

Research Project Report

Project Title: 'I am what I do'. A Study of Teacher Education Qualification (TEQ) Training in Further and Adult Education In the island of Ireland.

Acronym: SAFETTI

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1. Summary Details

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Title of project:	'I am what I do'. A Study of Teacher Education Qualification (TEQ) Training in Further and Adult Education in the island of Ireland
Acronym	SAFETTI
Total budget approved:	Stg 4000 (approved grant from SCoTENS)
Total budget spent:	Stg 6647.85 (incorporates organisational
Total estimated budget	Stg 11,500.00

2. Project Overview/Description

The 'SAFETTI' research project represents Phase II of the WIT/TEQ longitudinal research project initiated in 2013. It extends the research focus across the island of Ireland building a clearer picture of the experience of AFE teacher professional development and the role of transformative learning in supporting their evolving ideal identity self-states.

The purpose of the SAFETTI research study was to explore how adult and further education practitioners engage in professional learning and development. What are the basic reasons why frontline practitioners seek to develop professionally? What is the starting point for attaining further qualifications? Is it economic stability, self-prestige, possibility for social improvement, advocacy in education, self-improvement? We suggested that identifying the starting point, the predominant driving force, for the adult and further (AFE) educator, is critical in developing a different and fulfilling pathway toward professional development.

The **importance** of the research study is confirmed by the scale of change facing the post-compulsory or further and adult education sectors in Ireland. Educators in the South were advised in 2013 that a Teacher Education Qualification (TEQ) might be required in order to continue working in the sector (Teaching Council Act, 2011). Following publication of a joint Department of Education/Department for Employment and Learning consultation response (2014) and new legislation anticipated in 2015, the General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland (GTCNI) was also preparing to extend its remit to the further education sector.

Broad questions that guided the scope of the project were:

1. How can the teaching-learning environments (TLEs) in AFE professional development programmes be enhanced?
2. How can transformative learning spaces be created to support the participants' evolving professional identity as critically reflective practitioners?

Literature that informed the study was drawn from three focal areas. Firstly, **transformative learning theory** is a predominantly cognitive/rational approach to adult learning emphasising the critical role experience and reflection play on existing assumptions about the world in order to arrive at a new worldview (Mezirow 1991, 2012, Cranton, 2006, Graham Cagney, 2011). Secondly, British government constructivist research on enhancing **teaching-learning environments (TLEs)** suggests that students' perceptions are strongly determined by 'a set of overlapping contexts that comprise of four elements: course contexts; teaching and

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assessing content; staff-student relationships; and aspects of the students and student culture within a particular programme (Entwistle, 2003; Entwistle & McCune, 2009). Finally, **identity self-states** pinpoint a 'motivational self systems' framework that incorporates 'possible' and 'ideal' selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy theory. Three seminal reviews of the literature on teacher identity in the last decade (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijard et al 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008) highlight the importance of and interrelation of notions of identity, context, emotion and agency.

The study uses a **mixed methods design** and **purposeful sampling** (deMarrais, 2004; Roulston, 2010). Participants were selected on the basis that they are teaching within the AFE sector, had completed a relevant AFE teaching qualification and were currently employed as faculty members within an FE college. Interviews were completed in 2015/16 with participants from FE colleges in the North and the South to understand their perspectives in three areas: personal learning, professional development and identity self-states. Participants were also invited to participate from the original TEQ from Phase I population. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study and triangulate the interviews, supporting documentary evidence that provided further insights was collected as the participant felt comfortable. Individuals were also asked to review their transcript and our interpretation of the interview and engage in a follow-up interview if deeper inquiry was beneficial as a part of our member checking process. A workshop held in June 2016 provided participants with an additional opportunity to meet the research team and to review the results from the initial analysis of the data. It also enabled the research team to engage further with participants in order to gain a broader understanding, from AFE teacher perspectives, of the key constructs of personal learning, professional development and identity self-states.

Digital recordings were fully transcribed. Consistent with qualitative methodology, the data was analyzed by the researchers with respect to the research questions using a mix of inductive coding and the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and the modified inductive Framework Approach (Smith & Firth, 2011). Analysis of themes within each category produced the findings that follow.

Results and findings from the study identify how AFE educators experience professional development programmes, and what learning spaces are needed to support their 'readiness for change'. They are presented below under the following headings: i) Personal Learning and Perspective Shifting, ii) Professional Development, and iii) Identity Self-States.

i) **Personal Learning and Perspective Shifting.**

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Results confirm the importance of a personal transformative learning space comprised of direct and active learning experiences, informed dialogue, critical reflection and personal action plans ((Mezirow, 1991, 2012; Cranton, 2006; Graham Cagney, 2011). The majority of respondents reported that changes in their mindset occurred predominantly within the psychological (sense of self and self concept), epistemological (new knowledge or reframed knowledge into a deeper context) and moral-ethical (their values, beliefs and assumptions about the important things for them). Findings also indicated that participants engaged in all three levels of reflection—content, process and premise—but primarily at the content and process levels, with some critical reflection (Mezirow, 1997) happening after their immediate experience of the teaching-learning environment (Entwistle, 2003).

ii) **Professional Development.**

When considering professional development participants reported on the importance of work-based learning models and partnerships in support of post-compulsory teacher education (Husband, 2015). They also revealed critical insights to linking knowledge to their practice, particularly in relation to the elements of professional teaching – that is, the depth of knowledge, skills and understanding of teaching pedagogy and processes, and abilities to communicate these (Coughlan and Graham Cagney, 2009). In addition, the notion of transdisciplinary skills (Skotols, 2006) emerged as a unique insight.

iii) **Identity Self-States.**

Results on identity self-states are similar to those of Conway and Clarke (2003) and Hamman, et al (2010). Student teacher possible selves evolve from being “task based” to “quality based”; and teacher feared selves remain predominately task based. The results also show a strong relationship between personal, professional and situational mediating factors in the formation of possible future teacher selves. Teachers demonstrated that the process of reflection on action having experienced an eventful change in their lives, both personal and professional, was critical in the formation of their evolving possible selves. The question remains as to how to facilitate teachers ‘readiness for change’ as they envisage future possible selves personally and professionally.

In conclusion, this study was about those who are responsible for the frontline provision of AFE and its multifaceted services. Being close to the frontline of a changing educational landscape also offers opportunities to construct avenues for teachers to fully utilise their whole worldview while capitalising on the best of lifelong professional learning and development opportunities. Some educators measure teaching ability by standards that have already been achieved. This view may therefore conclude that learning for the teacher has been completed or at least contained within a particular framework. Such a view leaves no desire, or at

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the very least limited possibility, for professional development. The results of this study (in the final published paper) provides deep insight into the nature of learning in this kind of professional practice qualification; the evolving identity of an individual's 'professionalisation' that can result; and the aspects of the teaching-learning environment that need to be attended to in order to foster this kind of learning experience and set out the foundations for transformative learning to occur.

These insights will inform other educators who are challenged with developing new models for FE teacher education and professional development. In addition, in light of the emphasis on identity self-states (and evolving FE teacher identities) and perspective transformative explored in this study, readers will also gain practical application related to the creation of work-based learning models and partnerships as a mechanism of transformative learning to inform FE teacher learning and development (Coghlan & Graham Cagney, 2013; Lamm, 2000). The need for more research into creating FE teacher transformative learning spaces in professional development will also be discussed. The question remains as to how to facilitate teachers "readiness for change" as they envisage future possible selves personally and professionally.

Key Words: transformative learning, professional development, possible and ideal teacher self-states, professional identity, further education, work based learning

3. Project Implementation

3.1 Aims and objectives, dissemination of outputs

The aim this research study was to explore how Adult and Further Education (AFE) teachers engage in professional learning and development. The key SCoTENS objectives met by the funded project were to:

1. Provide a **supportive framework for collaborative research and professional activities** where both organisations have a specific interest and role in teacher education and professional development, North and South
 - Demonstrated by the successful implementation and delivery by WIT and GTCNI of a complex research project to completion, and
 - The successful submission to SCoTENS by WIT/UU for a further AFE teacher education study on outward facing assessment – SOFA Study
2. Strengthen **inter-professional and inter-institutional** linkages.
 - Demonstrated through ongoing relationships with both GTCNI and the University of Ulster.
3. Explore **collaborative reflection** between AFE professionals, North and South.

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- Demonstrated by the inter-institutional meetings; cross-collaboration of researchers in interviewing North and South; and in the delivery of a workshop for participants in June 2016
4. Produce a **research/position paper** on issues of mutual concern to teacher educators, North and South.
- Demonstrated through several conference papers and a journal article due for submission in Spring 2017
5. Establish and maintain a **project website** which will provide information and resources of interest to teacher educators and to AFE professionals and researchers, North and South.
- Demonstrated by the development and launch of the SAFETTI website <http://www.SAFETTIstudy.com> The website is set to continue to September 2019 and host the results from the SOFA study

Dissemination and PR/Communications

2015

June 2015: Inaugural European Conference on the European Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL), Bridging Boundaries through the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning, University College Cork, 8-9 June 2015. Ned Cohen and Anne Graham Cagney. Pecha-Kucha Paper (Monday June 8: Parallel Session 4) [<http://www.nairtl.ie/documents/EuroSoTLBookofAbstracts.pdf>]

September 2015: Attendance at the BERA conference, Queens University Belfast, 15-17 September 2015: The SAFETTI study was represented by both Ned Cohen & Anne Graham Cagney.

October 2015: Participation at the SCoTENS conference, Teacher Education for Social Justice, Strand Hotel, Limerick 15th & 16th October 2015; The SAFETTI study was represented by both Ned Cohen & Anne Graham Cagney.

November 2015: Further Education Network (FEN) meeting and colloquium: National University of Ireland, Maynooth 23 November 2015: The SAFETTI study was represented by both Ned Cohen & Anne Graham Cagney.

2016: General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland planned conference Professionalism in Further Education. Deferred to early 2016 due to external factors in relation to GTCNI stakeholders in Northern Ireland.

July 2016: Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education, ARPCE, 2nd International Research Conference, Research in Post-Compulsory Education, Harris Manchester College, Oxford, UK. 8-10 July 2016. Abstract submitted for a full paper. <http://arpce.org.uk/events/2nd-international-research-conference-oxford-uk/>

August 2016: European Education Research Association, EERA-ECER Conference, Leading Education: The Distinct Contributions of Educational Research and Researchers, University College Dublin, 23-26 August 2016. Abstract submitted for a full paper submitted. <http://www.eera-ecer.de/ecer-2016-dublin/>

September 2016: Attendance at the BERA conference, University of Leeds, 13-15 September 2016: The SAFETTI study preliminary results were presented by Anne Graham Cagney in the Teacher Education and Development SIG.

September 2016: National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) International Literacy Day Conference: From coping to flourishing: Transformative learning in practice and theory, Dublin City Council Civic Office, Woodkey, 8 September 2016. [Guest speaker Dr Anne Graham Cagney]

2017

August 2017: Submission of final results paper at the EERA-ECER Conference, University College Copenhagen, 22-25 August 2017
http://www.eera-ecer.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Pictures/ECER_Logos_and_Pictures/ECER_2017/ECER_2017_Call_for_Proposals_fin.pdf

WEBSITE

* information related to the SAFETTI study website is in the section above on 'website'. Also <http://www.SAFETTISTUDY.COM>

Journal Publication

* information related to submission for publication of the manuscript/draft paper is set out under the schedule of work section above. Estimated completion of SAFETTI final draft journal manuscript/paper and consideration for submission to an appropriate journal. Spring/Summer 2017.

3.2 Schedule of events/phases of the project

Project Set-up and Management

Project setup and co-ordination including project documentation and PR events planning were completed. The overall deliverables in relation to finance systems including the SAFETTI study website design were impacted by local issues for all parties. However, set-up including SCoTENS project stage payments, confirmation of SCoTENS approval notification, set-up of research partners, suppliers and payment for co-investigator project expenses were all resolved. And whilst the original timeframe was not adhered to the project was successfully completed.

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Project management meetings alternated between Dublin and Belfast on a semi-regular basis. From May to December there were five face-to-face meetings in Dublin and Belfast on 09/02/2015; 01/05/2015; 17/07/2015; 10/09/2015; 24/09/2016). In order to reduce costs and keep the project within budget, Skype meetings, email, telephone updates and discussion formed an integral part of the support for the ongoing project management of the research study.

Research Study Design, Ethics Approvals and Operations

Conception, final design and sign-off of the SAFETTI study as an extension of the original WIT/TEQ Phase I longitudinal project was completed in May 2015. This project has proved to be a most interesting learning experience as it brought into sharp relief the differing approaches to the overall running and ethical set-ups among the partners. Delayed ethical approval for the extension of the TEQ Phase I study was successfully resolved and with the backing of the WIT Ethics Committee, approval was awarded to the SAFETTI study (TEQ Phase II) in October 2015. WIT Ethics Committee confirmation letter (5/11/12) is held by both research partners. (Copy of approval letter is available on request).

SAFETTI web design and set up

The research study site was activated (<http://www.safettistudy.com>) and hosting plus domain registration continues with Blacknight until September 2019. This was paid out of the project funds to ensure the continuation of the website. Ned Cohen was trained by our supplier (<http://www.fierceclever.ie>) in how to manage and edit content etc. The website was an integral part of targeting FE teachers to engage with the study and to promote the study to the targeted audience. It continues to be an important part of the dissemination process for the overall study results and an avenue for engagement with FE teachers on a national level. Dissemination of some of the results of the study were made via SAFETTI website in August 2016. Final results will be posted on publication of the final research paper. Links are to be created to the WIT, GTCNI and SCoTENS websites if possible by Ned Cohen. Finally, the website continues to support ongoing North/South SCoTENS funded research activity and partnerships with the launch in February 2017 of the University of Ulster/Waterford Institute of Technology offshoot SOFA Study (Study of Outward Facing Assessment).

Data Collection/Interviews, Transcription and Analysis

Sixteen in-depth interviews were completed with FE teachers North and South (including participants from the original longitudinal TEQ Phase I study). Participants self-selected and no external sites were involved in the process.

Transcription and analysis of data was completed throughout the period of interviews. A participant workshop took place in Dublin on 22 June 2016 at the

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National College of Ireland, Mayor Street, Dublin. Following an integration of the results from the participant workshop into the existing data final analysis and interpretation of the data, write-up of the draft manuscript and editing was completed to an initial draft stage in December 2016 and prepared for journal submission in Spring 2017.

Audio clips utilised on the website (including permissions) are in the process of being operationalised in Spring 2017. More content and interactive media will be loaded onto the site over the next three years. It is intended that the www.SAFETTISTUDY.com site will continue beyond the timeframe of SAFETTI study (TEQ Phase II) and hopefully extend to a TEQ Phase 111 with the SOFA study.

Write-up and drafting of final report and journal papers for publication

Submission of the final SCoTENS report to SCoTENS was scheduled for December 2017. The draft report was ready but due to the termination of our co-PI's project at GTCNI this caused an unavoidable delay in issuing the final report and signoffs in WIT and GTCNI.

Results from the study have formed the basis for two potential submissions i) Journal of Research in Post-Compulsory Education and ii) Irish Educational Studies.

Final Word

This project builds on previous SCoTENS funded research on developing spaces among adult practitioners for reflection (Mernagh and Tracey, 2012); the comparative study into FE teacher education by O'Hagan et al (2010); and the 2009 study of work-based learning models and partnerships in support of post-compulsory teacher education (McAleavy, O'Hagan and Flemming).

The study contributes to both national strategies by developing greater understanding of the factors motivating AFE teachers to undertake TEQs and engage in further professional development, their experiences of this learning journey and its impact on them as lifelong learners. It will enhance an understanding of how to develop powerful and transformative learning environments for AFE educators. This is important because AFE education plays a key role in facilitating the learning of a broad range of individuals on the island of Ireland thereby contributing to the economic and cultural wellbeing of Ireland. Consequently, it is important to shed light on the practical consequences of examining/outlining current frameworks of what is understood by being qualified in this sector.

Collaboration between GTCNI, Northern Ireland's six further education colleges, WIT's School of Lifelong Learning and Education (including its established AFE partners) together with FE colleges in the South will also enhance connections

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between education institutions on the island of Ireland.

Results from the study will also benefit institutions delivering AFE teacher training programmes; inform current practice in AFE institutions; and add to the discourse on enhancing TLEs in professional development programmes in Ireland, the UK and elsewhere. It will also add to the body of knowledge on the evolving ideal scholar-practitioner identity self-states of AFE practitioners.

We are grateful to SCoTENS (Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South) for seed funding. We acknowledge the commitment we have received for this study from our co-investigators and the support of our institutions, Waterford Institute of Technology and the General Teaching Council, Northern Ireland have given to this study. We appreciate and acknowledge the engagement and support we have received from our participants, in the North and South.

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APPENDICES:



APPENDIX 1

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

1. WIT_SAFETTI STUDY TOTAL COSTS
2. GTCNI_SAFETTI STUDY DRAFT COSTS

APPENDIX 2

REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

1. WIT_SAFETTI STUDY TOTAL COSTS

	Self-funded AGC EURO	Self-funded AGC Sterling	WIT EURO	WIT Sterling	Actual Budget	Original Estimated Budget
OVERALL SAFETTI PROJECT COSTS						
Partner Payment to cover GTCNI costs			900	777.93	777.93	
TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE (also Dissemination)					2897.57	2900
ISSOTL_NAIRTL (AGC) Cork 8_9 June 2015			286.61	247.73		
BERA Conference & Partner Meeting (AGC)_Belfast 17 Sept 2015			46.58	40.25		
Partner Meetings Belfast & Dublin (AGC) 9 Feb 2015, 1 May 2015, 17 July 2015, 18 Sept 2015 (klms 340) Petrol Costs only	400	345.61				
SCoTENS Conference Limerick (AGC) 15_16 October 2015(klms 256)	115	99.42				
FEN Network Meeting NUIM (AGC) 23 November 2015 (klms 304)	136	117.58				
SAFETTI Workshop (AGC) NCI Dublin 22 June 2016			45.61	40.2		
ARPCE (AGC) 8_10 July 2016			640.51	553.61		
EERA-ECER (AGC) 23_26 August 2016			330.4	285.53		
BERA (AGC) 13_15 Sept 2016			681.51	588.97		
NALA (AGC) Guest Speaker 8 September 2016	0				0	500
EERA-ECER (AGC) 22_25 August 2017 estimate			680	587.67		
ARPCE (CYH) 8_10 July 2016			640.51	553.61		
Interviews(CYH)			80			
GTCNI Conference						2500
EQUIPMENT & RESOURCES					787.82	1500
Website development, Design & Training			720	622.23		
Hosting & Domain Sept 2015 to Sept 2016 paid by AGC	55.28	47.78				
Hosting & Domain Sept 2016 to October 21 2019			191.64	165.59		
DATA TRANSCRIPTION					864.11	1000
Data Transcription_Interviews & Workshop						
Block A_234.21						
Block B_105.15						
Block C_204.63						
Block D_456.01			1000	864.115		
ADMINISTRATION					345.6	1000
General Cost Allocation_Project Management			400	345.6		
VENUE COSTS					374.82	2100
Workshop 22 June 2016						
Room hire (National College of Ireland)			100	86.4		
Catering (KSG Catering)			333.8	288.42		
TOTALS	706.28	610.39	7077.17	6047.855	6047.85	11500

2. GTCNI_SAFETTI Project Costs - DRAFT

Travel Costs (Code 01)

Partner meeting (Code A)

Date	Location	Mode	Miles	£ (GBP)	€ (Euro)	Receipt
09/02/15	Dublin	Train		23		N
01/05/15	Dublin	Train		23		Y
17/07/15	Dublin	Train		23		Y
10/09/15	Dublin	Train		23		Y
Subtotal:				92		

Stakeholder meetings (Code B)

15-16/10/2015	Limerick (2)	Car (1)	376	169.2		N
23/11/15	Dublin/Maynooth (3)	Car (1)	226	101.7		N
Subtotal:				270.9		

Participant Interviews (Code C)

07/10/15	Coleraine	Car (1)	114	51.3		N
03/11/15	Castlereagh, Belfast	Car (1)	5.6	2.52		N
06/11/15	Dungannon	Car (1)	79	35.55		N
11/11/15	Coleraine	Car (1)	114	51.3		N
Subtotal:				140.67		

Other Travel Expenses (Code D)

07/10/15	Parking	N/A		2.4		Y
15-16/10/2015	Tolls	N/A			7.6	Y
15-16/10/2015	Parking	N/A			6	Y
23/11/15	Tolls	N/A			6.9	Y
Subtotal:				2.4	20.5	
Travel Costs						
Subtotal:				505.47	20.5	

Project Costs (Code 02)

Website (Code A)

Payment Date	Descriptor				Receipt
17/8/2015 & 8/10/2015 (4)	Website Development			720	Y
	Website Hosting (5)				Y
Subtotal:				720 (6)	

Workshops (Code B)

Subtotal:

Other Project Costs (Code C)

24/09/15	SCoTENS Conference (2)			135		Y
Subtotal:				135		

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Project Costs Subtotal: 135 720

Total Costs (Travel & Project): 640.47 720

Notes

- (1) GTCNI Milage Policy: 45p per mile flat rate. Insurance Policy Confirmation Required. No receipt required.
- (2) SCoTENS Conference: GTCNI payment - draw down from project funds required
- (3) Meeting with Killester FE College Principal & FE Network
- (4) 2 payments due - site developed but delay in payment so not live
- (5) Payment Due
- (6) Costs excl VAT

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