THIRD AGE

FÁILTE ISTEACH

School of Education
TCD
Evaluation of Fáilte Isteach Project

Final Report

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Introduction to the report: Setting the context and main findings

In 2006 the Third Age organisation set up their first Fáilte Isteach branch in Summerhill, Co, Meath. Since then it has grown into a nationwide network of 50 branches covering most parts of the Republic (see Figure 1). The aim of the project was to encourage older people to provide English language support to non-English speaking members of their own communities. However, this was also interlinked with the other key aim of attempting to foster a sense of belonging and intercultural exchange between different language communities based in Ireland. Although it has become somewhat of a cliché to say that Ireland has experienced a sizeable influx of people from abroad during the past 20 years, it is nonetheless an accurate one. The headline data offers interesting reading. There are' according to the Central Statistics Office (2012), 544,357 non-Irish nationals living and working in Ireland. This large and diverse group constitute 12% of the population and has grown by 320,096 since 2002. This group also constituted 15% or 268,180 of the Irish labour force; of which 67,646 people came from Poland, 19,753 from Lithuania, 10,782 from Latvia and 8,000 from India. The 2011 census also recorded 182 separate languages. Of the 363,929 people who stated they 'spoke a language other than Irish or English at home', the Polish language community constituted the largest group (113,404), followed by Lithuania (29,596), Russia (17,489) and Romania (16,185). The census also reported that 107,318 people lived in rural areas, 228,824 people in cities and 120,588 in towns; appendix 3 includes more detailed demographic data. It is against this backdrop of national and cultural diversity which has seen Fáilte Isteach develop and flourish.

The report that follows is an evaluation of the Fáilte Isteach project six years into its development. The project had grown in scope and scale since 2008 when it was launched nationally and at the behest of Third Age they wished at this juncture to consider 1), what had its impact been so far and 2), how might it develop in the future. In designing the study and in collaboration with Third Age we set out to consider the role and work of Fáilte Isteach in terms of three dimensions: 1) pedagogy 2) organisation & management and 3) social inclusion. The study was based around a mixed methods design and comprised of a survey to all tutors, interviews with tutors, organisers and staff from Third Age, as well as observations of a sample of centres and group interviews with students. The data was generated between May and September 2012.

Although we saw this study as being mainly an evaluation, it was also an opportunity to explore what has been a unique experiment in not only supporting second language learning, but of creating an environment in the Fáilte Isteach centres, which allows for a mutual understanding to emerge between participants, students and tutors. The majority of our findings would on the whole support this view. Although the project functions in a highly decentralised manner, that is most of the operational decision-making is made at individual centre level, most of them followed a similar pattern in the way in which they organised and undertook their work. Of the tutors and organisers, we found a level of dedication, care, and attention to practice around teaching and learning, which was of a high standard. This is made more impressive due to the fact that most centres are 1) only open for two hours a week and 2) mostly run and staffed by volunteers from their local communities whose remit is to 3), help students develop their conversational English. These three points are essential to bear in mind when reading this report. In terms of language learning, Fáilte Isteach is not intended to function as what traditionally might be seen as a language school. It was set up to support and develop students' capacities in spoken English, which would enable them to engage more competently and confidently in their local communities, whether in a familial, social or work context. However, issues around student assessment and progression, accreditation and training for tutors formed part of our questioning to try and get a sense of what the future of Fáilte Isteach may look like. Although the social dimension of Fáilte is very strong and a point, which was echoed by most participants in the study, the pedagogical dimension is also critical. How the parameters of this are framed, structured and undertaken is vital. It is essentially the 'glue' through which the project is held together. It is also the key motivating factor as to why tutors and students choose to participate. In this sense, the social dimension is spun and woven around the pedagogical dimension. Most of the centres are only open for two-hours a week and usually follow the school year. In short, this time-frame does circumscribe what can be achieved. More formal curricula, underpinned by summative and formative assessment strategies would struggle to operate in this context. Lastly, and most importantly is the voluntary nature of the project. There were in 2012, fifty centres, which incorporated 367 volunteer tutors and catered for approximately 1,800 students.[1] This equates to 984 hours a week (including organisers) or approximately 35,424 hours (between September and May), which are given freely by this group. If

[1] The number of students is a very approximate value based on the data supplied by 16 centre organisers to a short questionnaire.

volunteers were to be paid for their time, this would cost approximately between €19,680 and €46,100 per week or €708,480 and €1,659,614 a year.[2]

The key findings from the data

Pedagogical

- 37% of tutors said they held teaching qualifications
- 68% of tutors reported that they felt confident in assessing the learning needs of their students
- 88% of tutors said that they try to integrate the content of what they teach into the lives of their students
- 64% of tutors said that students should be supplied with a workbook to chart their progress
- 71% of tutors find the materials from Fáilte Isteach suitable for use with beginner students
- 71% of tutors said that there needs to be a greater diversity of material for tutors than is currently supplied by Fáilte Isteach
- 66% of tutors stated that their students learnt best through discussion with each other
- 71% of tutors reported that they usually bring in their own materials to use with students
- 87% of tutors said that they found that students learnt best when they are grouped by ability

Organisation & Management

- 67% of tutors said that they would like to receive more training than they currently get
- 78% of tutors suggested that experienced tutors should be encouraged to mentor new tutors

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[2] These costs are an estimate based on the average hourly rate for an ESOL qualified teacher (€20.00) and the hourly rate paid in a VEC type setting (€46.85) for a qualified teacher (Source TUI, 2013) over a 36 week period (September to May). The National Volunteer Development Agency have estimated that 465,550 hours which were provided by volunteers in 2012, would if they were paid at the average hourly rate of €21.96, amount to €10.2 million. Interestingly Donoghue (2001) estimated that in 1995 there were approximately 33,690 (FTE) volunteers working in the nonprofit sector in Ireland whose contribution would be worth €598 million.

- Organisers reported that they would like to receive training for their role
- Organisers of smaller centres would like to see some help being provided in terms of the financial aspects of running their centres
- Organisers would like to see more frequent contact with Third Age
- Organisers reported having a good relationship with Third Age
- 78% of tutors stated that it would be helpful if students committed themselves to attending on a regular basis
- 76% of tutors reported that their centres were well organized
- 54% said that students not be charged a fee for attending the centre
- 82% of tutors reported that their centre and facilities were appropriate for their work

Social Inclusion

Students reported that they attended Fáilte Isteach to:

- gain access to employment or to a "*better job*"
- be able to communicate more effectively with employers, fellow staff and customers
- become more independent and attend appointments alone
- not have to rely on family, friends or community translators to translate
- help their children succeed and assist their children through the Irish school system
- not be reliant on their children to '*interpret*' school notices and report cards
- support the school by becoming more involved as a parent
- help others within their communities or within the wider community
- be involved in education for its own sake

For the tutors:

- 96% of tutors reported that students enjoy coming to the Failtie Isteach centre
- 68% of tutors felt that their students are more part of the local community as a result of coming to the centre
- 69% of tutors said their students have made new friends from outside their own language community as a result of attending the centre
- 99% of tutors said that they enjoy interacting with people from different cultural groups

- 89% of tutors said that their students are more confident in their day-to-day activities (shopping, visiting the post office etc.)
- 94% of tutors volunteered because they saw it as a way of making their local comminuty more inclusive
- 90% of tutors thought that it was essential for anyone living and/or working in Ireland to be proficient in English

Figure 1: Location of Fáilte Isteach Centres as of 2012

2. Background Issues: Volunteering and second language learning

In this chapter we shall outline some of the key theoretical issues which have informed the study. We will begin with a brief overview of 'volunteering' which we shall discuss in the context of social capital. Next we shall consider the position of volunteering as an activity in Ireland. Lastly we shall provide a short review of the main dimensions of second language learning. However, due to the limitations of space, at best we can only 'signpost' some of the key ideas which we have used in the evaluation.

Volunteering: Some conceptual issues

Far from being a simple concept, 'volunteering' can take on a number of different meanings. As summarised by Ruddle and O'Connor (1993, p3), it is as an activity (either a combination or singularly) which is usually 1) non-compulsory, 2) non-professional, 3) unpaid and 4) carried out for the benefit of others or society. However, they go on to argue that these characteristics can be problematic; for example, informal care given to family members may be based a sense of obligation and not freely given. In the context of Fáilte Isteach, a sizable proportion of the volunteers who took part in the survey, hold teaching qualifications. Whilst not being paid for their professional expertise, they are undoubtedly drawing on their experience and training in undertaking the volunteering role. This lime of reasoning is similar to Wilson and Musick (1997), who echoing Tilley and Tilley (1994), argue that volunteering is a significant form of productive labour which is freely given outside of any contractual, familial or friendship obligations (Tilly and Tilly, p.291). Additionally, Wilson and Musick (1997) go on to suggest that volunteering is also a form of collective behaviour that requires social capital, that is relationships with other people 'including friendship networks and organizational memberships, [which] supply information, foster trust, make contacts, provide support, set guidelines, and create obligations' (p695). In addition, volunteering is also ethically guided work which requires cultural capital; that is socially differentiated values, attitudes, preferences and knowledge, which can be utilised in a volunteering context. To this we should add human capital, which refers to the specific technical skills and tools (e.g. literacy, numeracy, teaching and learning strategies etc.) brought to the volunteering role. In this sense 'capital' refers to a cluster of resources that volunteers possess which are of use and benefit to the organisation. But Wilson and Musick (1997) further add that volunteering, as well as being productive (that is it has an affect on others who are the recipients), also

has a consumption element to it. This is to say that the act of volunteering is seen as a symbolic act (an expression of the volunteers' values) from which volunteers derive a sense of personal and social well-being. We also need to be mindful of the distinction between formal and informal modes of volunteering (Donoghue, 2001; Williams, 2004). Formal volunteering is usually understood as occurring in the context of a prescribed organisation or project which with varying degrees of latitude, manages, regulates and co-ordinates activity.[3] However, volunteering can also take place in organisations such as hospitals, schools, and libraries, which are also formally defined, as workplaces (National Committee on Volunteering, 2002). In addition to this, a number of not-for-profit non-governmental organisations such as Third Age or trade unions are also employers in their own right They also have significant numbers of volunteer workers as part of their organisation and are essential for its operational integrity and sustainability. However, as van Tienen et al (2010) argues, informal volunteering is a form of activity which normally occurs outside of civic associations and organisations. It can take on a number of forms, but essentially it is seen as private activities in which time, either regularly or not, is given to other individuals or groups (Williams, 2004; CSO, 2009).

Within the literature, volunteering is seen as being a feature of social network theory, which in turn subsumes other key concepts such as social capital, which has been closely associated with volunteering. Put simply, social capital is concerned with what kinds of networks, reciprocal relationships and patterns of trust people, as well as groups have towards each other, along with the kinds of norms and values that underpin, as well separate groups and individuals. In posing the question of why social capital is important, the NSEF (2003) takes the position that it is 'crucial in community development and the functioning of a democratic, inclusive and cohesive society' (pv). These networks can take have both informal properties as shown in Breen and Reese's (2009) study on informal and non-formal learning situations for the development of active citizenship in Dublin's docklands. These networks can equally be of a more formal and overtly structured nature designed to be top-down interventions into communities. Fáilte Isteach is an interesting model, as it facilitates the development of non-formal modes of learning which are mostly controlled and organised at a local level. As a national

[3] For example the Irish National Volunteer Development Agency have produced a range of materials to this effect. It includes guidance on induction, role descriptions and regularizing volunteer-organisation relationships through a 'volunteer agreement'. The latter they define as 'the foundation of the working relationship between an organisation and its volunteers. A volunteer agreement clarifies the expectations of both parties in relation to length of time commitment, confidentiality, attendance at training, and adherence to the organisation's policies and procedures.'

organisation Third Age via Fáilte Isteach, also functions as an intervention into these communities, but one which is by 'invitation only' so to speak. A further linking concept common to the literature on volunteering is that of social capital.

David Putnam (2000) in his useful historical survey of social capital argues that its origin as a term can be found in the early 20th century. This he traces to the work of Lydia Hanifan. As proposed by Hanifan:

> I do not refer to real estate, or to personal property or to cold cash, but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible sub- stances count for most in the daily lives of a people, namely, good- will, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit, the rural community, whose logical center is the school. (Hanifan, 1916, p130)

Putman (2000) notes that what is useful about Hanifan's definition is these networks are not just an about instrumental exchange, such as the buying and selling of services and commodities, but are defined by sets of interactions which have an affective, emotional and intellectual effect which is 'directed towards the general improvement of community well-being'. In the 1950s Putnam argues that social capital was defined as being concerned with 'membership of clubs and associations in which he [sic] may cash, transfer or use as collateral' and in the 1970s the emphasis was placed upon 'the collective value of neighbourhood ties'. However, the most well know and well-used definition comes from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu [1930-2002] in 1979 [1985]. He argued that social capital is 'the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – to membership of a group.' As Portes (1998) observes across the literature, it appears that 'social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures'. (p6) However, Portes and Landolt (1996) have argued that social capital can also be a constraint upon individuals' actions and choices, as much as it can create opportunities. In Portes and Landolt's (1996) view, social capital has for policy makers in particular, become an overly optimistic concept. There is an assumption that once social capital is generated or reinforced, others forms of capital such as cultural (including educational attainment) and economic will flow from it. This position is also taken by James Coleman (1988) in that social capital can be seen as a gateway to human capital: education, training and workplace skills which in turn can be converted into occupational

mobility (Portes, 1998). The problem with Putnam's and Coleman's argument is that it misplaces and overextends the role of social capital as a factor in generating inclusion or social well-being. Putman takes the position that successful communities are successful because they exhibit high degrees of social capital, which can be used to benefit each member through networks of reciprocity. Portes and Landolt (1996) partially invert this logic and argue that it is precisely because they are successful, that they can form certain kinds of networks with each other, which reinforce an individual's position. As they further argue 'there is considerable social capital in ghetto areas, but the assets obtainable through it seldom allow participants to rise above their poverty'. In short, having social capital without either having access to or a stock of resources is in itself not sufficient.

This scepticism is echoed by Leonard (2004), who argues that social capital can also be used as a way of excluding others from access to resources. It can also be used as reference point by socio-politically dominant groups to reinforce the view of communities which appear to lack much in the way of social capital (contingent upon how it is measured) as being in some way 'deficient' and in need of intervention (Leonard, 2004). As noted by Portes and Landolt:

> For instance, the call for higher social capital as a solution to the problems of the inner city misdiagnoses the problem and can lead to both a waste of resources and new frustrations. It is not the lack of social capital, but the lack of objective economic resources - beginning with decent jobs - that underlies the plight of impoverished urban groups. (Portes and Landolt, 1996, p6)

This is not meant to be dismissive of social capital as a way of understanding how communities function, but we need to be very careful not to treat it as a romanticised ideal either and be aware of its less positive aspects both within and between communities. In offering his model, Portes (1998) instead suggests that we need to pay attention to the sources of social capital, which structures the relationship between people in a group or community and not just its affect. In short he sees is as being rooted in:

1) Bounded solidarity: the recognition by a group of individuals who share a similar position and find mutual support amongst each other. However, their sense of altruism is limited to the boundaries of the community and not extended beyond that.

2) Value introjection: the internalisation of norms such as ‘paying debts on time, obeying traffic rules’ or simply an ‘obligation to behave in this manner’. This makes for predictability and stability in knowing that one individual others will more or less behave in the same way as any other.
3) Reciprocity transaction: here individuals provide ‘privileged access to resources in the expectation that they will be fully re-paid in the future’. (p7)
4) Enforceable trust: The group is able to exert sanctions over a member who violates its norms. In this sense ‘trust exists in this situation precisely because obligations are enforceable, not through recourse to law or violence but through the power of the community. (p8)

Taken together, Portes argues that the end result of this is a form of social capital through which individuals have the ‘ability to secure benefits through membership in networks and other social structures’ (p8). McGrath (2010), in his study of 64 Brazilian immigrants in Gort, argues that amongst other things, the development of social capital within the non-Brazilian community is predicated on language competency:

> Communication functions in exploiting the stock of social capital through information exchange, problem/solution identification, behaviour regulation, and conflict management. In other words, to take advantage of social capital one must be able to negotiate and understand reasonably clearly the context of situations where social capital operates. (McGrath, 2010, p150)

More specifically Leonard (2004), as well as Coffee & Geys (2008) make the observation that much of the social capital literature can be conceptually decomposed into two further dimensions around ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’; both of which can be seen as significant in the realms of volunteering. The former is concerned with *building* links between different social groups. As argued by Paxton this is intended to cut across social boundaries and prevent ‘the creation of pockets of isolated trust and networks’ (Paxton, 1999). As he further remarks members of such networks ‘are more likely to come into contact with diverse others’. On the hand, bonding, as noted by Coffee and Geys (2008) is the formation and/or reinforcement of social ties within groups. In an earlier paper they argue that ‘association membership empowers individuals and develops their democratic values, generalized trust, cooperative norms, racial and religious tolerance, and so on. (Coffee and Geys, 2007, p387).

Whilst bonding can be good for the group in certain respects, it can also reinforce 'inward focused behaviour, reduce exposure to new social ideas and exacerbate existing social cleavages' (Paxton, 1999, p259). Bonding is seen as a 'dark side' of social networks in that it can reinforce patterns of exclusion between groups. However, Leonard (2004) also notes we need to be careful not to treat the internal social relations of groups as being equal, but be mindful of the internal dynamics of groups which may well reinforce oppressive and hierarchal relationships. As suggested by Paxton, that governments need to be mindful that policies designed to engineer and affect social capital, may produce different outcomes from what is intended. In short, state policy needs to be aware of bridging or bonding functions. Paxton (1999) in particular suggest that policies should influence the formation of bridging social capital; whether top-down or bottom-up. Woodcock & Narayan (2000) note that 'the basic idea of social capital, one's family and friends and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called on in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake and leveraged for material gain. What is true for individuals also holds for groups. Those communities endowed with a diverse stock of social networks and civic associations are in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability, resolve disputes and take advantage of new opportunities.'

A number of writers such as Martinez (2011) argue that we should view volunteering (formal and informal) as part of the much broader construct of 'active citizenship'. In following the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007, pp1-3), Breen and Rees (2009) note that this concept incorporates:

> the voluntary capacity of citizens and communities working directly together, or through elected representatives, to exercise economic, social and political power in pursuit of shared goals. It is important that the notion of active citizenship should not be confined to volunteering and informal social engagement but should also encompass political and civic engagement. (Breen and Rees, 2009, p14)

This expansive definition of active citizenship is captured less prosaically by the Taskforce as being:

> about engagement, participation in society and valuing contributions made by individuals, whether they are employed or outside the traditional workforce. In practical terms, this engagement and participation may mean membership of a resident's association or political party or lobby group, or volunteering to

> help out in a local sports club, or caring for a family member or neighbour, or simply being active and caring about the local neighbourhood, the environment as well as larger global and national issues. (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007, p2)

Volunteering in Ireland

There is a relatively small body of empirical research undertaken in Ireland around active citizenship more generally, and volunteering and the role and work of volunteers more specifically[4]. This has been undertaken by European Values Survey (1992-2008), Ruddle and O'Connor (1992), Ruddle, Mulvihill and O'Connor (1999), O'Donoghue (2001), Donnelly-Cox (2001), the National Committee on Volunteering (2002), National Social Economic Forum (2003), Healy (2005), the Taskforce for Active Citizenship (2007), Breen and Rees (2009) and Bailey (2009).[5] The general trend across this data is that volunteering is mediated by social class position, educational attainment, religion, gender and age. In short volunteers tend to come from socio-economic groups A, B and C, tend to be educated to leaving certificate and /or degree level and beyond. Participation in terms of gender and age are more contingent upon the kind of activity undertaken. Sport is predominantly a male activity, unlike participation in a religious organisation. Martial status is also a factor as well (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007). The Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007) also noted an upward trend in volunteering between their two surveys of 2002 and 2006: up from 17% to 21%. However, the census of 2006 records this as being 16%. The Social Community and Networks Report (CSO, 2009) found that 24% of their respondents participated in unpaid informal voluntary work. The report also noted that 'females reported marginally higher participation levels. . .and approximately one-third of persons in the age groups between 35 and 64 years were involved in voluntary and community groups compared with one-fifth of persons aged 25-34 years and a quarter of those aged 15-24 years. In terms of motivation, Ruddle and O'Connor (1993) found that of the 339 participants (or 39% of their sample) who reported being

[4] Also linked to this is the national policy dimension of volunteering which has been included in a number of reports: 'White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector' (Government of Ireland, 2000); 'Tipping the Balance: Report of the National Committee on Volunteering (NCV, 2002); 'Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship' (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007). These are useful documents as they tried to map out how the volunteer sector in Ireland should be structured.

[5] There is also Leonard (2004) on bridging and bonding in Northern Ireland and McGrath (2010) on the Brazilian community in Gort, County Galway and more generally Fanning (Eds) (2007) on immigration into Ireland. See also CPA (2001) for a commentary on volunteering and poverty reduction.

involved in a voluntary activity, ‘29% did so for altruistic reasons . . . 7% to be neighbourly . . . [and] 7% a sense of duty’. In a later survey Donoghue (2001), found in their sample the top four reasons given for volunteering were 43% of their sample said that they ‘believed in the cause’, 35% ‘was asked to help’, 32% ‘wanted to help’ and 30% ‘wanted to be neighbourly’.

The Central Statistics Office census of 2006 and their Social Community and Networks Report (CSO, 2009) also provide a useful point of reference. However, despite not collecting data on volunteering activity in the 2011 census (or even in prior ones), the 2006 returns do provide a useful snapshot of volunteering activity. In total the census returns for 2006 showed that ‘over 553,000 persons, representing 16.4 per cent of the population aged 15 and over, were involved in at least one of the five voluntary activity categories’ (CSO, 2007). Table 2.1 below shows a summary of this data by age and form of voluntary activity; this includes the totals for the Irish population as a reference point.

Table 2.1: Volunteering by Age (CSO Data, 2007)

Age Group	Irish Population	Social or charitable	Religious group or church	Sporting	Political or cultural	Any other voluntary activity
15-19	290,257	12,786	7,778	14,970	2,642	8,978
20-24	342,475	11,985	6,254	13,207	3,380	9,749
25-34	722,439	27,984	14,446	29,148	6,777	22,548
35-44	623,434	38,582	23,909	48,709	8,301	31,348
45-54	521,813	39,388	28,649	43,714	10,054	30,017
55-64	407,055	33,057	29,465	20,235	8,854	21,867
65 plus	467,926	2,8970	32,632	10,482	6,936	15,954
Total	3,375,399	192,752	143,133	180,465	46,944	140,461

From Table 2.1 is it noticeable that volunteering in a 'social or charitable' organisation is the most popular with 196,752 reporting that they engage in this form of activity; under which Fáilte Isteach would be classified. This category constituted 27% of all voluntary activity (or 5.7% of the population) and was in terms of gender, split between 41% males and 59% females. In relation to age it does appear to be a factor in terms of activity, as 47% of volunteers in this category are aged between 45 and 64 and 15% over the age of 65. This pattern in terms of age distribution is replicated across gender for this group as well. The next largest group, are the 180,465 people who said they volunteered within a sporting organisation and they make up 26% of all voluntary activities. The gender split here is 31% females and 69% males. The third largest cohort are those who reported that they volunteered within a 'religious group or church organisation'. The split in gender was 39% male and 61% female. There is also a skew towards the older age-range, with 23% of volunteers in this category of activity being recorded as 65 and above and 41% between 45 and 64 years of age. Table 2.2 below shows the distribution of volunteering activities by socio-economic class.

Table 2.2: Volunteering by Socio-economic Group (CSO, 2007)

Voluntary Act.	Total	Social or charitable organisation	Religious group or church	Sporting organisation	Political or cultural organisation	Any other voluntary activity	% of all voluntary activity
A. Employers and managers	458866	34013	20193	37262	7880	21735	21
B. Higher professional	185470	16443	12146	13802	4238	10764	25
C. Lower professional	354676	31549	25430	26231	7870	23656	26
D. Non-manual	650248	38044	26802	30815	7312	26261	16
E. Manual skilled	363020	12390	9300	19814	3326	11105	12
F. Semi-skilled	299008	13125	9926	13598	2987	10224	13
G. Unskilled	138302	4442	3644	4553	1331	3808	9
H. Own account workers	148453	8244	5937	9666	2148	6501	18
I. Farmers	147555	7776	8574	9226	3023	6770	18
J. Agricultural workers	24896	888	811	1067	290	804	12
Z. All others gainfully occupied and unknown	604905	25838	20370	14431	6539	18833	11
Totals	3375399	192752	143133	180465	46944	140461	

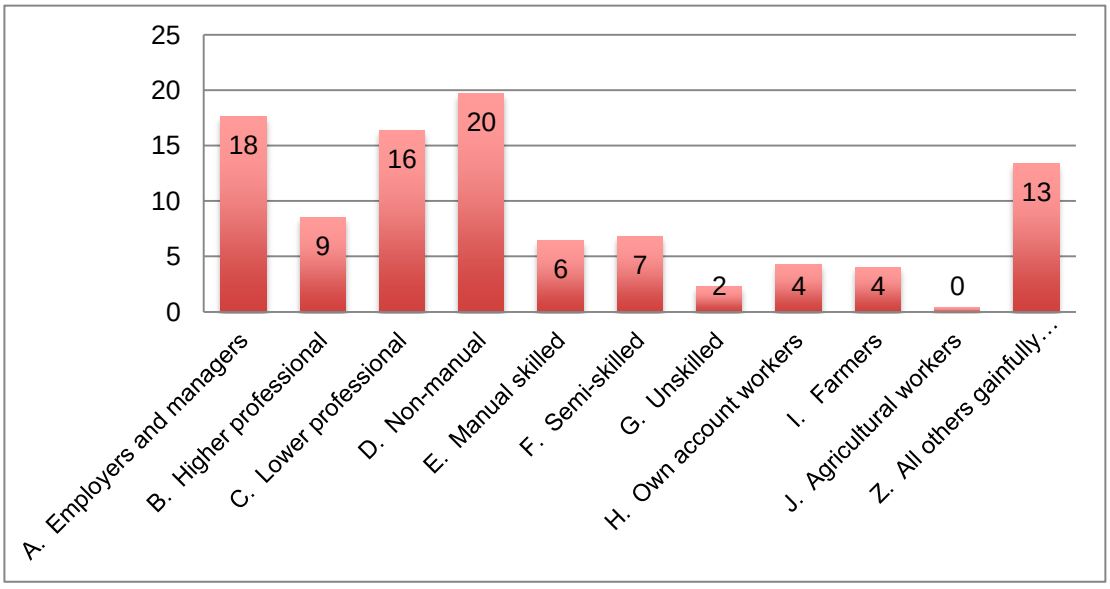
The highest levels of voluntary participation are in the ‘lower’ and ‘higher professional’ at 25% and 26% respectively. The groups with the lowest level of participation are the ‘unskilled’ (9%) and ‘agricultural workers (12%). What this data seems to suggest is that volunteering is an activity demarcated by socio-economic group, with the higher levels of participation for the ABC groups and the least form the FGJ, with the DHIs falling into the middle. This pattern is also approximated across the category of ‘gender’ though there are some interesting variations. There appears to be a slightly higher rate of participation for males than females in the first four SEG categories, whereas it is reversed for the last four SEG groups as can be seen in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: % of Volunteering Activity by Gender and SEG.

Socio-economic Group	% Male	% Female
A. Employers and managers	23	19
B. Higher professional	26	23
C. Lower professional	26	25
D. Non-manual	17	15
E. Manual skilled	12	13
F. Semi-skilled	13	13
G. Unskilled	9	10
H. Own account workers	17	19
I. Farmers	18	19
J. Agricultural workers	11	12
Z. All others gainfully occupied and unknown	10	11

In looking at the SEG of the volunteers in the category 'social and charitable organisations' (shown in the chart below), of the 192,752 who participate, 20% came from the 'non-manual' group, followed by the 'employers and managers' at 18%. The 'unskilled' (2%), 'own account workers' (4%), 'farmers' (4%) and agricultural workers (0.4%) participate the least in this category. Our focus on age, class and gender from the CSO data will provide a reference point for our discussion of the tutor survey data.

Chart 2.1: % Volunteering Activity by Socio-economic Group (CSO Data 2006)



Social Community and Networks Report (CSO, 2006) also provides a useful analysis based on other socio-demographic characteristics and 'showed that persons most and least likely to participate in voluntary and community group activities were':

- Those living in households with two adults and 1-3 children (34%), compared with persons living in lone parent households (20%) or those under 65 years of age living alone (21%).
- Persons living at their residence for 5 years or over (33%), compared with those who have resided at their current address for less than one year (16%).
- Those living in households in a rural area (35%), compared with those who live in urban areas (24%).
- Persons living in owner-occupied accommodation (33%), compared with those in rented accommodation (15%).
- Respondents with a primary education or below had significantly lower levels of participation in voluntary and community groups (21%), compared with other higher levels of education, all of which showed no significant differences between each other in terms of participation.
- Those who had a Principal Economic Status (PES) of unemployed had far lower rates of participation in community activities (16%), compared with those in employment and those not economically active (both 29%).
- Persons living in the Dublin region had the lowest level of involvement in community groups (21%), compared with rates of 27-36% in other regions. (CSO, 2009, p9)

Second language learning

The successful teaching of English is a core component of Fáilte Isteach's purpose. The main barrier identified for many migrants is a lack of language skills (Vasta, 2004). Many minority ethnics come to Ireland with no, or limited, English language proficiency. Poor English spans the different education levels of migrants but is a particular barrier for older migrants who did not have the opportunity to learn English at school, college or university (Connolly and Keenan, 2002; Jarman, 2005). English language skills support integration and community cohesion. Parents who are literate in English are able to support their children's learning at school and interact with the teaching staff. Not being able to speak and understand their children's teacher is a major issue for many migrants.

A lack of English language skills can restrict access to services and can result in the segregation of communities. English language skills are required to operate and play a full part in society - from correctly accessing health services and local authority services to interacting with neighbours. Another important factor worth noting in relation to language teaching and learning is that the Department of Justice and Equality envisage the introduction of a language test which will form an essential part of the integration process for immigrants:

> Completion of work on the development of an English language/civics test for naturalisation applicants. Such tests are a standard part of the naturalisation process in many countries worldwide; the ability to speak the language – even at a most basic level - together with some knowledge of the way business is conducted in Ireland is an essential part of the integration process for immigrants and must form an integral part of eligibility for naturalisation. (Department of Justice and Equality, 2011)

Poor English language proficiency is also one of the biggest barriers to accessing work, to progress in employment or to fulfilling individual potential. Canadian research shows that "*while finding suitable employment ranked as the most critical task facing the newcomer, success in doing so was largely contingent upon second language skills*" (d'Anglejan *et al*., 1986, 185). Employment opportunities for adult migrants who lack speaking proficiency may be limited to those that entail no public contact and thus do not require spoken English skills, such as assembly line work, construction, or manual labour in agriculture. Others find jobs in dishwashing, janitorial services, and housekeeping - positions that Burt (1995, 2) called "*back-of-the-house jobs*" in the public service sector. Even immigrants who have had professional or vocational training in their own countries may be seen as lacking employability skills if their spoken English is weak where employability skills are defined as "*transferable core skill groups that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the 21st century workplace*" (Overtoom, 2000, 1). The ability to speak English is certainly one such enabling skill.

Adult learners of English may wish to participate in English-based vocational training or literacy programmes. They may want to complete their secondary education or may aspire to pursue higher education studies. Whatever their goals, adults whose English is inadequate relative to prevailing norms and standards have few opportunities for educational advancement in their host country.

Finally, there is a less obvious but perhaps more pervasive result of adult migrants' limited English-speaking abilities. Initial perceptions of individuals are often based on very brief speech samples. Sociolinguistic research - the descriptive study of the effect of all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society - has consistently shown that people's accents and speech patterns influence others' perceptions of the speakers' intelligence, trustworthiness and social status (Fasold, 1984). For instance, Zuengler (1988) found that the pronunciation of English vowels by Mexican speakers of Spanish led to stereotypical evaluations of those speakers by Americans.

Acquiring literacy in a second language

There are many differences between second and first language acquisition, including the following:

- Unless it begins in early childhood, second language acquisition is not part of the learner's primary cognitive development.
- In most cases learners have much less time for second language acquisition than they had for first language acquisition.
- The later second language acquisition begins, the more it is a necessarily conscious and intentional process.
- The later second language acquisition begins, the more it is influenced by conscious motivational factors.
- Learning a second language entails the interaction of language, culture, affective factors and cognition "*because learning is an active, dynamic process* [...] *second-language acquisition will occur most effectively with a high degree of learner involvement*" (O'Malley & Chamot 1993, 97).

Within the field of adult education, literacy is defined as the ability to read, write and speak English proficiently, to compute and solve problems, and to use technology in order to become a life-long learner and to be effective in the family, in the workplace and in the community (Geddes & Grossett, 1999). Within an Irish context, NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) provides an excellent working definition:

> NALA defines literacy as the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and numeracy. It also encompasses aspects of personal development – social, economic, emotional and is concerned with improving self-esteem

> and building confidence. It goes far beyond mere technical skills of communication. The underlying aim of good literacy practice is to enable people to understand and reflect critically on their life circumstances with a view to exploring new possibilities and initiating constructive change (NALA, 2001:1).

The ability to read, to write, to understand and to be understood is critical to personal freedom and to the broader goals of economic opportunity, social justice, human dignity and personal well-being. Researchers use the term "*Functional Literacy*" to address the use of language as a practical activity for the purpose of successfully responding to practical tasks in one's daily life[6]. Definitions are usually explicit about the contexts of literate activity. The UNESCO definition, for instance, states "*A person is literate when she/he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him/her to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his/her group or community*" (de Castell, Luke and MacLennan, 1986, 32).

Adults and second language acquisition

Along with varying educational backgrounds and ideas about language learning, adults possess other significant characteristics that impact upon their language learning and that make them different from a young child who is acquiring or learning a language. Learning to speak another language can take a person a long period of time. Depending on the learner's abilities and socio-cultural background, this process can take anywhere from two to ten years (Kouritzin, 2000). There are many linguistic, psychological and even physical factors (such as age) which may affect how successful a person will be in learning the language. Moreover, there are other factors that the language learner cannot control at all such as the negative attitudes that native speakers have towards non-native speakers, access to appropriate language classes and the language learning context(s) which can influence the success/failure of the learner.

[6] Many definitions of functional literacy leave unanswered such philosophical questions as how and by whom successful operation shall be determined. Instead, functionalism frequently carries covert expectations about the importance of certain abilities over other ones. Many definitions hold that literacy is a basic set of abilities necessary to functioning in life but they do not explain what is included in this set of abilities, nor what it means to 'function' in life.

Second language acquisition research demonstrates that there are many factors involved that can either enhance or hinder the process of acquisition of a second language. A constellation of factors has been identified including age, the influence of first language(s) proficiency on learning the second language, student motivation, self-esteem and identity, cultural aspects and learner attitudes, socioeconomic backgrounds, cognitive factors such as learner aptitude, as well as previous schooling (Fidler, 2006; Furtado, 1996). Other internal and external factors such as educational background and anxiety about learning a language may also impact the ability of adults to acquire a language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Marian *et al*. (2007) cite factors such as environment, family literacy, self-consciousness and cultural identity as exerting an influence on second-language acquisition while Ellis (1984) highlighted factors such as personality and learning style. The interwoven contexts that surround a language learner (aspects of past educational experiences, social and family networks, worries and joys, and in the case of the participants in this study, the experience of migration and resettlement) may also affect the extent and effectiveness of language learning (Cole 1996).

Learners' socioeconomic backgrounds

Second language acquisition researchers have identified socioeconomic variables as predictors of success in second-language learning. Exposure to the target language is a strong determinant of language acquisition (Brown, 2007; Ellis, 1984; Ellis and Collins, 2009; Marian *et al*., 2007; Pearson, 2007). Pearson (2007) discusses five factors influencing language acquisition: input, status of language, access to literacy, family language use and support from community and posits that the quantity of input is heavily influenced by family and communities. Pearson contends that an adequate amount of exposure was crucial during the early stages of language acquisition when grammatical structures were being internalised. The socioeconomic factor is highlighted because of the reduced opportunities for reading, the limited exposure to print and the lack of models of spoken language available so that students from impoverished homes had lower levels of reading-readiness and continued difficulties with reading than children from affluent backgrounds (Roberts, Mohammed, & Vaugh, 2010)[7]. The lower the learner's

7 While most of the research in this field relates to the development and education of schoolchildren anecdotal evidence from the field of adult literacy can attest to its pertinence when discussing adult language learning. One of the authors is an adult literacy and numeracy tutor of 18 years standing.

socioeconomic status, the slower was the rate of learning (Hakuta *et al*., 2000). Bailey and Symons (2001) opined that the limited learning opportunities available to children coming from impoverished homes delayed development and set them up for academic failure. According to Haneda (2008), learning of any kind involved increasing participation in a community of practice. Song (2006) found immigrant students enrolled in an ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) class failed the course, in part, due to poor reading and writing habits and their limited use of English outside the classroom, but also due to familial responsibilities imposed on them because of their socioeconomic conditions. As an example of this California's low educational achievement scores were attributed to the fact a large number of students spoke little English and came from poverty-stricken families (Gunderson, 2008), the poor physical and psychological conditions diminishing motivation and impeding learning (Jimenez & Rose, 2008). Kieffer (2008) wrote that the common characteristics associated with language minority children's reading difficulties and low achievement were the low income of families and the poverty-ridden conditions of the schools in question.

Adult learners, teachers and communication

Adult language learners, as they step into the second language classroom, are influenced by a variety of external and internal factors that help or hinder their acquisition of a second language. Second language acquisition research recognises that in the context of language development, it is the educational context that shapes language policy, language planning, and most importantly, the learning opportunities available to the language learner (Kumaravadivelu, 2008) since effective teaching and learning depends on the student, the teacher, the learning environment and the curriculum (Korkmaz, 2007).

Dealing with adult students is incomparably different from teaching young learners mainly due to their developed intellectual and discipline abilities. They have a whole range of life experiences to draw on which makes the learning process easier for them in some ways and also enables the language teacher to use many varied activities within the lessons. Given that their goal is to learn English adults work to try to achieve it no matter how much effort they have to invest. They are able to sustain a certain level of motivation by pursuing their goal for a longer period of time than most young learners. They also have certain expectations about the learning process and recognise the amount of work required to attain said goals. Moreover, in many cases, adult students have already determined a set of learning strategies upon which they can call and are usually able to

distinguish which strategy is more beneficial to them. Recognising the appropriate learning strategy for oneself is a very important step in an adult's lifelong learning process. Some adult students may find visual learning very effective while others may achieve more by listening to recordings.

Language teachers should bear all these adult characteristics in mind and provide them not only with knowledge about the language such as grammar but also involve students themselves in teaching through a communicative approach. Perhaps the most accepted instructional framework in adult ESOL education is communicative language teaching (CLT) (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003). The goal of CLT is to increase communicative competence, which means being able to understand and interpret messages, understand the social contexts in which language is being used, apply the rules of grammar, and employ strategies to keep communication from breaking down (Ellis, 1999; Pica, 2003; Savignon, 1997). With CLT, instructional emphasis shifted from grammar translation, memorisation of dialogues and drills and practice of structural patterns to using language in real-life contexts for meaningful purposes (Savignon, 2001). CLT demands authentic use of language, which means people interacting with other people since conversation is socially constructed. The primary principle underlying CLT is that language learners need opportunities to use the language in authentic conversations. After all, daily life requires people to communicate in a wide range of contexts for many diverse purposes.

> Communicative language teaching is based on the view that learning a language means learning how to communicate effectively in the world outside the classroom. (Lindsay, 2006:20)

Communicative language teaching is widely used in language teaching all over the world. It has shifted the focus from learning *about* the language to learning to communicate *in* a foreign language.

3. Methodology for the study

Introduction

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the methodology we employed during the study. Although the study is ostensibly an evaluation of Fáilte Isteach, in which we set out to generate data to draw conclusions about the professed aims of the project, it was also exploratory. The Fáilte Isteach project represents a unique intervention into Irish communities. From our initial 'reconnaissance conversations' with Third Age and organisers, it was apparent that Fáilte Isteach has a strong grassroots orientation. It was our intention in the study to try and capture this dimension of the work of tutors, students and organisers. The aims are based on what would be considered to be good practice in a study of this nature, as well the discussions we have had with representatives of Fáilte Isteach and documentation provided. In short the aims we adopted for the study were the outcome of negotiations with Fáilte Isteach. From the outset we took a view that are far as possible we would adopt a collaborative relationship with Fáilte Isteach concerning most facets of the design. The experience and advice proffered by Fáilte Isteach was we would argue an advantage in constructing and implementing the design. However, we were conscious that the study was intended to be a critical and independent evaluation, so we were clear as to the boundaries between Third Age and us in the implementation of the study.

The research design we adopted was based around a fairly orthodox mixed methods approach. This involved the use of 1) one-to-one interviews (telephone and face-to-face), 2) focus groups, 3) observations, 4) document analysis and 5) questionnaires. In terms of the sample, we attempted to be as comprehensive as possible in terms of both scale and scope; that is, we aimed to involve as many different types of participants (e.g. students, centre organisers, tutors, Fáilte Isteach organisers) as possible in order to be as extensive as we could be. Our intention was to generate a dataset which would capture, as far as this is feasible, a range of voices inclusive of the Fáilte Isteach project.

Aims of the study

As stated in Chapter One, the evaluation of the project was based around three core areas:

1. Pedagogical
2. Organisation & Management
3. Social inclusion

These areas were broken down into more specific objectives, which we used to guide the framing of our data generation and subsequent analysis. They are set out as a series of relatively open-ended questions, as it was important to try and capture and map the diversity of practice within Fáilte Isteach.

Pedagogical

1. How is teaching and learning conceptualised by students and tutors?
2. What are the expected outcomes as perceived by students and tutors of their teaching and learning sessions?
3. How do tutors assess and plan for the needs of the student?
4. How are tutors' pedagogical needs supported by the centre?
5. How is student attainment 'measured'?
6. What types and forms of substantive content are used by tutors?
7. How do tutors learn the role of the tutor?
8. What do they understand by the role of the tutor?
9. What do they see as the boundaries of the role?
10. What kind of supports (for example teaching and learning materials, training, sharing of good practice etc.) do tutors see as being needed to develop their role?

Organisation & Management

1. How do centres organise teaching and learning sessions? (e.g. timetables, programmes of study, study groups, supply of teaching materials etc.)
2. What affect does the location of the centre have on the organisation & management of the centre?
3. What is the role of centre co-ordinator and how is it undertaken?
4. How is funding currently organised?
5. What recruitment strategies (for students and tutors) does a centre employ?
6. How are the aims & objectives of Fáilte Isteach communicated to the local community?
7. What strategies do centres employ to support student retention and persistence?
8. How is the work of tutors co-ordinated by the centre?
9. What are seen as the issues around the sustainability of a centre?

10. What are the extent of the relationships with local partnerships and other organisations; how are these managed and how do they impact on the work of the centre?
11. What strategies are in place to support the role of the tutor?
12. What is the relationship between a centre and 'head office'?
13. What kinds of linkages and relationships exist between centres?

Social Inclusion

1. What are the socio-cultural backgrounds of the tutors?
2. What are the socio-cultural backgrounds of the students?
3. To what extent do students participate in local community activities (e.g. GAA clubs, youth groups etc) and to what extent has this been facilitated by or initiated via Fáilte Isteach?
4. To what extent does student involvement in Fáilte Isteach support their engagement with formal governmental and non-governmental agencies & bodies e.g. local schools, employers, employment agencies?
5. To what extent does student involvement in Fáilte Isteach foster new friendship patterns?
6. To what extent has student involvement with Fáilte Isteach facilitated further learning opportunities e.g. FETAC or HETAC programmes?
7. To what extent do students act as 'recruiters' for new students?
8. What are the motivations and perceived benefits for Fáilte Isteach tutors?

Sample selection and sampling

The sampling frame for the tutors, organisers and centres was built around information provided to us by Fáilte Isteach. At the time of the fieldwork (between May and September 2012), Fáilte Isteach held information on 367 tutors,[8] there were also 50 centres in operation which were dispersed across most counties in the Republic (see chapter one for location map). The sample of tutors who took part in the face-to-face interviews was generated in two ways. Firstly, a random sample of 30 people was taken from the tutor sampling frame. These individuals were then subsequently contacted in the first instance via our research administrator inviting them to participate in the study. Secondly, we asked for volunteers via the questionnaire, from this group a sample of 20 were randomly selected. It should be noted that a further set of 37 informal interviews were undertaken during the visits to the centres. In total this gave us a tutor interview data set of 69 interviews to draw upon as part of the analysis. The centre organisers who were invited to participate in the study, were also selected at random from a list again provided to us by Fáilte Isteach. This group constituted

[8] This data is passed on to Fáilte Isteach via the centre organisers.

For the questionnaire we considered that the most effective strategy was to undertake a census, rather than generate a sample, as the population of tutors was relatively small. For the administration of questionnaire, we had to take a two-pronged approach due to the kind of contact information which was provided to us by Fáilte Isteach. Our original intention was to undertake an electronic survey of all tutors. However, only 238 of the sampling frame had provided Fáilte Isteach with individual email addresses (though ten were non-functioning) and 98 only gave postal addresses. 30 people had only supplied Fáilte Isteach with phone numbers and so were excluded from the survey, leaving us with a final sample of 328 tutors.

Additionally a number of visits (n=14) were made to different centres around Ireland between May and September. The selection of the centres was based on two main considerations 1) geographical location and 2) length of time in operation. The former criteria is a fairly obvious one, as it allowed us to gain an insight into how Fáilte Isteach was operating in different local contexts. The second criteria, we used was based on advice from Fáilte Isteach. The logic here was to sample centres based on how long they had been in operation as well as their location as this may provide us with insights into how centres developed over time.

Design and application of the research tools

The questionnaire

The design of the tutor questionnaire (a copy of which can be found in appendix 1), was based on an eclectic mix of ideas from the literature, the aims of evaluation, our own experience of being adult and second-language educators, discussions with Fáilte Isteach and the tutors themselves from what was emerging from the interviews and the centre visits. We were anxious that the questionnaire, whilst covering a number of conceptual propositions we were keen to explore, also reflected the context in which the tutors were working.

The questionnaire went through a number of iterations in terms of the fine-grained content, but in relation to the broad areas, it remained the same from our initial planning. The five areas we identified were:

- Volunteering and motivation for being an Fáilte Isteach tutor
- Approaches to working with students
- Impact of Fáilte Isteach on students

- The organisation of the centre and Fáilte Isteach more generally
- Biographical information

The data from the questionnaire was generated around the above five sections, each of which contained a number of Likert type response sets. We also included space for six open-ended questions about their work as a tutor and for people to register their interest in being interviewed. The questionnaire was piloted twice with a small number (n=6) tutors as well as colleagues in the School of Education TCD. Some minor changes were made to a few of the statements that seemed to duplicate content and also to increase clarity in relation to grammar and syntax. To ensure complete continuity, the final questionnaire, both in the electronic and paper versions were identical in content and use of response sets. So too were the content of the 'invitation to participate letters' (a copy can be found in appendix 1), which were sent out with the paper copy of the questionnaire and the email to those whom we invited to participate via a universal resource locator (url) to the Survey Monkey website. Both questionnaires were distributed during July 2012.

The Interviews

The design of the interview schedule (a copy of which can be found in appendix 2), was underpinned by the same approach as the questionnaires, that is a bricolage of ideas drawn from a range of sources, which would illuminate the work of the Fáilte Isteach tutors. The content of the schedule, which predated the questionnaire, covered areas such as motivation for volunteering, recruitment and training as an Fáilte Isteach tutor, the various dimensions of their teaching, the perceived impact of their work and future developments of the programme. The interview schedule was piloted before being 'taken on the road' so to speak, but was also subject to a number of minor adjustments as new ideas emerged from the initial interviews. For instance, some additional questions we added to the schedule quite early on during the interview process, asked tutors about the physical environment of the centre as a place to undertake their work, whilst another concerned the fluidity of student attendance as this emerged as an issue for tutors during the first few interviews.

The interviews where undertaken in two contexts: 1) telephone or face-to-face interviews in TCD and 2), in-situ during the centre visits. The 32 TCD interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes and were apart from one, digitally recorded. The interviews in the centres were also recorded but tended to be of a shorter duration. They were also undertaken in

two phases, the first being during May to July and the second in September 2012. A similar approach was taken to interviewing the 12 centre organisers i.e. a mix of face-to-face and telephone. The interview schedule for this group of participants was generated from what we had learnt from the tutors, discussions with Fáilte Isteach and a two-hour 'reconnaissance' interview with two experienced organisers in early May, as we were attempting to get an understanding of how the project worked in practice before designing the research tools.

The Centre Visits

In total, 14 centres were visited with one centre being visited on two occasions. The initial evaluation of 11 centres was carried out over a four-week period in May 2012 where interviews were conducted with 10 coordinators and 37 tutors. In five centres small focus groups were conducted with 18 student participants. As mentioned above, the centres were chosen as randomly as possible but efforts were made to reflect the geographical distribution of centres nationwide. As well as observing classroom practice, these visits also afforded the opportunity to collect teaching and learning artefacts such as examples of teaching materials from Fáilte Isteach, other teaching materials (for example, an *English for Polish Learners* booklet) and examples of students' work. This initial evaluation also permitted one of the researchers to attend a national seminar for coordinators. Further contact by email and telephone was made during the same period with 17 other coordinators.

In September 2012, three centres were visited with a view to conducting more structured focus groups with students. Focus groups are a most effective means for getting information from participants (Gubrium, 2002) as they are a useful method for sustaining discussion especially when the participants are personally interested in the topic while permitting access on the part of the researcher to a larger and more diverse group by talking to several people at the same time.

The samples for our focus groups were decided in a purposive manner. We felt this was especially important because we did not want our sampling to be skewed toward one particular set of students (Baker, 2002). We did, however, consider it important to group the students by English proficiency as we believed that students with a low level of English proficiency would be unlikely to talk if the rest of the group was much better at English. In all, 43 students participated in these focus groups.

Data analysis

The analysis of the numerical i.e. questionnaire data was undertaken using the statistical software SPSS. Whereas Survey Monkey allows for the data to be imported directly into SPSS via their website, the paper-based version requires this to be done manually. After screening for any coding and data entry errors, the final data set was explored using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. As with the handling of any numerical data, it went through a number of analytical iterations. This was done to ensure that the data was considered from a number of conceptual viewpoints and that different patterns could be explored and critiqued. The interview data was analysed using techniques common to working with this form of data. This is a two-step process: firstly, the digital recordings are transcribed as completely as possible and checked for veracity vis-à-vis the recordings. Secondly, this raw text forms the basis of the material from which we begin our analysis. Each transcript is read using a technique known as open-coding, whereby participants' responses are placed into a number of analytical categories. The categories then form the basis of the next stage of the analysis, whereby they are used to explore patterns of similarity and dissimilarity which are emerging from the data. Again, this is undertaken with reference to the research questions and forms the basis of the structure of the discussion of the findings in the next chapter.

4. Findings part 1: tutors, students and organisers

Introduction

As outlined in the methodology, this study used both qualitative and quantitative methods incorporating observations, face-to-face and telephone interviews, focus groups, document analysis, follow-up emails and telephone calls, and questionnaires[9]. The purpose of this and the subsequent chapter is to report on the findings which have emerged from the data. As also outlined we applied standard numerical techniques to the questionnaire data and what would be viewed as standard qualitative analysis methods were used to allow a meaningful description and interpretation of the data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Student and tutor responses and writings were labelled and listed using specific descriptive phrases and then clustered into broader ideational categories or thematic units (Corbin, 1998). The categorisation of descriptive phrases followed the guidelines of explicitness and "*best fit*" suggested by Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, 261). The ideational categories for both the student and tutor data were then organised according to a framework of three dimensions: motivations for attending Fáilte Isteach classes; the learning/teaching experience (including materials and assessment); and suggestions for improvement. The tutor data further suggested a fourth thematic unit of the relationship(s) with the coordinator and with Fáilte Isteach. Qualitative studies typically use quotations in reports to illustrate themes, interpretative logic and conclusions. During this evaluation participants agreed that their words could be used in the report but that they would not be identified by name. The findings below will examine the students' responses and those of the tutors in turn.

Overview of the student participants

The students interviewed for this study – who broke down on gender lines of 58% female and 42% male - differ widely in age, background, nationality, L1 language ability, length of time studying English as an L2, job experience, educational background, and reasons for attending Fáilte Isteach classes. Their age ranged from 16-64 but the majority (71%) were in the age category 25-34 and they constituted 37 nationalities. Most were literate in their L1 (93%) but some were semi/non-literate while one student was preliterate (a learner who speaks a language that has no written form). 67% of participants had been

[9] All interviews with students, whether individual or focus group, were conducted in English.

learning English for between 1-2 years with 15% having spent less time and the remaining 18% having spent longer. Their previous and current work backgrounds ran the gamut from manual and unskilled labour to post-graduate ICT professional. Equally, their educational backgrounds varied greatly from early primary school to post-graduate (with one student already awarded a doctorate and another pursuing doctoral studies).

Motivations for attending Fáilte Isteach classes

Adult ESOL learning is motivated by both internal and external factors. Most adults learn in order to address specific needs in their lives. Given the diversity of the student population in this study it is not surprising that students have varying reasons for attending Fáilte Isteach classes and their goals may change over the course of this attendance as the classes are often a precursor to further training and employment.

In analysing a large corpus of adult ESOL data, Merrifield (2000) suggested four macro goals for adult ESOL learners in the United States:

- To gain access to information and resources so that adults can orient themselves in the world.
- To express ideas and opinions with the confidence they will be heard and taken into account.
- To solve problems and make decisions without having to rely on others to mediate the world for them.
- Learning to learn so that adults can be prepared to keep up with the world as it changes. (p.23)

On their website, Fáilte Isteach suggests that students attend for the following reasons:

- To improve their English comprehension, and their speaking and writing skills.
- To access assistance with form filling, writing CVs and drafting letters.
- To increase their opportunities to gain employment.
- To make day to day tasks, such as shopping, banking, general interacting with the community, less stressful
- To meet new people and make new friends within the project itself, and in the wider community[10]

The student data from this present study are in accordance with Fáilte Isteach's findings above and suggest that students attend for the following reasons:

- To better understand the Irish system

10 http://www.thirdageireland.ie/what-we-do/68/why-people-attend-failte-isteach-classes.html Accessed 30/12/2012.

- To talk to authority figures, obtain ongoing social services and/or explain a problem (e.g. traffic accident, medical visit, etc.)
- To gain access to employment or to a "*better job*"
- To be able to communicate more effectively with employers, fellow staff and customers
- To become more independent and attend appointments alone
- To not have to rely on family, friends or community translators to translate
- To help their children succeed and assist their children through the Irish school system
- To not be reliant on their children to '*interpret*' school notices and report cards
- To support the school by becoming more involved as a parent
- To give something back to the community
- To help others within their communities or within the wider community
- To be involved in education for its own sake
- To ameliorate perceived employment and language skill deficits
- To do something worthwhile for oneself and attain some respect (both self-respect and that of others/the community) thus boosting self-esteem
- As a first step on the "*path to citizenship*."

From the data we can see that students placed great emphasis on the need to access information and resources which were denied them through their English language deficits. For example, the needs of newly arrived migrants often include obtaining services such as housing, welfare support/employment, education for children and medical care. They must also develop the language skills to find work and subsequently carry out the responsibilities of their employment. All of these access-oriented needs require spoken English.

Language training programmes for migrants are often a primary means of accessing information about settlement in their country of residence and as a means to social integration. In addition to the instrumental utility of such programmes they are also an invaluable means of building social networks and social support so as to limit the isolation and the challenges of adapting to a new country and culture. Many migrants experience multiple losses as a result of migration; for example, loss of status, family members, friends, and a sense of place. Within this study, students experienced isolation

due to unfamiliarity with the English language and the dominant Irish culture. Language training programmes can play a part in restoring and renewing social supports (Taylor, Taylor-Henley and Doan, 2005). In addition to improving language skills, the Fáilte Isteach classes address social and psychological needs and build "*social literacy*" - that is, familiarity and comfort with social interactions in the dominant culture (Taylor, Taylor-Henley and Doan, 2005). Adult education is a social process (Lindeman, 1961) and therefore does not occur in a vacuum but is shaped by the context, culture and tools in the learning situation (Merriam, 2001; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). According to the students these Fáilte Isteach classes foster the development of social networks and friendships and provide opportunities for them to volunteer and become active in the mainstream community. Thus they, the students, are facilitated in socialising outside their families and ethno-cultural groups.

Students expect that, through the Fáilte Isteach classes, they would be enabled to break their isolation and to become more socially engaged. Numerous social needs for spoken English include adult language learners being able to communicate with their employers and neighbours in mixed-language environments, deal with their children's teachers and other school authorities, obtain on-going social services and medical care, advocate for their own rights and those of their children, and participate in political and recreational activities in the community thus boosting their self-esteem. Solidarity and the building of alliances are important elements of the adult education tradition in general but are more pertinent in the case of ESOL students given the importance accorded to the English language within the dominant society.

Poor English literacy and language skills are associated in the minds of these students with low income, unemployment, financial dependence on others and the need for financial assistance and welfare. In contrast, their responses suggest that once they acquire good English language skills – though this may take some years – they will have the ability to find employment, earn a salary, reduce their experience of poverty, become independent from the State and others, and generally improve their life-style. Some students also need ongoing education such as vocational training or further literacy programmes. They may want to complete their secondary education or may aspire to pursue higher education. Whatever their goals, these adults feel that those whose English is inadequate have few opportunities for educational advancement in this country.

The students see the acquisition of English as being a tool which can help improve their circumstances through becoming more independent, less vulnerable and more successful within their careers and as citizens thus improving their social capital. The concept of social capital often appears in adult and ESOL education literature and mostly draws from Putnam's theory (e.g. DeKeyser, 2001; Johnston, 2003; Mayo, 2000; Merrifield, 2002). Putnam (2000, 19) defines social capital as the "*social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them*." In other words, social capital for Putnam (1995, 67) represents the "*features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit*."

Educational needs are usually for self-enhancement, job improvement or increased opportunities but may also fulfil internal needs of self-fulfilment, esteem, and self actualisation (Cross, 1981; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). Theorists in adult education and SLA pedagogy note that ESOL classes have the capacity to empower migrants, as well as increase their social networks and, therefore, their social capital (Fitzgerald, 2000; Orem, 2001). In the Fáilte Isteach classes, most of which take place in community-based settings, the social aspects of the classes appear to have the same importance as the linguistic ones. The students point out, however, that English skills are not neglected but that the integration of real-life issues and contexts identified by the learners themselves means that these classes have the potential to transform, engage, and improve their lives.

From classroom observation in the 14 centres visited, it was noted that the students were active agents in wanting to learn English and to find out about life in Ireland. No one was forced to be in class. They attended because of their own initiative in order to satisfy their individual reasons for being there. Researchers such as van Lier (2008, 169-170) define this self '*initiative*' and '*self-regulation*' as '*agency*.' Within the field of acquiring a second language, agency is crucial at the point where individuals must move beyond the mere memorisation of new words and expressions with a view to initiating a longer, more exhaustive, and for some, never-ending process of "*adjusting one's sense of self and creating new identities to connect the known to the new*" (van Lier, 2008, 177).

The students' learning experience

From Chapter 2 it is clear that learning a second language as an adult is a complex process involving aspects of returning to learning that are common to all adult learning

contexts but include others that are specific to SLA. For example, whereas children have to learn how to learn, adults have to find the already existing cognitive pegs on which to hang new linguistic knowledge. As Ward (2002, 18) points out:

> The majority of adult learners within a language class have sophisticated life and literacy skills; they are able to transfer their own knowledge and abilities from one context to another (for example, from their country of origin to the host country). In order to communicate in the target language, a language learner needs: English language vocabulary, grammatical patterns, sociolinguistic features and cultural information.

ESOL teachers have to be flexible in their approach and draw on their students' life experiences for, "unless learners can be involved in activities which have meaning and interest for them, and in which they can invest something of themselves, the foreign language becomes just another body of language to be acquired" (Grellet, Mahay and Wesley, 1982, 2). The psychologist Espín (1999, 2000) addressed the complexities behind classroom interactions as learners attempt to learn the new language while also acquiring the skills to negotiate new cultural spheres and construct new knowledge within their new surroundings:

> The immigrant learns to "live within two languages" at the same time she learns to live in two social worlds. Learning to live in a new language is not merely an instrumental process; it is not a neutral act (Espín, 1999, 134).

A remarkable finding of this present research is the significant positive response of students to the Fáilte Isteach learning experience. The students felt that the classes brought immediate language and social integration benefits to them within specific, practical, and realistic learning situations thus further facilitating their motivation to learn English. In addition to the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation in Gardner's social-psychological model of language the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction in mainstream motivational psychology is most pertinent to the present study participants' motivational discourses. Nearly all the successful students reported that they liked English. They claimed that such a liking stemmed from their satisfying English learning experiences in the classes which represents a classic example of intrinsic motivation, i.e., "*doing something as an end in itself, for its own self-sustaining pleasurable rewards of enjoyment and interest*" (Ushioda, 2008, 21).

The students stressed that most Fáilte Isteach tutors tried to involve them as active participants in the learning process by taking the students' experiences and interests into account when developing a lesson or by adapting the learning materials to the students' individual objectives, needs, and capabilities. Furthermore, students were actively encouraged to assist each other. This '*co-construction*' of learning is a fundamental principle of a successful L2 social learning environment. Mitchell and Myles (1998, 221) explained that in the sociocultural model "*all learning is seen as first social, then individual*." Indeed, one of the tenets of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) held that learning or "*problem solving*" took place "*under the guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*" (Vygotsky, 1978, 86). Walqui and van Lier (2010, 8) added to this point, "*knowledge arises in social activity, and all learning is co-constructed, with the learner transforming the social learning into psychological, or individual, learning over time*".

The ideal tutor for the students was identified as someone with a high degree of patience, flexibility and understanding who was able to lead the classes calmly and efficiently through a learner-driven approach. Students suggested that a tutor should be friendly, caring and engaging and a large proportion of students (72%) opined that attendance at the classes depended on the kind of relationship the tutor was able to develop with them. It was generally observed that tutors were approachable if the student had an extracurricular concern such as filling out a form, drafting or improving CVs, legal advice, advice on family support (including domestic violence issues), discussing employment practices and interviews, drafting letters or dealing with agencies, banks or other community bodies. It was further suggested that many tutors appeared to avail of this opportunity to incorporate the extracurricular activity as a "*teachable moment*" (Dutro and Moran, 2002, 7) for the student in question (and, if data protection concerns did not arise, for the class in general).

Certain teaching techniques were suggested by the students as being very effective examples of good practice on the part of the tutors such as the use of repetition, the revision of older concepts before addressing newer topics and moving at a slow pace. This spiral – rather than a more linear - form of learning is an accepted tenet of good ESOL practice (Nicholls & Raleigh, 1998). After exposure to a particular chunk of language, students are permitted to digest it and begin to use small portions. As they gain confidence and are re-exposed to the language, the portion they are able to use grows. Continued exposure to and active revision of important language structures

during the classes will consolidate this process. This approach involves work being constantly revised as well as teaching new concepts (Nicholls & Raleigh, 1998).

Only 42% of students were content with the language learning materials currently being used in classes while the remainder felt that the materials would be of more benefit if they were more attuned with language use and custom as practised in everyday life in Ireland. It is important to point out that no clear distinction was made here between the materials developed explicitly by Fáilte Isteach itself and other English language learning materials whether from online or published sources. What is clear is that there was a clear majority of students (61%) who felt that materials brought in by the individual tutor "*worked best.*"

When it came to further progression and assessment there was a clear division on age grounds between students who wanted more assessment and a clearer line of progression from beginner to more expert level as would be common in a commercial language teaching environment and the maintenance of Fáilte Isteach's ethos as currently in place. Younger students (within the age range 18-29) overwhelmingly favoured more regular and structured assessment with accompanying documentation whereas older students expressed satisfaction with the current approach by Fáilte Isteach of unstructured needs assessment and occasional ongoing assessment with class attendance being recognised through certificates issued by Fáilte Isteach (and sometimes by the centre in question). The majority of students interviewed pointed out that assessment of some form is important to learners themselves since they need to know how they are doing, assurance that they are making progress and should be used to motivate learning on the part of the student and not discourage them.

Sample students comments made in the evaluation:

- "I have learned the alphabet, both lower case and capitals"
- "I can now write words"
- "I learned pronunciation"
- "I learned more spelling and listening"
- "I learned to speak many words and to explain and understand more verbs"
- "I learned about making a shopping list for food, and calling people on the telephone"
- "I am very happy that I can give good directions. I have more confidence when I speak I learned to speak and have a much better conversation, and now I am

able to speak more. This is good for me because it is helping me a lot in my work place"

- "I am now very happy that I can read a letter, newspaper, and I can speak to my Irish co-workers and customers in my job. I have more confidence when I am going shopping, because when I have a question I can speak to them"
- "I am now very happy that I can get used to living in Ireland and am enjoying my life. I have more confidence when I speak with my friends because I like talking"
- "I have more confidence when I speak with people on the street or in a restaurant because in the class I get practice. I am not afraid any more. I am very happy that I can speak English and go to places where I didn't go before, like a theatre"
- "The teaching has been great, it has really boosted my confidence especially for when I meet Irish people outside [of] here"
- "I'm speaking out in the group now, I never used to"
- "When you think back to where I was when I started and to where my tutor has brought me"
- "They [the classes] gave me a lot of confidence"
- "It helps me with my child's work from school."
- "It was great getting to know all the other students and I'll miss it"
- "I got to know all the things local going for Brazilians in the area and around … wasn't part of it before the classes but am a part of it now"
- "I have learned new things, made new friends and I have really got some fun"

Arising from the teaching practice observation which formed part of this evaluation it should be noted that examples of all the receptive and productive skills such as reading comprehension, writing skills, speaking and listening were witnessed with students running the gamut from A1 beginners being led through word recognition exercises up to an ethical discussion on the rights and wrongs of euthanasia from a tableful of C1-level students[11]. More specifically, the following formal language skills were observed as tutors provided instruction on:

[11] The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (or CEFR) is produced by the Council of Europe. The Council has been one of the driving forces behind the communicative approach. The CEFR guides practice and policy within the Council of Europe. Devised after wide consultation (with over 1,000 institutions and individuals) and research, it is a planning instrument which provides a common basis for: describing objectives, assessment, planning syllabuses, examinations, textbooks and teacher training programmes. The 6-point scale runs along a spectrum from A1 (Breakthrough or beginner) to C2 (Mastery or proficiency).

- functions of language
- register differences between spoken and written language
- lexis and synonymy
- spelling and punctuation
- aspects of grammar including the tense system, articles, adjectives, adverbs and nouns/noun phrases, use of infinitives and gerunds, and active and passive voice
- the connections between form and function
- phonology including intonation, word and sentence stress, how sounds are produced
- coherence and cohesion in spoken and written discourse.

Tutors were observed using activities such as information gap and cloze work, use of realia such as maps and newspapers, reading with prediction[12], board games and role play. An excellent example of this latter activity was the case of a Ukrainian woman who lacked confidence in using her English during real-life situations such as dealing with a bank cashier. The tutor in this case had a drama background and so she and the student acted out several bank desk/counter interactions during their session together. Tutors were observed to be very interactive and inventive in their explanations ranging from providing a good example of the word '*wrinkle*' by wrinkling a page to explaining Hiberno-English terms such as "*to put on dinner*"; from explaining the difference between '*3.35*', '*15.35*' and "*25 to 4*" to imaginative use of vocabulary images (for example, one tutor took an image of a cup and with a group of A2 level beginners began to investigate related words such as *saucer-plate-cup-mug-handle*; then made students spell the words, say them out loud and write them down before making them find out what the words were in the students' L1 and concluding with "*Can we say anything else about the word?*").

A general observation is that tutors reflected the advice of Green and Piperis (1987, 5):

> The goal of communication must not be confused with an ability to use the language with accuracy or fluency. If the correct form is not attained but the message is understood, and this is felt to be a reasonable achievement for a student, language in single words or phrases should be acceptable.

[12] The student starts by reading the cues, such as the title and subtitles, by looking at pictures and illustrations and reading their captions, and by reading the first sentence in every paragraph.

All observed classes were conducted in a very easy, welcoming environment with many types of learning groups being found such as one-to-one teaching, small (2-5) or larger (10 or more students) groups and shared and mixed-ability groupings. Good communicative language practice such as making students introduce themselves when they welcomed new members to the group and going around the table so that each student got a chance to speak and respond were much in evidence. Even in complete beginner classes (A1 level) tutors encouraged slightly stronger students to explain things to weaker/newer students. In several cases pairing up into different nationalities to avoid talking in shared L1 took place but equally some tutors encouraged shared L1 students to assist one another. The appropriate use of stronger students to mentor and answer questions asked by weaker students was a common feature of all group lessons observed. Good student autonomy was observed as iPhones and iPads etc. were used for translation and further definition of words and concepts. A great deal of cultural knowledge was mixed into every lesson in a relaxed manner. The overall conclusion of this observer was that a lot of mutual respect was shown between tutors and students.

Overall, these observed good practices would support the view that effective provision of ESOL was being provided to the students (often as entire family units of one or both parents with their children[13]) in a student-centred, welcoming and inclusive manner. The flexibility of the centres - in the range of migrants to whom they can provide support and versatility in services provided and tasks undertaken - enables them to fulfil a niche for these students which is not being filled by state agencies.

Suggestions for improvement

A significant area of concern for the students was the issue of mixed-ability or mixed-level classes. Because of the different levels in a mixed ability group, students felt that it was difficult to keep the attention of all the students at the same time. What is interesting and challenging for one student may be boring or too easy for another. So while the tutor's attention is fixed on one student on one side of the table or room, the others lose concentration and switch off and get increasingly distracted or frustrated. This can affect class cohesion, the sheer disparity of the students' language levels and interests proving to be a strongly divisive influence. The larger the group or class, or the more mixed the

[13] An interesting case study is that of a daughter who came first as a student herself, accompanied by her mother, and who subsequently became a tutor.

language competencies and skills of the students' in it, the more easily the lesson could lead to frustration on the part of some or all concerned.

In light of this, it is worth noting Reid *et al*. (1981) research which identified the following as problems in mixed ability classes:

> Disadvantages for students at the extremes of the ability ranges - the more able had a problem of reduced motivation and frustration at not being stretched and boredom resulting from waiting for the slower ones, the less able missing out and being left behind as the teacher always teaches for the average level of students.

- Teacher's difficulties in meeting pupil needs at the same time as s/he is the only mediating agent in the whole class.
- The lack of stimulus material for a mixed ability class.
- Problems of judging student input work in such a way as to maintain standards but avoid de-motivating low achievers.
- Difficulties relating to control and discipline which results from the difficulty of providing suitable activities for all pupils and of meeting demands for attention.

Related obviously enough to the above concern is the wide-spread desire for more tutors on the part of students. While deeply grateful for the sterling work being done by the current tutors, students felt that more tutors per session and - in 47% of responses – a '*regular*' tutor would be of more benefit to their learning experience. The third biggest concern is also closely linked to these earlier issues – the need on the part of students for more frequent classes and the continuation of the Fáilte Isteach classes during the summer months.

Overview of the tutor participants

The tutors interviewed for this study – who broke down on gender lines of 56% female and 44% male - differ widely in age, educational and work backgrounds, teaching experience, English language knowledge and motivations for becoming Fáilte Isteach tutors. The age range of volunteers for this study ran from 19-80. Older tutors were more likely to come from higher socio-economic groups, be well-educated (either to third level/post-graduate or advanced technical qualifications), married (widowed), in reasonable health, to have been (be) in paid work, have large social networks, have a religious affiliation, and have a history of volunteering.

Motivations for becoming a tutor

In keeping with one of the Fáilte Isteach Project's main aims, namely, to "*Involve older volunteer tutors and recognise their skills, expertise and contribution to the community*" the data suggests that the Project is successfully involving older volunteers and recognising their skills, expertise and contribution to the community. As we saw in Chapter 2 volunteering is generally accepted as contributing to social capital where the tutors understood it to mirror Putnam's definition of '*those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions*' (2000, 19). Tutors felt that this social capital benefits both themselves as individuals as well as the wider community.

According to the participants' responses, their motivations to volunteer as a tutor include to:

- Fill a gap or void in their lives
- Put structure to one's free time
- Help others
- Manage the transition from paid employment to retirement
- Keep active and involved
- Feel useful, valuable and wanted
- Use skills that have been built up over one's working life
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Do something enjoyable and interesting
- Assist the integration of newcomers into Irish society through increased language skills

- Benefit the community (and wider society) by permitting the students to become more economically productive
- Help newcomers get or improve their employment
- Facilitate the students in pursuing other forms of education
- Learn about other cultures and ways of life
- Improve their own knowledge both of Irish culture and the English language
- Develop transferable skills (for example, TEFL[14] skills)

The tutors felt that participation in the Project afforded them the following benefits of:

- Keeping busy and active
- Feeling like you are doing something useful and active, both in the actual volunteer
  activity and in contributing to a worthwhile project
- Permitting them to assist others while gaining information and skills for themselves
- Promoting higher levels of well-being
- Maintaining a strong sense of their own worth and boosting their self-esteem
- A sense of taking responsibility
- An opportunity to learn new skills
- An opportunity to develop existing interests and skills
- Strengthening informal networks and social support systems
- An opportunity for social interaction and meeting new people
- Leading to increased social contact with a wide range of people which can increase the chances of finding social support, useful contacts, and helpful information
- Having the occasional "*day out up in Dublin*" (for example, to celebrate Fáilte Isteach events) or similar group excursion/activity
- Meeting up with other tutors
- Meeting a variety of newcomers "*from around the globe*"

[14] Teaching English as a Foreign Language. For the purposes of this report it can be compared to ESOL.

Tutors felt that dealing with adult students is incomparably different from teaching young learners. In contrast to children and adolescents they are already mature and therefore able to approach learning English in a more responsible and self-motivated manner. They have a whole range of life experiences to draw on, which can make the learning process easier for them and also enables language teachers to use a variety of activities within the lessons. They are able to sustain a certain level of motivation in the pursuit of learning the language which eludes most children thus permitting them to continue their studies for a longer period of time, which many younger learners might find difficult. They also have certain expectations about the learning process and most of them are already familiar with the amount of work involved in learning a language. Moreover, most adult students have already developed their learning strategies and are able to distinguish what works and is most beneficial for them.

Tutors felt that their participation was beneficial for the organisation because they:

- brought a maturity which enables them to understand the problems of others
- had skills from their personal and work lives
- tend to have more spare time and can be flexible about when they participate
- had a strong sense of loyalty
- had a sense of patience and tolerance
- were reliable and provided commitment and continuity
- were more altruistic than younger volunteers
- able to respond to the group dynamics of the adult language learning situation
- went at as a slower pace, were less intimidating, and could relate to people's life experiences better.

The tutors' teaching experience

Tutors were overwhelmingly positive towards the Fáilte Isteach teaching experience though, as we will see below, they did harbour some concerns. They were conscious that the success of the classes rested on the tutors and being a good tutor. One tutor stated that tutors were "*the key to the whole Fáilte Isteach Project*." This reflects the widely-held belief in SLA about the primacy of good teaching (cf. "*There is absolutely no doubt that the enthusiasm and skill of the teacher has an enormous effect on the attitudes of learners*" (Underwood, 1991, 31) and Harmer (2005, 53) who posited that "*If the teacher*

can help students in the achievement of short-term goals, this will have a significant effect on their motivation. After all, nothing succeeds like success").

When asked to define what makes a good tutor a number of characteristics were suggested. The ability to develop positive relationships with the students was suggested as was the skill to build up the students' confidence and self-esteem. Tutors felt that what defined them as good teachers was their patience. Learning another language takes time and an incredible amount of effort and can cause frustration and anxiety in learners. Patience and a student-centred approach are necessary so as not to put the student off the learning process and to provide an environment of mutual respect where learners will want to participate fully. This involves recognising, as mentioned above, that adult learners are not children and they bring a wealth of "*life experience*," knowledge and cognitive ability to the classroom. Adult learners' levels of literacy and education need to be accommodated. The approach taken by tutors is to treat each and every student as an equal partner in the teaching relationship by encouraging "*teachable moments*" - where the learner shows interest in something other than the material presented (one example offered by a tutor was the case of a student -generated and - directed lesson which revolved around the filling in of a HSE medical card application). The tutors' own life experiences permit them to recognise that all learners are different and thus adapt – in as realistic, organised, accountable and practical a manner possible - their tutoring to the differing learners' learning styles and needs.

> I see in my students everyday. . .when [they] can communicate with their co-workers, the teachers of their children, neighbours, and everybody else they are likely to be more self-sufficient and confident. (Tutor)

Another characteristic noted by the tutors was their cultural sensitivity which enabled them to connect with the students through the sharing of cultural knowledge such as family structure, common religious beliefs and festivals/holidays. Of note were three tutors who discussed their role as being to "*wipe out*" the bad effects of past learning experiences for certain students and remove (or, at least, minimise) the fear of failure. Although adults might be perceived as problem-free learners there are a number of characteristics which can sometimes be problematic. Because of their previous learning experience they may tend to stick with one particular methodological style and feel uncomfortable when faced with new teaching approaches. In addition, some students may have been victims of criticism or humiliation which makes them anxious and lacking in self-confidence when using English. A final trait of a good tutor was that of recognising,

to quote a tutor, that "*1 – and other tutors - don't know everything*." Tutors were willing to ask the coordinator or other tutors for additional ideas, or for support and encouragement. They also expressed themselves ready to attend any learning opportunities extended by Fáilte Isteach or, for that matter, any other professional organisations in their area.

The main finding of the observed teaching practice in the 13 centres was the overall excellence of the language classes provided. Some tutors were quite simply as good as this researcher has ever seen in their approach to both their students and the material being covered (whether it was Fáilte Isteach's provided material or something brought along by the tutor him/herself). Examples of good practice abounded. For example, when working with a new student tutors regularly learn the students' names and how to pronounce them, explicitly asking more than once if required. The appropriate use of nametags was also in evidence so that tutors and students could learn each other's names. Some lessons began with the tutor finding out something about the backgrounds of new students to the group. All of this took place within a non-threatening and inclusive learning environment. Tutors appeared to incorporate ways of informally finding out students' needs in skill areas such as speaking, reading and writing. Armed with this, they would clearly set out short-term goals for the student and would begin to teach for a purpose, by making certain that the subject matter was relevant and that the students were leaving the class with examples of language they could use.

For more frequent students, most tutors would begin by reviewing previous activities. It was noteworthy that tutors were aware of the need to not correct every error when students began to speak. Tutors were also extremely flexible in their lessons and on several occasions I saw a tutor being diverted from what was, perhaps, a prepared lesson topic/plan to incorporate a student-generated learning activity. Another example of good practice for the communicative classroom was that even in cases of weak students, the students in question were given the opportunity to pass their knowledge to classmates thus encouraging all students to participate and ensuring a good level of student self-confidence which has a positive effect on further learning. The tutors availed of a wide range of activities to address the needs of individual learners from teaching the alphabet and connecting the alphabet to sounds to '*WH*' questions, numbers, time and date to activities involving banking, shopping, money matters, health, school and housing.

Several tutors observed that the Fáilte Isteach classes were a small cost to pay to support the independence and well-being of both tutors and students.

> Helping immigrants learn English has many benefits to the larger society. Learning English will help these people to become more economically productive. It will raise their income in the long run and ... increase their tax input and go some way towards addressing Ireland's demand for skilled workers.

Another added:

> The shortage of language courses like we provide - for free mind you - poses one of the most difficult challenges this country faces when dealing with improving the economic chances for these new communities.

According to the tutors, some of the extracurricular roles they play over and above English language teaching include:

- Providing advice on family support, domestic violence issues
- Mentoring
- Legal advice
- Providing a link between the HSE and students/their families
- Advocacy
- Job-seeking support and Job Skills Preparation such as confidence-building techniques, developing interview and job search skills and techniques, and CV and cover letter preparation.

Both tutors and students recognised that ESOL supports integration and community cohesion - "*a tutor needs to realise that he or she is going to deal with people whose backgrounds and ways of learning are very different from one another*." A lack of English language skills forces people to rely more on their own families and communities to interpret for them, restricting their access to services, and resulting in the segregation of communities. English language skills are required to operate and play a full part in society - from correctly accessing HSE and local authority services to interacting with neighbours and volunteering in their community. Furthermore, poor English language is one of the biggest barriers to accessing work, to progress in employment or to fulfilling their potential. English skills also unlock potential in a workforce; some migrants bring

with them valuable skills, qualifications and experience which can lie untapped unless they have the chance to learn English to an appropriate level. Finally, parents who are literate in English are able to support their children's learning at school. Not being able to speak and understand their children's teacher is a major issue.

The research suggests that particular qualities and skill-sets of tutors are key elements of this effective provision. The evidence suggests certain skills are conducive to effectively teaching English language. Examples of interpersonal and communication skills, particularly important, were much in evidence in addition to more technical skills like being able to facilitate independent learning and being able to address different ways of learning.

Other skills shown by the tutors include the importance of being able to develop positive and trusting relations with students. Other significant interpersonal qualities include being able to create a positive, welcoming, supportive, non-threatening atmosphere for learning; being empathetic and understanding; and respecting cultural differences and local contexts.

Of note, given the age of the volunteers was the considerable knowledge of workplace or industry cultures and discourse they possess and many tutors included this in their English language teaching. The research shows that most tutors witnessed have the skills to assess and respond to individuals' needs and the ability to adapt teaching approaches to these needs.

Several tutors and some students in this evaluation study mentioned the need to publicise the work of the actual Fáilte Isteach classes further. Two tutors suggested that a DVD might be produced showing the examples of good practice. They pointed out that not only would this help to disseminate the good practice to a wider audience but it would also act as a record and a celebration of the success of the classes. This DVD could then be used by Fáilte Isteach for on-going training and promotional activities.

Some concerns and suggestions for improvement

The greatest single concern for tutors was simply that they do not know if they are "*doing it right*", that is providing ESOL effectively. Many tutors expressed concern that they never receive any feedback on their students' progress or on the efficacy of their own teaching methods. This was directly linked to a commonly-held perception about the lack of initial training, the unsuitability of some of the Fáilte Isteach language materials and

consistent concerns about on-going support structures for tutors (for example, upskilling and ongoing professional development as required). It would be hoped that this report will alleviate some of these concerns as their language, cultural and social support of these students is of an extremely high standard.

There is a sense in talking to the tutors and watching them in action that this feeling of not really knowing if they are, in the words of one tutor, "*serving any purpose other than coming here on a Tuesday for two hours...getting me out of the home*" may be a not insignificant factor in tutor burnout. Tutor fatigue was evident in several centres as "*old hands*", that is regular tutors and those who had been with the centres in questions, sometimes from the inception of the Project, were "*carrying the burden*" of teaching while other tutors came and went over time. Tutors who felt this were of the opinion that the effects of burnout on a centre are manifested in low morale, poor performance, high absenteeism and high turnover of volunteers. This directly impacts the healthy functioning of a centre by disrupting the continuity of teaching. This could eventually result in having a deleterious effect on both tutors and students and perhaps have serious damaging consequences for the reputation and credibility of Fáilte Isteach itself going forward.

Another overriding concern for the majority of tutors is the issue of student retention as there could be great variation in student numbers even when adjusted for seasonal factors such as holiday periods. There was concern amongst some tutors that gender played a role in this drop-off as women were discouraged from attending classes where education was perceived as being a male activity. As many students are seeking employment tutors were conscious of how time-consuming and emotionally and physically draining such an endeavour can be. It was recognised that some jobs obliged the students to displace around the country and so they were unable to continue with the Fáilte Isteach classes. However, some tutors were also concerned that successful ESOL provision requires courses to be of sufficient length to ensure positive impacts, with associated funding implications, and some tutors were not of the opinion that Fáilte Isteach could retain students who wanted more from the classes than what was on offer.

Most tutors were of the opinion that the learning materials provided by the centres – whether it was produced by Fáilte Isteach or copied from internet or other educational sources – were sufficient for their purposes. Classroom observation noted that tutors used the materials to varying degrees with some using them extensively throughout the lesson while others used them merely to introduce a topic before tutor and, in some

cases, the group negotiated another learning activity. The need to improve the Fáilte Isteach materials was suggested by several tutors but no actual examples of said improvements were outlined other than a need to make them "*more useful,*" "*more relevant*" or "*more practical.*" Materials from the internet were, in some cases, deemed by some tutors to be too US-centric and not reflective of Irish society and cultural norms (one tutor was using a worksheet which discussed former Vice-President Al Gore and was replete with American idioms and American spellings) and, in general, were not recommended for use by these tutors.

Tutors were not of the opinion that formal assessment – whether formative or summative - methods or more recognised certification/qualification would improve the learning experience of their students though many tutors did admit that students had requested some form of assessment and/or recognised qualification upon successful completion of the classes. Qualifications could be provided by Fáilte Isteach itself or by some external body. Tutors were very aware that any such assessment would require "*way too much time*" to implement thus necessitating considerable upskilling and on-going professional development on their part. Encouragement and validation of progress were, in the opinion of most tutors, extremely important for all students and formed a part of good practice on the part of most tutors.

Mixed ability classes were problematic for some students and so it was that tutors also voiced their concerns how best to deal with students who "*feel disappointed and don't want to take part in the lesson*" or who "*are advanced and lose interest in the group* [because others] *hardly know any English at all*." Tutors felt that groups should be kept small (no larger than 6-7) with lower-level students benefitting from more one-to-one teaching. They further suggested that groups should ideally be composed of students with approximately the same language level so as ensure that higher-level students do not lose interest and lower-level students are not left behind.

Finally, the level of or, in some cases, lack of L1 literacy on the part of some students was a concern for some tutors. According to Burt and Kreeft-Peyton (2003) there are many different types of learners:

- Preliterates: learners who speak a language that has no written form. (These are the learners who may not know that "lines on paper" have meaning.)
- Nonliterates: learners who speak a language that has a written form but have not learned how to read and write.

- Semiliterate: learners who have had limited access to literacy instruction in their first language.
- Nonalphabet literate: literate learners from other countries whose languages use a nonalphabetic script (for example, Chinese).
- Non-Roman alphabet literate: learners who are literate in a non- Roman alphabet (Korean, Greek and Russian).
- Roman-alphabet literate: learners from other countries who already know the Roman alphabet.

Some learners who were not literate in their first language required being shown simple skill such as how to hold a pencil, write the alphabet or the nature of text on a page.

The centre organisers

This next section is based on the data generated with the centre organisers from the interviews (n=10) and the short questionnaire (n=16). At the time of the study there were fifty centres geographically dispersed around Ireland (see Figure One on page 8). In organisational terms the centres fall into three broad categories, based on their affiliation or embeddedness in a 'host' organisation. The first category are those centres which are 'standalone' and have no formal affiliations, the second are those which are part of a pre-existing organisation such as a local partnership company or family resource centre and centres which are part of charitable organisations. According to Third Age there are currently fifty-six centres spread around:

- **21** centres established as part of a partnership
- **8** centres as part of Family resource centres
- **2** centres in Direct Provision centres for migrants
- **1** centre in partnership with the HSE
- **8** as part of a pre-existing charitable and migrant organisations
- **16** as standalone centres

To begin with, below is a selection of the written comments from the organiser questionnaire. The first set of comments are a response to the question 'Please indicate three key things which in your opinion work well for you as a Failte Isteach organiser' and the second set 'please could you indicate three areas that need to be improved to support your work as an organiser'. These offer a good overview as to how organisers view their work and the project more generally.

Areas that work well

- Dedicated tutors/volunteers
- Excellent programme
- Good venue for sessions
- Tutors run the classes on a weekly basis, my role is more to coordinate, advertise and recruit/train new tutors as needed
- Pre-assessment of students' English ability and streaming them into groups of students of similar ability.
- Students' attendance
- Flexible approach - creates positive atmosphere and enables students to return to classes as needed
- Good support from Failte Isteach headquarters
- Support & help from our tutors. The use of the VEC Centre.
- Funding from local authority and local area partnership
- Support of local youth centre where we are based, competitive rental rates and staff help setting up room etc.
- The appreciation of the students
- Testing new students and allocating appropriate groups
- Planning ahead with tutors to organise weekly lessons
- The social aspect of the classes
- Having a social gathering at every tea break
- Gatherings at end of term and Christmas
- Goodwill of school where classes take place

Areas that need improvement

- Workbook for students
- More regular feedback from Failte ‘HQ’ - its good but not enough
- More support for me to train new tutors as they come on board
- Improved grading of lesson materials - Beginners cannot be expected to understand many of the lessons marked 'Beginner@’
- Advice on how to keep tutors motivated and satisfied
- Resource material sorted by subject matter, level of English etc.
- We had no contact from head office this year they need to interact more with the groups in each centre
- More structured lesson plans

- Availability of more appropriate materials
- Laising by Failte Isteach
- More contact with head office
- Clarity in the definition of the role
- Better assessment tools to determine students level of English
- A forum on the Fáilte Isteach website for discussions/exchanges with other centres and tutors.
- More dialog with other [Failite Isteach] groups
- Financial supports towards cost of rent and materials
- Advice on retaining students and recruiting new ones

In summarising the above (and many of these comments were echoed in the interview data), the positive responses from the organisers centred around the commitment and quality of the tutors, working with Failtie Isteach, the values of the programme and its role in fostering inclusion, the social dimensions of the sessions and being connected into other organisations. The less positive comments concerned the limited diversity of and need to update the teaching materials, the need for training for tutors and funding, and especially around the recurrent costs of running a centre.

Role of the organiser

The core functions of the role of the organiser for all of the participants was clear and did not differ much across the form of organisation they worked in. However, the organisational context, as we'll discuss below, did make a difference as to how effectively they can carry out the role. On a session-by-session basis they reported that their work was to prepare the materials for the class (usually photocopying), allocate students to tutors (though this did vary from centre to centre depending on the relationship between tutor and student) and assess new students. The following quotes would be illustrative of the role:

> I'm always here on Tuesday night and we just sort of greet the people, put them with their teachers and just generally lock up the place when they've gone and make sure everybody's happy. And we have a meeting with the teachers every now and again as well.

> It takes me about two hours to photocopy the hand-outs that have been used. . .we have boxes of hand-outs for beginners, one for intermediate and one for

> the advanced, in turn about fourteen packs of hand-outs every week and these are at the disposal of the tutors or the student. . .I texted all the students that had attended since January and to tell them that classes are starting again. . .and when I have a review day with tutors. . . it's not hugely time consuming. I think I have more returns than for the work I put in.
>
> I welcome the new students make sure everybody is out in the right group and then I just float to make sure everything is just fine. . .when a new student comes I just chat to them and through that I get a feel for approximately what their level is. Sometimes when they answer you you know straight away.

In addition to the above, one of the organisers mentioned that she developed the content of the sessions to go beyond the conversational:

> Also, I'm hoping to introduce some information sessions into the teaching getting people in from the community. . .the local police. Also we've have people from the fire service. . .people who know about walks around the town. At our Christmas parties and end of year celebration we try to make it a cultural exchange. Last year we had a group of Irish musicians come and play Irish music.

This extension into cultural activities was also brought up by other of organisers, but it did not emerge from the data to be something that was commonly undertaken. Seven out of the sixteen questionnaire respondents reported that they arranged a 'cultural and social event. When asked to comment on what benefits they got out of being an organiser, the following quote nicely captures the views of the participants:

> I get loads out of it. The energy when people come in and when they're leaving you can see them smiling and have a good two hours and they're learnt something and the feeling that they're in a safe space. Sometimes students will ask questions that aren't related to language. . .like if someone feels they have been mistreated for interview or they've had a racist incident. And it's evidence that it's a safe space for them to talk about things like this. And for me it's a way of using this programme to feed into other programmes as well.

Additionally, nine out of the twelve questionnaire respondents described themselves as being the 'sole organiser' and six said they were joint organisers. They gave an average of 4.5 hours a week to the role. However this ranged from two hours to twenty hours; with nine people giving ten or more hours to the centre. Twelve of them also stated that they would for the 'foreseeable future' continue to be an organiser. Additionally, ten organisers reported that they were responsible for setting up the centre. Eleven of them also expressed interest in having regular training sessions for themselves as organisers and eight thought that the Failte Isteach website should dedicate pages for them as a group.

Funding issues

The issue of funding was problematic for those organisers whose centres were not linked into state funded or supported organisations. However, whilst the day-to-day running of the centres for this latter group were not a concern, they were aware of the hazard of this funding being cut along with any other programme they worked with. As an aside these organisers were also aware of accountability structures, particularly those around outcome-based funding, which were part of their organisation, and how this could be in tension with the aims of Fáilte Isteach. Funding mechanisms which are built around easily measurable outcomes such as the number of students attaining a specified NQF level or engaging in labour market activation schemes, may well be at odds with the more flexible and predominantly non-outcomes related Fáilte Isteach project. This is something to be mindful of when linking in Fáilte Isteach with certain forms of organisation such as VECs. For one organiser this raises concerns:

> I have to from my own funding agency I have to start using some self-assessing tool where students will assess their progress with language because I have to somehow show there is progress but I think it's a little bit tricky because the language is only one part of it [Failite Isteach] it's about people building their self-confidence, making friends. Focusing on the language only is not the only way to go with this programme. . .I think this programme is for people who are looking for the social. . . our students naturally make friends together and they hang-out together outside the class so they're not as isolated anymore. . .it's nice for people for find out about other countries but at times it can get a little heated!

However, the developing knowledge of, as well as linking in with other groups and organisations was seen as invaluable for one organiser:

> As a coordinator of a centre who's not attached to any state agency and we know absolutely nothing about any grants or any money that would be available. . .who I met at the conference last year in Kilkenny. . .gave me a few of these ideas and it worked for us. Certainly the local leader partnership certainly, we got a substantial grant from them and we need to pay for premises, we haven't you know you have to pay. . .And from the Lion's Club we approached them after Christmas last year and we got a donation from them a small donation, two hundred euro. Vincent de Paul were another, gave a hundred euro. And now because we're a bit dry, we are now asking the students to donate one euro every [session].

For the other centres, funding and fund raising was seen as essential for the day-to-day activities of their work. The funds were mostly used for photocopying, purchasing new materials, provision of refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits during the break-time), as well as payment of rent if premises were either not given freely or part of an established organisation. The 'two Euro' charge, which was suggested by Third Age, was, for the co-ordinators we spoke to not seen as being overly problematic. For instance:

> We charge them two euros a lesson now which we didn't do at the start . . . we have a big office we have to run and so we thought well the heat, the light and tea and biscuits. . . and nobody had a problem with that. So it's a bit of income for us.

Another organiser, who had set up the centre on her own discussed the issue of funding in relation to the debate it caused between herself and some of the tutors. As the centre was completely self-funding, her argument was that it needed to be able to cover its costs and not produce a deficit at the end of the year. She took the decision to charge the suggested two Euro a session which did not provoke a negative response from students: 'I ask them to pay two Euro and I explain why . . . [adding] I am not standing by the box looking at who is paying'. There was a recognition, as with the other organisers that this was a contribution and those who could not afford it did not have to pay. The same organiser also said that the small surplus which was generated was spent on the centre in the form of books for a small library they had set up and games for their regular games evening. The question of using additional funding for 'extra curricular activities' also opened up new possibilities for one organiser: 'when we've got 200 Euro we could use for a coach for a trip or an exchange visit. We can go from [Y] to [X] to visit the Fáilte Isteach programme in [X].'

> We may now have to charge people because the funding we used to get for the project has stopped so we're running it on a shoestring and one of the possibilities is that we would have to start charging but hoping to charge very little at least to pay for the tea and coffee and things like that . . .at least we do have a free venue so that does take the pressure off.

For one organiser, she discussed the issue of charging in a more ethical rather than pragmatic terms:

> I thought about asking people for donations but in the end I didn't go for it. . .I still have a little bit of a budget for tea and coffee. . .but know for some people even one Euro is money for them to find. . .it is advertised as a free class. . .and I don't want to create this barrier for people.

When asked about centre sustainability, one organiser who is employed by a partnership commented that:

> We are very lucky as I know that other volunteers struggle with space and have to pay for electricity and for food. I don't have to deal with any of this yet, but it may change, My funding is always from year to year. . .even if my involvement was to stop I would try to motivate somebody from the volunteers to take on the co-ordinating role.

Eight of the questionnaire respondents reported that they were worried about the sustainability of their centre and only five were in favour charging students a fee. However, seven organisers agreed with the statement that 'there are sufficient financial resources to run the centre' and six disagreed. Furthermore, six of the sixteen organisers said they would like to see some financial support from Failtie Isteach to support their centre.

Student attendance

Similar to the tutors, the issue of student attendance also came up during the interviews. Most of them found it to be one of the more problematic aspects of being an organiser. Again there was a mix of responses to this issue. Some of the organisers saw this as being an inherent part of the project whereas, others argued that it should be addressed as an issue at national level i.e. Failitie Isteach should develop a policy or guidelines for

centres. One organiser who wanted to avoid the centre becoming a ‘drop in-service’ had applied a structured approach to student attendance.

> Now a drop in service led you to believe that you just drop in when you feel like it. But because we have such a demand for classes in X, it got to the situation that we kinda said ‘right, we can only cater for a maximum of probably thirty five in this building – insurance wise, health and safety wise we can’t. . .So these are the thirty five on the list and then we did pitch to the students that ‘look guys if you really want to keep your place you do really need to be attending on a regular basis’. So it didn’t end up as being a drop in service. And whether that was against the Fáilte Isteach I don’t know because that isn’t the way we ended up running it because there was too many other people waiting to get a slot on the waiting list.

One organiser who had remarked that her centre had a high turn-over of students discussed the problem of student attendance issue within the context of the role of the tutor:

> This is something which is just one aspect of the programme. It is challenging because you have to think on your feet and you have to adapt to new students. It’s not easy but they [tutors] do understand it that the nature of the programme is informal, it is flexible. . .people come and go all the time. . .I was thinking of changing it [to a system where people signed up for a fixed number of sessions] and I discussed it with my volunteers but most people didn’t like it. . .but in the end and we had our first class last week and I just said to people that if you don’t let us know for three weeks and you come back I can’t guarantee that you’ll have a place. So maybe that’ll help.

Recruitment of students was done via a mix of methods by the centres and with the following being a fairly typical strategy:

> We recruit through advertising. . .in the local paper. We would use our own networks. Send emails around and also put a flyer round the town all the usual places like the library, the Polish shops, the doctor’s surgery, the citizen’s information bureau and kind of public spot we can find. Also give them to the social welfare officers as well. . .also voluntary organisations and word of mouth is very important as well.

From the questionnaire data when asked 'normally how many students would attend your centre?' the answers ranged from eight to eighty with the average being 39. Twelve people stated that it would help their work as an organiser if students committed themselves to attending the centre on a regular basis.

Working with tutors

The organisers work with tutors can be considered from three main perspectives 1) recruitment, 2) training and 3) on-going support. Firstly, alongside the recruitment of students, the recruitment of tutors was also seen as a key organiser role. Although the organisers said they were always looking for new tutors, this did not appear to be a problem for most of them and were very complimentary about their volunteers.

> I usually register with the volunteer centre and we always put it to the coordinators to put on their website when we need to recruit tutors.

> We're astonished at how they're benefitting so much as tutors. But it just seems to attract retired teachers. . .we'd have a high level of literacy amongst our volunteers.

However, the for the same organiser the issue Garda vetting was mentioned in connection with tutors:

> Anybody who shows any interest in wanting to be a volunteer is brilliant. I mean straight away. . .but we're watching very closely on sort of health and safety grounds and that sort of thing. . .We're, you know, we're monitoring them very carefully and we don't know what we're going to do. . .if somebody was undesirable as a tutor and we were concerned somebody was and we just, and we asked Fáilte Isteach obviously for advice on it.

It is useful to note that this issue of 'undesirable tutors' did not arise in any of the other interviews.

One organiser went on to remark that the informality of the programme was not to every potential tutors liking. This in turn highlights the importance of organiser providing clear descriptions as to the nature of the project and the role of the tutor. For instance:

> I've interviewed a prospective volunteer and when I've said this [outlined the programme] she told me almost straightaway that I need structure, this wouldn't suit me its too unstructured.

For another organiser they articulated the role of the tutor as being:

> the idea of the teacher as facilitator and not someone who is chalk and talk. . . and it is about using everyday circumstances and making it relevant to their lives.

Interestingly, another organiser referred to their role as also being about matching new tutors' preferences in terms of which 'level' of student they wished to work with:

> I ask during the induction [of tutors]. . .some people have a preference for beginners so I would put them with beginners. But other than that most of the time teachers don't have a preference. Some teachers are more comfortable working one-to-one. . .sometimes you get an older student and they're more comfortable with someone their own age. . .it's also about matching student to teacher personality wise some students prefer more animated and energy and explains everything. Where others prefer someone who is calm and patient.

The question of training for the tutors was also discussed of which there were two aspects. Firstly the initial training of volunteers and secondly, on-going training. As commented on by the following tutor:

> I would say that was one thing [training] that could be improved. When we started originally the new volunteers did have two evenings of training and that didn't happen last year. . .but this year we had one evening of training and that's a good idea as it keeps people, even people who have been with us a while for the to know that they're getting support and being kept up to date. It would be good to have two evenings rather than one evening for volunteers because I think they need more support than what I can give them.

The idea of new tutors being mentored by more experienced tutors was discussed during the interviews. Generally, this was seen as a good way of initiating tutors into the work of the centre and was an approach already undertaken by one of interviewees. In this

instance a new tutor would for their first two weeks ‘sit in’ with another experience tutor as way of getting an understanding of the role and the project more generally. Fourteen of the questionnaire respondents viewed this idea in a positive light. One organiser mentioned that she had begin to organise her own training sessions:

> The training I do at induction. I go through the materials [Third Age] gave me and add some things that I learnt from my experience. . .I asked the older volunteers to come in an hour early and talk to the newer volunteers and give them lesson tips or ideas. . .the reason I organised this was that when new volunteers started it was so hectic that I didn’t get a chance to introduce new people properly sometimes I wasn’t even sure who was a student and who was a teacher! So that’s why I did this so they would get a chance to talk to each other properly.

In terms of the content of the training, the organisers focused on the need for tutors to develop their repertoire of teaching techniques. Interestingly, this was usually discussed in the context of either the advanced students and in particular the vexed issue around grammar or beginner students and their needs. For example:

> People are concerned about how to teach beginners, how do you approach people who can’t say anything [in English]? Whereas people [students] who are already speaking English that’s a bit easier. . .and we do actually get quite a few beginners and I do think that’s a difficult one for untrained unqualified volunteers to deal with. Third Age have done some work on that but it does need to be developed. . . it just need more guidance for volunteers.

Lastly in relation to on-going support of a non-training nature, some of the organisers reported that they convened meetings with their tutors to informally evaluate their work as a centre and discuss other related issues.

> I try every term to have at least one meeting with the tutors for planning and just discussing where we’re at, what needs to be done. We would have one hour with the students and another the volunteers. . .I feel that I’m not able to give enough support to tutors, I feel they deserve more. . .and I think volunteers don’t always say when they need more support.

For another organiser who had not gone the route of setting up meetings, gave the following rationale:

> No I don't [organise meetings]. It's something I've been thinking about but I haven't taken that step yet because one of the reasons is that when I've been recruiting volunteers is that I say it is two hours per week and if I had let's say [a meeting] even once a month that's an extra commitment they have to give and not everybody is in a position to give it. . . but maybe once every three months.

In summary, centres are generally self-organising and self-regulating and once they get established they develop modes of working which suit their local contexts. They do not appear to require much in the way of external intervention from Third Age in their day-to-day working practices. However, they require some for support around quality assurance and positive validation of their work. It also would reinforce the sense of being part of a bigger entity, which whilst being very local, was also national both geographically and socially. Generally, the organisers were very positive about their relationship with the national co-ordinators. They found them helpful and supportive but sometimes difficult to contact. If anything, there was a view that they would like to see more of them. Twelve of the questionnaire respondents agreed with the statement 'I would welcome regular visits from Failte Isteach national organisers' and nine considered them response to concerns about the teaching material.

5: Findings part 2: The tutor survey

In this chapter we will provide an overview and analysis of the data which was generated from the questionnaire. As outlined in the methodology section, this was administered in both electronic and paper form based on the available information concerning tutors' contact details. The final number of completed questionnaires via Survey Monkey (out of 228 usable email addresses) was 99 [43%] and 34 [34%] paper questionnaires (from out of a total of 98 tutors who only had postal addresses). This gives a response rate of 46% (n=146), which would not be atypical in social science studies that are reliant on voluntary participation and the self-administration of the research 'tool'.[15]

Despite being a relatively short questionnaire, it was designed to explore a number of different aspects of being a Fáilte Isteach tutor which included:

- Reasons and motivations for volunteering;
- Their work and experience as a tutor;
- Their perceptions of the impact of their work as a tutor on students; and finally
- Their perceptions of Fáilte Isteach as both a programme and organisation.

Additionally, we also generated demographic and biographical data in which to 1), provide a brief profile of the tutors and 2), help contextualise their responses more generally. It is with this data that we shall start our discussion of the findings generated by the questionnaire and where relevant, we shall draw on CSO data to provide points of comparison. However, it is important to be mindful that as we discussed in Chapter 2 on 'volunteering', this data is now seven years old as it was part of the 2006 census and so needs to be read with a degree of caution. This will be followed by an analysis of the four areas as set out above[16].

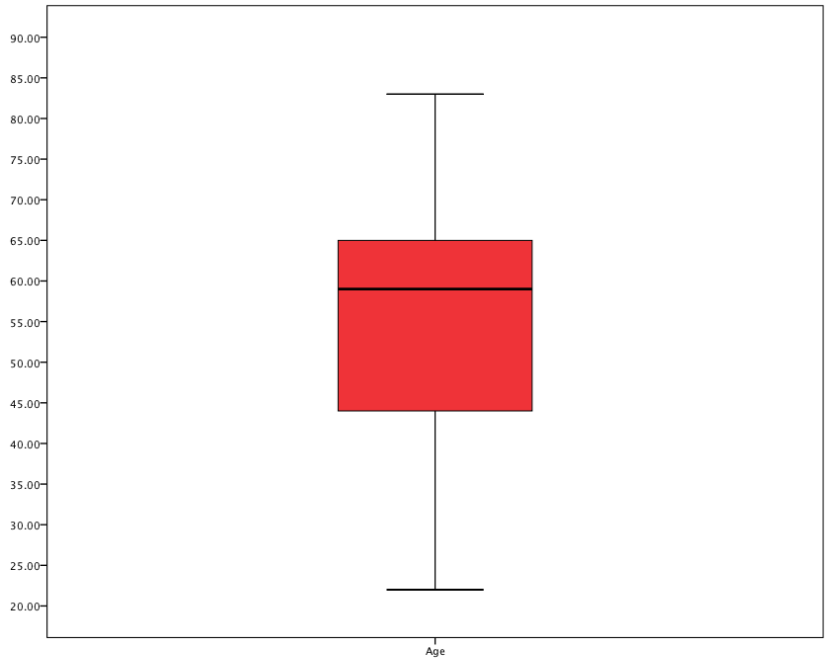
[15] It should be noted that this is derived from a tutor list of 368 people (as of July 2012 and supplied by Fáilte Isteach), out of which an initial sampling frame was generated of n=337 (those people with contact details: email and/or postal) and a final sample frame of 326 (this was based on excluding incorrect or non-usable email addresses and no postal addresses).

[16] When reading the tables please note that due to rounding, some of the column and row totals may not sum exactly to '100'. Also, due to missing data, usually in the form of non-responses, the total number of actual responses will also vary slightly. This will be indicated on the table.

Characteristics of the tutors

An interesting finding was that the age of the tutors ranged from 22 to 83; with a mean of age 55 (or median of 59) and a standard deviation of 14; meaning that 68% of the sample fell between 42 and 70 years of age. Figure 5.1 below shows the distribution of the reported ages of the tutors in the form of a simple boxplot. The red block represents 50% of the sample (and the black line the median). The lines (also known as 'whiskers') ascending and descending vertically from the box and capped by a horizontal line, represent the other 50% of the sample but split into two groups, each of which 'contain' the top and bottom 25% of the sample. The values on the left hand side of the chart are age in years.

Chart 5.1: Boxplot of Tutor's Reported Ages



In looking at this data in more detail, Table 5.1 below shows the participants ages arranged into five groups which allow us to compare it with the 2006 CSO results. It should be noted that the CSO data reported below, refers to proportions of the total number of people who indicated that they volunteered in a 'social or charitable organisation' to make it comparable with the Fáilte Isteach sample. Although the two sets of data need to be read very carefully when placed together (one is based on a national census and the other a small and self-selected sample), it does provide for a point of

comparison in a fairly rough way how typical or untypical the Fáilte Isteach participants are.

Table 5.1: Age of Fáilte Isteach (FI) Tutors

	Frequency	FI %	CSO %
Up to 34	16	12	28
35-44	19	14	18
45-54	15	11	20
55-64	47	34	17
65 or older	40	29	15
Total	137	100	0

The first point to note on the above table is that the Fáilte Isteach tutors in comparison to the CSO data have an older age profile. The '55 to 64' and '65 or older' groups comprise 63.5% of the Fáilte Isteach tutor sample in comparison to 32.1% of the same age range in the CSO data. This skew toward the upper age range is probably not too unsurprising given that the Fáilte Isteach project operates under the Third Age 'umbrella'. However, when the data is looked at in relation to gender (as we do below) a slightly more nuanced pattern emerges.

In relation to participants' gender, 37% stated they were male and 63% were female. As a point of comparison, this distribution is roughly similar to the CSO data on those people who 'volunteered for social or charitable organisation'; 41% were male and 59% were female.[17] As a further point of comparison it is also worth noting that within the tutor sample frame of n=337, 107 (30.7%) tutors were males and 230 (69.3%) were females and within the tutor list of n=368, 114 (31%) were males and 252 (69%) were females. What this suggests is that in terms of responses, or at least as far as gender is concerned, the sample is roughly in line with the Fáilte Isteach tutor list. Another way of

[17] By using a simple Chi square test, it is possible to assess whether the proportions of male and female respondents are similar to an hypothesized set of values; in this case the data from the CSO. The test statistic of Chi = 1.096, p=.295 allow us to infer that the proportion of males to females in the sample is not statistically different from that of the proportions found in the CSO data. The same can also be said for the relative proportions between the tutor list and the responses to the questionnaire in terms of gender as well: Chi = 2.171, p=.141.

looking at age is presented on Table 5.2 below which shows the distribution of age crosstabulated by gender.

Table 5.2: Crosstabulation of Participants Age and Gender (%) [n=136]

	Age					
Gender	***>34***	***44-55***	***45-54***	***55-64***	***65>***	**Total**
Male	2	4	2	14	15	37
Female	10	10	9	20	14	63
Total	12	14	11	34	29	0

As noted above, the highest proportion of tutors, some 34% were in the 55 to 64 age band; though there were more women than men in this group, but roughly equal proportions in the 65 plus age group. Interestingly the mean age between males and females is quite striking; for males this is 59 and for females 52. What this seems to suggest, is that not only do more women than men volunteer as tutors, they also happen to be on average as a group, younger as well[18]. The charts below show the distribution of age for males and females separately and then both together in the form of a boxplot.

[18] A Mann-Whitney U procedure generated a test statistic of 1553 and p=.003, from which we can infer that given a sample of this size, the probability of finding a difference between the two medians is not by chance alone. This test was used because 'age' was found to be not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk = .939, p=.000).

Chart: 5.2 Histogram of age: male

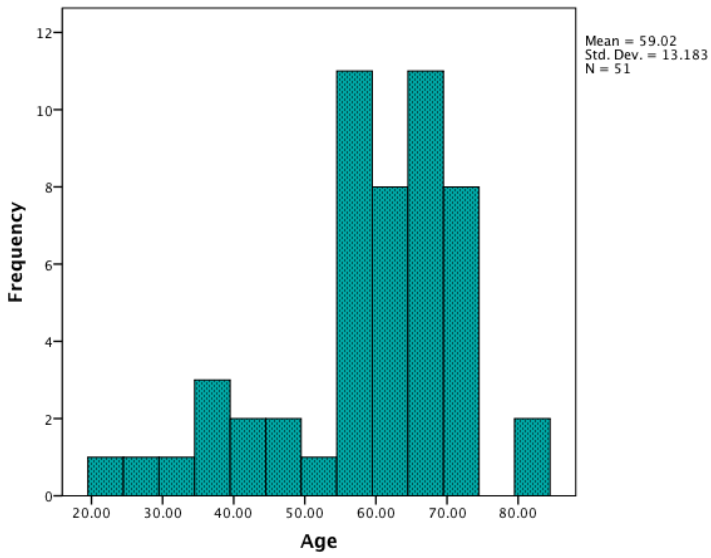


Chart: 5.3 Histogram of age: female

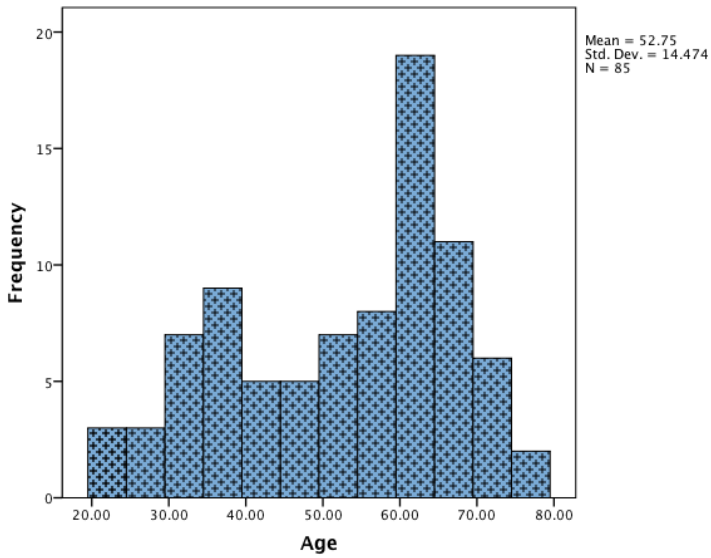
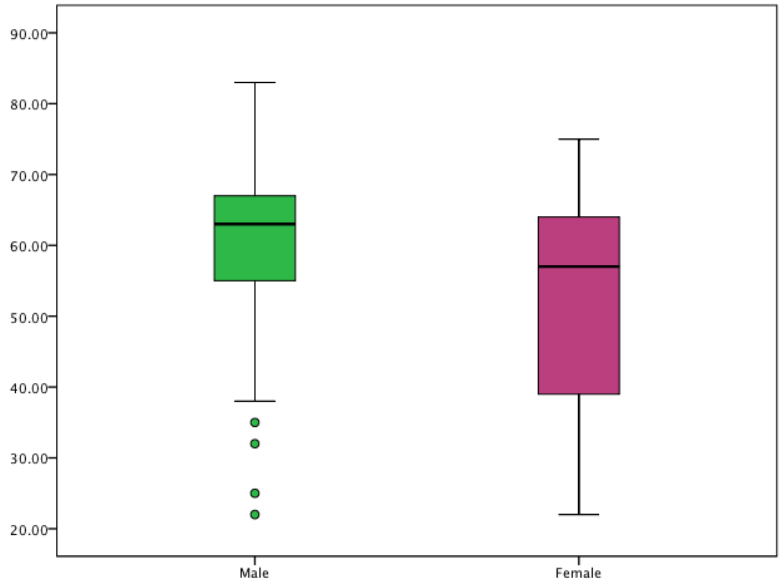


Chart 5.4: Boxplot of Age and Gender



A further variable through which we can contextualise the tutors is that of social class and socio-economic group. On the questionnaire we asked the tutors to indicate their previous (if now retired) or current occupation. Through recoding this data by using CSO classifications, we can organise it to provide an overview of the social class status of the sample of tutors[19]. The table below is the same as Table 2.2 in chapter 2, that is of national social class profile based on 2006 CSO returns, but with an additional column based on the questionnaire data. What is immediately apparent from this data, is that 40% of the Fáilte Isteach tutors fall into socio-economic group (SEG) C (lower professional). This is a much higher proportion than that found in CSO data, which was 16% for those who indicated that they were 'involved in a social or charitable organisation'. The next largest group at 15% are those in socio-economic group B (higher professionals), followed by SEG D at 14% and the higher professionals (SEG A) who make up 8% of the sample. When taken together, SEGs A, B and C comprise 64% of the sample. The skilled manual (SEG E) and semiskilled (SEG F) make up 2% of the sample, with 'own account workers (SEG H) on 5%. As a tentative interpretation of this data, we would surmise that although volunteering was more prevalent among the

[19] The data was also recoded into socio-economic groups as well. Both of these operations was done by mapping participants' responses onto the CSO (2006) census classifications as set out in appendices 3 to 8. Those participants who gave vague or no response were classified as 'unknown'. As a reminder 'social class' is about classifying people based on sharing similar levels of occupational skill. Socio-economic groups (SEG) are constructed by the CSO which are also based on skill level and/or educational attainment but they are treated as being non-hierarchical, whereas social class is intended to convey information about status. SEG is also a more fine-grained set of classifications, covering 11 as opposed to 7 categories.

‘higher’ SEGs (ABCs) at 43% as per the CSO data and that this pattern is repeated in the Fáilte Isteach data, it may well be that the educative orientation of the programme is a significant factor for their association. In simple terms, involvement in Fáilte Isteach is very much a middle class activity and when put in fairly crude human and cultural capital terms, they would see themselves as possessing the requisite skills and knowledge appropriate for Fáilte Isteach. In terms of tutors’ reported educational attainment (see below) and the data from the interviews, this would not be an unreasonable proposition to make. Conversely, it may be this factor i.e. the perceived need for a specific set of skills and knowledge to fit the goals of Fáilte Isteach, which has less appeal to those placed in social classes 3, 4, 5 and 6. This does not at all imply that these groups do not posses the type of human capital commensurate with Fáilte Isteach, it may well be that the perception of the project in conjunction with lower participation rates by these groups more generally, could be a possible explanation. It should be noted however, that this is conjecture on our part, as we do not have data from those who do not volunteer for Fáilte Isteach to either support or negate this supposition.

Table 5.3: Socio-economic Group Profile of Fáilte Isteach Tutors (%)

SEG	SEG involved in voluntary work	SEG involved in a social & charitable organisation	FI Tutors
A. Employers and managers	21	18	8
B. Higher professional	25	9	15
C. Lower professional	26	16	40
D. Non-manual	16	20	14
E. Manual skilled	12	6	1
F. Semi-skilled	13	7	1
G. Unskilled	9	2	0
H. Own account workers	18	4	5
I. Farmers	18	4	2
J. Agricultural workers	12	1	0
Z. All others gainfully occupied and unknown	11	13	14
Unkown*			16

* this refers to the non-responses in the Fáilte Isteach questionnaire.

In relation to educational attainment, Table 5.4 below shows the participants' reported highest educational level and the following table (5.5) shows this data in comparison to the 2006 CSO returns. Again great care needs to be taken in comparing the CSO data with the Fáilte Isteach questionnaire data, but it does nonetheless provide a point of reference.

Table 5.4: Reported Highest level of Educational Attainment (n and %)

Educational Level	Frequency	%
Intermediate/Junior Leaving Certificate	5	4
Leaving Certificate	12	9
Non-degree course (e.g. National Diploma)	24	19
Degree	48	37
Postgraduate Diploma	15	11
Masters	23	18
PhD/Doctorate	2	2
Total	130	

Table 5.5: Participants Reported Highest Educational Attainment in comparison with 2006 CSO returns for those people who volunteered for a social or charitable organisation (%)

Educational Level	CSO	FI Tutors
Up to Leaving Certificate	55	13
Non-degree	15	19
Degree and higher	26	68

The data in both these tables show that Fáilte Isteach tutors in terms of their reported highest level of educational attainment appear to be a relatively well-educated group. As a signifier of their human capital, albeit in what is technically referred to as an institutionalised form (see Chapter 2), 68% (n=88) reported having a third level qualification (primary and postgraduate degrees) as their highest educational attainment and 19% held non-degree qualifications i.e. higher than a Leaving Certificate. Importantly it should be noted that 54 (37%) people said they held a teaching qualification and of this sub-group, 40 were female and 13 were male. When we look at the data from the main body of the questionnaire, this particular group generate some interesting findings. However, given the nature of Fáilte Isteach, it should not be too surprising to find such a high proportion of people with teaching qualifications in the sample. At the same time, it is also important to note, that the other 63% of the sample do not hold teaching qualifications.

The next table (5.6) shows a crosstabulation between age and educational qualifications. Although the proportions in each cell are relatively small when set out in this way, there is a noticeable ‘clustering’ of those tutors with third level educational qualifications towards the upper-end of the age range i.e. 55 and above. Again, this is not completely unexpected given the age profile of the sample more generally and from what we know about volunteers and patterns of volunteering. However, we should be mindful that 28% of the sample who are aged under 54, also hold third level qualifications and that 11% of this age group do not.

Table 5.6: Age by Educational Qualifications (%) [n=128]

	>34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65>	Total
Up to Leaving Certificate	2	1	1	6	4	14
Non-degree	2	3	2	5	7	19
Degree	4	7	3	15	9	38
Postgraduate	5	4	5	9	6	29

The participants' reasons and motivations for volunteering

In this next section we shall provide an overview of the data generated from the eight statements presented at the beginning of the questionnaire asking participants about their reasons and motivations for being a tutor. Table 5.7 below sets out all of these statements

Table 5.7: Responses to the statements concerning motivations to become a Fáilte Isteach tutor (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I see my involvement as a tutor as a way of making my local community more inclusive	1	1	4	50	44
Volunteering is a good thing to do in its own right	1	1	2	33	63
It is essential for anyone living and/or working in Ireland to be proficient in English	1	1	7	40	50
I respect the values of Fáilte Isteach	1	0	2	47	50
I get personal satisfaction from being a Fáilte Isteach tutor	1	0	3	47	49
I enjoy interacting with people from different cultural groups	1	0	0	43	56
Being a volunteer is an integral part of my own values and beliefs	1	1	13	38	48
I volunteer because I think the government is not doing enough to support this particular group of people	2	15	48	24	11

There are a number of ways in which we can consider the above data, with the most obvious starting point being the participants' motives for volunteering more generally. This is covered in two of the statements 'Volunteering is a good thing to do in its own right' and 'Being a volunteer is an integral part of my own values and beliefs'. In the case of the first statement, which can be seen as their attitude towards volunteering as a generalised class of altruistic social behaviour, there is a very high level of agreement – with 97% either 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing'. This is repeated across the second statement, which is intended to be more indicative of their matching of their beliefs with their own behaviour; with 85% of participants either 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing'.

In another general statement concerning the tutors' attitude towards language and its role in fostering social inclusion ('It is essential for anyone living and/or working in Ireland to be proficient in English'), this generated a 90% level of agreement. The conceptually related, but self-focused statement 'I see my involvement as a tutor as a way of making my local community more inclusive', also produced a very high level of agreement at 94%. Their attitude towards Fáilte Isteach as a programme also generated a high level of agreement, with 97% 'agreeing' and 'strongly agreeing' to the statement 'I respect the values of Fáilte Isteach. This high level of agreement was also reflected in their reported sense of 'satisfaction' derived from being a tutor which was 96%. Another useful indicator is the statement 'I enjoy interacting with people from different cultural groups' which also generated high level of agreement (99%).

However, the statement 'I volunteer because I think the government is not doing enough to support this particular group of people', generated a 48% 'neither agree nor disagree' response and 34% level of 'agreement' and 17% 'disagreeing' or 'strongly disagreeing'. Although the study was not overtly designed to explore the cultural politics of second language provision, the purpose of this statement was intended to provide a partial insight around this issue and in particular the role of Fáilte Isteach vis-à-vis the state. In summary, the participants seem to exhibit a high degree of commitment and attachment to both their own sense of purpose in terms of volunteering in general and the aims of Fáilte Isteach via the statements concerning social inclusion and the instrumental function of language learning. This is reflected in an 87% level of agreement when the two statements 'I see my involvement as a tutor as a way of making my local community more inclusive' and 'it is essential for anyone living and/or working in Ireland to be

proficient in English' are crosstabulated[20]. Although the interrelationship between these two aims are far more thoroughly articulated in the interview data, we can infer from the numerical data, that inclusion as a goal needs to be fostered through a form of active intervention, which in the case of Fáilte Isteach is mediated through the acquisition or development of English as a language. In providing a conceptual overview on this set of statements, we would surmise that the tutors' understanding of inclusivity vis-à-vis their role as a tutor is built around a form of bonding *and* bridging (see Chapter 2). We would argue that the bridging function arises through Fáilte Isteach providing a space, both social and physical, whereby members of different language communities can come together to form an association. For the tutors their 'bridging behaviour' (to coin a phrase), is also motivated by a highly positive attitude towards individuals from other language communities. This we would argue is an important factor. Whilst both language learning and the goal of inclusion could be seen as utilitarian objectives (i.e. Fáilte Isteach is good because it may reduce alienation, racism, increase employability and so on), their sense of interest in interacting with individuals from different cultures has ethical and humanistic overtones which comes across more eloquently in the interview data than on a single item on a questionnaire. The bonding function is obviously enough instantiated through student and tutor participation in the Fáilte Isteach Fáilte centre. However, as we will argue the bonding process in Fáilte Isteach is a fluid and variable phenomena across centres. This we will also argue is not necessarily a negative reflection on or a consequence of either the operation of the centres or Third Age more generally, but an inherent part of the project. But this particular issue we shall come back to in the final chapter.

In relation to experience and length of time as a volunteer, 36% stated they had been a tutor for one year, 24% for two years and 10% for three years and 4% more than four years and the remaining 23% less than a year. Lastly, as a measure of future commitment to the project, 89% (n=117) indicated that they intended to carry on being a Fáilte Isteach tutor. When explored in relation to the participants' characteristics such as age, gender and educational level, only age generated a statistical difference.

[20] In exploring these statements via participants' characteristics such as gender, educational attainment and age, only gender generated a statistically significant difference. This occurred in two of the statements: 'Being a volunteer is an integral part of my own values and beliefs' (Mann-Whitney U= 1592, p=.008) and 'I respect the values of Fáilte Isteach' (Mann-Whitney U=1649, p=.008).

Approaches to teaching & learning

The second part of the questionnaire presented participants with twenty-six statements, which dealt which a range of issues concerning their approach to teaching and learning. The purpose of this collection of inter-related statements, was to generate an insight into how they approached their role as a tutor mainly from a pedagogical perspective and can be split into two broad clusters. The first cluster (made up of 14 items) explored the relational aspects of their role as a tutor; in short how they structured and evaluated their interactions with students and the students' interactions with each other. The second cluster (consisting of nine items), was concerned with the use of teaching materials, either those which they have developed themselves or provided by Fáilte Isteach. Two final statements in this section asked participants about how they perceived students' commitment and motivation towards language learning and Fáilte Isteach more generally.

In taking the first cluster of items, which are focused on participants' responses to statements about the process of teaching and learning, they can be further decomposed into three sub-groups. There are four items which centre on tutors' reflections on their role as educators, five of which have a focus on their practice with students and three of which are linked to the composition of the teaching groups they work with. Table 5.8 below shows the response to the items on reflection on practice. Taken collectively, the responses to the statements demonstrate a good degree of sensitivity towards the role of tutor or at least an understanding that the role carries with it a need for an element of self-reflection. More specifically, the tutors seem to report to be equally sensitive to the learning requirements and needs of their students. For example 97% of tutors agree and strongly agree with the statement 'I adjust what I do as a tutor in light of feedback from my students' and 'In general I try to adapt my teaching to suit the needs of the students' (99%). This appears to be indicative of an orientation towards teaching and learning which is not content centred, but shows an awareness of the dialogical nature of their work with students. That is to say, the role of the tutor is more than a provider of content, in that it needs to be mediated within the context in which they are working. [note: link to Zach's observations etc].

Table 5.8: How tutors view their work with students (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I adjust what I do as a tutor in light of feedback from my students	0	1	2	59	38
I feel confident in assessing the learning needs of my students	0	11	21	53	16
It is important that I try to integrate the content of what I teach into the lives of the students	0	1	12	54	34
In general I try to adapt my teaching to suit the needs of the students	0	0	0	52	48

However, in delving beneath this initial set of responses, a different picture emerges when looked at via the category of whether or not a participant reported holding a teaching qualification. We find that there is a statistically significant difference between these two groups on the statements 'I feel confident in assessing the learning needs of my students' and 'it is important that I try to integrate the content of what I teach into the lives of the students'.[21] We would see the difference between the 'qualifieds' and the 'non-qualifieds' in relation to assessment as being an unexpected finding. However, the difference between their reported ability to match content to the students' daily lives is intriguing. If anything, we would not see this as being conditional upon whether or not a person is a qualified teacher, but more a consequence of the matching of content to need. However, this does raise the question of what the actual content being used is and its perceived appropriateness? Despite a high degree of agreement with the statement, trying to integrate the content should not be seen as being synonymous with the utility and/or quality of the material, an issue we shall consider below. Table 5.9 below show the participants responses to the small cluster of items, which asked them about the management and organisation of their relationship with students during teaching sessions.

Table 5.9: Working with students (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My role as a tutor is more about building relationships with students than providing content and skills	4	39	29	25	3

[21] A Mann-Whitney U procedure provides for the statement 'It is important that I try to integrate the content of what I teach into the lives of the students' a rank mean of 68.11 for tutors with teaching qualifications and a rank mean of 56.25 for those without. The computed test statistic (U=1479) with a p value of .040. For the statement 'I feel confident in assessing the learning needs of my students' the mean ranks are 69.16 and 54.43 respectively with a U of 1368.5 and a p value of .011.

I encourage my students to practice their language skills outside the class	0	0	1	43	56
I find that my students learn best through discussion with each other	0	8	27	49	17
I experiment with different teaching styles (e.g. games, pair work)	0	11	13	53	23
I encourage students to help to support each other's learning during the session	1	1	9	54	35
My students get to practice and develop their language skills in a non-judgmental environment	0	0	0	44	55
It would be helpful to my work as a tutor if students committed themselves to attending on a regular basis when they first come to the centre	0	7	15	41	37

The first item on the table was intended to capture the tutors' awareness of what they saw as being the core purpose of their role. It was meant to 'push' them in one direction or the other to get a sense of where they positioned themselves in terms of being content centred or learner centred. As can be seen, their responses are that 43% 'disagree', 27% 'agree' and 29% 'neither agree nor disagree' with the statement. This seems to suggest a split, albeit quite moderate, around the purpose of the role. However what was surprising was a high proportion of 'neutrals'. This could be interpreted in a number of ways, but we suspect that this group may represent the tutors who see the role as being about both content and relationship building, which would correlate with some of the interview data. Interestingly, we found that there was no statistically significant difference between those participants with teaching qualifications and those without.[22] Our presumption here was that those who had undertaken a teacher education programme, would or may have a view of the role which is different from those who did not hold a qualification. The other items appear to generate a majority of positive responses. This would suggest that the tutors generally see their role as one which facilitates students active engagement with each other. Their high levels of agreement (76%) with the statement concerning their own capacity as tutors to experiment, was encouraging to see. However, although this did not generate a statistically significant difference when looked at again from the perspective of whether or not they held a teaching qualification, the mean rank difference

[22] Mann Whitney U = 1713.5, p=.501. Mean rank 'yes' (teaching qualification) = 63.7, mean rank 'no' = 59.7.

was quite large relative to the other statements in this table.[23] It suggests, that the qualified tutors may have both a wider repertoire of strategies and/or a disposition towards inventiveness in their sessions. What is also striking is the very high level of agreement (78%) to the statement concerning the need for student commitment. Unsurprisingly, this was an issue which preoccupied the interviewees as it had considerable impact on how they structured and organised their work as a tutor. Despite the fluidity of student attendance, this did not translate into a negative view of Fáilte Isteach or of the students themselves. When the above statement is crosstabulated with the one 'I get personal satisfaction from being a Fáilte Isteach tutor', 77% of the participants 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the two items. In this sense they can reconcile what is an organisational feature of the project with their own work as a tutor. In the interviews in particular, this was seen as the nature of the project and they worked within these parameters. However, this stoicism did not necessarily imply that as an issue it should be ignored. Most of the Interviewees were keen to put forward suggestions as to how it might be resolved. This we will return to in our 'recommendations' chapter and discuss in more detail in the next chapter on 'organisation and management' of the centres.

In moving on to the next table, this shows the tutor's responses to the items which asked them about the organisation of the groups they work with. Within the interviews this emerged as a critical aspect of their work. Firstly, 35% of tutors reported that they worked mainly with groups of mixed ability (e.g. beginners, intermediates or advanced students). Secondly, 66% agreed with the statement 'I find it difficult working with groups of mixed ability students'. A small contingent, 18% of tutors, reported that they worked mainly with mixed ability groups and found this difficult to manage. This tension was articulated very clearly in the interview data, when we asked tutors about the composition of their teaching groups. Much of this discussion focused around their frustration of trying to balance the needs of learners who were at different stages in their language development. There was also a very strong level of agreement (87%) with the statement 'I find that students learn best when they are grouped by ability'. We also found that there was no difference between those with teaching qualifications and those without, in relation to the composition of the groups vis-à-vis ability. What this seems to suggest is

[23] Mann Whitney U = 1396, p=.081. Mean rank 'yes' (teaching qualification) = 64.6, mean rank 'no' = 54.6.

that tutors have a strong disposition and orientation towards single ability groups. Although most tutors worked with single ability groups, facilitated by the organisers, this is an area which we will come back to in our 'recommendations' chapter.

Table 5.10: The organisation of the teaching and learning groups (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I find it difficult working with groups of mixed ability students	4	12	19	44	22
I normally work with mixed ability (e.g. beginner, intermediate) groups of students	9	40	16	27	8
I find that students learn best when they are grouped by ability	0	7	6	37	50

The final table in this sub-section shows the participants' responses to the statement concerning the use of teaching and learning materials. Not unlike the issue of 'single' v 'mixed ability' grouping, the form, content and diversity of teaching materials also provoked an interesting array of responses. Though this should come as no great surprise as the two are interlinked; whom we teach and the medium through which teaching and learning occurs are part of the same process. Needless to say this was covered in detail in the interviews.

Table 5.11: Tutor responses to the statements concerning teaching materials (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I find the materials from Fáilte Isteach suitable for use with intermediate students	1	9	21	61	9
The material provided by Fáilte Isteach is culturally appropriate for my students	1	6	26	59	8
I find the materials from Fáilte Isteach suitable for use with beginner students	1	9	19	57	14
I find the materials from Fáilte Isteach suitable for use with advanced students	4	9	31	48	8
There needs to be a greater diversity of material for tutors than is currently supplied by Fáilte Isteach	0	8	21	47	24

Students should be supplied with a workbook to chart their progress which they can bring to each session	4	11	22	43	21
I usually bring in my own materials to use with students	0	14	16	45	26

The first point to note about the above data is the relatively large minority of neutral responses. There is generally a good level of agreement concerning the appropriateness of the materials either culturally (67%) or for 'beginners' (70%) and 'intermediates' (71%). However, this does drop-off for 'advanced' students (56%). Despite this generally positive endorsement of the Fáilte Isteach teaching materials, there is a high level of agreement around the need for 'greater diversity'. What is also interesting is that 70% of participants used their own material with students. However, from what was discussed in the interviews this did range from using 'found material' such as local newspapers or flyers advertising community events to commercially available textbooks and learning resources.

Embedded in the list of statements were two items which asked the tutors about how they thought their students viewed the project. As can be seen this was perceived as being highly positive with 97% agreeing with the first statement and 95% agreeing with the second. This was also echoed in the interview data as well.

Table 5.12: Tutor perceptions of students motivation and enjoyment (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In general students enjoy coming to the centre	0	0	3	60	37
In general my students are well motivated to learn English	0	1	3	60	36

Outcomes for students

In slightly shifting our orientation away from the processes of teaching and learning and onto the perceived 'products', this next section will discuss the data that was generated via a range of items which asked tutors to consider what impact, if any, their students involvement with Fáilte Isteach was having upon them and their lives. The statements

themselves function at different levels of specificity and generality, as we tried to ‘capture’ tutors’ perceptions of how students managed the mundane aspects of daily life along with the more intangible, such as the extent to which they thought they were embedded in the local community. It should be stressed that tutor’s responses are contingent upon the kind of relationship they have with their students and the content of their discussions. This caveat is echoed in the interview data, as when we asked a similar question of tutors, some could discuss in great detail what affect Fáilte Isteach had on their students, whereas others could not. However, caveats notwithstanding, this data does provide us with a good understanding of how tutors perceive the impact of their work.

Table 5.13: Tutors reported affects of Fáilte Isteach on the lives of students (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my students are more part of the local community as a result of coming to the centre	0	4	29	54	14
My students tell me that they are more involved in the local community as result of attending the centre	1	19	53	23	4
My students' attendance at the centre has helped them in their place of work	0	1	31	58	10
My students' involvement in the centre has helped them in dealing with state agencies (e.g. the Gardaí, revenue office, local schools)	0	1	31	58	10
My students have made new friends from outside their own language community as a result of attending the centre	0	3	28	61	8
As a result of their involvement in the centre, students are more confident in their day-to-day activities (shopping, visiting the post office etc.)	0	7	9	73	18
Successful completion of the sessions opens up new work opportunities for students	0	5	36	51	8
My local community is accepting of non-Irish people irrespective of their English language skills	2	14	35	43	7

Taking the 'routine' items first, there is a high level of agreement towards the two statements which directly ask tutors about students interacting with state agencies or places (e.g. shops, the doctors) which involve the use of English as a transactional medium. 90% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'As a result of their involvement in the centre, students are more confident in their day-to-day activities (shopping, visiting the post office etc.)'. A similar, though less effusive response was give to the statement 'My students' involvement in the centre has helped them in dealing with state agencies (e.g. the Gardaí, revenue office, local schools)'. This is of course, conditional upon whether or not their students need to visit the Gardaí. However, if we take these two items as markers of how well Fáilte Isteach has impacted upon the students, at least from the perspective of the tutors, it has provided them with a set of language resources and concomitant levels of confidence to manage aspects of their lives which necessitate going beyond their own language communities. An interesting aspect of this, which for some tutors partially explains student participation, is what we could crudely refer to as a push and pull effect. An exemplar of this (which came out in

the interviews) would be parents needing to interact with their children's school (the pull into the social world of schooling) and the resultant language issues this generates for them creates an impetus (the push) to engage in some mode of language learning; in this case with Fáilte Isteach. Another example is that of the workplace. 67% of tutors agreed with the statement 'My students' attendance at the centre has helped them in their place of work' as well as the other statement 'Successful completion of the sessions opens up new work opportunities for students' (59%, with 35% neither agreeing nor disagreeing). There is obviously a strong utilitarian orientation to this, but this is tempered by the tutors also being positive about their students being more included generally via the statement 'I feel that my students are more part of the local community as a result of coming to the centre' (67.7%). Another thought provoking finding, when placed in the context of the interview data in particular and which is suggestive of the bonding feature of Fáilte Isteach, is the high level of agreement (69%) towards the statement 'my students have made new friends from outside their own language community as a result of attending the centre'. What this seems to imply is that there is a 'spillover' effect in terms of relationship building by the students, which goes beyond their interaction with the volunteers. The perception here is that the tutors see student participation as a way of forming new attachments outside of their own communities. Again, from the interviews this was also seen to be a way in which students could reinforce and develop their use of English, as it was a common medium through which their verbal interactions were conducted. Two other statements we added to this section were intended to provide an insight (as far as it is possible to do so in a short questionnaire), into how 'welcoming' or not they thought their local communities were to non-Irish non-English speaking individuals. 50% of the tutors agreed with the statement 'My local community is accepting of non-Irish people irrespective of their English language skills' with 16% disagreeing. The second statement asked whether or not they felt their students were 'well included in the local community before coming to the centre'. This generated a high level of 'neither agree nor disagree' (47%), but a 41% level of 'disagreement' and only 11% in agreement. When the two statements about students being more involved in the community as a result of Fáilte Isteach was crosstabulated against the one above, 40% of participants had 'shifted' from expressing disagreement with the statement about how well they thought their students were included in their community before and after participating in the centre and 32% of the 'neutrals' had also indicated 'agreement'. In summary, we are left with the impression that from the tutors' perspective, student involvement in Fáilte Isteach has led to positive changes in various areas of their lives ranging from relationships with Fáilte Isteach students, the workplace and routine day-to-

day activities. Although we would be cautious in rushing to assert a direct causal link between Fáilte Isteach and changes in the students' lives based on this data alone, there is nonetheless a strong sense by the tutors that their work has an affect.[24]

The last section of the questionnaire focused on the tutors' attitudes towards what can be broadly characterised as the organisational dimensions of Fáilte Isteach. These statements ranged from the vexed issue of applying a financial charge to students, assessment, accreditation, the organisation of their centre and training for tutors. We shall begin with the items which directly explored the operation of the centre.

Table 5.14: Tutor views on the organisation of Fáilte Isteach (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students should be charged a fee for attending the centre	30	24	21	14	10
My centre is well organized	1	7	16	50	26
Tutors should be involved in all aspects of running the centre	2	32	33	22	12
Students need to be involved in the running of the centre	4	29	35	31	1
My centre and its facilities are appropriate for my work as a tutor	3	4	11	56	26

In looking at the data in the above table, we can see that the tutors are generally satisfied with how the centres are run and the quality of the facilities in which they are located. Given that most of the centres are run by volunteers (usually a single organiser) and housed in a variety of premises (schools, church halls, community centres), this is a solid endorsement of this important dimension of Fáilte Isteach and should not be understated. As we will discuss in the next chapter, the role of the organiser within Fáilte Isteach, occupies a central mediating role. However, less unequivocal are the tutors' attitudes towards the management of the centre, either via themselves or the students. For instance 33% of tutors agree with the statement 'tutors should be involved in all aspects

[24] As a methodological aside, the data set is too small to be able to undertake a more sophisticated (and more importantly trustworthy), statistical analysis to tease out these assumptions. As such we shall remain on the side of caution in this respect and stay with a descriptive reading of the data.

of running the centre'[25] and a similarly low response (32%) was given to the statement 'Students need to be involved in the running of the centre'. However, roughly the same proportions 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' and 'neither agreed not disagreed' with both statements. Table 5.15 below shows a crosstabulation between these two items. This is useful as it shows a more nuanced relationship between two statements in that 20% of tutors agree with both statements and that 24% disagreed.

Table 5.15 Crosstabulation of 'Tutors should be involved in all aspects of running the centre' by 'Students need to be involved in the running of the centre' (%) [n=138]*

Students need to be involved in the running of the centre	Tutors should be involved in all aspects of running the centre		
	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree
Disagree	24	4	8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7	20	9

*Response categories have been merged due to small numbers in cells.

The next set of items shown in the table below, are those that are related to the issue of tutor qualifications and training.

Table 5.16: Tutor Training and the issue of Qualifications (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The training I receive from Fáilte Isteach is appropriate for my role as a tutor	4	20	26	46	3
For Fáilte Isteach to attain its goals, tutors should have formal teaching qualifications	21	48	20	7	4
I would like Fáilte Isteach to provide regular training sessions to support my work as a tutor	1	11	21	49	18
Experienced tutors should be encouraged to mentor new tutors	0	5	17	50	28

[25] As a methodological aside, the statement is phrased in this way as we would argue that the tutors are involved in the running of the centre by virtue of them being tutors – this was reflected in the interview data which informed the questionnaire design.

There should be opportunities to meet with tutors from other centres to share our practice	1	4	30	52	13

There are two main things to initially note from the above table and that is 1) a good proportion of the tutors are generally satisfied with the training provided by Fáilte Isteach (though this view is not shared by a quarter of the sample), and 2) they would like more of it. What is quite striking is a strong level of disagreement (69%) with the statement concerning the relationship between Fáilte Isteach and the need for formal teaching qualifications. There also appears to be strong support for the use of mentoring between new and experienced tutors (78%). However, by using the categories of whether or not a tutor reported having a teaching qualification and their length of time as a tutor, differences start to emerge across the responses. Those tutors with teaching qualifications had a higher mean rank score (66.9) in comparison to those without (55.2) on the item asking about formal teaching qualifications which was statistically significant[26]. The same was also found for the statement on sharing practice with other tutors: those with qualifications had a mean rank of 66.2 compared with 54.9[27]. Although the statement on the appropriateness of the Fáilte Isteach training generated a relatively large difference between the two groups (qualified = 54.9; non-qualified = 65.0) it was not statistically significant. However, (as every first year PhD student should know), because the result is not statistically significant does not mean to say it is empirically irrelevant. The concern over training was discussed in the interviews and although the non-qualifieds (to put it simply) and the qualifieds did share reservations, by far the largest of these came from the latter group. However, it is not surprising, given their experience of being involved in teacher education programmes, that they would have a more critical take on the process. What was interesting was the closeness of the mean ranks (62 and 60) between these two groups around the issue of mentoring and a desire for further training provided by Fáilte Isteach; both of which we will come back to in our final chapter. The final table draws together the rest of the items and covers a mix of issues pertinent to the work of Fáilte Isteach more generally.

[26] Due to the way the data is scaled a higher mean rank score indicates a higher level of agreement. The test statistic U=1434 with a p=.050.

[27] U=1418, p=.053.

Table 5.17: Working with Fáilte Isteach (%)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The principles of Fáilte Isteach are well meaning but do not work in practice	1	65	14	11	1
I am clear as to my role as a tutor as defined by Fáilte Isteach	1	5	7	73	14
The language needs of new students should be formally assessed when they first visit a centre	1	16	14	48	21
Students should be charged a fee for attending the centre	30	24	21	14	10
Other than the certificate of attendance Fáilte Isteach should not get involved in formally accrediting the attainment of students	4	9	20	50	18

In taking the first item, it can be seen that the tutors have a strong sense that the project 'works in practice'. They are also certain as to the parameters of the role; 87% of the participants 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I am clear as to my role as a tutor as defined by 'Fáilte Isteach'. This is important in two respects: 1) tutors are able to balance the twin aims of Fáilte Isteach (the pedagogical and the social) and 2), that the Fáilte Isteach programme has a transparent position on what the role should be about which is capable of being translated into practice. This second point is to a certain extent reflected in their response to the first statement on the table, as the 'principles' of Fáilte Isteach are very much articulated through the tutor and their work with students. This was also evident in the interview and observational data as well. The issue of whether or not students should be charged a fee was a contentious one, which came up during the interviews and was subsequently included as a questionnaire item. 54% of tutors disagreed with the statement 'students should be charged a fee for attending the centre' with around one quarter agreeing with it. A final issue, which arose throughout our preliminary discussions with Fáilte Isteach, was that of the accreditation of student attainment. 66.6% of tutors disagreed with the statement 'other than the certificate of attendance Fáilte Isteach should not get involved in formally accrediting the attainment of students'. A small proportion, 12% were in agreement with the statement. It was seen as being deeply problematic in the interviews as it brought into question what might be the future direction of Fáilte Isteach more generally? A shift into the realms of formal

accreditation for Fáilte Isteach may generate a number of organisational as well as ideological issues around role and purpose.

We also asked via two open-ended questions for tutors to indicate 1) what three things worked well for them as tutors and 2) what three changes could be made to the project to provide better support for their work. Both these questions generated 660 responses which fell into the following categories.

Positive aspects of the project:

- Good working relationships with fellow tutors, organisers, students and Failte Isteach co-ordinators
- Positive appraisal of the teaching materials
- Flexibility of the project re. the structuring of their teaching and learning
- Continuous attendance of the students
- Streaming of students into competency groups (beginner, intermediate and advanced)

Areas for improvement:

- More training for tutors
- Meetings amongst tutors: both within and across centres
- Streaming of students into competency groups (where this does not occur)
- ICT provision
- More and better quality materials
- More frequent contact with Fáilte Isteach co-ordinators

We have included a selection of the tutors' comments in Appendix 5.

Conclusions and recommendations

The recommendations below are based on our consideration of the data generated during the course of the study. Most of them are of an incremental nature as we have argued in this report, that the project generally works well and is well regarded by most of the participants in this study. The recommendations are focused on both the centres and Third Age and are intended to develop and augment existing practice, rather than suggest any radical overhaul of the programme. The more significant of them applies to Third Age rather than the centres. As we found, whilst the relationship between the centres and Third Age is very good, there are areas of practice that require attention. Some of these are organisational and others require making a financial investment. The decentralised model between the centres and Third Age works well, but as we have observed in the section relating to the organisers, there are different contexts in which they are embedded. Although this is probably not news to Third Age, it does in relation to both day-to-day operations and any strategic planning need to form part of the doxa. This raises questions around the sustainability of the project in its current form and is, we would argue, based on the need to provide a more structured relationship between Third Age and the centres. This is more an outcome of size, distribution and subsequent diversity of centres; in short the success of the project may well have reached a saturation point in its current state. This is not about constructing a contractual relationship based on a series of obligations and commitments, but more about providing a set of well-defined supports. This can come in three main forms: 1) written materials, 2) peripatetic and 3), quality assurance. As a final observation, we are very sensitive to the fact (and Third Age notwithstanding), that the project is built around the work of volunteers who in the case of tutors, give two hours of their time a week and organisers who give approximately five to six hours per week. Hence, any of the recommendations we make are set within this context. Our suggestions are intended to provide all those involved in the project a set of 'thinking tools' as how to both consolidate the work of the project, as well as inform its future development.

Materials

Our recommendation of the need to provide pedagogic materials to centres and tutors would not come as any great surprise to the Third Age Fáilte Isteach co-ordinators. We would see this as being one of key roles of Fáilte Isteach and potentially, where the uniqueness of the project can be developed. We would also see it as being the main

concrete contribution to the work of the centres. In extending our ‘glue’ metaphor, the teaching and learning materials are the link between students and teachers. Although some tutors use their own materials, those supplied by Third Age are also the mainstay for others. Even though the materials currently provided were reasonably well regarded, they were not seen as being rich enough in variety. In addition, the material needs to be regularly reviewed and up-dated, as both tutors and organisers commented on them being used quite quickly.

Other materials that are essential to develop is a handbook for organisers. A lot of expertise has been built up over the lifetime of the project, which means there is a corpus of good practice (as well not-so-good practice), which can be brought together in a single and importantly, easy to use text. For example, the setting up of a new centre and particularly for the ‘sole trader’ organisers can be a complex proposition. A handbook to support this process would be very beneficial. Here we would see the role of new-organisers being ‘paired-up’ with an experienced organiser to mentor them through the early stages of establishing a centre. This should not be an onerous relationship if there is a clear ‘job description’ so to speak, for the mentor and mentee. Having this kind of model would also alleviate the national co-ordinators from getting involved in the minutiae of setting up centres. Again, this does not mean that they should withdraw from the process, but it would allow them to take on more of an oversight role. A handbook of this kind would codify practice and allow for a degree of harmonization of practice across the project. However, it is essential that centres continue to develop organically and adapt their own practice to suit their local context. Hence any handbook that is developed should be there to support and guide practice and not direct it in a prescriptive fashion.

We would also recommend the development of a handbook for tutors. Similar to the organisers a lot of very good practice has been developed and a short handbook that is a distillation and synthesis of this experience would in our opinion be very welcome by tutors and organisers. Again we would see these as being done in consultation with tutors. From our experience, a well-written handbook can form part of the ‘institutional memory’, where much tacit knowledge is put in a usable and articulated form which can be passed on. It would provide tutors with a substantive ‘manual’ which would not only help define the role, but could also be used as a springboard into working with students. Though in terms of role definition, most tutors were very clear as to what they were doing and what was expected of them. We would also suggest that experienced tutors mentor

new tutors for the first few weeks when they join a centre. Again a handbook could support this process thereby removing any excessive variation in practice.

Peripatetic support for tutors and centres

The work of the national co-ordinators in trying to support the centres seems an onerous task. From the data, tutors and especially organisers are supportive and well disposed to their work. However, these roles need to be better defined than they currently are. We would like to see a separation of the organisational and the pedagogical. Put simply, Third Age needs to seriously consider employing a well qualified and experienced ESL teacher, but more importantly one who is attuned and sensitive to the aims and objectives of the project. As well as provide in situ support for centres, we would envisage this role as being key in the development of teaching and learning materials and the co-ordination of training for both new and experienced tutors. Training also needs to designed to fit the context in which tutors are working. For example, some tutors only work with 'advanced' or 'beginners', therefore it would be efficacious to target support towards specific modes of working. This is not to preclude dealing with generic concerns such as different modes of assessment and providing feedback, but the learning needs of different groups do require different strategies and techniques. This person would largely free-up the three national co-ordinators to focus on the organisational and managerial aspects of the project. Additionally and more importantly, it should give the co-coordinators sufficient space and time to take on a much greater development role in terms of the project. Any further expansion would be exceedingly problematic given the current levels of resourcing. It may be useful for the national co-ordinators to explicitly work with a designated group of centres and be identified as the main contact people for the organisers.

Network building

We would also recommend that Third Age invest time and resources in building networks in two main directions. Firstly, it would be efficacious to develop a sustainable network amongst organisers. As we have argued above, we would see organisers as the pivotal group in the project who would welcome the development of mechanisms to facilitate their coming together as a group or groups either locally or nationally. This we would suggest could be a mix of the virtual (the use of the Third Age's website, social networking and so on) as well as the physical i.e. meeting which could be organised on a local or national basis. This does not need to be onerous or demanding in terms of an

organiser's commitment, but it would provide an arena whereby they and Third Age can come together both on an *ad hoc* (re. social networking) and regular basis. The details of this would need to be elaborated on in conjunction with organisers and the national co-ordinators. If the project itself is intended to be about bridging and bonding (as well as linguistic capital to coin a phrase) for students and tutors, the same logic should also be applied to the relationship between Third Age and the organisers.

The second set of networks involves the national co-ordinators developing formal links with local organisations such as Vocational and Educational Committees and community partnerships. This would allow the co-ordinators to not only develop an awareness of what was happening in terms of other programmes and projects, but also help build links with Fáilte Isteach centres into these more formal organisations. Issues of local politics, colonisation and territoriality notwithstanding, the discussions with the Portlaoise co-coordinators provided a good rationale (as well as being acutely aware of the potential hazards involved), as to why these kinds of links would be beneficial to the project. In this model, the organisers were able to link students into other programmes which they were either running or knew of. However, we would stress that centres should retain their autonomy in terms of whether or not and to what extent they wish to be involved with other organisations. The tightness and/or looseness of any arrangement should be negotiated with other organisations on a centre-by-centre basis. The status of Third Age as a well-respected national organisation should help centres nurture these links where they wish to be developed. Obviously this is a role we would see coming under the remit of the national co-ordinators. This network building and information 'gathering' dimension to the work would allow co-ordinators to create a 'stock' of local knowledge that could feed into the work of the centre. The other obvious advantage to networking is simply around the sharing of practice amongst tutors. From our visits to centres and discussions with tutors, a lot of interesting practices have been introduced or developed. Again a simple and cost effective way for tutors to exchange ideas and resources would be via the Third Age website.

Quality assurance

In this context quality assurance is simply concerned with providing a framework in which both Failite Isteach, the centres, tutors and students can work together. Mostly this can be achieved by the introduction of handbooks for tutors and organisers, the proposed service level agreement, as well as continuing with the regular meetings and centre visits. Some of the centres we spoke to did met with their respective tutors to discuss and

evaluate their work. In any teaching and learning situation this would be seen as good practice and we would suggest that Failite Isteach strongly continue to encourage all centres to build this into their work. The most obvious way to do this would be to allocate an hour out of the usual two-hour session. A framework for discussion can be part of the organisers' handbook to provide a degree of purpose and structure. These would include such areas as student recruitment and retention, the teaching materials, training needs for tutors, student assessment and so on. This 'space' would also be useful for training activities as well if so desired by a centre. We would also suggest that some of the outcomes of these meetings, can be 'fed forward' to Third Age on a regular basis. This will provide Third Age with a systematic and regular overview of what tutors and organisers are planning and/or need support for. A further aspect to this would be for centres to generate student feedback about the project more generally as to its impact upon them. Much of this is implicit in the work which tutors undertake, but it may be useful for centres to set aside time to systematically consult with students on how they are engaging with the project and how it is impacting upon their lives. Again, we would see this data as being useful in informing the centre in terms of evaluating its practice and future developments. We would also suggest that brief and of course anonymised (from the student point of view) summaries be shared with Third Age. Again the intention is to help them gain a systematic view of work in the centres via the student perspective. We would not advise going down the route of introducing anonymised student evaluation forms which would be common practice in a formal post-compulsory education setting. We would argue that this would be contrary to the ethos of Failtie Isteach.

There is a good store of tacit knowledge, which was available to us as part of this study, but not much is kept in a standardised form that we know of. We would suggest that as part of any quality assurance process, generating and updating basic information about the centres would be very beneficial for Third Age. Some centres we spoke to did keep records and others did not. It may be useful to move to a situation where there was a uniform procedure across centres to collect basic information. At the most, all Third Age need to know are the number of students, number of tutors (which is already collated), the nationalities of students and perhaps the number of students on each level i.e. beginner, intermediate and advanced. This should be sufficient to get an overall picture of what is happening nationally and again be helpful in informing decision-making. There is no need at the 'national' level for individual student data to be collected or kept. We would strongly advise against doing this due to data protection issues.

The other aspect of quality assurance is usually seen as quality control; that is applying some kind of outcome-based measures to assess whether or not specified standards have been reached. We would also not advise Third Age to engage in quality control work of this sort. Given the broad aims of the project, its voluntary nature and the fluidity of student participation, even trying to generate a sensible set of outcomes which can be easily and also effectively implemented, would be a highly complex and time-consuming undertaking. There did not appear to be any great enthusiasm for accreditation of student attainment beyond the certificate of attendance. We would endorse this view as it would not only undermine the basic principles of the project, but would be exceedingly problematic to develop. If anything, the uniqueness and value of Failte Isteach is that it does not function in this manner. We would also argue that the programmes' appeal to most tutors and students with whom we have had contact with, is that it is free from the pressures which a more formal and outcome orientated structure would create.

Work of the tutors and the centres

Lastly, we have some recommendations concerning the work of the centres themselves.

Tutors should acquaint themselves with learners' cultures to better understand their perspectives and expectations both inside and outside the classroom (e.g., traditional literacy practices, gender roles, teacher and learner roles, religious beliefs and customs). Acknowledge and respect differences. When discussing cultural differences and traditions in class, focus on descriptions rather than judgments. In general, adult learners are practical, purposeful and self-directed learners (Shank and Terrill, 1995) but a tutor must create a classroom environment in which learners feel comfortable using and taking risks with English. Use activities that ask learners to work together or share information to build a sense of familiarity and community. Make sure the physical environment is as comfortable as possible. Avoid constant error correction and include activities that focus on overall ability to communicate meaning. Recycle topics or activities that motivate learners.

Adult learners need to use the language and so give learners opportunities for meaningful interaction and natural communication in the target language that reflect or relate to their lives (e.g., role-playing a doctor/patient exchange or in a bank, etc.). Use authentic materials in activities whenever possible (e.g., listening for details in a recorded telephone message or reading classified ads from the local newspaper). Authentic materials work as a motivating feature and as a link between students' general

knowledge of language and their individual and professional language needs. If possible, extra-curricular activities such as cultural activities and field trips should be encouraged as these provide good authentic language learning situations.

Adult learners tend not to require a concentrated focus on grammar, forms and structures. However, because many English language learners may have studied English grammar and are familiar with the terms describing language components, tutors should be prepared, when appropriate, to answer learners' questions about sentence structure and vocabulary. Tutors need to think about the purpose of each lesson (e.g., is it important that the learner produce a specific grammar point or communicate an idea?). Error correction by the tutor must reflect this purpose. For example, if the focus of the lesson is a doctor/patient exchange (as mentioned above) that involves use of past tense verbs - correction may simply consist of a repetition of the correct form by the tutor (e.g., "*I am sick last night*" is corrected by, "*Oh, you got sick last night. How did you feel? What Happened?*").

Give learners sufficient time for activities, to communicate, and to monitor their performance. Integrate lessons on grammar, structures, and language rules that are relevant to the communication task at hand but do not try, in the words of one tutor, to "*do too much*" in every lesson as this can be overwhelming.

There is a silent period during which learners are absorbing the new language prior to producing it. The length of this period may vary for each learner. Allow learners time to adjust to the new language and begin to internalise its sounds and patterns. Use activities that allow them to demonstrate comprehension without having to produce language (e.g., say new vocabulary and ask learners to hold up picture cards that illustrate each word).

Remember that culture can play a role in all facets of language, including response time. Many English language learners will come from cultures where silence is not uncomfortable. When this factor is coupled with the reality of a slower processing time for listening comprehension in a second language, it suggests that waiting after asking a question (possibly as long as 10 seconds) before repeating or restating the question is advisable.

Tutors need to use visuals to support their instruction. English language learners need context in their learning process. Using gestures, expressions, and pictures makes words

and concepts concrete and connections more obvious and memorable. Tutors should encourage learners to do the same as they try to communicate meaning.

Tutors need to model tasks before asking thier learners to do them. Learners need to become familiar with vocabulary, conversational patterns and grammar structures before producing them. Demonstrate a task before asking learners to respond.

Students should be encouraged to work in small groups or one-to-one with a peer as much as possible though one-to-one activities with the tutor are suitable where the student's language proficiency requires it or where the tutor judges it appropriate.

Progress for language learners can be slow and incremental. Learners need to know that they are moving forward. Any assessment of students must be appropriate. Make sure expectations are realistic; create opportunities for success; set short-term as well as long-term goals; and help learners recognise and acknowledge their own progress. It is axiomatic that progress will be delayed for those students who do not attend on a regular basis.

Summary of the main recommendations

- The development of specific handbooks for centre organisers and tutors
- The development of a mentoring system between new and experienced tutors
- Employment of a qualified and experienced ESL teacher who can take the lead on developing and reviewing teaching materials, provide differentiated and generic training to tutors
- Regular training for tutors which is tailored to fit their needs and circumstances
- Training for organisers and job descriptions specifying the role
- The development of a network for organisers and tutors (both virtual and physical)
- Provide financial support for stand alone centres who are less 'locked into' existing structures etc.
- Support the standalone centres in making connections with other local community groups or organisations
- The development of a basic national database
- Avoid formal accreditation of student attainment and continue with the certificate of attendance
- Reaffirm the conversational and oral language aims of the project
- The development of a national policy around student contributions
- The development of a national policy around student attendance

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Appendix 1: The Tutor Questionnaire

Part 1 Your Motivation and Reasons for Being an Fáilte Isteach Tutor

The following statements are concerned with your motivations and reasons for becoming a tutor. Please tick the box that best represents **your** opinion.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I see my involvement as a tutor as a way of making my local community more inclusive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteering is a good thing to do in its own right	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a tutor I believe that it is essential for anyone living and/or working in Ireland to be proficient in English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I get personal satisfaction from being a Fáilte Isteach tutor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I respect the values of Fáilte Isteach	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I volunteer because I think the government is not doing enough to support this particular group of people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I enjoy interacting with people from different cultural groups	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being a volunteer is an integral part of my own values and beliefs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 2 Your Approach to Teaching and Learning as a Tutor

These next set of statements are concerned with your approach to and views on, teaching and learning as a Fáilte Isteach tutor. Please tick the box which best represents **your** opinion.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My role as a tutor is more about building relationships with students than providing content & skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I adjust what I do as a tutor in light of feedback from my students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I encourage my students to practise their language skills outside the class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel confident in assessing the learning needs of my students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find the materials from Fáilte Isteach suitable for use with intermediate students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I encourage students to bring in their own materials to discuss	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find that students learn best when provided with structured activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The material provided by Fáilte Isteach is culturally appropriate for my students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find the materials from Fáilte Isteach suitable for use with beginner students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find the materials from Fáilte Isteach suitable for use with advanced students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There needs to be a greater diversity of material for tutors than is currently supplied by Failte Isteach	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In general students enjoy coming to the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I normally provide my students with feedback (oral and/or written) as to their progress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is important that I try to integrate the content of what I teach into the lives of the students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find that students learn best when they are grouped by ability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I usually bring in my own materials to use with students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In general I try to adapt my teaching to suit the needs of the students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find that my students learn best through discussion with each other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In general my students are well motivated to learn English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students should be supplied with a 'workbook' to chart their progress which they can bring to each session	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I experiment with different teaching styles (e.g. games, pair work)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students get to practice and develop their language skills in a non-judgmental environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find it difficult working with groups of mixed ability students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I normally work with mixed ability (e.g. beginner, intermediate) groups of students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It would be helpful to my work as a tutor if students committed themselves to attending on a regular basis when they first come to the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I encourage students to help to support each other's learning during the session	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 3 Outcomes for students

This next section is a series of statements asking for your views on the impact of Fáilte Isteach for the students. Please tick the response which most closely matches **your** opinion.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my students are more part of the local community as a result of coming to the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students' attendance at the centre has helped them in their place of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students tell me that they are more involved in the local community as result of attending the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students' involvement in the centre has helped them in dealing with state agencies (e.g. the Gardaí, revenue office, local schools)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students were already well included in the community before attending the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students have made new friends from outside their own language community as a result of attending the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Successful completion of the sessions opens up new work opportunities for students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My local community is accepting of non-Irish people irrespective of their English language skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of their involvement in the centre, students are more confident in their day-to-day activities (shopping, visiting the post office etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 4 Some statements about working with Fáilte Isteach

This section is a series of statements which asks you about your views of Fáilte Isteach more generally. Please tick the response that most closely matches **your** opinion.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The principles of Fáilte Isteach are well meaning but do not work in practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am clear as to my role as a tutor as defined by Fáilte Isteach	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students should be charged a fee for attending the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My centre is well organised	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tutors should be involved in all aspects of running the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students need to be involved in the running of the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The language needs of new students should be formally assessed when they first visit a centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Experienced tutors should be encouraged to mentor new tutors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My centre and its facilities are appropriate for my work as a tutor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The training I receive from Fáilte Isteach is appropriate for my role as a tutor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
For Fáilte Isteach to attain its goals, tutors should have formal teaching qualifications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There should be opportunities to meet with tutors from other centres to share our practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Fáilte Isteach website is easy for me to navigate and use as a tutor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fáilte Isteach is responsive to tutors' feedback concerning the teaching materials	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like Fáilte Isteach to provide regular training sessions to support my work as a tutor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other than the 'certificate of attendance', Fáilte Isteach should not get involved in formally accrediting the	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

attainment of students					

Please could you indicate **three** key things that in your opinion **work well** for you as a Fáilte Isteach tutor (e.g. the organisation of your centre, the 'resource box' etc.).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please could you indicate **three** areas which **could be improved** upon to help you as a Fáilte Isteach tutor.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Part 5: Personal Information (This is for statistical purposes only)

Your gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Your age (at last birthday): _____

What is (or was if now retired) your occupation? _____

Please can you give your location (county): _____

Please can you indicate your highest educational qualification?

Intermediate/Junior Leaving Certificate ☐ Leaving Certificate ☐

Non-degree course (e.g. national diploma) ☐ Degree ☐

Postgraduate Diploma ☐ Masters ☐ PhD/Doctorate

Other: _____

Do you hold any teaching qualifications? (E.g. Higher Diploma in Education) Yes ☐ No ☐

If 'yes' please can you indicate what this is: _____

For how long have you been a volunteer tutor for Fáilte Isteach? Year(s) _____ Months _____

Do you for the foreseeable future, plan to continue being a volunteer tutor? Yes ☐ No ☐

_____

Very many thanks for taking the time and effort to complete the questionnaire. Please send the questionnaire back to the School of Education in TCD in the prepaid and addressed envelope.

If you would be willing to participate in this study then please complete the section below.

I would like to participate in an interview (this can be done by telephone) ☐

Name:

Telephone:

Email:

Appendix 2: Tutor Interview Schedule

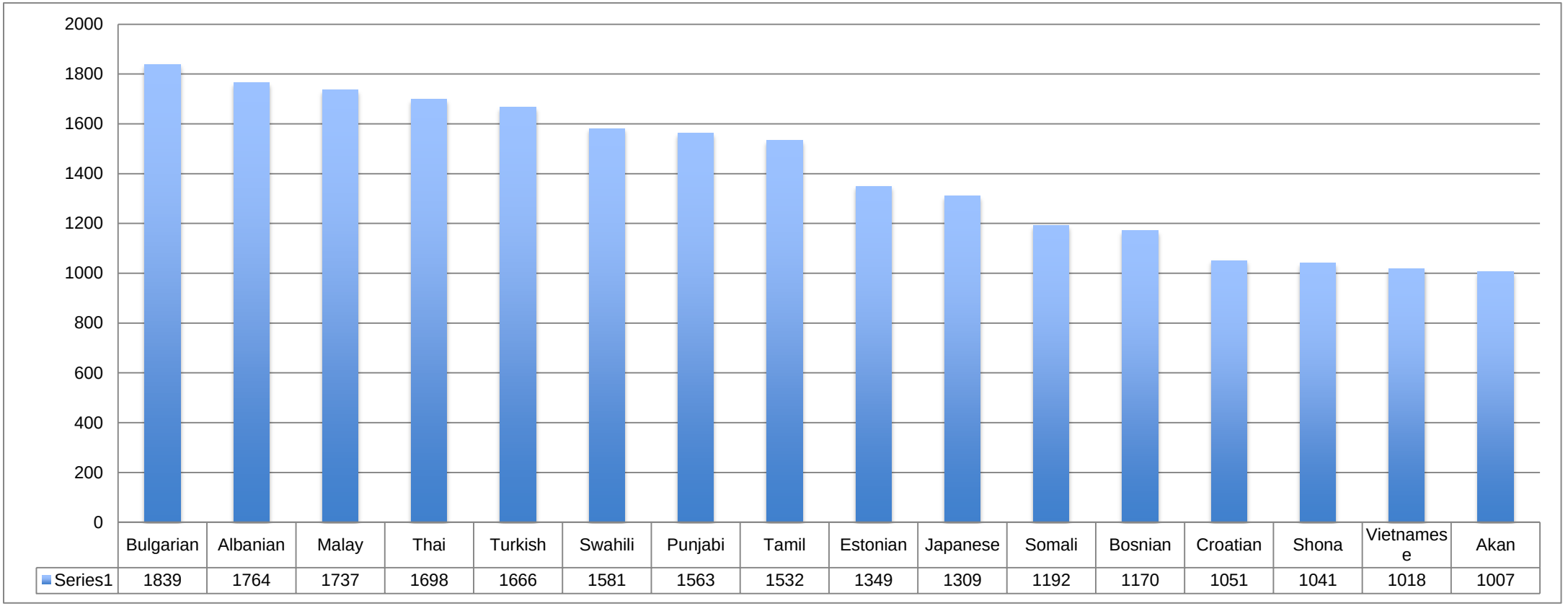
1. Please could you briefly tell me something about your own background? (age, educational, work, volunteering etc)
2. How long have you been a Failte Isteach volunteer?
3. Please could you tell me about how you came to be involved in Fáilte Isteach?
    a. How did you hear about the organisation?
    b. What was your experience of the recruitment and training process
4. What motivated you to get involved as a tutor?
5. Could you outline your role as a tutor – talk me through a typical session, how do you prepare for a session, you approach to working with students, assessment of students needs & progress.
6. What has been your experience so far of: the teaching materials supplied by Failte Isteach, the organisation of the centre, the training you received etc.
7. What do you see as the key impact(s) of your work as a tutor on the students?
    a. To what extent do you think this has realised the aims of Failte Isteach?
8. How do you think the students view the work of Failte Isteach?
9. What do you personally get from being a tutor?
10. What do you see as the positive aspects of the Fáilte Isteach programme?
11. What do you see as the less positive aspects of the Fáilte Isteach programme?
12. How would you like to see the programme develop? In the short term, in the long term.

Appendix 3: Organiser Interview Schedule

1) Please could you outline the historical background of the centre (date started, how was it initially set up, acquisition of funding, initial involvement with Third Age)
2) Please could you outline your role as centre organiser?
    a. How long have you been an organiser
    b. What was your motivation to take on the role
    c. What are the day to day activities
3) How is the centre resourced (e.g. funding)
4) Is the physical environment of the centre sufficient for your needs as a Failte Isteach centre?
5) What is the relationship between the centre and Failte Isteach?
    a. Communication
    b. Training for tutors
    c. Training for organisers
    d. Teaching materials
6) What is your approach to the recruitment and retention of students?
7) What is your approach to the recruitment & retention of tutors?
8) What is your approach to the organisation of the tutors and their work with students?
9) What is your approach organisation and distribution of the students with tutors?
10) How do you think the students view the work of Failte Isteach?
11) How do you think the tutors view the work of Failte Isteach?
12) To what extent do you think the work of the centre has realised the aims of Failte Isteach?
13) How do you view the sustainability of the centre?
14) What do you see as the positive aspects of the Fáilte Isteach programme?
15) What do you see as the less positive aspects of the Fáilte Isteach programme?
16) How would you like to see the Failte Isteach programme develop?
    a. In the short term,
    b. in the long term.
17) Are there are any areas that we haven't discussed that you would like to comment on?

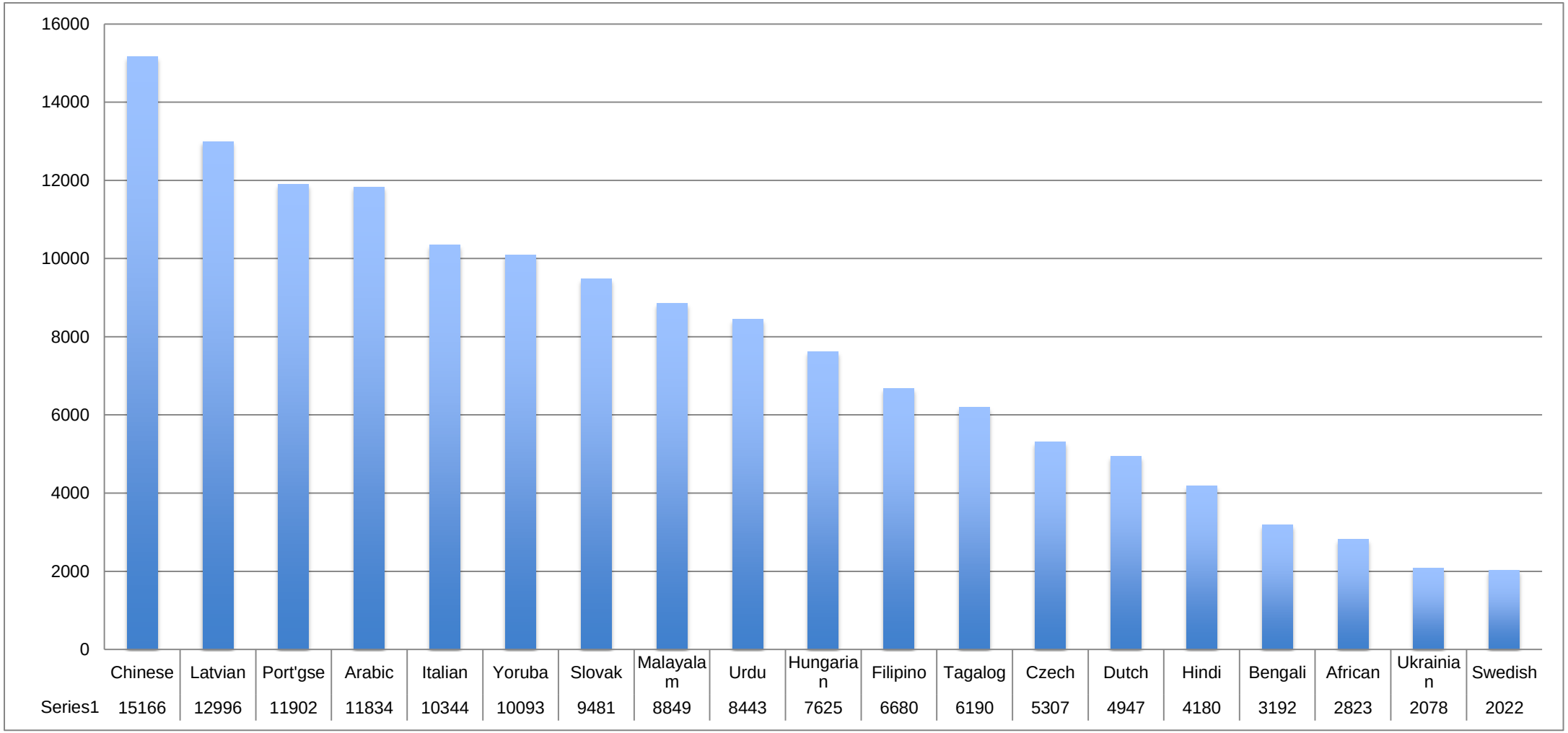
Appendix 4: Selected CSO 2011 Census Data

Nationalities Resident in Ireland between 16,000 and 5,000 people



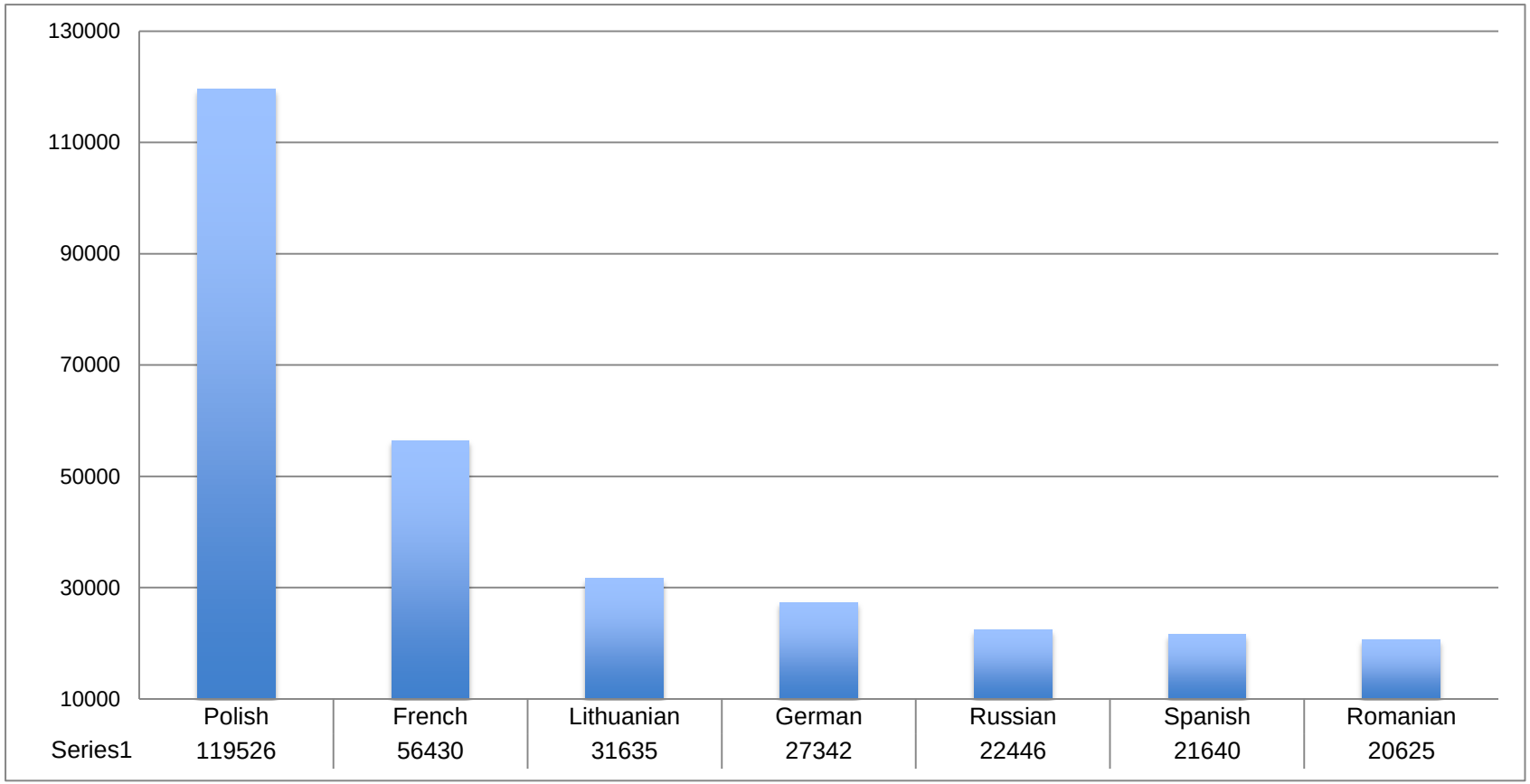
	Bulgarian	Albanian	Malay	Thai	Turkish	Swahili	Punjabi	Tamil	Estonian	Japanese	Somali	Bosnian	Croatian	Shona	Vietnamese	Akan
Series1	1839	1764	1737	1698	1666	1581	1563	1532	1349	1309	1192	1170	1051	1041	1018	1007

Nationalities Resident in Ireland between 16,000 and 2,000 people

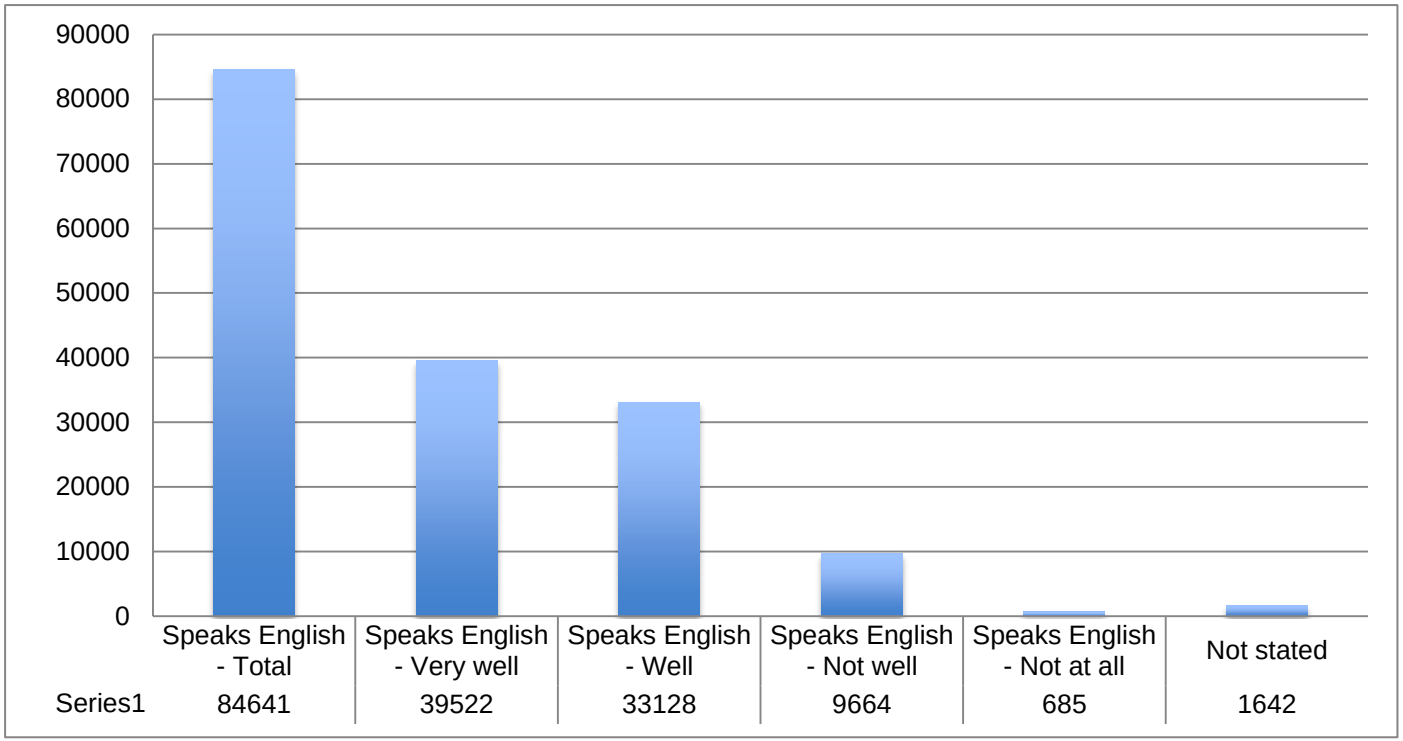


	Chinese	Latvian	Port'gse	Arabic	Italian	Yoruba	Slovak	Malayalam	Urdu	Hungarian	Filipino	Tagalog	Czech	Dutch	Hindi	Bengali	African	Ukrainian	Swedish
Series1	15166	12996	11902	11834	10344	10093	9481	8849	8443	7625	6680	6190	5307	4947	4180	3192	2823	2078	2022

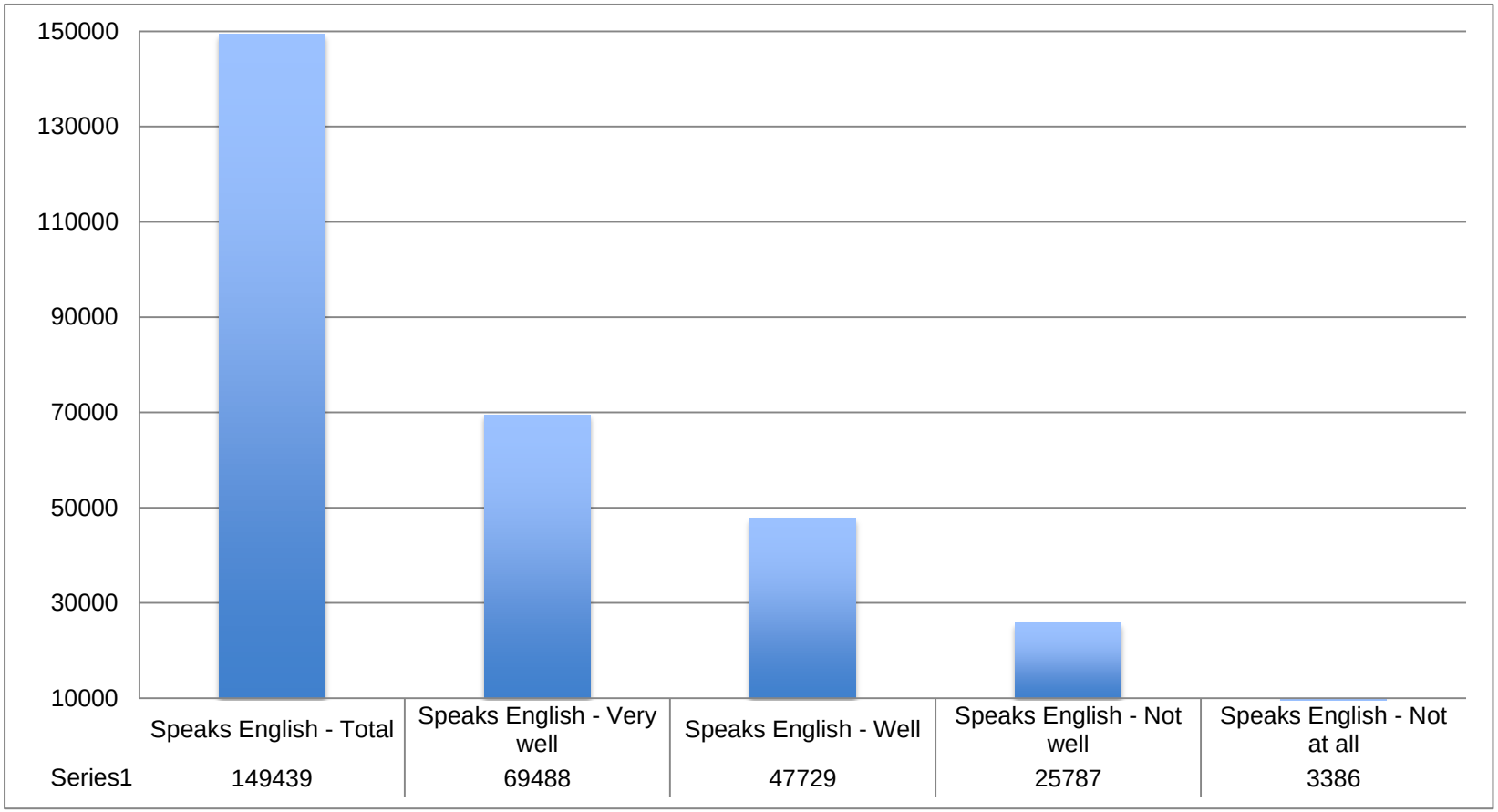
Nationalities Resident in Ireland between 20,000 and 120,000 people



Self-report on competency in spoken English: individuals 15 – 29 years of age



Self-report on competency in spoken English: individuals 30 years of age and over



People with nationalities other than Irish classified by age

Nationality	Total	Age group						
		0 - 14 years	15 - 24 years	25 - 34 years	35 - 44 years	45 - 54 years	55 - 64 years	65 years and over
EU	386,764	53,469	45,189	132,819	73,598	42,832	21,992	16,865
Belgium	1,071	114	103	283	259	140	110	62
Bulgaria	1,759	184	201	575	517	199	68	15
Czech Republic	5,451	587	702	2,635	994	382	128	23
Estonia	2,560	369	355	1,076	414	239	90	17
France	9,749	778	1,660	3,642	2,405	811	317	136
Germany	11,305	1,074	1,243	3,119	2,457	1,686	894	832
Hungary	8,034	979	786	3,918	1,690	499	140	22
Italy	7,656	569	615	3,126	2,151	675	291	229
Latvia	20,593	3,660	3,330	7,164	3,640	2,099	604	96
Lithuania	36,683	6,424	5,565	14,140	6,198	3,385	842	129
Netherlands	4,313	496	372	769	949	801	534	392
Poland	122,585	22,204	12,357	60,827	17,915	6,932	2,131	219
Portugal	2,739	331	274	1,045	724	245	89	31
Romania	17,304	2,450	2,849	6,223	4,316	1,085	305	76
Slovakia	10,801	1,136	1,434	5,825	1,536	687	156	27
Spain	6,794	532	756	2,992	1,932	367	125	90
Sweden	1,713	127	313	637	355	135	96	50
UK	112,259	11,138	11,866	13,648	24,320	22,106	14,877	14,304
Other	3,395	317	408	1,175	826	359	195	115
Rest of Europe	16,307	2,110	2,005	5,508	4,275	1,655	534	220
Russia	3,896	617	508	1,162	937	476	162	34
Ukraine	3,343	385	312	1,100	1,090	375	74	7
Moldova	2,881	347	405	1,066	743	265	49	6
Turkey	1,029	83	89	475	296	72	9	5
Other	5,158	678	691	1,705	1,209	467	240	168
Africa	41,642	7,542	6,313	10,369	13,038	3,550	588	242
Nigeria	17,642	3,752	2,415	3,120	6,581	1,607	127	40
South Africa	4,872	664	705	1,235	1,373	580	219	96
Mauritius	2,844	232	583	1,349	502	158	15	5
Congo	1,770	308	401	336	533	158	25	9
Zimbabwe	1,537	290	253	442	388	128	24	12
Sudan	1,470	398	147	453	358	91	17	6
Somalia	1,178	199	356	298	205	80	24	16
Ghana	1,158	219	129	287	406	96	15	6
Egypt	1,055	215	125	364	228	95	19	9
Algeria	1,047	133	59	249	466	118	19	3
Other	7,069	1,132	1,140	2,236	1,998	439	84	40
Asia	65,579	10,406	8,961	24,564	15,428	4,676	1,157	387
India	16,986	3,922	1,018	7,468	3,619	759	158	42
Philippines	12,791	2,421	1,180	1,991	5,002	1,759	399	39
China	10,896	580	2,258	5,951	1,450	451	142	64
Pakistan	6,847	1,087	907	2,873	1,386	439	108	47
Malaysia	3,295	338	812	1,190	677	203	53	22
Bangladesh	2,319	217	290	1,143	565	91	8	5
Thailand	1,381	181	138	454	468	123	11	6
Iraq	1,081	226	196	244	226	110	40	39
Saudi Arabia	1,029	219	399	311	66	18	12	4
Other	8,954	1,215	1,763	2,939	1,969	723	226	119
America	24,884	3,638	4,655	7,639	4,363	2,451	1,098	1,040
USA	11,015	2,416	1,675	1,788	1,927	1,556	813	840
Brazil	8,704	709	2,113	3,980	1,391	419	57	35
Canada	2,384	200	458	743	425	282	147	129
Other	2,781	313	409	1,128	620	194	81	36
Australia	2,849	373	311	731	845	342	157	90
New Zealand	1,394	163	94	386	496	161	59	35
Other nationalities	4,098	630	571	1,098	876	475	216	232
Multi nationality	840	238	88	193	178	72	37	34
Total	544,357	78,569	68,187	183,307	113,097	56,214	25,838	19,145

People with nationalities other than Irish classified by towns with population of 1,500 or more

Nationality	Total	Aggregate town area										Aggregate rural area
		Total	Dublin City and suburbs	Cork City and suburbs	Limerick City and suburbs	Galway City and suburbs	Waterford City and suburbs	Towns 10,000 and over	Towns 5,000 - 9,999	Towns 3,000 - 4,999	Towns 1,500 - 2,999	
EU	386,764	296,645	101,947	16,913	8,564	9,362	4,507	84,473	37,617	14,943	18,319	90,119
Belgium	1,071	736	427	58	9	12	7	121	40	22	40	335
Bulgaria	1,759	1,585	742	62	42	22	13	444	124	36	100	174
Czech Republic	5,451	4,786	1,485	223	88	165	215	1,694	439	158	319	665
Estonia	2,560	2,287	808	128	61	62	71	688	198	146	125	273
France	9,749	8,181	4,558	960	132	311	64	1,377	363	203	213	1,568
Germany	11,305	7,337	3,464	866	158	307	74	1,500	463	200	305	3,968
Hungary	8,034	7,159	2,871	543	104	209	84	1,562	1,203	363	220	875
Italy	7,656	6,992	4,405	506	78	178	56	1,074	390	136	169	664
Latvia	20,593	18,061	3,918	469	879	512	208	6,558	3,189	1,249	1,079	2,532
Lithuania	36,683	32,203	9,130	1,126	597	744	409	10,692	4,926	2,121	2,458	4,480
Netherlands	4,313	2,460	1,145	148	54	56	31	646	177	72	131	1,853
Poland	122,585	110,503	30,581	6,822	4,543	4,133	1,702	33,884	16,070	5,798	6,970	12,082
Portugal	2,739	2,425	828	222	31	94	18	743	270	75	144	314
Romania	17,304	16,494	10,666	303	140	362	127	3,178	1,065	346	307	810
Slovakia	10,801	9,819	3,370	523	267	292	369	2,709	1,223	476	590	982
Spain	6,794	6,231	3,781	520	145	279	30	966	299	111	100	563
Sweden	1,713	1,411	852	123	26	41	9	207	88	26	39	302
UK	112,259	55,158	17,326	3,075	1,164	1,502	999	15,919	6,914	3,319	4,940	57,101
Other	3,395	2,817	1,590	236	46	81	21	511	176	86	70	578
Rest of Europe	16,307	14,451	6,121	717	411	476	332	3,815	1,382	608	589	1,856
Russia	3,896	3,411	1,356	200	159	132	75	875	308	130	176	485
Ukraine	3,343	2,902	1,129	137	65	48	104	728	335	214	142	441
Moldova	2,881	2,729	1,294	48	27	73	40	722	362	98	65	152
Turkey	1,029	947	417	78	18	30	8	267	65	37	27	82
Other	5,158	4,462	1,925	254	142	193	105	1,223	312	129	179	696
Africa	41,642	38,340	16,583	1,710	927	1,553	817	11,575	2,943	911	1,321	3,302
Nigeria	17,642	16,631	6,250	640	281	737	383	5,888	1,428	426	598	1,011
South Africa	4,872	3,781	1,485	136	44	75	55	1,207	415	130	234	1,091
Mauritius	2,844	2,775	2,224	19	5	19	8	346	103	26	25	69
Congo	1,770	1,657	744	92	65	71	33	402	149	49	52	113
Zimbabwe	1,537	1,365	504	49	27	70	25	458	121	28	83	172
Sudan	1,470	1,401	393	135	99	63	57	572	46	11	25	69
Somalia	1,178	1,138	666	63	77	18	50	219	19	8	18	40
Ghana	1,158	1,065	310	39	39	68	18	439	99	22	31	93
Egypt	1,055	987	505	38	23	27	12	167	115	59	41	68
Algeria	1,047	994	629	51	20	43	22	151	45	18	15	53
Other	7,069	6,546	2,873	448	247	362	154	1,726	403	134	199	523
Asia	65,579	61,541	33,909	3,335	1,821	1,745	993	12,749	3,424	1,517	2,048	4,038
India	16,986	16,096	8,832	824	274	419	268	3,455	966	467	591	890
Philippines	12,791	11,951	7,057	487	220	133	106	2,589	759	302	298	840
China	10,896	10,282	6,104	497	349	263	144	2,064	442	210	209	614
Pakistan	6,847	6,472	3,031	321	391	219	88	1,415	398	136	473	375
Malaysia	3,295	3,100	1,606	247	74	132	46	552	246	82	115	195
Bangladesh	2,319	2,248	679	220	119	116	50	754	126	83	101	71
Thailand	1,381	1,115	380	100	36	20	29	343	113	47	47	266
Iraq	1,081	1,049	735	77	25	21	24	122	22	7	16	32
Saudi Arabia	1,029	1,020	555	60	31	115	115	140	4	-	-	9
Other	8,954	8,208	4,930	502	302	307	123	1,315	348	183	198	746
America	24,884	19,112	10,039	846	329	799	245	3,257	1,638	731	1,228	5,772
USA	11,015	6,842	3,097	482	158	422	74	1,485	448	267	409	4,173
Brazil	8,704	8,023	4,377	71	96	170	143	1,175	939	365	687	681
Canada	2,384	1,846	998	162	43	110	12	281	107	55	78	538
Other	2,781	2,401	1,567	131	32	97	16	316	144	44	54	380
Australia	2,849	1,981	1,039	113	23	89	13	393	141	66	104	868
New Zealand	1,394	969	479	73	15	43	11	203	62	24	59	425
Other nationalities	4,098	3,288	1,173	208	102	148	65	935	356	125	176	810
Multi nationality	840	712	414	46	11	21	7	104	50	36	23	128
Total	544,357	437,039	171,704	23,961	12,203	14,236	6,990	117,504	47,613	18,961	23,867	107,318

Appendix 6: Selected comments from the tutor questionnaire

Key things which in your opinion work well for you as a Fáilte Isteach tutor

- A safe, comfortable and practical place to meet
- Being able to view the lesson plans before class
- Camaraderie of the group - tutors and students
- Centre is a very well organised and well run.
- Commitment of tutors of helping their community
- Conversation as opposed to "Book Learning'
- Feeling appreciated by students and staff
- Freedom to teach classes in whatever manner I please
- Having a break halfway through for tea & coffee
- Having a small room where I am the only tutor working with 4 or 5 students
- Make learning fun
- Materials for teaching English very helpful
- Tutors have feedback from other tutors and their support.
- Our organiser is very effective in welcoming new students into the centre and helping them to settle in
- The premises - location - facilities
- Students who come regularly each week mean it's easier to teach and allow them progress
- The expectations of tutors clearly defined initially helped me focus on what was expected of me as one
- The FI co-ordinator gives great guidance and encouragement and feedback
- The Resource box, with clear indication of Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced
- The resource website
- All tutors made to feel important
- Brainstorming meetings. We came up with some great ideas through the meetings I attended.
- Easy going attitude but good interaction between tutors
- Feedback and meetings every few weeks
- Having ""floating"" tutors, who can adapt to new students
- Having the same students for continuity
- I am given the freedom to modulate my teaching to suit the student
- I have found the support from Third Age to be very good when FI staff were present for the first few weeks of classes to observe and give feedback. This really made me feel more confident.
- Tea break, gives opportunity to socialize and chat with students individually etc.

Areas which could be improved upon to help you as a Fáilte Isteach tutor.

- A book or workbook for each level to work through and track progress
- A meeting with tutors once a month to chat about students levels and improvements and lesson plans.
- A syllabus /guide/ topics to cover for appropriate level
- Access to Internet during tutoring (A) access to online dictionaries (B) access to sites of interest (C) use as a tool in tutoring
- Access to material and games to make learning more interactive for different learning styles i.e. visual learners.
- At times I feel unsure about tow to structure a lesson or even if I am really helping, especially if the student has little or no English. Some further training in this area would help.
- Better physical conditions - more space etc.
- Bit of a jump between beginners materials and intermediate materials
- Failte isteach staff to visit and support tutors
- Feedback from students - how are we performing
- Grammar tuitiion for tutors - (we may know the correct grammar but may not be able to explain it to students)
- Have a more structured teaching plan - rather than just a selection of teaching resourses - Good for non-teachers
- Help perhaps in assessing new students on first arrival, for example, written hand- out tests, prepared by an education expert. The tutors could oversee their completion.
- I think a little homework would not go astray
- I think it is important to include some help to students in learning to write esp those who have no formal schooling
- I would like to do crafts and cooking
- IF WE COULD ACCESS A PHOTOCOPIER TO PRINT MATERIALS
- Inconsistent attendance of students
- Introducing formal language proficiency evaluations for students (Not tests. The evaluation should be an informal relaxed experience for students and a useful guide for their tutors).
- It is much easier when all are at the same level of English
- Lack of 'control' of disruptive students
- Lack of whiteboard/blackboard or computer access (PowerPoint)
- Printing off material is expensive as the logo is too intrusive.
- Provision of contemporary articles from newspapers, magazines
- The contents of the resource box could be greatly improved. I would suggest that centres be supplied with a starter resource box e.g. simple games, a clock, alphabet, number charts etc
- Online forum for tutors (Swap notes, resources, ideas etc)
- The success depends very much on the tutor - some may not be suitable -the person in charge needs to be aware of that and find a way of dealing with it.
- To mix the students with other tutors that would help me more
- lack of communication between tutors
- Training in assessment for co-ordinators and general training in dealing with tutors/students
- Update all material regularly
- Variation in tutor group numbers from week to week

- Weaker students would benefit from extra sessions in my opinion. Two hours once a week is insufficient to meet their needs.
- Perhaps guest "speakers' to stimulate conversation and the expression of students
- Some video materials for discussion at advanced stage
- Perhaps more initial training
- Availability of foreign language dictionaries - particularly helpful for Beginners where Tutor has no familiarity with language (E.g. Chinese, Gudjarati etc)
- More student involvement ie more feedback from students as to where they need help
- Guidelines on handling delicate situations such as those arisen from students coming from countries at war, violence from policial states or drug trafficking, etc.

THIRD AGE

FÁILTE ISTEACH