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**An investigation into ITP tutors' understanding of policy and performance, to identify changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the reported views and experiences of tutors who work in the institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITP) sector in New Zealand. This phenomenographic based study focuses on elucidating these views and experiences in order to identify changes that have the potential to enhance tutors' teaching practice. The choice of phenomenography as a methodology for recording and analysing individual viewpoints – and the variation in these viewpoints – is complemented by case study analysis, designed to present a more individualised interpretive perspective.

Although studies have been undertaken on the way in which academics perceive working in the university sector, little research has been undertaken on the way in which ITP tutors understand and evaluate their teaching practice. This research revealed variations in the way that tutors: experience teaching in the ITP sector; measure their own performance; and interpret and use policy to support their teaching practice.

Thirty-two volunteer tutors participated in semi-structured interviews conducted within four ITPs and across four subject areas, namely: trades, business, art and design, and foundation studies. Interview data was transcribed and analysed in order to present the findings of this research, which are presented in two parts.

First, the aggregated views and experiences of tutors are marshalled into five qualitatively different categories: understanding and modelling effective teaching; developing and growing; building relationships; enacting government and institutional policy; and adapting to contextual influences.

Second, the thesis presents case studies of tutors drawn from four different subject areas. Their data was included in the categories of description before being re-analysed and reported in the context of the five categories identified in the aggregated analysis.

The researcher has formulated eight recommendations from the findings. These recommendations are of a long-term nature, and have the potential to enhance teaching practice within the ITP sector.

This research provides new perspectives on tutors' understanding and experiences of working within the ITP sector. It demonstrates that there is marked variation in the way in which they perceive and evaluate their performance; identifies potential gaps in their understanding and in the institutional environment in which they are employed; and offers recommendations for change.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background and context for this research

The latest iteration of the Government's *Tertiary Education Strategy [TES] 2010-15* renewed previous calls for tertiary education institutions (TEIs) to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Empirical evidence suggests that when TEIs are responding to the challenge to improve teaching and learning, the resultant changes appear to have limited impact. Not only is progress slow, but learners are also recording diminishing levels of satisfaction with their experiences of tertiary education (Hurst, 2012).

Further, the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC's) Educational Performance Indicators published in 2011 showed wide variation in the performance of similarly notional ITPs. Peter Coolbear writing in *Alert – Newsletter of Ako Aotearoa* (2011) said: "Perhaps the most surprising aspect of all of this is that, without doubt, the best of our tertiary education is comparable with the best in the world, yet we do so little to lever off this. We do great things for many learners, but the data tells us that we are not meeting the needs of so many more" (p. 1).

Commentators agree that strategies to improve teaching practice involve much more than simply focusing a lens on what the teacher does and what occurs within the classroom setting. The issues to be addressed involve a complex and dynamic tertiary system that surrounds teaching practice. Biggs (1999) states that teaching and learning take place in a whole system which includes the classroom, discipline and institution. A poor quality system is one in which the various components are not integrated, and are not attuned to supporting students' high-level learning. In a well performing system, all aspects of teaching and assessment are attuned to support high-level learning so that students, in turn, are encouraged to use higher order learning processes. This model is supported by other authors (Ramsden, 1992, 2003; Zepke, Leach & Butler, 2009; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2006; McInnis & James, 1999; Krause, Hartley, James & McInnis, 2005; Yorke & Longden, 2007) who also suggest that a system-wide approach is required to improve the quality of the educational experience.

This research focuses specifically on tutors' understanding of policy and performance within the institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITP) sector, for which there is little published supporting documentation. It takes a systems approach to identify changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice, and adopts a conceptual framework to shape the structure and organisation of the research data. This framework is presented in Figure 1.

## **Origins of this research**

In selecting this area of research, the researcher has drawn on 25 years as a tutor, Head of School and Head of Faculty in a regional ITP. Further stimulus was provided by the research that underpinned her thesis submitted in 2008 as partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of a Master of Education. During the data-gathering phase of this research, the researcher interviewed teaching staff from three ITPs who were found to have accrued a wealth of knowledge on their current practice and on ways in which teaching could be improved. In collecting these tutors' stories the researcher soon realised that their perceptions of working in an ITP varied widely, and that further research into the nature of these perceptions could assist in identifying strategies to enhance teaching practice.

In order to undertake the current project with the requisite objectivity, the researcher resigned from her (then) position as Head of Faculty. Distancing herself from the day-to-day issues and problems facing the sector was seen as a cogent factor in minimising the possibility of researcher bias and of any emotional involvement in the particular circumstances identified by her research subjects.

## **Rationale for the research**

The *TES 2010-15* called for tertiary providers to address their policy and practice in a number of key operational areas. It also stated explicitly that improving course and qualification progress and completion rates was dependent on higher quality teaching and learning, and more effective and responsive pastoral care of students.

In order to address these challenges the ITP sector is constrained to focus on strategies to enhance teaching practice that are based on empirical research findings. Much of the current research on tertiary education is generated from the university sector. Although Gumpert and Pusser (1997) suggest that research findings from one tertiary education sector may be applied to another, more reliable strategies may be developed through an in-depth study of current policy and practice within the ITP sector.

## **Aims of the research**

This research project investigates the experiences and perceptions of tutors employed within the ITP sector. Understanding the various ways in which they interpret their teaching roles and responsibilities and evaluate their performance is intended to identify: improved ways of planning and preparing for teaching; new approaches to implementing institutional policy; and more focused opportunities for professional development and for implementing institutional quality assurance practices which impact on teaching practice. The findings from this research generate a set of recommendations for enhancing teaching practice within the ITP sector.

## Research questions

The primary objective of this research is to:

- Investigate ITP tutors' understanding of policy and performance in order to identify changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice.

To address this objective a series of sub-questions is proposed, namely:

- Why is enhancing teaching in the ITP sector important?
- How is educational development perceived to take place in the ITP sector?
- Why are changes needed to teaching policy and practice and to the implementation of this policy and practice in the ITP sector?
- What might be a realistic and possible agenda for change?

## A systems framework to guide the development of this research

The researcher has developed a systems framework to guide the development of this research. This framework or set of organising roles focuses on the complexity of enhancing teaching practice by ordering the various components identified within the literature as impacting upon teaching and learning within TEIs. It incorporates the Māori concept of “ako” (meaning both to teach and to learn), recognising that the two are inextricably linked. The framework is presented as a hierarchical model, although this is not necessarily how it is enacted in practice. Commencing from the starting point of government initiatives, the framework flows through to the institution, the subject or discipline areas, and finally to the teacher. By using an inward and outward flow, the framework shows how various external factors impact upon institutional practices.

The framework is not designed to be all encompassing. Rather, it provides a system that encapsulates the complexity of teaching and learning in today's tertiary environment, and which includes factors relevant to the current research. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) note that any conceptual framework which gives structure to a complex body of information has inherent weaknesses. The way the framework is laid out suggests order, but this is not necessarily so. The relationships between the discrete components are intricate, and components could be located in any number of frames. Staff development, for example, is located in the frame titled *Context in which teaching and learning occur*, but could also be located in the *Institution*, *Discipline*, or *Teacher* frames. Student engagement is placed under *Context in which teaching and learning occur*, but could also sit under *Institution*. If the inter-connectedness of components is difficult to encapsulate in written terms, it is even more complex in operation.

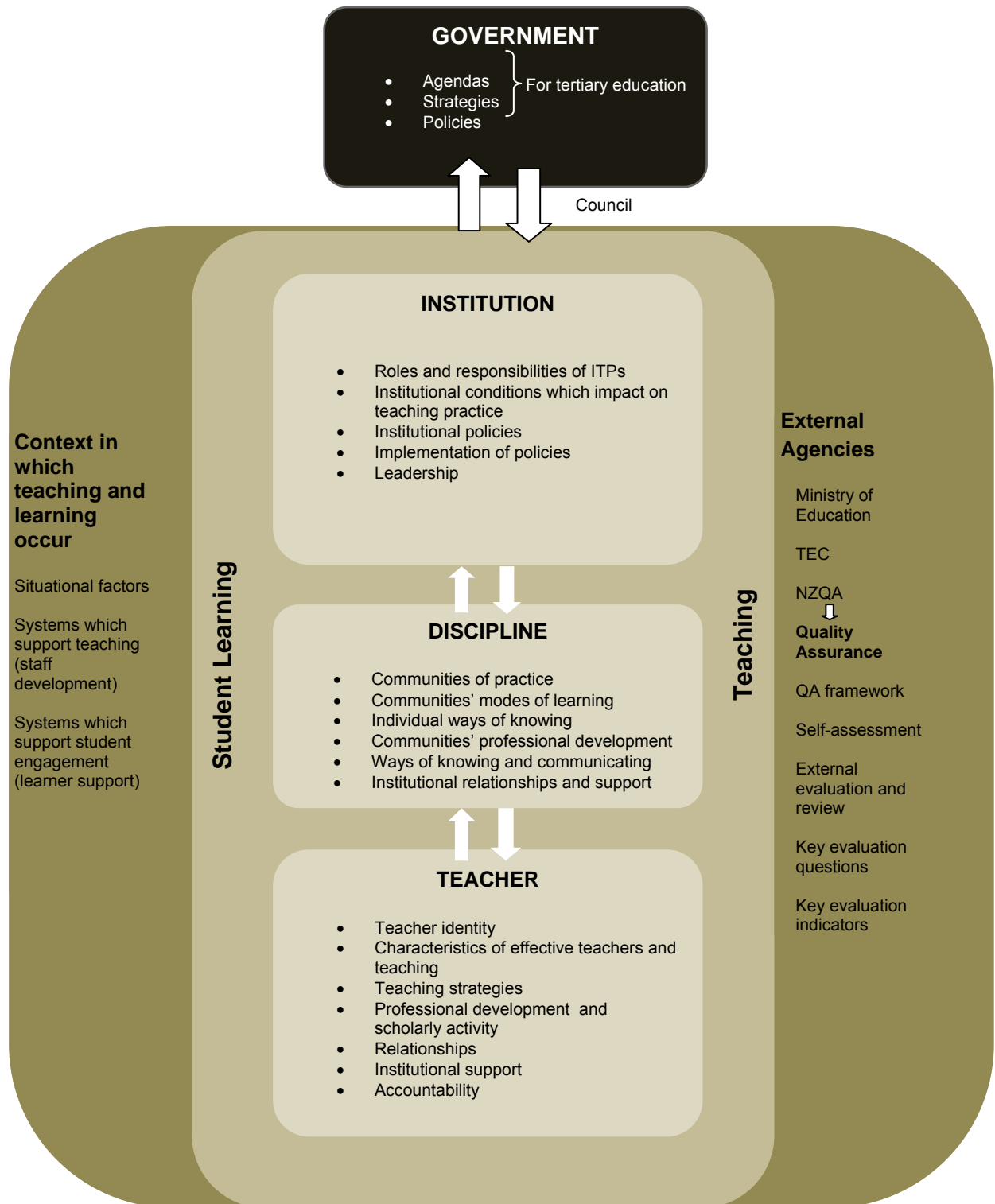


Figure 1: Framework for teaching in the ITP sector

## **Discussion on the framework for teaching in the ITP sector**

### ***Changing government strategies for tertiary education***

A series of reports published in the late 1980s – the Treasury’s *Government management: Brief to the incoming government 1987*, Vol. 1 (1987); *The Hawke Report* (1988); *Learning for life: Education and training beyond the age of fifteen* (1989a); and *Learning for life two* (1989b) – were the first to introduce neo-liberal policies into tertiary education. Of central importance to these reports were the issues of efficiency and accountability (Giddens, 2001).

In order for TEIs to be efficient and accountable, the environment in which they operated needed to change. To improve efficiency TEIs were to be bulk funded on the basis of numbers of Equivalent Full-time Students (EFTS). This move led to the “corporatisation” of TEIs, effectively turning them into mini businesses and changing the way in which they were managed (Olssen, 2002). In so doing, changes also took place to teaching practice and to the roles and responsibilities of teaching staff.

The Education Amendment Act 1990 was a watershed for tertiary education in New Zealand, and established new definitions for the various sectors in tertiary education (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, wānanga, and private training establishments [PTEs]). The Industry Training Act that followed two years later established Industry Training Organisations (ITOs). These developments eventually led to significant changes to teaching systems and practice in the ITP sector.

The *Tertiary Education Review (Green Paper)* released in September 1997, emphasised the neo-liberal themes of accountability, responsiveness and transparency; and sought to increase student participation levels in tertiary education, at the same time limiting and containing costs. The *Tertiary White Paper* that followed in October 1998 noted that TEIs needed to adapt to meet the challenges and opportunities created by: expanding frontiers of knowledge; the changing needs of students; and the emergence of new learning technologies. TEIs would also need to provide students with more timely and targeted information on the nature and intended outcomes of education and training programmes.

After the 1999 election the Labour-Coalition Government signalled a change of direction for education policy. Neo-liberalism with its focus on decentralisation and marketism had provided the basis for education policies through the 1990s, and was about to be replaced by a new political agenda described as Third Way (Codd, 2005).

New Zealand’s version of Third Way was promoted through the establishment of the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) which was tasked with developing a new strategic direction for tertiary education. The TEAC produced four reports between April 2000 and the end of 2001 which proposed a new vision for tertiary education and identified mechanisms to help guide the system towards achieving

this vision. One of the main recommendations from the reports was to set up the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Among its responsibilities the TEC was charged with implementing the Government's *TES 2002/07* and *Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities (STEP)*. A collateral role of the TEC was to advise the Government on policies, priorities and sector performance.

In presenting an alternative to the neo-liberal policies of the past decade, the TEAC proposals were consistent with the general direction of Third Way politics. These proposals, however, promoted a system that was highly centralised and heavily regulated, and which would ultimately have a marked effect on the way TEIs were to operate and on tertiary teaching practice.

These centralised and regulated systems are still evidenced today through the ongoing drive for accountability and efficiency; for managers to be entrepreneurial; and for the focus of applied tertiary education and training to be on preparing people for the workplace (Olssen, Codd & O'Neill, 2004). It is also clear that TEIs now operate in an era of "managerialism" which has greatly increased their level of accountability to central direction and control.

Tertiary education initiatives are articulated via successive *TES* reports. The *TES 2002/07* published in May 2002 was the first statement to identify the Government's priority of improving sector performance. Institutions were encouraged to: engage positively with the soon-to-be-established National Centre of Tertiary Teaching Excellence; build a better understanding of the nature of teaching and learning; develop professional standards; and consider the application of professional qualifications. This Government also signalled its intention to measure the quality of teaching and learning.

The *TES 2007-12* focused on planning, funding, quality assurance and monitoring. The document also signalled the need for TEIs to receive guidance that would support decision making. The new system for tertiary education was to be built around "investing in a plan", highlighting that future investment in TEIs would be on the basis of a negotiated contract. The new investment-based approach carried an expectation of high performance, but also promised high rewards. The Government signalled that assessment of an institution's performance and assurance of its quality systems and processes would increasingly inform investment decisions. In the case of ITPs, performance outcomes were not just related to their core business of teaching and learning, but included a broader range of organisational performance indicators.

In introducing the *TES 2010-15*, the Minister for Tertiary Education emphasised the need for tertiary education to become more relevant and more efficient in order to meet the needs of students, the labour market and the economy. The Government required providers to be more responsive to the needs of industry and students, and to make better use of scarce resources. Enhanced course and qualification results

were expected, higher quality teaching and learning was to be evidenced, and more effective and culturally responsive pastoral care was called for. TEIs were required to be financially viable on an ongoing basis, which posed a significant challenge to the ITP sector. But change did not stop there. This *TES* also signalled the implementation of a new quality assurance framework for tertiary education, focusing on providers' accountability to improve their educational outcomes on an ongoing basis. The Government further specified that in future, reports on the external evaluation and review of TEIs would be published and would contribute to funding decisions. Institutions were feeling pressure from all directions. These pressures were certainly experienced by teaching staff at the coalface, and started to impact on their teaching approaches and practice.

### ***Providers of tertiary education in New Zealand***

The systems framework highlights the link between government strategies for tertiary education and the various organisations charged with implementing these strategies. New Zealand has a range of tertiary education organisations (TEOs) that can be grouped into six sub-groups, namely: universities, polytechnics (ITPs), wānanga, PTEs, ITOs and other tertiary education providers. These six sub-groups cater for education and training to meet the differing and diverse needs of a wide range of students (Ministry of Education website, 2010).

The *TES 2010-15* sets out the Government's expectations of the various TEIs which provide education and training. They are expected to offer quality education and focus on the areas that each does best. In terms of ITPs, this *TES* states:

Polytechnics have three core roles:

- to deliver vocational education that provides skills for employment
- to undertake applied research that supports vocational learning and technology transfer
- to assist progression to higher levels of learning or work through foundation education.

The Government expects polytechnics to:

- enable a wide range of students to complete industry-relevant certificate, diploma and applied degree qualifications
- enable local access to appropriate tertiary education
- support students with low literacy, language and numeracy skills to improve these skills and progress to higher levels of learning
- work with industry to ensure that vocational learning meets industry needs. (pp. 18-19)



## *ITPs in New Zealand*

There are 18 ITPs within New Zealand delivering academic and applied education at all levels, from English language and foundation studies to degree and postgraduate programmes. Owned and funded by the government, ITPs have been a feature of New Zealand's education system for over 100 years. They offer a wide range of programmes including: agriculture, forestry, horticulture and viticulture; visual art and design; building and construction; business; engineering and trades; computing and information technology; nursing; media studies; hospitality and tourism; sport and recreation; social services; arts and humanities; and personal services.

The role that ITPs play in educating New Zealanders both complements and contrasts with that of universities and PTEs. ITPs are encouraged to facilitate students to move on to higher levels of learning once they have gained qualifications at lower levels. This collaboration has been encouraged by successive governments since the *TES 2002/07*. As a result, many ITPs now offer qualifications with guaranteed pathways on to university. Similarly, ITPs have also formed stair-casing arrangements with PTEs, through which students may be transitioned from lower level programmes offered at PTEs to continue their studies in higher level programmes offered by ITPs.

The key perceived benefits of ITP training are that it focuses on vocational areas and has strong linkages with industry associations and other business and professional bodies. These linkages aim to ensure that courses on offer are relevant to New Zealand's employers, and that curricula include current industry practices and incorporate authentic tasks and problems. Teaching practices strive to be interactive and formative. Further, all ITPs are required to have student learner centres to provide students with study advice and learning support, together with assistance on issues such as enrolment, accommodation, cultural adjustment, and personal and health concerns.

ITPs offer varying contributions towards meeting government expectations and supporting *TES* priorities which reflect the particular education needs of their catchments. Smaller institutions may progress students to higher levels of learning at other TEIs, whereas larger institutions offering degree programmes will see teaching staff engaged in applied research and scholarly activities. ITPs must meet the needs of their local catchments first and foremost, placing particular emphasis on the priority groups identified by the *TES*.

ITP councils are responsible for the governance and overall educational and financial management of their institutions. Further, they are required to be answerable for the outcomes of educational performance. ITPs that record poor educational performance face future revenue reductions and likely interventions to improve the quality of educational delivery.

The *TES 2010-15* signalled the Government's concern that a number of TEIs had reported poor financial outcomes over recent years, and must become viable over the longer term. In order to have more input into the management of institutions, the Minister of Tertiary Education revised current legislation which impacted on the member numbers, roles and responsibilities of ITP councils.

### ***External agencies***

The framework depicts diagrammatically the impact that external agencies have on teaching practice in the ITP sector. Successive governments' requirements for increased accountability have placed institutions in a position where external agencies play a greater role in their operations. As academics once enjoyed relative freedom and autonomy in their daily lives, so too did institutions. Today institutions are more tightly managed and are required to be accountable to their funders. The *TES 2010-15* indicates that even greater accountability will be expected in future years, and that ITPs will be answerable to the following key external agencies:

- Ministry of Education which is responsible for writing and implementing government policy.
- TEC which is responsible for managing the Government's annual \$3 billion funding of tertiary education.
- NZQA which is responsible for providing quality assurance services for ITPs.
- ITOs which are responsible for industry training and skill development linked to the needs of workers, workplaces and industry.

### ***Ministry of Education***

The Ministry of Education is the lead advisor to governments on legislation for education in New Zealand. The Ministry's current focus is on developing a world-class education system that equips New Zealanders with the knowledge, skills and values to be successful citizens (Ministry of Education website, 2010).

### ***TEC***

The TEC is responsible for managing government funding to TEIs. The TEC also provides policy advice and implements government policy across the tertiary sector, and supports TEIs to be accountable, self-improving and self-managing (TEC website, 2012). TEIs are required to negotiate investment plans with the TEC which form the basis for funding (TEC website, 2012). These plans must include teaching outcomes in the form of retention and completion statistics.

## NZQA

NZQA is a Crown entity established under Section 248 of the Education Act 1989. Funded by the government, it is responsible for providing leadership in assessment and qualifications. Specifically, it oversees quality assurance services including the evaluation of courses and moderation of assessment activities and processes for NZQA-administered unit standards and national qualifications. In providing quality assurance NZQA is charged with external evaluation and review of training providers, and with relaying feedback and guidance to teaching staff on internal assessment. NZQA also makes information about the quality and relevance of educational performance and organisational capability publicly available.

Closer monitoring of teaching systems and processes has resulted in power shifts between training provider staff and NZQA. Moderation systems require assessment materials to be developed by the training provider and approved internally (internal moderation), and subsequently submitted to an external accrediting agency such as an ITO or NZQA (external moderation). This situation, in which tutors feel they are being closely monitored, can impact negatively on what is already perceived as a tenuous relationship with monitoring agencies (Smelt, 1995).

The recent move to evaluate an institution's quality assurance largely through self-assessment is a critical system measure designed to precipitate a step change in the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. Self-assessment requires an institution to evaluate the evidence that learners are benefitting from individual and organisational practices in place to support them.

## ITOs

Industry training is learning and skill development that is linked to the needs of workers, workplaces and industry. New Zealand's provisions for industry training evolved from the previous vocational training and apprenticeship system, to take on a more legislated mandate as set out in the Industry Training Act 1992. This Act established ITOs for major industry sector groups that are responsible for:

- Setting national standards for their industry
- Providing information and advice to trainees and their employers
- Arranging for the delivery of on and off-job training
- Arranging for the assessment of trainees and
- Arranging for the monitoring of quality training

ITOs are recognised by government, and receive funding from both government and the industries which they represent. Their relationship with ITPs has at times been less than harmonious, which has hampered collaborative engagement (Cabinet Policy Committee, 2007) between the two TEOs. ITOs saw overlapping training provision with ITPs as threatening their long-term survival; and ITPs saw ITOs as seeking to dictate the terms of training for which ITPs formerly exercised jurisdiction.

Although tutors in the ITP sector reported loss of control over *what* was taught and *how* it was assessed, they did retain some jurisdiction over *how* the material was taught (Eraut, 1994).

Although situations vary, in many instances national qualifications are still developed by ITOs under the guidance of advisory groups. Teaching staff from training providers were, and often remain, missing from these sector groups, leading to an environment of distrust and leaving teaching staff feeling frustrated that their expertise is being overlooked.

### ***Context in which teaching and learning occur***

The framework identifies that a complex and dynamic system operates with respect to teaching in the ITP sector, including the context in which it takes place. Entwistle (2010) stated that the teaching and learning environment has a marked effect on overall student learning, and further suggested that it is a defining factor in encouraging deep learning and conceptual change in the learner. TEIs, however, will continue to employ teaching staff who are committed to institutional strategies designed to enhance teaching and learning, and others who – to varying degrees – are not (Radloff, 2008). A number of factors may contribute to this lack of commitment, and generally reflect the context within which the institution operates. These factors may include: staff identity, work priorities, conceptions of teaching, attitudes to institutional strategies and policies, motivation and preparedness to participate in professional development activities, willingness to work together with other faculties and departments, reaction to participating in quality assurance processes, trust in senior management, financial security of the institution, and conditions of employment.

### ***Discipline***

The framework suggests that tutors develop their teaching identity within an ITP. Writers have identified that this sense of identity is closely tied to the discipline involved (Becher & Trowler, 2001). When questioned, ITP tutors will generally describe themselves first and foremost as members of their subject or discipline, and secondly as members of the teaching staff (Pritchard, 2008). This situation is further compounded by many tutors' professional allegiances to their subject rather than to their professional role as teachers: possibly because the majority of new tutors come straight from employment in an industrial, commercial or business setting.

The subject or discipline environment is associated with collegial decision making (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Teaching staff members' long-held beliefs that teaching is tied to academic freedom and to their right to determine how teaching is best planned and undertaken, can bring departments into conflict with senior managers and with institutional strategies. Management teams that unilaterally devise teaching strategies without seeking input from teaching staff at the outset, inevitably invite

dissatisfaction and a lack of commitment from these staff members when it comes to implementation (Clark, 2004).

### ***Teachers***

Teaching staff are pivotal to implementing changes in teaching and learning. Although they are placed at the lower end of the framework diagram, this placement is not indicative of their importance as change agents. If ITPs are to move from an environment which in the past has focused primarily on teaching to one which focuses primarily on the learner (Barr & Tagg, 1995), all staff must be prepared to make changes to their teaching practice. They must accept responsibility for “producing learning”, and not simply providing programmes of study (Tagg, 2003).

The centrality of the teacher in the learning process is well researched (Entwistle, 2010; Biggs, 2003; Trowler, 2008), and it is widely acknowledged that effective teachers promote good learning. Studies on the impact of teachers on the learning process (Knowles 1990; Kolb, 1984) have all concluded that effective teaching practices are an essential component in satisfying learners’ needs. Although a number of researchers (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kember, Ma & McNaught, 2006) have promoted models of effective teaching, no generally agreed definition has yet emerged as to the nature of effective teaching within the ITP sector.

It has been reported, notwithstanding, that teachers who commit to creating quality learning environments are likely to display attributes and behavioural traits that are similar to those of committed students (Radloff, 2008). Committed teachers will show: enthusiasm for their subject and for teaching; commitment to their students and their learning; and an interest in knowing their students and how best to help them to learn. They will also bring a scholarly approach to teaching and learning. Most importantly, committed teachers are prepared to be learners themselves in terms of enhancing their own teaching practice.

In the case of ITP tutors, they will need to make choices about best use of their time. A commitment to enhancing their teaching practice may create conflict in relation to work priorities. Given an intensification of academic work (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007), ITP tutors are now expected – in varying degrees – to: participate in marketing activities; build relationships with external agencies such as industry and qualification developers; maintain expertise and subject competence by undertaking relevant industry experience; undertake professional development in subject and teaching expertise; and provide student support and pastoral care. Improving the quality of their teaching may simply become another expectation of tutors, and one that is not seen as a priority in their daily working lives.

Suggestions for teaching enhancement are necessarily complex. As opposed to a single measure, a multi-faceted strategy which is based on empirical evidence appears to offer the best prospect for bringing about positive change. This approach is reflected in: the research design for this study; the methodologies and methods

chosen; the way in which the data is marshalled and analysed; and the recommendations arising from this data analysis.

### **Organisation of the thesis**

This thesis is presented in seven chapters. This first chapter provides an introduction to the research and presents background information detailing – through the use of a systems framework – the complexity of teaching in the ITP sector. It also highlights the significance of this research and the context in which it took place.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature framing the research. An overview of the literature provides justification for the focus on the systems framework which details the multi-level approach required to enhance teaching in the ITP sector.

Chapter three explains the methodology and methods employed in this research. The approach of phenomenographic analysis, combined with an embedded case study, is described in terms of its serviceability in addressing the research questions. The data collection methods are also outlined, together with any perceived or actual limitations of the data collection instruments.

The data gathered from the semi-structured interviews is phenomenographically analysed and discussed in chapter four. This chapter also introduces and elucidates the categories of description, and identifies the variations in tutors' understanding and experiences.

Chapter five presents the results from the four individual case studies. Categories found in the course of phenomenographic analysis of the pooled data are reinterpreted in terms of individual experiences, in order to provide examples of these experiences in action.

Chapter six discusses the results of the research. This discussion centres on the significant themes that emerged from both the phenomenographic and case study analyses, and links these themes to findings from the literature.

Chapter seven offers recommendations for changes in the ITP teaching environment that have the potential to enhance teaching practice. Suggestions are also offered for future areas of research, before the research is summed up in the overall conclusion to this study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the literature on the varying ways in which teaching is understood in tertiary education. There is a large volume of literature that discusses ways of enhancing teaching practice, taking into account the many factors on which successful teaching and learning depend. Hence this literature review focuses on the complex and multi-dimensional factors which influence teaching practice. It further identifies gaps in research that focus specifically on the ITP sector in New Zealand.

#### **Content and context of this literature review**

Preliminary discussion reviews government agendas for tertiary education, and evaluates the impact that these agendas have had on tertiary institutions, managers and teaching staff.

Institutional conditions are identified as having a major role in student success. Institutional policy and the way it is enacted lies at the very heart of quality institutional performance. Four recent comprehensive syntheses of research literature reports undertaken by Prebble, Hargraves, Leach, Naidoo, Suddaby and Zepke, 2004; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, 2005; and Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek, 2006, highlight institutional factors which need to be taken into account when evaluating initiatives to enhance teaching practice.

Within the model of the systems framework, further discussion identifies various factors that impact on teaching practice. The section on the context within which teaching and learning occur discusses two issues which influence student engagement, namely: staff development and learner support.

The role of external agencies with which institutions are required to form relationships is the subject of the following section. The focus of this section is on the perceived impact of NZQA: the organisation responsible for quality assurance within the ITP sector.

Last – and of major significance – is the impact of teaching staff and the environment in which they undertake their daily work. It is suggested that to enhance teaching practice it is necessary to gain a prior understanding of teachers' concepts of teaching, and of their performance in the teaching role. Further discussion highlights the significance of the department or subject area, and suggests that these environments can be construed as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998a; 1998b). It is also suggested that working in communities of practice affects the development of individual teachers: their attitudes and motivation towards teaching, approaches to teaching, and teaching performance.

Tertiary teaching takes place within a complex web of systems, structures and pedagogies. Unravelling this web is central to understanding the workings of ITPs and the teaching that takes place within them. As will be shown, very little is understood about the day-to-day life of teaching staff in an ITP, and little empirical research has been undertaken (Prebble et al, 2004). What little is known about operational aspects generally originates from more wide-ranging studies undertaken across TEIs in general, both within New Zealand and internationally.

Literature sourced for this review focuses on teaching in tertiary or higher education, primarily within the university sector: from New Zealand, United States, Great Britain and Australia. As Gumpert and Pusser (1997) indicate, research from the university sector is a valid source of information when assessing teaching at other higher education institutions. The lack of research focusing specifically on the ITP sector is of concern, however (Prebble et al., 2004; Morris, 2008); resulting in an analysis of research that is – of necessity – most closely aligned to the university sector.

## Review of the literature

### ***Government agendas and policy for tertiary teaching***

Building on the systems framework introduced in the previous chapter, the following discussion centres on the multi-dimensional factors that impact on teaching practice within the ITP sector. Of particular significance is the effect of recent government policy for tertiary education which shapes the conditions under which ITP tutors are employed. Government agendas set the initiatives and outcomes required of TEIs, and Hardy (2010) contends that understanding these agendas is a key element when evaluating measures to enhance teaching practice.

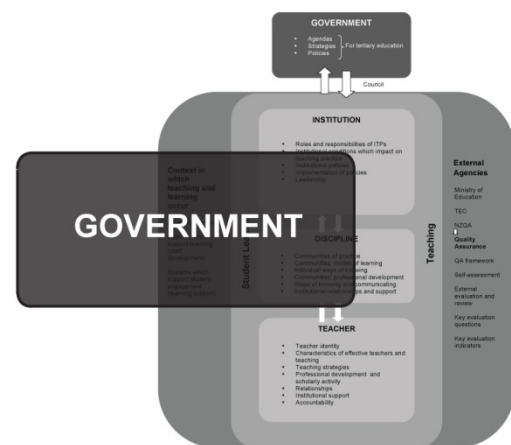


Figure 2: Government

### ***Government agendas: the challenge of change***

Calls for improvement to the quality of teaching and learning are not new. Successive iterations of the *TES* (2002/07; 2007-12; and 2010-15) have articulated this goal of government policy for over a decade. However, these calls have been made to a sector which has struggled to adapt to constant and ongoing change since the early 1980s, when the then Labour Government introduced neo-liberal principles which over the last 30 years have revolutionised tertiary education policies and practice.

Pritchard (2008) summed up these tumultuous times by noting that prior to the early 1980s polytechnics (now ITPs) operated in a relatively open environment, free of



constraints and the flow-on effects of government bureaucracy. The New Zealand Treasury argued that reform in tertiary education was necessary because this highly centralised sector was failing to respond to the changing economic climate (Codd, 2002). The welfare state of the early 1980s was soon to be replaced by an economic environment shaped by a range of new academic, social and philosophical perspectives, with core common assumptions that could be attributed to a strain of thought known as neo-liberalism (Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991; Rose, 1993).

The neo-liberalism policy context of the 1990s defined the direction of all TEIs and formed the basis of tertiary education policy over the next ten to 15 years. As noted in the previous chapter, following the 1999 election the Labour-Coalition Government signalled a change from neo-liberalism to Third Way politics that promoted “a vision of social inclusion, pluralism and democratic participation with a cohesive society based upon norms of trust and social responsibility” (Codd, 2005, p. xiv). Notwithstanding this change, many of the vestiges of neo-liberalism remained in evidence. The impact of these policy changes has resulted in significant change for teachers at the coalface (Giddens, 2001).

In order to meet government initiatives TEIs faced a number of paradigm changes which entailed significant cultural shift. Lick (2002) suggests that these changes included the need for:

- A shift from a teaching to a learning paradigm
- Continuous professional development of all staff
- Transformational leadership
- High-level strategic planning

These trends suggested that tertiary education should be prepared to embrace the same elements that drive successful business: in particular, openness to taking risks; and a leadership tier that held a long-term strategic vision for the institution, promoted and developed a culture of ongoing professional development among teaching staff, and placed value on the core business of an ITP – teaching and learning.

Karran (2009) supporting Waugh (2000) contends, however, that these changes left academics feeling that freedom in the classroom was being eroded. This change in values was seen as an affront to teaching staff who traditionally had a major role in the development of their institution’s programme portfolio. Waugh (2000) evidenced a loss of input into decision making from teachers in general, not just in the programmes offered but also in the way in which classes were taught and assessed.

### *Institutional responses to government agendas*

The changes required of TEIs since the introduction of neo-liberal policies have in the main proved difficult to implement. Many staff were not prepared for change, let alone for the amount or rate of change that occurred. Successful change initiatives require clear statements of intent, planning, staging and direction across the institution (Diamond, 2002). Even after these changes were initially implemented, few institutions acknowledged their worth and continued to work much as they had in the past. Diamond (2002) further suggests, however, that ongoing change has brought about the gradual acknowledgement that TEIs must adapt to a new climate and to a more efficient way of discharging their business. Bateson (1972) suggested that institutional change must start with strategies that are consistent with stated institutional values. These values arise from an institution's history, context and role, and from the resulting strategies that are developed for all levels of the organisation.

Accomplishing institutional change of this magnitude, however, can be challenging. Diamond (2002) and Sarath (2005) both highlight that cultural change is extremely difficult to achieve in tertiary education, reflecting systems that are complex and multi-layered and which comprise diverse, moving parts. Roles and responsibilities vary, and many institutions appear to be adversely affected by a shifting personnel base which compromises continuity in the context of change. Sarath (2005) further adds that deeply entrenched assumptions about human knowledge are bound up with: classroom dynamics; the structure and nature of curricula; institutional systems; the criteria under which staff are hired and promoted; the profile of successful staff; and even the physical layout of the campus. Change has been slow in those areas that directly impact on teaching, which some commentators suggest may be due to teachers' underlying beliefs and practices.

The rapid rate of change over the last 30 years has seen some TEIs unable to adapt as readily as might be expected (Lick, 2002). Lick suggests that in some cases institutions have not been able to develop a clear vision for learning in the information age. Others have been slow to restructure roles, functions and services in order to meet evolving government priorities. And corporate leadership has not always recognised that moving to a new era will require a renewed emphasis on ongoing development of staff at all levels; improved strategic planning; and a re-focus away from teaching *per se*, towards learning and leadership which are inherently transformational.

Investment in professional development is vital to meet these changes. Svinicki (2002) states: "If you spend time and resources in faculty and staff development, you will get a huge return on your investment in terms of creativity, productivity, morale, and self-renewing energy" (p. 211). Traditionally, professional development focused on keeping staff members' discipline knowledge current; but in recent times more emphasis has been placed on the quality of teaching itself. The recently published

*TES 2010-15* calls for TEIs to underpin their teaching with research in order to validate the practices that they have adopted.

Blackmore and Blackwell (2006) in discussing ongoing development of teaching staff, predicted moves ahead to make tertiary-level teaching more professionally aligned. They cited attempts to raise the capability of teaching staff by defining expertise, improving professional development opportunities, and formally recognising proficiency. They also identified that a well-balanced and ongoing model of professional development was a key requirement if staff who are expected to enhance their teaching roles also recognise and accept that the balance of their activities may change over time. Ramsden (2003) identifies and commends training initiatives that aim to:

- Raise the level of student performance
- Provide information about student learning styles and the ways in which learning may best be supported
- Improve student interest, motivation and retention, and ultimately outcomes

These priorities dovetail neatly with the policy directions of successive governments in launching tertiary education reforms and reiterating their aims through ongoing *TES* reports, in particular the move to a teaching focus and the improvement of students' learning outcomes.

#### *Managers' responses to change*

The introduction of neo-liberal policies has changed the way in which managers discharge their roles in TEIs. Given the increased emphasis on issues such as performance, accountability and efficiency, managers are now required to work to performance indicators and undergo performance appraisals. The institutions that they work for are now essentially run as businesses, with strategic plans, targets and incentives. The CEO, who is appointed by the Council, has become an agent of change. Whereas the focus of managers was formerly on teaching, a slow but steady shift in priorities has taken place.

Olssen (2002) confirms that neo-liberalism has played a major role in shifting management focus. He suggests that managers have become focused on efficiency, maximising outputs and achieving financial profits; and that they have become competitive, hierarchical, corporate loyal, audit focused, and have adopted a "hard" managerial stance (p. 45): "hard' managerialism" meaning hierarchical and imposed management practices, as opposed to collegial management decision-making (Trow, 1996). This change in focus was seen as: deflecting managers from their core responsibilities of promoting high quality teaching and learning, and supporting staff and students; and limiting the opportunities for tutors to participate in discussions that directly impacted on their teaching practice.

This perspective is well supported by other commentators. Codd (2005) agrees, and argues that this dominant managerialist culture within tertiary education runs counter to the traditional culture of teaching. “Managerialism with its emphasis on efficiency and external accountability treats teachers as functionists rather than professionals and thereby diminishes their autonomy and commitment to the values and principles of education” (Codd, p. xv). He suggests that this situation leads to a culture of performativity in which “ends are separate from means and where people are valued for what they produce” (p. xv).

A new perspective from Blackmore and Blackwell (2006) proposes that managers themselves faced challenges in assimilating the new requirements of neo-liberalism. The authors suggested that some managers may have become caught up in addressing the disparity between the beliefs, goals and values of the institution and the realities of institutional life. In a study of management roles in the Australian university sector, the authors highlighted the diversity in managers’ job descriptions. Managers reported that they shaped their job in accordance with the expertise that they brought to the role, and concluded that they “believed that they performed a role that was more complex than many of those outside it understood” (p. 377). They identified that the focus of their work had shifted from teaching to broader management responsibilities, but reported that this shift was not uniform in scope or rate of change.

A side-effect of change is that power has become an issue between managers and their staff. Scott, Coates and Anderson (2008), supported by Winter (2009) and Colbeck (2002), highlight that power has become a dominant theme in the dynamics of an institution. Both managers and tutors are struggling to define not only “what is done, but also how and why it is done” (Waugh, 2000, p. 2). This struggle leads to tension when roles and responsibilities are not communicated and well understood. Winter (2009) confirms that the rapid rate of change and poor role definition are contributing to this tension.

#### *Teaching staff members’ responses to change*

Teaching staff have, in the main, struggled to cope with an increase in workload resulting from the need to assimilate additional responsibilities into their day-to-day activities. Ramsden (2003) states teachers have largely been left “unimpressed” (p. 4) by changes that have revolutionised the way in which they work. An increase in administrative responsibilities requiring more time and energy was seen as potentially detracting from the core business of teaching. Ramsden further contends that learning – which he suggests is a dialogue between the teacher and the student – seems to have retreated before a “tide of bureaucracy” (p. 4). Allan, Lafferty and Burgess (2008) agree, highlighting that teachers are expected to: meet increasing demands for improved learning outcomes; become accountable and efficient; undergo rigorous quality evaluations of courses and an increasing number of quality

audits; improve market-driven outcomes; be more flexible – and to do all of this at less cost. They sum up their frustration in a single word: “intensification” (p. 1).

Karran (2009) agrees that academic freedom is being eroded, reporting that academic staff are concerned about a perceived loss of freedom and autonomy leading to diminished control over what and how they teach. Peters and Roberts (2000) agree that the loss of freedom and autonomy is of concern to many teachers who consider that the introduction of neo-liberal reform has limited institutions’ and teachers’ ability to make changes within their organisations. Greater input into the funding of TEIs and the choice of programmes they offer by government agencies such as the TEC can be construed as a further affront to teaching staff who have traditionally played a major role in developing their institution’s programme portfolio. In making this suggestion Waugh (2000) notes a loss of input into decision making by teachers in general, not just in the programmes offered but also in the way that students are taught and assessed.

### *Support for changes*

Not all authors, however, take a negative stance on the introduction of neo-liberal policies. Buchanan, Gordon and Schuck (2008) state that restructuring has: brought about better economic responsiveness; reduced costs to the taxpayer through increasing student fees; reduced institutional power; and increased institutions’ accountability both to the government (the funder of education), and to society at large (the consumer of education).

Ramsden (1992) also states that the real problem in responding to the call to improve teaching is not the forces of accountability – which in itself he considers an inadequate reason for enhancing teaching practice and unlikely to succeed. He believes that if teachers are committed to improving their teaching, they must understand why improvement is needed, namely: to enhance student learning. Concurring, Kuh et al. (2006) suggest that pressures to change are powerful incentives for teaching staff “not” (p. 648) to modify their teaching practices.

Intervention from various external agencies, however, accompanied changes in the tertiary education sector. These agencies played a major role in determining policy and its implementation, in turn changing the way in which teachers planned and discharged their responsibilities, and implemented their practice.

### ***Influence of external agencies on teaching practice***

Enhancing teaching practice is dependent on a raft of initiatives bound up with policy and practices within the ITP sector. External agencies that play a role in negotiating changes to policy and practices include: the Ministry of Education for matters relating to government policy on tertiary education; the TEC for funding and the outcomes of funding; and NZQA for quality assurance and qualification issues.

## Quality assurance in ITPs

ITPs are developing initiatives to enhance teaching practice at a time when quality has become “a marker of distinction” (Blackmore, 2009, p. 857) for higher education. Quality assurance measures appear to have come to exemplify a system focused on accountability rather than improvement in teaching and learning (Sachs, 1994). But is this, in fact, the case? Although various authors (Power, 1997; Blackmore, 2009; Marginson and Considine, 2000) argue that quality assurance processes are about accountability, Meade (2001) does not agree. This author suggests the evidence shows that quality assurance *does* support improvements in teaching and learning.

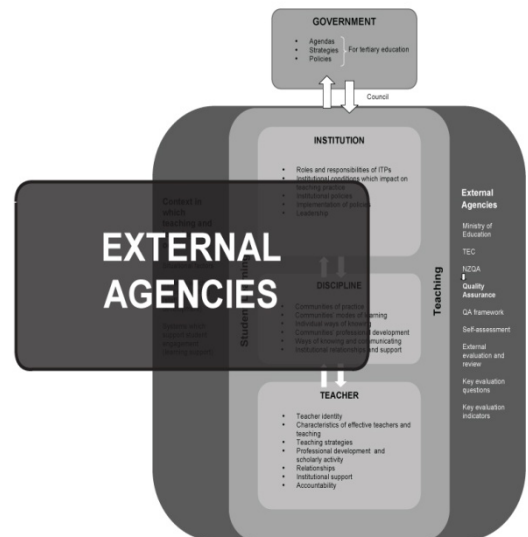


Figure 3: External agencies

## Introduction of quality assurance

The introduction of quality assurance into higher education has been rapid as the push for quality became driven by market pressures and the infiltration of private sector management principles into tertiary education. Initially the relationship between funding and quality assurance audit outcomes was not explicit. Changing government policy in New Zealand, however, has seen this relationship become more apparent with the announcement in 2010 that future government funding of institutions will reflect the outcomes of student learning (Ministry of Education, 2010). In a move which suggested that the Government aimed to strengthen the effectiveness of quality systems, the *TES 2010-15* revealed that a new quality system based on self-assessment and external evaluation and review would be introduced to the tertiary sector. These policy shifts signalled to tutors that: teaching outcomes would be monitored; future funding was dependent upon “satisfactory” outcomes being achieved; and that in order to improve teaching and learning, a new quality assurance system driven by the provider was necessary to bring about the required system adjustments.

The impact of quality assurance systems has been the subject of much debate within the academic community (Blackmore, 2009; Blackmur, 2004). Blackmore (2009) argues that the introduction of policies and resultant quality assurance processes into tertiary education has not proceeded smoothly. Much heated debate occurs among academics as to the effectiveness of various quality assurance measures in promoting teaching enhancement. To add weight to the argument, Blackmore (2009) contends that academics have always been involved in discussions on curricula, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation in relation to enhanced teaching practice. In support of Blackmore, Baldwin and James (2002) add:

One is dealing with intangible, non-observable qualities in higher education: the outcomes of university courses are much harder to assess and compare than, say, the holding properties of different brands of glue. They are complex and long-term, and many are hard to measure precisely. Further, the relationships between those outcomes and the characteristics of curricula and teaching methods which produce them are infinitely complicated by diversity of the “inputs” – the range of student abilities, interests and approaches. (p. 142)

Ironically, Blackmore (2009) suggests that the introduction of quality assurance systems including performance appraisals is one way of “managing” academics, by ensuring that they have the required qualifications and are answerable to student evaluations. Much of the dissatisfaction, however, appears to originate from a perceived increase in workload following the introduction of mandatory quality measures. Blackmore (2009), Knight and Trowler (2000) and Baldwin and James (2002) cite an increase in paperwork, introduction of student evaluations, changes in accreditation systems, compliance with validation procedures, monitoring of faculty performance and the trend to intensify and fragment academic work: which they argue have increased academic workloads and led to a perceived loss of freedom and control.

Writing institutional policy to articulate the expectations of external agencies such as NZQA does not appear to be a simple and straightforward exercise. Authors including Fanghanel (2007), Ball, (1994), and Becher and Trowler (2001) note that policy writing is fraught with complexities, and urge caution when planning and implementing policy. Fanghanel (2007) suggests that further caution is needed in the choice of wording, as teaching staff may construe their own meanings from policy directives if the wording is not precise. Misinterpretation may have serious consequences for institutions if staff interpret the wording to suit their own means, leading to inconsistent understanding and implementation of policy across the institution.

To overcome some of these problems Fenwick (2004) suggests that a cross-section of staff should participate in the developmental stages of policy planning and writing. This approach would alleviate the perception of teaching staff that policy writing is a top-down exercise. Once policies are written, appropriate professional development activities should be offered prior to their implementation, to familiarise staff with policies relevant to their particular areas and resolve any issues over imprecise or ambiguous wording. Notwithstanding these measures, Fanghanel (2007) sounds a further note of warning suggesting that although policies are in place, in practice they may not be implemented as envisaged.

Not all authors agree that the introduction of policies and the resultant quality measures have had a negative impact. Meade (2001), for instance, believes that external quality audit systems can add value to institutional structures and

processes. In a paper which reviews case studies of successful quality audit systems in universities throughout the world, he documents 26 examples of institutional processes or practices which were enhanced through quality measures. Meade (2001) concludes that the most successful areas were communication and consultation; teaching, learning and assessment; and the quality system itself. He suggests that institutions should share examples of effective quality processes, which could be disseminated through the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

### *Quality assurance for improvement or accountability*

Central to the debate on quality is the question of whether it is primarily about improvement or accountability; and Harvey (2005) suggests that there is a significant difference between the two. This question arises most notably in the context of evaluation. Harvey proposes that if evaluation is undertaken for purposes of improvement, the focus should be on what worked, how and why it worked, and how the performance could be improved. Evaluation for purposes of accountability, on the other hand, focuses on processes and outcomes. Laughton (2003) suggests that accountability is about measuring the visible and the measurable, and tracking the paper trails to pre-determined outcomes. He notes that accountability processes appear to have precedence over those aimed at improvement, which gives cause for concern.

Power (1997) also questions quality assurance for the purposes of accountability. As institutions write their own policies and procedures, and Academic Boards set up their own paper trails to provide evidence for external audits, they not only produce their own logics of practice but change the institutional practices they are monitoring; thus defining what constitutes quality and performance. "What is audited is whether there is a system which embodies standards and the standards of performance themselves are shaped by the need to be auditable...thus the audit becomes a formal loop by which the system observes itself" (Power, 1997, pp. 36-37). Bourdieu and Coleman (1991) suggest that audits are staged performances often with little relevance to practice other than as data-gathering exercises. Serious questions consequently arise as to whether quality assurance processes actually achieve what they set out to do, namely: improve the quality of teaching, and ultimately of learning.

As if to answer concerns about the outcomes of quality assurance systems that many saw as relating more to accountability than to improvement, NZQA recently moved to a system of self-assessment and external review for ITPs. The principal aim of this change was to strengthen institutional performance, in particular to improve student learning outcomes.

### *Self-assessment*

Self-assessment replaced an earlier model based on external audit processes. Under the new system ITPs are required to undertake regular, scheduled internal



audits to ensure that internal quality systems meet the expectations of external agencies.

This move to self-assessment brought to the forefront the Government's aim of achieving high-quality outcomes from its investment in tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2010). Central to the issue was the quality of teaching and learning – indeed the quality of the total student experience. Periodic external evaluation of an ITP provides judgement about its performance and capability in self-assessment and educational delivery. One of the key tools used in this process is a series of six key evaluation questions (NZQA, 2009).

These six key questions are designed to initiate reflection, discussion, evidence gathering and ultimately to define strategies to improve progression and retention rates, and the outcomes of student learning. They ask:

1. How well do learners achieve?
2. What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?
3. How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?
4. How effective is the teaching?
5. How well are learners guided and supported?
6. How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement? (NZQA, 2009)

How each ITP interprets, offers evidence for, and undertakes to seek answers to these six questions, is left to its own discretion. There are implications, however, that cannot be discounted. Quality assurance has traditionally been management led; but following the introduction of self-assessment, quality matters rapidly became everyone's responsibility. Various authors including Blackmore and Sachs, 2007, and Shore and Wright, 2000, contend that devolution of the management of quality to academics exacerbates trends to intensify and fragment academic work. Self-assessment takes valuable time, and requires the marshalling of supporting evidence. Baldwin and James (2002) suggest that the process is further complicated in that tertiary teaching deals with intangible, non-observable qualities, which makes it difficult to compare and assess outcomes which are complex and often long term. The relationships between teaching and outcomes are also complicated by the diversity of factors which impact on them, including students' abilities, attitudes, interests, motivation and level of family support.

NZQA has developed two key evaluation indicators – outcome and process – to help institutions to identify salient factors when evaluating the quality and value of educational experiences (NZQA, 2009). Outcome indicators include longer term economic, social, cultural and cognitive benefits, and encompass the wider community. Process indicators focus on learning and teaching, community needs and organisational learning. Outcome indicators describe what has happened,

whereas process indicators describe the processes in place to help to achieve the required outcomes. These indicators place considerable emphasis on institutional policies and practice, and on learners and their learning – perhaps signalling that these are the areas in which improvement is most required.

NZQA also provides an overview of the evaluation indicators to highlight its expectations (NZQA, 2009). These indicators support a “whole-of-institution” approach to improving teaching outcomes, reflecting the recommendations of authors such as Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Prebble et al., 2004; Kuh et al., 2006; and Klinkum, 2006 who also propose a “whole-of-institution” approach to improving teaching outcomes.

Some commentators, however, have expressed concern over the application of an indicator system to tertiary education. Strathern (2000) stated that the actual boundaries and rules for indicator systems are predetermined; and Baldwin and James (2002) questioned the style used to report audit findings. Claims that external audit agencies are not obligatory and that institutions may name their own targets and define the evidence they present in support of their effectiveness may, in fact, be unfounded. Further criticism followed the actual roll-out of quality indicators. When an indicator system was introduced in Australia to assess the quality of teaching in universities, it was subjected to intense, detailed scrutiny in terms of the philosophy of teaching and learning it embodied, the wording of particular indicators, and the areas which it overlooked.

Some commentators have expressed tentative support for a move from a retrospective to a prospective QA system (Biggs, 2001) on the basis that a system which is forward looking has a greater chance of promoting improvement than one which focuses on the past. Biggs (2001) questions how a focus on quality management could ever have improved teaching. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003) agree with Biggs (2001) that a change of perspective is required. They suggest that quality can no longer be thought of as simply maintaining standards, and that institutions need to take a developmental approach to quality.

Quality assurance measures have changed teaching. Tutors have had to adapt to an increase in paperwork, introduction of student evaluations, changes in accreditation systems, compliance with validation procedures, monitoring of their performance and the trend to intensify and fragment their work (Blackmore, 2009). Interestingly, the calls for teaching to improve can still be heard.

## ***Institutional factors which impact on teaching practice***

Until relatively recently, the impact that institutional factors had on teaching practice was considered to be of little significance. More contemporary studies indicate otherwise, and that initiatives to enhance teaching practice should no longer focus simply on teachers' performance and the methods and strategies that they employ to teach, but also address issues such as support systems, resourcing and workloads.

### ***Institutional conditions impacting on teaching practice***

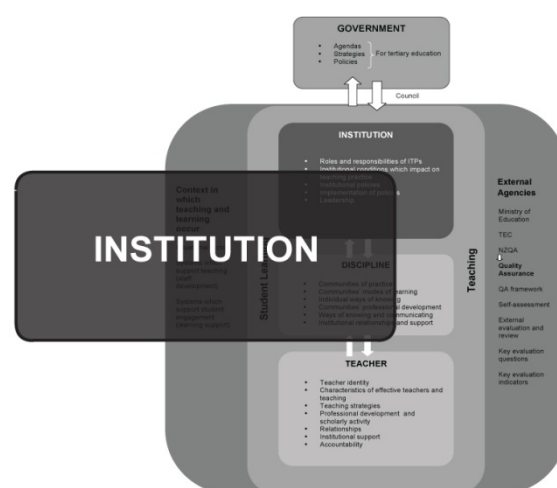


Figure 4: Institution

Prebble et al. (2004) in a comprehensive synthesis of the literature that addresses successful student outcomes in undergraduate tertiary education, developed a list of key organisational attributes. It should be noted that Prebble et al. (2004) identified very few New Zealand-specific studies to include in their synthesis, and made an urgent call for research to be undertaken in a New Zealand context.

The key institutional factors which Prebble et al. (2004) identified relative to teaching practice included: providing appropriate orientation and induction programmes; encouraging academic learning communities; making learning support available with additional assistance from peer mentoring and peer tutoring; implementing teaching practices that recognised and catered for students' diverse learning styles; ensuring that students had manageable workloads; and promoting teachers' approachability and willingness to make themselves available for academic debate.

Concurring with Prebble et al. (2004), Kuh et al. (2006) and Kinzie (2010) also placed more emphasis on institutional policies and processes, stating that institutions have control over – and are consequently able to improve – this operational element. Analysis by Kuh et al. (2006) identified similar findings to those of Prebble et al. (2004), although their grouping of factors differed. Factors of importance were grouped into: structural and organisational characteristics, programmes and practices; teaching and learning approaches; and student-centred campus cultures. In summing up their synthesis of the literature, Kuh et al. (2006) advised institutions to invest heavily in academic support to assist students with their diverse learning needs; and advised students to work alongside teaching staff to improve the teaching and learning climate both inside and outside the classroom.

Other authors have addressed the issue of student retention and success relative to teaching practice. Yorke and Longden (2008) suggested that six factors contributed to students' withdrawal from programmes, namely: the teaching content/style did not suit the student; the programme was not organised well; there was inadequate staff

support outside of the timetable; there was a lack of personal support from staff; teaching was perceived as of poor quality; and class sizes were too large. These findings suggest that re-evaluating teachers' approaches to teaching and learning, together with more sophisticated student support systems, are key factors with which institutions should engage if they are to enhance teaching practice and – collaterally – improve students' retention and completion rates. In a more recent study, James, Krause and Jennings (2010) cite a new trend which requires institutions to engage students at an early stage in activities which involve joint staff/student collaboration.

### *Institutional policies*

Institutional policies play a critical role in the quality of teaching. Patrick and Lines (2005) argue that many teachers think quality systems which generate more paperwork are associated with central control, relentless measurement, and ever-increasing demands for accountability within the sector. Harman (2000) suggests that teachers often see institutional policies and practices as remote or irrelevant, and of little use in the day-to-day world of their teaching. Harman (2000) also suggests that the challenge for institutions is to sell quality processes to staff in such a way that these processes become embedded within the fabric of the institution.

The question of academics implementing – or not implementing – institutional policies is also a concern for Ramsden (2003). He suggests that strategies for teaching should reflect processes relating to academic scholarship and student learning, and be applied consistently across the institution, including to individual teachers. Although this procedure should be commonplace, Ramsden (2003) indicates that all too often evidence suggests otherwise. Offering examples, he cites institutions that articulate a policy of good teaching without implementing the processes which make good teaching possible; or an institution that has inconsistent criteria for teaching staff awards. The institution may emphasise academic-led approaches to quality assurance of teaching and learning at departmental level, but apply bureaucratic appraisal and performance management techniques to individual staff members.

### *Institutional leadership*

It is evident that enhancement of teaching practice will necessarily involve organisational and cultural change. This change, in turn, will require institution-wide change and senior management ownership and leadership (Klinkum, 2006). Managers display what they value through speech and action, and both speech and action by managers will signal whether or not new or amended policy is important to the organisation. If organisations seek change, such change must begin with senior managers' endorsement and modelling. Without this leadership change is unlikely to occur. Institutional leaders need to model and support reflective practice to create a learning organisation, and realising this aim requires a high level of intentionality (Hussey & Smith, 2010).

Institutional leaders play a critical role in helping their institutions to attain quality outcomes and to manage ongoing change. Effective leaders not only help staff to manage change but also promote supportive environments which foster productive engagement with change. Scott, Coates and Anderson (2008) in a study of leadership capabilities in Australian universities identified that many leaders find they have “no room to lead” (p. xiv). Citing examples of managers distracted by poor bureaucratic systems, coping with unexpected events, extra meetings, and dealing with complaints, Scott et al. (2008) suggest that there may be little time left for leaders to lead strategically. In turn this situation can lead to teaching staff having “no room to teach” (p. xiv) or to learn how to make the changes expected of them.

A number of studies offer detailed accounts of what higher education leaders should know and be able to do (Ramsden, 1998; Scott et al., 2008). Scott et al. (2008) suggest that effective leadership requires leaders in today’s higher education environment to have an up-to-date knowledge of teaching and learning. This knowledge should be coupled with self-awareness, decisiveness, commitment, a capacity to empathise with – and influence – a wide variety of people, cognitive flexibility, and an ability to diagnose situations and be strategically adept.

Similarly, Debowski, Blake and Corte (2004) confirm that academic leaders should have specific capabilities and competencies associated with teaching and learning, including a strong commitment to pedagogy; an understanding that course and curriculum development should be driven by an assured grasp of how learning occurs; and knowledge of the effects of different forms of teaching on learning. Ramsden (2003) contends it is well known that successful schools are more likely to enjoy strong leadership: “It is now possible to see that effective leadership – at all levels – is a key to improved learning” (p. 239).

***The context in which teaching and learning occur***

The literature strongly suggests that institutional context influences teaching staff members’ motivation and perception of the value of the work that they undertake. Institutional morale, energy and enthusiasm are a reflection of the context in which individuals work. In this section a review of situational factors leads on to a discussion of systems that support teaching. Following a sub-section on staff development, the discussion concludes with an examination of systems of learning support that promote student engagement.

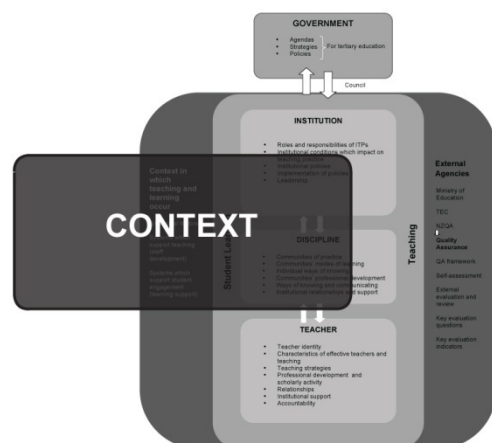


Figure 5: Context

### *Situational factors influencing teaching practice*

The approach that teachers take to their teaching is influenced by their prior experiences in education, their perceptions of the learning environment in which they operate and the context in which teaching and learning occur (Prosser & Trigwell, 1997). Prosser and Trigwell (1997) identified five situational factors which teachers focus on, namely:

1. The amount of control they have in the classroom.
2. The extent that inappropriate class size plays in teacher/student interactions.
3. The increased diversity of students that impacts on teaching. Of particular significance is students' level of preparedness for tertiary education. Teachers report that they are expected to teach more students with lower levels of academic success from secondary school, coupled with increased numbers of international students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds and often have poor English language skills.
4. The extent to which teachers believe their teaching is valued by the institution.
5. Whether they have appropriate workloads.

Halsey (1992) concurs that teaching context is particularly important in terms of teaching practice, but views it from an industrial relations perspective. He acknowledges the increase in the number and diversity of students, but notes that there has been no increase in staffing and resources. Lafferty and Fleming (2000) claim that teachers face increasing pressures from the implementation of corporate management practices including tighter performance management and the "extensive process of routinisation, standardisation and codification of academic work, emphasising measurable skills and outcomes" (p. 260).

Trowler and Knight (2000) discussing the institutional context of teaching and learning, ask cryptically whether higher education has become an inhospitable environment for good teaching and learning. These authors indicate that many aspects of the changing nature of higher education run counter to enhancing teaching practice, including: intensification of work; hard managerialism; a loss of collegiality; "greedy" institutions; the ageing malaise; and the marginalisation of teaching staff.

The picture is not a completely negative one, however, and Trowler (1998) found that significant pockets of freedom, autonomy, work enrichment and development are still evident in the sector. Trowler and Knight (2000) indicate that teachers have choice and are able to take action to maximise work satisfaction in the face of institutional changes. As an activity system, the discipline or department is the primary location in which operational change may take place. Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) demonstrated that teachers are conditioned by the characteristics of the department in which they work; and consequently, that positive change may be generated through disciplines and departments.

Klinkum (2006) also highlights the importance of the context in which teaching and learning occurs. Reporting on developments to improve teaching and learning within a regional New Zealand ITP, he states that a significant factor in supporting innovation in teaching and learning should be a shared commitment among key personnel to developing organisational capability that supports teaching and learning excellence. Klinkum (2006) also suggests that all staff in the institution have a role in enhancing teaching and learning.

#### *Contexts that support teaching: teacher education*

Tertiary teachers are usually appointed on the basis of their qualifications, experience and knowledge in their subject area, and often lack any teacher education (Beaty, 1998). A report titled *Tertiary practitioner education training and support: Taking stock* (Projects International, 2010) claims that this statement, made by Beaty in 1998, remains largely true in today's environment. The report adds the rider that 80% of ITPs require teaching staff to gain a teaching qualification within two or three years of a full-time appointment. The landscape of qualifications offered is a confusing one, however: 62 qualifications are available, of which only eight are national qualifications – the remainder are provider based. Further confusing the issue of choice are the widely varying graduate profiles and outcome statements for each of these 62 qualifications (Projects International, 2010).

To date, worldwide studies into how educational development occurs in tertiary education have included: different concepts of teaching and learning in higher education (Ramsden, 1992; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999); guides to teaching (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2000); and teachers' accounts of their work (Brookfield, 1995). The recently published report from Ako Aotearoa (Projects International, 2010) contributes to the body of knowledge on the ITP sector, and suggests that there appear to be a wide variety of institutional approaches to the support and education of tertiary teachers. This report highlights that 65% of ITPs have induction programmes for newly appointed teaching staff, and a requirement for a reduced teaching load. Several support provisions are provided for new staff including enrolment in a programme which leads to a tertiary qualification, and the provision of a buddy or a mentor. The decision to engage in these support mechanisms is left to the discretion of new staff members and their managers, however, and is not an organisation-wide, mandatory requirement (Projects International, 2010).

The effectiveness of these strategies is difficult to gauge, as the report does not state the number of teaching staff who actually avail themselves of these provisions, or assess whether or not they are providing staff with the necessary knowledge and skill base. It goes so far as to suggest that monitoring mandatory and voluntary provisions may be problematic for some institutions which have not implemented business processes allowing them to confirm that mandatory provisions are being met. The report also raised the concern that IT systems could not support central record-keeping of staff members' professional development. By way of a collateral

perspective, Murray and Macdonald (1997) concluded in their study that tertiary teachers lack a strong theory-based understanding of their teaching and rely on tacit experiential knowledge rather than formal training mechanisms, which together do not provide them with a solid foundation to support their teaching practices.

More favourably, the report commended the establishment of educational development units in most TEIs, often in a central role and providing a commonly accepted range of activities and services.

### *Contexts that support teaching/learning support*

Morris (2008) suggests that change is occurring in tertiary education by way of “a shift from educating the masses to a greater emphasis on *successfully* educating the masses” (p. 3). With the increased emphasis on completion rates and retention of students, Morris (2008) suggests that learning support centres will play a more crucial role in promoting students’ success. Although learning support centres initially appeared remedial in nature, they have developed from catering for the special needs of particular students, to recognising that all students have distinctive, differential learning needs. Gettinger and Seibert (2002) have suggested that “study skills are fundamental to academic competence...produce positive outcomes across multiple academic content areas and are for diverse learners” (p. 350).

A New Zealand study carried out by Prebble et al. (2004) defined the primary role of learning support staff as developmental, because they assist students to understand the culture, purposes and conventions of different academic genres and practices. Morris (2008) suggests that learning centres don’t fix problems; but that they teach students the strategies and skills necessary to achieve the outcomes to which they aspire.

In developing a working model for teacher/learning centre interaction, Morris (2008) contends that shared responsibility between discipline and learning centre tutors seems to provide the balance that students are seeking – “and students should be listened to” (p. 21). Irrespective of how best practice services are perceived, however, the reality of provision may be very different. Morris (2008) further states that all too often provision of services is greatly affected by fiscal constraints. “What an institution commits to its level of service, such as Learning Centres, reflects the values it has in relation to success, retention and completion, and to its students and their learning” (Morris, 2008, p. 21)



## ***Teaching and learning, and the impact of teachers' conceptions of teaching***

Much of the motivation for ongoing research into teaching and learning in higher education has been the search for knowledge which has the potential to improve student learning. As a result, over the last 15 years a subtle but noticeable change has started to occur in the way in which institutions operate. This change reflects a paradigm shift from teaching to learning, as discussed by Barr and Tagg (1995). This change has led to the statement that institutions exist “to produce learning” (p. 1). As change agents, teachers have had to focus on the learners in their classrooms, and institutions have had to focus on systems and processes associated with supporting learning.

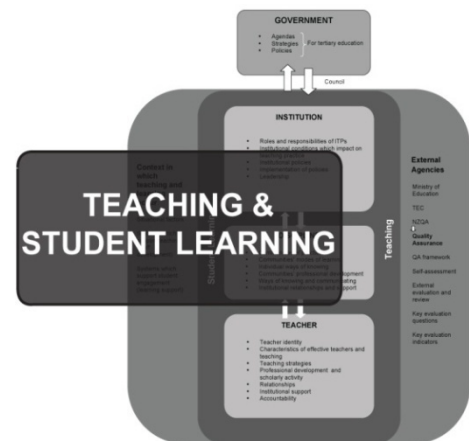


Figure 6: Teaching & student learning

### ***The shift from instruction to learning***

One of the significant contributions to the literature on teaching and learning in higher education is an article by Barr and Tagg (1995) titled “From teaching to learning – A new paradigm for undergraduate education”. In this article Barr and Tagg describe a shift in assumptions and views about how teaching and learning should occur in higher education. According to the authors, institutions should shift their focus from offering teaching to producing learning results – which calls for a paradigm change from instruction to “producing learning with every student by whatever means works best” (p. 1). They further argue that under the previous teacher-centred or instruction paradigm, institutions had become bound by out-of-date traditions which were “contrary to almost every principle of optimal settings for student learning” (p. 2).

If the purpose of the teaching model was to providing instruction through the programmes and courses offered by the institution, the emphasis was on the processes or ways of teaching, rather than on what was learnt or how it was learnt. The learning paradigm, on the other hand, aimed to produce learning and to create effective learning environments. Barr and Tagg (1995) depict the learning model as one that frames learning holistically, recognising that the learner is central in the process.

The support for learner-centred approaches comes from many quarters but is not a new concept in higher education. Carl Rogers' work in the late 1960s supported the notion of learners having more control of their learning environment (Rogers, 1969). More recent studies undertaken by Prebble et al. (2004); Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005); Kuh et al., (2006); McInnis and James (1995); McInnis, James and Hartley (2000); Yorke and Longden (2007); and Krause, Hartley, James and McInnis (2005) articulate a strong case for learner-centred approaches.

### *Understanding student-centred learning*

Understanding the nature of student-centred learning is pivotal to its successful implementation (Entwistle, 2010; Zepke & Leach, 2010; Kuh, 2009). Kember (1997) described two orientations in teaching: the teacher-centred or content orientation, and the student-centred or learning orientation. In presenting his views on the student-centred orientation Kember (1997) suggests that knowledge is constructed by students, and that teachers become facilitators of learning rather than presenters of information. Barr and Tagg (1995) concur, stating that “students must be active discoverers and constructors of their own learning” (p. 21), moving from a traditionally passive state to active participants in their own learning.

Student approaches to their learning and factors that influence these approaches have been investigated by Marton and Saljo (1976); Berglund (2006); Marton and Tsui (2004); Trigwell and Ashwin (2003); Dall’Alba (1991); McKenzie (2003). “Deep” and “surface” approaches are now commonly used terms to describe students’ learning; and much of the research undertaken by Marton and Saljo (1976) into these approaches to learning remains influential in contemporary studies on how student learning may best take place.

### *Teachers’ conceptions of teaching and their impact on teaching*

This gradual shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach naturally carries implications for how teachers view their practice and performance. Research shows that they conceive of and approach their work as teachers in a number of ways (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Carnell, 2007; Wood, 2000; Prosser, Trigwell & Taylor, 1994). Their conceptions of teaching have been shown to relate to measures of the quality of student learning (Kember, 1997). Kember (1997) argues that moves to enhance teaching practice should take account of teachers’ conceptions, stating that “teaching approaches are strongly influenced by the underlying beliefs of the teacher” (p. 255).

Many studies have been undertaken into university teachers’ conceptions of teaching, and phenomenographic approaches have informed many of these studies (Åkerlind, 2005a, 2008, 2011; Carnell, 2007). Because phenomenography records variation in human experiences of the phenomenon under investigation, it provides a serviceable alternative to research into teaching and learning that focuses on similarity and generalisation. In the case of the ITP sector, however, there is no corresponding literature on the way in which tutors view their teaching practice and performance.

Research undertaken within the university sector identifies that teachers who adopt a quantitative or teacher-centred approach view teaching as a process of transmitting information or concepts about their discipline to their students. Teachers who adopt a qualitative or student-centred approach to learning help students to develop and change their views of the subject they are studying, and their views of the world

(Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1999). It is also possible to identify a medium point between these two positions. Prosser, Trigwell and Taylor (1994) found that teachers can adopt an intermediate position which they called teacher/student interaction strategy.

### *Teacher development*

Understanding teachers' conceptions of teaching has been shown to be an effective way of approaching their professional development (Åkerlind, 2003, 2008; Kember, 1997; Wood, 2000). Developing a conceptual understanding of the nature of teaching and learning as opposed to the more traditional focus on developing methods and skills, has seen researchers over the last decade suggest that conceptual change provides a potential means of enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. Raising teachers' awareness comes about through a process in which they reflect on their teaching practices while weighing them against alternative approaches (Bowden, 1990).

Teachers' conceptions of teaching are formed through a complex combination of influences including their experiences as students, the departmental and institutional ethos, the conventions of the discipline, and the nature of classroom dynamics. Because these conceptions of teaching are embedded within teachers' philosophies and practices over time, it consequently becomes a major challenge to change them (Mezirow, 1991).

Kember (1997) also suggests that teachers who focus on teaching approaches but are unwilling or unable to challenge and change their beliefs, may compromise any educational development initiatives that they undertake. He concludes that teachers' conceptions of teaching may alter and evolve over time, and that their development as teachers should be seen as a continuum: "If the link between conceptions of teaching and the quality of student learning is accepted, then it should be possible to improve the latter by changing beliefs about teaching" (Kember, 1997, p. 272).

### *Effective teaching*

While there appears to be no universally accepted definition of effective teaching, several commentators have addressed the concept of good teaching practice: (Lupton, 2012; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Sotto, 2007; Biggs & Tang, 2011). They concur in one particular, namely that effective, good or excellent teaching all promote high-quality student learning (Ramsden, 1992).

Rogers and Horrocks (2010) report that in researching students' perceptions of good teaching, students repeatedly express little doubt about its key elements, emphasising: teachers' enthusiasm for – and knowledge of – their subject matter; regular and timely feedback; a capacity to engage students by expressing key ideas; and the ability to give a clear explanation of these key ideas.

Zepke, Leach and Butler (2009) reporting results into how institutional and non-institutional learning environments influence students' learning, found that the top 12 items of importance to students all focused on teachers and teaching, namely teachers:

- providing prompt feedback
- providing feedback that improves students' learning
- challenging them in helpful ways
- making themselves available to discuss students' learning
- teaching students in ways that enable them to learn
- making the subject really interesting
- valuing students' prior knowledge
- displaying enthusiasm about their subject
- encouraging students to work independently
- encouraging students to work with their peers
- recognising that students may be in employment
- recognising that many students have family and community responsibilities

Chickering and Gamson (1987) provide guidance for educators with the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, as compiled by the American Association of Higher Education, the Education Commission of the United States, and The Johnson Foundation. These seven principles suggest that good practice:

- encourages student-faculty interaction
- encourages cooperation among students
- encourages active learning
- provides prompt feedback
- emphasises time on task
- communicates high expectations
- respects diverse talents and ways of learning

#### *Measures for enhancing the student, teaching and institutional interface*

Cross (2005) contends that “the instruction that we provide, the intellectual climate that we create, and the policy decisions that we make should all start with the question, ‘but will it improve students’ learning?’” (p. 1). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggest that getting the early years of study right is essential, given the gains in students’ critical thinking, knowledge and academic skills that accrue during those years. First-year students are more like to remain in study if they experience regular contact with teaching staff and if they feel supported by their institution.

Research to date approaches the question of student engagement from various perspectives (Bryson & Hand, 2007). A recent New Zealand synthesis of the engagement literature by Zepke and Leach (2010) concludes that institutions can create a climate for engagement. Reason, Terenzini and Domingo (2006) support Zepke and Leach (2010) by contending that if students feel their institution supports them – not only academically but also socially and personally – and if they feel academically challenged, they are more likely to gain academic competence which will see them choosing to remain in their programmes.

Less sanguine are the results of a New Zealand study by Zepke, Leach and Butler (2009) titled “The role of teacher-student interactions in tertiary student engagement”. This study concluded that although relational interactions between students, their teachers and their institutions are of importance to students, “most institutions do not engage...[them] at an optimum level” (p. 78). It was not apparent as to the type of TEI within the post-secondary sector – university, ITP or PTE – that would most benefit from renewed engagement strategies. An earlier study, however, suggested that institutions could improve their level of student engagement over time (Hu & Kuh, 2003).

### *Teaching today's students*

Teaching in higher education can be complex and demanding, reflecting the wide diversity of students and their previous educational and life experiences. In the case of ITPs, teaching traditionally focused on educating adults who were assumed to be self-motivated and who brought a background of experiential knowledge to their learning. They tended to link their learning to meaningful life applications and were aware of the life-changing ramifications of their study (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2011).

This is often not the experience of many of today's younger generation who enter tertiary education with an approach to learning which is almost the direct opposite to that of adults (Jerriam, 2006). These students may miss classes, arrive ill prepared for lectures, fail to hand in assignments, and exhibit little enthusiasm for their study. Many want to be spoon fed, and may take a shallow approach to their learning (Marton & Saljo, 1976). As a consequence, they are unable to transfer learning, i.e. they acquire learning in one area but are unable to repeat the exercise in another (Jerriam, 2006).

Studies have highlighted that teacher/student relationships are highly influential in supporting students and motivating them to stay engaged in their studies (Prebble et al., 2004; Kuh et al., 2006; Yorke & Longden, 2007). Dawes (2004), von Aufschnaiter (2003), and Welzel, von Aufschnaiter and Schoster (1999) report that students are only strongly influenced by one or two teachers within an institution from whom they are most likely to seek advice and support. This personal connection helps students

to achieve a sense of belonging at the institution. A sense of belonging is reported by Bishop (2009) as particularly important to Māori students if they are to record successful learning outcomes.

Other research found that students' perceptions of their learning are linked to the perceptions of teaching staff (Aldridge, Fraser, Murray, Combes, Proctor & Knapton, 2002). Students who are positive about their teachers' teaching are usually equally positive about attending classes and participating in activities (Waldrip & Fisher, 2001). On the other hand, students who were not positive about their teachers or their teaching methods were found to be more likely to curtail or cease engagement with their programme or with the institution.

### ***Enhancing teaching practice***

Light, Cox and Calkins (2009) contend that the quality of teaching offered to students in higher education needs to improve. Enhancing teaching practice involves a number of issues, including specific calls for teachers to: define goals and structures; use appropriate teaching strategies; assess students using valid and reliable methods and materials; evaluate their teaching effectiveness; engage in teaching and educational development; and be prepared to be accountable (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2009).

Biggs and Tang (2011) suggest that education is about conceptual change in students. As an agent in such change, the teacher has an obligation to ensure that course requirements and the objectives of the learning and assessment tasks are clearly outlined at the outset. Race (2007) contends that if students are to learn the desired outcomes of teaching, the teacher's task is to design learning activities for students that are likely to result in successful outcomes. Supporting a call for an aligned system, Biggs and Tang (2011) argue that such a system provides maximum consistency in terms of assessing students against stated objectives. Alignment includes presenting the curriculum with clear objectives; identifying the level of understanding required; using teaching methods which are most likely to realise the objectives; and selecting assessment tasks that address these objectives.

Biggs and Tang (2011) also state that teachers should have a clear idea of what they want students to learn, and be able to stipulate how well each subject area needs to be understood on a topic-by-topic basis. They should also establish course objectives and appropriate performance measures that can test students' real understanding.

Teachers seeking to identify teaching methods and techniques appropriate to higher education can draw on an extensive and helpful body of literature (Race, 2007; Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Cannon & Newble, 2000; Kember & McNaught, 2007). Reiterating that there is no "best" teaching method, Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2011) suggest, notwithstanding, that some methods or combination of methods are

better than others in promoting constructive engagement with learning activities which can lead to changes in students' understanding.

Research also highlights that deeper and more sustained learning takes place when there is intensive student interaction with content; clear curriculum structure; engagement of interest; cooperative student endeavour; responsible choice; and when the teacher takes an informed interest in students' learning (Ramsden, 1992). Biggs and Tang (2011) also challenge teachers to think about learning activities that occur outside of the classroom. Citing problems of lack of resourcing for conventional teaching on campus and the changing nature of tertiary education, Biggs and Tang (2011) suggest that teachers are being constrained to consider activities such as peer teaching, interactive groups and work-based learning; and highlight that all of these activities provide rich learning for students.

The use of technology in teaching is also commended by writers on on-line teaching (Lea & Jones, 2011; Goodfellow & Lea, 2007; Bennett, Marton & Kervin, 2008) who generally agree that technology offers benefits in three main areas of teaching and learning, namely: organising groups of students; instructing students and organising learning; and evaluating student performance. In order for technology to reach its full potential, however, teaching staff are required to devote a considerable amount of time to refining and familiarising themselves with new developments (Giddings, 2004). McClure (2003) suggests that a lack of cohesion when developing on-line programmes has created problems for some institutions, and contends that organisational planning and prioritising of projects – including a designated leader at the outset – are paramount, so that the most needed programmes are developed first.

A growing body of research has focused on the key features of assessment that promote learning (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Biggs & Tang, 2011; Light, Cox & Calkins, 2009; Race, 2007). New Zealand researchers Musgrove, Reid, Matheson, Stewart, Oneroa Stewart, Mitchell and Pandey (2007) found, however, that little research was available on assessment practices in the New Zealand tertiary sector. They suggested further research was needed, given that appropriate assessment is one way of potentially enhancing students' learning outcomes.

Recent research also identifies a shift to the view that teachers should give more attention to assessment *for* learning rather than assessment *of* learning; and that utilising assessment *for* learning is one of the most powerful interventions teachers can introduce to improve teaching and learning (Crisp, 2010). Brew, Riley and Walta (2009) suggest that assessment is about getting to know students and the quality of their learning, and requires assessment tasks that mirror the learning outcomes and allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and level of competency. Ramsden (1992) sounds a note of warning, however, stating that as far as students are concerned, the assessment *is* the curriculum, and that they will learn what they think

they will be assessed on, not what is in the curriculum – or even what has been taught in the classroom.

Student rating surveys are a well-established tool for gaining feedback on teaching effectiveness, and assess particular teaching styles and approaches in terms of perceived performance (Deaker, Stein, Spiller, Terry, Harris & Kennedy, 2010; Slate, LaPrairie, Schulte & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). They have also been administered to satisfy other institutional requirements, including calls for accountability (Williams & Ceci, 1997).

Recent studies continue to confirm the validity and reliability of student ratings (Wright & Jenkins-Guarnieri, 2012; Winchester & Winchester, 2012). Notwithstanding this validation, there is much debate about the usefulness of these ratings. McKeachie (1997) argues that the precise numerical scores generated in student evaluations imply a level of measurement that may simply not have occurred. In other words, the data reported may be misleading. McKeachie (1997) further suggests that the fine measurements generated do not provide differentiation between effective and less effective teaching; and that it would be more effective to have cut-off points that help individuals to make sense of the reported data.

Other writers (Penny & Coe, 2004) claim that the use of student evaluations for administrative purposes is a misappropriation of the data, as students may be unaware of how it will be used. They suggest that students believe their evaluations of teachers are heeded, and that teachers change their behaviour as a consequence even though different cohorts of students have no way of comparing their respective evaluations, and hence are unlikely to be aware of any such changes. If evaluations are gathered at the end of the course, however, they will be of little potential help in enhancing teaching in the current class. Casey, Gentile and Bigger (1997) conclude that student evaluations will only be of use if the data is gathered, reported and interpreted in a careful and considered manner.

Solas (1990) found that data obtained through surveys is often confined to a limited number of dimensions which are more meaningful to the surveyor than to the person being surveyed. The way questions are interpreted may be problematic, as students may respond to them in a different manner to what was intended. Some commentators have also questioned the philosophical justification for using students' ratings to measure the quality of teaching. Simpson and Siguaw (2000) argue that students do not have the knowledge necessary to assess teaching appropriately; and that they are not necessarily the best judges of their teachers' performances. These authors further contend that students often view completing surveys as burdensome, and frequently do not put the necessary effort into the information they are supplying.

Prebble et al. (2004) in synthesising the literature on teaching evaluations reported a general consensus that they were one mechanism for improving teacher



performance, and in turn, student learning. Difficulties arose, however, with the way in which evaluations were interpreted and followed up. The authors concluded that improved mechanisms for administering and processing student feedback could prove to be an efficient and relatively cost-effective way of enhancing teaching performance.

### ***The impact of discipline or subject areas on teacher practices***

Some writers have suggested that a powerful impetus for staff development and conceptual change resides within the discipline or subject area.

These subject or discipline areas are tasked with: exercising academic responsibility for identified programmes or courses; holding their own operating budgets (but may not directly manage them); and playing some part in the recruitment of staff (and possibly in the selection of students) (Becher & Trowler, 2001).

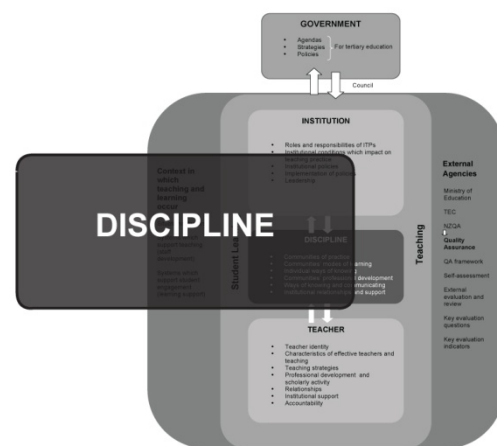


Figure 7: Discipline

Kember (1997) proposed that concepts of teaching at a discipline level impacted on curriculum design and teaching approaches. He suggested that in disciplines where a knowledge transmission orientation dominated, curriculum design and the use of didactic teaching approaches were more in evidence. Conversely, disciplines with a greater leaning towards learning facilitation were more likely to design courses and establish environments that placed greater emphasis on interactive learning.

Becher and Trowler (2001) contend that the way in which a particular discipline organises its professional activities is closely related to the intellectual tasks in which it is engaged. They further contend that the manner in which academics engage with their subject matter – and the narratives they develop about it – are important in the formation of discipline cultures. Strong and successful cultures display a widely shared set of values, a strong ethos and a commitment to common goals. Hence the structuring and development of academic communities which have a shared belief in achieving institutional goals, and similar attitudes, values and accepted ways of behaving, have shown to be effective in responding to institutional imperatives.

Huber (1999) and Neumann, Parry and Becher (2002) claim that disciplines have their own modes of learning. Nicholls (2005), however, questions the means by which academics attain knowledge within their particular disciplines, and further questions their basis for believing it to be the most effective means of meeting set outcomes. Nicholls (2005) goes on to suggest that answers are to be found in the way in which academics teach and learn. Fundamental to understanding concepts relative to their discipline is their ability to think critically about the nature of

knowledge and the way it is formulated and validated. Teaching staff are cautioned to be sensitive to the different understandings of various disciplines, however, particularly if their understandings differ from those of colleagues, as there is no single universally accepted theory on the formulation of knowledge (Jones & Quentin-Merritt, 1999).

## **Summary and conclusions**

This literature review has discussed the multiple factors that impact on teaching and learning in tertiary education. Although a wide variety of literature was reviewed, and much is known about pedagogies of teaching and learning, knowledge gaps are still apparent, particularly in the ITP sector for which minimal research is evidenced. Literature sourced for this review originated primarily from the university sector, and although acknowledged as applicable to other TEIs empirical studies are needed to confirm that this is so.

Under the heading of *government agendas and policy for tertiary teaching* the literature confirmed that tertiary education has undergone a period of major change since the start of tertiary reforms in 1989 that required TEIs and the staff working within them to adapt to a paradigm shift in thinking and to develop new ways of imparting skills and knowledge (McInnis, 2000; Harman, 2000; Colbeck, 2002). These changes have proved difficult to implement, as many staff were not prepared for change and institutions were slow to acknowledge the need for it. Where change has come about, one side issue has been a power struggle between managers and teaching staff to define their respective roles and responsibilities (Scott, Coates & Anderson, 2008). Other writers suggest that: teaching staff have struggled to cope with increased workloads; the rising tide of bureaucracy appears to have compromised teaching and student learning; and academic freedom has been eroded – the cumulative result being that teachers perceive they are limited in their capacity to influence or effect change within their institutions.

Other concerns identified in the literature include the perception that teachers no longer have a major role in the development of their institution's programme portfolio; that they are increasingly frustrated by the devolution of decision making on what is taught and how it is taught in the curriculum; and that increased workloads are detracting from their primary role of teaching. To date there has been little literature undertaken specifically on the ITP sector; and consequently it is unclear as to how teachers within this sector have responded to these issues, or whether they have had any effect in altering tutors' current practice.

The section on *the influence of external agencies on teaching practice* discussed the impact of these organisations on teaching and learning. The literature identified that in recent years quality assurance processes designed to improve educational performance have been introduced into TEIs. Commentators, however, have debated the effectiveness of quality assurance policies in promoting teaching

enhancement, and have suggested that policy writing can be fraught with complexities leading to inconsistent interpretation and application across an institution. The manner in which teaching staff respond to institutional quality assurance processes, their involvement in the development of policies, and their commitment to implementing policies into their daily practice, are issues that would benefit from further targeted research within TEIs.

In the section on *institutional factors which impact on teaching practice* the literature identified that TEIs which aligned their mission with their policies and programmes were the most effective and efficient. Clear and consistent objectives stated in terms of desired outcomes for learning and professional development, were identified as of critical importance in promoting educationally powerful TEIs. The question of institutional leadership was also addressed, a key finding being that managers had little time to provide leadership to teaching staff who were consequently left with little guidance on how to make the changes expected of them. Missing from the literature were teacher perspectives on issues associated with aligning institutional policies – e.g., a TEI's vision and mission statement – with day-to-day teaching activities. Again, a lack of literature pertaining specifically to the ITP sector leaves issues such as the manager/tutor interface and the impetus for making changes that will enhance teaching practice, in need of further investigation.

The section focusing on *the context in which teaching and learning occur* discussed two important contextual issues which impact on teaching and learning outcomes, namely: professional development of teaching staff and learning support systems for students. In terms of professional development, the literature identified inconsistencies in policy relating to requirements and timeframes for teaching staff to acquire adult teaching qualifications. Various authors further raised the possibility that some teachers may not have a strong theory-based understanding of their teaching and are simply relying on tacit experiential knowledge which by itself does not provide a solid foundation to their teaching practice.

In terms of contexts that support student learning, one writer suggested that in developing a working model for teacher/learning centre interaction, shared responsibility between subject/discipline and learning centre tutors appeared to provide the balance that students sought. Questions around financial pressures and institutional recognition of the value of learning centres which represents a possible threat to their ongoing viability, warrant further investigation; as do the views of teaching staff and the value they place on these support services in enhancing teaching practice and improving teaching and learning outcomes.

The section which addressed *teaching and learning, and the impact of teachers' conceptions of teaching* discussed pedagogies of teaching and learning, and acknowledged that a paradigm shift had occurred in recent years from a focus on teaching and teachers to learning and learners. There was a general acknowledgement among writers that understanding student learning was pivotal to

understanding the changes that would lead to successful teaching outcomes. Student approaches to their learning and the factors that influence these approaches are well documented; and there is clear evidence that teaching methodologies, learning tasks, assessment requirements and teachers' workloads all impact to some degree on students' approaches to their learning.

Of major significance to this study is the body of research which shows that teachers conceive of and approach their work as teachers in a number of ways, and that these concepts relate to measures of the quality of students' learning. A number of studies of teachers' conceptions of teaching have been based on a phenomenographic research methodology which has highlighted that teachers are oriented towards different approaches to their teaching. Ongoing study into these approaches and their underpinning rationales will help to provide serviceable data to inform further recommendations for changes that have the potential to enhance current teaching practice.

In the section on *enhancing teaching practice* various suggestions for enhancing teaching practice were presented, reflecting a growing body of research which suggests that education is about conceptual change. Writers adopt differing stances as to the relative merits of teacher-based interventions as opposed to student-generated initiatives in facilitating change. The role of technology, assessment tasks and student evaluations respectively, were also discussed in terms of writers' varying perspectives.

Lastly, the final section discussed *the impact of discipline or subject areas on teacher practices*. If teaching practice is to be enhanced, a powerful vehicle for staff development and conceptual change is located within the discipline or subject area. Further research will identify the extent to which the discipline or subject area does, in fact, represent a powerful site for the development of initiatives that have the potential to enhance teaching practice.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual framework which determined the direction of this research. This framework is based on findings presented in the literature review which examined the multi-dimensional factors that influence teaching within the ITP sector. As a starting point, it was suggested that a potential way of enhancing teaching within the ITP sector was to understand the experiences of tutors teaching and working in an ITP. It was further proposed that phenomenography – a methodology that has been employed in higher education research – would provide an appropriate approach for this research. Phenomenography, combined with a multiple case study approach, was seen as a serviceable vehicle to meet the primary objective of the research and to address the research questions.

#### Ontological and epistemological assumptions

Any research that is undertaken has a basic set of principles with which the study aligns. This basic set of principles represents a worldview which usually derives from various ontological and epistemological assumptions that represent the worldview of the researcher (Marsh & Furlong, 2002).

According to Grix (2002), ontology – defined as the image of social reality upon which theory is based – is the starting point of all research. Bryman (2004) offering a different perspective, contends that social ontology is concerned with the nature of social entities. There are two broad positions with respect to ontology: positivism and relativism. Relativist – also called interpretist and constructionist – approaches conceive of reality as socially constructed (Robson, 2002), referring to a belief that social phenomena and their meanings are created or constructed by social interaction between individuals. This view differs from positivism or objectivist approaches which hold that social phenomena are believed to exist independently from individuals (Bryman, 2004). A constructivist ontological position coupled with the assertion that individuals construct their own reality, underpins this research.

Constructivism challenges the suggestion of objectivism that social actors, as external realities, have no role in fashioning the categories that people employ in helping them to understand the natural and social world. These categories do not have built-in essences as objectivism suggests; instead their meaning is constructed in and through interaction. Constructivism suggests that the social world and its categories are not external to people, but are built up and constituted in and through interaction. The assumption which underpins this research is that tutors working in an ITP construct their own reality through interaction and experience. As these interactions and experiences vary, the meanings that individuals construct will also

vary. The experiences of tutors are understood to yield valuable insights which have potential to answer the research questions.

The ontological perspective of the researcher will affect the manner in which the research is undertaken. The researcher having adopted a constructivist ontological position, the epistemological question remains to be addressed. If ontology is about what we may know, epistemology is about how we come to know what we know (Grix, 2002).

Epistemology addresses the question of what, or what should be, construed as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. In this research the discipline is the social world of the tutor working and teaching in an ITP. Blaikie (2000) suggests that epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge, especially with respect to its methods, validation and “the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality. In short, claims about how what is assumed to exist can be known” (p. 8).

Epistemology focuses on the knowledge-gathering process, and is concerned with developing new models or theories that improve on existing ones. In so doing it is acknowledged that knowledge is not a static entity, and nor does the way of discovering it stand still.

Two contrasting epistemological positions characterise the perspectives of positivism and interpretivism respectively (Grix, 2002). Because a positivist position advocates the application of objective natural sciences methods to the study of social reality and beyond, it was not deemed an appropriate approach to addressing the research questions in this study. Interpretivism, on the other hand, is predicated on the view that a strategy is required which respects the differences between people and the objects under study (Bryman, 2001). Interpretivism assumes the view that the subject matter of the social world – such as teaching staff and their institutions, which is the subject matter of this research – is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. The study of the social world therefore requires a different logic of research procedure, and one that reflects the distinctiveness of human beings.

Discussing various epistemological assumptions, von Wright (1971) suggests that the epistemological clash is one between positivism and hermeneutics (the theory and method of interpreting human action). A positivist approach places emphasis on the explanation of human behaviour, whereas a hermeneutic approach endeavours to understand human behaviour (Bryman, 2004).

An epistemology is nevertheless required to answer the research questions which reflect the position that social reality has meaning for human beings. Consequently, human action is construed as meaningful, i.e. it has meaning for people who act on the basis of the meanings that they attribute to their acts and to the acts of others; and hence the choice of interpretivism to underpin the epistemological perspective which characterises this research. Support for this choice comes from Schultz (1962), who believed it was the role of the social researcher to gain access to

people's thinking and to interpret their actions and social world from their own point of view.

### **Research design – theoretical perspectives**

In selecting a research design, the nature of the perceived connection between theory and research implied by the question, combined with epistemological and ontological considerations will influence the chosen design (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). Methodology is concerned with the logic of inquiry, in particular with the investigation of potentialities and limitations of particular techniques or procedures. The term “methodology” pertains to the science and study of methods and assumptions about the ways in which knowledge is produced (Grix, 2002). Methodology is linked to the methods employed in a research project, which one writer has described as the “techniques or procedures used to collate and analyse data” (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8).

Qualitative and quantitative research designs form two distinct clusters. Quantitative research is understood as a research strategy that emphasises numerical quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Qualitative research, on the other hand, emphasises verbal description in the collection and analysis of data. Quantitative research utilises a deductive approach, or one which tests theory. It incorporates the practices and norms of the natural sciences – positivism in particular – and embodies a view of social reality as an external objective reality (Bryman, 2004). Conversely, qualitative research adopts an inductive approach that emphasises the generation of theory; replaces the practices and norms of the natural sciences – positivism in particular – with a study of the ways in which individuals interpret their social world; and embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation.

Traditionally, education-based research was dominated by quantitative approaches which used positivistic techniques to establish predictive laws and principles (Filstead, 1979). The view that knowledge and the knower were independent of each other prevailed. Quantitative methodologies were seen to offer “formulaic precision” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) in the prediction and control of natural phenomena.

In more recent times there have been strong critiques of the assumptions on which the presumed superiority of quantification was based. Various problems with quantitative approaches surfaced which appeared to challenge conventional wisdom (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and that could potentially be remedied through qualitative approaches. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) summarised the perceived shortcomings of quantitative approaches as:

- Context stripping – which through the enforcement of strict controls removed variables that had the potential to alter the research findings. These controls might have increased the theoretical rigour of the research, but detracted from its relevance and ultimately its scope for generalisation and application.

- The exclusion of the meaning and purpose of human behaviour. Human behaviour cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes which individuals attach to the activities they undertake.
- The inapplicability of general data that has been generated, to individual cases. Although statistically meaningful, the findings could not be directly applied to individual circumstances.

Given the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this research, a research paradigm which assumed that knowledge and the knower are inter-related was required. Consequently, the researcher adopted a qualitative paradigm for this study.

The key to understanding qualitative research is the belief that individuals construct meaning from their interaction with the world in which they live (Merriam and Associates, 2002). This world (or reality) is not stable, single, agreed upon or measurable in a quantitative sense, but represents an entity in which there are multiple constructions and multiple interpretations of reality. Because these realities are understood to be ever-changing, qualitative researchers are drawn to understanding the nature of these interpretations at any given time and in any given context: recording how individuals experience their world and the meanings they attach to these experiences. In interpretivist research, researchers use their skills to try to understand how other people construe their world. From this perspective knowledge is constructed by mutual negotiation and is specific to the context being investigated (Donoghue, 2007).

### ***The characteristics of qualitative research relevant to this study***

*Qualitative research studies are interpretive in character*

The characteristics of qualitative research have been discussed by Denzin and Lincoln, (2008), Merriam and Associates (2002), Eisner (1998) and Patton (1985). Merriam and Associates (2002) suggested the key to understanding qualitative research lies with the view that meaning is socially constructed by individuals' interaction with their world, and that there are many constructions and interpretations of this reality which is in flux and which changes over time. Patton (1985, p. 1) similarly explains that an interpretative approach aims to:

understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what might happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of the setting, what their lives look like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting. (p. 1)



Finally, Eisner (1998) suggested that “interpretative” can have two meanings: researchers “try to account what they have given account of...in short, one meaning of interpretation pertains to the ability to explain why something is taking place...and a second meaning of interpretation pertains to what the experience holds for those in the situation studied” (p. 35). All of these views align with the research design and with the researcher’s selected approach to addressing the research questions.

*The researcher is the main instrument for data collection and data analysis*

Because understanding is the main goal of this research, a researcher who is able to be responsive and adaptive is the ideal vehicle for collecting and analysing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). During the data collection phase the researcher is able to recognise and interpret non-verbal clues, process information quickly, clarify and summarise data for clarity, check for accuracy and explore unanticipated answers. The researcher may also bring shortcomings and biases to a research study, however, that can prove difficult to eliminate. Consequently it is important to identify these factors and monitor their impact on the collection and interpretation of data. Notwithstanding this proviso, Peshkin (1988) considered that a researcher’s “subjectivities” (p. 18) can actually be “virtuous”, as these personal qualities, combined with the data, form a combination of accrued knowledge and understanding that can contribute materially to the research findings.

*Qualitative studies are naturalistic or field focused*

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described field-focused inquiry as naturalistic, implying that qualitative researchers observe, interview, record, describe, interpret and appraise settings as they are. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggested that qualitative researchers go to particular settings because they are concerned with *context*, further adding that understanding is best gained within those settings in which the data gathering takes place.

*Qualitative research is inductive*

Merriam and Associates (2002) suggested that qualitative researchers frequently undertake study because there is no existing theory or explanation of a situation or phenomenon from which conclusions may legitimately be drawn. Qualitative research may therefore be seen as a process which is inductive, or one in which the researcher gathers data to build up concepts or theories rather than deductively postulating or hypothesising in accordance with a positivist stance.

An inductive approach was consequently deemed appropriate to this study, in that the views of ITP tutors had not previously been researched. This research aimed to synthesise these views in order to gain insight into the meanings that tutors attach to teaching and working in an ITP, and ultimately to identify changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice.

### *Qualitative data is richly descriptive*

In reporting qualitative research, researchers convey their findings through words and pictures, leading to what Geertz (1973) called “thick descriptions”. These descriptions dig deeply into identifying the meaning that events have for people who experience them. Merriam and Associates (2002) emphasised the importance of using quotes to support research outcomes; and together these descriptions and quotes define the descriptive nature of qualitative research.

### *Qualitative research emphasises the processes, meaning and understanding of phenomena*

The search for meaning is closely linked with the interpretative aspect of research. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than with products or outcomes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Understanding how people derive meaning from situations, how certain practices come to be accepted, and how attitudes and beliefs become ingrained, are all of interest to the researcher. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality, and the importance to the researcher of understanding how meaning is adduced.

### *The criteria for evaluating qualitative research differ from those of quantitative research*

Strauss and Corbin (1990) contend that the “usual canons of ‘good science’... require redefinition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research” (p. 250). Merriam and Associates (2002) indicated that much debate has taken place as to the nature of validity and reliability in qualitative research. Quantitative research employs evaluative criteria including validity, reliability, objectivity and statistical generalisability (Hammersley, 1992). By contrast, Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 33) assign criteria to constructivist/interpretive research that include “trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability”. Lincoln and Guba (1985) had previously cited credibility, neutrality or confirmability, consistency or dependability, and applicability or transferability, further suggesting that the quality of dependability in qualitative research closely aligns with that of reliability in quantitative research. Reliability and validity (Åkerlind, 2002; Sandberg 1997, 2005; Booth, 1992) were the criteria adopted to evaluate phenomenographic research – the prime methodology chosen for this research project.

### ***Overview of phenomenography***

Marton and Booth (1997, p. 110) characterise phenomenography as a “research specialisation” which focuses on the way something is experienced. Marton (1986, p. 31) described it as a research method adapted for mapping qualitatively different ways in which people “experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them”. That is, the researcher chooses to study how people *experience* a given phenomenon, not simply to study

the phenomenon itself. A comprehensive description is offered by Trigwell (2000) who stated that:

the key aspects of a phenomenographic research approach...are that it takes a relational (or non-dualist) qualitative, second order perspective, that it aims to describe the key aspects of the variation of the experience of a phenomenon rather than the richness of individual experiences, and that it yields a limited number of internally related, hierarchical categories of description of variation. (p. 77)

Phenomenography grew out of a range of qualitative approaches in phenomenology (Hasselgren & Beach, 1996). It began with research in the 1970s into student learning in educational settings (Marton, 1981). It is important to note the differences between phenomenography and phenomenology. Phenomenology was initially considered as a potential framework for this study, given that it is characterised by multiple perspectives which taken together, “attempt to understand experiences through the lenses of those describing the experience...while recognising one’s own perspective and the influence of the perspective” (Eyring, 1998, p. 141).

Given that phenomenology focuses on discerning the essence of the experience (Hasselgren & Beach, 1996), however, it was deemed unsuitable for the purposes of this research. Although phenomenology and phenomenography both focus on human experiences of phenomena, phenomenography has a particular focus on the perceived variations within these experiences. The term “ways of experiencing” has been used in this study alongside the word “conceptions”, as more aptly describing the nature of holistic experiences (Hazel, Conrad & Martin, 1997).

Important characteristics of phenomenography which are of relevance to this study include:

- A focus on the variation in ways in that people experience and describe phenomena
- Use of open and explanatory data collection methods
- An emphasis on interpretive analysis
- The use of “categories of description” that describe key qualitatively different ways in which individuals experience particular phenomena (Svensson, 1994)

Trigwell (2000) described phenomenography as having a non-dualist ontological perspective; i.e. the object and subject are not separate and independent of each other. He also described it as qualitative in a grounded way, in that it aims to explore and describe phenomena from the data, rather than attempting to fit the data to predetermined categories. Lastly, he characterised it as a second order approach, investigating the experiences of other people rather than those of the researcher. Because it focuses on the variation in ways in which people experience a particular aspect of the world, it is able to present the results in sets of categories that are

internally related. These differences may be between individuals or within an individual, but categories of description are at an aggregated level and have a second order or relational nature (Marton & Booth, 1997). The focus of phenomenographic research is on qualitatively describing the variations and relationships between categories of description, which distinguishes it from phenomenology and related research approaches.

The findings of a phenomenographic study are constructed as “outcome spaces”, which represent the internal relationships between the categories of description (Bruce 1997). The unit of analysis is not the participants – in this case the tutors in the ITP sector – but the variation in their relationship with the described phenomenon, i.e. the experience of working and teaching in an ITP.

Since the early 1970s when phenomenography first emerged from the field of education, there have been a variety of approaches to phenomenographic research. Three strands of development are apparent. Marton (1986) suggested that the first of these strands comprised content-related studies which compared students’ learning outcomes to their learning approaches. The second strand of research focused on the context of learning in particular domains such as economics and physics. The third strand investigated the way in which people view aspects of their perceived reality in subject areas within and outside of education, e.g. nursing and politics.

The first line of development described by Marton (1986) was “pure” phenomenography in that it presents a range of diverse ways in which people experience and perceive of a phenomenon. In contrast, the third strand – “developmental” phenomenography – investigates how people experience an aspect of their world, and the means by which they – or others – are able to modify these conceptions of how their world operates (Bowden, 2000). In this study the researcher has adopted a developmental – as opposed to a “pure” approach – to explore tutors’ experiences and understanding of working in an ITP.

Within “pure” phenomenographic research traditions, data analysis organises perceptions that emerge from the data into specific categories of description (Marton, 1986). These categories are subsequently sorted into a hierarchy based on their level of comprehensiveness to form an outcome space. However, not all phenomenographic research results in data that can be organised into a hierarchical structure (Francis, 1996). Developmental approaches require researchers to stay true to the data; and in the case of this research, categories of description were established through aggregation of the same – or similar – responses and viewpoints.

### ***Criticism of phenomenography***

Not all researchers support phenomenography. Richardson (1999) was critical of the conceptual, epistemological and methodological basis of phenomenographic research, and suggests that phenomenographic approaches have been troubled by

“a lack of specificity and explicitness” (p. 53) around the methods used for the collection and analysis of data, and the conceptual underpinning of those methods.

Further criticism of phenomenographic research centres on the tendency of researchers to equate experiences with accounts of those experiences (Richardson, 1999). Saljo (1979) suggested that at times there may be a discrepancy between the researcher’s observations of participants’ experiences of a particular phenomenon, and how participants themselves actually describe these experiences. Richardson (1999) suggested that researchers should critically examine the nature of the interview environment and the language used by participants. Orgill (2002) countered this criticism by acknowledging that people’s accounts of their experiences may not equate to the ways in which they experienced phenomena; but as there is no physical way to examine people’s brains to obtain the data, the only means of understanding how people experience particular phenomena is to ask them to describe their experiences.

Acknowledging that researchers in general may misinterpret what participants intend to convey, the researcher for this study undertook training and guidance on the nature of phenomenographic interviews with experienced phenomenographic researchers. This training aimed to address issues of concern identified in the literature about phenomenographic approaches to interview techniques and data analysis. Further, to preserve impartiality, the data from the interviews was transcribed by a person independent of the researcher.

Webb (1997) questions claims that phenomenographers are able to be neutral foils in the process of analysing research data. He suggests that researchers have certain experiences and hold certain theoretical beliefs which potentially influence their data analysis and categorisation of the degree of variation in participants’ perceptions. To overcome these concerns, Webb (1997) calls for phenomenographic researchers to make explicit their backgrounds and beliefs, so that readers of their research are informed of variables that may potentially affect the results.

A further criticism of phenomenography – that “the researcher purports to categorize an individual conception with a description that denies the individual voice” (Bowden & Walsh, 2000, p. 16) – influenced the design of this study. As individual voices needed to be heard, the researcher carried out more in-depth analyses of four participants’ experiences utilising case study methodology.

Other criticism is directed at the reliability of phenomenographic studies. Answering these criticisms, Marton (1986) acknowledged it was possible that two researchers working independently could devise different categories of description from the same data. To address this concern he proposed that once the categories of description have been established, the researcher must describe them in a way that is clear and unequivocal to other researchers. He also suggested that once categories were

developed and described, this categorisation would become useful to other researchers who could utilise the results of the study.

### ***Choice of qualitative research approach***

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) identified a variety of empirical methods that can be applied to qualitative research including case study; interview; introspection; life story; personal experience; artefacts; cultural texts and productions; and observational, historical, interactional and visual texts. These methods can provide descriptions of people's lives and the meanings that they attach to their lives. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) recommended that researchers employ a range of interconnected practices in order to gain an understanding of the issues that define their research questions.

Given the nature of the research questions, case study was selected as a complementary methodology to phenomenography for collecting and analysing the data that addresses these questions. Yin and Davis (2007) suggested that case study methodology provides researchers with an in-depth understanding of real-life phenomena that encompass important contextual conditions. Merriam (2001) suggested that insights gained from case studies can directly influence policy, procedures and future research. Hakim (1987) and Yin (2009) both noted that case studies could be single and multiple-case in design. Given the nature of the research questions, the researcher has adopted both a multiple and an individual case study design for this project.

### ***How case study addresses the research questions***

Case study has strong traditions within educational research. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) suggested that case study's flexibility allows researchers to apply a variety of methods and avenues to answering their research questions. Merriam (1988) noted that case study design is a particularly serviceable tool in exploring the processes and dynamics of educational practice.

Some confusion has arisen, however, with the terminology used in case study models, particularly with respect to process and product. Yin (2009), for example, described case study in terms of process, as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). Stake (1995) on the other hand focused on the unit of study, and Merriam (1988) focused on the end product: "a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). Wolcott (1992) discussed case study as an end product, and Smith (1978) suggested that case study was an intensive description and analysis of a single unit or a bounded system such as an individual, group or community – a description that aligns with the approach to this current research.

### *Strengths and limitations of case study design*

Merriam (1988) suggests that case study research is able to address the nature of applied research and the questions deriving from it, and provides a potential means of answering these questions. He further suggests that as the research design is conceptualised, it becomes apparent its strengths outweigh its limitations.

The features that provide the rationale for selecting case study research, however, may also represent the factors that limit its scope and applicability. Merriam (1988) suggests that limitations to a researcher's time and resources may compromise the aim of obtaining rich descriptions from data analysis. Further, the descriptions themselves may be too lengthy, detailed and time consuming to read and apply in practical situations. Guba and Lincoln (1981) noted one limitation of case study research is that it may lead to over-simplification or exaggeration of its subject, resulting in inconclusive or distorted research outcomes.

Riley (1963) argued that a further limitation of case study design resides in the researchers themselves, who are the prime vehicle for data collection and analysis. Researchers may be offered minimal help and support, and have little or no training in interview and observation techniques, and in analysing and interpreting data. Consequently they may be constrained to rely on their own abilities and instincts: a circumstance that can lead to the frequently contentious ethical issue of researcher bias. If researchers are able to select, highlight or play down particular issues arising from the data, inevitably this raises questions around the credibility, dependability and confirmability of the research findings (Newby, 2010).

### *Types of case study research*

Case study can be described in various ways. Merriam (1998) referred to three types – descriptive, interpretive and evaluative – the choice of which is determined by the overall intent of the study to which it is applied. Descriptive case study presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under review; interpretive case study explores conceptual assumptions prior to data gathering; and evaluative case study is characterised by the application of description, explanation and judgement. Yin (2003) also referred to three types of case study but classified them as exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. He suggested that descriptive designs aim to present a complete description of the phenomenon within its context. Merriam (1998) further suggested that descriptive designs are particularly suited to situations where little research has previously been undertaken, and in studies that focus on the application of research to practice.

Descriptive case study was identified as an appropriate approach for this research, particularly given the paucity of previous research on teaching practice within the ITP sector.

Case studies may be used in a variety of ways in accordance with the objective of the research (Newby, 2010). A single case study deals with one situation only (e.g. the practice of a single teacher). Multiple case studies (e.g. the teaching practice of a number of teachers or teaching practices within several institutions) can be designed to be repetitive (i.e. to test the findings of earlier case studies), or comparative (in which case the characteristics of the cases are varied in order to assess the significance of the emergent differences). Differences may also be identified on an holistic basis (e.g. a whole-institution study on the research subject that also reveals the institutional culture), and in an embedded study in which an institutional section or department is reviewed in detail. In the case of this research an embedded case study design was chosen to establish the relationship between the experiences of individuals and the aggregated experiences of all participants; and in so doing revealed the richness of individual experiences and understanding of working in an ITP.

#### *Multiple case study design*

The research questions in this study focus on the ITP sector and not simply on a single institution. Merriam (1998) suggested that multiple case study design is used when the researcher collects data from more than one case. The more cases studied, the greater the potential variation across cases which can lead to more insightful interpretation. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that multiple case study design can “strengthen the precision, validity and the stability of the findings” (p. 29). Yin (1994) similarly suggested that evidence from multiple sites or cases was frequently more compelling than that from a single case, and commended the use of a replication research design in multiple case study analysis.

#### *Individual case study design*

Individual case studies are used to reveal individual experiences or experiences in action. Stake (1995) states that individual case study is used because “we are interested in them [individuals] for both their uniqueness and commonality. We seek to understand them. We would like to hear their stories” (p. 1).

#### ***Combining case study and phenomenography***

Newby (2010) suggested that case study can be used in a variety of ways, corroborating the views of Merriam (1998) who suggested that case study is a relatively basic research design that doesn't specify a particular method for data collection and analysis. Merriam (1998) further claimed that case study designs can accommodate a variety of disciplinary and philosophical perspectives. In this way case study approaches can be combined with other methodologies to strengthen quality assurance issues associated with qualitative research design.

The researcher's decision to pair case study with phenomenography enabled the individual and aggregated voices of teaching staff to be heard. Case study analysis



provided a comprehensive, unitary and in-depth exposition of four particular tutors' views that complemented the grouped understandings deriving from the wider research sample. Combining case study and phenomenography also allowed the researcher to triangulate the findings by analysing respondents' individual – as well as aggregated – experiences.

### **Summary**

This section examined the theoretical and conceptual framework that determined the direction of the research, and explained and justified the choice of a qualitative, interpretative approach. An interpretative approach has the potential to provide rich, descriptive data which is able to report individuals' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings (Hakim, 1987).

Both multiple and individual case studies combined with a phenomenographic approach were identified as an appropriate and serviceable means of collecting and analysing data to address the research questions. Both case study and phenomenography are identified as having inherent limitations, and these limitations have been managed through rigorous attention to the methods of data collection and by evaluating the researcher's perspective at each stage of the research process.

### **The research methods**

A research plan guides the data collection and analysis phases of a research project (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996). It provides the framework that identifies the type of data to be collected, its sources, and the procedures in place for data collection. An explicit account of the methods and progress of the research as it unfolds is required to address reliability and validity issues, and consequently to substantiate the credibility of the research. The overarching research plan summarising the main phases of the research is presented as Figure 3.1 following.

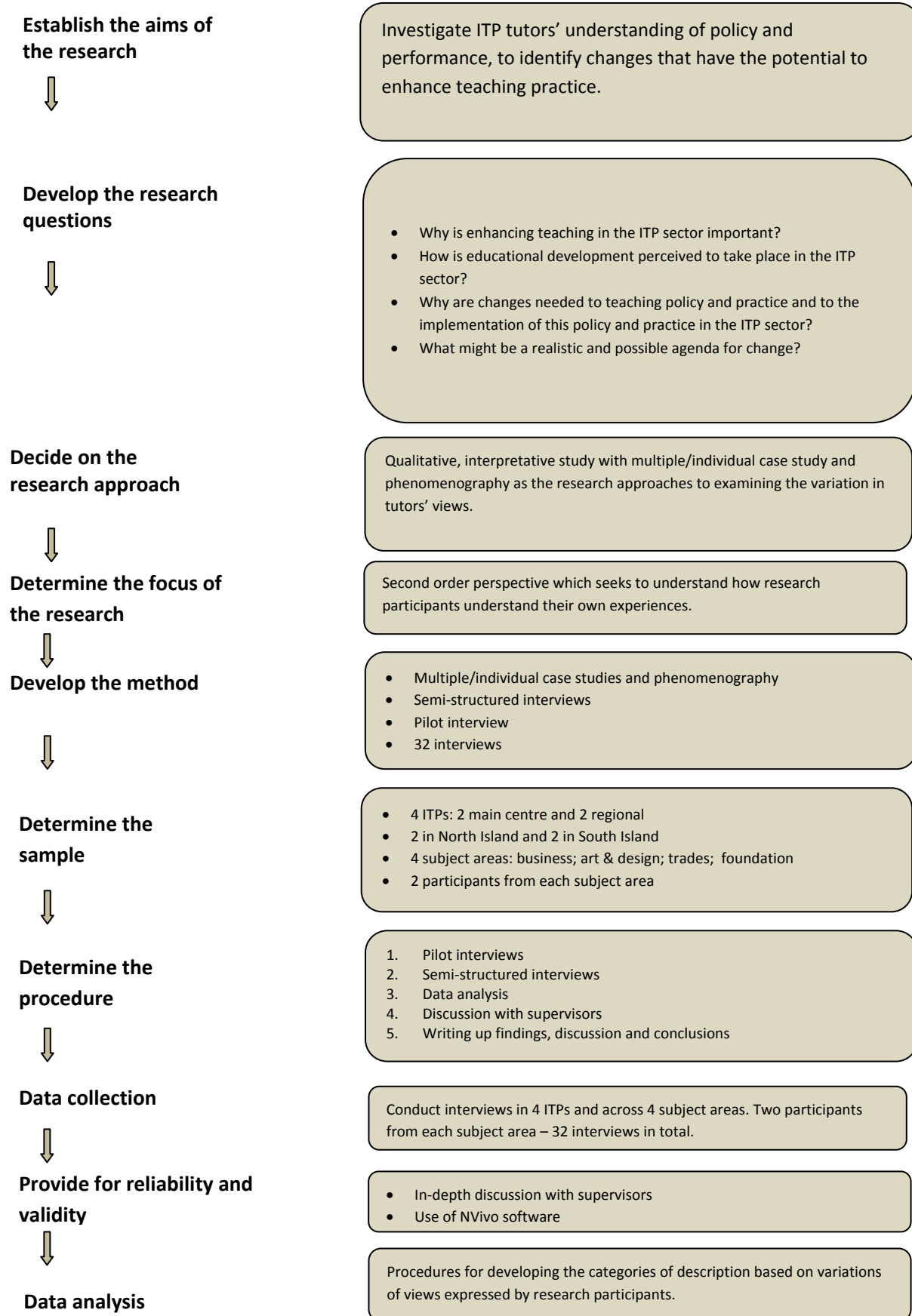


Figure 8: The research approach (Diamond, 2007).

Data collection occurred between June and August 2011. This period coincided with the introduction of self assessment and external evaluation processes.

### ***Justification of chosen research methods***

The choice of the research method was influenced by the research questions and the research methodology that had been adopted, namely: a qualitative/interpretive design pairing case study and phenomenography.

Åkerlind (2005) stated that the aims of phenomenographic research carry certain implications for the approaches that are used to collect and analyse data. Together these approaches distinguish phenomenography from other qualitative research traditions. In phenomenographic research, the preferred method of data collection is the semi-structured interview (Marton & Booth, 1997). Interviews are audio-taped and later transcribed verbatim. These transcriptions constitute the empirical data for qualitative analysis which follows prescribed, consecutive steps that allow the researcher to identify similarities and differences in the views of the research participants.

Ashworth and Lucas (1998) highlight that the outcome of phenomenographic research is the formation of categories of description in which the qualitatively different ways of conceiving a phenomenon are hierarchically and logically interrelated. Kember (1997) noted, however, that not all phenomenographic studies present outcome spaces that are hierarchically ordered. Francis (1996) reminds researchers to be faithful to the data and asserts that “the more faithful we, as researchers, can be to individuals’ conceptions of an aspect of reality, the better we are able to understand” (p. 204). Morris (2006) identified four different approaches in relation to the hierarchical ordering- or not- of an outcome space in phenomenographic research. At the outset of this present research study it was not known how the categories of description would be related. As data analysis proceeded the logical relationship between the categories of description in the outcome space was found to be related to each other through aggregation or the combining of similar but independent parts into a whole to form a category of description.

### ***The research process***

The fieldwork for this research was undertaken across four ITPs and within four subject areas during mid 2011. Initially the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of each ITP was approached by the researcher, requesting permission to research within the institution. It was planned to address any specified ethical requirements after permission to research within the ITP had been granted. In the event, only one ITP asked for institutional *Permission to Research* forms to be filled in. No further action was requested.

One ITP declined to participate in this project. This ITP had recently been disrupted by a natural disaster, and its focus was on returning the institution to a normal working state. A back-up institution which matched the demographic of the ITP that had withdrawn was approached, and subsequently agreed to participate.

Research took place during the period May to August 2011. Prior to this time a pilot survey was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the semi-structured interview questions and to fine-tune any particulars prior to the interviews within the four chosen ITPs. This pilot survey was conducted in an ITP outside the research sample, and information from the pilot interviews was neither reported nor used as part of the research data, given its potential to contain shortcomings or inconsistencies that could compromise or invalidate the final results (Bowden, 2005).

Bowden (2005) contends that pilot interviews form an important part of the data collection process, as they enhance the researcher's phenomenographic interviewing skills and help to identify whether or not the initial questions elicit the types and range of views necessary to focus the research. Åkerlind (2005b) adds it is frequently the case that follow-up prompts are more useful than the initial questions. As these follow-up prompts have to be formulated in accordance with participants' statements, it is important to practise identifying and asking appropriate questions. Bowden (2005) states that assured interview techniques are vital to the validity of the outcomes, as the interviews form the sole data collection method. No evidence exists beyond the transcripts to inform the subsequent analysis and results.

### ***Determining the sample***

In order to answer the research questions it was deemed important to identify ITPs that offered variation in experiences within the sample group. Criteria used to determine final choice included: geographical spread, location (a mix of regional and urban ITPs), a range in EFTS numbers, complementariness of programme offerings, and financial and academic viability. ITPs that were acknowledged as performing inconsistently – academically or financially – were ruled out on the basis that disaffected tutors could respond differently than if the institution had been in a more favourable position. Ultimately four ITPs were chosen and subsequently agreed to participate in the research: two from the North Island and two from the South Island. Two of these ITPs are located in urban areas and two are in regional settings.

Four subject areas were randomly chosen from a list of programmes which were identified as common to each ITP: trades, business, art and design, and foundation studies. Two tutors – those who responded first – from each of the four subject areas in the ITP were chosen to participate. Thus eight interviews were conducted in each institution: 32 interviews in total.

A sample size of 32 was deemed appropriate and aligned with comparable phenomenographic studies. Trigwell (2000) indicated that a sample of 15-20 subjects was considered to be sufficiently large and able to reveal the sought-after range of viewpoints, at the same time providing for a targeted and defensible interpretation of the research findings. Other phenomenographic studies reported the use of larger numbers of participants: Brew (2001) citing 57, and Åkerlind (2004) citing 30.

### ***Contacting the ITPs and participants***

In the first instance the researcher made written contact with the CEO of each ITP (see Appendix A), seeking permission to undertake research within the institution. Background information on the research was provided at this stage (see Appendix B). Once permission was obtained from the CEO, the researcher intended to obtain a list of all tutors teaching in the chosen subject areas and invite them to participate in the research. However, the CEOs chose to ask the relevant senior managers to e-mail the invitation letter to tutors, and invite interested parties to respond directly to the researcher (see Appendix C). The first two tutors from each subject area who agreed to participate in the research were selected for this study. It is noteworthy that although ITPs expressed an interest in participating, responses were slow and institutions required reminder notices.

Subjects selected for this research were contacted via telephone to confirm their participation, after which a consent form was sent and signed (see Appendix D). Dates and times for the interviews were subsequently organised with each participant.

### ***Data collection in phenomenographic research***

The interview is the most common form of data gathering in the phenomenographic tradition (Marton, 1986). The aim of the semi-structured interview is “to have the participant reflect on his/her experiences and then relate those experiences to the interviewer in such a way that the two come to a mutual understanding about the meanings of the experiences (or of the account of the experiences)” (Orgill, 2002, p. 2).

An opening question was proposed for the interviews, namely:

Can you tell me what it's like to work in an ITP?

Probing questions followed if the main question did not yield sufficient, serviceable data; e.g.:

- Tell me what you think effective teaching is?
- How do you know that your teaching is effective?
- Tell me what changes *you* could make to improve the outcomes of teaching.
- Tell me what changes could be made by *this institution* to improve the outcomes of teaching and learning.
- Tell me how you believe teaching practice is impacted on by the requirements to comply with institutional policies and practices.
- Tell me your reaction to quality assurance initiatives and the impact you believe they have on improving your teaching practice.
- Explain the impact that your subject group has on your teaching practice.

- Tell me what forms of training and development would be best to help develop your teaching skills.

The proposed questions aligned with the research design of comparable phenomenographic studies. Semi-structured interviews usually take between 30 minutes and several hours (Walsh, 1994). Once the initial question has been asked, follow-up questions invite participants to elaborate on their experiences and explain what they mean by particular concepts or ideas. Follow-up questions are extracted from what the participant has already said, and are not formed from the interviewer's predetermined ideas and questions. Hence different interviews may follow different pathways. The interview becomes a dialogue encouraging participants to reflect on phenomena as they have experienced them, and to explore the various implications of these phenomena jointly – and as fully as possible – with the interviewer (Marton, 1994a).

Phenomenographic literature discusses “bracketing” (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000; Bowden, 2005), which refers to the researcher setting aside previous experiences, assumptions and understandings of the phenomena under investigation so as not to influence participants' accounts of their experiences. However as noted in Ireland, Tambyah, Neofa and Harding (2008), the researcher's behaviour must not become contrived or otherwise impact negatively on participants. An approach of “gentle enthusiasm” was adopted by the researcher to establish a balance between personal involvement and bracketing.

It is important that in the course of interviews the researcher should not query the validity of the world or experience described by participants (Ashworth & Lucas, 1998). In this way the researcher maintains a position of impartiality and experiences data gathering as a process of discovery.

A possible disadvantage of semi-structured interviews is discussed by Bruce (2001) who suggests that compared to questionnaires which involve short, focused written answers, semi-structured interviews have the potential to elicit extraneous data. This possible disadvantage was acknowledged in planning this research project, albeit there was no intention to limit the answers of participants at any stage during the interviews. Participants were encouraged to determine factors that were important to them when giving meaning and substance to their experiences.

As noted, the interviews were transcribed verbatim by a person not associated with the researcher. These transcriptions subsequently formed the subject matter for discussion and analysis (see Appendix E).

### ***Data analysis***

A phenomenographic data analysis sorts the perceptions that emerge from the collected data into specific categories of description (Åkerlind, 2005b; Marton, 1986). In this study the researcher examined the transcripts of participants' interviews,

looking for similarities and differences among the reported views and experiences. Initial categories were developed that described different people's experiences of working in an ITP. Svensson (1997) contends a major aim of data analysis is to ensure that the categories of meaning which emerge from the data are not defined prior to the research. Bowden and Walsh (1994) propose an alternative approach that draws on the literature to create the theoretical categories. In this way, the authors suggest, the outcomes are grounded in existing research. For this study the literature guided development of the systems framework by suggesting where the groupings may lie, but ultimately the data created the categories of description.

Orgill (2002) suggests that if the interview has covered different topics, the researcher should aim to develop an outcome space for each topic. Pre-requirements for the development of categories are internal consistency and parsimony (Orgill, 2002), i.e. finding an outcome space that includes the minimum number of categories to cover all the variations arising from the data.

For this study, different categories of description were developed for each theme identified on the systems framework. Qualitative measures were employed to determine the categories and sub-categories that illustrate the range of experiences relative to each category. The themes that emerged most frequently were used to establish the five categories of description.

Hasselgren and Beach (1997) suggest that analysis is a process of discovery, whereas Bruce (2002) describes it as a process of construction. Åkerlind (2002) states that researchers need to keep an open mind during the analysis stage, as categories can change several times and the researcher must not become fixed on the categories that have already been determined. She suggests that the researcher must maintain a constant focus on the transcripts as the only admissible source of evidence. Green (2005) adds that the researcher must focus on the transcripts and categories as a whole, and not on individual transcripts or categories in isolation. Writers differ, however, in their views as to how much of a transcript should be reviewed at one time. Bowden (1994) suggests that researchers should review the whole transcript; Prosser (1994) suggests segments of each transcript; and (Svensson and Theman, 1983) suggest a selection of quotes.

### *The data analysis process*

The approach undertaken in this research was to review the whole transcript initially in order to establish interrelated themes and meanings, and subsequently to consider the transcripts in terms of the themes developed for the systems framework.

The overwhelming amount of data led to the researcher establishing the categories by analysing the data in batches. Initially ten transcripts were reviewed to establish the categories, and subsequent transcripts were analysed to confirm or modify these categories. Once the initial categories were chosen the researcher re-examined the

interview transcripts. The second and third reviews of the data resulted in modifications, additions or deletion of some categories. A fourth examination of the data checked for internal consistency within the categories of description. The process of modification and data review continued until the categories were consistent with the interview data: a process which inevitably proved time-consuming. As Marton (1986) suggested, there is a decreasing rate of change which eventually stabilises the whole system of meanings.

The categories were subsequently sorted into a hierarchy based on their level of comprehensiveness. This hierarchical representation of the categories of description is known as an outcome space (Åkerlind, 2005b). However, a hierarchical – or a less-to-more-complex – representation was difficult to achieve. Hierarchical representation assumes that categories which are lower ordered are able to be identified in more complex categories. This ordering was not achievable from the data obtained from the fieldwork for this research. Francis (1996) reminds the researcher to be true to the data, and in so doing the researcher believed that the categories were related through aggregation: the combining of similar but independent parts into a whole.

Once the initial five categories of description were identified, a description of each category was written and supported with illustrative quotes from the transcripts.

### ***Individual case study analysis***

Further analysis was undertaken to establish the relationship between the experiences of individuals selected for the four case studies, and the aggregated experiences of all participants. Categories found during the phenomenographic analysis of the aggregated data were re-interpreted in terms of the individual experiences to provide examples of these experiences in action. The analysis of the case studies included selection of cases and the actual process of re-examination of transcripts. After analysis of the interview transcripts on an individual participant basis was complete, four tutors were chosen to provide contrasting perspectives of their experiences of teaching and working in an ITP. These tutors were selected on the basis that they illustrated the range of phenomena in the study and most comprehensively represented their subject areas. The transcripts of the four individual cases were re-examined in order to identify key themes and to gain insights into the personal meanings which participants ascribed to them.

The final analysis of the results constituted the triangulation of key themes from the individual case study analysis with key themes from the aggregated experiences.

### **The role of the researcher**

The potential for interpretative bias by the researcher in this study was minimised by making the data from the interviews available to individual participants for review. It should be noted that only one participant requested to see the transcribed interview



data, but did not respond to repeated requests to confirm the accuracy of this data (see Appendix F). The researcher also had in-depth discussions with her supervisors as to the basis for establishing the categories of description.

Another mechanism utilised to promote the researcher's impartiality was NVivo software: a computing package designed to analyse qualitative data. Following analysis of the data using traditional phenomenographic analysis, this data was analysed again by way of NVivo. The use of NVivo helped to confirm the results obtained from traditional analysis. The researcher was able to confirm that the themes chosen for the five categories of description and their sub-categories were, in fact, the themes that emerged the most frequently from the data.

### **Issues of reliability and validity**

Kvale (1996) describes approaches and techniques employed to improve data gathering and analysis as the quality of craftsmanship in the research. Guba and Lincoln (1985) refer to the trustworthiness of the research. Because categories of description are developed by the researcher, however, they may be liable to subjectivity. For these reasons issues of trustworthiness in phenomenographic research are continually debated (Bowden & Green, 2005; Marton, 1994a; Sandberg, 1997; Åkerlind, 2005b). The key issues identified may be summarised under the headings of reliability and validity.

#### ***Reliability***

Kvale (1996) indicated that reliability generally refers to replicability of results which is achieved by using appropriate methodological procedures that promote consistency and quality in the interpretation of data. Phenomenography renders replicability problematic, however, because researchers' analysis and interpretation of the data is determined by their personal experiences and unique interpretative insights. Booth (1992) suggests that this subjectivity limits the reliability of the results.

Sandberg (1997; 2000) suggested that reliability in phenomenographic studies revolves around the researcher's interpretative awareness, or the manner in which interpretations have been controlled and checked during various stages of the research. Important stages where interpretations should be checked are when:

- formulating the research questions
- selecting the participants
- interviewing the participants
- analysing the transcripts
- reporting the final categories of description

Kvale (1996) and Hales and Watkins (2004) provide a different perspective, proposing that research reliability may be enhanced by utilising more than one

researcher to analyse the data. A team approach allows for two strategies to be employed to improve reliability: utilising two or more researchers independently coding the data that derives from the interview transcripts; and a research team that develops categories of description through ongoing dialogue and discussion. Sandberg (1997) labelled this approach “inter judge reliability” (p. 205), in which reliability is determined by the extent to which other researchers are able to validate the conceptions and categories determined by the first researcher.

Because a team approach was not appropriate for this research the researcher elected to apply a variation of the concept of “inter judge reliability”. The researcher was responsible for analysing the data and developing the categories of description. After these categories of description were identified and described the researcher had an in-depth discussion with her supervisors, describing how the analysis was undertaken and how the categories of description were derived. A further reliability check as suggested by Sandberg (1997, 2005) involved the researcher fully describing the interpretative stages, outlining and justifying her perspective and considerations at each stage of the research.

### ***Validity***

Validity in qualitative studies refers to the degree to which research findings are reflective of the phenomenon under investigation (Åkerlind, 2002). To promote this congruence, researchers are challenged to ensure that: the sample is appropriate, interview questions are non-leading, chosen methodologies are rigorously applied, and data analysis follows established guidelines (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). Booth (1992) argues, however, that the validity of a phenomenographic approach resides in the researcher’s ability to justify and defend the outcome space and research findings. Kleiman (2007) offers a different stance, suggesting that validity derives from the interpretative coherence and rigour brought to the research, and in the capacity of the findings to argue and to persuade.

Validity or trustworthiness in this research reflects Sandberg’s approach to validity as determined by knowledge that can be verified consistently: “throughout the research process we must continue to question and check interpretations of the research object under inquiry” (Sandberg, 1994, p. 62). He further suggests that this questioning and checking can be undertaken by applying communicative and pragmatic validity throughout the research. Communicative validity requires:

- Descriptions to be generated in the form of a dialogue
- Analysis of the descriptions to be communicated or written in a way that aligns interpretation with the research object
- Dialogue with other researchers and academics in the process of the work (Sandberg, 1994)

Pragmatic validity is promoted by not taking research participants’ statements at face value. One way to evaluate these statements and to verify interpretations is to ask

probing questions about the actual teaching and working situation in order to establish practical relevance (Sandberg, 1994). Checking back with participants about what was understood during the interview as suggested by Kvale (1996) is another way to advance pragmatic validity.

To promote communicative and pragmatic validity in this study the researcher continued to work with other researchers to check that data analysis and establishing the categories of description and resulting outcome spaces were faithful interpretations of the data. Further, the researcher ensured that statements made during the semi-structured interviews were not taken at face value but were probed to verify participants' interpretations. Lastly, the researcher checked each participant's understanding of the nature and scope of the interview before it concluded.

### **Ethical considerations**

The central question in relation to ethical issues is whether harm – or potential harm – may be caused to another person in the course of the research. Research involving human subjects must protect their rights by having systems in place for ensuring that participants are giving informed consent to their involvement in the research, and that they are not exposed to harm that is greater than the gains they might accrue from taking part in this research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Educational research that is conducted ethically will also be marked by a commitment to honesty, the avoidance of plagiarism, and a respect for the dignity and privacy of research subjects at all times (Busher & James, 2007).

McNamara (1994) identifies five ethical issues pertinent to qualitative research:

1. Voluntary participation of individuals
2. Ensuring that no harm befalls participants
3. Participants remaining anonymous and not able to be identified
4. Maintaining confidentiality over what is said and ensuring that data cannot be tracked back to participants
5. All participants are informed of the purpose of the research and how the information is to be analysed and reported

All five of McNamara's ethical issues were addressed and met for the purposes of this research. The main ethical concerns relative to this study, however, were the issues of informed consent and protecting the rights of individual participants, together with maintaining the confidentiality of the ITPs involved. To ensure these concerns were addressed the researcher sought approval from the Massey University Ethics Committee (MUHEC). Although a low risk notification was suggested, the researcher considered that the nature of the interview questions had the potential to bring about unexpected emotions and reactions which could be construed as causing emotional harm to participants, and to a lesser degree to the researcher herself.

### ***Informed consent***

In preparing for this study informed consent was needed from participating ITPs for access to their premises and to a number of their teaching staff. A research information sheet was included in the letter to the CEO of each ITP, requesting access to the institution. Tutors who were invited to participate in the interview process were requested to sign a consent form confirming that they agreed to do so of their own volition.

The risk of harm to the researcher also warranted consideration. Information and the way it is conveyed may invoke feelings of frustration or concern, or otherwise be troubling to the researcher. The provision to terminate an interview or take time out in the event of such a situation arising, however, did not need to be invoked on account of any participant or of the researcher herself.

### ***Confidentiality and anonymity***

Ethical issues generally relate to confidentiality and anonymity in the analysis and dissemination of results. Merriam (1998) suggests that “deciding what is important – what should or should not be attended to when collecting and analyzing data – is always up to the investigator” (p. 216). The descriptive nature of qualitative research makes anonymity during the interview schedule impossible. Compounding the problem is the relatively small size of the ITP sector within New Zealand.

The researcher’s intention to maintain confidentiality was stated in the research information sheet, invitation letters and consent forms. All practical steps were taken to ensure that no ITPs or participants were able to be identified as a result of this research. Moreover, data which had the potential to identify individuals or institutions was not used in reporting the discussion or results of the research.

### **Summary**

This section described the approach to the research objectives. Phenomenography supported by a multiple case study design aimed to address the research objective and answer the research questions.

Phenomenographic research investigates and describes qualitatively different ways in which individuals experience specific phenomena. In terms of this study, a phenomenographic approach elucidated the experiences of tutors employed within the ITP sector. Case study analysis allowed the relationships between the experiences of individuals and the aggregated experiences of all participants to be analysed and described in depth. The categories of description deriving from the data analysis exemplify the relationship between the researcher and the data; and the outcome spaces represent the researcher’s interpretation of the cumulative data.

The means of measuring reliability and validity was established by “inter judge reliability” (Sandberg, 1997, p. 205). This measure was addressed by the researcher

initially establishing the categories of description, followed by a discussion with her supervisors to confirm that the categories of description could, in fact, be identified from the transcripts of the interviews.

The validity or trustworthiness of the study was established through Sandberg's (1994) approach of claims of defensible knowledge. To meet this objective the researcher provided a detailed description of the methods employed and of her interpretation of the results.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE RESULTS

#### Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the research methodology and approach employed in this study, and provided a description of the data collection and analysis procedures. This chapter presents the results of the research.

The research questions which underpin this study were examined through the reported experiences of tutors working in the ITP sector. Demographic data relating to the tutors who participated in the research is presented in Table 4.1.

#### Demographics of participants

Participant number	Gender	Age group	Subject	Teaching qualifications	Time teaching in tertiary education
A1	Male	40-50	Foundation (trades area)	Working on Certificate in Adult Teaching (CAT)	20 years
A2	Male	30-40	Foundation (trades area)	Working on CAT	5-6 years
A3	Male	40-50	Business	B. Ed	10-12 years
A4	Male	40-50	Trades	Working on CAT	10 years
A5	Female	50-60	Art and design	CAT	15 years
A6	Male	60- 65	Trades	CAT	8-9 years
A7	Female	50-60	Business	Diploma in Adult Teaching	20 years
A8	Male	60-65	Art and design	None	Over 20 years
B1	Female	50-60	Business	CAT. Now working on Cert in Adult Tertiary Education (CATE)	10 years
B2	Female	60-65	Business	B. Ed (Adult)	22 years
B3	Male	30-40	Trades	CAT and CATE	4 years
B4	Male	40-50	Trades	CAT	6 years
B5	Female	40-50	Art and design	CAT	5 years
B6	Female	50-60	Foundation	CAT and CATE	7 years
B7	Female	50-60	Foundation	CAT and CATE	10 years
B8	Male	40-50	Art and design	CAT	6 years

C1	Female	40-50	Foundation	CAT	17 years
C2	Male	50-60	Art and design	None	15 years
C3	Male	30-40	Trades	CAT	4-5 years
C4	Male	60-65	Art and design	None	24 years
C5	Female	40-50	Business	CAT and secondary teacher training	3 years
C6	Male	40-50	Trades	Working on CAT	3 years
C7	Male	40-50	Foundation	Primary teacher training	6 years
C8	Female	40-50	Foundation	CAT	4 years
D1	Female	50-60	Business	CAT and CATE	28 years
D2	Male	40-50	Trades	Undertaking Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning	2.5 years
D3	Male	50-60	Trades	CAT	8-9 years
D4	Female	40-50	Foundation	Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning together with primary teacher training	6 years
D5	Male	65-70	Art and design	None	35 plus years
D6	Male	50-60	Art and design	CAT	15 plus years
D7	Female	50-60	Foundation	Primary teacher training	5 years
D8	Female	40-50	Business	CAT plus Graduate Certificate in e-Learning	15 years

Table 1: Demographics of participants

### Examining variation in tutors' experiences

Determining variation within tutors' experiences is fundamental to phenomenographic analysis. Variation is examined across a number of areas relative to the framework identified and discussed in previous chapters. The focus of variation is on considering the "what" aspect of the experience as well as "how" the experience is understood by each research participant.

Analysis of the interview transcripts aimed to identify and describe an outcome space that captured the range of views across each area of investigation. The outcome space consists of qualitatively different categories of description. Each category of description reflects both structural and referential components. Consequently each category is identified in terms of the experience itself (the “what” aspect) and the meaning (the “how” aspect) attributed to it. The “how” aspect reveals that tutors experience working in an ITP in differing ways.

Each category is named in order to delineate clearly its identity and scope. Any relationships between categories are identified and examined. Whilst phenomenography traditionally focuses on group meaning to facilitate integration of similarities (Trigwell, 2000), individual comments are used in this analysis to illustrate aspects of meaning that are assigned to these categories. The following section presents the variation in tutors’ experiences of working in an ITP as a series of five categories, each of which is described and illustrated by extracts from the interview transcripts.

The five categories of description and their ensuing sub-categories were determined on the basis that the themes which occurred most frequently in the data formed the five categories. The sub-categories flowed from data pertaining to each category. Again, quantitative measures dictated the sub-categories: the themes that appeared most frequently formed these sub-categories.

The categories describing the variation in tutors’ perceptions of working in an ITP are logically related to one another (Åkerlind, 2005). Phenomenographic studies generally present hierarchical relationships between each category of description. However, Kember (1997) noted that not all phenomenographic studies present outcome spaces that are hierarchically ordered. As previously noted, Francis (1996) reminds researchers to be faithful to the data and asserts that “the more faithful we, as researchers, can be to individuals’ conceptions of an aspect of reality, the better we are able to understand” (p. 204). It is important to understand that the meanings of tutors’ experiences in these categories are not those of individual tutors, but were compiled from the aggregated (pooled) evidence across the whole set of transcripts.

### **Categories of description developed from tutors’ experiences within an ITP**

The five different ways that tutors experience working in an ITP are summarised as:

*Category 1: Understanding and modelling effective teaching.* Working in an ITP is understood as focusing on teaching and the role that the tutor plays in supporting students’ learning.

*Category 2: Developing and growing.* Working in an ITP is understood as developing the teaching role and enhancing personal performance.



Category 3: *Building relationships*. Working in an ITP is understood as building relationships with colleagues and students both internal and external to the institution in order to inform the teaching role.

Category 4: *Enacting government and institutional policy*. Working in an ITP is understood as enacting government and institutional policy in order to achieve set strategies and initiatives.

Category 5: *Adapting to contextual influences*. Working in an ITP is understood as adapting to the teaching environment and to factors which directly impact on teaching and the teaching role.

## **Describing the five categories**

### ***Category 1: Understanding and modelling effective teaching***

This category elicits information about tutors' understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher in the ITP sector; how evidence is gathered by tutors on the effectiveness of their teaching; how subject/discipline factors impact on effective teaching; and tutors' views on how learners' preparedness for tertiary education impacts on their teaching role.

Four sub-categories of description are identified within this category. Whilst each sub-category identifies variation of experience and understanding, a relationship emerges between the sub-categories as tutors suggest that they move between the discrete entities in each division of the sub-category in response to the objective of their teaching.

These four sub-categories are:

- Understanding effective teaching
- Measuring effective teaching
- Defining the impact of the subject/discipline on teaching practice
- Teaching today's tertiary students.

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Understanding effective teaching</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing on skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Building a relationship with the student</li> <li>• Engaging the student in learning</li> <li>• Supporting students to become independent learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulates and demonstrates subject knowledge and skills to students</li> <li>• Establishes rapport or friendship to build trust with students</li> <li>• Actively engages students in activities which promote learning</li> <li>• Provides learning activities which enable students to take control of their learning and become autonomous learners beyond the life of the programme</li> </ul>

Table 2: Understanding effective teaching

This sub-category highlights tutors' understanding of the nature of effective teaching. Variation arises in the approaches to teaching that tutors perceive as effective in any given circumstance and which become the focus of their practice.

Some tutors understood effective teaching in terms of students acquiring content knowledge and skills; others as building a relationship or trust with students; others, engaging students in an active way by participating physically in their learning; and others, by encouraging students to research knowledge, make their own discoveries, and critique knowledge in their own contexts. Rendering the tutor's role obsolete was one suggested outcome of effective teaching.

The subject/discipline appears to influence tutors' understanding of effective teaching. Tutors, noticeably in trades and foundation programmes, reported that their teaching practice strongly aimed to pass on skills and knowledge, establish a relationship with students, and engage students in learning activities. Tutors in business and arts were more likely to report significant aims in building relationships, engaging students in an active way, and supporting their independence beyond the life of the programme.

The following representative quotations indicate a range of tutors' views as to the nature of effective teaching. The four participating ITPs are designated A to D; and tutor respondents (eight from each ITP) are numbered, respectively, 1 to 8. As tutors may identify more than one approach, the total numbers indicated are more than the sample size of 32.

Fifteen tutors viewed effective teaching as passing on their skills and knowledge:

*Effective teaching is being able to pass on the skills that I have to my students so that they get value out of me. (B8)*

*It's very me oriented. It's very much probably "the sage on the stage". (B2)*

*I'm hoping that the students gain a bit of my knowledge and skill in whatever field they want to go into. (B7)*

The experience of effective teaching as relationship building with students was evident in comments from 13 respondents:

*You actually have to get to know them quickly. Get to know something about them. Get to know something about how the group as a whole is working, but also being open yourself. Not just teaching the subject...but in the process of going through the teaching, not standing at the front and saying I'm this, but also getting in amongst them, listening to their questions and allowing them to speak. (D5)*

*Effective teaching is getting to know your students, know where they are at, showing them where they are at by progress charts, showing them that they are achieving, motivating your students and showing them that someone believes in them. (C7)*

*It's a partnership rather than...a teacher/pupil relationship. (D5)*

*I apply 90% mothering skills and 10% teaching. It's empowering, just making them aware of what they know. Making them value what they already know, giving credit to a lot of their past experiences. The way we teach them we're walking alongside them, not standing in front of them. (B6)*

Eighteen tutors cited engaging students in an active way with their learning as a measure of effective teaching:

*Students...learn best by applying their theory and practical as often as possible, and definitely through interactive teaching rather than chalk and talk. (C1)*

*I utilise a lot of discussion, quite talky classes with hard, hard critiques. You have to put ego aside and concentrate on the work....That's really, really effective. It builds confidence in [students] being able to articulate what they are doing, or their intentions if it's not happening. (B5)*

*I'm a great believer that we're training students for practical work in the workforce, and therefore the greater or closer to reality that we can get the better. (C1)*

*They don't learn if they aren't engaged. It's not only your engagement with them and their engagement with you; it's their engagement with the subject. And you can only do that by making the subject seen vital to them in some way. (D5)*

Supporting students to continue their learning beyond the life of the current programme was suggested as a mark of effective teaching by six tutors. However, four tutors, all from trades areas, opposed this view by stating that the learning needs of the current programme took priority:

*I think the learner should be in command of what they learn. I mean, I really believe in student centred learning. There are times when it's unavoidable, I give lectures....It's unavoidable because I have to...expose students to what the hell's going on outside. The rest of the time...I give them fairly direct projects to do and they work on them by themselves or in groups...to produce something...I think my role is to make myself obsolete by the time they leave. So that...they know how to research themselves, so that they know how to discover things themselves and they know how to think about these discoveries in their own way, in their own contexts. That's what I want students to get out of it. (C2)*

Respondent B1 stated that there is value in students knowing:

*how to go out and find information and how to analyse it, how to critique it and understand it.*

Respondent B5 similarly adopted the stance that real value in teaching arose from students being actively engaged in their own learning:

*I don't think content is what we teach. I can go and print them stuff out and give them content. Mine's always been about how can I get them to utilise that sort of self knowledge, that willingness to learn, to go back to their work, to see what's not working, to get that passion and honouring of their own strengths I guess is what I'm interested in.*

However, respondent A4 said that effective teaching:

*isn't about what they need to know further down the line but all about the best way they can absorb the information you're throwing at them.*

Sub-category	What is the experience?	How is it understood
<i>Measuring effective teaching</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking institutional evaluations</li>   <li>• Using intuition or feelings gained through observing students' visual or audible cues</li>   <li>• Referring to retention and completion statistics</li>   <li>• Discussing teaching effectiveness with students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a valuable form of feedback which reflects institutional quality management requirements</li>   <li>• Provides immediate feedback that utilises tutors' intuition and experience</li>   <li>• Institutionally generated data records previous success in retaining and completing various student cohorts</li>   <li>• Provides an immediate form of feedback by way of a two-way dialogue in which learners report what is and isn't working for them</li> </ul>

Table 3: Measuring effective teaching

This sub-category highlights measures taken by tutors to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Undertaking institutional evaluations, relying on their intuition or feelings, referring to institutional data such as retention and completion statistics, and holding discussions with students were cited as evidence of effective teaching.

Variation is found in the differing measures tutors employed to identify their teaching effectiveness. The data suggests, however, that although information on effective teaching was forthcoming, devising and implementing remedies to enhance teaching practice may be lacking.

Institutional evaluations were reported as the most reliable measure to evaluate teaching. Institutional system failures, however, meant that sometimes tutors did not see these evaluations and consequently received little feedback on their teaching. Tutors also reported that evaluations were often undertaken towards the end of the teaching term, and that students' suggestions for improvement were not able to be actioned as they had already left the ITP.

Tutors who viewed evaluations also disclosed that the results of these evaluations were not always reported back to the students, and strategies for improving teaching

were neither devised nor implemented. Tutors did, however, report the prevalence of information on the effectiveness of teaching available to them and their perception that it was of value in enhancing their teaching practice.

The availability of evidence to assess effective teaching was applauded by tutors:

*There's plenty of feedback available. Everything from the environment they're [students are] in to how they were taught, what they thought of us, what they thought of the content, was it what they expected, all that sort of thing. It's really helpful to improve. (D2)*

Twenty tutors highlighted institutional evaluations as a prime source of evidence for gauging effective teaching. But they also reported that institutional quality assurance procedures associated with evaluations were frequently not followed. In particular, tutors did not see the outcome of evaluations or report back to students, or follow through on students' suggestions for enhancing teaching practice:

*Student surveys are used most often to know how things are going. It's the best evidence because everyone has a chance to say how it is for them. (D4)*

*Evaluations probably are probably the most reliable and my main source of feedback. (C6)*

*The first year they did student surveys I didn't hear anything back. I think that happened again the next time. Last year they opted not to do them but this year they've gone back to doing them but I haven't heard anything about feedback. (C5)*

*We do evaluations that go across [the institution] that are organised by management. If there's anything that needs to be addressed then management usually pick up on those. (A8)*

*I read through, um, mostly I focus on the comments. I'm trying to find themes [and] I tend to dismiss extremes. If everybody says I found this approach unhelpful, then I know just to leave it alone. (A7)*

Timing of evaluations was also suggested as problematic:

*I don't necessarily feedback to the students because by the time they do them they're on their way exiting. (B6)*

*Evaluations that you do are often right at the end. You can't actually make any of those changes. (D8)*

Because of its immediacy, a frequently used measure of effective teaching – reported by 12 tutors – was relying on their experience or instinct. Visual cues such as students' body language and participation and interest levels were seen as valuable aids to tutors' understanding:

*I can pick up the vibes in the class. I can pick the way students talk to me if they're got impatient or they're worried or they're anxious, or um, they start an activity and they're not actually doing it. (A7)*

*Oh, you...watch the audience's reaction to things. Just this afternoon for example, it was a tutorial. It was a second tutorial of the day, and they'd already had an hour-and-a-half lecture. It was after lunch, we had the heating down there, and it was warm. I could see after half an hour of tutorial that attention was drifting into sleep. There was nothing I [could] do about that. (D5)*

*I can tell from the work that they're handing in. And I can tell from the class discussion...what I need to follow up, what they've understood and not understood. (D7)*

Viewing institutional statistical data was cited by eight tutors as a further measure of gauging effective teaching:

*We're always screening the stats from the managers. Last year we got a low pass rate, I think it was about 49% or something like that. (D3)*

*Tell by the results. We started at about 60% and got to 80-90%. (A1)*

*We got really bad stats last year, attendance and results, and they [management] tended to look at us. We thought they [the stats] were OK actually. (B3)*

Evaluating teaching effectiveness through discussions with students was reported by five tutors. This form of feedback was immediate, opened up a dialogue between students and tutors, and proved to be of value to both parties:

*I do prefer to do that [ask students for feedback] in the first place verbally, but of course you know with an institution you have to have a whole bunch of systems...and most of it's written or online based. I'd rather that feedback process be dynamic than something that is constrained by procedures oh, and instantaneous. (D6)*

*At times there are discussions depending on where we are at as to what changes they want. So we had a few talks about that. I just tend to do it informally, ask questions or let them say something. (C5)*

A further five tutors reported asking students at the end of a lesson to identify "effective" and "not-so-effective" teaching strategies that the tutor was implementing to assist learning:

*I use the one-minute paper. I give it out at the end of a topic and it's got what is the most important thing that you've learnt in this and what questions are uppermost, or what question is uppermost, in your mind. If I get several*

*saying the same thing [raising questions of concern], then I know I haven't taught that bit or I haven't gone over that bit clear enough. (A7)*

*I ask them to write down what worked for them and what didn't. It helps me know what to try and do better but sometimes I just put them aside as the suggestions aren't practical. (A6)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Defining the impact of the subject/discipline on teaching practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding that effective teaching varies between subject/discipline areas</li> <li>• Accepting that teaching is often based on out-dated traditions</li> <li>• Relying on tutors' experiences and beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows the curriculum to be shaped and moulded so that teaching best reflects each subject/discipline</li> <li>• Mythologies of teaching, based on the past, reside in departments</li> <li>• Previous experiences and beliefs of teaching shape current practice. It may be hard to break away from these perceptions</li> </ul>

Table 4: Defining the impact of the subject/discipline on teaching practice

Defining features of this sub-category include: understanding that effective teaching varies between subject and discipline areas; believing that teaching is based on outdated traditions; and relying on tutors' previous experiences. Tutors reported variation in the way that effective teaching is perceived across various departments within an ITP.

The subject/discipline appears to exert some influence on the nature of effective teaching and how it is to be achieved. Tutors' views, however, were coloured by past experiences and the traditions associated with teaching a particular subject. They reported that out-of-date methodologies and mythologies may prevent the implementation of more modern methodologies for enhancing teaching practice.

*I'm not sure we all see effective teaching in the same light. There must be some likeness across subjects but I'm also not sure that effective teaching in art is the same as in trades or nursing. Is it? I don't actually know. (A6)*

*Teaching trades means teaching is hands on and low level; business and finance would require teaching at a higher level. So teaching isn't all the same. (C2)*



These views led to tutors' perceptions that curricula should be shaped and moulded in departments so that teaching practice is "best suited" to each subject. Tutors could subsequently implement teaching strategies which maintained traditional forms and structures on the one hand, or were innovative and creative on the other.

Thirteen tutors valued a sense of autonomy or:

*The freedom to shape the curriculum to something that is most ideal from an arts point of view rather than being dictated. So the autonomy that I referred to is our capacity or power to make that curriculum tailored to suit us. (D6)*

*Monthly meetings are focused on particular themes which tend to be philosophically driven in terms of...beliefs in what teaching is, or how teaching can develop. It leads to teachers doing it their way, depending on what they believe achieves the result in their subject. (A8)*

*We sort of have a similar philosophy...I don't know if it happens all over the polytech, but our department believes we are professionals and pretty much leaves us to do how we see best. (D7)*

Trades tutors generally reported that teaching theoretical components was "best done" from workbooks:

*Got to cover what's in the book so a lot of stuff becomes very much like cut, copy and paste. There's the answer, just write it down word for word. (C3)*

*Teaching economics you have to tell them every little thing. You've got to stand there and explain it all and go through it all and do several things and do diagrams and all that sort of thing. (A7)*

*I think [art] tutors perceive teaching as supervision rather than teaching. I think there's a real need for a...lot more improvement of teaching in that respect. (D5)*

Twelve tutors sounded a note of caution in identifying and establishing teaching practice that is "best suited" to the department and the subject:

*Um, the older tutors have got very strict guidelines on how they're going to teach and, the outcome. I know it doesn't work for modern people, modern thinking. (A6)*

*I came into study here under some of the old guys that have since left, and you know their way of doing it was, "it's all on the white board, it's all written tests" and you know that sort of thing. So that's the way I thought it had to be. (D2)*

*A lot of my teaching has come from when I was a student here a few years back and I had the IT tutor as my tutor, so I picked up some things from them*

*particularly the reflection stuff and working in small groups and that sort of thing. (C5)*

Of particular import was the view of some tutors that traditions of teaching were a hindrance to effective teaching:

*I've learnt that you don't have to teach that way. We have to move on. (D5)*

*Institutions are full of inherited mythologies on both education and teaching. We are having problems just with teaching. You know they've [tutors have] based their teaching on the past. That's the teaching philosophy. We are all disciples of the discipline, let's learn from each other. You don't have to teach like this. (C2)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Teaching today's tertiary students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising teaching to meet students' diverse needs</li> <li>• Coping with students perceived as poorly prepared for tertiary education</li> <li>• Supporting students who come with social, health and financial problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching students can be stressful and challenging as well as rewarding</li> <li>• Students come to vocational education with limited skills and capabilities</li> <li>• Tutors require capabilities and skills over and above the ability to teach</li> </ul>

Table 5: Teaching today's tertiary students

This sub-category highlights tutors' experiences of working with students. Issues that impacted on teaching and learning included: the challenges of organising teaching to meet the diverse needs of today's students; coping with students who are perceived as having limited preparation for tertiary vocational education; and supporting students who arrive at the institution with social, financial and health problems. The sub-category of description revealed minimal variation in tutors' experiences and understanding: all 32 expressed varying levels of concern as to the inherent ability of students to navigate their way through tertiary study.

Interaction with students was reported as the reason why 29 of the 32 tutors most enjoyed teaching. The rewards of seeing a student "turn around" and grasp the concepts of a subject provided the impetus that drew tutors to their jobs and frequently kept them there. However, many expressed concern at students' lack of preparedness for tertiary education, noting that ITPs are not full of "bright, young things", but of people who may have failed in previous educational experiences and consequently lack confidence and motivation. Tutors reported the additional demands that these struggling students placed on them in their desire to succeed.

However, variation in perspectives saw four of the 32 tutors suggest that *they* needed to own the problem of struggling students and assume responsibility for teaching them, whatever their levels of ability. In other words, the onus was on tutors to acquire the range of skills necessary to meet students' diverse learning needs and support them through their studies.

Seventeen tutors reported issues in organising their teaching to meet students' diverse needs:

*Students want to be entertained. If you're not entertaining them, you're not reaching them or you're not connecting in some way. The students today need to be engaged all the time and in short bursts because they can't concentrate for long. (B2)*

*You've always got the ones that are here because they're conscientious, they want to do well, and they're going to do the work. Then you've got the ones that are always going to be the battle. If you lay the foundations in year 1, "this is what we need", then it encourages them and certainly by year 2, 3, I'm finding you get the students that [have] got through the first year and they know this is what you want. (D8)*

*Polytechnics are not full of bright, young things. (C2)*

*Every year we get told, we've got to develop new ways of teaching because students don't like it that way. (D3)*

Twenty-two tutors expressed their frustration in coping with students who were perceived as poorly prepared for tertiary education:

*We are getting the second tier of people turning up for study. These types of students need a bit more support around their learning. They're not quite as confident. (A5)*

*What I find most frustrating is literacy. They're [students are] actually illiterate. They cannot write or comprehend. A lot of them don't read. We've had students who have never read a book. Their comprehension is non-existent. (B5)*

*Polytechnics are full of people who have failed at school. Suddenly realise that they need an education, don't really know much about what they want to do. They come to polytechnic. And you get a whole range of learning capability. From people who can't read and write, to people who can read and write really well, but have no idea what they want. No focus. They don't know how. They have never learnt. So you are starting off with an incredibly difficult group of people. (C2)*

Many students arrive with social, health and financial problems:

*A lot have had alcohol and drugs. One student is struggling because of her drugs that she's on because of her stress. It's fuzzing her brain. (D7)*

*A real problem at the moment is drugs. Students smoking marijuana on site. And alcohol, you know. They go off site at lunchtime and come back, you know, obviously been smoking a joint. (B8)*

Other students present with motivational issues:

*If the students feel like coming, they come. If they decide not to come, that's their choice. (C5)*

*[They say]: "Oh, I don't want to be here, Mum and Dad told me to come." (D8)*

*We take them into the workshop and they'll stand there and look you straight in the face and say "No I'm not doing it". Literally, without a word of a lie. "You are going to do it". "No I won't because I will stuff it up, I'm not doing it". "No you will do it". You would think that young men would love this. Half of them don't want to do a damn thing. They don't want to be here but we have no control over that. We've got to do something with them. (D3)*

Yet others lack peer support or are battling with family and social issues:

*There's no-one supporting them. Nobody is there...guiding and helping them. Someone to show that they care and show them something positive. (A2)*

*These people have got families. You know they're not youngsters; they're grown-ups with adult problems. You know, splitting up from families, kids dying, problems at school, kids running off the loose, deep end. And these problems impact learning. (C2)*

## **Category 2: Developing and growing**

In this category, tutors experienced teaching as developing their skills and knowledge in the art of teaching. Four sub-categories of description were identified which related to one another in that they identified variation in tutors' experience of engaging in professional development (PD). Tutors acknowledged that the emphasis between categories may shift in response to their training needs at any given time.

These four sub-categories are:

- Engaging in professional development
- Achieving qualifications and their value to teaching competence
- Maintaining currency in industry experience and knowledge
- Responding to calls to improve teaching practice

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Engaging in professional development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement to undertake professional development and training</li> <li>• Appraising the effectiveness of training</li> <li>• Identifying the training needs of individual tutors</li> <li>• Training to support e-learning strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training is a choice option</li> <li>• Training needs to be effective if practice is to improve</li> <li>• Training needs should be identified through a consultative process</li> <li>• Training to support e-learning initiatives is not adequate to support quality learning outcomes</li> </ul>

Table 6: Engaging in professional development

Included in this sub-category are descriptions of: the requirement to undertake PD; appraising the effectiveness of training; identifying individual tutors' training needs; and highlighting training which tutors report is most needed, namely: training to support e-learning strategies.

Although tutors concurred with the need to undertake effective PD, they differed as to how their training needs should be identified; e.g. some suggested that observation of teaching practice is necessary, while others disagreed. There was overwhelming agreement, however – 30 out of 32 tutors – that training was most needed in areas which support e-learning initiatives.

They also reported, however, that the PD process was often not problem-free, and identified a number of significant issues including difficulties in: finding time, receiving appropriate funding, identifying relevant and effective training, and receiving adequate support.

Sixteen tutors considered that PD was a choice option: the tutor deciding what PD (if any) would be undertaken and when it would occur. However, a further eight tutors identified that a manager played a role in deciding their training. Institution-wide organised PD days were a feature of two ITPs.

Tutors reported concern as to the effectiveness of training which needed to be relevant, useful, timely, and at an appropriate level, and reported frustration with training that failed to meet these criteria.

Tutors' experiences of undertaking PD varied:

*I came from industry, so I had no teaching background but in that time I've done my teaching diploma, degree in Masters and just recently applied e-learning. I've ensured that I've kept current and good at using my professional development and being able to learn things. But I don't know if that's the same across the board. (D8)*

*The only way to improve is with ongoing PD, stuff like that but relevant PD, not stuff that you have to go and do just because some bloke in an office wearing a tie says you have to do it. (A1)*

*My previous manager was very receptive to us, if there was money to go on training. They're not against it, it's just this institute has been strapped for funds that the priority has gone on saving money, not spending it. They haven't always seen training as an investment. It's a cost to them. I think it should be an investment really. (C1)*

*We get 10 days [of PD]. I don't take them, because I haven't really been able to find pockets of time. (D1)*

*There used to be a staff development centre here. That disappeared 10 years ago. Since then training has been probably more self initiated than anyone saying you need to do this training. Training and actually being a teacher is something that I feel is lacking. (C1)*

*Professional development time is the thing that always gets left until last. Um, it's very difficult for it to be factored into your annual timetables. (A8)*

There were also differing views as to the effectiveness of training:

*I enrolled in a graduate certificate in applied e-learning which I did over 18 months. That's assisted my knowledge and certainly made me feel a lot more comfortable in using technology, but I really wish someone was there to help me when I actually put things online. It's then that you need support. (D8)*

*Initially [the training] was well above me. We didn't understand the big words they were using because it was academic speak, so they brought it down to our level and it proved to be useful in the end. (B8)*

*They [short courses] used to be silly things which I didn't really like to do but I went along. The ideas have gone into my ideas book and one day I'll do something about it. (D2)*

*I don't get a huge amount out of training courses I do here. They give you different techniques and ideas which sometimes are a little useful, but not a huge amount. (A4)*

Seven tutors highlighted their individual needs:

*Coming straight from industry and to the polytech I was thrown very much into the deep end on a course that hardly had any development or anything and not having stood up in front of a group of students: that was a very steep learning curve to start with. I wish someone had said you need to do this and this...helped me plan my training, what I needed. (D8)*

*I find coming in as a tutor because you aren't trained through teachers' college or anything like that there are fundamental things need to be done to qualify you. You have to go on a programme, get training, things like that. Then fine tuning. I needed to know what I need to do to get better at it. You should have someone saying "Do this – do that, I know what you need to do because I watched you and if you did this you would be better." (B4)*

There was overwhelming support for training in e-learning strategies. Thirty of the 32 tutors requested additional training in this area:

*I should be spending time learning how to use the technology effectively. There's just so much available that would make our teaching, but also student learning so much more enjoyable if it was readily available. I'm pretty much self-taught developing those computer skills, the IT skills. (B8)*

*I definitely need technology, learning technologies. I mean using computers, video cameras and social networking and all the rest of it because, for us, we need to understand the world they [learners] inhabit and use the skills they're good at to speak back to them and with them and get them talking to one another. (A5)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Achieving qualifications and their value to teaching competence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving teaching qualifications</li> <li>• Accepting that qualifications alone are not adequate to meet tutors' needs</li> <li>• Calling for appropriate measures to gauge a tutor's teaching proficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications aid practice, particularly in the initial stages of teaching</li> <li>• Training beyond qualifications is needed so that skill development is ongoing and not just about gaining qualifications</li> <li>• A system of observation and review supports improved practice</li> </ul>

Table 7: Achieving qualifications and their value to teaching competence

Within this sub-category tutors highlighted significant issues around: achieving teaching qualifications; whether qualifications alone were adequate to meet their needs; and the lack of appropriate measures to gauge their teaching proficiency. This sub-category of description highlighted a wide diversity in tutors' experiences of PD, particularly in gaining qualifications and the worth of these qualifications.

Tutors reported varying experiences in institutional requirements to gain a teaching qualification. When such a qualification was specified, it was acknowledged by nine of the sample that they had been teaching for longer than the required timeframe and hadn't completed the qualification. Others reported that they welcomed the experience of completing a qualification and valued the knowledge and skills gained from it.

Eight tutors expressed scepticism as to the value of qualifications, suggesting that more than just qualifications was required to become an effective teacher. This argument was not supported by seven tutors who considered that qualifications such as a certificate or diploma in adult teaching helped tutors – especially new tutors – to understand the language of tertiary education and at the very least helped them to prepare and deliver lessons.

Five tutors suggested that the content of their teaching qualification helped them to develop skills and knowledge in the early stages of teaching; but that additional knowledge would have benefitted them as they developed their teaching skills over time. Overall, respondents perceived a need for enhanced skill and knowledge in three areas: exciting ways to engage students, strategies for coping with struggling students, and ideas for innovative teaching.

Tutors supported classroom observation as a means of measuring teaching proficiency. One ITP had recently implemented this system to overwhelming tutor support for the initiative. Twelve tutors in the other three ITPs suggested that impartial observation would assist them to improve their teaching skills, particularly if this observation was documented and used to identify further training and development.

[Note: The following abbreviations are used for qualifications cited in this section: Certificate in Adult Teaching (CAT), Certificate in Adult Teaching and Education (CATE), and National Certificate in Adult Learning and Education (NCALE).]

*This institute requires all tutors to have a teaching qualification within two years. This often doesn't happen. (B7)*

*I've been here for four years and they have finally got me and said 'you have got to do this' [complete a teaching qualification]. Why do I have to do that after four years? But I think it's a good thing to do. There are definitely things in there that I'm now trying and finding it's a good way of doing it. (D2)*



*A lot of tutors didn't have teaching quals but it became an issue for the schools that were under review. If you didn't have a teaching qualification, you were either out or you did it. That made people act. (D1)*

*I think CAT, CATE and NCALE helped. It taught you how to do it for one thing. Often you get to the first day and are kept in the classroom and they say "Here's a whiteboard pen, here's your book" and you go OK, which is how a lot of people start. I mean in a perfect world they'd give you mentoring and you'd be under someone's wing for six months but day one they are employing you and they want you productive. Productive means in front of a class. (B3)*

Six tutors, mainly from trades and foundation studies, questioned whether teaching qualifications adequately met their needs:

*People are required to get some form of diploma in teaching but I don't know if that's necessary. You need more practical skill, not the theory. (D8)*

*I'm doing CAT but I would prefer to get some professional development around adults as I see that issues that are facing my students as more important at this stage. (B6)*

*I would consider the professional practice to be more of the pre-requisite than a teaching qualification. (D6)*

*When I did it [CAT] it was very much around academic type people, like you know, this is how you should do it, sit around, hold hands, touchy feely, you know, and how it should be in the classroom and our students just aren't like that. You know we went to the CAT tutor at the time and said 'hey look you know can we tailor it, or tailor a course for more practical skills' but nothing ever happened. (C3)*

There were also calls for measures to gauge a tutor's teaching proficiency:

*We do teacher observation and it's been really good, I've enjoyed the feedback, it's constructive and it's, you know, you get really good points from that. And we observe others as well. (C1)*

*We want to start that practice again [observations]. I know what I need to do, but there are times I think can I do this better? Is there a different way? Is there a more exciting way to be able to deliver some information? Having someone look at me teaching might help me. (D8)*

*Everyone should be observed and be observer. That's where you learn the most. The observer is going to learn more than the observed. Why isn't everyone an observer? If you set the paradigm where everybody is observed*

*twice and they observe somebody twice you would learn...something about your own teaching. (C2)*

However, not all tutors welcomed observation as a measure of their proficiency. Six tutors took a negative stance:

*They've had people reviewing us in class. I mean we're bloody qualified teachers for God's sake, as well as trade skilled and they've had people in class critiquing us and that's pretty hard to take when you know you are doing a good job. (D3)*

*I don't see the need for tutors being observed. It's time consuming, what with everything else we do. There's enough feedback already. (A5)*

*Being observed feels like a trick. (D2)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Maintaining currency in industry experience and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining workplace currency</li> <li>• Encountering limitations in maintaining currency</li> <li>• Believing that isolation from industry leads to loss of relevance in teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currency establishes credibility with students and industry. Credibility is important</li> <li>• Remove currency, and professional practice and teaching practice will be diminished</li> <li>• Teaching must remain relevant, up to date and meet industry's expectations</li> </ul>

Table 8: Maintaining currency in industry experience and knowledge

Three divisions emerged from this sub-category: maintaining workplace currency, encountering barriers in maintaining workplace currency, and the concern that isolation from industry could lead to a loss of relevance in teaching.

Research data showed that tutors in trades, business, and arts and design recognised the importance of staying current with industry trends and practices. They cited issues of self belief, credibility and confidence in fronting students and industry peers, and presenting relevant and up-to-date industry practices, as reasons for doing so. However, foundation tutors – often not from an industry background – did not regard work experience as significant and favoured life skills over practical work experience. Two tutors who taught foundation programmes in trades areas *did* acknowledge that workplace currency was of some importance, but stated that neither had worked in industry for some years due to work commitments at the ITP.

Tutors who supported workplace experience also questioned how this experience could be incorporated into busy schedules. Five tutors suggested that an extended period of leave, similar to a sabbatical, should be available to tutors every few years to enable them to keep up to date with recent developments in their field of expertise.

Twelve tutors emphasised the importance of maintaining workplace currency:

*I make sure that I am current. I'm just going back into industry for a week. I've initiated it myself. I make it explicit to students that I'm involved in things. I told students I was going. It's necessary they know you are current and to retain credibility. There is an expectation that you maintain your currency and your links with industry. (B1)*

*I'm teaching [subject named] in an art school because I am a [trade named]. So my relationship between my professional practice and my history as a practitioner is crucial in me being relevant to my students as a teacher of that subject. And I firmly believe that if I take away my practice, my capacity to be an effective teacher is diminished. So that's a crucial aspect. (D6)*

*I believe you need to keep your training current and in line with what's happening in industry. Students like that. Stories to tell them. Industry wants us to stay aligned with them. (D8)*

*I think we are supposed to do a week a year from memory...sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't. Depending, but I think I've programmed a week this year to go and work in industry. Most [firms in industry] know you are pretty competent if you're working at the polytech, so you generally pick a subject and maybe learn a little more about an area. (A4)*

*We all have a practice and need to be seen to be working at it. I still maintain a graphics practice and a fine art practice, so that every year for instance I do catalogues for other artists, but every year I will also be generating work for exhibition. (A5)*

Nine tutors encountered barriers to maintaining workplace currency or questioned its efficacy:

*It would be good to go out and work. I'd spend time with a surveyor but it all comes back to bloody time. (C3)*

*I don't need to work in industry. We are not teaching a particular skill, we're teaching a life skill, so as long as we come with lots of life that's enough. (B6)*

*Institutes should think about sabbatical, like universities. Leave so that you could spend a bulk of time on PD doing a sustained period of time in work. (D1)*

Seven tutors suggested that isolation from industry could lead to a loss of relevance in teaching:

*For me it's relevance with what's happening in industry. Offering students training so that they go to employers knowing what industry wants them to know. (A1)*

*Training at tech has got to be the same [as in industry]. I need to see what's going on out there or I've got no idea what's happening. I go around all my work experience places. I don't know what's happening if I don't go. (A6)*

Sub-category	What is the experience?	How is it understood?
<i>Responding to calls to improve teaching practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking: "What is an effective teacher?"</li> <li>• Believing there is no need to improve teaching</li> <li>• Working on improving teaching</li> <li>• Understanding that students must be the focus of improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of effective teaching is required for the ITP sector</li> <li>• Teaching is effective and doesn't need improving</li> <li>• Learner groups change, so teaching must change</li> <li>• Students seem to have become lost in institutional systems</li> </ul>

Table 9: Responding to calls to improve teaching practice

Four divisions arose from this sub-category: defining an effective teacher; questioning the need to improve teaching; working on improving teaching; and reinforcing that students must be the focus of improvement.

Twenty-eight tutors identified that improvement in their teaching was an ongoing expectation and one which they sought to fulfil. Variation was evident in the degree to which they were prepared – or able – to enhance their practice, with time constraints frequently cited as a limiting factor. Four tutors, however, saw no reason for their teaching to improve, and felt that it was good enough as it was.

Tutors consistently questioned the nature of effective teaching, and many felt that the attributes of an effective teacher could vary in different subject areas. Institution-wide observation of tutors was seen as a vehicle for identifying effective and non-effective teaching practice, and included the tutor as both observer and the observed.

Most tutors were able to identify strategies that they undertook to improve their teaching. These strategies were often self initiated, however, and tutors were sometimes unsure as to whether they resulted in improvement. The opportunity to

share dialogue with peers within and across institutions was a means by which teaching strategies and innovative ideas could usefully be discussed.

Tutors from two ITPs reported positively that their institution currently offered a range of support mechanisms – over and above PD – to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Eight tutors suggested, however, that institutional initiatives to improve teaching focused on institutional efficiency or financial gain rather than on enhancing student-centred teaching and learning.

Some tutors struggled to identify a touchstone of effective teaching:

*I'm sure there are things to improve, it's just that there's nothing that I'm aware of off the top of my head though. They should say what they see as an ideal teacher. I feel I'm always striving to be a better teacher but is it the way they see it? (A7)*

*Do I need to improve? You get chucked in the deep end. There's no gauge to tell how well you are doing a lot of the time. So there's no real – there's no sort of like level...or anything like that...you are thinking am I teaching hard enough or am I teaching easy. (C6)*

Others saw no need to improve their current teaching practice:

*I don't think teaching needs to improve. I honestly don't. There's nothing wrong with the way we're teaching. (D3)*

*I can't really think of anything to improve because I guess I've been doing it right for quite a few years now. (A4)*

Many tutors supported the concept of improved teaching, but some also identified impediments along the way:

*All the time constantly [improving teaching]. No set of students is ever the same. You can never develop something and teach it the same time after time. I think you would be a poor teacher if you did that. (B6)*

*I think it [teaching] always does [need improving] and I think it helps teachers feel fresh and feel satisfied with what they are doing. So yeah, I don't think it stops. (D4)*

*They [institutional managers] do want better teachers but they don't quite know how to get there. (C2)*

*Yes teaching should always be improved. The issue is around time to do things, I suppose. There's so much stuff on offer. Staff development days. Organise other staff to get together and share what they're doing and hopefully keep a bit of energy there and learn for each other, so we aren't reinventing the wheel. Finding time that staff can get there. (D4)*

*I'm always looking at different areas and trying to improve them. I'm always looking at different resources that I think would be relevant to my learners. I spend far too long planning my lessons and trying to make them interesting to them. (C8)*

*I would probably like to see what other people do but there's no chance, you don't get time to go and catch up with them. (C5)*

Seven tutors acknowledged institutional support in improving teaching:

*They [institution] do [help] all the time really. We're offered short courses, special days and special workshops. We actually did a questionnaire on where the holes are in our own learning are. So I think as an institute we do that really well. If I needed help in anything I know it's there. I just have to ask. (B2)*

*We have a unit called Capability Development. They allocate us a person and they are available as a resource. I went to him with this problem and we talked about interventions, things that I could do to make a difference. (B1)*

And there are always opportunities for new initiatives:

*One way to improve teaching would be to actually involve other institutes. Good if we were able to invite people from other areas to be involved here to teach. It's basically down to integration of staff as well; you know how to foster good working relationships. It's really important. (A8)*

Finally, some tutors reminded themselves that students must be the focus of improvement:

*I think we have too many priorities...as an institution...all sound and totally worthwhile, but there's so many competing things and we seem to have lost our focus on teaching – the real focus on students and learning, that's gone. (D4)*

*Everyone talks about improvement, but it seems to be all talk but I would rather start at my students, what's going to make it easier for my students to run further. (B4)*

*I think what's overlooked often is the student. (C2)*

### **Category 3: Building relationships**

Within this category, tutors understood and experienced teaching as focusing on building relationships with people both internal and external to the institution. Because tutors cannot perform their teaching roles in isolation, generating a network of supportive relationships is necessary if they are to perform their teaching role, manage their workload, and maintain industry contact.

As relationships with students are discussed elsewhere, this category focused on the relationships that tutors developed with external agencies such as NZQA, ITOs and industry; and internal relationships with institutional managers and staff in the same subject/discipline area.

Three subcategories were identified, namely:

- Establishing and maintaining alliances with external agencies and industry
- Working with institutional managers
- Forming relationships with tutors in the same subject/discipline

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Establishing and maintaining alliances with external agencies and industry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigating relationships with external bodies</li> <li>• Acknowledging relationships with moderation agencies</li> <li>• Maintaining industry participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships can prove difficult at times</li> <li>• Tutors question the value of moderation in improving teaching</li> <li>• It may prove difficult to engage industry, but this relationship is vital if the curriculum is to continue to meet industry needs</li> </ul>

Table 10: Establishing and maintaining alliances with external agencies and industry

Three divisions are presented in this sub-category: navigating relationships with external bodies; acknowledging relationships with moderation agencies; and maintaining industry participation. Agencies in this category include: NZQA, ITOs, industry and associated industry groups.

Tutors acknowledged that building and maintaining relationships with external bodies is an important element in enhancing teaching practice, but can also be problematic. Overcoming differing and at times conflicting agendas was seen as time consuming and frustrating. Tutors reported on a lack of timely opportunity to provide input into the development of qualifications by ITOs, or having their advice ignored. Some tutors cited power struggles between ITOs and training providers; whereas others reported successful relationships and suggested that further time and effort were needed to achieve productive dialogue and outcomes. Eight tutors reported no relationship with external agencies, suggesting that this was a managerial – and not a tutorial – role.

There were varying viewpoints as to the perceived benefits of moderation with external agencies. Seven tutors spoke of conflict, frustration and power struggles between moderation bodies and training providers, suggesting that external bodies could be picky or pedantic, and that changes to assessment materials proved time

consuming. Conversely, other tutors considered moderation to be invaluable in improving teaching practice because of the discussion that occurred during the process of engagement.

Building and maintaining close working relationships with industry was seen as vital in ensuring that training remained current and relevant. These relationships were generally viewed positively, although five tutors reported difficulties in securing representation at institutional meetings. Tutors in trades, arts and design, and business were the most focused in their connections with industry by inviting members to meetings, undertaking research, helping with joint projects, participating in conferences, and undertaking work experience. Foundation tutors, excluding trade tutors, were less likely to focus on building and maintaining industry connections and more likely to promote relationships with external agencies and moderation bodies.

Tutors reported varying experiences in navigating relationships with external agencies such as NZQA and various ITOs:

*I don't have a relationship with NZQA. I'm not directly involved, [Name of manager] is the interface between out there and in here. We [tutors] are so busy and so tired doing what we are doing. (A5)*

*I'm on the national moderation panel for NZQA. I do that at the urging of our dean because he likes this institute to be represented on these things. I thought it might be useful for me to say I've been able to do that on my CV at any rate. (D7)*

*Every year we have people come from NZQA to give us feedback on how we are doing. Some issues have come up out of that in relation to delivery, well not delivering what the papers say we should be delivering. It's that kind of dialogue between ticking the boxes and what action practice is about. (A8)*

*Personally I think the ITO just produces a book and apparently they are supposed to liaise with industry. I've never seen the ITO do more than that. I think the ITOs are just there to sign them [apprentices] off. There's a chance they will pop up here to make sure we are filling out their material correctly. We get written feedback where we need to improve, where we are lacking, but it's not helpful to improving things. (B3)*

*I get the feeling that they [ITOs] don't trust us. Like, 20 years on the tools I should be allowed to make a decision without having this bloody great big paper trail behind me to justify it. He's made the right decision or no he hasn't. You know they pick us up on the fact that the boss didn't sign the bottom of the diary. (C3)*

*We can make submissions; suggestions to the ITO, as we go through teaching and we find things that we think "this just doesn't work" or "we could*



*make this better” we can make those suggestions. Now what they do with them is we really don’t have any more influence than that. (B8)*

*Our relationship with them [ITO] is, I wouldn’t say it was good, I wouldn’t say it’s intolerable, we tolerate each other. It’s a hell of a lot better than it used to be, it’s a lot less confrontational. It used to be a process of come and sit down, shut up; we’re going to tell you what you’re doing wrong. (B3)*

*We have a really good relationship with the local ITO; I’d like to think we do. We liaise with them a lot figuring out what we need to do to deliver for industry, what courses need to run, how we’re going to run them, the timeframes, what works for employers, that sort of thing. So yeah, we have a good relationship with them I think. (A4)*

Meeting moderation requirements also drew a mixed response:

*External moderation is sometimes just “picky”. I think it can find holes where maybe there is performance criteria missed; it helps to reinforce that what you are doing is OK. If you get a report back and it says you’re useless, I guess you have to look at it and try to improve it. So yes I think it’s worthwhile. (B2)*

*I’ve been told by the other guys that no matter what you do it’s not going to be right [external moderation]. (D2)*

*We’ve got moderation coming up in August. They moderate us for a day and a half. It’s very much they come in, they’ll talk to me, they’ll talk to [name], ‘what do you do on site’, ‘what’s the process you go through’ and it’s the same as they did last year and the year before and the year before that, it’s exactly the same then they come back the next day and they give us the report. There’s no opportunity to sit down and say, ‘Look for now I want to vent. I want to let you know what I think about this system.’ They don’t want to hear it. (C3)*

*I don’t think they [moderation processes] help to improve teaching but they definitely help improve streamlining of what’s being delivered and the continuum of learning. So when we are moderating I try and get streams of progression going at the same time to see if they’re sitting in that sort of alignment of accumulating skills. They have to have those skills to go to industry and it’s one of those things that our teaching practice is definitely moderated on. (B5)*

*The New Zealand system is too directive, it’s as if the powers that be don’t trust you and they’re looking to catch you out. “Why haven’t you done this, or why haven’t you done that” – it’s directive, it’s too much of an auditing micro-management function. (D1)*

Maintaining industry participation was strongly supported in principle, although the challenge of organising meetings and securing regular participation was also acknowledged.

*We visit industry; it's one of the things we take very, very seriously. It's often things that industry reports back to us 'can you teach this' that makes us change our courses. We do really try and make those links. (B2)*

*We have a permanent advisory committee. Basically we are grabbing guys from out of the industry who work in the [name of trade] industry and get them to come here two or three times a year. We have a bit of a chat about what we are teaching, whether they are happy with the guys coming to industry, what we can do better and that sort of thing. (D2)*

*There was an industry advisory group but there was no one from industry there. (A1)*

*Fostering industry relationships is basically down to the integrity of staff as well, you know how to foster good working relationships. It's really important. I mean it's pretty key to the working situation. (A8)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Working with institutional managers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining relationships with managers</li> <li>• Responding to reactive management</li> <li>• Responding to managers' ongoing initiatives to enhance teaching outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager relationships vary</li> <li>• Causes a snowball effect for tutors</li> <li>• Initiatives to improve teaching should focus on the students</li> </ul>

Table 11: Working with institutional managers

Within this sub-category tutors identified three divisions that impacted on their teaching practice: maintaining relationships with managers, responding to reactive management, and supporting managerial initiatives for improving teaching outcomes that focus on students.

Tutors identified a direct link between their relationships with managers and their motivation for teaching. Thirteen tutors reported that the relationship with their direct manager was generally harmonious and supportive. However, 11 tutors identified that relationships with senior managers were often remote and dislocated, and trades tutors reported specific feelings of alienation. Trades tutors further considered themselves undervalued and disregarded by management who sidelined the trades and saw them as expensive to offer. Eight tutors did not report on their relationship with their manager.

Tutors expressed a clear feeling of frustration with reactive management. Last-minute decisions and instructions to teaching staff when work plans had been finalised led to retrospective changes to work allocations, leaving tutors feeling out of control, frustrated and overworked. Tutors believed that managers needed to realise that reactive management strategies ultimately had negative repercussions that were generally felt at the coalface.

Tutors agreed that managers' initiatives to enhance teaching outcomes were necessary, but questioned the focus of these initiatives. They saw students as central, but suggested that enhancement measures often focused not on students but on improving institutional processes, systems and human resources. Four tutors raised a further concern around decisions made "on high", styled in a rhetoric that served reporting purposes but which didn't devolve into direct action.

Tutors' relationships with their managers elicited a wide range of responses: from neutral, to supportive, to dismissive:

*I've always said around here the tea lady could go away for a week and the place stops. The CEO goes away for a week, no one knows. I wouldn't have a clue where he is. He never comes to our students' graduation, a guy came all the way from Auckland and the CEO couldn't even come across to welcome everyone on behalf of the institute. It makes you feel very undervalued. (C3)*

*The relationship with the Head of School is the level where it matters most, rather than the management crew who do not have the specifics of understanding of practice as an educator. (D6)*

*I make sure that I don't have a problem with my manager. I don't have personal problems with anybody. That's how I survive. (B2)*

*Never see the senior managers, maybe at the odd staff meeting, don't see the CE, it doesn't bother me at all. I don't know if I would learn anything or gain anything from seeing him that I wouldn't get through the normal chain of communication anyway. (D2)*

*Our Head of School is quite good because she knows individual people's sort of commitments and things of your family. She's quite good at not putting night classes on if you've got a family. (D8).*

*[Name of manager], my direct report, she's really good, just sort of like mother hen to everyone. (B5)*

*I've got a good relationship with my immediate manager. You've just got to become pro-active and make sure that heads [of department] are well aware of what you're doing and why you're doing it. (B5)*

*We have a very good Head of School, she's very supportive, we have constant staff meetings and we have an opportunity to participate in what's happening in the programmes that we're teaching. (B6)*

*The management team comes around twice per year. I am never quite sure that we are listened to properly. I'm never quite sure that we are listened to with the sort of attention we would like to have. (D6)*

*We are so undervalued, are thought of as just scummy tradesmen, just the bottom of the barrel. It comes from senior managers; they think we are a hindrance that they would cut free really quickly. I think what I've seen that if they could get rid of us they would really quickly because we are one of the biggest costs. You know all trades are expensive. Our profit margins are minute. (B3)*

Nineteen tutors' responses to reactive management, however, were uniformly negative:

*Managers pushing more sh-t on us. (B3)*

*Managers are out of touch with what happens in teaching areas. He seldom comes to the classroom and sees what goes on. (C7)*

*What they don't realise is yes there is a snowball effect and so we end up chasing things to try and remedy things for them. (B4)*

*There's a push to become more businesslike, business oriented, profit oriented, however you want to put it, rather than student oriented. You know, we've got to save money "so how do we do that, or we get rid of some tutors, we just put bigger classes in front of what tutors". (B8)*

*As a tutor we feel like we are at the bottom level. We almost feel we are not valued. I mean we are the ones, we're at the coal face, we're the ones that are basically providing the service but our opinions, input seems less valued than the ones at the top. They've never stood in front of a class. (B8)*

Tutors' attitudes towards managers' initiatives to enhance teaching outcomes were more ambivalent:

*Continuous improvement is all talk, it seems to get more talk on higher levels, but it doesn't get worked to lower levels. (B4)*

*The problem is if we have got lower pass rates, isn't necessarily anything we're doing or not doing. You know we have changed teaching styles to suit people that say "Oh you have to do this, you've got to do that". They're trying to turn all these departments into profit, money-making ventures, to save money. Look honestly we get a hard run. (D2)*

*I think we are under quite a bit of pressure for success, completing and that. That we get students through and I feel uncomfortable if they don't actually demonstrate they've got those skills. You know they have got to be able to do that [skill or task] independently but I feel there's some tension around that. (D4)*

*Pressure from managers to get students through. Bums on seats. Taking students and getting them through. When you know, sometimes they're just not there to be honest. (C1)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Forming relationships with tutors in the same subject/discipline</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing harmonious and productive relationships</li> <li>• Coping in non-supportive situations with conflicting goals and agendas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results in similar goals and a supportive environment</li> <li>• Personalities who hold differing goals and expectations</li> </ul>

Table 12: Forming relationships with tutors in the same subject/discipline

Within this sub-category only two issues are discussed: the experience of harmonious and productive relationships, and the opposing experience of non-supportive situations marked by conflicting goals and agendas. A middle-ground experience was not apparent in the data.

Generally tutors reported the immediate working environment within the subject/discipline area to be harmonious and productive. Relationships were established within these environments in which tutors felt confident, secure and supportive, and had their voices heard. If help and support were needed they were available. Tutors were prepared to cover for one another and share resources, and worked together to achieve departmental goals.

Opposing experiences were also reported. Tutors described conflict situations in which they felt insecure and at odds with other staff in the department. Insecurity and back-stabbing were demoralising and impacted on the tutor's teaching role. Tutors suggested that differing values and work ethics – together with weak leadership – led to non-supportive environments.

Establishing harmonious relationships was reported by 20 tutors:

*Encouragement within the team is always there. We don't have any negative stuff. (B2)*

*Within our department we have got a really good team approach because we have small teams working, teaching, delivering the same lessons rather than one person doing it all, so we have a whole team approach. (B6)*

*I think we have a pretty damn good group of guys. (B3)*

*I think it's quite collegial. I wonder if it has come about because we haven't been under scrutiny and review and threatened with job losses and so on. So it's kind of forced on us, but it has made us determined collectively. We are quite good on sharing resources and materials. There's no point in reinventing the wheel, we could do better at sharing research ideas. If a colleague is going to a conference and presenting, then they present here first and we give them feedback and so on. (D1)*

*It's good to have a good collegiate body, that's why I moved from a university to here. At university it's fiendishly competitive. When you are competing with colleagues, it's a terrible life. (D6)*

Non-supportive experiences with conflicting goals and agendas were reported by 10 tutors:

*The relationships aren't great, feeling of isolation of who you can talk to around your subject area. It's important to have networks for, you know, the subject, the content. (D8)*

*We don't have the same goal. I don't think we have the same goal. (C2)*

*No, I wouldn't say it's entirely supportive. Um, there's a big rift down the middle of the tutor staff. It all comes through change and some don't like change because people don't want to be involved in project type learning. (A6)*

*Conversations that need to occur aren't happening. We haven't sat down and been committed to having standards between ourselves and also protocols with students. There's a lot that could run smoother. (B4)*

*Staff won't attend meetings, we've been very slack at keeping meetings going and having a good discipline structure of things like that. (B4)*

It should be noted that two tutors did not report relationships with peers in their subject area, saying that they worked alone as redundancies had left only one person teaching in that subject.

#### **Category 4: Enacting government and institutional policy**

ITPs are required by the government’s funding agency – the TEC – to have an investment plan which sets out the institutional targets and objectives to be met for funding purposes. Tutors have a role to assist institutions to meet these targets, and must also comply with institutional policy set out in each ITP’s quality management system (QMS). This category sets out tutors’ understanding of their role in enacting government and institutional policy in order to achieve prescribed strategies and initiatives.

Three sub-categories were identified, namely:

- Enacting government policy
- Supporting the achievement of institutional strategies
- Implementing institutional policies

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Enacting government policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to government policy</li> <li>• Perceiving the financial impact of government priorities on teaching</li> <li>• Achieving student retention and completion targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus on teaching and learning can get lost in numerous initiatives</li> <li>• Funding levels have implications for tutors and teaching</li> <li>• Meeting specified targets may raise moral and ethical issues</li> </ul>

Table 13: Enacting government policy

In this sub-category tutors highlighted their experiences of enacting government policy, and presented their understanding of the impact that government policy has on the core business of teaching and learning. They suggested that government policy has allowed this focus to become diffused because of the perceived significance of other initiatives.

Tutors identified three issues, namely: responding to government policy; perceiving the impact of government priorities on teaching; and achieving student retention and completion targets which are agreed with the TEC. They acknowledged that government policy impacts on teaching practice. Of particular concern was the number of government priorities that ITPs are expected to achieve at the cost of the core business of teaching and learning. Eleven tutors spoke of the need for students to be the focus of improving teaching.

Tutors noted the constant change that government policy brings to tertiary institutions. Seven tutors noted that they struggled to cope with ever-changing requirements to meet set targets. The financial impact of government policy was also reflected in their concerns about continued employment and the downsizing of institutions. Thirteen tutors cited employment issues: in particular, redundancies.

Tutors generally responded negatively towards what they saw as an excess of government policies.

*There's too many priorities from government. The focus used to be on teaching and learning but that seems to not be the case now, it seems to have got lost. I can understand because they all sound totally worthwhile but you know we've got so many competing things. The real focus on teaching is gone. (D4)*

*The government actually need to get on site, see what we're trying to do, we had [name of prime minister] just recently telling us the government wants more bang for their buck from lecturers and so forth. That might be the case with certain institutions but don't put us in that category, we're a professional institute, we work bloody hard here where we try to get real good solid positive results with our students so do not categorise us. (D3)*

The financial impact of government priorities was experienced (and expressed) strongly by thirteen tutors:

*Funding impacts on us tremendously, government policies mean that we have more or less staff. We've been cut over the last five years; since I have been here the staff has been cut in half. (D5)*

*Government financial arrangements need to be not one or two years, they need to be a financial plan over five years. You know for at least in five years how your institution lies. That doesn't happen now.... There needs to be a lot more forward planning and then keeping to it. I think in order to improve teaching tutors need to be relaxed and not worried about their future. If financial arrangements were over five years then they could relax; they would know that they had a job. (D5)*

*Policies to do with funding, and the nature of funding to polytechs was altered in recent years, funding was dramatically reduced. Every year we have had staffing cuts that reflect government policy. The polytech system was not built on that reduced level of funding. (D6)*

Tutors reported, to varying degrees, pressures to retain and pass students, leading to moral and ethical dilemmas associated with assessment decisions.

*We are under pressure for success, completing students and all that. We have an open door policy, if learners apply who we feel are going to be*



*unsuccessful in our programmes we actually send them elsewhere. We don't accept them and set them and us up for failure. (D4)*

*TEC and government are basically telling us that you have to make them pass. It doesn't really matter whether they pass or not, you have to make them pass. If that's not what they are saying then I would like to know. (D3)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Supporting the achievement of institutional strategies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding institutional strategies</li> <li>• Discerning the tutor's role in achieving institutional strategies</li> <li>• Assigning responsibility for achieving institutional strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness that institutions have responsibilities to meet set goals and targets</li> <li>• Achieving set targets is an expectation that doesn't include me</li> <li>• Managers are seen as responsible for achieving set goals</li> </ul>

Table 14: Supporting the achievement of institutional strategies

Within this sub-category tutors identified three central issues: understanding institutional strategies; discerning the tutor's role in achieving them; and assigning responsibilities.

Government policy devolves to institutions through various plans which state the agreed targets linked to the funding cycle allocation for each provider. Tutors are expected to assist institutions to meet these stated targets. Although tutors acknowledged that they were well informed of institutional strategies, they considered that managers should take responsibility for achieving them.

Tutors were prepared to support an initiative that directly affected their work; and a background in a leadership role was evident for those tutors who expressed support in achieving institutional goals. But if attaining certain goals entailed additional work, they often directed the focus elsewhere.

Understanding institutional strategies and how this information is communicated varied between participant ITPs:

*We have a meeting at the beginning of each year, called a planning meeting and we look at the goals for the institute and we look at how they're broken down into goals for our department and how the department is going to achieve those goals. (A7)*

*We are told of the institute's strategies in a couple of meetings each year. I think they [institute managers] are good communicators. The information is*

*available. I look at government policy as well...because I want to make sure that their [institute managers'] interpretation of it is a reasonably objective interpretation. (C4)*

*[Name of institution] very much sets its objectives based on the direction it's given from the government policy and that filters down. CE has regular talks every semester that staff should go along to. Stuff available on the intranet. We're kept well informed of the direction in terms of teaching, research, direction we are going in. Strategy behind that and how we are going to get there. Our planning has to align with the institution. Developing new programmes to make sure they're consistent with whatever the overall strategy or plan is. (B1)*

*The government wants polys to work smarter. I don't have an issue with that. We need to show value for money. I can see there are inefficiencies around here at times. A lot of long-term staff are institutionalised. This institute needs to have goals to change that. (B8)*

In the main tutors minimised their role and responsibilities in achieving institutional strategies:

*Personally I tend to keep my nose out of everything. I do the teaching and institutional policies my boss deals with. (A4)*

*If it doesn't affect me on a day-to-day basis, it's not something I bother to keep in my head. I know it's there, but my name is not attached to any of these particular things so I don't see myself as being responsible. (A7)*

*When it comes to institute strategies the less I know the better because they are just controls, more things that they are trying to direct you where they want you. (C3)*

Tutors who had held managerial responsibilities, however, took a more discerning stance:

*Achieving institutional strategies is important. Our investment plan with the government, TEC, and the achievement of those targets is what keeps the money coming in. I know about this because I spent time in a manager role. I know how important achieving them is. (A3)*

Tutors' responses as to the responsibilities involved were unequivocal:

*My boss deals with that and then she'll come and say this is what we have to do here and I work with that side of that and then forget about it. (A4)*

*My team leader looks after that stuff and anything that I need to do will come down from on high from the Head of School to the team leader. (A2)*

Sub-category	What is the experience?	How is it understood?
<i>Implementing institutional policies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the role of policy</li> <li>• Establishing the tutor's perspective on compliance</li> <li>• Suggesting how policy could be made more useful to practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An institutional resource that is a safety net for the institution and its staff</li> <li>• Policy is peripheral to teaching practice</li> <li>• Institutions could take steps to make policy more relevant to practice</li> </ul>

Table 15: Implementing institutional policies

In this sub-category tutors expressed their views on the implementation of – and compliance with – institutional policies, including the QMS. An ITP's QMS sets out the expectations of practice standards within that institution, and is subject to academic audit and review by accreditation bodies.

Tutors reported three main issues: understanding the role of policy; compliance with policy; and suggestions for linking policy more closely to practice. Of the 32 tutors interviewed, 25 found policy burdensome and suggested that it was frequently disregarded in their practice. Some tutors who considered that policy compromised teaching, was all-controlling, and stifled creativity and innovation, were outspoken in their disregard for compliance. Even tutors more disposed to enacting policy saw it as malleable or open to individual interpretation. Three tutors reported that policy had not been supported or upheld by senior managers, and offered evidence of these experiences.

Four tutors, however, acknowledged policy in their practice, agreed that it was there for a reason, and saw it as providing a safety net for staff and students. Their suggestions for improving compliance with policies though limited, included simplified presentation, making it easier to understand and more accessible, and providing training.

Tutors' responses to the role of institutional policy ranged from acceptance and pragmatism, to questioning and dismissal:

*I can understand why it's [policy] there because we all know in a teaching context there are certain teaching practices which you know aren't appropriate and the role of policy is to actually remind everyone that you can do some things and other things aren't appropriate. (A8)*

*Policies are a safety net and you need to be responsible for your own sake... You may not agree with them but they are in place for a reason. (C7)*

*Policy is malleable. We have a large degree of autonomy...[and] can shape them to what we consider to be an effective way of teaching. They are sufficiently generalised that we can tailor them. (D6)*

*The policies really heavily shape and drive what we do and I am not too sure that's a good thing. I think policies are written from a policy bureaucratic perspective. OK, it's suppose to guide the students' learning experiences, but I find it creates too many barriers and too many hurdles. I don't like being constrained too much. (D1)*

*Policies are just lip service. They're clichés. I don't think people actually understand them. A manager will arrive, they'll bring policies from somewhere else because it sounds good and fits with the government policy. You know it's got to fit and by making it fit, everything's OK. (C2)*

Similarly, tutors' readiness to comply with these policies varied markedly, with most respondents appearing reluctant to engage with them:

*I think that people put their own bent on their understanding of the documentation. (A8)*

*These policies are not something that we are obliged to follow. We may exploit ambiguities or those grey areas to suit us. So the policies and the shaping of the curriculum is actually a philosophy that is articulated and developed constantly amidst the staff. (D6)*

*That's more paperwork and I can't be bothered with that. I've got enough to do without filling in more bits of paper. Anything that creates more paper work for me is just not on, I just want to do my teaching I'm good at that. (A4)*

*I just kind of ignore it [policy] because I don't see it fitting in with anything I do. (B7)*

*I've never taken any notice of anybody's policies. They can do all their policies, print them off and they can be there for us to see, but I've never taken any notice of them. They're well intentioned generalities that don't matter in the actual teaching process. (D5)*

*There's been numerous occasions where those policies and procedures have been breached whether by staff or students. They have been dealt with by management who have been asked to back up that policy but it's kind of sometimes you get things swept under the carpet. They don't back their own policies. (B8)*

Suggesting how policy could be made more serviceable to practice generally drew more constructive comments:

*I think it would be helpful if the institution had orientation or training in terms of policy, as well as having more training on each policy, particularly the ones that affect tutors and students. (A7)*

*It would be nice to have them [policies] explained. It's academic speak which I think it's assumed that all tutors here we know what the policies are. I don't think we do....I mean we get a manual of policies and procedures and stuff like that but how many people actually sit down and read them? (A1)*

*More reminders during the year, before teaching starts or in the planning stages where these policies are an essential resource. (B6)*

### **Category 5: Adapting to contextual influences**

This category presents tutors' experiences of adapting to contextual influences. The environment surrounding teaching and learning impacts on the work that tutors undertake; and the wider systems of support and influence require consideration if teaching and learning are to improve.

Tutors identified four sub-categories that impacted on teaching and learning:

- Working with learner support centres
- Resourcing teaching
- Acknowledging and rewarding teaching practice
- Understanding and expectations of the teaching role

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Working with learner support centres</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting students to learn</li> <li>• Identifying a relationship between learner support centres and the classroom</li> <li>• Suggesting ways to improve the student/tutor/learning support relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students need support to learn</li> <li>• Learning to learn is disconnected from teaching in the classroom</li> <li>• Learner support needs to be aligned with classroom teaching and the subject</li> </ul>

Table 16: Working with learner support centres

This sub-category reports tutors' understanding and experiences of working with learner support centres and the assistance that these centres provide in enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. Tutors reported three issues of significance: supporting students to learn; identifying a relationship between the learner support centre and the classroom; and suggesting ways to improve the student/tutor/learning support relationship.

Tutors acknowledged that learner support was an essential institutional resource for students experiencing difficulties with their studies. They identified a gap, however, between the classroom and learner support centres which often saw students fall through the cracks:

*There's extra help available to them outside of their normal course hours like the Student Help Services. You'll try and organise for them and they won't turn up. They aren't interested in doing anything outside their normal hours of the course. It's very difficult to add extra hours to students that need that kind of thing. (B8)*

*Without extra help they [students] don't feel as though they will make it through. They need a plan of how they should study. They don't know the people at Student Services so I can't get them there. So I guide them outside my normal hours. (B7)*

Tutors suggested that the relationship between the learner support centre and the classroom could be a divisive one. The classroom tutor is often unaware of the support that a student is receiving, and is given little or no feedback on that student's progress. Further, tutors reported that there is often no dialogue from learner support staff as to how the classroom teacher can be of assistance in supporting learner centre initiatives for students:

*They [students] go off there [learner support] and who knows what happens. (B8)*

*Student learning contact them if they need help for their literacy and that. It would help if I knew what help they were getting. (B7)*

*It's like they [learner support centre] take the student and they deal with it and send them back. (C3)*

Six tutors, however, reported examples of successful partnerships. In each instance a close working relationship was evident between the classroom tutor and the learner support centre. Communication was a key factor, and a "working together" partnership was clearly evident:

*I organise some help with the library learning support team. We've got a good learning support team and we organise stuff on report writing and using templates. We work together to make sure that our students get all the help they need. (C1)*

*They [learner support centre] sometimes come into the classroom and work with me with the really slow ones [students]. (A3)*

*I get on really well with them [learner support centre]. They are always giving me clues to help slow learners. (D1)*

In terms of improving the student/tutor/learner support relationship, tutors reported frustration with the relationship between classroom teaching and institutional mechanisms to aid learning:

*There's got to be a more effective way to improve students' learning. My students that have been over there don't do that well. Surely it would be best for them to have help with learning the content of the course and I think that probably means that learner centres have to actually work with the course tutor. At present we never see them. (A2)*

*How much help do we have to give them [students]? Is it our job to help them learn? It's not what I signed up to do. Someone else here has to help get them to learn. (D6)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Resourcing teaching</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquiring appropriate spaces for teaching</li> <li>• Acquiring resources for teaching</li> <li>• Knowing the budget allocation for teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings and spaces are adequate</li> <li>• Improvement in teaching is about the use of up-to-date and appropriate resources</li> <li>• Knowing financial allocations for teaching resources</li> </ul>

Table 17: Resourcing teaching

In this context resources include the spaces allocated for teaching, classroom resources, technology, and classroom consumables. Tutors identified three issues of significance: acquiring appropriate spaces for teaching; acquiring resources for teaching; and knowing the budget allocation for teaching.

Twenty tutors acknowledged that classroom spaces were of an adequate standard, and two ITPs had recently opened new teaching blocks which tutors reported were a significant improvement:

*Some of the classrooms are great. We have a fantastic new art block. It's got lots of awards. (C5)*

*We've got a new \$8 million trades building which is pretty cool. (A4)*

Although teaching spaces appeared to be adequate, available resources in these teaching spaces frequently came in for criticism:

*Most of our equipment is second hand. When it's time to replace stuff we get old equipment. Obviously in this financial climate money is pretty tight so we*

*get students to overhaul it. You know there has been a lot of money spent in this place on buildings. I'll shut my mouth. (A1)*

*Finding resources is just a constant battle. I found that very, very frustrating coming from industry where generally they will pour huge amounts of money into whatever that needs to be done. It's the opposite here. (B3)*

Classroom consumables were assessed as available and adequate for teaching by four tutors and inadequate by another three:

*I've always got about everything that I've asked for in the way of teaching consumables. There's never been a problem. (C6)*

*It's basically a lack of materials. We run a very expensive department, steel is expensive. We are having to make do with what you can find, or what you can rob or what you can acquire from industry. (B3)*

Fifteen tutors reported the lack of technology as a hindrance to improving teaching:

*Lack of technology is stifling my teaching. No internet access. (B8)*

*We've got no technology; have no audio visual, no classroom computers. We do have a computer lab and the hub with computers and we do take them [students] to do their research but there's no technology in the classrooms. (B7)*

*It's hard to get computer space for students. If you're wanting computer rooms at times, it's hard. But then they have just cut down on that as well. There was thinking that every student should really have a lap top. Students don't necessarily have the resources, the money for that. (D8)*

Five tutors reported a lack of knowledge on their budget allocation for teaching resources and consumables which hindered projects that they wished to develop for teaching purposes:

*I suppose knowing what our budget is probably the biggest thing. We need to be able to develop projects based on the budget we are allocated. Sometimes we are told that we can't do what we have developed because the money isn't there. (B4)*

*The budget is always being cut and we are told we can't have that or we can't do that. It wastes time developing ideas when we end up not being allowed to do them. (A2)*



Sub-category	What is the experience?	How is it understood?
<i>Acknowledging and rewarding teaching practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuing acknowledgement</li> <li>• Perceiving the worth of institutional awards</li> <li>• Believing in self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of acknowledgement depends on where it comes from</li> <li>• Awards are valued by some but met with suspicion by others</li> <li>• Reward is an intrinsic response. It is about self-evaluation</li> </ul>

Table 18: Acknowledging and rewarding teaching practice

Within this sub-category tutors identified three main issues: valuing acknowledgement; perceiving the worth of institutional awards; and believing in self.

The manner in which tutors wished to be recognised for the work they undertook varied. Some favoured public acknowledgement, whereas others suggested that overt acknowledgment was not necessary. Twenty-two tutors identified simple thanks from students as the most valued acknowledgement they could receive. Acknowledgement from managers was generally not seen as meaningful; and managers were often considered remote from teaching and lacking in understanding of what the tutor actually did to receive acknowledgement.

Institutional awards were met with some cynicism. Tutors questioned the processes that often occurred, asking if they were truly fair and reflective of those tutors who were performing to optimum levels. Tutors had to be nominated for these awards, either by self or another person. The application process was often lengthy, however, and needed supporting material which was time consuming to complete. Consequently tutors were often not interested in undertaking the required processes and simply didn't apply. A tap-on-the-shoulder-for-mates approach was called into question, as were the decision-making processes for awards once all the nominations had been received.

Some tutors spoke of embarrassment at receiving awards, saying that there were more worthy recipients in their departments. Others, however, spoke of the value of institutional rewards in lifting tutor morale, and providing a time to celebrate teaching excellence and to get together with other teaching staff. Self worth or an inner feeling that the tutor had done a good job was suggested as the real reward of knowing that a job had been done well.

Tutors valued acknowledgement very much in terms of where it came from:

*I guess, for me, it's the student feedback and the thanks you get from them which means the most to me. (D7)*

*The thanks from students is more valuable [than thanks from his manager]. That's what I'm here for. It's the students that are the ones if I'm doing a good job for them, then I've done a good job. (B8)*

*I don't expect the boss to come over and cuddle me. I'd probably be uncomfortable with flowers, but even an email that says "you are doing bloody well, you know." (C3)*

*I get thank you and a pat on the back type stuff from the institution. I don't need the reward, I'm happy as long as I'm doing what I doing, my students, that's good enough for me. I don't need recognition. (A2)*

*They pay me every fortnight. That's acknowledgement. (A7)*

Tutors were ambivalent as to the perceived worth of institutional awards:

*We call them the Oscars. One of our guys got one and he said "how the hell did I get that?" How much value they actually hold, I'm not really sure. (C3)*

*We mingle with other staff, go over there and make ourselves available and not just sit in our cave. So the awards achieve that. (C3)*

*I wouldn't go out of my way to try and do something just so that I got nominated for an award. It wouldn't be something that I would strive to. (B8)*

*There's a system within [name of institution] where you can nominate, a system of reward, annual staff awards and I've been nominated a couple of times. It's not something that I really think is necessary. Just one person being rewarded, what happens to the rest of them? It should be everyone that's nominated should get an award. Being nominated is the reward for me. (B7)*

*How would they [managers] know if they're not coming in observing and it's sort of, for me, a bit of a tap on the shoulder for the favourites? I don't think it's right. (D8)*

*We've got awards night, the employee awards. We do get certificates and some dosh. You have to select yourself. There's a bit of campaigning going on. You get heaps of emails saying "will you nominate me?" It's quite difficult when you don't nominate them, it's difficult. (B5)*

Most tutors had a perceived sense of self belief:

*I'm one of those people that just as long as I know I'm doing a good job and I'm confident at it, I don't need people coming and giving me cards and flowers and things like that. (B7)*

*The real reward is knowing you have done a good job. Thanks from managers and students is OK but just you, knowing you've done OK is best. (B6)*

<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>What is the experience?</b>	<b>How is it understood?</b>
<i>Understanding and expectations of the teaching role</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the role and responsibilities of an ITP tutor</li> <li>• Preparing for the teaching role</li> <li>• Aligning expectations of managers and tutors on workload issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of the teaching role versus the reality of the role</li> <li>• Orientation and initial training play a vital role in integrating tutors into their role</li> <li>• Institutional context impacts on employment issues</li> </ul>

Table 19: Understanding and expectations of the teaching role

Tutors identified three issues within this sub-category: understanding the role and responsibilities of an ITP tutor; preparing for the teaching role; and aligning the expectations of managers and tutors on workload issues.

Eight tutors suggested that some people may enter teaching not fully understanding the tutor's role and responsibilities. Some spoke of surprise at the duties expected of them, suggesting that they perceived student interaction as the focus of their role, with administrative duties undertaken by others. Trades tutors were the most vocal in this respect.

Six tutors also reported that they appeared – at least from outside the ITP – as having a relaxed way of life, but in reality worked harder and for longer hours than was perceived. Lengthy holidays were also an illusion, as much time was committed to planning and preparation for forthcoming teaching and PD. The working day was often longer than expected, and the duties over and above being in front of a class were more complex than first envisaged. Participating in meetings, undertaking administration, marking, programme development, PD, work experience and industry consultation created a complex working environment in which tutors constantly had to juggle their priorities.

Orientation at the commencement of teaching was considered either marginally helpful or generally unhelpful. However, it was seen as a vital time to integrate a tutor into the ITP. Current orientation programmes were seen as delivering too much irrelevant information in a short space of time. Tutors also suggested that orientation needed to occur over a longer period of time; was too focused on institutional processes; and didn't provide the immediate knowledge that they needed to plan and prepare for teaching. Tutors also suggested that ITPs could do more at this stage to make them aware of institutional policies which impacted on teaching.

Twelve tutors felt that they needed a longer timespan to integrate themselves into the ITP before standing in front of a class and teaching. It was suggested that a

minimum of two to three months was needed for a tutor to observe, ask questions, and become familiar with the world of tertiary education and training.

Tutors assigned importance to aligning the workload expectations of managers and tutors. Some tutors reported variation in the level of work expected; others cited over-work; and yet others suggested that they had a fair and equitable workload. Twenty-four tutors felt that the sinking lid policy apparent in tertiary education was seeing them working harder and longer. Redundancies placed pressure on tutors who reported high stress levels at a time when the government sought increased efficiencies, improved outcomes, and greater returns on the money it was investing in tertiary education.

Twenty-one tutors reported that their initial perceptions of the teaching role differed from the reality once their teaching had got underway:

*It's a lot harder than what you'd think looking from the outside in. The demands are quite hard on a teacher especially mentally. Much greater than it was like in industry. (C6)*

*Five years ago if you'd asked me what a teacher does, I would've laughed, it was a bit of a joke really but now I know it from the inside and know how hard it is. (C6)*

*Just finding out what you need to do is really hard. It's like really hard to know how to teach and what's expected of you, how much to put in, what to put in. You've got to find your own answers to how to teach and all that stuff. Yeah, there's a hell of a lot to do. (A2)*

*I started part way through a term. I didn't really know the level I had to teach to. I just adjusted as I went along, but I didn't always know where to find things, where I was supposed to report to each day. There was too much that I didn't know. (D7)*

Similar discrepancies were identified as tutors prepared to take up the teaching role:

*I do think you need a couple of months training before you meet a student. I definitely do think that two months, learn how to use computers, actually learn how the actual institution works. Learn how to get IT to work for you, learn how to use HR and all that sort of stuff. I think two months would be quite a good induction before you start actually getting chucked amongst the students. (C6)*

*I think a nice way would be to have three months where you could be mentored by someone. You know actually show, oh this is how you do things. You know this is what's required, rather than just be shoved in the deep end. I don't know why they don't do it. It's outside my pay scale. (B3)*

*Orientation didn't help. Too much information about institute stuff like HR and health and safety. I needed a lot more on how to do the teaching stuff like planning, timing of things, writing tests and practical stuff. And all the information they gave you was overwhelming, I forgot most of it. (A5)*

*They didn't actually go to the trouble to tell me about policies. It was pretty hard going because I did things I wasn't meant to but how was I to know if they didn't tell me. Not like that in industry where I came from. (C3)*

*We had orientation of what to do if there was a fire and all that sort of thing, but not the basics of what I was teaching. (D7)*

Aligning the expectations of managers and tutors on workload issues raised a number of dilemmas:

*We're expected to do so many hours [teaching] which is no problem, but then you're also expected to do marking, researching, constantly update your resources as well as administration work, the automatic rolls, liaising with industry, focus groups. I often feel a bit overloaded but all we are told is "you've got to manage your time better". That's not an answer. That is a bad management answer. That says you are driving the staff too hard. (B4)*

*I spend probably 10 hours per week on top of my normal time. I just work more hours than I am paid for but we are starting to count a lot of those extra hours. So what we are saying to management "don't just look at our contact hours; look at all the hours that we spend with the students". (B1)*

*Time is my enemy. I tutor 9-3 and then I need to prepare lessons, find resources, create workbooks, deal with student issues, meet students one-to-one. I just don't fit it all in. I constantly feel behind and that stresses me out. (C8)*

*They need a different method of accommodating people's differences in terms of work patterns. People look at numbers and they say "this person's only teaching 15 hours per week, but we pay them for 36 hours. So what are they doing for the rest of the time?" I think some of the fault is that we haven't been necessarily upfront in terms of all those other things that we do. (B1)*

*We burn out for sure, we're pushed to the edge where you know confrontation and disputes just happen. It's very hard, you're off to a teaching course and they speak about reflective teaching practice but it's very hard to do when you are full on. (A8)*

*My workloads fair, there's times when we have to pick up a little bit extra but that's all part of helping the team out, just pick it up, get it done, crack on. (A2)*

*Discretionary leave, a lot of that is normally working. I do a lot of work in that space, just trying to keep ahead of other bits and pieces. (B4)*

*People are always uncertain about what's going on. Everyone realises that it [restructuring] means more work. The tutor that did the research side she stopped doing it last year. She ended up on sick leave and then had to cut back on all her research. She's working to rule now. They're losing people doing extra. (C5)*

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the research findings in a manner that is consistent with a phenomenographic approach. The outcome space was presented through the development of five categories of description and the variation between tutors' experiences.

The following chapter presents four case studies of individual tutors' experiences of working within an ITP.

## CHAPTER 5

### INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY RESULTS

The previous chapter reported on the aggregated experiences of tutors who took part in this research. This chapter addresses the individual experiences of four tutors who were chosen for analysis because their experiences of working in an ITP were widely represented in the data. As the phenomenographic analysis suggested that the subject or discipline played a role in tutors' experiences, one tutor from each of the four named discipline areas was selected for investigation.

These case studies are intended to reveal individual nuances that were masked in the pooling of transcripts for the purposes of establishing the categories of description. Analysis of the individual cases follows that of the aggregated experiences, and is reported as the five categories of description introduced in chapter four.

The tutors chosen from the disciplines of foundation studies, business, art and design, and trades have been given fictional names to preserve anonymity. The experiences of Sarah, Bronwyn, Gregory and Tom are elucidated from their descriptive accounts in the semi-structured interview transcripts. They were chosen as their experiences were not only widely represented in the data, but their descriptions exemplified those of other tutors in the same subject. The similarity of experiences and understandings identified among the tutors in each subject area was of note.

#### **Individual Case Study One: Sarah**

Sarah teaches foundation studies programmes. She is responsible for preparing students who come to tertiary education with few – or in most instances with no – pre-requisite qualifications, and who are seeking entry either to higher levels of learning or directly into the workforce.

Sarah works at an outpost of an ITP. She regards the distance between the two campuses as both an advantage and a hindrance to her practice. On the one hand she is largely left alone and is distanced from some of the pressures – particularly the politics – of a large institution that she would otherwise have been exposed to on the main campus some distance away. On the other hand, this isolation also means that much-needed support is often limited or not available.

Sarah also struggles with obtaining sufficient numbers of students to keep her programme viable. Although employed as a tutor, her duties have been extended unofficially to marketing her programme in the local community and securing the numbers that will ensure its ongoing viability. She has been repeatedly advised that insufficient enrolments will result in cancellation of the programme and the disestablishment of her position, leading to last-minute scrambling to meet EFTS

targets set by Sarah's managers. This is not a situation which Sarah finds reassuring or which acknowledges her hard work.

Sarah's understanding and modelling of effective teaching has developed over her four years of teaching foundation students. She believes that effective teaching in this field is "more than just delivering the programme and helping them achieve a qualification". She considers that there is too much focus on "getting them that qualification" because, as she says: "These learners have so many barriers to overcome to come here, that there's so many other things that I see as being effective teaching". Having students attend is a huge bonus, and learning to work with others and basic life skills are another.

Sarah cited one example of a student who attends classes regularly, but isn't actually learning. He's hungry, and doesn't eat breakfast because he can't afford it. He can't concentrate and he's a big man. When given food to eat, he starts concentrating and starts learning. It's all about teaching him that in order to learn "you actually have to eat".

Sarah often feels that effective teaching puts her into a mother role, which creates conflict for her: "I keep thinking I'm the tutor, don't get involved, but it affects their learning. So if I can sort some of their issues out, then they get on and learn and I see that as a win/win for all of us".

Learning how to cope with foundation students provides unique opportunities. If they turn up, it becomes a challenge to retain them in the classroom. Simply being there in the room indicates that "they are wanting to do something", which usually means access to computers, as they often don't have one at home: "I let them have a little bit of space because I see that as important...If I put them in the right space then that's good, because no learning takes place until they have got that out of their system".

She suggests that students see learning as 9-3: "They won't do anything at home". She believes that many of her students learn superficially and just want to tick the box and get the unit, and go on to another one. Sarah spends much time attempting to change their perceptions of learning and getting them to understand that "it's knowledge that they need... [to] grow and build from".

Sarah believes that creating a physical learning environment which differs from school is "really important". Foundation students favour a home base, a room to call their own. This wish is often not supported by the ITP that seeks to utilise rooms to maximum capacity, and discourages students from taking "ownership" of space. However, Sarah believes that stability is vital to successful learning, given that many of her students have unsettled or transient home lives. Consequently, having a stable learning environment "is really important to them". Students stay there at lunchtime, play music, and play movies: "that type of thing".



Getting students to take responsibility for their learning is a challenge. Individual learning plans are discussed every Monday when goals are set for the week. It is all about making students aware of their responsibilities, where they are at, and where they need to go. However, a wary Sarah reports that although it doesn't always happen, "I still do it every Monday". She continues: "It's difficult to get them to learn because they battle so many different things. They have so much else going on that learning does seem to be the bottom of the heap for many of them".

Evaluating her teaching in terms of effectiveness requires a range of evidence, including self-reflection: "I reflect on it [my teaching] and make notes at the end of each session. I gauge students' reactions or non-reaction. I also use a tutor assistant and she gives me great feedback. Student feedback is [also] good".

Although institutional evaluations are completed, Sarah questions their worth: "They [students] see if they aren't achieving that it's not their fault. They're quick to blame someone else. If they don't succeed in a subject they blame the teacher. They would say in the evaluation that he's no good because he didn't teach us anything". Sarah believes that students react in this way because of previous negative experiences in the schooling system.

She struggles with making her teaching relevant to students' needs: "I know as adult learners their learning should be relevant, but most of my learners are young and they haven't had work experience. They don't know the relevance, so it's really hard to get them to see that this is a useful thing to do".

Students who simply enrol to get financial support and have no intention of completing the course are problematic for Sarah: "They know they can sign up and get Study Link". Other concerns involve students who attend because of parental pressure, saying that their mother said they had to do something, or that their mother had enrolled them, and even that they don't want to be there at all. Sarah feels that many of her students fit into these categories and display little apparent motivation.

One group that she does see as committed and motivated are second-chance learners or the more mature students looking to change direction. Teaching such diverse groups, however, poses significant challenges: "I plan my lessons but the plans are never followed". Sarah reports that there is so much disruption in the class that the plan goes out the window until the issue is sorted. Students' differing levels of ability make it difficult for them to activate prior knowledge and to build learning in small, incremental steps.

Developing and growing in her teaching skills and knowledge is an important aspect of Sarah's practice: "I'm always looking at different areas and trying to improve them". Career guidance is one such area. If PD were available, Sarah would like to up-skill so that she could guide and support her students into making appropriate career choices.

Sarah would welcome training and support in how to work smarter or more efficiently, together with ideas for more innovative and creative teaching strategies. Physical isolation means that Sarah does not have access to the pooled experiences of other tutors in the foundation studies area, leading to anxiety that she may not be delivering in a similar manner to larger “more switched-on institutions”. “I would really love to go and visit other institutions. I think it would be hugely beneficial for my students because I am too much in the box. If I saw other ideas it would be great”.

Training in e-learning would allow Sarah to put resources on to the computer for her students. Their love of computers and frequent use of technology may motivate their learning, but Sarah doesn't have access to training that she believes is at a level to support successful implementation of e-learning strategies. Her knowledge and ability level with computers is poor.

Sarah has achieved a CAT (L4) and NCALE, but isn't presently engaged in further study. She explains that “putting that [study] in place takes time, and time is my enemy. I teach 9-3 and then I need to prepare lessons, find resources, create workbooks, deal with student issues, meet students one-to-one. I just don't fit it all in. I constantly feel behind, and that stresses me out”. Continuing PD in industry does not feature in Sarah's development plans; teaching life skills is a broader focus of her practice.

Building relationships with others is problematic when Sarah is working in an isolated environment: “I have no relationship with NZQA or any ITOs. There must be a lot of information to share so I'm going to try and build one [a relationship]. I have a lot of queries. I'm finding it quite difficult at the moment. There's so much more that I feel I need to know”.

Sarah finds that because she is the only foundation tutor at the regional campus, tutors from other subject or discipline areas become mentors. Sharing problems with tutors experiencing similar situations helps Sarah. However, she laments seeing them heading off to planning meetings and reporting on their various initiatives which leaves her “feeling a bit isolated”.

Relationships with managers haven't featured largely in Sarah's experiences to date. At the time of the interview for this research project, however, a programme manager had recently been appointed, and Sarah was looking forward to “being able to share in a wider group” – albeit some few kilometres away on the main campus.

Enacting government and institutional policies was not high on Sarah's agenda: “It's probably quite good being away from the main campus because we're left alone for a lot of those things”. She also adds: “I don't really use the policies as such. I do use programme regulations and course descriptors, but that's the extent of policy use”.

Government policy and institutional initiatives are delivered to staff via CEO visits several times a year. Staff focus on the relevance of these issues to what's

happening at the regional campus. Job losses and ongoing restructuring are at the forefront of their concerns.

Adapting to contextual influences raises particular concerns for a regional campus. A learner support centre is available, but with limited capacity it often falls to the tutor to support and counsel students. Sarah wonders if her experience and knowledge are adequate and appropriate, but feels that her experience as a mother allows her to fulfil these support roles. Although students do attend the learner centre it is often difficult to get the younger ones to go, and Sarah finds that they struggle to relate what they are being taught to classroom learning: “The classroom learning has to somehow fit with the way they are being told to learn it”.

Adequate resourcing is a constant battle for Sarah. Finding new, up-to-date and exciting resources that inspire and motivate students to learn is time consuming and frustrating. Limited availability of computers creates frustration which is exacerbated by Sarah’s perception of her limited ability to help students to navigate commonly used software such as Microsoft Word programmes.

Acknowledgement of Sarah’s teaching derives almost solely from her students. She rarely receives endorsement from her managers, as she doesn’t relate to them on a regular basis and believes that they are largely unaware of what she does. Her students say “thank-you”, as do some of the staff who work in the same regional campus and are aware of Sarah’s difficulties with her students. When asked to expand she replied: “Yeah, I have struggled a bit recently. I’ve been getting a bit buried under things and probably because I am busy – yeah, I suppose a ‘thank-you’ or a ‘well done’ would help”.

Sarah’s understanding and expectations of the teaching role are summed up as: “I do what needs to be done. One of the benefits of being at a regional campus is that you are left alone to get on with the job. You do whatever needs doing. Politics and union rules don’t come into it. We do whatever is needed”.

### **Individual Case Study Two: Bronwyn**

Bronwyn teaches business, having previously taught at a university. She finds that teaching in the ITP sector is more vocationally focused and more aligned with equipping students to meet industry requirements. A short foray into a middle management position was relinquished when Bronwyn quickly realised that her real passion lay with teaching and research.

Bronwyn’s understanding and modelling of effective teaching focuses on student engagement. She believes that students frequently have the potential to succeed in their learning, but lack confidence from earlier learning experiences in the schooling system. She believes that the role of tertiary education is to help give students the “skills and tools to enable them to be successful”. Once they become successful, Bronwyn observes that learning often “builds and builds”.

Reflection on her teaching practice led to a shift in Bronwyn's focus from delivering content to a model which seeks to engage students in a way that makes the learning relevant and of more interest to them. According to Bronwyn, economics is an "unpopular" subject among students, and one that causes them "mass phobias". Turning learning into a fun, interesting and useful experience for her students has been an exciting and rewarding outcome for Bronwyn.

Bronwyn believes that "engagement" requires students to be both physically and mentally attuned to their study. She says that a tutor can tell when students are fully committed and engaged because they develop a passion for learning: "After a bit of time when you see their confidence developing [as] they get to know the system and how it works, they become more confident and learn and learn".

Bronwyn identifies a variety of teaching methodologies as the key to engagement. She is a member of a group that shares resources online, including a facility in which both the theoretical and practical aspects of economics can be taught through game playing. This game focuses on examples from current news stories. In order to participate in the game students need to prepare, participate in discussion, study the theory behind the discussion and evaluate it. The teaching is relevant and timely, and Bronwyn finds that students relate positively to what is currently happening in the world: "I use lots of variety in my teaching. One example of what I do is to play a game, but the game explains the theory. Students really like that. They say they are really excited to come to class".

Early intervention is important if students start to fall behind. There are high numbers of international students in Bronwyn's economics class. Frequently these students experience difficulties in learning, mainly due to language issues. Bronwyn has an institutional resource available to address learning and teaching dilemmas that may arise with her classes, and which continues until such time as these dilemmas are remedied: "You need to act at an early stage if there is a problem. Identify what is actually going wrong and do something to fix it".

Evaluating the effectiveness of her teaching is vital to improving the outcomes for Bronwyn's learners. Institutional evaluations are undertaken at the end of the course which Bronwyn believes is too late for them to be effective, and the response rate is often low. To gain feedback on an ongoing basis she hands out slips of paper and asks students to record what they enjoyed most and least, and ask any particular questions.

Bronwyn welcomes feedback from colleagues who observe her teaching, and from participating in moderation. She believes that effective feedback must come from varying sources and be ongoing.

Bronwyn observed that teaching often occurs the way it does because tutors believe subjects such as business "are taught like this". She notes that a lesson may start with theory, followed by a practical exercise: a model that she believes has to

change if teaching is to become innovative and interesting to today's students. She reflects on the lack of passion and motivation in some of her colleagues who "mindlessly" continue teaching practices that were around when they were being taught "some time ago now".

Bronwyn sees today's students as more demanding than in the past. Because they seek more detailed feedback, often in a written form, she spends more time annotating their assignments. She acknowledges that students are also more likely to challenge what is written, which requires tutors to exercise care with what they commit to paper. She further believes that students expect value for their money, including technology-assisted teaching which is entertaining, participatory, interesting, exciting and innovative, and which meets their expectations.

Bronwyn views developing and growing in terms of remaining current and up to date with industry practices. She takes great satisfaction in working in industry for at least one week per year, serving on several industry committees, attending workplace seminars, and undertaking applied research to resolve issues for local industry. She ensures that students are aware of her industry links in order to demonstrate that her teaching is credible and relevant, and is preparing them for future employment.

However, Bronwyn believes that her current PD allowance does not promote in-depth industry experiences. She would like to see a sabbatical system similar to that of universities in which blocks of time are allocated for staff to undertake subject-related activities. She considers that an industry based sabbatical of up to three months would provide full immersion and promote optimum outcomes.

Bronwyn is currently undertaking the compulsory CAT (L5) teaching certificate. She has exceeded the specified two-year timeframe in which to complete the qualification, however, because of competing calls on her time that make it difficult to set and maintain priorities.

She acknowledges institutional systems and processes that are in place to support her teaching practice. An annual capability development cycle is undertaken with her manager which sets teaching goals and a teaching development plan for the year. This plan is reviewed after 12 months to monitor progress towards meeting these goals. Notwithstanding this positive theoretical design, practical difficulties have arisen with managerial changes that compromise continuity of approach, coupled with a perception that goal-setting measures are not being consistently applied across the ITP.

Bronwyn views improvement in teaching practice as an integral part of a tutor's role. She discussed her experiences of attempting to improve what she does, recognising that the most beneficial feedback derives from peer observations, student feedback and moderation processes. Because of doubts as to her own impartiality, she attaches limited value to systems in place for self-evaluation.

Bronwyn considers that institution-wide PD days help her to understand the impact of global issues on her ITP. Although she acknowledged difficulties in finding time to attend, some colleagues' reluctance to take part (which she puts down to "arrogant attitudes") encourages her to make the effort to be present.

Bronwyn ascribes excellent TEC statistics on programme retention and completion to the fact that her ITP has a dedicated team of staff who drive improvement and who are totally committed to providing an optimum student experience.

In Bronwyn's view building relationships is not only central to developing and growing, but also to actually surviving as a tutor. Industry support is essential to her relationship with external groups that are undertaking joint research projects; while she considers membership of organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce as enhancing both her teaching practice and the reputation of her ITP.

Relationships with NZQA involve participation in discussion groups to improve the teaching syllabus. Bronwyn considers that the current syllabus appears to "constrain teaching": a view deriving from her involvement in industry which has highlighted areas of deficiency. She also identifies issues in what and how students' knowledge can best be assessed, citing out-of-date assessment practices and ideas. She is unsure of how far she can drive change, but supports the introduction of discussion forums to address these – and related – issues.

Bronwyn cites relationships with managers as a concern. Because middle management is often changing ("four programme managers in four years"), consistency of approach has become an issue. She suggests that teaching staff are reluctant to take on this role, but considers, none the less, that it provides a vital link with senior managers. She also supports strong leadership and a clear vision at senior manager level if the ITP is to succeed in today's environment. Stability is another crucial factor, as "constant changes in managers do not allow consistent expectations to occur".

Bronwyn reports relationships within her subject area as "harmonious". Staffing levels are relatively stable, and teaching staff set similar high standards, support one another, and hold common expectations of their students. She notes that high quality meetings promote positive discussion and good outcomes.

Bronwyn states that enacting government and institutional policy features in her teaching practice. She acknowledges that government initiatives for tertiary education filter down to institutional level, eventually impacting on departments and on the teaching practice of individual tutors. Her ITP has in recent years become "a lot more proactive in informing staff on the initiatives government articulates for tertiary education and how this institution intends to achieve them". CEO meetings inform staff of the institutional direction, as does information provided on the internal internet system. So in Bronwyn's view, there is no excuse for staff not knowing:

“There’s ample opportunity, in different ways, to get people engaged and to develop their understanding”.

The ITP is expending energy focusing on outputs and results, in terms of both student and staff achievement. Bronwyn believes that this emphasis aligns with government initiatives, and is related to “both financial efficiency and improved outcomes”.

Institutional policy and an adherence to integrating policy within her practice are a focus of Bronwyn’s teaching role. She understands that policy is in place as a “protective mechanism for both students and staff”, and a reference point if a contentious issue arises. She gave an example where several students were caught cheating, and the institutional policy detailed the processes to be followed. As Bronwyn explained, “It is vital that the policy is followed, as these cases have potential to become messy if policy is not adhered to”.

Self assessment is the new quality assurance process which ITPs are required to have in place for each programme. Bronwyn believes that this process is really just an extension of self reflection, “so we should constantly be reflecting on what we do and how we do it and why we are doing it. And I think as an institution it should go up through the levels so that every part of the institution has to undertake a reflection exercise on their performance”.

In terms of adapting to contextual influences, support to assist students who are struggling to learn has minimal impact on Bronwyn’s practice. If students struggle they are directed to institutional support centres, but Bronwyn considers that students themselves must decide whether or not to attend.

Bronwyn described resources for teaching as “adequate” but quickly followed this description by concerns about the IT system. If it worked more quickly and was more reliable, productivity could be improved. Not knowing if the IT system will work on a day-to-day basis means that a plan B is always necessary. Bronwyn describes this situation as “unacceptable”. She acknowledges, however, that teaching spaces are excellent and any resources asked for are generally supplied; but notes that business – unlike trades – is not an area which requires many resources for teaching.

Acknowledgment of – and reward for – teaching are found within Bronwyn’s school. She described occasions when her direct manager has acknowledged particular outcomes and thanked her for her work, but was hesitant when reporting on acknowledgement from the ITP itself.

She explains that managers look at statistics, graphs and charts: “If a person’s only working [teaching] 15 hours per week and they are paid for 36 [duty hours], what are they doing for the rest of those hours?” She thinks staff must accept some responsibility if they haven’t been proactive in informing managers of how their duty

time has been utilised. To address this issue teaching staff in the business department have initiated diaries that quantify how their working week is scheduled. Bronwyn believes it has come to “counting” all the hours that are used to prepare for teaching: “If you count in today’s world you get recognition and reward. You are seen to be doing the work. If things are not counted, if they are sort of invisible, then you’re not going to be recognised”. Bronwyn continues by stating: “We need to step forward and say, yep, we’re doing 15 hours teaching, but we’re also doing this, this and this”.

Bronwyn acknowledges that having previously taught in a university, coming to an ITP was a change of culture to which she had to adjust. The teaching is more skills based, and Bronwyn believes that the students who leave the ITP are as good as university graduates, with the proviso that they need more effort, resource and assistance to develop their capabilities.

Understanding what is expected of Bronwyn as a tutor is defined in institutional documents and is articulated during annual personal planning meetings with her manager. Bronwyn hasn’t had any issues over her employment, which she attributes to her experiences and clear understanding of her teaching role. At times she feels that managers do not understand tutors’ workloads, and hopes that keeping a diary will substantiate the value she is adding to her ITP.

### **Individual Case Study Three: Gregory**

Gregory teaches art at an ITP which in recent times has experienced ongoing restructuring and changes in management, leading to what Gregory describes as “low staff morale”. With new managers and institutional structures in place, however, the institution has started on a path to improve many areas of its performance. Notwithstanding these initiatives staff morale remains low, and confidence in the new management structure is slow to change. Gregory acknowledges that the ITP has been through troubling times. He came to it having taught previously at a university and another ITP. He was head hunted because of his abilities in both teaching and management of art teams. He is very vocal in articulating his ideas and opinions, and acknowledges that this stance has sometimes put him off-side with his managers.

Gregory’s discussion on understanding and modelling effective teaching initially focused on criticising the aims and goals of teaching in an ITP. With an orientation towards industry and its focus on apprentices, Gregory believes that teaching has become “low grade”. He has observed this low level of teaching across the institution, even in areas in which teaching requires the application of higher level cognitive development skills.

Gregory believes that teaching becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. He is concerned that ITPs may employ inexperienced staff. He has observed that ITPs have a tendency to employ “their own”, citing a history along the following lines: “Teacher arrives, they’re limited in experience and skills, they teach their students, they



recognise something in their own students that reflects them and they employ them [their students]. And so the cycle repeats itself.” Gregory states that he has observed this pattern many times. This situation results in students exposed to tutors who he believes do not have adequate depth to their skills and knowledge, which is subsequently reflected in their teaching.

If teaching is to be effective and to improve, Gregory believes that tutors and managers must first read the research and underpin any new initiatives with this research. He feels that much teaching is based largely on the past, or “on doing like me”. He has seen this understanding passed on to new employees on many occasions. He believes this teaching philosophy to be endemic in the ITP sector, and that it has to change. He laments the fact, however, that research does not appear to be valued within the ITP sector, saying “it’s not valued, it’s just not valued. No one takes any notice of it”.

Gregory was adamant that “what needs to occur is the sector needs to use contemporary theories to break the classroom down and start teaching in exciting, innovative and interesting ways”. He has observed, notwithstanding, that teaching starts at base levels in trades areas and is extrapolated across the ITP to other disciplines, even those which require more innovative and highly developed levels of thinking and applied pedagogy.

Gregory believes that effective teaching requires learners to be in control of their learning. The student must be placed at the centre of the learning experience. He acknowledges, all the same, that “there are times when lecturing is unavoidable because certain exposure to information is required, and the only way to deliver it is via a lecture format”. Project work which sees students either working on their own or in teams features prominently in Gregory’s teaching strategies.

He laments that many students do not know how to use the library effectively. Introducing students to researching information, getting them to read and understand what is happening in the world of the artist, getting them to think and evaluate like an artist, and valuing knowledge are all goals of his teaching. “My goal is to get a student to understand that there are too many mythologies around art and artists; to get them to understand that and to start making their own determinations about what the criteria for a good artist [are]”.

Gregory considers that his role is to make himself obsolete by the time his students leave the programme. He wants his students to be able to research themselves, discover things themselves, and know how to think about these discoveries in their own way and in their own contexts.

He frequently evaluates his teaching in discussion with students. Providing that art students know and understand what is expected of them, Gregory finds that teaching in non-traditional ways appeals to them. They enjoy the freedom of talking, and

sharing ideas and knowledge: “It’s all about finding out who has the knowledge, how to get it, and how to analyse it and how to make the best thing for them out of it.”

Gregory gets annoyed when asked to expand on his perception of how the subject or discipline influences the way in which tutors teach. He suggests that tutors are too siloed in their perceptions. Traditional ways are perpetuated year after year, and tutors are always complaining that they are overworked. He acknowledges that this complaint is probably true because of the way they go about teaching. Standing in front of a group and “having to work out what you are going to say every two seconds – of course you are overworked”. He suggests that tutors need to throw traditional ideas of teaching out the window.

Gregory argues that art tutors need to stand back and evaluate their teaching. He finds that end-of-year exhibitions are often managed by the tutor. “Why? If their [the tutor’s] teaching was good enough then it should be the student who organises the exhibition”. He reports that tutors respond along the lines of: “We can’t have them doing that because they might make us look bad”. His response is: “You should give the whole thing to the students; you just stand back and let them do their thing. This is their demonstration of what they have learnt”.

The demographics of the student body cause Gregory considerable anguish. “Polytechnics are full of students who have failed at school. Or who went out and got a job and failed. Suddenly they realise that they need education but don’t know what they want to do. They come to a polytechnic because they don’t believe in themselves, and don’t believe that they can achieve higher levels of learning.” He suggests that ITPs attract students with a wide range of learning capabilities, from people who can’t read to others who can read and write really well but lack focus. So tutors start off teaching incredibly diverse groups of people: a more challenging scenario than teaching at a university.

Gregory interprets developing and growing in terms of his assertion that teaching must improve. A focus on learning how teaching can be changed is necessary if outcomes are to improve and if the learner is to take centre stage in the process. He is currently researching and developing skills associated with artists working in teams. He believes the widespread view that artists work alone is a myth, and that working in a team environment could be more productive: “Different people have different strengths; you can only utilise them by being in the team. You have to trust the other people in your team to do the thing that they think is their thing and those they can contribute best.”

PhD qualified in art, Gregory has long since left the pursuit of formal qualifications behind; but does acknowledge that he holds no teaching qualifications. He viewed his PhD as a “cover-all” for him to attain a skill and knowledge base that would enable him to teach in both university and ITP sectors. He believes, however, that

his widespread experience as a teacher has given him an assured understanding of effective teaching and the ability to achieve positive results with his students.

Building relationships are reported by Gregory as “necessary” for implementing his teaching strategies. His current thinking and development focus on the ability of people – including tutors – to work in teams. He believes others, both within the ITP and outside it, are necessary to support his teaching role.

Local artists and the local art gallery all work alongside Gregory and his students, supporting Gregory’s innovative teaching practices and assisting his students to complete their projects. Developing close working relationships with the local art community takes time and requires mutual respect; but the opportunity to assist in teaching up-and-coming artists is warmly welcomed by this community.

Gregory’s relationships with his managers have not always been harmonious. His forthright ideas and willingness to voice his opinions have at times led to confrontational situations. He is stinging in his criticism of managers he has worked with, stating that “we don’t attract good managers. They [the ITP] can’t afford good managers”. He believes some managers are attracted to smaller regional institutions as a bridge to more prominent roles in larger organisations: “So they can get a job somewhere else, go further up the ladder; it’s a stepping stone. I don’t think people regard this place as a destination in itself.”

Relationships within the art team can also be frayed, and Gregory gave examples of tutors denigrating his teaching in front of students. He believes that tutors should be able to rely on the trust and support of members of the teaching team; but previous experience has shown him that this trust can be breached, and as a result relationships become damaged.

Gregory does not identify enacting government and institutional policies as a focus of his teaching practice. He states:

*I don’t read policies. I don’t know them because I think they are just lip service. They’re clichés. I don’t think people understand them. I think what happens is that a manager will arrive here and bring their policies from somewhere else because it sounds good and it fits with government policy. You know it’s got to fit and by making it fit everyone is happy.*

Notwithstanding this view, Gregory accepts that the roll-down effect of government initiatives impacts on institutional strategies, but remains sceptical of some of the initiatives that the ITP asks tutors to implement. He cited setting up e-learning on the Moodle website before sufficient research had been undertaken to identify whether or not this initiative would provide a positive learning experience for students. He states that he has never come across a student who says: “I learnt the most on-line”. Further, Gregory believes that IT systems are still “too slow and clunky” to offer a

quality learning experience, at the same time accepting that on-line teaching has some benefits, e.g. providing a repository for teaching resources.

Gregory reports that he completes QMS policies and procedures at his manager's direction, including moderation, documenting student progress and other administrative duties.

In terms of adapting to contextual influences, Gregory believes his subject area is well resourced with excellent teaching spaces and staff offices. Any resources requested are normally approved, and students are able to use high quality art materials. A budget is prepared and approved each year to cover expenses, and staff acknowledge that adequate resourcing is not a "constraining" factor in their teaching practice.

Gregory reported that "no one has ever said anything" that even hints at acknowledging the success of his teaching. He once overheard a colleague comment that his [Gregory's] students had been recording high completion rates, but received no endorsement from his manager. Gregory believes that managers shy away from him on account of the vocal stance he takes on many issues which they find intimidating.

Gregory perceives understanding and expectations of the teaching role as a mixture of elation and frustration around his teaching outcomes. He is elated at the achievement of his students, and seeing them progress to higher level qualifications or on to university. He experiences frustration through a workload that he perceives as "high", and by the requirement to undertake duties which he considers unnecessary and time consuming (for example, tracking student progress). He admits that he is a bit of a rebel, but says he is frustrated by inefficient and poor quality systems and initiatives that he views as poorly thought through and implemented without thorough research.

#### **Individual Case Study Four: Tom**

Tom is a trades tutor employed in an ITP where he has been teaching for 16 years. He doesn't hold back his views, and reports that he has seen a lot of change over the period of his employment. Tom is at pains to report that even after 16 years he remains passionate about teaching trades students, and gets frustrated with any change that he considers does not lead to improvements in teaching and learning. He says openly that the first eight to nine years were "the best" when tutors had flexibility, freedom and fewer constraints on their teaching. Bureaucracy, declining finances to run the ITP, poor resources, constant managerial change, institutional restructuring, and uncertainty mixed with a feeling that trades training is no longer valued by managers have left Tom wondering about the future direction of teaching.

Tom explains that understanding and modelling of effective teaching for him focuses on the tutor and the way in which lessons are delivered. "I think effective teaching is

when you do your best and use every resource that's available to you." He further explains that lessons must take account of a student's prior learning, but struggles to articulate how he assesses this learning.

Tom's lesson plan follows a set routine of welcoming the students, outlining the material to be covered (during which time the stragglers usually arrive), and roll call. Lessons are divided into theory and practical blocks. Theory usually comes first so that "we can give a broad outline of what is going to be required" before the students are taken to the workshop. Theory and practice are incorporated in the workshop activities that follow.

Discussion sessions may take place for up to two hours, assisted by video clips and textbooks. Hand-outs aren't given as Tom explains that his ITP requires printed material to be kept to the minimum. This absence of hand-outs annoys Tom who asserts that trades tutors are "not getting support from the powers that be", particularly as over the years they have been asked time and time again to widen their student base through: apprenticeships, pre-trade students, high school students receiving taster trade training under the banner of STAR/Gateway, and more recently, Youth Guarantee and Trades Academy initiatives. Adapting to a broader student base has required tutors to adapt their teaching, skills and knowledge base, and to provide a vastly different level of pastoral care to their students.

Tom concludes that all this adaptation has left trades tutors feeling "dumped on". Actual teaching presents "a really hard task trying to do something with them [students]", who are often sent to polytechnic because they have "fallen through the cracks" at school. While sympathetic to these students' plight, Tom questions why they were referred to higher education in the first place. He suggests that the reason lies with the government funding which comes with these students. The ITP's willingness to accept these students, however, becomes the tutor's problem: "At the coalface it's extremely stressful. The school couldn't do anything with these students; how is the polytechnic going to? They're runaway train type characters". Tom believes tutors become caretakers simply to "look after" the students.

Tom feels that effective teaching is difficult to achieve with students who wilfully refuse to learn. "They're very, very hard to get motivated". Some refuse to take part in activities, deliberately "standing there, looking you straight in the face and saying 'No I'm not doing that....Half of them don't want to be there, they don't want to do a damn thing.'" Tom questions with whom the ownership of the problem resides, but cannot provide an answer. He believes that institutional managers think it is the tutor's fault if students don't want to participate in learning opportunities.

A low pass rate – 49% – was dismissed by Tom as a problem with the programme structure. An analyst brought in by the ITP to review the programme was met with the angry reaction: "We're bloody qualified teachers for God's sake, as well as trade

skilled. They've had people in class critiquing us and that's pretty hard to take when you know you are doing a good job".

Tom identifies several issues – over which he has no control – that he feels have resulted in poor outcomes. In particular he cites his ITP's open entry policy which accepts almost any student on to the programme, regardless of pre-requisite qualifications. He also draws attention to the lack of teaching resources.

Evaluating his teaching relies on Tom's self belief in the effectiveness of his teaching. When asked to elaborate on the evidence he uses to assess this effectiveness, he states that he talks to students and receives evaluation reports, but is vague about what is reported in these evaluations.

Tom explains that developing and growing as a tutor isn't as important to him after 16 years as it was when he initially started teaching. He states that he holds a CAT (L4) but hasn't undertaken further tertiary study. He reached the highest qualification in his trade a number of years ago and believes that these two qualifications are adequate to maintain his knowledge base. Tom works in his ITP's workshop but hasn't returned to industry for some years now.

Tom would like to undertake further training in IT and in accessing and utilising more of the IT resources that are available. He accepts that his IT skills are lacking and "way behind" some of his students. Notwithstanding this deficiency, Tom believes that his teaching does not need improving: "I honestly don't." He bases this belief on a peer observation of him teaching in the classroom: "The report was pretty excellent. In other words there's nothing wrong with the way I'm teaching".

Success in building relationships with peers is a feature that Tom acknowledges has an impact on his teaching role. A perceived harmonious relationship with tutors in the trades area aside, Tom readily admits that relationships with others in his ITP are anything but smooth.

Elaborating on relationships with his fellow trades tutors, Tom suggests that managers do not perceive these relationships as harmonious and productive, rather implying that they present "an issue". Tom doesn't agree with this perception and states that they all "get on like a house on fire". He believes his colleagues are mutually supportive, taking classes for others when necessary.

Tom's relationships with his senior managers, as noted, present a very different story. Tom does not believe that the trades department is getting the support it needs from senior managers. He suggests part of the reason is that managers are trying "to turn all these departments into money-making ventures", and because they are expensive to run, trades programmes are seen as a hindrance to the fiscal improvement of the ITP.

Tom does, however, commend the support he receives from the team leader of trades, who he considers is "doing a bloody good job" in leading the various

programmes, and setting up programme structures and timetables. But beyond the team leader level into senior manager roles, Tom explains that they never see their Head of School who he believes has distanced himself from the trades department. He states that staff find it hard to get answers to questions, and have difficulty gaining access to appropriate teaching resources.

Tom does not have a working relationship with people outside of his ITP. He believes that his team manager is responsible for liaising with external agencies such as NZQA and the ITO.

Tom is vocal about the direction that teaching in the ITP sector is heading in relation to government and institutional policy. Because he “is only one person, I get vocal because I think the more vocal you get the more seeds you plant in people’s heads, [and] hopefully they’ll start singing the same song”. Much of Tom’s criticism is levelled at government policy for tertiary education and its impact on the manner in which institutions are to operate.

He perceives funding – or rather a lack of it – as the root of most problems, leading to sub-standard or inadequate resources, without which teaching staff are unable to produce “a good product”. Tom defines “a good product” as having students complete their training successfully. He believes that ITPs are chasing any government funding stream available, and that this preoccupation has resulted in a shift away from trades and on to what he calls “sexy courses” or to research which carries additional funding.

Government calls for institutions to deliver enhanced retention and completion pass rates are met with scepticism by Tom who states that “we have to make them pass” to continue receiving funding at current levels. Government notice to reduce funding if required retention and completion rates are not met “puts tutors under immense pressures”. Tom cites this situation as one example of the wide gap existing between policy makers and teaching staff. He asks governments “to get on site and see what we are trying to do”, and suggests that calls “to get more bang for their bucks” show that they really don’t know what is going on at the coalface. He supports his own ITP stating that “certain institutions may be dodgy but we’re a solid institution; we work bloody hard”.

Tom sums up by suggesting that fewer institutions which are able to prove their systems are working well, is what is needed: “A system where they [the government] can say, right they’re out but you guys are in will mean that ongoing funding continues, the pressures come off management, and then the pressure comes off us hopefully. So it’s a trickle-down effect.”

Tom only follows institutional strategies and policies at the urging of his team leader. He doesn’t read policies and has no time or interest in them, but does realise that “some things need to be done as we are told”. He adds quickly that usually he just

goes about his work in the way which suits him best, and if he does anything that's not right he fixes it up later. He says: "everyone does it like that".

Tom interprets adapting to contextual issues in terms of resources that are lacking or deficient if teaching – or if the outcomes of teaching – are to improve. He states that tutors are told they have to use technology. When staff seek to utilise cameras, videos, screens or computers, however, they find that these resources are not available. He states that tutors understand there is only so much money to go around, but they see resources going into other areas and wonder why they have been left out. When questions to managers go unanswered, tutors inevitably end up disillusioned. Tom relates his embarrassment at the state of equipment in his department in comparison to industry, asking: "How the hell can we improve what we do if the equipment we are using industry threw out years ago?"

When asked to elaborate on a statement that his teaching is never acknowledged, Tom replied that "we get no recognition for anything good that we do. The only time we hear from them [managers] is when we cock up or when they think we have cocked up".

Pressed to elaborate on his perception that departments work in isolation and often don't feel supported by other divisions of the ITP, Tom acknowledges the assistance provided by student support. However, he doesn't really understand how his students are assisted to learn the course material, and feels that it would be better if his colleagues "all pulled together more".

Tom thinks it isn't right that there's no real smoko room and that staff don't get together more frequently. He questions why it's not like the "old days" when all staff went to smoko in the same room and at the same time, and got to know everyone on the staff and forged friendships. He says that formerly it was easy to ask for help if something needed doing, but "it's not like that now".

Tom concludes that what happens in his classroom hasn't changed much, but the way the ITP is run has changed a lot: "It's got bloody hard to teach." When he started 16 years ago it was a different world: "It's all changed." The thing that he dislikes the most is all the paperwork.

## **Chapter summary**

This chapter presented case studies of four tutors' experiences and perceptions of working in different subject areas, and the nuances in understanding that emerged. These individual cases highlighted variations in: tutors' understanding of effective teaching across their four subject areas; and in their experiences of: professional development, forming and maintaining of relationships, understanding and using policy, and interpreting various contextual influences.



## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

This discussion chapter centres on five main propositions that emerged from the data analysis, namely that: tutors understand and model what they perceive as effective teaching in differing ways; tutors reported variations in institutional provisions for PD; tutors considered that building and maintaining relationships was an important element in enhancing their teaching practice; tutors viewed policy as peripheral to practice; and the context in which teaching occurs influenced tutors' ability to perform their teaching roles. The discussion briefly reiterates the key variations in tutors' experiences, compares these findings to the literature, and considers the implications of the results for teaching practice. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the manner in which the research questions are addressed and answered.

The findings from this research are all inter-related and reflect the complexity of teaching in today's ITP sector; a sector – which Harman (2000) suggests – has changed markedly since the “golden days”. Tutor A1 remarked: “I remember a time when teaching was easy. We didn't have all the issues we have today. Students were easier to teach, we had long holidays, less paperwork, and there was no stress. It's not like that now.”

***Proposition 1: Tutors understand and model what they perceive as effective teaching in differing ways***

Proposition 1 conveys tutors' experiences and understanding of effective teaching. Tutors acknowledged that effective teaching requires a range of approaches, but expressed differing views as to the nature of effective teaching. This finding aligns with the views of Prosser and Trigwell, (2001); Kember, (1997); and Åkerlind, (2005a), who concluded that teachers conceive of and approach their work in a number of ways. Some tutors understood effective teaching in terms of students' success in acquiring content knowledge and skills. Others saw it as building a relationship or trust with students; engaging them in an active way by participating physically in their learning; and encouraging students to undertake research, make their own discoveries, and critique knowledge in their own contexts. Rendering the tutor's role obsolete was one suggested outcome of effective teaching. Regardless of the approach taken, teaching was predicated on the understanding that students were being prepared for vocational outcomes; and consequently that it focused predominantly on prospects for future employment.

Approaches to teaching were largely dependent on the strategies that each tutor perceived as effective in practice. Although tutors referred to effectiveness in achieving learning outcomes it was nevertheless surprising that so few tutors referred to the *quality of the learning* that was taking place. The distinction between

deep and surface learning, for example, was largely ignored, as tutors simply focused on *any learning*. Provided some learning occurred, they generally failed to utilise any measures that would ascertain the depth of learning that students were experiencing. This finding highlights a gap which suggests that tutors must focus on the *quality of the learning* and not simply on *any learning*.

Tutors acknowledged that they frequently varied their approaches in accordance with the aims of the teaching session. This finding was supported by Zepke and Leach (2007), who when researching ways of improving student outcomes in tertiary education concluded that teachers employed a variety of teaching approaches to help students learn successfully. In this study tutors suggested that offering a range of approaches allowed their students to choose the ones which were best aligned to their learning needs. As tutor A1 suggested: “You have to use different ploys to get them interested”. Although a learner-centred approach is well supported by Trowler and Trowler (2010); Prebble et al. (2004); Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005); and Kuh et al. (2006), simply offering a range of approaches and hoping that at least some will suit the particular student cohort is no guarantee of success. Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (2006) argued that understanding group learning styles is particularly important in striving for effective teaching. The findings of this research suggest that there is a gap in tutors’ practice, in that they are failing to identify and implement strategies which reflect an awareness of the particular learning styles of their students. Consequently there is a knowledge vacuum when it comes to designing their approaches to teaching and learning.

Along with learner-focused approaches, tutors also alluded to teacher-focused approaches as discussed by various authors (Åkerlind 2005a, 2007, 2008; Prosser & Trigwell, 2001; Kember, 1997). Gregory – case study art tutor – stated that such approaches were unavoidable, as at times the tutor had to pass on knowledge “by standing in front of the class and lecturing”. Tom – case study trades tutor – was noticeably more reliant on lectures as a primary means of teaching, believing that a tutor’s role was to “transmit knowledge”: to stand before the learners and tell them all that he knew. He acknowledged, notwithstanding, that he adopted this approach more widely when teaching theory, and that he employed more learner-centred approaches e.g. interactive demonstrations, in the workshops.

The findings revealed the importance that tutors placed on keeping students entertained, interested, active, and participants in – rather than passive recipients of – their learning. This approach aimed to allow learners to gain meaning from their direct experience of the subject (Kolb, 1984; 1999). Tutors found that when students were actively involved in learning activities their enjoyment levels generally increased, leading to enhanced levels of motivation. Consequently, they generally favoured interactive tasks of a “hands- on” nature to support student learning. This approach also aligned with the aim of preparing students for the work environment. Developing the skills required by future employers provided ideal interactive teaching situations that enabled students to learn the requisite on-the-job-skills. Project work

was identified as an holistic approach to teaching as it involves problem solving and the integration of a range of skills: attributes that employers seek in future employees. Further, as tutor A4 remarked: “teaching through project-based learning makes the whole teaching experience more beneficial for the student because there is a positive outcome at the end of it and there is something to be seen and for them [students] to take away”.

Interestingly, tutors’ understanding of effective teaching was generally self-defined rather than reflecting an institutional view. A number of tutors identified that they had not been involved in discussions on the nature of effective teaching at either departmental or institutional levels. Some questioned whether a “one-size-fits-all” definition was appropriate or even possible, given that effective teaching could be conceived of differently across various subject areas and disciplines. This finding is important, as tutors themselves appear to accept variation. Among commentators, Skelton (2004) reported that effective teaching in tertiary education is a “contested concept” that carries various definitions (p. 452). It is broadly understood, notwithstanding, as teaching that is oriented to – and focused on – learners and their learning. An effective tutor is one who models the skills and practices which research has identified as salient, aligning them to the context in which the teaching takes place.

If effective teaching is perceived in various ways by tutors across ITPs, there are implications for the way in which institutional literature such as policies and teaching and learning plans that impact on teaching, is conceived and written. A “one-size-fits-all” description of effective teaching – if, in fact, such a description can be said to exist – may be seen by tutors as tangential to their practice, and consequently ignored. As discussed later in this chapter, tutors acknowledged that they took little notice of institutional policies as they are currently written; finding little meaning in them, and even less relevance to their practice.

Various authors (Ramsden, 1992; Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Zepke, Leach and Butler, 2009) concur that there is no universally accepted definition of effective teaching, but that effective, good or excellent teaching all promote high quality learning experiences: a view also shared by Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010). Research by Chickering and Gamson (1987, 1991) has become accepted as providing a set of guiding principles for good practice in tertiary teaching (Gibbs, 2010). Notwithstanding these generic principles, currently there is neither a national set of guidelines on effective teaching for tutors in the ITP sector, nor a set of guiding principles for ITPs themselves. Unsurprisingly, this research has identified that because there is a lack of common understanding around effective teaching, tutors tend to rely on self-assessment when evaluating their own teaching practice. Recognition of an agreed set of institutional guidelines to assist in identifying the characteristics of effective teaching practice has the potential to improve teaching outcomes.

The subject or discipline appears to influence tutors' understanding of effective teaching (Kember, 1997). Tutors, noticeably in trades and foundation programmes, reported that they aimed to pass on skills and knowledge, establish a relationship with their students, and engage them in learning activities. Although passing on skills and knowledge was generally accepted as an outcome of effective teaching, tutors also felt that other criteria impacted on students' capacity to learn, e.g. that often a relationship or rapport needed to be established first: a view supported by Chickering and Gamson (1987).

This research revealed that the focus of teaching in trades areas was very much on transmitting skills and knowledge. There was also evidence, notwithstanding, that tutors were employing different approaches which largely centred on project work. Project work not only taught the skills that students were required to learn, but offered an interactive and relevant approach that could engage them and provide them with the motivation to learn. The research revealed, notwithstanding, that not all trades tutors have moved in this direction; and some reported that they have continued to rely on traditional, classroom-based approaches. This finding aligns with research undertaken by Conley, Ressler, Lenox and Samples (2000), who reported that engineering students frequently complained of poor teaching including inadequate organisation, ineffective presentation, poor classroom atmosphere and a lack of accessibility to teaching staff.

Tutors in business and arts were more likely to report an emphasis on building relationships, engaging students in an active way, and supporting their independence beyond the life of the programme. These approaches are endorsed by Entwistle and Percy (1973) who suggested that the aim of tertiary education is not only to develop students' intellectual ability and understanding, but also to assist them to: develop problem-solving skills; identify relationships within – and beyond – what they have learnt; stimulate a spirit of enquiry; gain the ability to analyse information and make judgements; develop a critical self-awareness; and become independent learners.

Gregory, teaching art and design, reported that establishing relationships was important to him. This rapport laid a foundation of "trust and respect between learner and tutor" which promoted effective learning. Sarah, teaching foundation students, wanted them to "succeed both in their area of study and in their life skills", which led her to assume a mothering role. Authors (Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Kuh et al., 2006; Tinto, 1988, 2009) in their guidance to educators, identify student/faculty interaction as fundamental to good practice.

Tutors' approaches to effective teaching appear to be coloured by past experiences and by the traditions associated with teaching a particular subject. This finding is supported by Stake and Trumbull (1982) who identified that tutors' past experiences had a significant impact on their understanding of how a subject should be taught; further, that breaking the mould was difficult. Often traditions associated with

teaching the subject were perpetuated within the department, and new tutors felt reluctant to initiate new approaches for fear of “alienation by older staff members” (D3). However, other tutors – mainly in art and design – reported that traditions needed to be challenged and discussed:

*We have to develop different attitudes in terms of what constitutes art and design teaching practice. So we all get together and forge links: as long as we acknowledge the differences and appreciate that there are differences in people and that some are better at teaching in some areas than we are, then we should be able to come up with better ways of teaching. (A8)*

To support diversification in teaching approaches, tutors sought wider exposure to teaching practice in other subject areas which they could evaluate in terms of their own practice. Others favoured greater exposure to tutors’ teaching practice in their own subject area.

Respondent D5 went further, seeking liaison with art tutors throughout the ITP sector. He considered that the knowledge of how art was taught in other ITPs, together with the ways in which they recognised or rewarded innovative approaches, had the capacity to enhance teaching practice. He also suggested that tutors acknowledged as “experts” could travel from ITP to ITP, providing peer review and advice on good teaching practice in action, rather than simply talking about what they did and how they did it.

Tutors employed various means of evaluating effective teaching practice. Institutional evaluations were reported as the most reliable measure, but institutional system failures resulted in tutors not seeing these evaluations, and consequently receiving little feedback on their performance. This situation potentially renders institutional evaluation systems unreliable, unhelpful and ineffective. The information provided was perceived as of some assistance to tutors to enable them to gain feedback from their students. But various system failures led to processes not being followed through; and consequently the cycle of feedback and improvement didn’t always appear to be closed.

These findings align with the results of a study by Prebble et al. (2004) which highlighted difficulties with institutional evaluations, in particular the manner in which they were interpreted and followed up. The authors suggested that improved mechanisms for interpreting and following up student feedback had the potential to enhance teaching performance. The results of the current research confirm the ongoing presence of system failures, and suggest that little progress has been made to redress this situation.

Institutional statistical data was cited as another potential means of gauging effective teaching, although tutors expressed varying views as to what constituted satisfactory pass rates and where responsibility lay if outcomes fell below institutional

expectations. It did not appear that tutors had been told of institutional expectations around completion rates, or of any agreements in place with government representatives. If this is the case, inevitably there is a gap between these two sets of expectations – those of the ITP, and those of teaching staff. Although Solbrekke and Englund (2011) suggest that tutors must assume responsibility for “poor” teaching outcomes, it is difficult for them to do so if institutional expectations around the outcomes of teaching have not been conveyed to them; and if they are unaware of the measures that the institution proposes to implement if results are deemed unsatisfactory.

In terms of satisfaction and reward, in the main tutors cited their interaction with students as the reason why they enjoyed teaching. The satisfaction of seeing a student “turn around” and grasp the concepts of a subject provided the impetus that drew tutors to their jobs and frequently kept them there. Tutors spoke glowingly of students who they had seen become engaged and motivated in the classroom. Seeing these students achieve qualifications and move on either to employment or to further learning was described by one tutor as “inspirational”.

Conversely, many tutors expressed concern at students’ lack of preparedness for tertiary education and the implications for what and how they taught. ITPs were not full of “bright, young things” (C2), but of people who may have failed in previous educational settings and consequently lacked confidence and motivation. Tutors noted the additional demands that these students placed on them in their struggle to succeed. As respondent C4 remarked, “I take a lot longer to get my class organised. You can’t go in and ‘wing it’; you need to have things planned”.

These views are supported by Jerriam (2006) and Ott (2004) who considered that many younger students are often ill-prepared for lectures, fail to hand in assignments, and exhibit little enthusiasm for their study. They suggested that the onus is on teachers to put greater effort into helping learners to engage with the subject material. Coaldrake (1998) identified that increased student numbers result in a greater diversity of backgrounds and previous educational experiences. He suggests that many people entering tertiary study may feel ill at ease with approaches to adult learning, and may lack the skills to cope with the expectations placed upon them. Interestingly, Coaldrake’s view still appears relevant to today’s tertiary environment. Institutions that fail to address issues of poor learner preparedness simply perpetuate the problem.

Tutors reported that the amount of time expended on pastoral care outside the classroom has increased, as have the number of one-on-one sessions with students. Variation in perspectives revealed diverging views as to where responsibility for struggling students resides. Some tutors criticised their ITP for taking on learners who didn’t meet entry criteria, or for permitting open entry which made their jobs more difficult. Others cited pressure to meet retention and completion targets. Whereas initial pre-testing could have identified whether students were suited to a

particular programme, open entry often saw them struggling and/or withdrawing from the programme. Students achieving only limited success potentially placed tutors in a position of failing to meet retention and completion targets: a situation that presented ethical dilemmas for them, particularly with the associated threat of withdrawal of government funding. As respondent D3 angrily remarked:

*I'm not prepared to sit down and take crap any more. If the government don't pull their woolly heads in and completely fund us and get rid of retention and completion rates then we are going to end up with a country full of dead heads because there's going to be people who pass their ticket but who really are only partly qualified cause [they] didn't really meet the grade but got passed anyway. (D3)*

Variation in perspectives, however, saw a minority of tutors suggest that *they* needed to own the problem of struggling students and assume responsibility for teaching them, whatever their level of ability. In line with the views of Jerriam (2006) and Ott (2004), they accepted the challenge to acquire the range of skills that would meet students' diverse learning needs and support them through their studies. Further support from Barr and Tagg (1995) suggested that once an institution agrees to accept a student, it becomes the institution's responsibility to do the best for that student. The findings of the current research suggested, however, that ITPs may need to revisit issues around entry criteria and open entry policies for consistency of interpretation and application.

**Proposition 2: Tutors reported variations in institutional provisions for professional development**

Tutors generally considered that they should take responsibility for their own PD and growth irrespective of their length of employment, although their views on PD varied considerably. Generally they recognised the significance of ongoing training and development in terms of enhancing their teaching skills and knowledge base. And most recognised the importance of ongoing training and development as key to improving teaching practice even for long-standing staff: a finding consistent with the literature. Luedekke (2003) identified that academics are generally receptive to continuing to develop their professional expertise in teaching; at the same time noting there was more support for participating in development activities at the early and late stages of their careers. The findings of the current research confirmed newly-appointed tutors' interest in PD, but suggested that tutors of long standing were less interested in following up opportunities for ongoing development.

Prebble et al. (2004) reinforced the need for ongoing PD to develop tutors' skills, knowledge and expertise, but also conceded that academic development was a complex and variable process irrespective of tutors' length of service. The current research identified that newly appointed tutors often questioned the teaching practices of longer serving tutors, and expressed surprise that these teaching

approaches remained more traditional in nature. This issue raises questions about provisions for training on contemporary approaches to teaching, given the wealth of innovative, relevant and up-to-date material available on this subject.

Surprisingly, half of the tutors considered that PD was a personal choice option: they decided whether PD (if any) would be undertaken, when it would occur, and in which areas of their practice. Variation occurred within these responses, however, as a quarter of the sample identified that managers played a part in determining their need for training. Notwithstanding this involvement, tutors questioned managers' levels of knowledge deriving from observation of their teaching practice, and also their understanding of tutors' individual training needs. Tutors reported that the dialogue was often a conversation about the tutor's and/or the manager's preferred choice of training, and not an informed discussion around the tutor's specific needs.

Tutors didn't always agree on their managers' directives, and the findings identified a resulting friction between the two groups. Respondent C7 reported: "My manager had no idea what training was appropriate. He is out of touch with what happens in teaching areas. He seldom comes to the classroom and sees what goes on. We don't see eye to eye." This stance appears to offer opportunities for further investigation. Given that minimal research has been undertaken within the ITP sector, there is no literature currently available either to support or refute this proposition.

The processes around PD were not perceived as trouble free. Tutors identified a number of significant issues including difficulties in: finding time, receiving appropriate funding, identifying relevant and effective training, and receiving adequate support. These barriers to undertaking PD in the ITP sector align with those identified by Haigh, Gossman and Jiao (2011), who found that New Zealand university staff sought more time, more PD opportunities, and more collegial interaction and support than was offered.

The current research also raised the question of tutors' views of PD in relation to their work schedules and priorities. Tutors were vocal in claiming that they simply didn't have time to pursue PD opportunities – which may well be the case. If undertaking PD is a requirement and a matter of individual responsibility, however, questions inevitably arise as to whether or not it has been discussed with managers and incorporated into tutors' annual work plans, together with an allocation of appropriate time, resources and support. Grey (2011) criticised managers in the ITP sector who she suggested undervalued PD, sought to reduce the time allocated to it, and directed tutors' resources and energies to the classroom.

One of the individual case study tutors, Sarah, reported that teaching foundation students in a remote campus compromised the time available for her to undertake PD. Lesson preparation, resource development and addressing student issues were her priorities, and PD was simply "relegated to further down the list". Requirements



around completing all the necessary forms, applying for money, and obtaining appropriate approvals further compounded the issues around the availability of time.

This researcher supports the stance of Radloff (2008) who concluded that teaching staff must prioritise their tasks. He suggested that work intensification and resulting high workloads may result in teachers being less willing to engage in PD, thus compromising initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Tutors expressed concern as to the effectiveness of training which was not relevant, timely, useful and at an appropriate level, and related experiences of attending training sessions that failed to live up to their expectations. They often reported leaving the training feeling energised and motivated: feelings, however, which dissipated after a day or two back in the work environment. An oft-quoted example was short-course training on putting teaching resources on-line. The training, at the time, appeared well-structured and informative, but tutors struggled to apply it in their actual teaching practice. Lacking back-up or ongoing support, they reported frustration at their inability to achieve the anticipated outcomes. Follow-up was the most called for training support: a finding endorsed by Weimer and Lenze (1997) who found little evidence of the continuing effectiveness of short courses. Similarly, Rust (1998) and Brew and Lublin (1997) reported on the limited impact of short courses when tutors claimed to have implemented the practices which they had learnt.

Institution-wide organised PD days were identified as limited in their effectiveness in enhancing tutors' performance. Although tutors reported positively on these sessions, most spoke of the benefits gained primarily from being able to join with their peers in an informative, social environment with food and conversation. They felt that the training offered on these occasions mostly provided a comforting feeling – or a sense of belonging – which soon disappeared once they returned to their work environment. Nevertheless, tutors acknowledged that they did gain some insight into institutional initiatives, and became more aware of their responsibilities in the wider organisation. As tutors spoke of becoming more siloed in their practice (Wingrove & Budge, 2009) these institution-wide PD days *did* provide a snapshot of activities taking place in other areas. Several tutors noted that without institution-wide PD days, often they wouldn't even know who worked in their ITP.

Tutors reported that their ITPs required them to gain a teaching qualification. This finding is supported by a report from Projects International (2010) which stated that 80% of ITPs require teaching staff to gain a qualification within two or three years of commencing full-time teaching. In the main, tutors reported that they welcomed the experience of completing a qualification and valued the knowledge and skills gained from it.

On the other hand the findings also identified a minority of tutors who acknowledged that they had been teaching for longer than the specified timeframe without

completing a teaching qualification. Projects International (2010) claims that a confused landscape of 62 teaching qualifications on offer may be the reason why tutors are not meeting institutional expectations. This finding, however, is not supported by the current research which identified that tutors had sidelined attainment of qualifications, believing that other training or work commitments took higher priority. This stance highlights a gap insofar as tutors do not appear to consistently adhere to – and ITPs do not appear consistently to enforce – their own policies around teaching qualifications.

Some tutors expressed scepticism as to the value of qualifications, by themselves, to promote effective teaching. This view was not generally supported, however, with the majority of respondents considering that qualifications such as certificates or diplomas in adult teaching helped tutors – especially newcomers – to understand the language of tertiary education and to prepare and deliver lessons effectively, especially in the early stages of teaching. Offering some reinforcement to the view that qualifications – unsupported by other measures – were limited in their effectiveness, Coolbear (2011) maintains that teaching practice – and ultimately measures to improve that practice – “are not to be gained simply through the efforts of individual practitioners, however professional they may be; their efforts must be actively underpinned by the tertiary organisations that employ them” (p.1).

Supporting the view that qualifications aid and support the tutor, Gibbs (2010) contends that research undertaken by Nasr, Gillett and Booth (1996) showed that teachers who achieve a teaching qualification are rated more highly by their students than those who do not. Currently in New Zealand, tertiary teachers are not required to hold a national qualification – or indeed any qualification – in order to teach; and the tertiary sector is the only education sector to which this provision applies.

Tutors questioned whether the content of teaching qualifications was always relevant or sufficiently specific to their teaching areas. They identified that content currently included in these qualifications helped them to develop skills and knowledge in their early stages of teaching; but that additional knowledge would have benefitted them over time. Overall, respondents perceived a need for an enhanced skills and knowledge base in three main areas: new ways to engage students, strategies for coping with struggling students, and ideas for innovative teaching.

Projects International (2010) also questioned the overlapping content, graduate profiles and outcome statements of qualifications available for tutors in the ITP sector: a situation which calls for fewer qualifications and content that is more targeted to tutors’ needs at all stages of their teaching careers. A structure of qualification attainment, from certificate to degree, allied with an ongoing system of observation and review may enhance tutors’ teaching practice, especially during their early years of employment. Seldon (1997), and Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan (1991), suggest that maintaining a teaching portfolio is an appropriate

mechanism for maintaining currency in both subject content and teaching proficiency.

Tutors suggested that an external, independent system of observation and review would assist them to identify areas of development. One ITP had recently implemented such an initiative to overwhelming support from teaching staff. Tutors considered that impartial observation would assist them to improve their teaching skills, particularly if this observation was documented and used to identify further training and development opportunities. This finding does not align with the research of Peel (2005), who suggests that academics believed peer observation was ultimately more about informing quality assurance and promotion decisions than enhancing teaching practice. Peel also noted that academics may not wish to provide negative criticism that could undermine their colleagues' confidence.

Currently, given a noticeable lack of external input into deciding the development that tutors require, more accountability is placed on their individual decision-making. Interestingly, a number of tutors in this study questioned the reliability of their judgment in deciding their own training needs, as well as those of their peers. This finding suggests that there may be a gap both in the identification of appropriate training and its implementation. As respondent C6 observed: "I look at what some of the others [tutors] are doing [with respect to training] and think that's not right. They should be doing something about the way they teach these kids".

The ITP sector's focus on vocational education requires tutors to remain current and up to date with industry practice: a view supported by the Ministry of Education (2007). Employers require graduates who are work ready and able to tackle multi-faceted situations: a specification which in turn requires tutors to maintain close ties with employing industry groups. Tutors from trades, business, and arts and design supported ongoing contact and industry experience within their areas of expertise, citing issues of self belief, credibility, currency and confidence in fronting students and their industry peers. Foundation tutors, on the other hand, were likely to favour life skills over ongoing practical work experience.

Tutors who supported workplace experience also questioned how this experience could be incorporated into busy schedules. A proposal was put forward that an extended period of leave, similar to a university sabbatical, should be available to tutors every few years to enable them to keep up to date with recent developments in their field of expertise. Bronwyn, an individual case study tutor who was passionate about maintaining teaching practice that was relevant and up to date, spoke of the "limited hours available" for her to work in industry. She supported any initiative that provided for sabbatical leave to return to industry for an extended period of time.

Little variation was evident in the unanimous call by tutors for training to improve their on-line teaching skills, including assisting them to put resources on line. They

supported managers' calls for the development of on-line teaching resources, but overwhelmingly sought more effective training together with follow-up support – without which they reported feelings of inadequacy. This concern was also identified by Corbitt, Holt and Segrave (2004), who suggested that institutions frequently placed too much emphasis on technology product features, and too little emphasis on the value of these features in enhancing teaching and learning. If so, institutions must be challenged to orientate their e-learning PD activities towards teaching and learning contexts within their organisation.

Overwhelmingly, tutors sought to improve their teaching on an ongoing basis. Variation was evident in the degree to which they were prepared – or able – to enhance their practice, and time constraints were frequently cited as a limiting factor. A minority of tutors, however, saw no reason for their teaching to improve, and felt that it was good enough as it was.

Tutors – often with some hesitation when asked to expand on teaching improvement – suggested that no matter how competent and capable they may be, there was always room for improvement. Ramsden, Margetson, Martin and Clarke (1995) in researching the attributes of a good teacher, identified that good teachers at all levels were also good learners. Good teachers were committed to improving their practice through learning more about the craft of teaching; further they were adept at reflecting on their own performance. Of significance in the current research was the high proportion of tutors who acknowledged the need to take measures to improve their own performance.

Among the tutors who disagreed that their teaching needed to improve, Tom, an individual case study tutor, rated his current performance as “pretty excellent”. He maintained this estimation despite what appeared be unacceptably poor learning outcomes with a recent group of students. Tom acknowledged that self belief was the criterion that underpinned his evaluation of his own teaching effectiveness; and showed no awareness of the possibility that his teaching might not reflect current good practice or fall short of institutional expectations. Work by Prosser and Trigwell (1999) and Marton, Hounsell and Entwistle (1997) which emphasises conceptual change and explores the qualitatively different ways in which individuals experience and conceptualise their world, has the potential to assist tutors better to understand the nature of teaching and learning. Evaluating how their current beliefs and understanding may be hindering enhancement of teaching practices could help them to identify mechanisms and systems to bring about improvement. Tom's particular worldview on teaching trades subjects in general, and his estimation of his own practice in particular, did not appear to be supported by his results. Åkerlind (2008) cautioned, however, that changing teachers' evaluations of their own performance is not an easy task.

Haigh, Gossman and Jiao (2011) suggested that asking tutors from a background such as trades to engage in constructive self evaluation raised significant

challenges, given that scholarly practice frequently deals with phenomena that are difficult to define precisely and often must be inferred as they cannot be observed. Tutors accustomed to employing precise measurements for determining possible improvement, may not be sympathetic to such an approach.

Tutors also consistently questioned how teaching could be improved if they were unaware of the overall aim. In the absence of defining boundaries, some tutors suggested that they could be adopting approaches which were not necessarily effective. Notwithstanding these concerns, most tutors were able to identify strategies to improve their teaching. These strategies were often self initiated, however, and tutors were sometimes unsure as to the efficacy of their results. Benson (2001) conceded that not all measures undertaken to improve teaching resulted in enhanced learning experiences. He concluded that many had no effect, others resulted in less learning, and a few had a positive impact.

Tutors supported dialogue with peers within and across institutions as a serviceable means of debating teaching strategies and innovative ideas. Gregory – individual case study tutor – lamented his “inability to access the expertise available from other tutors teaching art and design within the ITP sector”. He cited “dialogue and classroom observation” as potential avenues for enhancing his own teaching practice.

It appears from the current research that some ITPs have provided a range of support mechanisms over and above PD – including individualised assistance and advice – to enhance tutors’ capability and improve teaching and learning outcomes. Green (2005) concurred with this approach, reiterating a direct correlation between the quality of teaching (tutors’ skills, academic/technical prowess, knowledge and experience) and the quality of learning that takes place within an institution.

***Proposition 3: Tutors considered that building and maintaining relationships was an important element in enhancing their teaching practice***

Tutors acknowledged that building and maintaining relationships with external bodies was an important element in enhancing their teaching practice, but could also be problematic. Overcoming differing and at times conflicting agendas was seen as time consuming and frustrating. Tutors reported on a lack of timely opportunities to provide input into the development of qualifications by ITOs, or having their advice ignored. Some tutors cited power struggles between ITOs and training providers; whereas others reported successful relationships and suggested that further time and effort were needed to achieve productive dialogue and outcomes.

A minority of tutors reported no direct relationships with external agencies, stating that this was a managerial – and not a tutorial – role. This stance, however, overlooks the circumstance that ITOs and NZQA have regulatory control over aspects of the qualifications which tutors deliver. Before the establishment of

external regulatory bodies in the late 1990s, tutors in the ITP sector had relative autonomy over their teaching practice. With these new bodies came a perceived loss of control which brought about conflicting relationships and blurred boundaries of jurisdiction (Eraut, 1994). Although a few tutors said that relationships had improved over time, others indicated that there was still work to be done. As respondent D8 wryly observed: “Ah, you’ve got to keep an eye on the way you get on with them because they seem to get the final say, so I accept things and get on with it”.

Tutors expressed varying views as to the perceived benefits of moderation with external agencies. Some tutors spoke strongly of conflict, frustration and power struggles between moderation bodies and training providers, suggesting that external bodies could be pedantic, and that changes to assessment materials proved time consuming to assimilate. Conversely, other tutors considered moderation to be invaluable in improving teaching practice because of discussions that took place during the process of engagement. El-Khawas (2002) raises an issue around moderation systems in which assessment materials developed by the training provider undergo approval processes both within the provider’s organisation (internal moderation) and through external moderation with various accrediting agencies. This dual process involves close monitoring and differing stances which can compound already tenuous relationships between providers and relevant ITOs and/or NZQA. On the other hand, tutors who considered moderation to be invaluable in improving teaching practice noted that they were able to clarify roles and responsibilities with moderation agencies through closer communication and support.

Building and maintaining close working relationships with industry is recognised as an integral factor for teaching staff to maintain relevant and current training (Porthouse, 2006). These relationships were generally viewed positively by tutors, although some reported difficulties in securing representation at institutional meetings. Tutors in trades, arts and design, and business were the most focused in their connections with industry by inviting members to meetings, undertaking research and scholarly activities, participating in joint projects, attending conferences, and undertaking work experience. Foundation tutors – excluding trade tutors – were less likely to focus on building and maintaining industry connections and more likely to promote relationships with external agencies and moderation bodies. The *TES 2007-12* stated it was important that tertiary teachers are up to date with developments in their field. This currency is maintained by tutors working closely with their local industries, and encouraging industry leaders to have a voice via advisory groups and other consultative mechanisms.

Tutors identified a direct link between their relationships with managers and their motivation for teaching. In the main tutors reported a generally harmonious and supportive relationship with their direct manager. Conversely, other tutors identified that relationships with senior managers were often remote and dislocated, and trades tutors often reported specific feelings of alienation. Trades tutors further considered themselves undervalued and disregarded by management, who sidelined

the trades and saw them as expensive to offer. This view supports a finding of this researcher from an earlier study (Pritchard, 2008). In this study, managers who were interviewed responded by citing high workloads that prevented them from undertaking all the duties expected of them, including regular staff liaison. Discussion during the interview phase of this research also identified a possible lack of clear understanding of managerial roles, leading to friction – or potential friction – between tutors and their managers. This finding aligns with the conclusions reached by Marshall, Orrell, Cameron, Bosanquet and Thomas (2011).

Tutors expressed a clear feeling of frustration with reactive management. Last-minute decisions and instructions to teaching staff when work plans had been finalised led to retrospective changes to work allocations, leaving tutors feeling out of control and overworked. They felt managers did not appreciate that reactive management strategies ultimately had negative repercussions at the coalface. As respondent B5 remarked, “I wonder if they even think about how it affects us”. Marshall et al. (2011) suggested that a lack of coherent institutional and faculty approaches compromised managers’ capacity to provide effective management and leadership.

Duke (2002) took a different stance, however, and suggested that good management requires delegation and trust. All staff must be clear about reporting lines, and where particular responsibilities actually reside. Blackmore and Blackwell (2006) offered a further perspective stating that managers shaped their roles to reflect their own expertise. Adding to the discussion, Diamond (2002) suggested that academic leadership needs to be developed in an ongoing manner, and that PD has often not occurred at senior manager level. Marshall et al. (2011) offered a differing perspective, suggesting that PD was occurring but that it focused on the more concrete and practical elements of management as distinct from those of leadership – to the detriment of the latter.

Given that tutors reported a direct link between their relationships with their managers and their motivation for teaching, the findings suggest that a disconnection in the relationships between tutors and senior managers may be impacting negatively on tutors’ motivation for teaching.

On the other hand, the relationship which tutors identified as the most beneficial and generally the most supportive was that of their immediate manager – often from the same subject or discipline. These managers often apportioned their time between teaching and leadership. The literature on effective teaching at subject or discipline level frequently refers to departmental “cultures” (Wenger, 1998a). The perceived nature of these cultures is generally based on whether: teaching is valued and rewarded; teachers regularly discuss teaching and teaching enhancement; innovation is supported; teaching effectiveness is the subject of scholarly evaluation; and teaching is adequately resourced. The quality of departmental leadership is also seen to make a significant difference (Gibbs, 2008). Gibbs (2010) reported that high

performing subject or discipline areas were characterised by healthy communities of practice (Wenger, 1998a) and high quality leadership.

Leadership in department or discipline areas was often not a role that tutors aspired to. Case study tutor Bronwyn spoke of relinquishing this role as it “wasn’t a career path” she wanted to pursue. Other tutors spoke of high turnover at managerial level. Reluctance to take on managerial roles and/or high turnover in positions which research has shown to be significant, can impact negatively on both teaching and learning. The potential for strong leadership within the subject or discipline to improve the quality of teaching has been recognised in research undertaken in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States (Jones, 2011; Wright & O’Neill, 1995). Teachers’ perceptions of inspirational subject or department leadership which provides clear goals and enables them to embrace change, are associated with approaches that focus primarily on student learning rather than teacher activity.

A quarter of the respondents did not report on relationships with their managers, and may not have viewed these relationships as significant. The literature identifies, however, that more successful disciplines or departments are characterised by teacher/manager collaboration, purposeful leadership, and the maintenance of strong links between the manager and day-to-day teaching practice (Jones, 2011).

Generally tutors reported relationships within their subject or discipline area to be harmonious and productive. Relationships were established in which tutors felt confident, secure and supported, and had their voices heard. Any assistance requested was readily available. As respondent B6 acknowledged: tutors were prepared to “cover for one another and share resources, and worked together to achieve departmental goals”. Team meetings were characterised as productive, and tutors were able to discuss curricula, problems or concerns with students, and their teaching practice in a supportive environment. Discussions often went beyond the practicalities of day-to-day teaching and ventured into the philosophical and pedagogical aspects of teaching and adult education. This environment is described by Trowler and Knight (2000) as the ideal departmental culture.

Not all relationships were harmonious, however, and some tutors described conflict situations within their discipline areas in which they felt insecure and at odds with other staff in the department. Insecurity and denigration of colleagues were reported as demoralising, and impacted on tutors’ teaching roles. Respondent D3 suggested that “differing values and work ethics” – together with “weak leadership” – led to non-supportive environments.

Departments in which tutors reported unproductive meetings or difficulties in getting staff to attend meetings, were also those in which they were more likely to report conflicting relationships. Healey (2000, 2003) argued that teaching enhancement could only be brought about if the scholarship of teaching was studied, reflected



upon and discussed within the harmony of the discipline. Knight and Trowler (2000) concurred, adding that necessary departmental changes could only take place if the culture within the department was at a level of concord and productivity that allowed them to evolve.

***Proposition 4: Tutors viewed policy as peripheral to practice***

Tutors overwhelmingly viewed policy as peripheral to practice. Neither government strategies for tertiary education that devolved into institutional strategies, nor institutional policy – including knowledge of, and adherence to, QMS policies – were a focus of their current practice. When asked to expand on their day-to-day practice, however, it was noticeable that tutors were complying, albeit often unknowingly, with policies that impacted on this practice: a finding which aligns with Trowler's (1998) suggestion that academics adapt to, as much as adopt, institutional policy.

Tutors generally showed a good understanding of government policy for tertiary education, the nature of this policy, and its flow-on effects to the coalface. It appeared that the four ITPs in this study had gone to some length to inform staff of government direction for tertiary education and the impact of it on the institution. Information was generally conveyed through institution-wide staff development days, e-mail or CEO forums. Tutors were aware of the *TES 2010-15*, and were able to articulate various government initiatives for tertiary education and for the ITP sector in particular. Notwithstanding this general understanding, tutors did not identify government policy as the focus of their activities. If these day-to-day activities somehow contributed to the achievement of government initiatives, this was perceived as well and good. They saw institutional managers, on the other hand, as responsible for meeting set targets.

Tutors noted the constant change that government policy brings to TEIs. A majority of tutors reported that they struggle to cope with ever-changing demands to meet set targets. There is little doubt that academic work has been reshaped (Harris, 2005) as the sector becomes more consumer driven and increasingly bureaucratised (Debowski, 2007). Institutions have restructured and shifted their focus to address the various government priorities and expectations, along with consumers' – students' and their families' – expectations. These changes have led to a perceived loss of the traditionally accepted concept of academic autonomy. In order to respond to external requirements, organisations have been constrained to amend their leadership and management processes to reflect these new directions. In turn, Billot (2010) suggests, teachers have had to modify their roles, including how they may best provide a quality learning environment.

The financial impact of government policy was reflected in tutors' concerns around ongoing employment, and the downsizing of ITPs. Half of the tutors raised employment issues, and in particular, redundancies: a situation that has left a stressful and insecure working environment in its wake. Feelings of insecurity and

the possibility of job loss have impacted on tutors' motivation for teaching. As respondent D1 asked: "How can I focus on improving things when I don't even know if I'm going to have a job? It's a joke when we have these redundancies all the time". Billot (2010) supports this view by suggesting that staff may not fully engage with changing circumstances when they are unable to make sense of the situation. Constant change – and its impact on their workloads – was of significant concern to the majority of tutors participating in this research.

Tutors acknowledged that they were well informed of institutional strategies deriving from – and designed to support – government initiatives for the tertiary sector. The majority reported that they had been informed of the direction in which their ITP was headed, and were prepared to support a strategy that directly affected their work. But if attaining certain goals entailed extra work, they often sought to deflect the focus elsewhere – generally to managers. As respondent B2 remarked: "Most staff don't seem to care about the bigger picture of what's happening in this institute. They just want to focus on their small part".

Conversely, a small minority of tutors reported being party to developing plans that aided and supported various institutional strategies. As respondent B1 expressed the matter: "It all fits – government policy, institutional strategies, then planning what we do. So our planning has to align with the institution". But most tutors felt that managers were responsible for monitoring institutional strategies. Respondent B5 summed up the situation: "I'm sorry but I don't see that as my job. [Manager's name] – that would be part of her role".

In an effort to understand the lack of engagement by teaching staff in achieving institutional strategies, Oliver (1991) reported that institutions which operate in a context of uncertainty faced increased likelihood of staff resistance to institutional initiatives. He further suggested that the lower the degree of interconnectedness between staff within the institutional environment, the greater the likelihood of resistance to realising institutional aspirations. The findings of the current research identified an overall lack of commitment on the part of tutors to achieving government and institutional strategies.

The majority of respondents found institutional policy – i.e. adherence to the QMS – burdensome, and suggested that it was frequently disregarded in their practice. Some tutors who considered that policy compromised teaching, was all-controlling, and stifled creativity and innovation, were outspoken in their non-compliance. Even tutors more disposed to enacting policy saw it as malleable or open to individual interpretation. According to Shore and Wright (2000), quality management systems are designed to set expected norms of conduct and professional behaviour. Quality processes, however, derive from the implementation of quality mechanisms that are either required by external agencies such as NZQA, or are separately created within the institutions themselves.

Tutors perceived the requirement to prepare paperwork that explained and justified the work they do as a compliance issue – which they resented. This view was supported by Carr and Jennings (2009) who suggested that quality processes focus on measurement and external accountability, which takes away academic ownership of the audit process and creates a power relationship in which teaching staff are perceived as disadvantaged. Harvey and Newton (2007) similarly argue that a compliance culture has dampened creativity and slowed down the capacity of TEs to respond to a rapidly changing environment.

Tutors generally appeared unconcerned at their lack of engagement with institutional policy, and felt that their managers would tell them if they weren't discharging their responsibilities as required. It was noticeable that tutors did not express any views which suggested wilful non-compliance and that when directed to follow a particular institutional policy, generally agreed to do so. Their general stance was that if the ITP didn't see a lack of knowledge or enactment of policies as a problem, then neither did they.

Some respondents identified that the problem of policy compliance was due to lack of awareness of: the scope of policies, responsibility for them, where to access them, and interpretation. Fanghanel (2007) contends that academics position themselves towards policy in a fragmented way which is often understated, and that they unpack, or decode, the text of the policy in order to construct their own meanings.

Tutors uniformly reported that formal training in policy matters was not occurring. Several thought it may have been foreshadowed during orientation, but stated that information overload at the time prevented them from recalling whether, in fact, it had been discussed at this time. Their suggestions for improving policy compliance – though limited – included simplified presentation, making policies easier to understand and more accessible, and providing training. For some the language was not an issue, whereas others found difficulties comprehending the formal “academic speak” in which policy is habitually couched. Ball (1994) suggests that often policy text is open to interpretation, and that the reader plays an important part in unpacking the complex relationship that exists between: the text itself, the intentions of the text, and the way in which it is interpreted. All of these nuances compromise the supposed supremacy which the policy owner has over its meaning.

Other tutors suggested that policies could be long-winded, and stated that there simply wasn't time to read lengthy policy statements and supporting procedures. As respondent D2 summed up: “The last thing you want to do is to be reading [them].” Further suggestions were that policies be shortened and simplified – using bullet points – or that staff were provided with summary statements rather than with the actual policies themselves.

Conversely, a minority of tutors acknowledged the incorporation of policy in their practice, and agreed it was there for a reason. They spoke of occasions on which

non-adherence to policy – not following assessment procedures, not filling in fieldtrips plans, and not following complaints procedures relating to disputes over assignment results – had led to their realisation of its necessity and efficacy.

Some tutors reported concerning claims that policy was not being supported or upheld by senior managers, and offered evidence of their experiences to substantiate these claims. One such situation involved managers waiving mandatory entry criteria to allow prospective learners into programmes; and another was a manager not adhering to institutional complaints procedures. Tutors reported that these experiences left them feeling exposed, powerless and unprotected. Allowing students into programmes for which they were ill prepared became a problem for both the learner and the tutor, but achieved the outcome of filling programmes and enabling the manager to meet EFTS targets. The findings identify a significant issue in that tutors – and at times, managers – do not appear to be adhering to institutional policy.

***Proposition 5: The context in which teaching occurs influenced tutors' ability to perform their teaching role***

Tutors highlighted various contextual factors which they believe impacted on their teaching experiences. Factors such as student learning support and the resources provided for teaching were seen as having a direct impact on the quality of student learning. Most tutors agreed that students benefit from learning support, but also suggested that this assistance is often marginalised by centres that are dislocated from the classroom. They further suggested that a closer relationship between subject content and the learner support centre had the potential to improve students' quality of learning. Not surprisingly, tutors reported that learner support centres were needed more than ever, given the decline in students' degree of preparedness for tertiary education: a finding supported by Morris (2008). However, they also reported that when students accessed learning support, frequently there was little or no feedback to the classroom tutor. They saw this support as less effective than if teaching staff were involved more closely in helping students to improve their learning.

Historically, learner support was identified as a means of bridging the gap between the skills that students bring to tertiary education, and those that they require to participate successfully in formal learning (Hoffman, 2002). An increase in the number of students attending TEIs, and in those who are under prepared or from non-traditional backgrounds, has resulted in an increased need for readily accessible learner support services.

Data from a project researching engagement with first-time enrolled students in New Zealand suggests that institutions are investing in a variety of support services (Leach & Zepke, 2011). Rivers (2005) considers that student support services “play a role in the social and academic integration of students which leads to their

retention and success” (p. 7). But McGillin (2000) and McInnis and James (1997) also suggested that learning centres need to re-look at how their services are provided and evaluated, as a means of identifying examples of good practice for their students and for the institution.

Case study foundation tutor Sarah spoke of the significance of the learner support centre in assisting her students to cope with the demands of their programmes. But given the centre’s limited capacity she found that she was often called upon to provide this assistance. Bronwyn – case study business tutor – who had a high percentage of international students in her class, relied upon learning support to help them with immediate language issues.

Notwithstanding their positive experiences, tutors also identified some issues of concern with learner support services, in particular: too few staff available to support learners. Morris (2008) calls for a closer working relationship between the student support service and the classroom that will meet students’ needs and also promote the attainment of institutional/political goals.

Tutors reported teaching spaces as of an acceptable standard or exceeding their expectations. They assessed the resources allotted to those spaces, however, as poor to acceptable, citing in particular a lack of appropriate technology, out-dated technology, a lack of computers, and difficulties with low capacity IT systems. Trades tutors described the use of outdated machinery – especially compared to industry – as embarrassing. Case study trades tutor Tom encapsulated this perspective: “How the hell can we do it [enhance teaching] if the equipment we are using industry threw out years ago?”

Tutors cited a lack of computers for students as a general concern, and considered that this situation – together with issues around slow IT systems – was impacting negatively on efforts to improve their teaching. At times they spoke strongly when referring to a lack of resources – computers, in particular. Some considered that they had heeded managers’ calls to enhance their teaching practice with new technologies, but failed to be provided with the necessary tools and equipment to achieve the desired outcomes. Tutors appeared most angry with IT systems that didn’t perform consistently and which constantly mal-functioned – often at critical times during teaching sessions. Given that there is currently no literature available to support or refute these findings, there is potential for further study into the provision of technological resources within ITPs, and the impact of such resources on teaching practice and learning outcomes.

A paper entitled “*Report and Recommendations on Proposals for a National Centre for Tertiary Excellence*” (Tertiary Education Commission, 2005) recommended a raft of initiatives to improve teaching. These initiatives included the strategic importance of institutional managers demonstrating a commitment to a learner-focused culture that values effective teaching. To give effect to this commitment, managers were

charged with providing a learning environment and allied resources that would enable students to learn effectively. Tutors in this study suggested, however, that any focus on enhancing their teaching skills without providing them with the vital tools to implement such initiatives, would only lead to frustration and disharmony.

Kuh and Pascarella (2004) took a differing stance, claiming that institutional resources are largely irrelevant to a high-quality student learning environment. They suggested that the vitality of classroom experiences and educationally purposeful activities, combined with students' own efforts and study habits, were more to the point. Tutors' reported experiences, however – and that of the researcher – support the view that relevant and appropriate resources are vital in supporting tutors to achieve effective teaching outcomes.

The way in which tutors wished to be acknowledged for their teaching varied. Some favoured public recognition, whereas others suggested that overt acknowledgment was not necessary. A majority of tutors identified simple thanks from students as the most valued token of appreciation they could receive. Acknowledgement from managers, on the other hand, was generally not considered meaningful, given that they were often seen as uninvolved and uninterested in teaching and lacking a clear understanding of what tutors actually did to warrant recognition.

Over the last decade most ITPs appear to have taken seriously successive governments' challenges to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Whilst there is evidence of institutional commitment, gaps are still apparent between institutional rhetoric and practice when it comes to recognising and rewarding teaching excellence. Many tutors expressed disappointment that their managers didn't fully appreciate the lengths to which they went to meet their obligations, and case study tutors were particularly forthcoming in this respect. Sarah identified that she rarely received any endorsement from her managers, as she doesn't "relate to them on a regular basis". For Bronwyn, recognition and reward came from within her school, although she did identify instances when her direct manager had acknowledged particular outcomes. Gregory reported that "no one had ever said thanks", and Tom stated that he got "no recognition for anything" he did.

Institutional awards were met with some cynicism. Many tutors questioned the processes in place, asking if they were truly fair and reflective of high-performing tutors. The process saw tutors having to be nominated for these awards, either by self or by another person. The application process was often lengthy, however, and required supporting material which was time consuming to compile. Consequently tutors were often not interested in working through the specified processes and simply didn't apply. A tap-on-the-shoulder-for-mates approach was called into question, as were the decision-making processes for awards once all the nominations had been received.

Gibbs (2008b) endorses the cynicism that some tutors expressed towards institutional teaching awards. In an article titled “What a performance” he questioned whether teaching awards were a good idea at all and actually promoted the goal of increasing the esteem in which teaching is held. He noted that although awards have been around for many years, they appear to have had little impact on the value of teaching during this time. He also questioned whether awards are always given to the right teachers, for the right reasons, using the most appropriate and transparent criteria.

Clegg (2007) took a differing stance, suggesting that any move away from “teaching excellence” (p. 1) and the institutional awards system was a backward step. She considered that striving for excellence – and the provision of awards – further the aim of understanding and improving teaching. Other research suggests that awards do little to raise the overall standard of teachers’ discharge of their responsibilities (Skelton, 2007); and that institutions should focus on creating cultures which support and maintain a deep intellectual curiosity in the teaching profession.

The findings from the current research encapsulate similarly divergent views. Some tutors expressed embarrassment at receiving awards, saying that there were more worthy recipients in their departments. Others spoke of the value of institutional awards in lifting tutor morale, and providing a time to celebrate teaching excellence in company with other teaching staff. Interestingly, a number of tutors spoke of self worth or an inner feeling of self affirmation as the real reward for knowing that a job had been well done.

Many tutors in this research focused on the expectations of their teaching role, and suggested that these expectations needed to be clarified at the time of employment, especially given that some people may enter teaching not fully understanding the role and responsibilities that it carries. Some tutors spoke of surprise at the range of duties expected of them. They perceived student interaction as the focus of their role, and believed that administrative duties would be undertaken by allied and support staff. Trades tutors were the most vocal in this respect. These findings aligned with the previous study undertaken by Pritchard (2008).

Billot (2010) attributes many of these perceptions of anticipated – as opposed to actual – workload to individuals not fully understanding the tertiary teacher’s dynamic and ever-changing role. As academic practices constantly evolve and change to meet government-driven policy and funding directives, multiple roles and responsibilities emerge from the need to reshape academic work. Whitchurch (2008) similarly suggests that academic roles and responsibilities are often more complex and multi-faceted than outlined in employment documents. This reality may explain why tutors appear to maintain a fluid identity as their duties and expectations fluctuate.

The majority of tutors considered orientation at the commencement of teaching as either marginally helpful or generally unhelpful, but acknowledged that it provided a structure for integrating them into the ITP. They considered that current orientation programmes delivered too much irrelevant information in a short space of time; were too focused on institutional processes; and didn't provide the immediate knowledge that they needed to plan and prepare for teaching. Tutors also suggested that ITPs could do more at this time to heighten their awareness of institutional policies which impacted on teaching.

Pritchard (2008) found evidence to support these concerns, namely that orientation programmes do not appear to meet either tutors' or managers' expectations. Processes often entailed the use of checklists containing insufficient detail for a line manager to know that all required elements had been conveyed in a full and constructive manner; and for a tutor to be fully integrated into the ITP. As a result, these checklists appeared to be open to individuals' interpretations. Pritchard (2008) also suggested that documents broadly outlining expectations of the tutor's role and responsibilities in relation to institutional requirements did not go far enough in explaining the scope of each component, how these components were to be achieved, and how a tutor could assess whether or not the outcomes had been achieved successfully. The research concluded that there was a vast gap insofar as institutional documents do not carry sufficient detail for tutors to comprehend the scope of their roles and responsibilities.

Tutors in the current research felt that they needed more time to integrate themselves into the ITP before commencing actual teaching. They suggested that a minimum of two to three months was needed for a tutor to observe, ask questions, and become familiar with the world of tertiary education and training. Other tutors felt that their integration into the ITP had gone smoothly, but in some cases suggested that self motivation had played a role.

Tutors all agreed, however, on the importance of aligning the workload expectations of managers and tutors respectively. Some tutors reported variation in the level of work expected; others cited over-work; and yet others considered that they had a fair and equitable workload. A minority of tutors reported stress and burnout, and suggested that managers needed to accommodate differing work patterns to manage personal workloads. Overall they felt that "sinking lid" policies currently evidenced in tertiary education were seeing them working harder and for longer. Redundancies placed pressure on them, resulting in high stress levels at a time when the Government sought increased efficiencies, improved outcomes, and greater returns on its investment in tertiary education. They reported that improving teaching practice and performing at optimal levels was difficult when jobs were under threat.



## **Summary: Answering the research questions**

At the commencement of this research the primary objective was to:

- Investigate ITP tutors' understanding of policy and performance, in order to identify changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice.

Further, a series of sub- questions was posed:

- Why is enhancing teaching in the ITP sector important?
- How is educational development perceived to take place in the ITP sector?
- Why are changes needed to teaching policy and practice and to the implementation of this policy and practice in the ITP sector?
- What might be a realistic and possible agenda for change?

## **How the discussion relates to the questions**

The findings from this research indicate that tutors experience teaching in an ITP in various ways. Recording and analysing these experiences from both phenomenographic and individual case study perspectives revealed gaps in tutors' current practice and in their understanding of policy and performance.

Five propositions were offered to answer the primary objective of this research. These five propositions summed up the experiences and understanding that tutors reported as significant in their daily work. In so doing, noticeable and concerning gaps have been identified, which if bridged, have the potential to enhance teaching practice and tutors' understanding and application of policy.

Although this research suggests that much needs to be done to improve teaching within the ITP sector, the findings also identified examples of effective teaching practice. In Proposition 1 tutors reported that their main focus was on their students; further, they fully understood that their teaching must centre on preparing students for future employment. Most tutors sought to be effective teachers, but as the research highlights, effectiveness was perceived in many different ways and did not always align with what the literature identified as effective practice.

Using phenomenography as the prime methodology to investigate tutors' views and experiences revealed the variation of perspectives arising from individual interviews. Among these reported views and experiences, tutors' overwhelming non-use of, or non-adherence to, institutional policy – as reported in Proposition 4 – was of significant concern. In Proposition 3 tutors' relationships with their managers, which they acknowledged as directly impacting on their motivation for teaching, was a further area of concern. In Proposition 1 tutors expressed widely differing views as to what constituted effective teaching, yet couldn't cite any accepted definitions against which to benchmark these views. In Proposition 2 teaching qualifications was highlighted as a core issue to be addressed, given that tertiary tutors and lecturers are the only teachers within the education sector who are not bound to regulatory

policies requiring them to hold appropriate qualifications in order to teach. The issue is a national one, as this research has highlighted that over many years ITPs have not been able to ensure that tutors are qualified and/or being trained to appropriate levels, as required by their own policies.

In Proposition 4 government policy for tertiary education loomed large in the picture that tutors painted of their working lives. Constant change all too often brought concern and despair in its wake. As individual governments come and go so, too, do different emphases in response to particular pressures or ideological causes championed by different interest groups. It remains an ongoing challenge for ITPs to manage this change in a way that meets the objectives of the government of the day, but which also minimises the sense of uncertainty and anxiety which respondents in this research so clearly expressed.

Proposition 5 highlighted contextual issues including student learning support, the adequacy of teaching resources, the ways in which teaching was rewarded, and tutors' understanding of the expectations of their teaching role: all of which carried the potential to deflect tutors' foci from their teaching role and responsibilities.

### **Answering the sub-questions**

- Why is enhancing teaching in the ITP sector important?

This sub-question was answered by the tutors themselves within Proposition 2. The majority stated that enhancing their teaching practice was an ongoing expectation and one which they sought to fulfil. As tutor D4 stated: "teaching always needs improving". Tutors are aware that the context in which their teaching takes place is constantly changing; in turn requiring them to review their teaching practice on an ongoing basis. Further, the majority of tutors sought to provide quality teaching however they perceived or characterised it. A small minority – all from trades areas – took a differing stance, maintaining that their teaching was of an acceptable standard and did not require revision or review. Without objective measures for gauging effective teaching, however, it will be difficult for ITPs to assess the level at which tutors are – or believe that they are – performing.

Further, although the most recent *TES 2010-15* called for improved teaching practice, this call may not provide sufficient reason for tutors themselves to act. As Ramsden (1992) reported, it is delusory to consider that the real problem in responding to the call to improve teaching lies with the forces of accountability; adding further that by itself this is an inadequate reason for aiming to enhance teaching practice and one that is unlikely to succeed. It appears that measures to enhance teaching will only succeed if tutors own the issue, and accept that there is a direct correlation between their teaching practice and the quality of students' learning.

- How is educational development perceived to take place in the ITP sector?

This sub-question was answered within Proposition 2 – reporting variations in institutional provisions for PD – for which tutors assumed prime responsibility. High workloads and competing priorities, however, resulted in processes that were far from trouble free. Further, tutors reported that undertaking PD was a choice option for which they themselves decided what PD (if any) would be undertaken, and when. Although some respondents acknowledged that their managers were involved in the decision-making process, they also questioned these managers' depth of knowledge of their teaching practice and of the areas in which PD was deemed desirable or necessary.

Tutors also questioned the content and relevance of teaching qualifications to their particular context, and many acknowledged that they did not complete them within prescribed timeframes. The findings suggested that tutors appeared to participate willingly in PD activities during the early stages of their careers, but displayed less enthusiasm in the later stages. Further, they challenged the perceived value and sufficiency of teaching qualifications in relation to effective teaching: a stance not supported by the literature which clearly identified that staff members holding a teaching qualification were rated more highly by their students, who perceived them as more capable teachers

Tutors expressed an overall concern about the quality of training and its effectiveness in relation to relevance, utility, timeliness and level. Overwhelmingly they called for training to improve their IT skills, including posting teaching resources on line.

Developing and growing by remaining current in industry knowledge and skills saw tutors questioning how this experience could be incorporated into busy schedules. Individual voices heard through the case studies, however, identified that a period of sabbatical style leave could measurably enhance the quality of industry placements.

- Why are changes needed to teaching policy and practice and to the implementation of this policy and practice in the ITP sector?

As this research has shown, Propositions 1-5 reveal gaps between tutors' current practice and what the literature has identified as effective practice. Although there will always be a diversity of views and approaches, the lack of targeted research simply leaves the issue unaddressed.

- What might be a realistic and possible agenda for change?

Enhancing teaching practice is a complex issue. Biggs (1999) stated that teaching and learning take place in a whole system which includes the classroom, discipline and institution. A poor quality system is one in which the various components are neither integrated nor attuned to supporting students' high-level learning.

This research identified that ITPs exist in a particular context, and that there is variation in the views of tutors working within these contexts as to what constitutes effective and enhanced teaching practice. Consequently, each ITP must necessarily drive a change agenda in accordance with its particular context, including ethos, constitution, mission statement and values.

Clearly there is no single strategy that has the capacity to address teaching effectiveness and teaching enhancement in general, and a raft of initiatives is required. Stake and Trumbull (1982) contend that tertiary education is a strange profession in that managers and teaching staff are seldom aware of when a task has finished. Consequently, tutors may feel that they lack a sense of accomplishment and completion. Calls for changes that lead to enhanced teaching practice – whether from the government, the institution, employers, teachers or students – will be ongoing. The onus is on ITPs to undertake organisational change in timeframes that are appropriate to resource allocation and other institutional imperatives; and on tutors to ensure that they are active participants in planning and implementing these changes.

## CHAPTER 7

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter presents eight recommendations deriving from the research findings and corroborated by the literature. It concludes with a *précis* of the contribution of this research to the body of knowledge; limitations of the research; three specific suggestions for further research; and a summative conclusion to the study.

The overall aim of this research was to investigate ITP tutors' understanding of policy and performance, in order to identify changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice. A systems framework introduced in chapter 1 conceptualised the multi-dimensional factors that underpinned the research. The 32 tutor voices emerging from this research provided a glimpse into the ITP world. Although tutors' views and experiences varied, their concerns were often similar, as was the rhetoric in which these concerns were couched during the interviews. The evident variation in their experiences, however, provided the categories of description which derive from the prime methodology adopted for this research.

The choice of phenomenography to address and answer the research questions provided a serviceable means of capturing and studying the range of tutors' experiences and understanding.

The following recommendations have emerged directly from the fieldwork undertaken during this research, and are further substantiated by the researcher's 25 years' accrued experience of teaching and management within an ITP.

#### **Recommendations**

The recommendations for changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice are directed at the two levels of ITP and tutor: four recommendations for ITPs, and four for tutors. Notwithstanding tutors' individual voices and the variations in their reported views and experiences, the frequency and urgency of these accounts enabled generic recommendations to be formulated. The systems framework introduced in chapter 1 and supported by the literature in chapter 2, provided the structural platform for these recommendations.

The findings of this research strongly suggest that the onus rests on individual ITPs to identify structures and processes within their institution that may be limiting the scope for enhanced teaching practice. Although such an undertaking may prove significant in both range and scale, it nevertheless addresses a complex issue that necessarily reflects the particular context and environment in which each ITP operates. All recommendations for change are predicated on the assumption that only a long-term, coordinated plan will bring about change. Without such a "whole-of-institution" approach, any changes are likely to be superficial in conception and ephemeral in practice.

## **Recommendations for ITPs**

It is recommended that ITPs:

1. *Actively foster and support an institutional climate and culture which values teaching and learning and demonstrates a commitment to enhanced teaching practice.*

The research identified that although ITPs were implementing strategies to improve the quality of teaching, there is still much to be done. It is recommended that each ITP:

- *Develops a common understanding of effective teaching.* This research has highlighted that effective teaching is understood in differing ways across discipline or subject areas, leading to a wide diversity in approaches, practice, and teaching and learning outcomes. The development of a common set of guidelines for effective teaching has the potential to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Consequently, developing varying (but congruent) definitions of effective teaching – with a common core – would provide ITPs with a basis for discussing strategies to promote enhanced practice across a range of subject areas.
- *Ensures that institutional evaluation processes are adhered to, and that any systemic faults are identified and remedied.* Tutors reported that institutional evaluations were a prime source of feedback to them about the perceived quality of their teaching and the dynamics of the teaching/learning interface. However, the findings identified that system failures compromised the worth of these evaluations. Tutors reported that they frequently didn't receive evaluation outcomes, or that feedback received was often out of date as students had already left the ITP. Consequently, they were unable to remedy any elements of their practice that were deemed to be unhelpful or to need improvement, within that particular academic year. Given this situation it is recommended that ITPs initiate immediate action to identify systemic faults, and plan and implement remedial action accordingly. The urgency of this recommendation is underscored by a previous study by Prebble et al. in 2004 which also revealed these same systematic failings and called for appropriate measures to address them.
- *Owns the problem of poorly prepared students once it has agreed to enrol them, and conveys this expectation to tutors.* Tutors expressed significant concerns at many students' ill-preparedness for tertiary education. This situation has immediate flow-on effects to: the type and level of pastoral care available; tutors' lesson planning and preparation; classroom dynamics; and learner support that may be required over and above formal tuition. Tutors expressed differing views as to who exactly "owned" the problem of struggling

students; but generally concurred that once an ITP agreed to enrol a student, the institution itself was responsible for addressing and managing the issue. Consequently it is recommended that ITPs: adhere to policy around entry criteria; and where necessary review entry criteria to determine appropriateness and consistency of application.

- *Acknowledges teaching with transparent systems and recognition of personal input and effort.* Tutors reported various ways in which they sought their teaching to be rewarded and acknowledged. Institutional awards were applauded by some respondents but met with scepticism by others. Overall, however, tutors called for a system of acknowledgement and reward that is transparent and equitable and which recognises the value of personal input and effort. Suggestions for how such a system might be constituted, however, were not forthcoming.
- *Makes financial data and resource allocation information available to tutors in order to promote effective forward planning for teaching practice.* Tutors reported that a lack of knowledge around funding allocations compromised their ability to plan for the purchase of teaching and learning resources. They also expressed frustration when innovative ideas for enhancing teaching practice were turned down because of insufficient funding allocations; and when projects were pared down as a result of uncertainty around approved budgets. Although these concerns are not substantiated in the literature, it should be recognised that ITP tutors are generally focused on vocational training, often linked to project work – particularly in the trades. As a consequence, a lack of funding for measures that would promote teaching innovation and enhancement in practically based contexts is clearly an issue for them. Disclosure of budget allocations at the outset, together with clear guidelines around expenditure (including jurisdiction, delegated authority and provisions for discretionary spending) would allow appropriately scaled projects to be designed and implemented.

*2. Ensure that professional development processes are reviewed for alignment with institutional policy requirements, and that responsibilities are made clear to all parties.*

- Tutors as a body accepted that PD is their responsibility, but many also regarded it as a choice option. Moreover, respondents who *did* confirm engagement in the process reported that it wasn't problem free, citing issues of time constraints, managerial and financial backing, identifying appropriate qualifications, and competing priorities. Consequently, it is recommended that ITPs review their processes around PD – including provisions for acquiring

qualifications – to check for consistency of application and adherence to institutional policy.

- It is further recommended that ITPs invest in training which is of demonstrable value in enhancing tutors' performance. Tutors reported frustration at training which they considered was ineffective in expanding their skill and knowledge base or enhancing their teaching practice, in particular short courses that offered little or no follow-up. There is a clear imperative for ITPs, often with limited PD budgets, to invest judiciously in the training offered to their staff, and to take into account feedback that may question the effectiveness of this training.
- ITPs are recommended to consider the implementation of a system of observation and review of tutors' teaching practice. Tutors themselves called for a system of formal observation and review. An initially unexpected finding – but one that was understandable when raised – was that at times tutors struggled to identify appropriate training that would enhance their teaching practice. There was, notwithstanding, a clear mandate from the research to suggest that external input by way of classroom and workshop appraisals had the potential to identify areas where changes could usefully be made.

*3. Foster greater awareness of institution policy and promote a culture in which policy is openly discussed and reviewed.*

- Tutors overwhelmingly reported their non-use of, or non-adherence to, institutional policy. They also reported occasions when managers failed to adhere to these policies, rendering the situation even more complex, especially with respect to internal and external audit and quality assurance. Particular areas of concern included: tutors not completing teaching qualifications within specified timeframes; arbitrary or inconsistent interpretation of student entry requirements; and lack of clarity around provisions for PD. It is recommended that ITPs provide institutional structures and processes whereby tutors can familiarise themselves with policy, discuss its intent and ramifications, and better understand the need for acting in accordance with agreed provisions.
- Tutors reported minimal involvement in the development of institutional policy. Although a few tutors acknowledged that they had been invited to provide feedback during the development of policy, most did not. It was apparent that input was haphazard and left to the whim of individual tutors to decide on. Given the inadequacy of this situation, it is recommended that ITPs develop mechanisms that actively encourage tutors to provide input into the



development of policy and procedures, particularly policy that which relates directly to teaching practice.

- Tutors reported that they received little or no training in the interpretation of policy; and that promulgation of policy in written format with no back-up support was ineffective and of little practical import. Consequently it is recommended that ITPs address the question of training and development in institutional policy, at both managerial and tutorial levels. At the same time it is recommended that the style in which policy is written and presented is reviewed for simplicity, ease of comprehension, and applicability to the realities of teaching practice.
- Various areas of non-adherence to policy have been cited in previous sections, including: non-adherence to entry requirements, criteria for PD, and systemic failures associated with classroom evaluations. However, these were not the only areas that tutors suggested were in need of review. They felt that institutional processes – including documentation pertaining to initial employment – needed to be made more explicit in terms of institutional expectations of the teaching role. The findings of the research also strongly suggest that ITPs should review the content of their orientation programmes to align them more closely to the immediate needs of new tutors. It is recommended that documentation should be developed for all newly appointed – and ideally, currently employed – tutors, which clearly delineates the nature of their teaching role, institutional expectations of this role, and how it is to be managed and assessed in terms of recognised models of good teaching practice.
- Institutional orientation processes and policies appeared overwhelming to new tutors, and were perceived as failing to provide the knowledge that they needed to understand and assimilate the teaching role in their early stages of employment. Tutors suggested that orientation programmes should include information on teaching and lesson planning, survival skills in the classroom in the first few weeks, information on institutional policy, and institutional strategies and expectations of the teaching role. A word of caution was sounded about overload, however, which requires ITPs to scale the amount of information that is provided, and the rate at which it is promulgated. It is recommended that institutional orientation policies and processes are reviewed and updated to reflect input from recently employed teaching staff.

*4. Promote an institutional culture which embraces relationship building not only across the institution but with external partners.*

- Tutors acknowledged that forming positive relationships was a significant factor in effective performance of their teaching role. Their comments clearly and overwhelmingly indicated that there were relationship issues at managerial level. Tutors further reported that relationships with their managers directly impacted on their motivation for teaching, and that these relationships were frequently far from harmonious. From tutors' perspectives, managers were often seen as distant and uninvolved; role definition was unclear; and fraught relationships between tutors and managers impacted negatively on the approach that tutors brought to their teaching practice. Hence, it is recommended that measures which include training in relationship building are developed and implemented across each ITP.
- ITPs are strongly encouraged to develop a closer working relationship between learner support centres and teaching staff. Leach and Zepke (2011) found that although most students knew about learner support services available to them, few actually used them. Many of the issues that tutors identified as problematic could potentially be resolved by giving learner support staff access to the classroom, to avoid the situation of students physically relocating to another venue in order to learn how to learn. Such access would also promote greater awareness of available services and make them more acceptable to struggling students; and would allow classroom tutors and learning support tutors to work collaboratively in identifying the most effective learning strategies.
- ITPs are also tasked with ensuring that relationships with external partners such as industry and regulatory bodies are developed and maintained at a level which is harmonious, and that promotes constructive teaching outcomes. As the tutors themselves identified, positive relationships are only achieved through concerted dedication, and require commitment, time and effort if they are to be realised.

### ***Recommendations for tutors***

It is recommended that tutors:

1. *Are accountable and responsible for contributing to a broader institutional approach to enhanced teaching, as well as continuing to focus on their own teaching practice.*

- Many tutors accepted personal responsibility for improving their own teaching practice. But few focused any attention on developing a broader institutional perspective. Because the research identified that a more holistic approach is indicated, it is recommended that tutors participate in institutional initiatives

that are shown to enhance teaching practice. A constructive starting point would be for tutors to discuss effective teaching in terms of particular subject areas. If academic discussions are not occurring in their subject areas, it is recommended that tutors take the initiative to begin them. They should be prepared to discuss issues and the literature associated with good practice and teaching enhancement, and to identify potential groupings within their institution e.g. a sub-group of a research committee, if their own department or immediate colleagues prove unsupportive.

- Tutors should be prepared to disclose system failures and to take a more proactive stance where they feel that information e.g. on the results of student evaluations, is being withheld from them.
- Tutors must jointly own the issue of struggling students. Although it is incumbent on ITPs to accept primary responsibility for supporting enrolled students, by delegation it is also the tutor's role to identify available institutional support services and to encourage students to engage with those systems that are best aligned to their individual needs.

*2. Participate in professional development activities in line with institutional policy.*

- PD is generally not a choice option but is predicated upon criteria articulated in institutional policy. Ongoing PD in both subject expertise and teaching skills and knowledge is a clear expectation of the tutor's role. Maintaining currency in industry practice is of particular significance, given that students in the ITP sector are trained specifically for future employment. Tutors are recommended to identify particular opportunities for their own development within the provisions of institutional policy and through regular discussions with their reporting managers.
- Tutors should be prepared to gain qualifications in line with the provisions of institutional policy. Although tutors questioned the relevance of available qualifications, this research showed that teachers who held teaching qualifications were generally ranked more highly by their students. It is recommended that tutors acknowledge the teaching skills and expertise required for teaching within the sector, and work through the provisions of institutional policy to identify opportunities which are best aligned to meeting their particular training needs.

*3. Fully engage with institutional policy.*

- Tutors are recommended to identify and engage in PD opportunities associated with institutional policy that addresses teaching performance and teaching enhancement.
- Tutors are recommended to take every opportunity to participate in policy development, and together with colleagues to provide input into policy that is particularly relevant to teaching practice. Tutors offered a number of reasons for discounting institutional policies, including irrelevant provisions, incomprehensibility, and lack of clarity around purpose and intent. Few offered to take responsibility for engaging with – or taking steps to improve – a situation which no longer reflects the so-called “golden age” of tertiary teaching (Harman, 2000).

*4. Seek to develop harmonious relationships with colleagues both within and across the ITP as well as with agencies that are external to the institution.*

- Collegial relationships include tutors’ managers, teaching colleagues within their own department, learning support staff, allied staff, and – most importantly – students. In all cases, promoting harmonious relationships will result in enhanced motivation for tutors to improve their own teaching practice, and will also assist in establishing an environment which supports a positive teaching/learning interface. Hence tutors are recommended to engage in activities that promote constructive and lasting relationship building. Examples include: participation in across-institutional committees and groups; team-building activities attached to institutional PD days; multi-activity days; and across-institution discussions and forums.
- Tutors should seek to develop harmonious relationships with external agencies. It is recommended that tutors focus on promoting positive relationships with those regulatory agencies e.g. NZQA and ITOs that are most closely involved in – or potentially have the greatest impact on – their teaching programmes and practice. Regular dialogue – preferably face-to-face – with external agency representatives during which current issues are discussed; frequent communication via e-mail; an exchange of newsletters on events and happenings; and consultation over teaching and assessment, issues all carry the potential to create a solid foundation for relationship development and consolidation.

## Contribution to knowledge

This research has made an original contribution to the existent body of knowledge on teaching practice within the ITP sector in the following ways.

It provides much needed information on ITP tutors' views and practices. As noted in Chapter 1, little research has been undertaken in the ITP sector and little was known of tutors' day-to-day work practices. Investigating tutor perceptions of working in an ITP and of their understanding of policy and performance, has shown to be an effective way of identifying changes that have the potential to enhance teaching practice. This research also assists to redress the imbalance of research carried out specifically within the ITP sector.

- The research provides evidence of ITP tutors' current experiences and understanding of working in the sector. Five qualitatively different ways in which tutors experience working in an ITP have been identified and described. It has been shown that these experiences vary, and that they are dynamic and ever-changing.
- The combination of phenomenography and case study has proved to be a serviceable means of researching tutors' individual perspectives. The phenomenographic perspective established the variations within the categories of description that emerged from these perspectives, complemented by individual case studies which allowed the voices of four tutors to add richness to the experience of working in an ITP.
- The research has identified potential gaps and deficiencies in teaching practice, and exposed the degree to which tutors acknowledge their widespread non-adherence to institutional policy. This is a significant finding and alongside other gaps carries the potential – when identified and rectified – to improve teaching practice.
- The research provides recommendations for change. Not only are gaps in tutor practices revealed, but the research makes suggestions for positive changes to address these deficiencies. Without these changes, the practices that tutors have acknowledged as deficient will continue to be perpetuated.
- The research provides suggestions for further scholarly investigation. The findings from this research project have led to the identification of a range of outcomes which have the potential to enhance teaching practice. Notwithstanding, it is clear that the ITP sector lacks targeted, quality research on its day-to-day practices. The literature identifies that there are many areas within the sector in which benefits could accrue if further empirical research studies are carried out.

Methodologically the research has:

- Utilised case study to support and enrich phenomenography and build on the existing literature on the ITP sector in New Zealand.
- Contributed to the body of phenomenographic research within the field of tertiary education. Phenomenography has been chosen as an appropriate methodology for researching the varying views and experiences of tutors who participated in this study. Although used infrequently as a qualitative research methodology for research within the New Zealand tertiary education sector, it is highly applicable in establishing variation in respondents' reported experiences within an empirically-based, interpretivist paradigm.

Finally, this research has explored the variation that arises from tutors' reported experiences, and in so doing has uncovered a remarkable degree of complexity. Tutors' perspectives yield valuable insights into the potential enhancement of institutional policy development, and to their own teaching practice. In researching tutors' views and experiences and the valuable insights deriving from these accounts, this study has demonstrated the need for significantly more research to be undertaken within and across the ITP sector.

### **Limitations of the research**

Any inherent limitations of this study are principally an outcome of its research design, choice of ITPs, range of participants, teaching levels and the teaching/subject areas involved. The factor of potential variability of results, however, is acknowledged in the literature which suggests that the scope and scale of participants and institutions was in keeping with similar, representative studies. Moreover, the vast amount of rich data that was obtained from the in-depth interviews provided ample material to fashion the categories of description, and identify the variations deriving from the differing perspectives of individual respondents.

The qualitative nature of the research necessarily results in findings that reflect the judgment and interpretation of the researcher. Other researchers may have chosen different approaches or emphases, e.g. the focus of the interview questions and follow-up prompts. A pilot study, however, resulted in changes to the initial research design and questionnaire, leading to findings that were tightly aligned to the literature.

In hindsight the approach of seeking tutors to participate in the research may have led to a group of respondents who were more interested and open to this type of engagement. Consequently, the experiences of other tutors who were indifferent or who may have held divergent views were not included in the sample. Given that this circumstance is an inevitable consequence of a volunteer interview project, the

rationale for the sampling methodology was reviewed and evaluated as more serviceable than alternative representational options.

As the research focused on tutors' views and experiences, a limitation arose insofar as the views and perceptions of other interest groups – e.g. managers and students – were not part of the research design. The experiences of managers, in particular, may have resulted in a more holistic picture and could potentially have provided a broader perspective to the outcomes of the research.

As the research indicated that departments or subject areas had a powerful impact on tutors' views and experiences, a more in-depth understanding of the interface between tutors' viewpoints and the underlying philosophies of their teaching departments could have added a further layer of meaning. It was not until the data was analysed, however, that this premise emerged.

Finally, the scale of the project was determined by the practicalities of doctoral degree requirements, timeframes and the constraints on the researcher's capacity to conduct a more significant project over a longer period of time.

### **Further research**

This research provides an *entrée* into the “entwining, personalistic, and crisis-like problems” (Stake & Trumbull, 1982, p. 2) which are encountered within tutors' daily working lives. However, it is only one venture into an increasingly complex and vexing world. Taking account of the current literature and the findings of this research, proposals that would add to the body of knowledge around teaching practice include:

- *A follow-up study of managers' views of teaching practice as they perceive it within and across the ITP sector.* Such a study would allow comparisons to be made between the respective beliefs and opinions of tutors and their managers, and would promote a more comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of current teaching practice.
- *A follow-up study of students' views of teaching practice within an ITP, and of the teaching/learning interface as they experience it.* This study would allow triangulation with the views of managers and tutors, and provide a wealth and depth of invaluable data on which to draw when developing strategies for teaching and learning enhancement.
- *An in-depth case study of tutors' understanding and experiences within departments or subject areas that record successful teaching outcomes.* This knowledge would promote an understanding of the measures of “successful” teaching practice within targeted subject areas.

## **Conclusion**

The focus of this research was on tutors' experiences of working in the ITP sector. The combination of phenomenography and case study has provided an appropriate and serviceable means of interpreting and elucidating the complexity of differing views through which tutors characterise their experiences of teaching in an ITP.

The information gathered provided insights into the current working world as perceived by a sample of ITP tutors. The evidence clearly indicated that although ITPs appear to be implementing measures to enhance teaching practice, much still remains to be done. Change will be progressive and formative, given that enhanced teaching practice is a long-term goal, and one that requires commitment and perseverance. Central to all initiatives and courses of action around this goal, is acceptance and ownership of the issue by individual ITPs. On this basis, each institution is best placed to develop and co-ordinate long-term strategies for teaching enhancement, together with obtaining the necessary support and buy-in of teaching staff that is a key to success.



## APPENDIX A – Letter to institutions

74 Gilbert Street  
New Plymouth

Chief Executive  
[Name of Institute of Technology]  
PO Box

Dear

I am writing to seek permission to undertake research within your ITP. This research is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements for award of a PhD in Education from Massey University.

I bring a background of extensive experience in the ITP sector to this research project, including 25 years of teaching and managing within a regional polytechnic. In 2007 I undertook a research project as partial fulfilment of a Master of Education (Adult Education) also at Massey University. This research was subsequently presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawaii Conference on Education in Honolulu (4-7 January 2009), and at the ITPNZ conference in Wellington in June 2009. A copy of this research report can be found on the Ako Aotearoa website at <http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/community/recommended-resources-ako-aotearoa/resources/pages/identifying-trades-tutors-and-instituti>

The topic I wish to research within your ITP is provisionally entitled “Changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching in the ITP sector”. I am inviting four ITPs to take part in this research project, of which you are one.

The idea for this research originated during my earlier research project conducted for the Master of Education. This project was entitled “Identifying tutors’ and institutions’ perceptions of tutors’ roles within the ITP sector”. It became apparent during this research project that tutors within the ITP sector appeared to conceive of teaching in differing ways. Consequently I felt that identifying how tutors conceive of teaching and working in an ITP may suggest, in turn, changes to policy and practice that would potentially enhance teaching. It is intended that the conclusions to this research will incorporate recommendations which aim to: increase knowledge of tutors’ conceptions and viewpoints, identify changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching and learning, and suggest some possibilities for further tutor development.

Massey University has approved this research project and ethics approval has also been granted.

My proposed fieldwork at your ITP involves interviewing two teaching staff from four subject areas. Firstly, I ask permission to approach teaching staff in the areas of business, foundation studies, trades, and art and design, to identify experienced teaching staff who may be interested in participating in this research project. These staff members would

subsequently be invited to participate in an interview of approximately 60 minutes which will focus on their conceptions of teaching and working in an ITP. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place suitable to the participant and may occur during working hours. In order to facilitate this process I propose that contact details of the relevant managers be made available so that I am able to organise through these managers a time and date to meet with teaching staff to discuss my research and invite the staff members to participate in the project.

Secondly, I ask permission to access hard copies of institutional documentation relating to teaching, primarily institutional quality management policies and procedures and institutional documentation which indicates institutional initiatives to improve teaching.

With your agreement I propose to visit [name of ITP] during May to introduce myself to the relevant Heads of Department and to organise to meet interested teaching staff. I will return shortly after to undertake the individual interviews.

A copy of the research report will be made available to each participating ITP after the project has been completed, which is scheduled for the end of 2012. This report will be sent to the Chief Executive of each ITP participating in the project unless requested otherwise.

Specifically, I wish to request formally:

- 1) Permission to undertake research within your ITP.
- 2) The names of the Heads of Schools/Faculties of Business, Trades, Art and Design, and Foundation Studies who will become my first point of contact with the tutors in each of these subject areas.
- 3) Advice as to whether you would require ethical clearance from your own ITP over and above Massey University ethical approval for this project.
- 4) Permission to access institutional policies and documents in order to contextualise and better understand tutors' experiences. These documents include quality management policies and procedures and documents which indicate institutional initiatives to improve teaching.

Should you wish to know more about this project please feel free to contact either myself on 06 7575095 or my supervisors, Nick Zepke, at Massey University, 06 356 9099 extn 8663, or Dr Paul Goodson, Careerforce ITO, 03 374 1331.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely

Christine Pritchard  
PhD student

## APPENDIX B – Information sheet

### ***Changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching in the ITP sector***

#### INFORMATION SHEET

##### **Researcher Introduction**

This research is being undertaken by Christine Pritchard, a PhD student who is completing this thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for award of a PhD in Education from Massey University, Palmerston North. Supervisors of the thesis are Associate Professor Nick Zepke (Massey University) and Dr Paul Goodson (Careerforce, Christchurch).

##### **Project Description and Invitation**

The research aims to investigate current practices of tutors within the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector to identify changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching.

An invitation is extended to you to participate in this research project. You will be asked to attend an interview of approximately 60 minutes duration, at a time and in a location suitable to you. This interview may occur during work hours. The interview will focus on the way that tutors conceive of teaching and working within an ITP. Prior to attending the interview you will be asked to sign a consent form and return it to me via a stamped self addressed envelope.

##### **Participant Identification and Recruitment**

Thirty-two experienced teaching staff members have been invited to participate in this research project. These staff members have been selected from four vocational subject areas (business, foundation studies, trades, and art and design) within four ITPs. The appropriate Heads of School/Faculty/ Department will be consulted to obtain the names of individuals teaching in these subject areas.

It is intended that no harm will occur to participants who participate in this project. However it is acknowledged that some individuals may be subject to emotional discomfort when discussing employment-related matters at a time of general uncertainty and change within the ITP sector. Strategies, such as termination of the interview or referral to a counsellor, have been designed to address any discomfort that may arise in this context.

##### **Project Procedures**

The fieldwork will commence in May/June 2011 with a personal approach from me to staff in each ITP seeking support of this research. Interviews will be conducted at each institution, during working hours, at a time and place negotiated with each participant. Data from the

interviews will be transcribed, and you will be asked to review the information before signing and approving the transcripts.

All participants – and the ITPs in which they work – will remain anonymous, and all data will be treated as confidential. However, it is acknowledged that in a small country like New Zealand full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Participants' names will be changed to ensure anonymity of individuals.

### **Data Management**

Data obtained from the interviews will be analysed using phenomenographic analysis which involves sorting the conceptions which emerge from the collected data into specific categories of description. As these categories of description are derived from the data as a whole and not from individual descriptions, participants' anonymity is preserved.

Data will be kept in safe environment, in a locked filing cabinet and in a locked office. All raw data will be disposed of by the Graduate College of Education at Massey University at the conclusion of the research project.

Institutions who participate in the research will be sent a copy of the research results at the conclusion of the project, at the end of 2012. A copy of the research results will be sent to each Chief Executive unless requested otherwise.

### **Participants' Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the project at any time;
- ask any questions about the project at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- be given access to a summary of the findings from the project when it is completed.

### **Project Contacts**

If you have any enquiries about this research project, including your willingness to participate in the interviews, please feel free to contact the researcher, Christine Pritchard, at [cp.pritchard@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cp.pritchard@xtra.co.nz), or 0274 981 039/ 06 7575095 during working hours. Further enquiries may also be addressed to the supervisors, Nick Zepke, at [N.Zepke@massey.ac.nz](mailto:N.Zepke@massey.ac.nz), or 06 356 9099 extn 8663 or Paul Goodson, at [paul.goodson@careerforce.org.nz](mailto:paul.goodson@careerforce.org.nz), 03 374 1331.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/08. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 extn 8729, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz).

## **APPENDIX C – Invitation to participate**

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. This research is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements for award of a PhD in Education from Massey University.

The topic I wish you to participate in is provisionally entitled “Changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching in the ITP sector”.

Massey University has approved this research project and ethics approval has also been granted.

My proposed fieldwork involves interviewing experienced teaching staff from four subject areas. These being: business, foundation studies, trades, and art and design. You are invited to participate in an interview of approximately 60 minutes which will focus on your conceptions of teaching and working in an ITP. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place suitable to you and may occur during working hours.

With agreement from your chief executive I have proposed to visit your ITP from the 17<sup>th</sup> until the 20<sup>th</sup> May to undertake the interviews.

A copy of the research information sheet is attached and contains details relating to this research. If you are interested in participating please contact me at [cp.pritchard@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cp.pritchard@xtra.co.nz).

Thank you for considering this request to participate in my project. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Christine Pritchard  
PhD student

**APPENDIX D – Participant consent form**

***Changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching in the ITP sector***

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the research project explained to me. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I agree to participate in this research project in accordance with the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name – printed**

.....

**APPENDIX E – Transcriber’s confidentiality agreement**

***Changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching in the ITP sector***

**TRANSCRIBER’S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

I ..... (full name – printed) agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

**Signature:**

.....

**Date:**

.....

**APPENDIX F – Authority for the release of transcripts**

***Changes to policy and practice that have the potential to enhance teaching in the ITP sector***

**AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this transcript may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name – printed**

.....



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