the names of mature students in years three and four of the programme. Following receipt of these details, I approached potential participants directly by means of letter to their college email accounts to ascertain their interest in taking part in the study. This letter of invitation explained the nature and purpose of the study, and included as an attachment a more detailed *Information Sheet* (Appendix 1) which provided further details on how issues of confidentiality and anonymity would be addressed. The *Information Sheet* was set out in the form of a series of questions and answers. In response to my email request, I received six responses in total from students expressing an interest in becoming involved in the research.

4.3.1.2.1.1 Protecting participants

Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992:228) refer to the requirement for the researcher to address the ‘social dimension’ of conducting research, and I was acutely aware that my ‘positioning’ as a member of staff in a HEI within a relatively small field was an issue that would require careful management. The issues of power relations, confidentiality and anonymity which inevitable arise when a researcher uses their own students in research has been considered by other authors (James and Busher, 2006; Malone, 2003). Given that I was recruiting students from my home institution, and recognising that this could potentially result in my having a dual role as researcher and teacher which could potentially result in ‘explicit tensions in areas such as confidentiality’ (BERA, 2004:6); following identification of potential participants, a number of measures were taken in order to minimise such tensions. First, as one of my duties is that of school placement (SP) Tutor, I contacted the Co-ordinator of SP by email to request that those students who might be partaking in the research would not be allocated to me as SP Tutor over the course of the period of the research. Second, in order to separate my role as ‘researcher’ with that of ‘lecturer’, I organised interviews with participants in my home institution in a different building to that in which classes are normally taken by those students. Further, arising from my taking parental leave from the period September - December 2010, I was not scheduled to teach 3rd and 4th year students; consequently,

I was not an internal examiner for their work in the academic year 2010-2011. Collectively, I felt that all of these were important measures in minimising risks for participants as I set out to conduct research ‘in my own backyard’ (Malone, 2003:797); and all were illustrative of the reflexivity which a Bourdieusian methodology espouses.

4.3.1.2.2 Recruiting participants from HEI 2

Gaining access to and recruiting participants from a second HEI proved to be a more arduous process, and as this was allied to the data gathering exercise undertaken for the field mapping, the problems previously identified in section 4.2.3 regarding response rate meant that obtaining access also emerged as an issue. I had hoped to recruit participants from one of the larger HEIs which provided a range of ITE programmes and which offered a number of non-standard entry routes. However, the difficulties I encountered in obtaining access to either information or potential participants through the relevant offices in that HEI following several attempts over several months, meant that eventually I had to explore other options.

In setting about to identify another HEI from which I could recruit participants, I returned to the communications received from all the HEIs with regard to entry routes onto ITE programmes in order to ascertain which of these might offer the best potential in having students from a number of non-standard entry routes on the programmes. I noted that in the course of my earlier correspondence with an Access Office from another smaller HEI, also located in the west of Ireland, which had at that time only recently begun to offer an Access Course, the Access Officer had indicated that she would be willing to assist me in disseminating information to participants from that programme should that be required. As I had sought to recruit participants who would be in a position to offer a perspective on both their SP experience as well as their HEI experience, and as SP was undertaken in years three and four of that programme, I had previously considered that this HEI would not meet my criteria. However, given that some time had elapsed since that first communication, and that there would now be a cohort of students in the latter stages of the programme who would meet my criteria, I decided that this HEI would be worth exploring as the second site for my study.

I identified the Head of School in which the programme resided as the most relevant person to inform about my study and to request co-operation with the research. I made contact with him by email, outlining the purpose and nature of the study as well as supplying details of the Ethical Clearance. I received a reply which indicated that he had no objections with my contacting students on the ITE programme in the HEI and requesting their participation in the research. Thereafter, I again contacted the Access Officer and referring to our previous correspondence, I sought her assistance with the recruitment of participants. I drew up a similar letter of invitation to that which I had used in recruiting participants from my own institution and forwarded this to her along with the *Information Sheet*, as well as my email contact details. She kindly agreed to email these to the relevant students, comprising both mature entry and access-route potential participants. This process yielded only a single response from a student who expressed an interest in participating in the study.

4.3.1.2.2.1 Recruiting participants: network selection

When I met the respondent in order to undertake the interview with him a short time later, he indicated that he knew of three others who had expressed an interest in taking part in the study and he was surprised that none of these had replied to me. He volunteered to remind them about the study, and he contacted me by email after a short period and supplied me with their names, email addresses and contact telephone numbers. The respondent (Respondent 1) indicated that each of these potential participants had indicated a willingness to become involved in the study, and each had highlighted that their preferred means of communication would be via a telephone call. Given that Respondent 1 referred me to other participants in his network, the mechanism employed for recruitment of participants in HEI 2 could be categorised as ‘network selection’ as outlined by Le Compte and Preissle (1993). I telephoned each of the potential participants and while all three expressed interest in taking part, they also signalled that due to the pressure of coursework and exam preparations at that time, they would prefer to wait until early in the following academic year to undertake the interview. We agreed that I would contact them again early in the first semester to arrange. When I made contact again in September 2012, all three were still willing to take part. However, when it came to arranging the date and time for the interviews, one student withdrew as despite several attempts to agree a location and time for the interview, he was unable to commit. I emailed a *Consent*

Form (Appendix 2) to each of the two who had expressed a willingness to take part. Thereafter, a suitable date, time and location for conducting the interviews was negotiated with individual participants by telephone. The location for the interviews in HEI 2 was a Research Room in the Library building, which I felt offered the required level of privacy for the interview. I had negotiated access to this room via email correspondence with the Senior Librarian in the institution.

4.3.1.3 Profile of participants

Pseudonym	Age at entry	Entry-route	Stage	Parents HE?	Siblings HE?
Monica (F)	20	Access	Year 3	No	Yes
Janet (F)	19	Access	Year 4	No	N/A
Deborah (F)	44	Access	Year 4	No	No
Linda (F)	28	Mature	Year 4	No	Yes
George (M)	30	Access	Year 3	No	Yes
Steve (M)	24	Mature	Year 4	No	No
Richard(M)	31	Access	Year 4	No	Yes
Martina (F)	27	Mature	Year 4	No	Yes
Rachael (F)	18	Access	Year 3	No	No

The final sample consisted of 9 students from two HEI's, and comprised both male and female students all of whom had gained entry onto an ITE programme either as a mature-entrant or as a result of having undertaken an Access course in the same institution in which they were pursuing their undergraduate studies. Table 4.1 above provides a profile of participants, using Pseudonyms to protect their anonymity; and for the same reason, does not identify either HEI or indicate which HEI participants attend.

4.3.2 Conducting the interviews

4.3.2.1 Reflections from a previous study

I had previously conducted two interviews in November 2009 as part of a mini-research project for an assignment for Part 1 of the Ed. D. These interviews were

undertaken with two Access-route students in my home institution, each of whom was in year three of the programme at the time. The assignment required me to reflect on the methodological issues involved in conducting face-to-face interviews (Kelly-Blakeney, 2010). As an exercise, this was immensely beneficial to me as it allowed me to explore (in theory and in practice) Bourdieu's approach to the interview as a tool for empirical research. As highlighted in the previous chapter, I was also drawn towards the need to engage in a deeper understanding of Bourdieu's reading of reflexivity, and his insistence of the need for it to permeate through each stage of the research process. Hence, whilst the mini-research project interviews did not occur within the confines of the present study, I do think that the interviews and the post-interview reflections I engaged in were important to informing how I prepared for and conducted the pilot interview, as well as the subsequent interviews.

Lingard et al. (2005:763) refer to Bourdieu's method as one which emphasises 'researchers' dispositions to openness, provisionality, radical doubt and reworking'. Having been afforded the opportunity to 'doubt and rework' through a number of issues, I was able to approach the pilot interview with a certain degree of confidence but also with some further questions which I hoped the pilot could help me answer. Previously, similar to many other research students (Roulston et al., 2003) one of my key concerns was the question of how I as a novice researcher could reconcile the issue of formulating focused yet 'open' questions in an unstructured interview. While guidelines on method gleaned from research methods texts was certainly useful in directing me on this, the process of conducting interviews as part of the mini-research project afforded me a unique insight into the difficulties of this approach; and highlighted for me the necessity of refining my interviewing technique, particularly with regard to the employment of prompts and probes throughout the interaction. Thus, following the mini-research project I was keen to explore the issue further.

I was already familiar with the work of Mc Cracken (1988) who presents a detailed account of undertaking a 'long interview', and I was also drawn to the comprehensive approach to conducting interviews set out by Wengraf (2001). Methodologically, each of these appeared to exemplify separate features of the approach advocated in *Weight of the World* (1999); and combined, I found they

offered me a scaffold upon which I could build the interviews. Mc Cracken's (1988:35) insight on how to employ both planned and 'floating prompts' in an unobtrusive way seemed to resonate closely with Bourdieu's guidance on 'participation', where he refers to how techniques such as repetition of a phrase and the use of affirmation or supporting comment at appropriate points throughout serve to establish a relationship of 'active and methodical listening' (Bourdieu et al., 1999:609) with the participants. Yanos & Hopper (2008) point out that this 'methodical listening' which Bourdieu describes enables the interviewer to bring together both sociological and experiential knowledge to the interaction, resulting in a more authentic interview. The method of narrative interviewing developed by Wengraf (2001) was also illuminating because of the level of detail provided on all aspects of the interview. Wengraf outlines a 'minimalist intervention' (p. 112) approach which entails three sessions with the participant. Starting with a single question, the first sub-session requires the participant to present their story, uninterrupted by the interviewer; this is followed soon after by a session in which the interviewer focuses in on particular issues/points raised by the participant during the first session. The third sub-session requires at least a preliminary analysis of the first two. As I intended to employ only a single session interview, the procedure I would adopt would be modified considerably from that outlined by Wengraf, but I set out with the intention of adapting his approach to meet the needs of a single interview.

4.3.2.2 The pilot interview

Prior to the stage when I set about recruiting the participants for the study from HEI 1, I conducted a pilot interview with another student in HEI 1 in April 2011. I decided not to target any of the students that had been identified as potential participants, given the small number of these that were available. Bearing in mind the profile of the intended participants, I identified a standard CAO-route mature entrant who was in year 3 of the programme as a suitable participant for the pilot interview. The student was known to me and while she did not fulfil the 'non-standard entry route' criterion (as she had applied and gained entry via the CAO on her LC points), I felt that she would be in a position to offer a perspective on her experiences as a mature student. I contacted her by means of letter to her college email account, explaining the nature of my research and requesting her participation in the pilot interview. I attached an *Information Sheet* as well as a *Consent Form* to

the email. I received a reply from her indicating that she was interested and willing to undertake the interview with me. We agreed a date and time for the interview, and I then formally booked a small room in a different building to that which the ITE students normally take classes in to conduct the interview, a protocol which I also adopted for all the interviews with participants in my home institution. I regarded that as being conducive to facilitating a separation of my role of ‘researcher’ from that of ‘lecturer’. With her permission, I recorded the interview using a digital recording device.

Agee (2009) points to the need to ensure that one’s research questions are actually answerable, and in light of my decision to employ Wengraf’s single research question approach as an opener to the interview, I was particularly keen to assess the effectiveness of my framing of the opening question. On completion of the interview, I asked the participant for feedback on the entire interaction, and I encouraged her to be as frank and as open as possible. Her feedback was generally very positive on the process, but it also usefully identified a number of issues which I needed to refine. She noted that it was good that I stressed my role as researcher rather than lecturer at the outset and that I presented an overview of what the study was about before commencing (as she hadn’t read all of the *Information Sheet*); she liked the fact that I wasn’t writing down her responses as it made the interview process more relaxed for her. She commented on the broadness of the opening question and wondered whether she had responded appropriately (and I assured her that she had). When I listened back to the recording of the interview, I noted that there were instances where I came in too quickly with ‘probes’, and this was something which I was conscious of and addressed in conducting the subsequent interviews. I also refined the opening question, and drew up a prompt sheet which consisted of a series of single word bullet points which I could refer to in the interview in order to ensure that all of the aspects of the student’s experience had been dealt with during the course of the interaction.

4.3.2.3 Interviews

The nine interviews took place across both sites in the period May 2011 to October 2012. The long time span occurred because as their SP experiences would be a focus of the interview I had to defer the interviews with some participants from HEI 2 until

after they had completed their school placements. In all cases, open-ended, individual face-to-face interviews with the participants took place at a mutually agreed time, and in a private room which was pre-booked by me in each HEI. Following refinement further to the pilot interview, I employed an adapted version of Wengraf's (2001) narrative interviewing approach. After a welcome and an introduction, I commenced each interview with a brief overview of the nature of the research, highlighting that it was being conducted for a higher degree in a University outside of Ireland. Bourdieu refers to the 'social symmetry' which exists between the researcher and the researched which is reinforced 'every time the investigator occupies a higher place in the social hierarchy of different types of capital' (Bourdieu et al., 1999:609). Aware of this, prior to the commencement of the interview, I stressed that my role was that of 'researcher' rather than 'staff' or 'lecturer', and outlined the format of the interview, emphasising that it was their own personal experiences and views that I was interested in hearing about. I then read through the *Consent Form*, checked whether s/he required clarification on any of the points therein, asked whether the participant was agreeable to signing it. Following these formalities, the opening question which I employed in the interviews was as follows:

I'd like to hear about your experiences of being a student on the [named] programme, particularly from your perspective as someone who has come onto the programme as a mature student/from an Access course. Can you tell me about that please...?

With the permission of the participant, each interview was digitally recorded. I made only limited notes during each session on the pre-prepared prompt sheet (Appendix 3). In the main, these consisted of single words used as a prompt/probe or to signal a return to the topic later. The interviews ranged from 50 minutes to 80 minutes in duration. A short follow-up interview was undertaken with one participant (Respondent 1) to hear about the school placement which he had undertaken after our first interview, and also to seek clarification on a point he had made during the interview. As soon as possible following each interview, I wrote a detailed memo of my thoughts and impressions of the session in a journal. Alongside the recordings, these notes were to be an important resource for me later when I set about undertaking the analysis.

4.4 Analysis of Interviews

4.4.1 Conceptualising the analytical framework

I have outlined above the process by which I collected data via face-to-face open ended interviews with participants who were undertaking degree programmes in post-primary ITE, all of whom had entered those programmes by a non-standard entry route. I have explained how narrative interviews sought to understand the habituses of these students in this dual-field of ITE. I have highlighted throughout this account how Bourdieu's conceptual framework was highly influential and instrumental to the design and execution of the research. Therefore, having completed the fieldwork and faced with the task of 'making sense' of the data, I was acutely aware of avoiding the pitfall that Gorard (2004:11) suggests those adopting a particular theoretical stance may fall foul of – namely allowing the perspective or theory to 'pre-determine the answer'. Given that narrative inquiry was the methodology which was employed in framing the interviews, it is pertinent at this point to elaborate further on how I developed an analytical framework which intertwines Bourdieu's concepts with narrative inquiry in order to make sense of the data. I will explain how I have drawn on Polkinghorne's (1995:12) approach to 'narrative analysis' in developing the framework and how, in so doing, I addressed the dual issues of moving beyond a simplistic 'overlaying' (Reay, 2004) of Bourdieu's concepts onto the data, whilst simultaneously allowing Bourdieu's theoretical approach to be retained as a lens throughout the process.

4.4.1.1 Narrative: a relational approach

Polkinghorne (1991:141) describes 'narrative' as 'the part-whole structure by which temporal experience is configured and given coherence'. Connelly and Clandinin (1990:2) posit that 'narrative is both phenomenon and method', because it 'names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study'. Their reference to structures and patterns is important because as Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) points out, the explication of these is commonly found in interpretive research practices. For this thesis, the reference to experience as 'structured' is particularly important because I view it as echoing the relational approach which is central to Bourdieu's theoretical framework. Polkinghorne (1995:7) too refers to the 'relational significance' that is created when narrative accounts are formed into stories, going on to indicate that 'the relational significance

is a display of the meaning-producing operation of the plot'. In a similar vein, Connelly & Clandinin (1990:7) state that:

Narratives are not adequately written according to a model of cause and effect but according to the explanations gleaned from the overall narrative.

Indeed, Hodkinson (1998) suggests that to view the research process as narrative storytelling is beneficial. He contends that the process of re-storying (which is implicit in narrative analysis) disproves the 'deterministic' criticism often levelled at Bourdieu's theory; pointing out that 'we are not trapped by our past, partly because that past changes as we re-story it from the present' (Hodkinson, 1998:145).

4.4.1.2 'Narrative analysis' of narrative

Polkinghorne (1995) presents one of the most comprehensive accounts of the typology of analysis of narrative research. Based on the type of reasoning which is employed in the analysis, he identifies two different approaches, which he explains as follows:

I call the type that employs paradigmatic reasoning in its analysis, *analysis of narratives*, and the type that uses narrative reasoning, *narrative analysis*. In the first type, analysis of narratives, researchers collect stories as data and analyze them with paradigmatic processes. The paradigmatic analysis results in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories or in taxonomies of types of stories, characters, or settings. In the second type, narrative analysis, researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories ... Thus analysis of narratives moves from stories to common elements, and narrative analysis moves from elements to stories.

(Polkinghorne, 1995:12)

Polkinghorne (1995:16) concludes that the outcome of a narrative analysis is 'an explanation that is retrospective, having linked past events together to account for how a final outcome might have come about'. Examining his statement from a Bourdieusian perspective, I consider it to be suggestive of the importance which Bourdieu attaches to *field* in understanding the habitus, a point which is emphasised in the following analogy:

Trying to understand a life as a unique and self-sufficient series of successive events (sufficient unto itself), and without ties other than the association to a 'subject' whose constancy is probably just that of a proper name, is nearly as absurd as trying to make sense out of a subway route without taking into account the network structure, that is the matrix of objective relations between the different stations.'

(Bourdieu, 2000:302)

In seeking to identify a framework which would be sufficiently fluid to enable the situating of each account within the broader 'field', but would at the same time provide a means for another layer of interpretation using Bourdieu's concepts; it became apparent that Polkinghorne's *narrative analysis* exhibited the properties that I sought. In the first instance, the narrative would allow the account to be viewed as a whole, not as parts, and not within 'themes'. In my view, this is a necessary aspect of a narrative approach which seeks to explicate the 'relational' aspect of experiences.

4.4.1.3 Narrative: a way of knowing

In their seminal texts on narrative inquiry, it is notable that many of the metaphors employed by Clandinin & Connelly (1990, 1995) resonate closely with Bourdieu's key concepts. They describe that they use the metaphor of 'landscape' because 'it allows us to talk about space, place and time...' and they go on to explain how knowledge and identity are 'influenced by a wide variety of people, places and things' (Clandinin & Connolly, 1995:4-5). In a later work, the same authors use the metaphor of 'stories to live by' (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999:4) to refer to identity formation, in particular exploring how identities are sustained and/or changed depending on the context. Narratives have been widely used in the context of educational research in the field of teacher education, including ITE. Soreide (2006: 538) looked at how teacher identities can be narratively constructed and understood, focusing particularly on 'how construction of teacher identity can be understood as a process of positioning and negotiation'. Mitton-Kukner et al. (2010:1163) also use narrative inquiry, and draw on the concept of 'stories to live by' as a mechanism by which student teachers explore past experiences in order to understand the composition of their identity and how teachers come to 'teach who they are'.

4.4.1.4. Narrative ways of knowing habitus

In the context of developing the framework for this element of the empirical work, there are a number of considerations with regard to employing habitus as a construct in the analysis stage which the literature had alerted me to and which I endeavoured to address. Bourdieu notes that 'every reading is already, if not constrained, then at least oriented, by the interpretive schemas employed' (Bourdieu et al., 1999:624). Reay (2004:440) suggests that what has been problematic about much of the research which purports to use habitus as a central concept is that it is introduced too early,

and consequently, instead of employing the concept in an interrogative way, 'habitus' becomes an explanation of the data rather than a way of working with it'. Taking up the same point, Maton (2008:61) emphasises the importance of maintaining 'a relational mode of thought' when employing habitus in empirical research. According to Grenfell (2008) this can be achieved in conducting research from which biographical accounts are likely to emerge only when such accounts are

...analysed with respect to field positions, structures and their underlying logic of practice; and, most importantly, the relationship between *field* and *habitus* – not just one and/or the other

(Grenfell, 2008:223-224)

4.4.2 From theory to practice

Having recorded the interviews, I listened to each recording several times prior to transcription. Conscious that 'transcription means writing, in the sense of rewriting' (Bourdieu et al, 1999:622), I consider this 'multiple listening' before and during the process of transcription as an important part of coming closer to knowing and understanding the data. Bourdieu acknowledges that the transcription of an interview may be subject to two constraints: first, being faithful to everything that comes up in the interview; and second, the constraint of readability, where in the presentation of data, phonetical accounts are not acceptable. During the process of transcription, analysis is already underway, as *what* is said, as well as *how* it is said becomes formalised into the written word. In undertaking the transcription, I was mindful of Mishler's (1986:49) caution to researchers to 'be wary of taking their own transcripts too seriously as the reality', noting that 'it is important to keep returning to the original recordings to assess the adequacy of an interpretation'. Transcripts were emailed to participants for verification, and no changes were requested.

Returning briefly to the issue of methodological reflexivity, I feel it important to note that this stage of the research process - the commencement of the analysis - was when the issue of reflexivity came to the fore most prominently for me. My awareness of the enormity of the responsibility I was faced with in re-presenting the story of each participant weighed heavily on me, because as Mishler (1986:48) notes 'each representation is also a transformation'. Similarly, Bourdieu's point that 'sociologists cannot be unaware that the specific characteristic of their point of view is to be a point of view on a point of view' served as a reminder to me of my role in the process (Bourdieu et al., 1999:625). Consequently, I spent considerable time

exploring this issue and developing a method of analysis which would ensure that the voices of the participants remained at the forefront (Kelly-Blakeney, 2012).

4.4.2.1 Developing an analytical framework

Bearing in mind the considerations which I have outlined above, in developing the analytical framework in which Polkinghorne's approach to narrative analysis would combine with Bourdieu's concepts, it became apparent that the framework needed to allow the data to be explored in a layered fashion, with each layer building on the previous. Given that a substantial amount of data had been amassed from each interview, in order to manage the procedure I returned to the 4 sub-questions in order to structure the process. Then taking each question separately I conducted a 'layered' analysis as follows. The first layer (Layer 1) entailed transcription of the narrative which had been generated in the interview, and identifying which parts related to each question (and I should mention at this point that owing to the adoption of an 'open-ended' interviewing approach, the nature and extent of the data pertaining to each of the questions varied between individual participants). The second layer (Layer 2) is where Polkinghorne's approach to narrative analysis was utilised to view the elements of the narrative and to form meanings from these, and to present the elements in a relational manner and in a storied form (Polkinghorne, 1995). In this layer, I endeavoured to include the 'context indicators' which Guéranger (2009) deems important in ensuring the particular meaning making of the participant is maintained. My post-interview memos were drawn on here, and I also repeatedly returned to the recordings for verification. In the third layer (Layer 3), Bourdieu's conceptual lens was brought to bear on the narrative analysis conducted in Layer 2, thus 'reconstructing' and enabling further meaning making of the narrative to occur. In the words of Bourdieu, I was endeavouring to 're-produce the point of view of [my] object and constitute it as such by resituating it within social space' (Bourdieu et al. 1999:625). Technically, in order to organise this process, a matrix comprising four columns and 5 rows was drawn up (Appendix 4) and was used as the basis for arranging the layered analysis. From left to right, the columns were labelled:

- Research question
- Layer 1: Transcription
- Layer 2: Narrative analysis
- Layer 3: Theorising

With regard to Layer 3, and how the concept of capital was employed, I sought to move beyond the limited understanding ascribed to cultural capital in particular which has been discussed elsewhere (Reay, David & Ball, 2005; Vryonides, 2007). Viewing it as extending beyond high-brow cultural practices such as theatre-going, visits to museum and galleries, and the reading of particular genres of literature, I subscribe to the ‘broad understanding’ of cultural capital which Reay, David & Ball (2005:20) espouse. Consequently, qualitative dimensions such as ‘levels of confidence, certainty and entitlement’ as communicated by participants in the interviews was included, along with other more standard aspects such as educational qualifications and knowledge of the educational system and the mechanisms for progression to HE (Vryonides, 2007). Similarly, in employing Bourdieu’s concept of social capital in the analysis, my understanding was informed by the recent work of Lee (2010:780) which addresses the ‘conceptual clarification’ of social capital and therefore its ‘analytical validity’. Lee usefully differentiates between the ‘actual and virtual resources’ which Bourdieu refers to in defining social capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:119); arguing that the latter ought to be considered ‘potential resources [which] are sources which could, at some point, be activated to become social capital’ (Lee, 2010:781).

It is also important to clarify that as I was not seeking to identify ‘themes’ as would be required from a paradigmatic analysis which is associated with Polkinghorne’s (1995) analysis of narrative approach, the transcript of each individual interview was treated as a separate ‘story’, and the layered analysis was conducted independently of the others.

4.4.2.2 ‘Re-presenting’ the stories: field positions

Reflecting on the analysis, it became apparent to me that this process had generated a rich and detailed overview of the different habituses of the students, determined by types and volumes of various forms of capital, their agency and decision-making, borne out in their interactions with the dual-fields. It also became clear that the students’ narratives were indicative of different positions being adopted by each as they negotiated the field(s), and this led me to think about exploring the issue of how this might be applied in ‘resituating [the narratives] within social space’ (Bourdieu et al., 1999:625) thus connecting habitus with field.

Thomson (2008:72) explains how ‘positions can be plotted on a field by amassing a set of data about the types and volumes of capitals held by social agents’. Hardy (2012:230) points out how individuals having accumulated different amounts and types of capital will each have ‘a range of positions available to them that are delimited by the capital they possess and by the choices they make about the desirability of any particular position’. In his own work, Bourdieu employed quantitative techniques using large samples and statistical analyses to represent positions with regard to French academics in *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu, 1988a), and with regard to the tastes of the broader French society in *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984). While various quantitative methods have been devised to measure relative amounts of capital, including a questionnaire designed to investigate whether cultural capital exerts an influence on participation in HE (Noble & Davies, 2009), as this was a qualitative study which utilised a narrative approach, these methods were not applicable.

In the expanding research base on WP and student experience, a number of researchers have employed a variety of metaphors to denote the different ways students experience HE. For example, examining the transition into HE, Watson et al. (2009) denote the degrees of congruence between students’ existing habitus and the demands of the new field as ‘*Fitting In*’, ‘*Adapting*’, ‘*Resisting*’ and ‘*Excluded*’; more recently Gale & Parker (2012) also look at student transition and theorise three conceptions of transition as ‘*Induction*’, ‘*Development*’ and ‘*Becoming*’; while Lehmann (2012) presents a typology of students’ involvement with HE as ‘*Commitment*’ or ‘*Alienation*’ or in transition towards one of these. Examining how working class students identify with HE, Kupfer (2012) designates three typologies of student: ‘*the self-confident student*’, ‘*the self-affirmative student*’ and ‘*the future family breadwinner student*’; and Read et al. (2003) employ the concepts of ‘*Belonging*’ and ‘*Isolation*’ to denote how academic culture is experienced by non-traditional students. Notably, Watson et al. (2009) and Lehmann (2012) each represent the student experiences of/involvement in HE figuratively, and each draws on Bourdieu in their analyses. I found all of these to be useful in informing my thinking as I set about devising a schematic representation of the habituses of the students as derived from their narratives.

I use the term ‘schematic representation’ in order to differentiate it from the exercise of plotting positions based on relative amounts of cultural and economic capital that is associated with the use of quantitative methodologies. Following Coudry (2007:211) I sought to chart ‘patterns within a messy domain of social action’. Drawing on the theorising undertaken with the data at Layer 3, which included consideration of the forms and amounts of capital held, along with the agency of the participant as s/he negotiated each of the fields, a ‘grounding’ process was undertaken, involving extensive diagramming (Appendix 5) akin to that employed in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). From this process, three field positions/orientations emerged: *Struggling*, *Adjusting* and *Belonging*. Hardy (2012:229) indicates that given the relational nature of Bourdieu’s theory of practice, in representing field positions, ‘possible positions are defined in relation to each other’. The diagram in Figure 4.1 (below) depicts ITE at the intersection of the fields of HE and TP, with relative amounts of capital and levels of agency represented vertically.

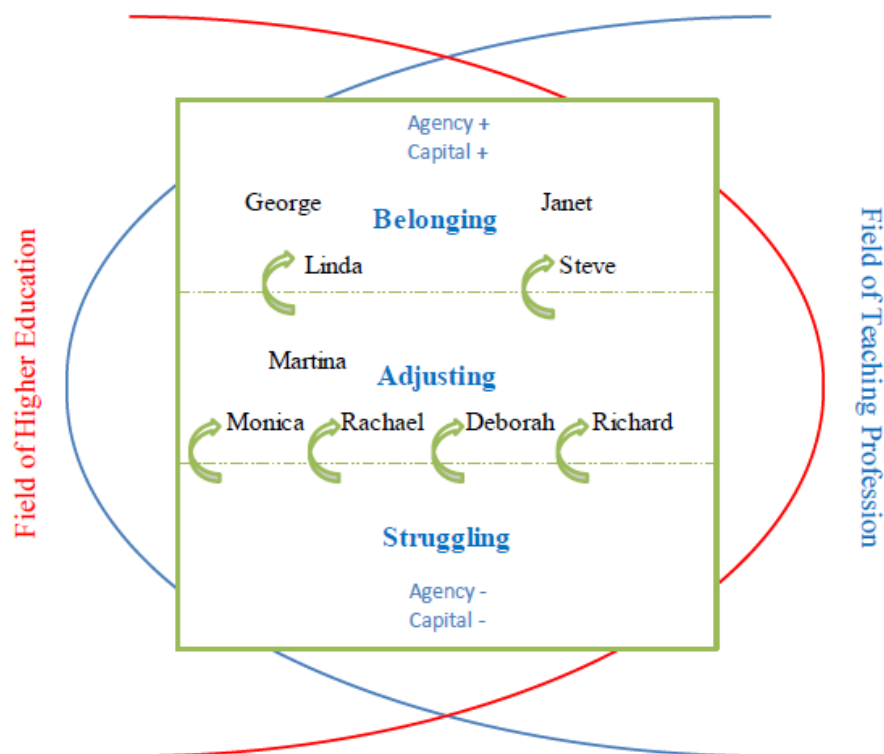


Figure 4.1: Schematic representation of field positions of participants

Thus, those in possession of high amounts of capital and displaying high levels of agency in their practices across both fields are represented in the upper segment of the square, positioned as *Belonging*. Conversely, low levels of capital and agency are indicative of a habitus positioned as *Struggling* at the lower segment, while medium levels of each are indicative of a habitus *Adjusting*, depicted in the central segment of the square. A broken line is used to denote the boundary between each of the three field positions, indicating that movement between positions is possible, with arrows indicating where movement by the student from another field position has occurred. The layered analysis of the narratives indicated that at the point when I undertook the interviews with them, four of the students were positioned as *Belonging*, while five were *Adjusting*.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has set out in detail the methods employed in conducting this study, outlining the processes by which Bourdieu's three level field approach was used in practice. In providing an overview of level one and two - the field mapping undertaken for the research, I also charted the difficulties I encountered in acquiring data, and how this was resolved; before moving on to discuss how I conducted the qualitative interviews - level three. With regard to analysing the interview data, I explained how I developed an analytical framework which combined Bourdieu's concepts with narrative inquiry in order to make sense of the data; and why Polkinghorne's (1995) approach to 'narrative analysis' was chosen as central to this framework. Bourdieu's (1990:46) assertion that 'just as no two individual trajectories are identical so no two individual habituses are identical' was important in informing the decision of how best to present the interview data in Chapter 6. Two of the nine stories will thus be presented in detail in Chapter 6: one a habitus *Belonging*, the other a habitus *Adjusting*. Given the confines of space, I have purposefully chosen these two because of the manner in which the stories illuminate the diversity of habitus, what capital is valued in the field, and the various means by which it is acquired. Prior to that, the next chapter - Chapter five - in addressing the RQs emanating from the first aim, will present the results of the field mapping which this chapter has also outlined.

Chapter 5: ITE and WP - Mapping the field

‘Fields present themselves synchronically as structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)’

(Bourdieu, 1993:72)

5.1 Introduction

Having established the theoretical underpinnings and methodological considerations in the previous two chapters, this chapter will address the first aim of the study: to map the field of ITE in Ireland with specific reference to widening participation. This entails consideration of the following questions:

1.1 How is the field of ITE constructed within the field of HE in Ireland and what are the other fields which impact on the field’s structure and function?

1.2 How is widening participation and increasing access to ITE enacted in policy and practice?

In addressing these questions, this chapter will thus commence the process of setting out the outcomes of the first two of Bourdieu’s three-level field analysis which is being adopted as the methodological approach. To recap: the level one analysis is concerned with determining the position of the field in relation to the field of power, while level two entails a mapping of the structure of the relations between positions occupied within the field. In order to consider the position of the field of ITE requires some background on its history and development, and it is this that I begin with. Then moving on to look at recent policy developments relevant to teacher education, I will consider the implications of these for the autonomy of the field of ITE in general, as well as specifically in relation to WP. This leads me on to explain and diagrammatically illustrate why in this study I conceptualise ITE as having a ‘dual-field, sub-field’ status. Thereafter, in undertaking the level two analysis which is concerned with the positions occupied within the field, given the focus of the study, the mapping presented is focused on ascertaining how the field of ITE has responded to WP in both policy and practice. As no published data is available on non-standard entrants to ITE as a field of study in Irish HE, the figures presented here in relation to ITE are those which I have obtained through personal

communication with national agencies. In order to contextualise this data, the figures presented will be compared to those pertaining to official targets for participation in HE by under-represented groups, which have already been outlined in Chapter 2. The chapter concludes with a commentary on the relevance of this mapping to the more in-depth analysis of the habitus of agents in the field of ITE.

5.2 ITE in Ireland: a brief history

It has been postulated that the history of ITE in Ireland has been broadly similar to many other countries in having progressed through a series of stages to arrive within the higher education setting (O'Donoghue & Whitehead, 2008). These authors have categorised the stages as follows: 'the teacher apprentice stage', 'the college-based teacher training stage' and 'the college or university-based teacher education stage' (O'Donoghue & Whitehead, 2008:192). However, while this is a largely accurate description of the evolution of ITE in Ireland, there have been differences between how and where the professional preparation of primary and post-primary teacher education has occurred. As I will go on to explain, this has impacted on how ITE has been structured, managed and operated.

Tracing the history of primary teacher education, Coolahan (1991:287-288) describes how 'formal, State-subsidised teacher training for primary teachers in Ireland began shortly after the State established the national (primary) school system in 1831', and that despite a number of attempts to link these more closely to the universities in the intervening period, it was not until the 1960's that reform of the 'single purpose, single sexed, boarding, denominational training institutions' occurred. However, in the mid-seventies 'the most significant change of all occurred [...] with the inauguration of a B.Ed. university degree for teachers' (Coolahan, 1981:228); thus constituting the move to the aforementioned 'third stage', whereupon the primary teacher training colleges either became 'recognised colleges' of the National University of Ireland or 'associates' of Trinity College, Dublin. Concurrent teacher education programmes leading to qualification as a primary teacher are currently three years duration (180 ECTs); and a postgraduate programme is also offered by the colleges of education for graduates holding a primary degree who wish to qualify as primary school teachers.

On the other hand, the education of post-primary teachers in Ireland has, with a few exceptions, been embedded in the university system from the early years of the twentieth century (Coolahan, 1981; 1991; Harford, 2010). The exceptions were the education of teachers for what are sometimes referred to as ‘specialist’ subjects (physical education, technology subjects, home economics, art). These programmes had their genesis in various colleges of education and followed a similar trajectory to the primary colleges, with most also becoming embedded in the university system in the mid to late seventies. Importantly, from their inception, all of these programmes of study were based on the *concurrent* model whereby the academic subject/s is taken alongside education, and the qualification obtained is a joint subject-education degree (Harford, 2010). Concurrent programmes of study for post-primary teaching are of 4 years duration (240 ECTS). They may thus be differentiated from the traditional university-based post-graduate ITE programme of study (of one year duration), which is commonly referred to as the *consecutive* model.

There are 19 publicly-funded providers of ITE in Ireland which offer concurrent and consecutive programmes in primary and post primary teacher education. These are situated in University Education departments, in Colleges of Education affiliated to the Universities, and in Institutes of Technology (IoT). There are 11 institutions providing undergraduate concurrent programmes of ITE for post-primary teaching (The Teaching Council, 2011a). Thus, unlike many other countries where school-based routes have become a feature of ITE provision (Furlong, 2013), in Ireland, all ITE is provided by HEIs as well as a single private institution. Hibernia College, a privately funded institution has been approved by the Department of Education and Science since 2003 to offer an online distance education post-graduate programme for primary teachers (Clarke & Killeavy, 2012), and in 2011 their provision was extended to also offer post-graduate programmes for post-primary teachers. Table 5.1 sets out an overview of providers of ITE in Ireland and the nature of the programmes offered by each.

Table 5.1 Properties of providers of Initial Teacher Education in Ireland

Higher Education Institution	Category of Institution	Under-grad. ITE	Post-grad. ITE	Primary ITE	Post-Primary ITE
Church of Ireland College of Education	Associated College of TCD	+	-	+	-
Crawford College of Art & Design, Cork	Affiliated College of IoT	-	+	-	+
Dublin City University (DCU)	University	+	+	-	+
Froebal College of Education	College of NUIM	+	+	+	-
Galway Mayo IoT	IoT	+	+	-	+
Hibernia College	Private	-	+	+	+
Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT)	IoT	-	+	-	+
Marino Institute of Education, Dublin	College of Education	+	+	+	-
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	College of Education	+	+	+	-
Mater Dei Institute	Associated College of DCU	+	-	-	+
National College of Art & Design	Recognised College of NUI	+	+	-	+
University College Cork (UCC)	University	+	+	-	+
NUI Galway (NUIG)	University	+	+	-	+
NUI Maynooth (NUM)	University	+	+	-	+
St. Angela's College, Sligo	College of Education Affiliated to NUIG	+	-	-	+
St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra	Associated College of DCU	+	+	+	-
St. Patrick's College, Thurles	Affiliated to LIT	+	-	-	+
Trinity College Dublin (TCD)	University	+	+	-	+
University College Dublin (NUI Dublin)	University	-	+	-	+
University of Limerick (UL)	University	+	+	-	+

Sources: Conway et al., (2009); Teaching Council (2011a)

This background is important in locating ITE within the socio-historical context of the field of higher education in Ireland. In applying Bourdieu's level one analysis to consider the birth and growth of ITE as a field in Ireland, and denoting 'the State' as the 'field of power' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:76), we see that the degree of control and influence exerted by the State over the different sectors of ITE has varied; and consequently, so too has the level of autonomy enjoyed by the different sectors. For ITE programmes situated in the colleges of education, comprising all primary undergraduate and some post-primary programmes (all of which utilise the concurrent model), the State (via the Department of Education) has always had considerable control with regard to a number of key areas: quotas for entry into programmes, the provision of funding (Coolahan, 1981; Harford, 2008), and for primary programmes: the curriculum (Harford, 2009). Conversely, in the case of most post-primary ITE, its positioning in the universities within the HE field has meant that as a sector, it has been subjected to considerably less involvement by the State, being neither 'directly subsidised or supervised' (Coolahan, 1991:288). So while the structure of one-year post-graduate post-primary teacher education programmes have been loosely governed by the Registration Council for Secondary Teachers (Conway & Murphy, 2013); to date, the issue of numbers of entrants into post-graduate ITE hasn't been centrally controlled, despite attempts by the State to address this in the early nineties (Hyland, 2012).

However, in the last couple of years (and since the commencement of this study), there have been a number of policy developments which in my view, have altered quite considerably the autonomy of ITE as a field; and these have impacted on all programmes, irrespective of sector, type or site. These will be considered, in the order of their publication, in the next section. Given the focus of this study, in section 5.5 the account will move on to examine the potential impact of these policies on WP within the field of ITE.

5.3 ITE in Ireland: Contemporary developments

The first policy development emanated from the teaching profession (TP) in 2011. This was a publication by the Teaching Council (TC) of a document entitled: *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria & Guidelines for Programme Providers* (Teaching Council, 2011b). The same year, (and just a month after the TC document) the

Department of Education & Skills (DES) published *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* (DES, 2011b), within which it was recommended that the duration of primary concurrent, primary consecutive and post-primary consecutive programmes of ITE would all increase by one year. The following year, in March 2012, the HEA informed all ITE programme providers that it was undertaking a ‘review’ of the structure of ITE provision in Ireland, and that this would be conducted by an international panel of experts. The outcome of that review in the form of the *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland* (DES, 2012) was published in September 2012 and its key recommendation was that the number of providers of ITE in Ireland be reduced from 19 to 6. While it is evident that the latter of the policies is the one having the greatest impact on the *structure* of the field, it is my view that the first two are also of note in that they have impacted directly on the *practices* within the field. Collectively, the three policy documents represent probably the most significant development in the field of ITE in Ireland since its inception. In order to explain this further, and to consider in some detail their impact on the autonomy of ITE, I will now look at each of these in turn.

5.3.1. Initial Teacher Education: Criteria & Guidelines for Programme Providers

Prior to looking at the Teaching Council document, and in order to contextualise it, a short background on the Teaching Council is useful. In Ireland, the Teaching Council was established relatively recently - in 2006 - as a result of the passing of *The Teaching Council Act of 2001* (Government of Ireland, 2001). It must be acknowledged that in the Irish context, in the lead up to its formation and indeed since, the Teaching Council is regarded as an important vehicle in maintaining and enhancing the status of teaching as a profession (Coolahan, 1987; 1994; 2007; Drudy, 2000; Halton, 2004).

The advisory functions of the Council specifically in relation to ITE are set out in sections 7 (2) (h), 7 (2) (m) (p. 9); as well as section 38(1) (p. 26) of *The Teaching Council Act*. Prior to the establishment of the Teaching Council, ‘policy proposals in relation to teacher education were made mainly at Department level’ (Stack, 2007: 46), but this shifted somewhat with the arrival of the TC, as illustrated in Section 38(1) of the 2001 Act where the Council’s functions are indicated as follows:

- Review and accredit the programmes of teacher education and training provided by institutions of higher education and training in the State
- Review the standards of education and training appropriate to a person entering a programme of teacher education and training, and
- Review the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the practice of teaching, and shall advise the Minister and, as it considers appropriate, the institutions concerned.

(Government of Ireland, 2001:26)

Since its formation, the TC has published several policy documents (Teaching Council, 2007a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d) and I will refer to others of these in later sections; but as indicated above, the one which I want to focus on at this point is *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria & Guidelines for Programme Providers* (Teaching Council, 2011b), (hereafter referred to as the *Criteria & Guidelines* document). The title of the document clearly signals what is contained within: a fairly prescriptive set of guidelines which includes details regarding the duration, nature and academic content of all programmes of ITE. Structured into three sections: *Inputs*, *Processes* and *Outcomes*, the introduction to the document points out that

The required Inputs and Outcomes are clearly elaborated in the document while the Processes are less prescriptive

(Teaching Council, 2011b:7)

The *Inputs* section sets out ‘mandatory elements’ regarding how programmes of ITE should be designed, and specifies proportions of time which should be devoted to the various aspects of the programme including the subject disciplines, the professional studies as well as the number of weeks to be devoted to the school placement. The *Inputs* section also stipulates that for entry onto ITE programmes, ‘minimum entry requirements...should be adhered to so as to maintain high standards of entry to the profession’ (Teaching Council, 2011b:17). In the *Processes* section, requirements are set out concerning teaching, learning and assessment approaches to be adopted by providers; it also puts an onus on providers to put in place processes and systems for dealing with the personal and social development needs of student teachers; as well as the development of their values and professional dispositions, the latter of which are referenced to those set out by the TC in its *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (2007a). The final section: *Outcomes* sets out the learning outcomes which programmes of ITE are required to include and ‘encompass the standards of

teaching, knowledge, skill and competence together with the values, attitudes and professional dispositions which are central to the practice of teaching’ (Teaching Council, 2011b:24). The learning outcomes are listed under various sections and number 65 in total.

Given its prescriptive nature, it is without question that this document has impacted on the autonomy of all ITE programme providers, albeit that the impact on some has been greater than for others. As noted in 5.2, for primary ITE providers, the State has maintained a considerable say in areas such as curriculum content and structure. For the majority of post-primary ITE providers, who have enjoyed a fair degree of independence over programme structure, content and intake, it is clear that their autonomy has been quite substantially reduced. For the HEIs in which both sectors of ITE are situated, the *Criteria and Guidelines* have certainly shifted the balance of power away from the HEIs and towards the TC. For HEIs providing ITE, it ‘is certainly a high-stakes process’ (Conway & Murphy, 2013:27): not alone does the TC set out the structure and forms of ITE; the role of HEIs in relation to the practicum within ITE; but they also set out the nature of knowledge within such programmes. Indeed this point is openly acknowledged by the Teaching Council within *Criteria & Guidelines* where it states:

It is also significant that the Council is now setting out, for the first time in the history of teacher education in the State, learning outcomes for all graduates of ITE programmes.

(Teaching Council, 2011b:4)

In order to ensure that ITE programmes are constructed and delivered in accordance with the specifications set out in *Criteria & Guidelines*, the TC is charged with reviewing and accrediting ITE programmes, as set out in another policy document *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the review and professional accreditation of existing programmes* (Teaching Council, 2011d). This professional accreditation is different from the academic accreditation conferred by the university or other body (Conway & Murphy, 2013), and the review reports are published on the TC website. Regardless of programme type or institution in which situated, it is apparent that with the establishment of the TC, teacher education in Ireland has been opened up to external scrutiny (Gleeson & Moody, 2005).

5.3.2 Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life

Moving on to the second policy document: *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* (DES, 2011b) (hereafter referred to as the *Literacy and Numeracy* policy document); the impact of which on ITE is perhaps initially, somewhat less obvious than *Criteria & Guidelines*. However, in the context of a discussion in which factors impacting on the autonomy of ITE as a field are under consideration, there are a number of issues which the document raises which are worthy of note. The first is that the development of the policy was driven by the OECD Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) results of 2009, in which the performance of Irish 15 year olds in maths and reading had deteriorated since 2000 (OECD, 2010; Perkins et al., 2011). I will return to this point in section 5.4.1.1 when I go on to map the broader policy fields which impact on ITE. Of more immediate concern to the discussion however, is how this report was used as a vehicle for the dissemination of the decision by the Minister for Education and Skills that all programmes of ITE (bar post-primary concurrent programmes which were already 4 years duration) would be extended by one year, and that the content of these would also be ‘reconfigured’. As noted previously, this extension had already been flagged in *Criteria and Guidelines* as well as another Teaching Council document: *Policy of the Continuum of Teacher Education* (Teaching Council, 2011c). Indeed, as Hyland (2012) notes, the recommendation to extend ITE programmes was not unexpected, having been mooted in several previous educational policy documents over a period spanning almost twenty years (e.g. Byrne, 2002; Coolahan, 1994; 2003).

At this point, it may be apparent to the reader that a degree of congruence exists between these first two policy instruments, albeit that they emanate from different sources. It is notable that in the introduction to the *Literacy and Numeracy* document, and throughout it, there are frequent references to the collaborative relationship which exists between the DES and the TC. Historically, it has been said that a ‘partnership’ approach to policy development has been a feature of the educational system in Ireland (Coolahan, 2007; Nic Craith, 2003). It must also be acknowledged that both of these documents were initially published in draft form, and a lengthy and extensive consultation process was undertaken with stakeholders prior to publication of the final version. In Ireland, teachers as stakeholders are part of this consultation, and it is acknowledged that Teacher Unions have been an important voice and

interest group in education policy-making (Hall, 2000; Nic Craith 2009). While noting that the process by which the policies have developed has been consultative, it is also important to recognise that the outcomes of these has resulted a move towards a more prescriptive and homogenous system of practices in ITE that heretofore has been the case, a system which Conway and Murphy (2013:11) have recently described as ‘a rising tide of accountability’ in teaching and teacher education in Ireland; and within which aspects of Neave’s (1988; 1998) ‘evaluative state’ are also apparent.

5.3.3 Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland

While it is evident that the *Criteria and Guidelines* and the *Literacy and Numeracy* policies have impacted on the autonomy of ITE as a field, their impact pales somewhat in comparison to the third policy document: *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland* (DES, 2012) (hereafter referred to as *The Review of the Structure of ITE* document). As noted previously, extensive consultation preceded the publication of both of the first two documents, but this was not the case for the third. The review was announced in April 2012, in May a background report was published (Hyland, 2012); and in the same month, the review panel held short meetings with ITE providers over three days in Dublin. The report is dated July 2012, but it was early September before it was circulated. In the communication to ITE providers, the terms of reference for the Review panel were set out thus:

To carry out a review of the structure of initial teacher education provision, and to identify possible new structures which will recognise and address weaker areas in the system of teacher education; leverage the current strengths in the system; and envision innovative strategies so that Ireland can provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the best in the world.

(DES, 2012:34)

As outlined in Chapter 2, the process of ‘reconfiguring’ Irish HE commenced with the publication of the *National Strategy for Higher Education (The Hunt Report)* in January 2011 (DES, 2011a), and this was followed by the *Landscape Document* (HEA, 2012a) in February 2012. Coming so soon after the *Landscape Document*, which set out a rationale for structural change of the HE system, it was to be expected that *The Review of the Structure of ITE* would mirror the sentiments set out

in the former, and it did. The Foreword situates the ITE review firmly in the context of the *Hunt Report* (DES, 2011a), noting that:

It was clear to the panel from the beginning that this review is part of the larger whole when analysing current structures policies and funding of the Irish higher education system

(DES, 2012:5)

Notably, the neoliberalist thrust of the *Hunt Report* referred to by Holborrow (2012) whereby the importance of HE to economic development is also apparent in the Foreword where it is indicated that ‘...teachers and how they are educated [are at] the core of the implementation of national programmes for sustainable economic growth and prosperity’ (DES, 2012:5).

However, while the *Landscape Document* set out broad possible configurations for the Irish HE system into the future, and invited each HEI to respond to the HEA and to set out its institutional strategic vision within the future HE landscape; I think that what is remarkable about the *Review of the Structure of ITE* is that it amounted to the DES singling out one field within Irish HE for ‘reconfiguration’ ahead of the process and timeframe which had been set out more broadly for HE in Ireland. ITE in Ireland was set out for a restructuring in a manner which no other field was subjected to, and this was confirmed with the publication in May 2013 of the follow-up to the *Landscape Document*, namely the *Report to the Minister of Education and Skills on system reconfiguration, inter-institutional collaboration and system governance in Irish higher education* (HEA, 2013a). Within a key section of the report entitled ‘Proposed higher education system configuration’, details are set out regarding the formation of:

- Regional clusters (p.20),
- Universities (p.20),
- Technological university proposals (p.23),
- Institutes of technology: strategic alliances (p.24),
- Teacher education (p.25),
- Creative and performing arts in the Dublin region (p.27) and
- Other colleges and institutions in receipt of funding (p.28).

Only two discipline areas are singled out for individual comment with regard to ‘reconfiguration’ - ITE and the ‘performing arts’, and of the two, it is ITE that receives the most specific and detailed mention.

5.3.4 Implications of contemporary policy developments for positioning of ITE

In considering these recent policy developments pertaining to the field of ITE through a Bourdieusian field lens, a number of issues concerning the autonomy of the field become apparent. Autonomy and heteronomy were important constructs of Bourdieu's field theory and in *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu (1988a) analysed the French university field and the positions of faculties, disciplines and individuals within it. Naidoo (2004:458) refers to how the 'field of university education is conceptualized as a field with a high degree of autonomy'. But that is not to say that all disciplines, faculties and institutions which make up the university/HE field are equally autonomous. The historical and contemporary account of ITE in Ireland illustrates how its relative autonomy in higher education has been marginalised arising both from proposed structural changes at the HE system level, and by measures imposed by a statutory agency as a result of which high stakes accountability regarding practices have become a feature of the field (Conway & Murphy, 2013). And while it is lauded that the composition of the TC is comprised of 'all stakeholders' who have an interest in the teaching profession (Conway et al., 2009), it has also been noted that that the influence of HE on this body has been marginalised (Galvin, 2009:279) given the low representation on the Council of individuals from HEIs providing ITE (4 out of 37 members).

Indeed, while the extent of accountability and nature of the structural changes are nowhere near as extreme as those experienced in teacher education in England in the nineties (Bates, 2008; Furlong, 2013; Gilroy, 1992; Murray et al., 2011), it could be argued that there are at least some parallels between the changes that are occurring in ITE in Ireland and those that have taken place elsewhere. With regard to the English experience, Murray et al. (2011:262) comment on how teacher education has felt the impact of the 'audit culture' which has become a feature of HE in that country more strongly than other fields because of the simultaneous demands imposed on it by the school sector in addition to HE. It is these dual demands from two separate but connected fields of practice that have influenced the schematic 'mapping' of the field of ITE which will be detailed in the sections that follow.

5.4 Mapping the field

5.4.1 ITE as ‘sub-field’ and ‘dual-field’

In commencing the mapping of ITE as a field in this study, it is important to acknowledge that ITE has been the subject of research by others who also have employed Bourdieu’s concept of field in their work. Grenfell (1996:297) describes initial teacher training as a ‘field within fields’, in which a ‘double structure in terms of site’ exists, resulting in students being ‘...structurally located between the two’ (p. 300). For Grenfell, the sites in question are those of the university and the school, and his study is concerned with the development of trainee language teachers’ professional competence within each site. Thomson (2000) also employs field in examining ITE, and she too suggests that Bourdieu’s designation of ‘sub-fields’ is useful in considering the dual sites where ITE occurs. In this regard, Thomson states that the university and the school may be viewed as ‘overlapping sub-fields within the broad field of education’ (Thomson, 2000:69). Thomson’s focus however is on how field may be a useful device for overcoming the theory/practice binary which is frequently the subject of debate in ITE (Elstad, 2010), and the potential of Bourdieu’s concepts to be utilised by those concerned with reform of the sector. It is important to note that both Grenfell’s and Thomson’s research is situated in the English context.

In mapping the field of ITE in Ireland, I am guided by the work already undertaken by Grenfell (1996) and Thomson (2000), but with distinctions. I draw on Thomson’s conception of ‘overlapping sub-fields’ to think about how ITE is structured, situated, and regulated. While I am in agreement with both Grenfell and Thomson that students in ITE encounter a dual-field, and that one of these is the university/college in the higher education (HE) field; I differ with them with regard to the second. Both Grenfell (1996) and Thomson (2000) designate the school as the second field, but I am indicating this to be the professional field of teaching, for which I use the term ‘the teaching profession’ (TP). I make this distinction because I consider that were I to limit the second field to that of ‘school’ or ‘schooling’, this would present too narrow a view of teaching as a field of practice. Clearly, for most, the school is the primary site in which the TP is enacted, but as a social space, TP is much more than that, and the intention here is to understand what Grenfell & James (1998:16) refer to

as ‘the generating principles’ between *all* relations that contribute to the TP as a field of practice.

5.4.2 ITE: ‘a field within fields within fields’

In outlining the recent policy influences on ITE in the previous section (5.3), we have seen that recent policies emanate from two key sources: the State (mediated through the DES and the HEA) and the Teaching Profession (TP) (mediated through the TC), but of course each of these is in turn also influenced by other policy fields external to them. Grenfell and James’ (1998:20) summation that: ‘no field ever exists in isolation’ and that ‘there is the sense of fields within fields within fields’ is particularly apt when considering ITE. Overlap occurs between HE and TP as fields of practice for participants; the field of ITE is a subfield of HE, and both HE and TP may be regarded as subfields of the larger field of education. Thus, both HE (and ITE within it) and TP ‘connect with and partially share the principles of the superordinate field, all whilst having their own particular context characteristics’ but they also ‘connect with other fields outside of education’(Grenfell & James, 1998:20).

In setting out a ‘mapping’ of the field of ITE in Ireland, I depict ITE as ‘sub-field dual-field’, situated at the intersection of the fields of HE and the TP. Given therefore, that ITE may be viewed as a sub-field of two separate (but interconnected) fields, the dynamics of ITE as a sub-field will be influenced by cross-field policy effects which emanate from each of these parent fields. In Figure 5.1 a schematic representation of ITE as sub-field dual-field is depicted. In presenting this mapping, I am guided by Couldry (2007:211-212) who states that ‘diagrams of field theory are merely expository devices’ and ought to be viewed as a mechanism for ‘seeing patterns within a messy domain of social action’. In the diagram, external to HE and the TP, there are further ‘layers’ which constitute the external influences which impact on both. Maton (2005:689) contends that ‘a field’s autonomy is illustrated by the way it generates its own values and markers of achievement’, but notes that there are more than these inherent values of the field at play in its shaping. I am indicating the OECD and the EU as the key external policy fields, and each of these will be discussed further in the following sections.

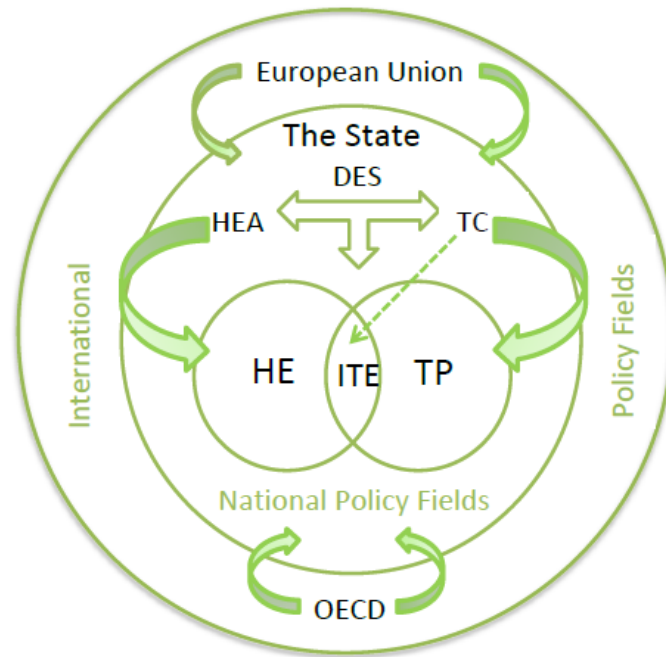


Figure 5.1 ITE in Ireland as a sub-field and dual-field of Higher Education (HE) and the Teaching Profession (TP)

5.4.2.1 ITE and the OECD

Bates (2008:280) describes the OECD as ‘probably the most influential’ intergovernmental organisation driving convergence of educational policy globally. I have referred earlier (section 5.3.2) to how the OECD PISA results have been important in directing recent educational policy in Ireland, a point previously noted by Drudy (2009) and Grek (2009). Looking at the broader context, Galvin (2009: 276) refers to how OECD has been playing a key role in the ‘seeding and orientation of educational policy in Ireland’ over the last forty years. However, in relation to teacher education specifically, the history of the OECD’s influence extends back to 1991 when it published a *Review of Irish Education*, a report which was focused specifically on teaching. That report endorsed the high standards that existed in initial teacher education institutions, commenting that ‘...a well organised, effective and professional and academically sound structure for initial teacher education already exists’ (OECD, 1991:97). At the same time, it put forward a number of suggestions regarding how TE could be enhanced, including the need for a statutory body which would ‘address the issues of teacher selection, initial training, credentialing, induction and in-service education’ (OECD, 1991:107). It has been noted (Burke, 2004; Coolahan, 2007; Harford, 2008) that this OECD report was

highly influential on the development of policy which emerged in Ireland during the nineties, namely the *Education for a Changing World: Green Paper on Education* (Department of Education, 1992), and the subsequent *Charting our Educational Future: White Paper on Education* in 1995 (DoE, 1995). It is important to acknowledge that several pieces of educational legislation arose directly from the recommendations of the *White Paper on Education*, thus it is fair to say that the 1991 OECD report ‘also indirectly influenced legislation’ (Galvin, 2009:277). Perhaps the most significant of these was the 1998 *Education Act* (Government of Ireland, 1998) which put Irish education ‘on a statutory footing’ (Mulcahy & McSharry, 2012:94); but for ITE, the *White Paper on Education* also set in motion the 2001 *Teaching Council Act* (Government of Ireland, 2001), to which I have previously referred. Specifically with regard to ITE, it is also worth noting that in the aftermath of the *White Paper* two policy studies addressing primary and post-primary teacher education respectively were commissioned by Department of Education and Science (DES) towards the end of the nineties, and the reports arising from these: Byrne (2002) and Kelleghan (2002) were published some four years later. However, as Coolahan (2007:20) notes, neither report was widely disseminated and ‘...no national debates took place on the recommendations, and to a large degree they were allowed to slip from public consciousness...’

More recently, the 2005 OECD Report *Teachers Matter* put teacher quality as the key criterion in raising school achievement:

All countries are seeking to improve their schools and to respond better to higher social and economic expectations. As the most significant and costly resource in schools, teachers are central to school-improvement initiatives.
(OECD, 2005:1)

Although the influence of this more recent OECD report has not been as extensive as its predecessor, it is nonetheless apparent that it too has been an important influence in steering the direction of teacher education policy in Ireland (Clarke & Killeavy, 2012; Dolan, 2012; Seery, 2008). Nowhere is this more apparent than in the *Report of the Review panel of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education* (DES, 2012) wherein ‘quality’ is indicated as the driving force for reform of the sector in Ireland.

5.4.2.2 ITE and the EU

Given the influence of the EU on developments in HE in Ireland as elsewhere (Clancy, 2008; Conway & Murphy, 2013; Gleeson & O'Donnabhain, 2009; Sugrue, 2009; White, 2001), it is no surprise that its influence is evident in policy developments in ITE also. The *Bologna Declaration* (European Ministers of Education, 1999) signed by 29 European countries put in place a framework for the creation of a European HE space. It has been noted (Papatsiba, 2006; Ravinet, 2008) that the *Bologna Declaration* and the reform process which it initiated has been a key influence on the reshaping of higher education in Europe in the new century. The 2000 *Lisbon Agreement* had at its core the objective to 'become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' (European Council, 2000; paragraph 5), and it referred to the need for recognition of teaching qualifications on a pan-European basis, as well as noting the importance of attracting high-quality teachers (Drudy, 2009). In its aftermath, several policy documents emanating from both the Council and Commission were focused specifically on teacher education and set down common competences and qualifications (European Commission, 2005) as well as reiterating the need for ensuring the quality of the teaching profession in Europe (European Council, 2007; European Commission, 2007). It is widely acknowledged that recent Irish teacher education policy has been significantly influenced by the discourse emanating from the EU, as apparent in recent DES policy documents (Clarke & Killeavy, 2012; Seery, 2008) as well as those drawn up by the TC (Conway & Murphy, 2013).

5.5 ITE and Widening Participation

So far, this chapter has addressed the first research question pertaining to the first Aim of the study. The discussion to date has focused on the structure and position of ITE in Ireland with particular reference to the policy influences pertaining to ITE specifically. The remainder of this chapter will address the second research question, namely: how is widening participation and increasing access to ITE enacted in policy and practice?

As indicated in Chapter 1, the issue of widening participation is particularly relevant for ITE given that students from minority ethnic groups and lower socio-economic

groups tend to be underrepresented (Byrne, 2002; Coolahan, 2003; Conway et al. 2009; Drudy, 2006a; Heinz, 2013a). It is also relevant because the field has been described as having ‘stringent academic requirements on entry and strong competition between students for places’ (Mooney et al., 2010:31). Further, given that demand for teacher education programmes outweighs supply (Aitken & Harford, 2011; Drudy, 2006a; Harford, 2008; Hyland, 2012) there has not been the same need in the Irish context to provide the array of routes into ITE compared to other countries where shortage of teachers is an issue (Chan Lai & Grossman, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Menter, 2002; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Whitehead & Postlethwaite, 2000).

However, as explained in Chapter 2, increasing access and widening participation to HE has been a policy objective for Irish HE for almost two decades. Moreover, given that virtually all ITE in Ireland is now provided by university departments of education or colleges which are within or associated/affiliated to a university (as outlined in section 5.2); it is reasonable to expect that the effects of WP as a policy field within HE will have impacted on ITE as a sub-field of HE. Bourdieu states that the manner in which external forces impact on those within a field

...never apply to them directly, but affect them only through the specific mediation of the specific forms and forces of the field, after having undergone a *re-structuring* that is all the more important the more autonomous the field, that is, the more it is capable of imposing its specific logic, the cumulative product of its particular history.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:105)

It is appropriate therefore to ascertain how WP has impacted on ITE, and it is to this issue that I now turn. This requires a brief return to the policy context before moving on to look at the statistics which will provide an insight into the enactment of WP in practice, with particular reference to undergraduate concurrent ITE programmes which prepare teachers for the post-primary sector.

5.5.1 ITE and WP: the historical policy context

The admissions process used by HEIs for entry into higher education generally has been identified as a factor which impacts on participation rates by under-represented groups (Schwartz, 2004). The predominant mode of entry to HE in Ireland is via the CAO, through which 80% of admissions to higher education programmes were

processed in 2010. The CAO system operates on the basis that applicants accumulate a number of 'points' from results of the leaving certificate (LC) examination (based on grades) which is taken at the end of secondary education (Hyland, 2011), with entry to HE programmes being determined by applicants achieving the required number of points for particular programmes.

Although the issue of attracting under-represented groups into teaching has been raised (Byrne, 2002; Kelleghan, 2002; Educational Disadvantage Committee, 2004), for ITE in Ireland, this has not been a policy priority (Conway et al., 2009; O'Brien, 2004). While the issues of equality in graduate and post-graduate teacher education in Northern Ireland have recently been the subject of a policy report by the Equality Commission for that jurisdiction (Elwood et al., 2004), these concerns have not been specifically addressed for ITE in the Republic of Ireland. Within broader policy documents concerning ITE, the focus on WP has been weak by any standards until relatively recently. In the raft of policy documents arising from the 1995 *White Paper*, only Byrne (2002) dealt with the matter in any detail, noting among its recommendations:

The Advisory Group recognises that teachers are now entering an increasingly diverse and rapidly changing professional environment. The teaching profession must have the capacity to adapt to this challenge. While the nature and content of initial teacher education will be crucial in this regard, the Advisory Group also considers it important to ensure that the intake to teacher education courses takes account of increasing diversity at school level. Accordingly, it is highly desirable to ensure greater participation in teacher education by students from diverse backgrounds, including those who are disadvantaged, students with special needs and candidates from ethnic minorities.

(Byrne, 2002:101)

5.5.2 ITE and WP: the contemporary policy context

I outlined in section 5.4 how the autonomy of ITE in HE has been weakened as a result of the accountability measures imposed on it by the TC. However, it is interesting to note that it is within TC discussion and policy documents that the issue of widening participation in ITE has emerged most prominently in recent times. In its first strategic plan, published a year after it was set up, the TC flagged the need for widening entry into ITE, couching it in terms of being beneficial to the profession:

There are also many opportunities for the expansion of the profession. For example, the Council must consider how to attract people who are under-

represented in the profession, e.g. men, people from areas designated as disadvantaged and members of the new Irish community
(Teaching Council, 2007b:10)

Some two years later, in a major research study commissioned by the TC in the lead-up to the publication of its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (Teaching Council, 2011c) the need for a ‘diverse teaching force and varied routes into teaching’ was articulated as an issue to be addressed, given that ‘a lack of student teachers from minority ethnic groups and low socio-economic status groups has been identified’ (Conway et al., 2009:xvii). Within the actual *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* document, in a section which looks at entry to ITE, it is noted that a review of entry requirements and selection procedures is warranted, and that ways of ‘facilitating entry to the profession by under-represented groups’ (Teaching Council, 2011c:12) be explored.

Aside from identifying WP in the policy context, it is reassuring to see that this is an issue which the TC has focused its attention on in practice. In the more recent review and accreditation of ITE programmes which it has conducted in the last year (www.teachingcouncil.ie), specific reference is made to whether the programme/s under review is addressing WP through having policies and preferential access quotas in place. In addition, in a number of review reports, comment is made on the actual proportions of non-traditional entrants on the programme/s. This is without doubt a positive outcome to having greater accountability in place as by highlighting practices among ITE providers in relation to WP, the TC is emphasising not only its own commitment to addressing the issue, but is heightening the awareness of the issue among programme providers.

Elsewhere, the *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education in Ireland* (DES, 2012:23) also makes reference to WP in ITE within a small section entitled ‘flexibility and access’. Noting that ‘one of the consequences of the changes recommended in this report is that teacher education will be concentrated into a smaller number of centres’ it suggests that

... in light of ...the commitment of the HEA to broaden access to higher education generally...HEIs should develop new, innovative approaches in order to facilitate greater flexibility of learning and access to programmes
(DES, 2012:23)

It is perhaps a little ironic that a report which is framed in the context of the *Hunt Report* (DES, 2011a), within which WP is mooted as a key policy objective, is by virtue of reducing the number of providers, also reducing access to one particular field for potential students. In that regard, it is useful to ascertain what has been the practice to date within ITE with regard to WP: it is this which is the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

5.5.3 ITE and WP: the practice

As outlined previously, WP as a policy field within higher education has impacted directly on the field of ITE. In practice, this has meant that providers of ITE have had to respond to HEA - led policy initiatives aimed at WP and increasing access to higher education (see HEA, 2004a; 2004b; HEA, 2008). Consequently, alternative entry routes into all undergraduate ITE programmes now exist. These include Access programme-route, mature-entry route, and HEAR and DARE supplementary routes. Access programmes/courses of different durations (max. 1 academic year) are offered by some HEI's for school leavers and mature aged students who have experienced socio-economic or educational disadvantage. On successful completion of the Access course, students are eligible to apply for entry into degree programmes, usually at the host HEI. Access routes have been in place since the early part of this century (HEA, 2004a) and mature-entry routes for some years prior to that. In Ireland, mature-entry students are those aged twenty three on the first of January in the year of proposed entry. Application is made either to the CAO for the named programme or directly to the HEI and participants are normally selected following aptitude tests and/or an interview (http://www.cao.ie/help_files/mature_help.htm).

Operating since 2008/09, HEAR is a 3rd level admissions scheme for economically/socially disadvantaged school leavers who may apply for a place (through CAO) on reduced points (www.accesscollege.ie/hear/index.php). A range of post-entry supports (including financial) are provided by HEIs for successful applicants (HEA, 2008). Prior to 2010, applications for HEAR places were processed by individual institutions, but since the 2010/11 academic year, the CAO has handled applications for the scheme. Entry onto all of the undergraduate ITE degrees via HEAR has been in place since 2010. It has been noted that the multi-indicator approach used to ascertain eligibility in the HEAR scheme is both robust and

successful in targeting individuals at greatest disadvantage (IUA, 2011). DARE (<http://www.accesscollege.ie/dare/index.php>) is an admissions scheme for school leavers with a disability and has been in place since 2010. At the time of writing in July 2013, 13 HEIs participate in the scheme, including 7 who provide undergraduate ITE degree programmes.

5.5.3.1 WP in ITE: participation trends

This final section will describe the trends in entry to post-primary undergraduate ITE programmes by students from non-standard entry-routes. As indicated in Chapter 4 section 4.2, it was envisaged that a comprehensive picture of participation via all non-standard entrance routes which were in existence at the commencement of the study would be provided in this chapter. However, due to the poor response rate from a number of ITE providers following repeated requests for information regarding numbers/proportions of students gaining access to ITE following an Access course, the data presented here is not as comprehensive as originally hoped. Nevertheless, the data presented does provide a good insight into participation by (a) mature students and (b) HEAR students. With regard to both groups, the data concerning applications and acceptances with regard to programmes of ITE which is presented is not publicly available, and was acquired via personal communication with the Statistics Section of the HEA (data on mature entrants) and the Chief Executive Officer of the CAO (data on HEAR applicants). In accordance with ethical guidelines, the data is presented in anonymised aggregated form.

5.5.3.1.1 Mature student participation in ITE

As outlined in Chapter 2, full-time participation by mature students in Ireland is very low compared to many other countries (OECD, 2003). Consequently, since 2001, ‘mature students’ are one of the groups for which percentage-based targets for participation in higher education has been set out (HEA, 2004b; 2008; 2010). In 2001, a target of at least 10% participation by mature students as a percentage of full-time new entrants for 2006 was set (HEA, 2001) and this was endorsed by the *2005-2007 Action Plan* (HEA, 2004b). In the *2008-2013 Action Plan* (HEA, 2008), further targets were set at 17% for 2010 and 20% for 2013.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
All Progs FT MNEs	9.4%	9%	12.8%	10.9%	10.8%	13.6%	15.6%	14.5%
All ITE FT MNEs	8.2%	8.5%	8.1%	7.8%	8.3%	10.8%	9.6%	10.6%
P.P. ITE FT MNEs	5.4%	10.5%	10%	8.0%	11.1%	11.6%	11.5%	13.4%

Source: HEA (2008), (2010), (2013); HEA Statistics Section, personal communication

While the target set for 2006 was achieved and exceeded (HEA, 2008), the 2010 target was not achieved. Table 5.2 (above) sets out the actual participation figures for the years 2004-2011 for full-time mature new entrants (FT MNEs) for all programmes, for FT MNEs who entered all ITE programmes (this encompasses early-years, primary and post-primary undergraduate), as well as the proportions of FT MNEs entering post-primary (P.P.) ITE which are the focus of this study. These figures are also illustrated in graph form in Figure 5.2 (below) where it can be seen that since 2005, intakes of FT MNEs as a percentage of all entrants to post-primary ITE has been equal or greater than those for all ITE programmes.

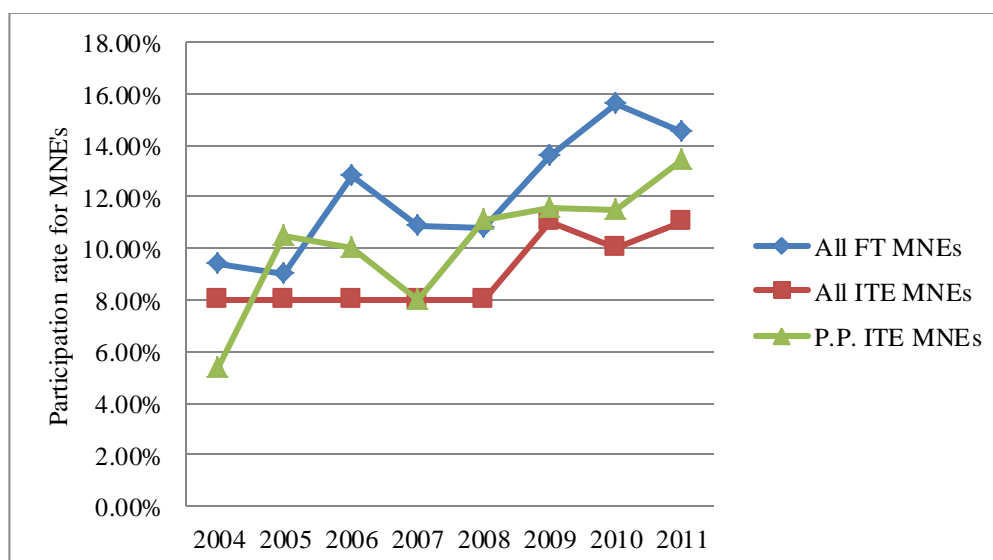


Figure 5.2 Participation rates for FT MNEs 2004-2011

When P.P. ITE MNEs are compared to FT MNEs to *all* HE programmes, the proportions have been considerably weaker until recently. In 2011, the figure for FT

MNEs to post-primary ITE programmes was just over one per-cent less than the proportion of entrants to all FT programmes. The HEA participation targets for full-time new entrants are illustrated in Figure 5.3 (below) for the years 2006, 2010 and 2013 (HEA, 2001, 2008). Alongside these, the actual participation rates for this group for all programmes are set out, as well as the participation rates for FT MNEs to post-primary ITE. For the latter two, only data for the years 2006 and 2010 is available at the time of writing, however, as indicated in Table 5.2, the participation rates for each of these categories in 2011 would suggest that the target of 20% for 2013 is unlikely to be met.

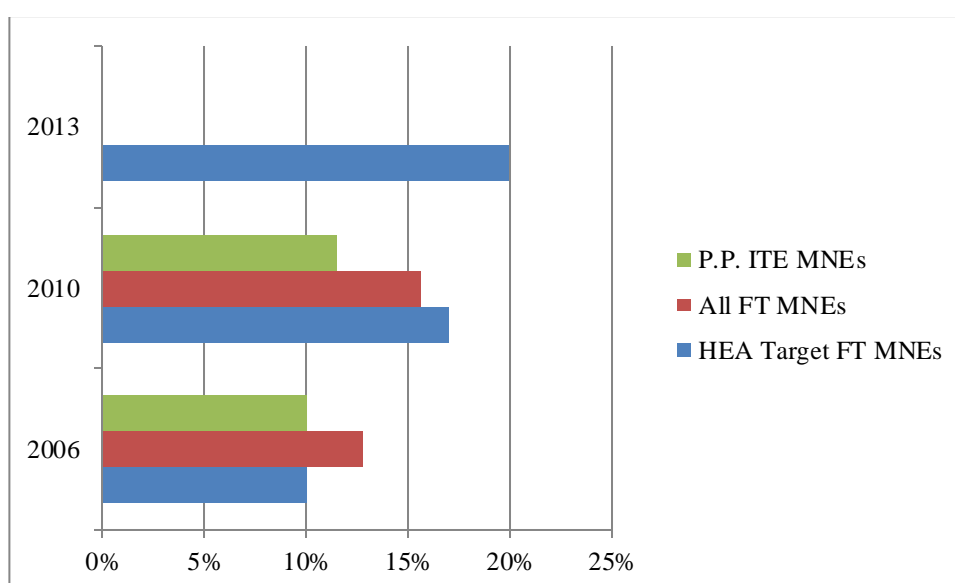


Figure 5.3 HEA participation targets vs. actual participation 2006, 2010 and 2013

5.5.3.1.2 HEAR student participation in ITE

The HEAR route has been in existence since the mid-noughties, but it is only since 2010 that the administration of the scheme has been undertaken by the CAO. As explained earlier, HEAR is an admissions scheme for economically/socially disadvantaged school leavers. HEAR applications are processed on the basis of the applicant meeting a range of financial and social/cultural indicators (www.accesscollege.ie/hear/index.php). The financial indicators relate to income level and include being in receipt of a medical card, parents in receipt of a social welfare payment, or parental income being below a certain threshold. The social and cultural indicators include belonging to a socio-economic group which is under-

represented at third level, coming from a designated disadvantaged school (DEIS), or coming from an area of concentrated disadvantage and exclusion. Table 5.3 presents an overview of applications and acceptances via HEAR for all undergraduate programmes for the years 2010-2012. In Table 5.4, applications and acceptances for undergraduate post-primary ITE programmes for the same years is presented.

Year	Total CAO Applicants		Total HEAR Applicants		Total HEAR Offers		Total HEAR Acceptances	
2010	78,199	100%	8,399	10.9%	1,495	2%	1,284	2.8%
2011	76,749	100%	8,377	10.9%	2,035	2.7%	1,744	3.8%
2012	76,900	100%	11,624	15.2%	2,453	3.2%	2,092	4.5%

Source: CAO, personal communication

	HEAR Applicants Post-primary ITE	ITE Acceptances who were HEAR applicants	ITE Acceptances who received a HEAR place
2010	16.6%	16.4%	6.8%
2011	16.9%	15.4%	7.0%
2012	16.4%	17.0%	7.9%

Source: CAO, personal communication

A number of points emerge from the figures. First, as indicated in Table 5.3, the proportion of HEAR applications to all HE programmes has increased from a baseline of just under 11% of applicants in 2010 and 2011, to accounting for over 15% of applications in 2012. This growth in numbers applying through the HEAR scheme can be attributed to the expansion of the scheme to include all schools (the scheme was previously restricted to DEIS schools only), coupled with increased visibility of the scheme as the number of HEIs participating increased from 8 to 17 in the period 2007-2011 (IUA, 2011). However, the proportion of applicants being offered and subsequently accepting a HEAR place - although increasing steadily since 2010 - is quite low, accounting for less than 5% of all acceptances in 2012. Indeed, as the HEA (2010:11) have noted, the numbers accepting places via HEAR (and also DARE) mask the high level of demand for access through these supplementary admission routes.

With regard to post-primary ITE programmes, there are proportionately more HEAR applicants to these programmes when compared to HEAR applicants to all programmes. Notably, the proportion has remained relatively stable over the three years for which data is available - averaging around 16.5%. Regarding acceptances onto programmes, Table 5.4 indicates an interesting finding regarding the proportion of acceptors who had applied via HEAR. In 2010, HEAR applicants accounted for 16.4% of acceptors to ITE programmes; the number fell slightly in 2011 to 15.4%, but increased again in 2012 to reach 17%. Notably, only a small proportion of these were awarded a HEAR place (and with it financial and other supports attached): the proportion of HEAR places awarded for ITE p.p. programmes was 6.8% in 2010, growing steadily to 7.9% in 2012. This upward trend indicates that ITE providers are making more places available through HEAR. However, as the figures in Table 5.4 indicate, there are a lot more students who meet the strict criteria of HEAR as applicants, and who are offered and accept places onto ITE programmes, but do so without the benefit of HEAR supports.

5.6 Summary

Thomson (2005:742) writes that the task of the social scientist who follows Bourdieu in seeking to comprehend the social world 'is to understand the nature of fields, their rules, narratives and self-held truths'. It was this understanding that this chapter sought to address. The chapter commenced with a background of the historical development of ITE in Ireland, followed by an analysis of the contemporary policy influences. I have indicated how recent policies emanating from the TC, while reducing the autonomy of ITE providers in general, may contribute to enhancing WP in the field of ITE by spotlighting how providers are implementing WP initiatives in practice. However, this gain may be offset by the impending restructuring of the field set out in the *Report of the Review panel of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education* (DES, 2012), which was endorsed by the HEA (2013a). Analysis of data regarding entry to ITE by mature students and by socioeconomically disadvantaged students indicate that good progress is being made with regard to participation by both these groups. The most recent data (for 2011) indicates that participation by MNEs in FT post-primary ITE programmes - at 13.4% - is lower than the participation rate by this group across all programmes. While it is encouraging to see that participation by MNEs in ITE has increased since 2004, there is still some way

to go to achieve the participation target of 20% by this group. Data regarding applications to ITE via the HEAR supplementary entry route are more encouraging, as in comparison to all undergraduate programmes, there are proportionally more applicants and acceptances via HEAR for ITE post-primary programmes. Additionally, the number of places available for ITE via HEAR has steadily increased in the three years for which figures are available. It remains to be seen whether rationalisation of provision (DES, 2012) will impact on access to and participation in ITE by under-represented groups into the future.

In schematically mapping ITE in Ireland as a 'field', this study conceptualises ITE as a dual-field and a sub-field of two larger fields: the field of higher education (HE), the site of which is the university/college, and the professional field of teaching (TP), the site of which is the school. Wacquant (1992:105) indicates that 'the field is a critical mediation between the practices of those who partake of it and the surrounding social and economic conditions'. Thus, in Bourdieusian terms, the mapping which has been presented in this chapter serves as an important precursor to the more in-depth analysis of the habitus of agents in the field of ITE, which is the focus of the next chapter – Chapter 6. That chapter will address the second aim of this study by examining the experiences of non-standard entry-route students who are enrolled on undergraduate ITE programmes to prepare them to become post-primary (secondary) school teachers. This examination is particularly pertinent as it has been remarked of ITE that the dual-field experience presents a challenge for the players therein - the students (Grenfell, 1996; Murray & Maguire, 2007).

Chapter 6: Analysing the habitus of agents in the field: student teachers' stories

'The daunting task that remains now is to show in detail how, in particular instances, narrative organises the structure of human experience...'

(Bruner, 1991:21)

'It leads to constructing the notion of trajectory as a series of successively occupied positions by the same agent (or in the same group) in a space which itself is constantly evolving and which is subject to incessant transformations.'

(Bourdieu, 2000:302)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research questions emanating from the second aim of the study, by presenting an analysis of the habituses of the student teachers who are the focus of the research. Building on the overview of the nine participants which was outlined in Chapter 4, I begin by first presenting a short vignette of each participant before moving on to consider in some detail and through a Bourdieusian lens, the narratives of two. The narratives are situated within one of three possible conceptions of positions in the field which were derived from the participant accounts, based on amounts of capital and practices within the dual fields. The three possible conceptions are: *Belonging*, *Adjusting* and *Struggling*. As explained in Chapter 4, data analyses indicated that the participants in this study were situated in two of these: *Belonging* or *Adjusting*, and thus, in the initial overview, participants' stories are organised according to these orientations. In each account, I have attempted to encapsulate some of the key features of the trajectory and the dual - field experience as evidenced by the narrative of each individual.

Following on from this overview, a more in-depth narrative analysis of two of the students which is illustrative of the two different field positions is presented. Choosing the narratives to include in this section was not an easy task, as unique and insightful perspectives on the student experience of ITE was presented by each of the participants. In the end, I chose to focus on these two particular narratives as they illustrate the different ways in which the dual-field of ITE is experienced by non-standard entrants, the complexities of their trajectories, and the impact of this on their positioning in the field. George's narrative is presented as an example of a habitus *Belonging*, while Monica's portrays a habitus *Adjusting*. Adopting Polkinghorne's

(1995) narrative analysis approach where narrative cognition builds the themes offered by the participants into a story, I have chosen to present the individual accounts as just that: the individual story. In so doing, I have attempted to emulate the approach which Bourdieu et al. (1999) employ and which Warde (2002:1007) describes as ‘...presenting extensive direct quotation’ which ‘allow[s] the interviewees to speak for themselves’. Therefore, in presenting the narratives, I have sought to keep the voices of the students at the forefront of the accounts; however, like Bergerson (2007), I acknowledge that through my re-presentation of their stories, a level of interpretation has already occurred. Further, I recognise that in narratively reconstructing and making meaning of their stories (Clandinin and Connolly, 1995) through a Bourdieusian conceptual lens, another layer is added to the interpretation.

6.2 Introducing the participants

6.2.1 A habitus *Belonging*

Four of the students are positioned as *Belonging*. Two of these entered their ITE programmes as mature-entrants: Linda and Steve, and two gained entry following completion of an Access course: George and Janet.

6.2.1.1. Linda’s story: *‘I’ve always been kind of ‘doing’ college’*

Linda entered the programme in her late twenties as a mature student after spending several years working in the catering industry. She is a first-generation higher education student. Coming from a family of four children, Linda is also the first of her siblings to progress on to higher education. Following completion of the Leaving Certificate examination at the end of her secondary schooling, she spent two years as a full-time student initially in an IoT and gained a certificate-level qualification. Two years later, Linda returned as a part-time student in the same HEI, spending one day per week in college for a further three years, and obtained a diploma at the end of that period. She was engaged in full-time employment for several years after that and the decision to apply for a place on the ITE programme as a mature student occurred at a point when Linda was considering a move out of the catering sector to either start her own business or return to college. She described how the support of a friend - a former work colleague, also a mature entrant on the same programme who was nearing completion of her degree, was instrumental in her decision to take the route

into ITE. Despite wondering whether she had made the right decision in returning to undertake a degree, and unsure about how to gauge the level of academic work expected, Linda emerged at the top of her class in her first year exams. Her experience of her first year School Placement (SP) was not as positive; she did not pass that component and was required to undertake a repeat SP in September. She successfully passed the repeat placement and moved into the second year of the programme, and has performed consistently well in all her subsequent placements. Now in year three of the programme, she has also maintained high grades across all her HE academic modules.

6.2.1.2. Steve's Story: *'I had no idea of what college would be like'*

Steve is in his late twenties and in the final year of an ITE degree which he entered as a mature student. Becoming a teacher was something he had always been interested in during his second-level education, and he was encouraged by his teachers to consider pursuing it as a career. He is a first generation HE entrant, and also the first of his siblings to attend college. From a farming background, Steve applied as a school-leaver via the CAO to do an ITE degree in the same subject in another HEI. Despite obtaining the required points for entry onto that programme in his LC, he hadn't achieved the required grade in mathematics, so he didn't secure a place. He explained that he wasn't aware of this requirement at the time. Steve subsequently undertook a four-year apprenticeship in a trade, and enjoyed this. He worked for a few years afterwards and then decided to apply again as a mature student to two HEI's which offered the programme, and he secured a place in the HEI where he is now enrolled. Steve described the mixed emotions he experienced at that time: *'I was happy, but I was sort of dreading it in a way - I had no idea of what college would be like'*. Steve made the transition into HE quite easily, and found the first year enjoyable; however, towards the end of the first semester in year two, he *'was thinking of quitting'*. These thoughts arose when he began to doubt his ability to complete a piece of coursework. After taking some time out of College, he sought guidance from the Lecturer who had set the work. He completed the coursework *'and actually got quite a good mark for it'* and since then, he has excelled in both his academic and school placements; but was modest in his relaying of this information, downplaying his achievements. Steve spoke of the comradeship he enjoys with his

classmates while attending college, but he doesn't socialise with them outside of that. He was pensive about his involvement in broader college life – and acknowledged that perhaps this is an aspect he ought to have devoted more time to.

6.2.1.3 George's Story: *'There's an atmosphere in the library and I just love coming into it'*

George is in his early thirties and in year three of a four year ITE programme, which he gained entry to following completion of an Access course. George had worked in the construction industry since leaving secondary school, but the downturn in the economy left him unemployed. He had secured a Visa to work in Australia, but following a chance meeting with someone who worked in the College, he became aware of the Access course. George decided to apply for the course, and after a very short time, he decided to remain in education and to pursue a degree. George has three siblings, all of whom went on to higher education, but neither of his parents progressed beyond second-level. George described how he really enjoys the programme and that his approach to college work is no different to other aspects of his life - he gives it 100% commitment. While George gets on well with group, he tends to work alone. He has got married since commencing the programme and lives some distance away from College, hence he has had minimum involvement in broader college activities, and doesn't socialise with his class. George also enjoys the SP aspect of the programme, and described how he mixed easily with his co-operating teachers and the comfort he felt being in the classroom. Categorising himself as a *'lifelong learner'*, George told me that he hopes to continue his studies in the future.

6.2.1.4. Janet's Story: *'I've always just got on with it'*

Janet is 23 years old and is in the fourth and final year of her undergraduate ITE degree. Janet came onto the programme following completion of a one-year part-time Access course which she undertook immediately following her LC exam. Janet was always interested in teaching as a career and when she didn't secure a place on the programme via the CAO route, she applied and was accepted onto the Access course. Neither of Janet's parents had progressed on to third-level education, nor had any of their relatives of that generation. Janet's family own and operate a small catering establishment in a middle-sized town in rural Ireland, and Janet works in the

business during term holidays. Janet has enjoyed her experiences of going out on SP over the four years of the programme. For each of the placements which she has undertaken, Janet chose schools which were local to the college, rather than seeking a placement nearer home as she felt that this afforded her better access to facilities and resources than she would have at home. Janet considers the programme ‘*very competitive*’, but that isn’t something that has impacted on her, and she described how she ‘*just gets on with it*’. While acknowledging that she has had limited involvement with clubs and societies due to the demands of the programme, Janet has maintained a strong link with the Access Office. She has helped out with activities organised by them for primary and secondary schools, and has delivering talks to Access course cohorts from later years about her experiences of the programme. Janet is one of a group of twenty students from the college who are going to a developing country to work as volunteers during the coming summer, and she has engaged in a number of fundraising activities for this over the past year.

6.2.2 A habitus *Adjusting*

Five students were positioned as *Adjusting* at the point when I undertook the interviews with them. Two of these were students who completed an Access course directly after finishing their second-level education: Monica and Rachael. Richard undertook an Access course some years after finishing an apprenticeship, while Deborah undertook the Access course as a mature entrant. Martina had been out of education for some time before applying and gaining a place on an ITE programme as a mature student.

6.2.2.1 Monica’s Story: ‘*I always felt I was so lucky to be here*’

Monica is a twenty-two year-old and is in the third year of an ITE degree, and she gained entry onto the programme following completion of an Access course as a school-leaver. When Monica saw the newspaper advertisement for the Access course, she had just commenced a degree programme in another institution, but she deferred her place on the other programme for a year in order to complete the Access course. She described herself as coming from working-class/middle-class background, neither of her parents went on to higher education, but all of her siblings have. While Monica was absolutely thrilled at having gained a place on the ITE programme as a result of the Access course, her route of entry onto the programme

was not something she shared with her peers. Monica described at length the feelings of inadequacy she experienced particularly during her first year, as she was conscious that her LC points were much lower than the other students. Over time however, Monica's attitude changed, and she realised that she possessed many of the qualities required to be a good teacher. Monica described how she has found the SP element of the programme easier to negotiate than the academic aspect, but she has had mixed experiences in each of the different schools in which she has undertaken placements. Having recently completed her third SP, Monica described it as her most enjoyable one to date.

6.2.2.2. Rachael's Story: *'I just do my own thing and get on with it'*

Rachael is in her early twenties and is completing year three of her ITE programme. She came on to the programmes following completion of a one-year Access course immediately after completing her LC exam at the end of secondary school. She had a strong interest in the ITE programme and had applied through the standard CAO route, but didn't secure a place based on her LC points. Rachael had heard of the Access course through her career guidance teacher, so when she wasn't offered a place via the CAO, she applied for the Access course as she felt that she would meet the criteria for entry onto it. Another girl whom she knew from school was also accepted onto the course and they travelled together to the HEI each week. Rachael described the Access course as being very beneficial in helping her to get to know the college and '*gave me a real taste of what college life is like*', along with being particularly useful in introducing her to academic writing. Rachael is the youngest in her family and the first to undertake a degree, although her siblings have completed diploma-level studies in higher education and apprenticeships in the trades. Rachael told me that she was always really interested in becoming a teacher, but her SP experiences haven't always been successful. Rachael didn't pass her SP in year two, and consequently had to repeat that element of the programme, which necessitated her taking a year out. She was reluctant to talk about this experience in any great detail, only acknowledging that her classroom presence has improved with each placement she has undertaken.

6.2.2.3. Richard's Story: *'In our school...boys didn't go to college - it wasn't the thing to do'*

Richard is in his early thirties and is in the fourth and final year of his ITE programme. When Richard left school at 18, he entered a four-year apprenticeship in a trade. At that point, he hadn't applied to go to HE, as this was not something which was considered an option as *'for a normal, everyday lad, it wasn't the thing to do'*. During his apprenticeship, he developed an interest in becoming a teacher of the trade subject, and on completion he explored how he might gain a teaching qualification. Over the next number of years, he up-skilled himself by undertaking a number of other courses in order to improve his chances of gaining a place on his programme of choice, and continued to work while doing so. The first time Richard applied as a mature student onto the programme which he is now on, he didn't secure a place, so he undertook an Access course the following year. On successful completion, he gained entry onto the ITE programme. Richard told me that the Access course was very useful in giving him *'a sense of what's expected and brings you up to a certain standard'*; but despite having completed the Access, academically, the transition into the degree was *'a big step up'* from anything he'd done before. Richard is married and his family home is in a small rural village a number of hours away from where he attends college, so he divides his week between college and home. His wife is very supportive of his studies. He doesn't engage in paid employment during term time, however, he works during the summer in order to support himself and his wife financially. He finds it difficult to attend to college-work during the time he spends at home, as he also has responsibility for his elderly parents. He finds some aspects of the academic work quite challenging, and is obtaining private tutorials to help him with one particular subject in which he has struggled. Richard enjoys the SP component of the programme, particularly so as he acknowledged that he lacked confidence in speaking to groups – even his fellow classmates – in the earlier stages of the programme. He attributes his growth and mastering of this area to the support of the academic staff delivering the programme.

6.2.2.4. Deborah's Story: *'College is for young people...and mature students...really have to fit in'*

Deborah is a mature access-route student in her late forties and while she is in the final year of the four year programme, but this is Deborah's fifth year enrolled on the

programme as she repeated year two, having failed the SP placement and repeat placement that year. Despite that setback and wondering '*will I ever get this done?*' Deborah has remained completely focused on completing the programme. Following her year out, Deborah found it particularly difficult to return to a new class group whom she did not know, although she acknowledged that her new classmates were very friendly and helpful to her. She described the support of her family as being vital in enabling her to undertake the Access course initially and the ITE degree subsequently. Deborah described her background as 'working class', she was the only one of her siblings to go on to further education upon completing her second level schooling, and some of her siblings left school early. On finishing her secondary education, she accepted a place on a catering course but left after completing only one year, choosing instead to remain working in the restaurant in which she had secured a summer job. A short time later she married and had three children, who are now in their twenties. One of these, herself a recent graduate of a programme in another University, was instrumental in encouraging Deborah to embark on the Access course. The location of both the Access course and the ITE degree in an institution which is located geographically close to where Deborah lives was a deciding factor in her undertaking both. While she indicated that the college is supportive of mature students, she feels that there is a distinction between herself as a mature student and younger students. Deborah described her SP experiences as '*mixed,*' and she told me that her final placement where she was working with adult learners was where she felt she '*fitted in*' the best.

6.2.2.5. Martina's Story: '*Teaching was always something I've wanted to do*'

Martina is thirty-one years old and in the fourth and final year of her degree. As a result of having to repeat her SP in year three, this is Martina's fifth year enrolled on the programme. Consequently, Martina had to adjust to coming into a new class group in year four, which she described as '*like starting off in first year again*'. From a lower middle-class family, two of her four siblings progressed to HE. Martina had applied for entry to the programme as a school-leaver, but didn't achieve sufficient points. She also had applied for a place on an ITE programme in the UK, and was offered that, but didn't take it up. Instead, she embarked on another degree programme in an unrelated field of study (which she was offered through the CAO) because her career guidance teacher advised her '*not to waste her LC*'; but she '*knew*

the course wasn't for me' so she left at the end of the first year. Martina then undertook a catering course, qualifying as a chef after two years. Afterwards, she spent a number of years abroad, managing a bar and food outlet, until she had to return home because of a change in personal circumstances. She then spent two years working in retail before deciding to apply to the programme as a mature student: *'I wanted to better myself'*. Martina finds the programme very *'academic'* and feels the atmosphere among traditional students is a highly competitive. She prefers to work on her own as it is *'less stressful'* and she isn't interested in competing with others, just *'doing my best'*. Making friends with her peers on the programme hasn't been a priority for her, and she feels that she has little in common with the traditional-route students whom she describes as *'being in a [names HEI] bubble where the only focus is on the programme'*. While she described her SP experience as *'a struggle'* where she has had *'a lot of stumbling blocks'*, Martina is clear that being out in the schools reaffirms that she has made the right decision to return to HE to become a teacher: *'that's what keeps me going, that's why I know this is for me'*.

6.3 Re-presenting the narratives

Bourdieu refers to how an individual's success within a given field *'depends on the capital held'* (Bourdieu et al., 1999:128), and how *'different conditions of existence produce different habitus - systems of generative schemes applicable by simple transfer, to the most varied areas of practice'* (Bourdieu, 1984:166). This section provides a detailed narrative analysis of the accounts of two agents (students) who occupy different positions within the field of ITE. Viewed through a Bourdieusian lens, the trajectories illustrate how habitus, capital and agency influence positioning in the field, along with also impacting on the success with which the students navigate their way through the dual-field.

6.3.1 George: A habitus *'Belonging'* in the field

I have selected George's narrative as characteristic of what I am conceptualising as *'Belonging'* within the dual-field of ITE. George's account clearly signals a habitus which is *'at home'* within the field and exemplifies what it is like to be *'a fish in water'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127-128). However, while George exhibits *'a feel for the game'* (Bourdieu 1977:164) as a student of ITE in HE, his narrative shows that this is not due to his encountering a *'social world of which [he] is the*

product' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127). George comes from a small village in a rural part of the west of Ireland; his background is working class, and his father left school at the age of fifteen. George was thirty years old when he entered HE. A simplistic application of Bourdieu's theory of educational reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) would suggest that such a trajectory would lead to a habitus which will be at odds with this dual-field that George now inhabits. But on the contrary, George's narrative illustrates perhaps more vividly than any of the other participants how 'habitus is not the fate that some people read into it' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:133); that capital can be accumulated, exchanged and transferred, and how this impacts on positioning. As I will go on to show, the nature of George's practice in the dual-field in which he is now located is illustrative of 'a product of transfers of the same schemes of action from one field to another' (Bourdieu, 1984:168). Furthermore, the generative capacity of habitus, in which agency and autonomy are important constructs, is a feature which runs through his narrative account; and thus George's narrative offers an insight into the evolutionary and transformative potential of the habitus.

When I first met George, he was thirty three years old and in year three of his four year degree. He began by telling me about the circumstances which led him to enrol on an Access course and how completion of that course led on to his undertaking an ITE degree in the same HEI. George differs somewhat to all of the other students in this study in that securing a place on the ITE programme was not his primary motivation for enrolling on the Access course. Indeed, his undertaking of the Access course occurred more by chance than by choice. George recounted how the opportunity to do so came about during a period when he had returned from a brief stay in the UK and was unemployed, and shortly after he had obtained a work visa for Australia. Prior to that, George had worked for over twelve years in the construction industry before the downturn in the Irish economy and its impact on the sector prompted him to consider emigrating. It was as a result of a chance meeting via a mutual acquaintance that George came in contact with a member of staff from the HEI who told him about the Access course which was soon to commence, and encouraged him to apply for it. He decided to try it out as it was a full-time course and only ten weeks long, and he still had the option of going to Australia afterwards. Inherent in George's account of how he came to learn of the Access course is

evidence of the type of resources which Bourdieu refers to in explaining his concept of social capital: George has ‘a durable network...of relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:119), and it is via one such social connection that he takes the first step towards entry to the field of HE. As I will illustrate later, George’s social network will continue to feature as an important resource to him in acquiring the capital necessary to negotiate the dual-field that is ITE.

After only a very short period on the Access course, George made the decision to continue his studies and decided to apply for entry onto a degree programme at the HEI. His narrative account of that decision presents a captivating picture of his transition to student and the ease with which this occurred:

‘I knew after a few weeks on the Access course, I knew how much I was enjoying it, and I decided that I’d like to stay on, yeah. It was almost instantaneous y’know. I mean, even the Library here, there’s an atmosphere in the Library and I just love coming into it. Especially on a windy day, upstairs you can hear the wind whistling like and I’m inside and I’m studying away, and I just *love* that feeling.’

There is no denying that what George is presenting here is an account of a habitus ‘contrib[uting] to constituting the field as a meaningful world...in which it is worth investing one’s practice’ (Bourdieu, 1989:44). But in order to fully appreciate how and why his habitus ‘fitted in’ so easily, we need to trace back his trajectory and explore that which Bourdieu (1984:117) refers to as ‘the social conditions of production of the habitus’. In order to do so, it is necessary to investigate ‘the social trajectory’ which according to Bourdieu, ‘represents the combination of: the lifelong evolution of the volume of his capital...the volume of each sort of capital, and therefore the composition of his capital’ (Bourdieu, 1984:118).

George left school following completion of his LC. He had wanted to leave school earlier (at age 16), but his parents ‘wouldn’t have it’ - a decision that he now acknowledges was the correct one on their part: ‘they were right too, I see that now, looking back’. Many of his school - friends did not go on to complete their LC, opting instead to go into trades or building work at a time when work was plentiful in that sector in Ireland and high wages were the norm. After finishing school and completing his exams, George went straight into construction work, where he

described his experience as ‘starting at the bottom’ but where he ‘quickly worked his way up’: employed by a building contractor, following a period as a labourer and then a machine operator, after a few years he went on to become a site foreman.

Bourdieu states that economic capital ‘provides the conditions for freedom from economic necessity’ (Bourdieu, 1993:68). It is clear that the accrual of economic capital has been an important focus for George from quite a young age. While he described how ‘earning money in order to socialise’ was his primary motivation to go straight into paid employment when he finished school, it is apparent that George soon realised the value of economic capital and the rewards which such capital could confer. He ‘strategised’ (Bourdieu, 2000) in order to accumulate capital quickly and abundantly. He told me how at one point, he was engaged in two jobs: he worked in construction from 8.30am until 3.30pm in the afternoon; he then worked in a local factory from 4.30pm until 12.30am, five days per week. This enabled him to save sufficient money to be able to purchase his first house at the age of twenty one. Some years later, he was able to build his own house on a private site on the outskirts of a small town close to the city in which the HEI is located, and where he now lives with his family.

On several occasions throughout the interview, George referred to himself as a ‘lifelong learner’ and his narrative account of his time working in construction provides a rich insight into how that learning was enacted. He employed quite powerful metaphors to describe his experiences, as illustrated in the following excerpt where he explained why learning became important to him:

‘Like when I started off, driving a digger and labouring - I’d have plenty of time there for thinking about stuff. Like some of the machines, you know, they’d have bars in front of the windows and it’s almost like being in your own little jail cell; and I’d be thinking *‘what’ll I do when I get out of here?’*”

George told me that during his time in construction he frequently undertook night classes; some were leisure type courses, while others he embarked on in order to learn new skills that he could draw on for his work. In the following excerpt, though he doesn’t explicitly reference it as such, George alludes to his desire to accrue cultural capital:

‘There was always something in the back of my mind actually, about educating myself further. Yeah, I’d say every year or every second year if I

wasn't doing my own work in the evenings; I did some kind of course; and I never really realised it, but I'm into lifelong learning and all that. It was only when I came here like, and one of my lecturers in Education and eh, she was talking about lifelong learning; I only *then* realised the concept of what I was interested in, you know.'

Cultural capital can be understood as forms of knowledge, attitude, skill, attitudes and expectation, which is denoted by academic qualifications (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The aspiration to acquire cultural capital had prompted George to investigate going to HE some years before he undertook the Access course, and he had visited the campus of a nearby University 'even before the [building] boom ended' and met with the Admissions Officer. But, as he explained:

'I wouldn't have qualified for any grants or anything like that at the time, and I wouldn't have been able to afford to go there and pay the mortgage, so I kind of parked that on the shelf for a while'.

However, when George found himself unemployed, he was afforded the opportunity to pursue HE as he was able to avail of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA). That allowance, coupled with the financial security provided by his previously amassed economic capital provided him with the means to enter the field of HE and accrue the cultural capital that he had previously sought, but had been unable to obtain. For George, the attainment of a degree is important. This is partly to dispel the perception that prevails regarding persons employed in the building trade:

'I think you're met with a certain stereotype you know, when you say you're in construction, d'you know, like: '*that fellow's as thick as a brick!*' (laughs)'

But it is also apparent that accruing cultural capital and getting a degree is important for George's sense of his positioning in his social network as he shared with me how he perceived himself as inferior to his friends and siblings:

'Yes, maybe sometimes I felt like that, especially when all my friends went to college and I didn't. But I didn't do [the course] for that reason, like. I wanted to be learning stuff as well, you know...'

'...and I'm delighted I did the Access course now. All my siblings went to third level, and I was the only one who when I finished [school], the only one who went straight into construction.'

Returning to his progression from the Access course into ITE, George explained that there were several programmes on offer for which he was interested in applying following completion of the Access - a few in the area of engineering, as well as the

ITE programme. He recounted how he was drawn to the teacher education programme as he felt it combined two of his main areas of interest, both of which he had some prior experience: working with materials and teaching. George was keen to point out that his experience of teaching was not in the formal classroom-setting, but on the construction site where he was responsible for training non-national workers in order for them to receive their safety and quality certification:

‘I was a foreman and one of my jobs was that I’d be training guys say to drive machines. And I really liked being in that kind of instructor role like, yes, I always liked that’

But while George’s habitus exemplifies a good degree of fit with the field of HE, it is important to note that this has not been without difficulty. George told me that the transition from first year to second year was the hardest part of the programme for him, as that was when they began to look more at the theoretical side of teaching. He explained how:

‘...reading academic writing was a big step up. And of course, I’m still going to the dictionary, looking things up, but I still love it, like.’

What is also notable throughout George’s narrative is his heightened capacity for reflexivity, defined as ‘the systematic exploration of the unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:40). This is evident in his capacity to move beyond a restrictive reading of the benefits of the ITE programme as being only concerned with preparing students to enter the teaching profession. George explained how the educational studies element has had an impact on him that goes beyond meeting requirements of the programme:

‘Like [learning about] Maslow’s *hierarchy of needs* - and his concept of *self-actualisation*. I think it’s probably one of the most important things I’ve ever heard in my life. It’s just changed my whole outlook on things, you know. Becoming all you can be... it really has been influential for me. It has filtered into other aspects of my life too, d’you know?’

This reflexivity is also apparent when George talked about how he enjoys being a student, and it is clear that he has an informed understanding of ‘learning’ in its broadest sense:

‘You’re never finished learning like. There’s just something about picking up new information, or a new skill. It doesn’t always have to be something out of a book.’

But having gained entry, how has George negotiated his way within the field of HE? I have referred earlier to how George ‘strategised’ in order to accumulate the dominant capital (economic) of the field he previously inhabited. In recounting how he manages his life as a student, it is apparent that although ‘the game’ (Bourdieu, 1977:164) and the field in which he finds himself are different, George employs similar tactics in order to succeed: here we see evidence how the ‘same schemes of action [are transferred] from one field to another’ (Bourdieu, 1984:168). In Bourdieusian terms, George has an evolved habitus which exhibits a high degree of agency, and this enables him to respond to the very different demands of this new field. Bourdieu highlights that the habitus is a ‘strategy-generating principle [which] enabl[es] agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing circumstances’ (Bourdieu, 1977:72). George strategises in order to successfully negotiate the field of HE: he told me how he never misses a class and has his coursework completed and submitted ahead of time. He recalled the one occasion where he didn’t finish an assignment until the submission date and the distress which that caused him:

‘Like once ever - I let a project run late on me. Now I still handed it up on time, but I just finished it an hour beforehand, you know. And it was like - do you know that feeling you get if you have to be somewhere, and you’re rushing and you’re stuck in traffic? - like that kind of feeling - and I can’t stand it.’

George recounted how in the summer between the end of second year and the commencement of third year, he completed a large piece of coursework and how this lessened considerably the pressure during semester one. As well as providing an insight into his organised approach to academic work, his account allows us a glimpse of how George is able to use social contacts in order to obtain vital information (about the game); and importantly how he then employs that information to obtain a positional advantage in the field:

‘Like last year, I picked out what I’m going to do for my thesis. I was talking to a third year and he told me we’d be doing a mini essay this year to prep you for the thesis. And the Lecturer said that if there was something in particular you had in mind [for the thesis], you could do the essay around that. So I knew I had that essay coming up this year, so I got that done during last summer. That took all the pressure off the first six weeks. All the others were down the Library, cramming it in; as well as doing everything else. We’re doing more psychologists this year, and it’s just so much more enjoyable learning it when you hadn’t that extra pressure.’

But this is not to suggest that George's strategising or positioning has impacted negatively on his relationship with his peers. He gets on well with his classmates, and he told me that there are five classmates whom he anticipates he will remain in contact with after finishing, and he sees these as being important supports for him in the future and vice versa. Positionally, he clearly aligns himself alongside other mature students, suggesting that their collective dispositions are broadly similar and that as a cohort, they bring benefits to the field:

'I think it's really great, like, having older participants - I think we do bring a lot of the younger guys with us. We turn up for class every day like, and it has a good effect within the group, like'

George had recently married and he explained that consequently, he wasn't interested in going out socially with his class peers, apart from class nights out at the end of a semester, as these were good 'for blowing off steam' after assignments and exams. He has a good circle of friends outside of college and these are all supportive of his decision to return to education.

So far, we have looked at George's entry into the field and his experience of the field of HE. In turning now to look at his negotiation of the second of the fields - that of the TP, there is further verification of how well he 'belongs' in the field and of how he exchanges one form of capital for another - using his social capital to help accrue cultural capital. At the point when I first met George, he was mid-way through the third year of the programme. He was preparing to go out on his first SP, and he was really looking forward to it:

'So you learn all the psychology and methodology - although you're never finished learning, like - and you get a bit of practice, and you go on a visit to the school, and it's all slowly building up, building up. And we've known this time was coming for so long and we're ready for it now, yes, ready for it now...'

When prompted to recall how he felt about his experience of being in a school and in a classroom during the non-teaching placement some months earlier, George told me that he was very comfortable there. Acknowledging that there was an expected way of behaving in that setting which was different to that which was the norm in the HEI setting we get a sense of George's knowledge of the importance of embodied capital in successfully navigating this different field in the role of 'teacher' rather than 'student'. He indicated that his manner and dress as well as his maturity would have

been important factors in this adaptation, and he recognised how these impacted on both staff and pupils' perception of him:

'Like this is the way I usually dress - jeans and t-shirt. But it's amazing - once you put on your professional dress, it's almost like putting on a mask - you just go into another kind of role like, almost like you're playing a different part. And when they [pupils] see you coming in dressed like that - they see you as the teacher, and even - some of them even thought I was an Inspector or something!'

I met George for a second interview at the beginning of his fourth year in order to hear about his SP experience. He described it as a 'great experience' even though he felt nervous the first day. He acknowledged that the support of the teachers was instrumental in helping him settle in: 'they show you what you should and shouldn't be doing, so it's very easy to get into the rhythm of it then, d'you know'. Social capital comes into play in his selection of school for his placement: 'I would have known a few of the teachers there', the school was well managed and had minimum discipline problems. He reflected that this was a contributing factor in the success of his placement:

'It was a really good school too, and I suppose that makes a difference. I mean there are a few inner city schools and they would be a different ball game if you know what I mean. But where I went, it's a really good school.'

It is clear from George's account that he quickly settled in to the school, and developed a good relationship with his co-operating teachers; and he attributed this to the fact that he was a mature student:

'I'd a good rapport with them because I'm that bit older, and in fact, I was actually older than a couple of them'.

Bourdieu states that 'the self-assurance given by the certain knowledge of one's own value ... is very closely linked to the position occupied in social space' (Bourdieu, 1984:204). George clearly has a sense of his own value and he positions himself closely to the teachers, despite being a student. George adapted effortlessly to this second field and he 'fits in' well, and uses the experience to accrue further social capital. This is clearly evidenced in his account of a particular event that occurred during his placement. He recounted how he had noted that there was a piece of equipment in one of the classrooms - 'it was left over to the side', and he enquired with one of his co-operating teachers whether he could use it in conducting his

classes. The teacher responded that he hadn't used it himself as he was unsure of how to. George explained to me that this was an item that he himself had used regularly in college and that he was quite au fait with it. He told me:

'So one day, I gave them [the teachers] a demo on how to use it. When the teacher had said to me that he hadn't a clue how to use it, I just said to him that I could show him, if he liked. Then on the day that I was to do the demo, that teacher mentioned it to another colleague, and he said he'd like to come in and watch it as well. So I did it and I went through a few things with them, explained the workings, and it was grand. And now, I'm not saying this in a cocky way like, but that was one of the highlights of my time there - being able to show *them* something, like, you know'.

I have indicated previously that George's reflexivity is a feature of his habitus; and imbued in this is a perception of his position in the field. Having acquired both social and cultural capital from his undergraduate studies, he sees this as only the beginning:

'Like I wouldn't be afraid of trying something, like even now, and I haven't said this to anyone else; I'll definitely go teaching like, but then I'd like to go on and do my masters. And I don't really know where it's going to stop, I want to keep learning, up-skilling myself.'

In drawing this re-presentation of his story to a close, I leave the final words to George because these illustrate in a particularly powerful way his 'meaning of the world to which [his] story refers' (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995:156). That 'meaning' provides us with an insight into a reflexive habitus which has the capacity not only to identify his current position in the field, but the position of that field relative to other fields; and how agency enabled a possibility to become a reality that has changed his entire life course:

'Like before I started [the Access], the postman was retiring in our village, and my father said to me: 'that job's there now if you want it'. And I was half thinking about taking it, I was. And I do often think about it now, when the pressure is on with coursework and that - I'd be thinking that if I was sitting there in that postman's van on a wet rainy day, like, waiting for the rain to stop to get out and deliver a letter - I'd say I'd have regretted it for the rest of my life.'

6.3.2 Monica: A habitus ‘*Adjusting*’ in the field

I have selected Monica, a twenty-two year old in the third year of her ITE programme as an example of a habitus ‘*Adjusting*’ to the field. As an ‘adjustor’, Monica provides insights into how habitus is both a ‘product of history’ as well as an ‘open system of dispositions’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:133) which is continuously affected by and responsive to the conditions of the field in which it finds itself. Unlike George who was a ‘fish in water’ (ibid:127) from the outset; Monica’s initial experience was very much that of a fish *out of* water. However, despite this initial experience, her habitus has altered, and consequently, so too has her position in the field. Thus Monica’s habitus has been shaped through having a trajectory which is comprised of ‘a series of successively occupied positions’ (Bourdieu, 2000:302). The nature of these positions will be considered in detail hereafter.

When we met, Monica began her story by telling me about the route she took to get onto the programme, and how she viewed the Access course as her ‘last chance, my only chance’ to get onto a degree which she had always been keenly interested in pursuing. Prior to undertaking the Access course, Monica had applied twice (in two consecutive years) to gain entry onto the ITE programme via the standard CAO route, but had been unsuccessful both times. It is clear from Monica’s account that she had a strong sense of the capital which was required for entry into the field, and despite not benefitting her in her second CAO application; she recognised the advantage of spending a further year in secondary school in helping her accrue some of the currency:

‘But I’m glad now that I repeated [the Leaving Certificate examination], like. Now, in hindsight, I’m glad that I had repeated because like, I got 100 points extra, so I’m glad that I’d done that.’

Yet, for Monica, the accrual of additional capital wasn’t sufficient to diminish the sense of ‘otherness’ that she felt upon finally gaining entry onto the programme. Bourdieu refers to the habitus as ‘not only a structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices, but a structured structure’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 166). In Monica’s narrative, there is clearly a sense of a habitus more dominated than dominant (Bourdieu, 1984); and thus from the outset, she positioned herself apart from those who had entered the field by what she perceived as the more ‘legitimate’

means: the CAO entry route. This perception comes to the fore quite frequently in Monica's narrative:

'...you *do* feel it, you feel it sitting among 50 or 60 people who have all gotten there with high points - it's like you feel you *cheated* your way through it, that you got there, you know...'

It arose again when Monica told me about a particular event which occurred during her first week as an undergraduate where the entire group were met in one room by personnel from the Registrar's office

'...and everybody had to go up and meet these people from Registration - they asked you all these questions, and one of them was what your points were. And I couldn't understand that - surely they *knew* that already - I mean, you weren't there for no reason? I couldn't understand it, like.'

Monica's narrative account here provides a clear sense of how her diminished habitus was reinforced through the institutional habitus of the HEI which served to emphasise - in a fairly explicit manner - both the dominance and the value of the particular type of capital at play in the field: high points in the LC exam. This was currency which Monica knew she didn't possess in the same quantities as others:

'I found the first week difficult, yes. Especially when you met a new lecturer, they'd all be [saying]: 'well done all of you on your Leaving Certs'...and it was *every* time, *every* time, so it was...'

So for Monica what were 'the social conditions of production of the habitus' and the 'social trajectory' (Bourdieu, 1984:117) which have shaped it? As we have already noted, she had planned to proceed to HE upon completion of her secondary education, and she had her sights set clearly on becoming a teacher. Monica recounted how she went to secondary school in a small rural town where there wouldn't have been a huge emphasis on going onto higher education. However, despite it not being the norm in her school, all of her group of friends progressed beyond second-level; and she is clear that obtaining a degree was something which she had always aspired to:

'I think choosing your friends has a huge impact on it, I really do. But then, I myself, I always wanted to [go on to HE], I always did - no question about it. I knew what I didn't want. I'd done the whole summer job thing, and I didn't want that kind of area - retail and all that. I knew that was not for me, and I knew that I wanted to better myself (laughs) ... I knew I didn't want to be working all my life and still have nothing. I guess I had that kind of attitude to improve myself and that really pushed me on, yeah.'

Monica's narrative here sheds light on her awareness of 'positioning in social space' (Bourdieu, 1984) as well as her awareness of the means by which a move from one position to another is possible; and it also clearly signals her awareness of her own positioning. She described herself as coming from a 'working-class or lower middle-class' background, neither of her parents went on to higher education, but all of her siblings have, even though 'there wasn't an expectation' at home that they would. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977:226) point to the importance of the family in determining how '... access to higher education is collectively felt, even in a diffuse way, as an impossible, possible, probable, normal or banal future'. For Monica, a first-generation entrant devoid of inherited cultural capital, a possible future in HE was self-instigated and largely self-managed, with little intervention from her family. Not having secured a place on the ITE programme and not yet aware of the Access course which had the potential to gain her entry into her programme of choice, Monica had commenced a degree programme in another HEI in a different field of study (her second choice on her CAO application). A number of weeks into that programme, she saw the newspaper ad., applied for and was accepted onto the Access course. She deferred her place on the other programme as insurance against not gaining a place on the ITE programme upon completion of the Access. As the Access course was offered on a part-time basis, Monica availed of the opportunity to acquire additional cultural capital by enrolling on a FÁS course in computers during the day, and explained:

'Well, the Access [course] was two evenings a week and one Saturday a month, so I needed, obviously, to do something else. So, as there would be a lot of computers and so on in the [Access] course, I registered for the FÁS course and did that during the day.'

When I asked her what the benefits of the Access course were, Monica was less explicit in her account than most of the other students in outlining particular advantages. She recounted that by virtue of having been exposed to the rigours and demands of higher education as a result of having completed the Access, in some ways she was more in tune than CAO entrants when she commenced the ITE programme because:

'I really felt like a lot of people were kind of ignorant as to what was ahead of us - in comparison to how I kinda knew a little bit more that way - I knew what was going to be expected. I don't think I had an advantage, but I just

think I mightn't have been as clueless, like... I knew my whereabouts and things like that, you know.'

Bourdieu (1984) refers to how the educational system operates in maintaining a particular social order, and in this regard, Monica's account presents a useful insight on the influence of the school on steering and assisting students towards HE. Monica told me that while her subject teacher had encouraged her to consider undertaking a teaching degree in the area she is now majoring in, career guidance would not have been a strong point in the school. As noted earlier, it was not from her secondary school that Monica had been made aware of the Access course, but via a newspaper advertisement which she herself spotted in a local weekly newspaper in the autumn following her repeat LC year. Monica explained that even though the Access course was in existence when she did her LC the first time, she wasn't aware of it then. She indicated that she probably would have applied for the course at that time had she known about it. I will comment further on this in the next chapter as it is illustrative of the usefulness of employing 'institutional habitus' (Reay, 1998b:521) as an extension of habitus in considering HE choice-making by non-traditional students.

While Monica was absolutely thrilled at having gained a place on the programme as a result of the Access course, her route of entry onto the programme was not something she shared with her peers. She described the relief she felt on discovering that she was the only person from the particular Access cohort who had progressed that year (the other two successful applicants had each deferred their places for a year). Importantly for Monica, this meant she didn't have to divulge her entry route to others because she 'didn't want to be known as the person who came through the Access', as she feared that she may have been 'isolated' as a result of it. When I probed her to tell me more about this, Monica went on to describe again the feelings of inadequacy she experienced, particularly during first year:

'I wouldn't have been putting it out there [that she came through the Access route] because, say, we'd be doing a lot of group-work and I always used to think '*o gees, these are not going to want to be with me, like.*'

So far, I have presented an account of Monica as having a habitus which exhibits the characteristics one might expect of agents occupying positions classified as *Struggling*, and indeed she did fall into this category initially, as suggested by her narrative thus far. However, over time, Monica's positioning changed, due directly

to her development of a better sense of 'the game'. She recounted how her attitude altered towards the other students - 'those with the high points' as she described them. She began to realise that having high points did not necessarily equate with performing well *within* the programme; and she began to recognise that she possessed many of the required qualities necessary to become a good teacher - qualities which she noted were lacking in several of the more 'academic' students. In effect, Monica is developing a practical mastery (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) of the field:

'But now, now, I look at it completely different. I have a completely different perspective...well; it's just that I started to see when loads of different kinds of tasks came up that I would find it easier than other people. Say, even coming to microteaching - I could see it then, so much. Some people who'd gotten the best points cannot do it, and it's like just because you're able to rote learn doesn't mean that you'll be able to do a good lesson. I mean, some people in my class literally cannot communicate!'

This practical mastery means that her stakes in the game (Bourdieu, 1984) have changed. Monica's realisation that having a large volume of a particular type of capital required for entry (LC points) did not convert to the capital required in order to be an effective player in a game whose rules are partly determined by another field i.e. that of the TP. Monica described this as a gradual realisation:

'The first time it was almost like a stab, like d'you know, it felt like '*oh no, I shouldn't be here*' (laughs). And sometimes, you'd wonder like: '*will I be able to do this, because you need to get certain points to get here?*' But it doesn't work that way, and it's only after a while that you realise that...'

Much of the research on the sociocultural experiences of non-traditional students in higher education point to the manner in which many of these students separate and/or compartmentalise different facets of their lives; and Monica's experience is no different in this regard. Since she commenced the degree programme, Monica has lived nearby: firstly at home with her parents, and more recently with her boyfriend. She acknowledged that had she been living in student accommodation then she may have been more likely to get to know the other students on a different level, and 'probably would have been more included that way'. Despite this, Monica was keen to point out that she does 'have a good relationship' with the other students, particularly those from her elective subject group, a number of whom she anticipates she will remain in contact with after graduation. She described how her elective group would 'look out for each other' and cited as an example how, when one

student failed her SP placement the previous year, it was ‘a big ordeal for us because of one of the group not getting back’, and how they all supported the student during her repeat placement - ‘sending her lesson plans and helping her’. While Monica has socialised with her fellow classmates a few times on students’ nights out, she doesn’t have ‘any interest in going out there during the week’ preferring to go out with her ‘own friends’ on a Saturday night. The friends she referred to are mostly friends from school with whom she has maintained contact. Most of these are working, but some have returned to college to pursue post-graduate qualifications.

One benefit of living at home is that it has meant less financial worries for Monica. She has a summer job which allows her to save for expenses which arise over the course of the year. So, having limited economic capital means that she has become adept at ‘budgeting her money well’. When she initially embarked on the programme, she wasn’t in receipt of a maintenance grant, but a change in family circumstances when she was in year two - her father’s hours were cut meant that she became eligible for it then. She feared that a recently announced change in eligibility criteria whereby the distance one resides from the college has been effectively doubled will mean that she won’t get a grant next year. While she has worried about not having enough money in the past, given that she is entering her final year, she considered that being faced with a situation where her grant is cut is less of an issue for her than it might have been earlier in the programme:

‘I’m not even going to think about it because all going well, I’ll be going into my final year and if I have to borrow, I will.’

Moving on now to consider her experience of negotiating the second of the dual-fields, it is notable that Monica makes clear that it is the SP element of the programme which she finds the easiest, and which she enjoys most. Having recently completed her third school placement, Monica described it as her most enjoyable one to date. Recalling how she felt in year one, when she went out on her first placement, she characterises it as ‘scary’ and described how she felt

‘...thrown in there...you kind of feel that you should be sitting down there beside them [the students], rather than standing up there in front of them.’

However, Monica was clear in her conviction that the concurrent approach is ‘probably the best way’. Despite the fact that she had mixed experiences in terms of success during her earlier placements, she was reflective when recounting how

having a placement in a different school each year has allowed her to experience not only different settings, but to experience working along with different teachers. Fresh from her third-year placement, she talked more about her experience there than those of years one and two. She was bemused by the school culture which she experienced in an affluent suburb of a large city, and described the students as:

‘...very *with it*, in their ways, their glamour you know. It was very different to at home, you know... you always got the sense that they were so many more steps ahead of us. They’d have the gel nails - it’d just amaze you like, and the teacher’s would just laugh; and then they’d [the students] come in with the fake tan on a Thursday or Friday morning, they’d be bronzed up to the last, and you’d be there looking at yourself going ‘*well, they weren’t up doing lesson plans ‘til three o’clock in the morning!*’ (laughs).

We get a sense here of Monica’s positioning vis-à-vis the students, and her description of the school culture ‘being different to at home’ points to an awareness of class differences and associated practices. Her reference to the preparation of lesson notes also provides an insight into the operation of the practice element of ITE in which the field of HE largely controls the practice of the students while in the second field - that of the TP.

Reflecting on being three-quarters of the way through the degree, and thinking about her mixed experiences of being out on teaching practice, when Monica surmised that her very positive experience of her third year placement was due to the school and the ‘people that make it’ and I suggested that it may also be attributed to how she has developed her own identity over that period, Monica was initially unsure, but then reflected:

‘I think I have my own opinions now and I would stand by them and that girl I was in first year would have been like: ‘I didn’t get those points’, but now, that doesn’t matter. I think if it’s for you, it won’t pass you - you’ll get there like. I suppose you do get more confident in yourself, in your ways, but you do get a lot of knock-downs along the way, and you have to build yourself up.’

Before we finish the interview, I asked Monica if there was anything else she would like to add that hadn’t already arisen in our conversation. She returned to the issue of how she gained entry onto the programme, and emphasised how gaining that place means so much to her:

‘I’m so thankful for that Access course, like, ‘cause without it there was no other option for me, ‘cause the points were so high like. And also like, two if not three of the girls have pulled out [of the programme], and I’ve often thought that they didn’t really want the course; and I’d often think that there are other people out there who would’ve been disappointed [at not getting a place], and yet they just dropped it like...’

Her final words to me reinforced the point:

‘Some people would be talking, giving out, giving out about all the work...but I never really felt that way because I always felt I was so lucky to be here.’

6.4 Summary

This chapter commenced with a brief overview of each of the participants from the study and provided a snapshot of key aspects of their experience of being a student of ITE. Thereafter, a more in-depth account of two of the participants: George and Monica was presented. Using Bourdieu’s concepts to consider the ‘personal insights’ (Stuart, Lido & Morgan, 2011) imbued in their individual narrative accounts has enabled a deeper understanding of the experiences of these students to be represented. In presenting this interpretation using Bourdieu’s concepts of field, capital and habitus, I have refrained from bringing other voices to the table, choosing instead to draw solely the key works of Bourdieu in this analysis. But as Jenkins (1992:11) states, Bourdieu’s concepts are ‘enormously good for thinking with’; and his work has been drawn on widely by social researchers in the field of higher education. In the next chapter I bring some other voices into the discussion as these are useful in elucidating how the experiences of the non-traditional students in my study have features which are both different and similar to the experiences of those whom have been the subject of research elsewhere. As the concluding chapter, the next chapter also considers the policy and practice implications of this study.

Chapter 7: Implications: ‘...providing the beginnings of an answer’

‘The logic of research is an intermeshing of major or minor problems which force us to ask ourselves at every moment what we are doing and permit us to gradually understand more fully what we are seeking, by providing the beginnings of an answer, which will suggest new, more fundamental and more explicit questions.’

(Bourdieu, 1988a:7)

7.1 Introduction

This research study set out to examine, using a Bourdieusian approach, the experiences of students who have entered ITE as a result of alternative entry-routes put in place to address increasing access and WP in HE in Ireland. A key element of a Bourdieusian approach is knowledge of the field in which the study is situated, and this was reflected in the first aim of the study as a precursor to the second, which attended to the main focus of the research. As outlined in Chapter 1, these aims were as follows:

1. To map the field of ITE in Ireland with specific reference to widening participation
2. To understand how non-standard entry-route students perceive their experiences of a full-time concurrent ITE programme

The findings arising from the research questions which were derived from the aims were presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 of this thesis. As suggested by the opening quote, this concluding chapter will now draw together those findings in order to provide the ‘beginnings of an answer’. In doing so, I acknowledge that while the study offers a particular perspective on how both access to, as well as navigation of the dual-field of ITE is experienced by non-traditional students, this perspective is but one perspective. However, in offering this perspective, like Ball, Maguire & Macrae (2000:142) I have attempted to ‘write in such a way as to escape from closure and determinism’. In drawing together the findings then, the primary focus of this chapter is to consider what insights on the non-standard entry-route student experience can be gleaned from the narratives of nine such students from one field of study in HE. In doing so, I seek to situate the voices and experiences of these students within the broader policy debate regarding how WP is enacted in HE in Ireland. The main part of the chapter is organised around each of the research questions, where key findings are discussed. Following on from the discussion, in the

latter part of the chapter I outline the contribution of this study to the field, set out the recommendations arising from the study and identify areas for further research.

7.2 Revisiting the focus of the research

What does this study tell us about how WP has impacted on the field of ITE in Ireland and within that field, how do non-traditional entry-route students perceive their experiences of a full-time concurrent ITE programme?

We saw in Chapter 5 that the proportions of students entering ITE via the two non-standard entrance routes for which data was obtained has steadily increased since the mid-noughties. However, with regard to mature-entrants, the numbers entering all ITE programmes and post-primary ITE programmes is still less than the proportion of mature-entrants entering *all* programmes across all HEIs. On the other hand, the proportions entering post-primary ITE programmes via the supplementary HEAR is greater than the proportion of HEAR students entering all programmes in all HEIs. This data is important because it provides an insight into how WP policy has impacted on the field of ITE in practice. Bourdieu (1989:44) writes of how ‘the field structures the habitus’, therefore in a study which is concerned with the experiences of students who have availed of WP routes into ITE, knowledge of this nature is apposite. Chapter 5 also provided details of how recent policy developments have resulted in a move towards greater prescription in the field of ITE than heretofore. I suggested that whilst increased accountability imposed by the Teaching Council may be viewed as restrictive on the one hand, resulting in the erosion of the autonomy of the field; on the other hand, in highlighting the nature of WP policy and practice by HEI’s in relation to ITE programmes, the TC has served to ‘normalise’ WP routes into ITE.

While the study was limited in scope to two institutions providing concurrent ITE degrees, it sought to elicit the views of students who gained entry onto ITE programmes via two alternative entry routes; thus it offers a unique insight into WP in one field of study in HE in Ireland. The study sample comprised nine students in total: three of whom were mature-entrants, and six of whom were Access-course entrants. The cohort of Access-course entrants was split equally (by default rather than by design) between school-leaver entrants (3) and mature entrants (3). All of the students were first-generation entrants to HE, and most were the first among their

siblings to attend HE. Analysis of their narratives indicated that at the point when I interviewed them, four of the participants (2 mature and 2 Access-route) could be viewed as occupying a position of *Belonging*, while the other five (1 mature and 4 Access-route) were positioned as *Adjusting*. This finding indicates that the field position adopted by students was independent of entry-route, age or gender. All of the participants were in years three or four of a four year degree, and a number of them had previously occupied a different position in the field. This is important as it points to the capacity for agents to change over time, arising from their habitus, their agency and ability to accrue and transfer capital; and it also points to institutional habitus as a determinant of student success in navigating the field. All of these will be discussed in the sections that follow.

Importantly, the findings highlight that despite the apparent differences between students with regard to their field positions, all the students were successfully (to a greater or lesser degree) negotiating the dual-field that they had entered: in Bourdieusian terms: they were adapting to its particular 'logic of practice'. The detailed analyses of the stories of two participants who occupy different field positions: George, a habitus *Belonging*, and Monica, a habitus *Adjusting*, illustrates in some detail not only the complexities of the experiences of the student teacher who is simultaneously negotiating two fields of practice; it also illustrates the unique insights afforded by using a combined narrative approach alongside a Bourdieusian lens to interpret student experiences.

In common with other studies which have investigated the experiences of non-traditional students in HE (Brennan & Osborne, 2008; Crozier et al., 2008; Heath, Fuller & Johnston, 2010; Keane, 2009a; 2011a; 2011b; 2012; Lehmann, 2012; Read et al., 2003; Reay, 2003; Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2009; 2010; Watson et al., 2009), the findings from this study point to the heterogeneous nature of the student experience. But what are the similarities and the differences between my participants and those that have been the subject of research elsewhere? What follows is a detailed discussion of the findings from this study of the experiences of non-standard entrants in ITE as derived from their narratives, organised around each of the research questions derived from the main (second) aim; but with reference to the insights provided by the first aim also, where appropriate. In the discussion, if there

are commonalities or divergences with the debates that have been raised in the broader literature, these will be highlighted; but the key focus is on the particular insights that *this* study adds to the debate; insights from a particular field of study, in a particular region in Ireland, at a particular point in time.

7.2.1 Revisiting RQ 2.1: What does the study tell us about the motivations of non-standard entry-route students to embark on ITE?

For all but one of the students, becoming a teacher was the primary motivation for applying to the HEI either as a mature applicant to the programme, or as an applicant to an Access course which offered the possibility of gaining entry onto the ITE programme upon completion. Permeating all of the narratives, regardless of whether the student was positioned as *Adjusting* or *Belonging* was the sense of ‘wanting to be a teacher’. For the *Belongers*, this process was characterised by fewer struggles and setbacks than that of the *Adjusters*, three of whom had repeated a year of the programme in order to reach their goal. There are two points of note about becoming a teacher in Ireland that are perhaps unique to the Irish context and which are important to this discussion: the first is that teaching is regarded as having a high social status (Drudy, 2006a); and second, undergraduate ITE programmes recruit from the top 30% of school-leavers (Hyland, 2012). The relevance of the first point will now be looked at, while the second will be addressed in sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3.

In meeting the entry criteria for the Access course, it was understood that six of the students were in socio-economic groups classed as under-represented in higher education. Further details of socio-economic status emerged during most of the interviews when the students referred to their parent’s occupation, and from this self-declared information, it was established that two out of the three mature-entry routes students could also be categorised as belonging to under-represented socio-economic groups. While socioeconomic status or social class was not an issue which was referred to explicitly in most of their accounts, what was implicit in *all* of the students’ narratives was an acknowledgement that obtaining a degree and with it a teaching qualification was a vehicle for upward social mobility, better earning power and a better quality of life. In this regard, it is interesting to also consider the decisions taken by the mature entrants (including mature-age Access entrants) upon finishing their secondary education as these provide an insight into the classed

choice-making processes that has been the subject of research elsewhere (Reay 1998b; Reay, David & Ball, 2001; 2005). Notably, two of the mature students (Steve and Richard), embarked on an apprenticeship when they left school, viewing this as a mechanism to obtain a trade qualification either because they did not succeed in gaining entry to ITE at that point (not having acquired sufficient 'entry' capital in the LC), or because HE was 'not for the likes of us'. For two others (Deborah and Linda) further and higher education was the route taken towards a catering qualification which Linda succeeded in acquiring and Deborah didn't. For Martina, a mature entrant from a lower middle-class background, initially pursuing the 'wrong' degree was a choice which had been guided by the career-guidance teacher as being 'better' than a certificate-level qualification in catering, which she ultimately pursued. And for George, who chose to go into manual work instead of progressing to HE like his siblings, there was always the thought at the back of his mind about 'bettering himself'. For all of these students, the early choices which they made clearly had an impact on their subsequent decision to enter HE and ITE. Indeed, for all of the mature students, their initial qualification/work experience was a contributing factor in gaining entry onto an ITE programme to acquire a higher qualification which would enable a 'vertical' movement within social space to occur (Bourdieu 1984:126). Their choice of field of study also bears out the observation (Evans, 2009; Lehmann, 2009) of the propensity for working class school-leavers to choose more vocational-type and practical subjects at university as these lead to a particular job with known economic rewards, as well as offering upward social mobility; choices which Lehmann (2009) argues is a manifestation of the working class habitus. For all of the students, the specialist nature of the ITE programme largely determined which institution they applied to, thus it could be argued that choice of HEI based on perceived 'fit' by the student (Baker & Brown, 2007; Crozier et al., 2008; Read et al., 2003; Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2010) was a feature of the accounts, albeit that identification and 'fit' with the subject area rather than type of HEI was the focus here. Apart from one Access entrant who was also a mature student, proximity to the institution was not a key influence in their decision to apply to the programme, an issue which has been identified as an influential factor in choice of HEI for non-traditional students elsewhere (Christie, Munro & Wager, 2005; Crozier et al., 2008).

For the Access-course entrants who were school-leavers, classed choice making is also apparent, but in their narratives we are also afforded an insight into the role of the secondary school and ‘institutional habitus’ (Reay, 1998b; Reay, David & Ball, 2001) in informing and directing students towards HE. Monica refers to ‘not knowing’ of the existence of the Access course in a school where progressing to HE was not the norm; whereas for Janet and Rachael, the career guidance teacher was instrumental in alerting them to the possibilities which the Access course offered as an alternative route into ITE. While acknowledging the obvious limitations of drawing conclusions from such a small sample, it is worth noting that this echoes findings from recent work in the Irish context by Smyth & Banks (2012) which similar to previous research in the UK (Reay, David & Ball, 2001; Ball et al., 2002), identifies the institutional habitus of the secondary school as a key influence on HE decision-making by school-leavers.

The choice-making process was very different for students who were not school-leavers. Spotting an advertisement in the local paper was how two Access-route students became aware of the course. For the other mature students, it was largely through drawing on social capital through personal contacts with others who were associated with the field that knowledge of the non-standard entry route was acquired. For two students, knowledge of the process was self-instigated: information was obtained initially from the HEI website, and subsequently by making telephone contact. From a WP policy perspective, all of the narratives point to the issue of the ‘visibility’ of information on alternative and supplementary entry routes to HE, raising questions about the mechanisms by which ‘target’ groups are actually targeted.

7.2.2 Revisiting RQ 2.2: What does this study tell us about the nature of the resources which non-standard entry route students have upon entry to ITE, and that which they acquire and draw on during the course of their studies?

This question provided valuable insights into the types of capital available on entry, how capital was identified, acquired, accumulated and sometimes transferred. As noted earlier, entry to undergraduate ITE in Ireland is highly competitive and within the CAO system, it attracts ‘high points’ school-leavers (HEA, 2007). In a number of the stories, the issue of the meritocratic and ‘high stakes’ (Smyth, 2009:2) nature of

the CAO system of entry to HE in Ireland was referred to: two of those positioned as *Belonging* and four of those positioned as *Adjusting* had previously failed to gain entry to the field via the standard CAO entry route. For the *Adjusters*, the legacy of this continued to permeate their narratives. In Monica's case, the feelings of inadequacy which she experienced having gained entry into the field by an alternative route point to a perception of the WP route as being certainly less authentic, and perhaps bordering on the deviant: '*it's like you feel you cheated your way in*'; while the subconscious practices of the HEI - the institutional habitus - served to reinforce her perceptions of 'otherness. For Richard, not having acquired the requisite capital from his LC, the accumulation of equivalent capital became a focus for him over a number of years as he pursued additional qualifications that would enhance his potential to gain entry. Expressing a similar sentiment to Monica, the Access course was viewed as his final chance to gain entry to the field, but his perceived lack of academic (cultural) capital in comparison to other students is a theme which remains in his narrative four years into the programme; and the pursuit (and accrual) of additional capital continues as he avails of private tuition in order to redress the imbalance.

As noted earlier, six of the students in the study had previously worked in or obtained a vocational qualification in a related area to that of the subject discipline which they were majoring in for their teaching qualification. Therefore, in the consideration of the forms of capital required for the new field, it is useful to look at the different ways in which students' prior experience and qualifications were drawn on as a form of cultural capital in the new field. However, as Swain & Hammond (2011) indicate, capital which is valued in one field may be devalued in another; thus the vocational qualifications and experience which these students held, while relevant in the new field, were not as highly valued as in the field of origin. In this regard, Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device (1990; 1996) provides a useful adjunct to consider how prior knowledge obtained in another field of practice was converted and recontextualised by students to fit the currency required of the new field. It was apparent from their narratives that on entering the field, all mature students considered their prior experience an advantage. However, it was also apparent that the *Belongers* had more successfully identified the differences between this procedural knowledge (a form of Bernstein's 'vertical discourse') and the

propositional form required by the field (Bernstein's horizontal discourse). For each of the three mature students positioned as *Belonging* (one of whom was an Access-route entrant), recognition of this enabled the necessary conversion to occur. In contrast, for Martina, one of the mature students positioned as *Adjusting*, a perceived lack of recognition by the HEI of the value and relevance of her previous qualification was a theme which prevailed in her narrative and was a source of continuous conflict for her: '*the programme is just too academic*'; and for another, the initial feeling that his prior qualifications would afford him a head-start was replaced by a gradual understanding that the particular demands of the programme were '*very different to anything [he'd] done before*'.

Six of the nine students in the study had undertaken an Access course, and for all of these, the course was an opportunity to acquire additional cultural capital. It is interesting that the *Adjusters* all referred to the competitive nature of the Access course whereby the realisation that the number of students seeking places via the Access-route outnumbered the places available made it yet another high-stakes experience for them. The key benefit of undertaking the Access course as articulated by all the students was that it equipped them with the academic 'know-how' necessary for third-level – in other words, the capital of value in the field. Being introduced to the art of 'academic writing' was constantly mentioned as particularly beneficial, a finding which is consistent with a recent Irish study by Keane (2011b) and by Lehmann (2012) in the Canadian context. However, whereas in my study those positioned as *Belonging* expressed a similar sentiment to that which was identified by Murray & Klinger (2012:121), whereby graduates of Access-type programmes consider themselves having 'an edge' over other students, this was not the case for those positioned as *Adjusting*. While all of the Access-route *Adjusters* noted the benefits of the academic preparation afforded by the course, this did not extend to their viewing of themselves as being 'at an advantage' (Keane 2011b:713) compared to standard entry-route students. This was illustrated vividly in Monica's account where she refers to not disclosing her entry-route lest the other students reject her from their (work) groups; and again in Deborah's feeling that '*...they're not going to want me in their group*'. From a policy perspective, it is important to note that the presence and support of the Access Officer was mentioned by *all* Access-route students as an important resource for students. In both HEIs, it was

clearly the case that the role of the Access Office and the interest of the personnel therein extended beyond the provision of the Access course; and this was valued by students even though some of them chose not to draw on the supports offered.

Family support was identified by both *Belongers* and *Adjusters* as an important resource in helping them navigate the field once they were there, despite there being no family history or expectation re progression to HE. However, a thread running through all of the narratives was that while family support was acknowledged as important, the extent to which the students shared their experiences of their ITE world within their home environment was limited. Indeed, only one student – Janet (positioned as *Belonging*) refers to her mother’s assistance in helping her fill out her CAO application form; and her narrative suggested a greater amount of interest and involvement by her family throughout the programme. For the other students, college-life was viewed and largely enacted as separate from everyday life, similar to previous research on non-traditional entrants (Christie, Munro & Wager, 2005). This is summed up in Linda’s assertion that she didn’t talk about the pressures of coursework or SP preparation while at home as her parents and siblings ‘*just wouldn’t get it*’; and is conveyed by Steve when he refers to his parents acceptance of all the time he spends studying, but never engaging in any meaningful discussion regarding the academic work which he is doing.

7.2.3 Revisiting RQ 2.3 & 2.4: What does this study tell us about how non-standard entry route students describe their experiences of each of the dual fields which they encounter, and how do they position themselves relative to others whom they encounter in each of the fields which they experience during the course of their programme of study?

I have chosen to discuss the findings from these questions together as they overlap with each other. Both questions pertain to the field experiences of the students which are the main focus of the study, and as expected, this is where the greatest distinction between those *Belonging* and those *Adjusting* emerged. While acknowledging that the experiences of individual students situated within each segment of the field also differ from others positioned therein, for ease of presentation, I will discuss each group separately (although there are a few occasions where they are taken together to maintain continuity).

7.2.3.1 *Belonging*

An important and defining feature within the narratives of all of the students who are positioned as *Belonging* is that they all regard their entry-route as valid and normal. None of these students distinguish themselves as any different to other agents (students) in the field, and this is very apparent in their narratives regarding their experiences of each of the fields which they are required to negotiate. In all of their accounts, there is a strong sense that they have identified the particular ‘logic of practice’ of the dual-field concurrent ITE programme which they are undertaking: they have ‘a sense of the game’ (Bourdieu, 1977). A clear sense of ‘fitting in’ is evident in the *Belongers’* perceptions of themselves as well as their perceptions of how others view them; and this is summed up by Linda, a mature entrant, when she tells me ‘*there was never any issue about being a mature student, I think I was seen to be the same as everyone else. I think I am the same as everyone else*’.

Research in the UK context (Crozier et al., 2008; Reay, 2003; Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2009; 2010; Thomas, 2002) points to how institutional habitus concerns not only hierarchical positioning of the HEI, but is also to do with issues such as ‘curriculum offer, organisational practices, and less tangible, but equally important, cultural and expressive characteristics’ (Reay et al., 2010: 109); characteristics which are manifested in the transmission by the HEI of what is ‘valued’ in the field. Notably, and without exception, it was apparent in the narratives of all the students (both those *Belonging* and *Adjusting*) that what was ‘valued’ in the field of ITE (and this was not institution-specific) was the capacity to achieve not only academic excellence in their HEI studies, but excellence in the practicum placement. In terms of how this impacted on students, it is also notable that they all, without exception, commented on the heavy workload associated with the concurrent ITE degree, characterised by high contact hours and a large number of coursework assignments. It would appear that this was translated into the prioritising of academic work over the social by both *Belongers* and *Adjusters*, a feature more often associated with ‘elite’ institutions in the UK (Reay et al., 2009). It remains to be seen whether the changes in the field (discussed in Chapter 5), encompassing even greater specification of learning outcomes by the Teaching Council will impact negatively or positively on this aspect of concurrent ITE programmes going forward.

With this prioritising of academic work came a preference for working individually, a feature common to other studies regarding non-traditional students' academic practices (Christie, Munro & Wager, 2005; Stuart et al., 2011). However, when this is looked at closely within the two categories, it is possible to see different reasons for this preference emerge. Certainly for George, who refers to his preference for working independently on several occasions throughout the interviews, working alone means that he has more control over the work and thus more control over the grade achieved. For all the *Belongers*, performing well academically as well as in their school placements is a priority. This is not to imply that negotiating the field in this manner was always straightforward and easy for those *Belonging*, as some accounts convey. But within their accounts of how difficulties were overcome, we get a glimpse of the importance of individual agency in dealing with the challenges presented by this new field, affording us an insight into habitus transformation. Both Linda and Steve were initially unsure of the standard required, and Linda talks of '*probably doing too much in first year, I didn't know what the standard was*' while Steve buckled under the pressure of the first major 'education studies' assignment. By year three, there was a strong sense in the accounts of all of the *Belongers* that they were on top of their work. Achieving success in their studies provided them with the habitus affirmation they required, thus motivating them to excel even further, and acquire more cultural capital along the way; illustrating that 'capital begets capital' (Watson et al., 2009:679).

The sense of 'fitting in' was articulated very clearly by students when they were telling me about their SP experience. We saw ample evidence of this in George's account presented in Chapter 6 – he took on the role of teacher easily and in his interactions with the teachers, he was on a par with them. This ease was also apparent in the accounts of the other *Belongers*: all of them recounted stories of the positive relationships which they had with their co-operating teachers while on SP, and their accounts of being in the classroom indicated a high level of comfort with being in the role of 'teacher'. While all of the mature students positioned as *Belonging* suggested that their age was an important part of this, the ease was also evident in Janet's (a school-leaver) account when she recounted how much she enjoyed the social interaction with other teachers in the school during her

placements, and how she wasn't daunted when the co-operating teachers '*treated you as one of them and let you get on with it*'.

Their awareness and reflexivity of the dual-field in which they are situated, as well as of that field within other fields, is another feature which presents more strongly in the accounts of those positioned as *Belonging*. This is manifested in Janet's recounting of the staffroom discussions on the changing nature of the teaching profession which she engages in with teachers while on placement. In George's narrative, an awareness of external perceptions of where the HEI is positioned within the broader HE landscape is articulated when he refers to the strong emphasis on the achievement of high academic standards within the programme: '*yes, I think there is that perception that we (the institution) might be looked down on because we're a (names type of HEI), and maybe that's why there's that push to drive us a bit harder*'.

7.2.3.2 Adjusting

While each of the students who are positioned as *Adjusting* has had differentiated experiences of the dual-field which they now occupy, there are a number of features which are common to their narratives. For most of these students, entry into the programme was not straightforward, often encompassing a longer and more challenging path to get there. Christie et al. (2008:579) suggest that for non-traditional students, 'learning to be' a student is 'bound up with the very particular nature of the[ir] pathways to higher education'. There is ample evidence of this in the narratives of the school-leaver Access students positioned as *Adjusting*, manifested in their non-disclosure of their entry-route. In Chapter 6, we got a distinct sense of Monica's relief on learning of the deferral of their places by the other two Access students: their non-presence meant that she wouldn't be '*found out*' as '*the person who came through the Access*'. When her entry route was finally shared with her peers, towards the latter part of their programme, Rachael tells me that '*none of them knew what that [the Access Course] was*', which again highlights the need for greater visibility and normalisation of alternative entry-routes by HEIs.

Another prevalent feature of the narratives of students positioned as *Adjusting* is the strong determination to succeed, often in the face of failure. Three of the students

had experienced repeated failure in their school placements, but for each of them, not completing the programme was not an option. In their accounts of taking a year out, undertaking a successful SP placement and then returning to join a new year-group, we see evidence of the type of resilience and determination identified elsewhere as important determinants of HE success among non-traditional students (Clegg, 2011; Watson et al., 2009). Deborah, a mature Access-route student who had successfully passed her repeat-SP placement and was also faced with having to retake a third-year paper, tells me how despite wondering ‘*will I ever get this done?*’ she had a clear conviction that she would complete: ‘*at the same time, at the back of my head I was thinking: I’m going to finish, I’m **definitely** going to finish*’.

Unlike those positioned as *Belonging*, the preference for working alone among the *Adjusters* would appear to stem from a self-reliance borne out of necessity, whereby previous educational experiences and achievements were largely self-managed, coupled with what Crozier et al. (2008) identify as a lack of academic self-confidence. We saw both facets articulated clearly in Monica’s narrative in Chapter 6, and it is echoed by Rachael’s: ‘*I just do my own thing and get on with it*’. Indeed, inherent in the accounts of all of those positioned as *Adjusting* was the sense of ‘getting through’ the programme: unlike those *Belonging* who sought to excel, the *Adjusters* were content to complete: they are ‘adjusting their expectations to their chances’ (Bourdieu, 1984:473). Martina, a mature-entrant is most vocal about the highly competitive nature of the programme and cites this as the reason why she prefers to work alone: she is not interested in competing to be the best; she just wants to do *her* best.

Non-traditional entrants may have much lower entry qualifications than the norm and may feel intimidated by the HE culture, often unsure and unwilling to avail of supports available (Crozier et al., 2008). Deborah, a mature Access-route student struggled with one of her academic subjects but was reluctant to seek help from her peers or draw on the support provided by the Access Office, even though she realised that there have been times when she would have benefited from support: ‘*Like, I do everything on my own, and sometimes I think I should ask for assistance*’. But habitus transformation is possible, and as noted by Lehmann (2012) individual agency is an important aspect in accepting or rejecting experiences which could

serve to facilitate the transformation process. For Richard, another mature Access-route student, recognising that academic support was available and proactively accessing it was an important part of moving out of the 'struggling' realm, a factor which Christie et al. (2008:574) identify as an important step towards 'significant learning' in the new HEI for non-traditional students. From a policy perspective, it must be noted that for students from both sites, there was an acknowledgement that support was easily accessible if required and that lecturers were 'approachable' and available to support students.

In my study, there was some evidence of the segregated behaviour of mature students which has been noted elsewhere (Keane, 2009a; Stuart et al. 2011), but it would appear that the manifestation of this among the *Adjusters* in this study arose from students being required to take a year out of their academic studies to repeat their SP, and gravitating towards each other on their return. Perhaps these students felt intimidated, but it would appear that this arose from having to join a new cohort, rather than being intimidated by a dominant middle-class culture in the HEI as reported elsewhere (Christie, Munro & Wager, 2005; Keane, 2011a). Indeed, in general, mature students in my study (both *Belongers* and *Adjusters*) reported having a good relationship with other classmates – but perhaps this is a function of the relatively small class sizes which is a feature of ITE. At the same time, for both groups, there appeared to be relatively little engagement in HEI-based social activities. Only one student narrative – Janet's (positioned as *Belonging*) pointed to any involvement of note in broader college activities. When I explored this with the other students, a key reason cited was the lack of time because of the heavy timetable and workload associated with the programmes; however, the mature students (across both positions) referred to a preference for maintaining their existing social networks rather than seeking to build new ones in the HE environment. Notably, it was only among the *Belongers* that reflexivity on the shortcomings of adopting this stance was remarked on.

7.3 How does this study contribute to knowledge?

Examination of the experiences of students who have entered ITE via non-standard entry routes is important in the Irish context. Since the mid-nineties, WP has been a policy focus for HE. While a number of studies have been conducted which examine

participation in HE in quantitative terms (Clancy, 1996; 2001; O’Connell et al. 2006), and in policy terms (Clancy, 2008; Bernard, 2006; Mc Coy & Smyth, 2011; Osborne & Leith, 2000; Skilbeck & O’Connell, 2000); only recently has the issue of the lived experience of non-traditional students in HE in Ireland come to the fore (Fleming & Finnegan, 2011; Keane, 2009a; 2009b; 2011a; 2011b; 2012; Mc Coy et al., 2010). Within that evidence base, there are no Irish studies that I am aware of which have examined the experiences of non-traditional entrants in *one particular field of study*. This study therefore makes an important contribution to the broader policy debate regarding how WP is enacted in practice in Irish HE because it highlights the experiences of students who have entered one field of study - ITE - as a result of WP policy initiatives (Kelly-Blakeney, 2013). Arising from this study a rich account of the experiences of non-traditional entrants on concurrent ITE programmes has begun to be created. As such, this study adds to the knowledge base of the field of ITE as well as the field of WP in the Irish context, and will be of interest to policymakers as well as practitioners.

7.4 Recommendations and future research: ‘suggest[ing] new, more fundamental and more explicit questions...’

In drawing this study to a close, I now outline recommendations arising from the study and indicate potential areas for further research, both of which are informed by the findings.

7.4.1 Recommendations

Data from the HEA clearly indicate that whilst the numbers of students entering HE from a broader socio-economic base has improved, many of the targets set for entry by specific socio-economic groups or via particular non-standard entry-routes have not been achieved. For many of the non-standard entrants in this study, knowledge of WP routes and their eligibility to apply via these routes occurred by chance. It is recommended that from a policy perspective, awareness-raising regarding WP at the pre-entry stage should remain a priority. As regards recruiting under-represented groups into ITE, it is encouraging that the TC have expressed a commitment to addressing this issue, but ITE providers now need to be proactive in exploring how the vision of a more diverse teaching force can become a reality.

At the post-entry stage, the evidence from this study points to a need for WP entry-routes to be more visible, more valued and ultimately normalised. The aforementioned awareness-raising at pre-entry stage is clearly a contributor to this issue; however, better ownership by HEIs of *all* modes of entry is required in order to ensure that those students who gain entry by routes other than the CAO don't feel alienated when they obtain a HE place. In that regard, it may be timely for HEIs to explore their own institutional habitus with regard to WP policy and practice. Allied to this, academic staff development on the issues of diversity, access and participation should be provided as standard within HEIs in order that all staff are informed of the challenges as well as the benefits which non-standard entrants bring with them to HE.

The findings indicate that for Access-route students, the undergraduate experience was enhanced as a result of having completed the Access course prior to embarking on an ITE degree. Post-entry, the supports provided by the HEI via the Access Office were also indicated as important. As the numbers of non-standard entry-route students in HE in Ireland increases, it is important that pre- and post-entry supports continue to be appropriately resourced. As highlighted in Chapter 5, there exists a sizeable proportion of HEAR applicants who secure a place on ITE programmes, but who don't qualify for the HEAR supports. This is an issue which needs to be addressed at two levels: initially at a policy level to ensure that adequate funding and other resources are available to HEIs, so that they in turn are enabled to address the issue in practice, in order that all students who require supports have the opportunity to avail of them.

7.4.2 Areas for further research

In employing a Bourdieusian approach, consideration of how the field of WP is enacted within ITE was a key concern of this study. However, as explained in Chapter 4, the field mapping which was envisaged in the initial study design did not come to fruition, as unfortunately it was not possible to obtain sufficient data on entrants to ITE via Access-courses. This is an issue which will continue to be investigated, as the procurement of that information will add to the knowledge base of how WP is enacted in ITE in Ireland. Further, it must be acknowledged that this study was limited to examining the experiences of one group of agents within the

field - the students, but there are other agents whose experiences and practices within the field also merit investigation. These are the academics who teach on concurrent ITE programmes. Given their key role in supporting and enhancing the HE experience of non-traditional students, their knowledge, attitudes and practices in relation to WP are worthy of examination.

Whether the experiences of any of these students, having entered undergraduate ITE via a non-standard entry-route, is different from those entering via the standard CAO route cannot be commented on, as no comparison was made between the two categories of entrant. This is perhaps an area also worthy of research. Further, as noted previously, a growing number of HEAR applicants are securing a place on ITE programmes but without the HEAR supports, and research into the experiences of this group would also enhance the knowledge base of WP in ITE.

7.5 Concluding remarks

Almost ten years on from the first National Access Plan (HEA, 2004), much has changed in Irish higher education. Achievements with regard to meeting the national targets for participation by under-represented groups have been mixed. This study has investigated the experiences of one sub-field of HE in relation to widening participation, and has provided 'the beginnings of an answer' (Bourdieu, 1988a:7).

The reconfiguration of HE in Ireland has already commenced (DES, 2011a; HEA, 2012a; 2013a), and this reconfiguration will result in significant changes within the field. It is reassuring that WP continues to be a policy priority for HE, as evidenced by the national strategy - the *Hunt Report* (DES, 2011a) where equality of access and participation is one of five key objectives for HE in Ireland for the next two decades. In the very near future, the HEA will publish its third National Access Plan for the period 2014-2016. There is no doubt that ITE as a sub-field and a dual-field within HE in Ireland will continue to be both impacted by the changes that are afoot, as well as responsive to the challenges which those changes might bring. Thomson (2008:78) writes of how the changing nature of fields dictates that 'new field analyses are always required'. In that regard, while this study provides some answers on how one sub-field of HE and those within it has fared in relation to widening participation, for ITE in Ireland, these answers are but a beginning.

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Appendix 1

Interviewee Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a small research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

I have presented the information about the study in a question and answer format. However, you may have other questions or concerns which are not addressed here. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information on anything. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the project's purpose?

The title of the research project is: 'An investigation of the perceptions and experiences of non-traditional entry-route students on concurrent initial teacher education programmes in the Republic of Ireland.' I am a registered Ed. D. student with the University of Sheffield, and I am undertaking this research for my doctoral thesis. The research project is a study which will look at the views and experiences of non-traditional entry-route students on B.Ed. /B.A. /B.Sc. concurrent degree programmes which prepare graduates for post-primary teaching. In using the term 'non-traditional entry-route students', I am referring to students who have entered concurrent programmes via routes other than through the CAO (Central Admissions Office). In particular, I am interested in hearing the views of students who have entered the programme following successful completion of an Access course, or students who have entered the programmes as Mature students.

Why have I been chosen?

As indicated above, the study is focusing on students who have gained entry onto a concurrent programme of initial teacher education following successful completion of an Access course, or those who have entered a concurrent programme as a mature student. I am targeting students from years three and four of concurrent programmes in two higher education institutions which prepares graduates as post-primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland. I have been in contact with the Access/Registrar's office in [name of HEI] and they indicated that you meet these criteria.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep, and you will be asked to sign a consent form, which you will also keep. However, you can still withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

As I am researching the perceptions and experiences of students who are in initial teacher education, I will be conducting face-to-face interviews with participants who agree to take part in the research. I intend to interview students individually for approximately 45-60 minutes on one occasion in May/June 2011, at a mutually agreed time. The interview will be informal, and I do not require you to undertake any preparation for it. I would like to hear about your background; your experiences as a student of initial teacher education - your experiences of being in third level as a student, both academic and social, as well as your experiences of being a student teacher in the school setting. I would like participants to be as honest and open as possible with their views during the interview. There is a possibility that I may ask you to take part in a second interview with me at a later date in order to clarify or develop points which may have been brought up during the first interview. Should a second interview be required, the timing of that interview will also be negotiated with you.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will be of benefit in informing policy and practice regarding entry routes onto teacher education programmes, as well as policy and practice regarding support mechanisms required by non-traditional entry-route students whilst in the higher education and school settings.

Will my personal details and information which I provide be kept confidential?

Yes. I would like to emphasise that your participation in the study, as well as all information collected about you and any views expressed by you during the course of the interview will be kept strictly confidential. All personal information (who has taken part) will be kept confidential and will not be reported in the doctoral thesis. Information kept on memory sticks and other portable media will be password protected. At all times during the research and subsequent to the research, I will maintain a position of confidentiality in relation to research participants. No one else in [*name of HEI*] will have access to any the information you provide during the course of the interview(s). I would like to emphasise that while this research is being conducted in [*name of HEI*], the outputs of the research will in no way impact upon or affect your relations with the institution.

Will my taking part in this project be kept anonymous?

As I have indicated earlier, this research is being conducted for a doctoral thesis and therefore the responses from participants who agree to be interviewed will be documented and analysed within the thesis itself. However, all research outputs will seek to maintain *personal anonymity*. This means that within the thesis or any academic papers/presentations arising from it, you and the institution in which you are undertaking your initial teacher education qualification will not be personally identified. In order to safeguard your anonymity, when referring to your responses I will not be naming the specific programme of study which you are undertaking, and I will employ the use of pseudonyms when referring to participants and institutions.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

With your permission, I would like to use a Dictaphone during the interview to audio record the interview in order to help me in writing up the information. No one other than me and my academic supervisor in the University of Sheffield will have access to the recording. Following the interview, I will use the recording to transcribe the interview, and a copy of the interview transcript will be available for you to view and to comment on at a later date. The label/file name for the recording, as well as the transcript, will be coded with a reference number, not your name or the name of the institution. Once I have transcribed the interview, the recording will be securely stored by me, and will be password protected until after the thesis is submitted, and thereafter it will be destroyed.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

Ethical approval has been granted for this project by the University of Sheffield, Department of Educational Studies. I have a copy of the Approval letter should you wish to view it.

Contact for further information:

I hope this Information Sheet has been useful in providing you with the relevant information which you require in order to decide whether to participate in the research. If you require any further information, or clarification on any of the issues raised in this Information Sheet, please contact me in person, or via email. I will be happy to respond to any further questions you might have and/or to clarify any issues or concerns that you have. My contact details are as follows:

Ms. Eileen Kelly-Blakeney,
Room 36 Arús Malachy,
St. Angela's College,
Lough Gill, Sligo.
Tel: 071 9135657
Email: ekelly@stangelas.nuigalway.ie

My research supervisor for the study is Dr. Simon Warren, and his contact details are as follows:

Dr. Simon Warren,
Lecturer in Critical Policy Studies,
School of Education, University of Sheffield,
388 Glossop Road,
Sheffield, S10 2JA.
Tel: 0044 114 2228089
Email: s.a.warren@shef.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Eileen Kelly-Blakeney Date: _____

Appendix 2

Consent Form

Title of Research study: ‘An investigation of the perceptions and experiences of non-traditional entry-route students on concurrent initial teacher education programmes in the Republic of Ireland’

Name of Researcher: Eileen Kelly-Blakeney

Participant Identification Number: _____

- I have agreed to take part in this research study of my own free will. Prior to my decision to become involved in the study, I was provided with an Information Sheet which outlines the purpose of the study, the ethical approval for the study, and the outputs of the study. I have read this sheet and have been given the opportunity to ask for clarification on any issue(s) which are not clear to me; and I am happy to be involved in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.
- I understand that all information collected about me and any views expressed by me during the course of the interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of the above-named research study by the named researcher. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis, and that I will not be personally identifiable in the thesis and/or any academic papers or presentations arising from the research.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Interviewee

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Eileen Kelly-Blakeney (Researcher)

Appendix 3

Field Questions Guide

Date:

Participant: _____

Open Interview

- Welcome participant
- Put participant at ease with informal chat
- Offer refreshments

Introduction:

- Summarise purpose of interview.
- Recap on outputs of interview as indicated in covering letter and information sheet.
- Reiterate ethical issues – highlighting that information provided is strictly confidential and that it will in no way interfere with the relationship between the Student and the College.
- Both parties sign consent form, one to be kept by participant.
- Briefly outline the format of the interview and indicate that the interview will be recorded and that notes will be taken and check that interviewee is comfortable and happy to proceed.
- Allow opportunity for issues to be clarified: any questions?

Opening Question:

I'd like to hear about your experiences of being a student on the [named] programme, particularly from your perspective as someone who has come onto the programme as a mature student/ from an Access course. Can you tell me about that please...?

Prompt	Notes
Why ITE programme?	
Motivation to become teacher?	
Reaction family/friends re decision?	

Early education	
Choosing/not choosing HE? -siblings going to HE? -other family members HE?	
Post-secondary school?	
If applicable...Access programme? -why applied? -experience of? -any specific benefits? -peers? -mechanism of progression? If applicable...Mature Student appl.? -motivation for applying? -experience of application process? -coming onto programme?	
Recollection of early days on being on programme? -whether changed/evolved? -disclosure of entry route?	
Experience of ITE programme? -views on concurrent approach? -being a student? -being a teacher? -identity development? -which aspect do you prefer, if any? -making the transition between two?	
Experiencer of being a student? -academic demands? -socialising?	

-involvement in clubs/socs/other? -interaction with other students? -experiences outside of college life?	
Experience of being a teacher? -types of school placements? -chosen or assigned? -relationships with pupils ? -relationships with teachers?	
Views of self in relation to others? -seeing self as 'student'? -seeing self as 'teacher'? -changed over time?	

Closing Question:

- (Name), before we finish up, is there anything further that you want to say to me about your college experience that we have not already covered? Or is there anything else you wish to add to what you have said earlier on a particular issue?

Close interview:

- Extend thanks to participant for taking part in the interview and for being so open, honest and forthcoming in their answers.

Appendix 4 – Extract from Analytical Framework Matrix

Participant pseudonym: George			
Research question	Layer 1: Transcription	Layer 2: Narrative meanings	Layer 3: Theorising
<p>Motivations for embarking on ITE programme?</p>	<p>I didn't go [to college] because, like, all my friends, the guys I hung around with, they left school when they were 15 or 16 and I wanted to leave that time too, but my parents wouldn't hear of it. And they were right too, I think, looking back. So they all went straight into trades, so say at the time when I was actually doing my leaving cert, a couple of them were actually going out on their own, starting their own business. So all I really wanted to do at that stage was get out and start making my own money like, so I could go out and have more of a social life, to be honest, you know.</p> <p>I was never one of those people, d'you know, like, some people would say 'I want to be a doctor' or 'I want to be a guard'. But I wouldn't have been like that. I've always just found that as life goes on, opportunities just open up for me and I just</p>	<p>Clear account presented here of choices and motives for those choice which were made during/at end of second-level education. Meaning-making: – social life was more important than education at that time. Plot: looking back from present position, recognising that parents were right in making him stay on in second level</p> <p>Further meaning-making regarding choice –making. Temporality – locating 'opportunities' within events.</p>	<p>-Economic capital identified as important -Family habitus: n.b. of finishing school -Some cultural capital accrued in form of LC -classed choice-making re not going on to HE</p> <p>-Bourdieu : 'not for the likes of us' -social capital – n.b. of contacts in negotiating the previous field which he occupied</p>

	<p>take it as it comes.</p> <p>Yes, but there's luck and fortune in everything. Like sometimes I'd be working on a job and I'd have met someone else through that, you know, I suppose it's what you would call 'networking' now, and it would all just seem to work out for me, getting another job or whatever.</p> <p>There was always something in the back of my mind actually, about educating myself further. Yeah, I'd say every year or every second year if I wasn't doing my own work in the evenings; I did some kind of course.</p> <p>Even before the boom ended, I went to [names university] once and I met with a lady there, she was a careers officer I think, but I wouldn't have qualified for any grants or anything like that at the time, and I wouldn't have been able to afford to go there and pay the mortgage, so I kind of parked that on the shelf for a while.</p> <p>So I met someone who works here and she was telling me that they were starting this Access programme, and she said to me</p>	<p>Moves to a deeper understanding of 'opportunities', recognising role of own agency. Recounting how interaction with others he has met in different contexts enabled him to be successful in previous field</p> <p>Plot: despite doing well in construction, recognition acknowledgement that other possibilities exist. Sense of own agency in pursuing these. Points out that these were not all academic-type course, many were leisure, but some were done in order to up-skill. NB re meaning-making regarding identity of self as a student</p> <p>Context: not equating his pursuit of HE, and embarking on Access as being entirely circumstantial. Keen to point out that HE was something that was explored while still in employment. Logistics of being able to work to pay fees vs actual attendance. Plot: reference to 'parking' is important here as it suggests that this was something that would be explored again. Linking of past events to present.</p> <p>Story of actual transition into HE recounted. Chance rather than choice. But</p>	<p>-Accrual of capital of value in the field which he occupied at the time- courses that would enhance his employment opportunities.</p> <p>-Agency- sought out info on HE -Desire to accrue cultural capital -University rather than IoT explored -Importance of economic capital--- -reflexivity here on field positions: position occupied at that time vs. desired position</p> <p>- Entry to field of HE made possible as a result of social capital – connections</p>
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	<p>'you should do it' because it was an intensive ten week course, as compared to a year-long one, and she said 'd'you know, you should definitely do it, you've got the time and you can still go to Australia then if you want'. So I decided I'd do it, then. And I'm delighted I did the Access course now. All my siblings went to third level, and I was the only one who when I finished [school], the only one who went straight into construction, yeah, so I started at the bottom but I had a good job when I finished.</p> <p>I was thinking about doing civic engineering, that was the other one I was interested in at the time, but I opted for the woodwork, then, so I did, for the teaching course.</p>	<p>aspect of choice-making also apparent. Weighs up benefits to be accrued from doing Access. Time-frame n.b. here – not a long-term commitment. Clear linkage evident here between past choices – comparing himself to his siblings- justification. Acknowledgement of the key role of Access course in gaining entry into the field. Legitimising position in previous field and status of that position – and refers to how movement occurred, and role of self-agency in that</p> <p>Insight here into formation of 'teacher identity'. Teaching was not the motivation for doing the Access, and was one of two programmes which he was interested in on completion</p>	<p>to someone already in the field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -insight into nature of field -agency – decision to undertake Access and why -reflexivity re own position in field vs. position of siblings, and recognition that obtaining a degree will confer parity of position with them -Access course has conferred cultural capital, and George is now in a position in which he has 'choices' open to him
<p>Resources (capital) held at entry and resources acquired during programme</p>	<p>Like when I started off, driving a digger and labouring - I'd have plenty of time there for thinking about stuff. Like some of the machines, you know, they'd have bars in front of the windows and it's almost like being in your own little jail cell; and I'd be thinking 'what'll I do when I get out of here?' d'you know, like, there's an awful lot of monotony in the job.</p> <p>Yes, maybe sometimes I felt like that, especially when all my friends went to college and I didn't. But I didn't do [the course] for that reason, like. I wanted to be</p>	<p>Meaning-making apparent in this account, powerful metaphor used to convey sense of own identity at that time. Constraining nature of experience, sense of not being fulfilled and needing to explore other alternatives. Links up to meanings imbued in account regarding smoothness of transition into HE – sense of liberation, 'belonging' and finally being 'at home' This story links up to later part of story regarding identification of self as a 'lifelong learner', but not realising that until he had entered the new field and navigated it for a while</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -we get a sense here of George's understanding of both the position of field which he previously occupied relative to other fields, and his own position within that field -recognition of how capital can be accrued, and the potential benefits which such capital can bring, as well as possibility of movement from present position to another more desirable position -habitus transformation is a possibility

	<p>learning stuff as well, you know.</p> <p>Yes there was a couple of courses that I was looking at, yes. A couple of things I always loved was woodwork, yes, for sure. And I always liked teaching. It kind of combined two things I like – not that I was a teacher before, but like in my job, when I was a foreman and one of my jobs was that I'd be training guys say to drive machines. And I really liked being in that kind of instructor role like, yes, I always liked that. And there was another course I was toying with at the time, but I'm glad I chose the course that I did, like.</p> <p>Like Maslow's hierarchy of needs – and his concept of self-actualisation. I think it's probably one of the most important things I've ever heard in my life, like. It's just changed my whole outlook on things, you know.</p> <p>Like I wouldn't be afraid of trying something, like even now, and I haven't said this to anyone else; I'll definitely go teaching like, but then I'd like to go on and do my masters. And I don't really know where it's going to stop, I want to keep learning, up-skilling myself. Like if I won the lotto tomorrow, I'd still want to finish my degree. And I'd like to go working, to get the experience of teaching.</p>	<p>Plot: Development of sense of identity as teacher. Draws on stories from past to contextualise decision-making in relation to choosing to become a teacher. Emphasises how role of trainer was enjoyable and own sense of self in that role, different to other duties associated with previous occupation</p> <p>Conveyance here of appreciation of broader benefits of education and learning. Heightened sense of reflexivity – capacity to apply learning to broader experiences</p> <p>Plot: clear development evident in this account regarding how his story has progressed. Transition from a point where money was deemed to be of primary importance (as school-leaver) to where he is now (almost qualified Teacher) and how priorities have changed in that time. Possible futures referred to here also</p>	<p>-recognition that he already has some capital of value for the field of HE/ITE</p> <p>-sense of own position in previous field and how that can be transferred to new field – n.b. of experience</p> <p>-recognition of the differences between fields</p> <p>-ref to Bernstein's 'vertical movement' here?</p> <p>Cultural capital has been acquired</p> <p>-reflexivity</p> <p>-habitus development</p> <p>-Bourdieu: 'capital begets capital'</p> <p>-clear sense of knowing how the 'game' works</p> <p>-has capital, but desire to accrue further</p> <p>-sense of present position and possible future positions available</p> <p>-rejection here of economic capital as being of primary importance – cultural capital has taken the place of economic capital</p> <p>-reflexivity</p>
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<p>Experience of each field and managing transition between fields</p>	<p>So, yeah, I started the Access course and em, I knew after a few weeks on the Access course, I knew how much I was enjoying it, and I decided that I'd like to stay on, yeah. It was almost instantaneous y'know, I mean, even the library here, there's an atmosphere in the library and I just love coming into it. Especially on a windy day, upstairs you can hear the wind whistling like and I'm inside and I'm studying away, and I just love that feeling.</p> <p>Reading academic writing was a big step up. And of course, I'm still going to the dictionary, looking things up, but I still love it, like.</p> <p>So when I started the teaching course, the first two years were actually out in [names campus] which was actually a two hour drive from [names home town] – you wouldn't think [names county] was so big! So I wasn't going to commute four hours every day, so I actually had to move there and that was a big commitment to make like, but I made it and em, I 'm glad I did, like. It was a big change, like, I'd lived in London the summer before I'd done the course. When you're out there, there's only one thing you can do, and that's study</p>	<p>Transition to new field brought about a sense of wanting to remain in this new field. Juxtaposition between previous statement re sense of being confined in digger, and this account where the library space is described as liberating. Metaphor of outside/inside the library used to convey this also. Being in the library is very different to being in the digger.</p> <p>Acknowledgement that the transition was not always smooth, that it was difficult; however, experience is conveyed in positive terms. Also acknowledgement that this there are on-going issues – but the key point here is that these are manageable and worthwhile – experience is framed positively rather than negatively</p> <p>Sense of 'places and spaces' apparent here. Rural location is juxtaposed with large urban area – and identified as preferable.</p>	<p>-habitus recognises new field as a 'meaningful world...worth investing one's practices' (Bourdieu, 1989) -habitus more 'belonging' here than in previous field</p> <p>getting to know the rules of the game and liking the new game that he is in -evolution of habitus is continuing, recognition that this is a gradual process</p>
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Appendix 5- Example of diagramming

