The application of a conceptual model of school-based implementation to the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme at Irish post-primary level

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this study was to explore the practice of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in-service training and subsequent RSE delivery in schools. This involved examining the implementation process of training and lesson delivery and the identification of facilitating or impeding factors. This study also explored teachers' conceptualisations of school-based programme implementation which is part of the overall study but was also compared to a published model of school-based implementation.

Design/methodology/approach – Using an implementation science conceptual framework, this research study was conducted from a pragmatic viewpoint and subsequently a Mixed Methods (MM) approach was adopted; specifically utilising a triangulation design convergence model from the field of MM research. Resulting from this approach, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to assess: (i) trainers' implementation of in-service training; (ii) teachers' experience of in-service training; (iii) teachers' implementation of RSE lessons; (iv) students experiences of RSE lessons; and (v) contextual level factors at both training and school level. Teachers' conceptualisations of programme implementation were explored through a participatory research process.

Findings – Overall the findings of this study indicate that RSE in-service training was implemented as planned and teachers reported positivity about the training process upon completion of training. Almost all teachers felt equipped to deliver RSE. At school level, students reported positively on RSE lesson delivery. However, the delivery of RSE at school-level was more complex than at training level and barriers were much more evident. This prompts questions about the degree to which teachers were actually equipped with the adequate skills for School-Based Sex Education (SBSE) delivery post-training completion and/or to what extent teachers were supported in RSE delivery. Furthermore, outdated programme content and materials with no evidence of effectiveness or in-built evaluative processes contribute to lessons which lack in relevant content and are not updated with regards sexual rights and citizenship. The teacher-developed schemas identified a number of major categories but the concepts of leadership and support for school-based implementation processes were prioritised.

Practical implications –The results from this study confirm the important role of teacher training for SBSE implementation, particularly in relation to teacher feelings about confidence and preparedness. It also, however highlighted a need to ensure that teachers do not just feel positive about SBSE delivery but are truly equipped with the necessary skill set and operate within a supportive environment. Another implication of this study relates to the important role the school context plays in SBSE programme delivery and should be incorporated in the pre-planning, implementation, and sustainability phases. The findings further emphasised the need for leadership and support at various levels.

Originality/value – Unlike previous SBSE studies focusing on teacher training, this study is unique as it specifically explored implementation fidelity and context at both training level and school level which is an under researched area. In addition, this study specifically studied a group of teachers' experiences of SBSE training and subsequent experience of delivery in the classroom, incorporating pupils views, which is a relatively unique approach to the exploration of SBSE implementation. The results of this exploration highlight that it is not enough to just explore teacher training but also the translation of such training into practice, remaining aware of the various implementation components that impact on delivery.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare/certify that, except where acknowledged, all parts of this thesis were undertaken by myself. The information contained in this thesis has not been used to obtain a degree in this, or another University.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introducing the research

Sexuality education is an internationally accepted approach for the promotion of sexual health and there is an increasing body of evidence on this topic (Rocha, Leal, & Duarte, 2016). The need to provide adequate information through sex education for adolescents is well-documented (Berglas et al., 2016; Blake & Aggleton, 2017; Helmer, Senior, Davison, & Vodic, 2015; Štulhofer, 2016; UNESCO, 2009; 2016a, 2018; Unterhalter et al., 2014; European Expert Group on Sexuality Education, 2016) and although young people learn about sexuality and sexual health from numerous sources, schools play a fundamental role (UNESCO, 2018). The majority of sexuality education programmes are delivered in schools (Browne, 2015; Kirby, Laris, & Rolleri, 2007). In addition, while school-based sexuality education and HIV prevention cannot be viewed as sole strategies to ensure young people's right to sexual and reproductive health and to prevent HIV; school-based programmes are an extremely cost-effective way to support these aims (Kivela, Ketting, & Baltussen, 2013; UNESCO, 2011; 2016a).

Sexuality education programmes that are delivered as intended (with implementation fidelity) have increased chances of achieving the desired benefits for young people's health outcomes in comparison to programmes that do not remain faithful to the original content, design, or delivery techniques (Michielsen et al., 2010; Shepherd et al., 2010; Wight, 2011). There are many challenges with regards implementing sexuality education programmes in schools and understanding what comprises effective implementation of such programmes is a neglected research area (Gugglberger & Inchley, 2012; Pearson et al., 2015). In fact, sexuality education can be theorised as an implementation problem. There is much literature published in the field of sexuality education, ranging from appropriate and effective content to ideal teaching strategies. However, one of the biggest problems lies in the lack of delivery, and even when delivered it is often with variable implementation fidelity exemplified through the omission of core topics or programme components (Mayock, Kitching, Morgan, & Press, 2007; Nic Gabhainn, O'Higgins, & Barry, 2010; Roe, 2010).

In an Irish context, the extant literature has "problematised" the implementation of the statutory sexuality education programme delivered in post-primary schools (Mayock et al, 2007; Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010; Roe, 2010). The programme, Relationships and Sexuality (RSE), has been explored with the identification of facilitating factors but also numerous challenges for the delivery of RSE in post-primary schools (Mayock et al., 2007). Previous research conducted on Irish RSE also highlights gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the underlying reasons for success or failure to deliver the RSE programme (Mayock et al., 2007; Roe, 2010). It is argued that research concerning the relationship between professional preparation and teaching outcomes is scarce (Hammig, Ogletree, & Wycoff-Horn, 2011) and in an Irish context, RSE in-service teacher training has been identified as requiring further exploration as there has been no in-depth research conducted in this area to date (Mayock et al., 2007). More specifically, the translation of RSE in-service teacher training to practice has never been explored. Furthermore, existing research conducted on the implementation of the RSE programme (Mayock et al., 2007), albeit large in scale, has not been theoretically-driven.

Implementation challenges regarding sexuality education programmes, and the need to explore implementation processes of such programmes, are not issues unique to Ireland. In 2018, UNESCO published the *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* (ITGSE); an updated version of the original UNESCO (2009) document. The revised version is voluntary, evidence-based, and intended for country and context-specific adaptation to assist in the implementation of effective sexuality education programmes (UNESCO, 2018). Part of this update involved a review of the evidence on sexuality education (UNESCO, 2016a). While it is recognised that the body of evidence on Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) has grown considerably in the last decade (UNESCO, 2018), there are core areas that arguably require further exploration (UNESCO: 2009; 2016a; 2018) and a number of these areas link specifically to the exploration of implementation. The focus of this study is to contribute to building the evidence base with regards the third 'further research' recommendation detailed in the UNESCO review (2016a) and recommendations two and four in the fully updated UNESCO (2018) guidance:

- "There is also limited information from high-quality research on aspects of teacher training, dosage related to CSE (i.e., how many sessions, hours,

classes, etc.) and other contextual and implementation factors. (UNESCO, 2016a, p.5)

- "Reviews of evidence should include holistic comprehensive evaluation, including formal and participatory, quantitative and qualitative processes, to shed light on contextual and implementation factors and implications." (UNESCO, 2018, p.31)
- "Overall, there is a need to conduct more studies on the effectiveness of curriculum design and implementation, including teacher effectiveness and the learning outcomes of students." (UNESCO, 2018, p.31)

It has also been highlighted that there is a need to share knowledge among countries in order to elucidate country-specific expertise of practices in sexuality education (BZgA/WHO, 2006; IPPF, 2006). This has been provided in some research studies (Fu, 2011; Haldre, Part, & Ketting, 2012; Loeber et al., 2010) however only a few cross-national comparisons have been conducted, detailing common practices, policies, and features affecting sexuality education implementation in schools (IPPF, 2006; UNESCO, 2010; Weaver, Smith, & Kippax, 2005). Furthermore, Rocha et al. (2016) argue that in spite of attempts by international organisations to share national-level understanding (IPPF 2006; 2018; UNESCO, 2010)[1]and to develop guiding principles and benchmarks (UNESCO 2009; WHO/BZgA 2010,2013), few existing studies have concentrated on the school or local level. Understanding the obstacles and variables affecting SBSE implementation is crucial to overcoming challenges and facilitate the delivery of SBSE in accordance with international advice and criteria of effectiveness recognised by research/experts in the field.

Exploring sex education within cultural contexts holds great potential to build on existing research for the refinement and improvement of sexuality education practices both nationally and across nations. The sharing of expertise among countries can create new knowledge about sex education and the implementation process of such programmes. It can reveal details on elements such as: approaches to delivery; course content; teacher training; facilitators and barriers of effective sex education; and cross-country similarities and differences. There is also potential to

[1] It should be noted that since publication of Rocha et al.'s (2016) work, there have been updates, such as the UNESCO (2018) guidance and reports that informed its development (such as UNESCO 2018b, UNESCO 2016) and new IPPF report (2018).

explore challenges that have been identified through previous work and research. Recognising that there is need for further research on features of teacher training, dosage related to CSE, learning outcomes of students, and other contextual and implementation aspects; this study seeks to explore these components in a specific national context and subsequently compare these findings to the extant literature.

In this chapter, an overview of SBSE will be provided and this will include: a description of SBSE, the rationale for SBSE, considerations in the evolving field of CSE, challenges and debates within sexuality education, implementing SBSE, and the effectiveness of sexuality education. The proceeding section will present the historical context and development of Irish SBSE. Following this, the structure, format, and operationalisation of the RSE programme will be described in full detail. A review of research on Irish SBSE at post-primary level will then be presented, identifying current knowledge and areas that require deeper exploration (the specific research gaps). A summary of the rationale for the research will then be presented, drawing on the information presented in this chapter. Following this, the purpose statement and study aims will be described. The final section provides a content synopsis of the thesis chapters, including chapter one.

1.2 Overview of sex education

While this study intends to focus on CSE in a school context (comprehensive SBSE), it should be noted that some of the literature discussed throughout this chapter deals with sexuality education and CSE generally and is not always setting-specific. Therefore it does not necessarily focus solely on comprehensive SBSE but also sexuality education or CSE in community or other settings. However, as mentioned earlier in this text, the majority of CSE programmes are school-based and the issues relevant to CSE generally are applicable in a school setting.

1.2.1 What is SBSE?

SBSE is described as the development and strengthening of children and young peoples' capacity to make careful, agreeable, healthy and respectful decisions regarding relationships, sexuality and emotional and physical health and does not encourage sexual engagement (European Expert Group on Sexuality Education,

2016). In the Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (WHO, 2010, p.20), a holistic description of sexuality education is defined as:

> learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality. Sexuality education starts early in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood. It aims at supporting and protecting sexual development. It gradually equips and empowers children and young people with information, skills and positive values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and fulfilling relationships and take responsibility for their own and other people's sexual health and well-being.

There are three main types of SBSE: abstinence-only, abstinence-based, and comprehensive (CSE as described earlier). Abstinence-only (often referred to as 'until marriage') approaches purport that young people refrain from or delay engagement in sexual intercourse (Barr et al., 2014) and focus on preventing risky behaviours while excluding information about the effectiveness of condoms and other forms of contraception (Lindberg, Santelli, & Singh, 2006). United States federal regulations (funding-related) define abstinence education as teaching that a reciprocally faithful monogamous relationship in the marital context is the accepted standard of human sexual activity (Lindberg et al., 2006). This type of approach has prevailed in the United States for several decades (Eisenberg, Madsen, Oliphant, & Sieving, 2013) with reports that although health professionals generally support comprehensive sex education, funding for abstinence-only education has increased (Lindberg et al., 2006). This is despite evidence which suggests such programmes are ineffective (Santelli et al., 2006). Abstinence-based approaches (often referred to as 'abstinence-plus) differ from abstinence-only as although abstinence is emphasised, information about safe sex and contraception is provided (Barr et al., 2014). In contrast, CSE is described as one which assumes a more positive view of sexuality, adopts a salutogenic approach, and provides information on a range of issues (Barr et al., 2014; Cholevas & Loucaides, 2012). Although sex education can be controversial, there is evidence of public support for programmes which are more reflective of abstinence-based or comprehensive approaches (Eisenberg, Bernat, Bearinger, & Resnick, 2008; UNESCO, 2009). Furthermore, there is a large body of evidence demonstrating that abstinence-only education is not effective in postponing

sexual initiation, frequency of sexual activity, number of sexual partners and preventing unintended pregnancy (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008). Despite the evidence that abstinence-only programmes are ineffective, many countries still rely on these (Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

1.2.2 The development, need for, and benefits of sexuality education

The development of SBSE began in the early 1900s as part of the social hygiene movement (Kyman, 1998). By establishing educational programs, this movement attempted to curb the growth of STDs, mainly among the young and middle class (Imber, 1994). The focus of sexuality education has been reflective of public health and education needs of the time: unintended pregnancy (1960s-1970s), HIV prevention (1980s), sexual abuse awareness (1990s), and from 2000 it has focused on preventing sexism, homophobia and cyber bullying (European Expert Group on Sexuality Education, 2016).

From a European perspective, SBSE was first introduced in Sweden in the 1950s and many more Western countries followed, with this trend continuing into the 1990s and early 2000s (European Expert Group on Sexuality Education, 2016). It is reported that countries such as Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands have established and deep-rooted school-based CSE programmes, and significantly less adolescent birth rates than countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which is described as a region with greater sensitivity to open conversations regarding sexuality and sexual and reproductive health in schools (UNESCO, 2011). Furthermore, the focus of sexuality education, since the 1980s, has shifted from a physical development approach to incorporate social and emotional development (Pound, Langford, & Campbell, 2016).

There is a large amount of research evidence which suggests that both children and young people need sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information before the onset of intense biomedical changes, and psycho-social changes in gender, identity and equality, which take place during the peak of puberty, usually between the ages of 11–13 years (Dixon-Mueller, 2008; Dorn & Biro, 2011; Sawyer et al., 2012). The beginning of puberty takes place earlier now than ever before (Goldman, 2015) particularly in developed countries as a result of improved health and nutrition (Gluckman & Hanson, 2006; Pinyerd & Zipf, 2005). As young people are maturing

earlier than before; initial sexual debut is also often earlier. For example, in Australia, over the past four decades, the average age of first sexual experience has changed from 19 to 16 years for women and from 18 to 16 years for men (de Visser, Smith, Rissel, Richters, & Grulich, 2003). In Ireland, in a survey of the general Irish adult population reported that among adults who reported having sex, there was an increase in the percentage of young men and women having sex before the age of 17 in 2010 compared to 2003 (McBride, Morgan, & McGee, 2012). In the first nationally representative and internationally comparable data on young people's sexual health behaviours in Ireland, among school children aged 15-18 years, 25.7% of boys and 21.2% of girls were sexually initiated (Young, Burke, & Nic Gabhainn, 2018).

There is an ongoing need for effective interventions that reduce sexual risk behaviours and encourage respectful and healthy relationships (Berglas et al., 2016). The onset of sexual intercourse is socially and personally significant and it has major health implications (Hawes, Wellings, & Stephenson, 2010). It has been reported that young people are more likely to engage in spontaneous and unprotected sex which enhances their risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections or having an unplanned pregnancy (UNESCO, 2009). For example, in the United States, STIs among adolescents and young adults account for nearly half of the 19.7 million new infections reported each year (Satterwhite et al., 2013). It is also reported that in the US annually, eighty percent of pregnancies (estimated at 614,400 pregnancies) among girls aged between 15-19 years old are unintended (Finer & Zolna, 2014; Kost & Henshaw, 2014). Further to this, over the past number of decades, globalisation and modernisation has led to developments which need to be matched with adequate education. Some examples of these changes are: new forms of media (such as the internet, cyber pornography, and technological advances in mobile phones); the emergence of HIV and AIDS; escalating anxieties about STIs; abortion, infertility; sexual abuse of children and adolescents; and changing perspectives towards sexuality, including a change in the sexual behaviours of young people (European Expert Group on Sexuality Education, 2016).

It is reported that reduced levels of unintended pregnancy, abortion and HIV infection are linked to the development of compulsory CSE school-based programmes, in conjunction with the growth of youth-friendly sexual health service

delivery (UNESCO, 2011). CSE has been recognised as an important part of health interventions for adolescents (WHO, 2017b) and in ideal terms, sexuality education has the capacity to incorporate a broad range of issues that impact on a young person's sexuality, relationships, and their social and emotional development (Collier-Harris & Goldman, 2017). Many young people become adults with very little understanding about relationships and sexuality and it is argued that schools, clinics and organisations providing services need to work together to empower children and young people around sexuality (Helmer et al., 2015).

When delivered in the school setting, CSE has the potential to improve *both* student health and academic outcomes (Barr et al., 2014). In addition, the school setting provides an environment where CSE can be delivered age appropriately: in a developmentally relevant progression over the years, with new content building on previous subject matter (Gordon, 2008). It is also reported that young people cite school as a main source for sex education (Tanton et al., 2015) and despite the availability of sex education information online, young people express a need for SBSE (Alldred, 2007; Parker & IPPR, 2014).

It is reported that young people who gain social and communication skills for conversing about sexual relationships are far more unlikely to engage in unprotected sex (Schaalma, Abraham, Gillmore, & Kok, 2004). There is an association between receiving any SBSE and lower reports of negative sexual health outcomes (Macdowall et al., 2015) and a strong association between unintended pregnancy and non-school sex education sources (Wellings et al., 2013). A review of a decade of Irish sexual health research has indicated that receiving sex education was associated with safer experiences of first sex, more consistent contraception use, and reduced probability of crisis pregnancy (Kelleher et al., 2013). It has also been reported that a recent review of the evidence for CSE supports the original UNESCO (2009) guidance, reaffirming that curriculum-based sexuality education programmes impact on a number of outcomes: delayed initiation of sexual intercourse; decreased frequency of sexual intercourse; decreased number of sexual partners; reduced risk taking; increased use of condoms; and increased use of contraception (UNESCO, 2018).

The significance of ensuring young people's access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, including contraception, is detailed in international agreements. Providing adequate sex education to young people is part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set for 2030 and is also part of the Education 2020 agenda. As demonstrated in the recent UNESCO guidance (2018), it states that:

> We are convinced that if we do not meet young people's calls for good quality comprehensive sexuality education, we will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) we have set for 2030, and the commitment that has been made to leave no one behind. With this in mind, we are committed to supporting countries to apply the Guidance, and hope that teachers, health educators, youth development professionals, sexual and reproductive health advocates and youth leaders – among others –will use this resource to help countries to realize young people's right to education, health and well-being, and to achieve an inclusive and gender equal society (UNESCO, 2018, p4).

Furthermore, Thematic Indicator (no. 28) for monitoring the Education 2020 Agenda is concerned with the percentage of schools providing life-skills-based HIV and sexuality education to young people (UNESCO, 2016a). Advocated as an important part of the development of children and young people, the field of CSE is one which is ever-evolving and in the recent UNESCO (2018) technical guidance, there are some core considerations outlined.

1.2.3 The evolving field of CSE

Based on their review of CSE, the recent UNESCO (2018) guidance presents areas of contemplation in the evolution of CSE. They present a number of aspirational components of CSE, in essence what it is envisaged that CSE *should* be:

a) CSE transcends education about reproduction, risks and disease and provides a way to present the positive aspects of sexuality, such as love and relationships underpinned by the concepts of mutual respect and equality. It also should include continuing socio-cultural discussions wider aspects of relationships and vulnerability, such as socio-economic factors gender and power inequalities, race, disability, HIV status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

b) CSE offers information on all approaches for the prevention of pregnancy, STIs and HIV and this includes the right of choice: to abstain, delay, or partake in sexual relationships. CSE is also promoted as the best and most rights-based approach (especially in comparison to abstinence-only approaches).

c) CSE employs a learner-centred approach, despite a lack of evidence specifically related to CSE, but based on evidence from health education programmes that such an approach is central to programme effectiveness. Furthermore, as learning can be viewed as personal growth, students are encouraged to engage in reflection and critical thought about their own lives.

d) Schools play a central role in the provision of CSE and are viewed as an ideal setting due to: the captive population; that many young people experience puberty and potentially engage in relationships (including some sexual ones) while in school; school authorities can regulate elements of the learning environment and make it protective and supportive; it's cost effective; and schools can act as a support hub linking with other services.

e) Non-formal and community-based settings are also important ways to provide curriculum-based CSE provided that it is evidence-informed, age-appropriate, and displays characteristics of effective programmes. CSE in these settings allows reach to populations who may be vulnerable, out- of-school, marginalised, in cultural contexts where school attendance is not high or where CSE is not a mandatory element of the curriculum, and to school-going youth in out-of-school contexts.

While the considerations for the field of sexuality education in ideal terms are described in this section, there are also criticisms and challenges which must be considered. There is a need to discuss the difference between the ideals of CSE and the reality of CSE. Although it can be argued that the benefits of CSE and curriculum-based sexuality education are widely acknowledged, there is still much contention within the advancing field of CSE. As noted by Simovska and Kane (2015), sexuality education is a contentious and challenging issue that has induced extensive debate about its aims, content, approaches, pedagogy, and intended outcomes. Furthermore, it is this highly contentious nature of sexuality education that presents greater implementation challenges than other programme-types (Pearson et al., 2015).

1.2.4 Challenges for sexuality education

While CSE is generally promoted among international agencies and in Western European countries, it is argued that CSE has been mostly evaluated in positive terms within international sexuality education literature (Roodsaz, 2018). There is however, according to Roodsaz (2018), an emergent body of literature that critically challenges its inherent normative foundations, questioning the implied impartiality and universality of CSE and what is described as 'the politics of CSE'. As noted by Cornwall and Eade (2011) , there is a need to gain conceptual clarity to avoid CSE from becoming yet another hollow buzzword within the field of international development (Cornwall & Eade, 2011) and this is arguably applicable in a broader context than just development discourse. Roodsaz (2018) largely draws on the work of feminist scholars to analytically discuss subjectivity and agency in relation to the ideology, morality, and emotional foundation of CSE. While Roodsaz specifically focuses on Dutch-funded CSE promotion in Bangladesh, many of the arguments purported are relevant to CSE generally.

In addition, Browne (2015) identifies core "challenge" areas for sexuality education, such as: cultural and religious resistance; teacher skill; the school environment**;** marginalisation; lack of planning; and a lack of resources while expert observations on the implementation barriers of sexuality education similarly identify a lack of resources in addition to insufficient teacher training, parental opposition, and the persistence of cultural taboos around sex (UNESCO, 2009). Some of the debates with regards sexuality education and core challenges will be discussed in this section.

<u>Gender and Power</u>

It has been noted that at both international and national levels, as delineated in strategies and polices, the general objectives of CSE have become wider and incorporate a more overt focus on human rights, life skills and empowerment (e.g., UNESCO and UNFPA, 2012; UNFPA, 2014). Part of this empowerment focus is specifically targeted on power and gender (UNESCO, 2016). It is argued that very few CSE programmes tackle gender quality and empowerment in significant and constant ways (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). Haberland and Rogow (2015) discuss the importance of sexuality education seeking to clearly empower young people, particularly girls and those marginalised, in order for young people to view

relationships in equal terms and to be able to look after their own health, and as individuals capable of actively participating in society. Furthermore, programmes that do not draw attention to gender, power and rights have been shown to be less likely to reduce rates of STIs and unplanned pregnancies (Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

Although research has shown that young people's content preferences are largely the same between girls and boys (Allen, 2011), overall it is argued that sexuality needs to become more gender aware. Arguably, the role of women has been socially conditioned to view men as responsible for sexual decision-making (Allen, 2011; Senior & Chenhall, 2008) while young men may model their behaviour in a gender-normative way that frequently continue the cycle of violence and coercion (Ricardo, Barker, Pulerwitz, & Rocha, 2006). As argued by Helmer and colleagues (2015), education about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships, and where to seek help in problematic situations, is imperative. They also postulate that the sexuality education curriculum must include a more overt focus on violence in relationships, date rape, and the long-lasting effects for both parties involved (Helmer et al., 2015).

The importance of gender and the need to include it as a core concept in CSE curricula was detailed in the recent UNESCO (2017) review to inform the updated ITGSE (UNESCO, 2018). The review highlighted the need to include gender, but also violence, as two new concepts to the updated guidance. The key concept of gender was outlined and covered the social construction of gender and gender norms; gender equality, stereotypes and bias, and gender-based violence while the key concept on violence covered violence; consent, privacy, and bodily integrity; and safe use of information and communication technologies (UNESCO, 2017). Despite calls for such an empowerment approach to CSE, there is little evidence that this is being implemented widely (UNESCO, 2016).

While there are calls for more overt focus on human rights, life skills and empowerment as discussed above, evidence suggests that most curricula still largely focus on reproductive physiology or highlight abstinence or delayed sexual initiation, with limited or inadequate attention to information about contraception or other sexual health issues (Lopez, Bernholc, Chen, & Tolley, 2016; UNESCO and

UNFPA, 2012). SBSE is accused of being problem-based and negatively focused, in particular with empirical research in public health adopting an individualistic and risk-taking behaviour approach, such as focusing on STIs and adolescent pregnancies (Shoveller & Johnson, 2006).

Positive aspects and pleasure within SBSE

It is noted that SBSE rarely focuses on sexuality as positive by focusing on sexual pleasure, well-being and/or critical health education including identity, diversity and human rights (Fine & McClelland, 2006; Hirst, 2013; Ingham & Hirst, 2010; Mannix-McNamara et al, 2010; O'Higgins & Nic Gabhainn, 2010). In general, there is an overly preventive approach in SBSE with a lack of focus on positive views of sexuality and rarely the inclusion of positive aspects, such as pleasure, intimacy and desire (Oliver, van der Meulen, Flicker, Larkin, & Toronto Teen Survey Team, 2013; Ollis, 2016). Pedagogy with regards sexuality education needs to include young people in their own learning. It also must steer away from focusing on abstinence or fear and concentrate on positive aspects of sexuality (Helmer et al., 2015).

From a more feminist perspective, Roodsaz (2018) describes the importance of CSE shifting not purely fusing on health issues but also sexuality as pleasure as a main feature. Roodsaz (2018) outlines the influential arguments by Fine (1998) to change girls experience from one of victimisation, objectification, and terror to one of entitlement, autonomy, and with their own sexual agency. Fine's (1998) work is described as sex-positive and individualistic and moved away from the tradition of women as sex objects to women as explorers of sexual pleasure (Lamb, 2010). Receiving education on sexual desire, others have argued, would enable girls to know what they really want, to love themselves and to gain self-esteem (Tolman 2002; Bay-Cheng 2003; Horne and Zimmer-Gembeck 2006; Impett and Tolman 2006).

It argued that while there are some exceptions, sexuality education that incorporates pleasure as a concept in varying contexts is largely absent; despite calls for its inclusion over decades (Hirst, 2013). For example, it is argued that a sexual pleasure discourse is mainly absent in Sexuality and Relationship Education (SRE) in English schools and that current government guidance for SRE positions sex as a 'risky' and

dangerous activity, which is unmistakably linked to child protection, and that sex is not discussed in terms of pleasure (Sundaram & Sauntson, 2016). It is this absence of a pleasure narrative which contributes to gendered and heteronormative views of sexual autonomy, agency, and empowerment with recommendations that such guidance should be reviewed to address gender equality, specifically in relation to sexual rights and pleasure (Sundaram & Sauntson, 2016).

Research has addressed the possible effects of including a pleasure agenda or how aspects of pleasure might be operationalised (Allen, 2011; Allen & Carmody, 2012; Allen, Rasmussen, & Quinlivan, 2013; Lamb, Lustig, & Graling, 2013; Mcgeeney & Kehily, 2016). There are recent papers published in *Sex Education* that have been grouped conceptually in the editorial (Mcgeeney & Kehily, 2016): ones that focus on the silences regarding the topic of pleasure in policy and practice (Hanbury & Eastham, 2016; Sundaram & Sauntson, 2016); those that concentrate on methods for researching young women's sexual experiences and sexual learning (Austin & Austin, 2016; Edwards & Edwards, 2016); and papers that offer practice examples on ways that pleasure can be included within education programmes (Ollis, 2016; Gordon & Gere, 2016; and Jolly, 2016).

Focusing on the papers in the final conceptual grouping, Jolly (2016) argues that despite challenges to discussing sex and pleasure in institutions and educational settings, there are some initiatives that are attempting to do this. It is also argued that normative structures are being developed to support newer pleasure discourses around young people's pleasure. In a comparison of two interventions which endeavour to create norms of pleasure for young people's sexuality, Jolly (2016) identifies that both case studies suggest that it is possible to talk about the positive aspects of sexuality, although only in marginalised spaces or in very regulated ways.

Another example is provided by Ollis (2016), who advocates that with: sufficient preparation; a structure to celebrate sex and sexuality; a gender lens to examine normative discourses; and the opportunity for reflection, pre-service teachers can develop their confidence, willingness and skill to incorporate pleasure pedagogies in their sexuality education delivery in schools (Ollis, 2016). The 'how' of pedagogies of pleasure is described in part (see Ollis, 2016) who also highlights the importance of reflective reconstruction and the importance of practice.

In the final paper in this conceptual group, Gordon and Gere (2016) describe an arts-based approach to sexual health sexuality education initiative, delivered by US college students, who make and perform monologues, scenes and musical parodies to pupils (aged between 13-15). They argue that there is a case to be made about using humour in sexuality education that will in turn radicalise, but also reinforce sex as important and pleasurable, while simultaneously increasing its effectiveness (Gordon & Gere, 2016).

Similar to Gordon and Gere (2016), a study by Helmer et al. (2015), highlighted possibilities to make sexuality education fun and intriguing through the use of more interactive methodologies, such as role-plays, discussions, and games. They found that the use of body mapping combined with a hypothetical scenario was one such method that facilitated discussions on sensitive topics and holds potential to determine what young people really know regarding a range of topics. Helmer and colleagues (2015) argue that sexuality education needs to be provided in a non-judgemental way to facilitate young people's discussion of any topic without fear of reproach. These examples demonstrate progress in the incorporation of pleasure into sexuality education although as noted by Jolly (2016), we must delve deeper into the 'how' 'where' and 'to what effect' pleasure appears within both sexuality education and research.

Another criticism within the pleasure debate is that there has been greater academic debate about the inclusion of pleasure in SRE than views from practitioners (Hirst, 2013). For example, in an exploration of practitioner's perspectives in recent work with Wood et al. (2018), the dangers of constructing pleasure as a normative requirement of sexual activity (and subsequently in sex education) and thus reproducing a 'pleasure imperative' are discussed. The 'pleasure imperative' specifically refers to the reinforcement of social and cultural norms that situate pleasure as a need or requirement for young people to achieve in their sexual lives which practitioners might (and frequently unintentionally) emphasise (Allen & Carmody, 2012; Allen et al., 2013; Lamb et al., 2013). Drawing on interviews with sexual health and education practitioners, Wood et al. (2018) found that practitioners were inclined to think of pleasure using a critical frame of reference thus facilitating the evasion of normalising and (re)enforcing the importance of pleasure. Practitioner's views demonstrated the interactions and strategic use of values

associated with sexual pleasure in a socio-cultural context (Wood, Hirst, Wilson, & Burns-O'Connell, 2018). There was also some evidence that there was a risk of a pleasure imperative being replicated, particularly in more contentious areas (Wood et al., 2018).

Challenges in the implementation of the pleasure narrative dominated the interviews with practitioners and were mainly described as: the increasing pressure to meet public health targets for risk prevention and some described the limiting effect this has on implementing a holistic approach; in schools, a focus on safeguarding reduced the scope for what practitioners felt could be discussed due to the direct tension between pleasure and harm prevention; the need for training, funding, and for practitioners to have the comfort and confidence to deliver the messages; a lack of piloting a new curriculum; and the fear of backlash from schools/parents when talking positively about sex and sexuality (Wood et al., 2018). In the discussion of these challenges, it is noted that many practitioner's perceptions were based on fears of resistance or censure rather than actual experiences. While difficult, the barriers cited possibly mirror an environment of fear, insecurity and distrust (Wood et al., 2018). As demonstrated, while incorporating the pleasure narrative into sexuality education is advocated for, it is not without complexity. While important, it is also necessary to view this critically within socio-cultural contexts and remain aware of the possible limits of pleasure discourses (Allen, 2011).

<u>The need for an ecological approach</u>

Further to challenges regarding incorporating the concept of pleasure, it is also argued that there is a need to adopt a more ecological approach to sexuality education. Observational research has highlighted that a wide variety of factors that are correlated with young people's sexual behaviours, such as: community; family; partner; and peer (Kirby, 2007) yet despite this, much attention is focused on individual agency, exploring factors such as: self-efficacy; academic achievement; or risk-behaviours (Berglas et al., 2016). It is argued that as a result of this individual-level focus, most interventions in the US are designed from this approach (Salazar et al., 2009). This argument is also supported in a recent reflection of CSE and international cooperation (Vanwesenbeeck, Flink, van Reeuwijk, & Westeneng, 2018) in which challenges with the application of "northern" sexuality education,

which is arguably agency-focused and rights-based in nature, in countries in the global South and more resource-poor countries is discussed. The authors also apply these challenges internationally, arguing that these difficulties are also relevant to CSE more generally (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). These arguments suggest that there are dangers with an agency-focused and rights-based nature of 'northern' sexuality education as it places too much individual responsibility on young people (Lamb, 2010; Rasmussen, 2012; Roodsaz, 2018; Vanwesenbeeck, Westeneng, de Boer, Reinders, & van Zorge, 2016).

Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2018) further expand this point and outline that there are crucial components of CSE: power relations; social customs; youth rights; participation and agency, and gender equality (Hague, Miedema, and Le Mat 2017; UNESCO 2016a, 2018; UNFPA 2010, 2015). The authors argue that these components may be conceptualised differently for different groups, in varying contexts, and by different players (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). The authors present some considerations and categorise these into: the structure-agency debate; the challenge in finding the right balance for sex education; the instability of international partnerships; the contentious nature of sexual rights; the need for multicomponent approaches to CSE; and careful and tactful community building (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). These considerations delve deeper into some of the challenges outlined in earlier parts of this section.

Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2018) outline the structure-agency debate and present critiques in relation to sexual agency. The structure agency debate, is a long-lasting socio-political issue and disputes whether behaviour is largely socially constructed or shaped by individual agency (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). Various arguments are presented within this discussion, in particular the contested concept of girls' sexual agency (Fine & McClelland, 2006; Lamb & Peterson, 2012; Murnen & Smolak, 2012; Peterson, 2010; Tolman, 2012). These criticisms challenge the concepts such as agency, sexual empowerment, authenticity or sexual choice and focus on the structural limits of their application (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). Questions arise, such as how are such concepts relevant in a heteronormative ideological context or in response to established gender stereotypes, and there are arguments that the concept of girls' sexual agency is actually false consciousness. In addition, what do such terms mean in relation to boys' sexual agency within this heteronormative

ideological context (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). Furthermore, if sexual agency is such a disputed concept, critics question its use-value (Gavey, 2012). This focus on sexual agency is criticised as being ideologically neoliberal and this creates to much focus on the individual, including the creation of self-blame (Bay-Cheng, 2015; Fahs & McClelland, 2016; Gavey, 2012), while simultaneously unfairly assuming all people have equal amounts of individual agency (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). Sexuality education that is predominantly individually agentic in focus has been critiqued for naivety in relation to the impact of social structures on young people's sexuality (Lesko, 2010).

For example, Helmer et al. (2015) found that the young people involved in their study were not aware of the varying forms of diseases they were possibly being exposed to through unprotected intercourse. Helmer et al. (2015) found that many of the participants in their study reported not having the type of family support structure that facilitated the communication of sensitive topics, such as STIs, at home. As argued by Larkins et al. (2007), young people should not have to deal with these issues on their own.

Authors such as Lamb (2010) and Rasmussen (2010, 2012) have critiqued other academics for placing too much emphasis on individual autonomy in CSE. These academics highlight the need for an approach which views young people as autonomous and sexually active individuals who also have the right to sex education by sexuality experts to allow for informed decision- making. In relation to this, Rasmussen (2010) highlights the importance of adolescent's internal feelings within this view of young people's sexuality. It is suggested that there is potential for CSE to create empowered and confident young people through conquering feelings such as shame and repression.

The issue of young people's handling of their own sexual agency is highly complex and arguably poses a challenge for sexuality educators (Cense, 2018). It is argued that there is potential for CSE to support young people in the development of sexual agency in all forms (see Cense 2018 for a detailed discussion of the various forms). Cense (2018) argues that CSE should recognise the relatedness of young people to differing people and cultures. It is argued that it should also provide ways to facilitate the process of assuming a position, developing an identity and expressing a

sexual persona within young people's own understanding of their social and cultural context. In addition, CSE should not just focus on individual-level empowerment but also should explore varying sexual cultures, social and gender norms to encourage critical consciousness and collective agency, and thus produce an environment that reduces inequality and restrictive norms and that enables and supports young people's agency (Cense, 2018).

Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2018) argue that the challenge lies in finding the right balance, mainly: a) between appropriate attention to young people's sexual agency including structural challenges for its use; b) focus on sexual agency, control or assertiveness must be reflective of particular contexts, requirements, and opportunities; and c) both young people and CSE programmes are never bound by just one culture and there must be a balanced approach (between pluralism and diversity) within cultural contexts. As described earlier in this text, critical reflection on cultural, religious, and societal values regarding sexuality is encouraged (UNESCO, 2018) and largely recognised as one of the core learning objectives of CSE. It is also argued that, in an internationally collaborative context, there is a need to create equal power dynamics between all stakeholders and partners which is a challenge (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). In such international collaboration on CSE, it is argued that a human rights-based approach should be used with regards both programme content and the implementation process (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). Arguably these points regarding stakeholder/partner power and adopting a human rights-based approach to both programme content and the implementation could be applied in national contexts also.

It has become clear that there is a need for multicomponent approaches to CSE (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). Svanemyr et al. (2015) argue for the need for an ecological framework to support empowerment. Twenty years after the International Conference on Population and Development, Chandra-Mouli and colleagues (2015) discuss progress. They demonstrate that sexuality education is most effective when school-based programmes are supported by community engagement and services, including condom distribution, raising awareness and increasing support, increasing need for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education and services among youth, combating gender inequalities, training provision for health providers, and involving community-level stakeholders, such as parents, teachers and other

community gatekeepers (religious leaders as an example). Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2018) argue that there is a need to address the social drivers impacting on SRHR at many levels and detail Rutgers (2016) model (see Figure 1.1) that demonstrates this point, in particular they emphasise that while each driver is vital, each driver alone will not result in the intended effect.

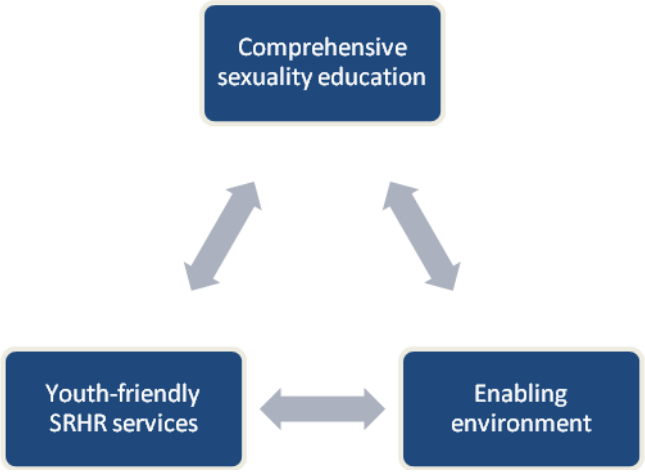

Figure 1.1 Rutgers ecological model for SRHR promotion (Rutgers, 2016)

The need for careful and tactful community building is advocated by Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2018) and although their focus is on the global South, there is recognition that there are many other countries where this is equally important (citing recent work on the USA, Australia and Ireland). She also argues that contextualisation is never complete and it is an ongoing practice.

Furthermore, a review of the international literature by Hague, Miedema, and Le Mat (2017) on CSE related implementation processes shows that approaches to CSE appear to vary at macro, meso, and micro levels and thus shape the varied understandings and delivery of CSE (see Figure 1.2). In addition to the variations at these levels, it is inevitable that these variations will change over time. The authors hope that a circular learning process to CSE will emerge and eventually prevail, instead of the existing heavily top-down approach to CSE guidance. They hope the new circular process will expand the creation of understanding and consensus among multiple actor-types and across different contexts as to what CSE should, at a base level, encompass.

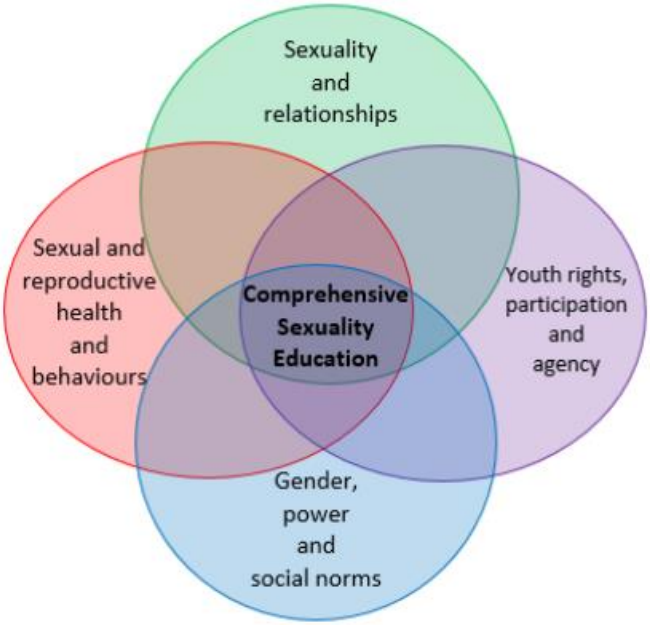

Figure 1.2 adopted from Hague, Le Midema, and Mat (2017)

Religious, cultural, and political resistance

Religious and cultural resistance is arguably one of the biggest barriers for the implementation of sexuality education. There are often claims that CSE leads to earlier sexual initiation or an increase in sexual activity although there is strong evidence that this is untrue (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008; UNESCO, 2018). Sexuality education remains a contentious issue with competition between the political interests of: teachers, parents, policy-makers, and community interest groups (Allen, 2005; Goldman, 2010). In the updated UNESCO guidance (2018, p.84-85), there is a table detailing common concerns about CSE and responses based on evidence and knowledge synthesis.

Parental objection or a lack of parental support is often cited as a barrier to implementing relevant SBSE (Eisenberg et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2009). This is a recurring barrier to SBSE implementation and frequent parental objections are outlined and argued against in Goldman's (2008) work. It was that *"most objections to school sexuality education appear to be based more on emotion than research data and reasoned analysis"* and that facts are sometimes *"selectively presented in an attempt to 'prove' the supposed ill-effects of SBSE"* (Goldman, 2008, p. 415). Ingham (2016) noted similar issues when discussing blocks to progress for sex and relationships education in England and Wales. Although parental objections are

often problematic for the delivery of SBSE (Goldman, 2008; UNESCO, 2009), research also suggests that many parents agree that SBSE is imperative (Peter et al., 2015) and report beliefs that their children should have access to a wide range of sexual health education information (Peter et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2009).

Such objections and disagreements about the content of sex education have arguably, in some cases, led to 'pick and choose' versions of SBSE which avoid focusing on important and relevant issues for young people. Age appropriateness is an area which causes contention with much disagreement over content and objectives.

Usually, sexuality education is focused on facts relating to sexual and reproductive health although the exact messages and content provided varies between countries (Kelefang, 2008). Although there are key global, evidence-based, and professional documents which offer age-appropriate guidance on puberty/sexuality content, standards, and support for teachers, schools and curriculum designers (Collier-Harris & Goldman, 2016), there is evidence that content and focus of SBSE is poor with regards students needs and that implementation is often patchy or variable. The contentious nature of sexual rights and topics that are deemed as 'sensitive' further complicates the implementation of SBSE.

As demonstrated in the work of Roodsaz (2018), same-sex relationships and abortion have always been areas of contention, both within the field of sex education and in the broader social and political domain. There is often huge social, political division and resistance, which highlight the importance of recognising the political aspect of sexual rights (Bijlmakers, de Haas, and Peters, 2018) and also differences between and within varying cultural contexts. This resistance creates difficulties with the delivery of CSE and topics which are considered sensitive or contentious are often omitted, adapted, or a lack of teacher adherence to programme fidelity (e.g Rijsdijk et al. 2013; Sidze et al. 2017; Vanwesenbeeck et al. 2016).

Many countries do not provide adequate (formal, age-appropriate, and evidence-based) sexuality education to children and young people (aged 10-14 years) exposing vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation, violence, unplanned pregnancy, STIs, and lost life opportunities (Glasier, Gülmezoglu, Schmid, Moreno, & Van Look, 2006; Kirby, 2011; UNESCO, 2009; Viner et al., 2012). For example, youth participants involved in an Australian study suggested that current forms of sexuality

education are too medical, didactic and unengaging, and are lacking in relevant content (Helmer et al., 2015). They requested more information on relationships, first sexual experiences and negotiating condom use (Helmer et al., 2015).

Similarly, in Ireland, a qualitative study involving young people identified that the issues they wanted more knowledge about included "how to establish healthy respectful, communicative relationships, knowing how babies are made, when one's ready physically and emotionally for sex, how to put a condom on, who to go to for information and how best to talk about sexual issues" (O'Higgins & Nic Gabhainn, 2010, p. 387). The young people in that study also identified that they wanted to be taught by people whom they trusted to deliver accurate information in a confident manner and who upheld confidentiality (O'Higgins & Nic Gabhainn, 2010).

CSE experts recommend that starting young is appropriate, as this can be before gender norms consolidate however, reaching younger children is a challenge (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). There is little literature on primary school CSE efforts. Some community-based programmes show positive evidence from girls' empowerment programmes around the age of eight years (Browne, 2015).

Marginalisation

Marginalised young people are considered the hardest to reach population in terms of CSE. Haberland and Rogow (2015) identify some of the most marginalised young people: girls who are not in school, married, living in extreme poverty, or economically dependent on transactional sex; boys that are part of gangs; substance abusers; HIV-positive youth; and those with learning difficulties. As most CSE programmes are delivered in schools, the best way to reach out-of-school populations is unknown (Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

For example, in work by Helmer et al. (2015) it is argued that in remote indigenous communities, sexuality education should be provided separately to school due to the high level of early school-leavers. Furthering this point, Larkins et al. (2007) have suggested that different methods should also be explored to reach this out-of-school group. Rosen (2004) and Mason (2003) suggest peer education programmes as an alternate way to reach marginalised groups while the use of text messaging is a more

recent approach for the provision of sexual health education messages (Lim et al., 2008).

Furthermore, young people who are repeating years of school may find the curriculum is unsuitable for their actual age (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). In addition to this, it is often reported that in many settings, lessons which cover key topics (particularly culturally sensitive ones or ones of a more sensitive nature) are omitted or modified during CSE lesson delivery. For example, there is often too much emphasis placed on the more mechanical aspects of reproduction without also concentrating on responsible sexual behaviours and the importance of healthy and equitable relationships (UNESCO, 2015). Avoidance or omission of these topics can contribute to stigmatisation, embarrassment and unawareness, may increase risk-taking behaviours, and create barriers for seeking help for marginalised or vulnerable populations (UNESCO, 2018).

Lack of planning and evaluation of effectiveness

A relatively recent review of scaling up CSE programmes (UNESCO, 2015) reported that a lack of coordination and planning across actors is a major challenge. It is argued that National governments should be in control of the strategies for CSE, rather than managing competing interests and interest groups (UNESCO, 2015).

Rocha and colleagues (2016) found that only a small number of the documents analysed in their study detailed plans to evaluate changes in students understanding, behaviours, or attitudes. For example, in Portugal, it is reported that there are neither informal nor formal evaluations of sexuality education effectiveness which makes cross-country comparisons more difficult (Rocha et al., 2016). They argue that the absence of routine and effective evaluation of sexuality education in schools is a barrier to improving quality (Rocha et al., 2016). Haberland and Rogow (2015) argue that despite the widespread recommendation for the evaluation of effectiveness, there is a lack of user-friendly tools to do this, while Rocha *et al.* (2016) further identify the importance of taking the school's specific context into consideration when doing this.

It is argued that sexuality education guidelines should:

- Outline theoretical frameworks and suitable approaches
- Highlight clear-cut ways to include the broader school community
- Specifically detail processes for planning, implementation and evaluation
- Evaluate the role of connected organisations who aim to facilitate autonomy in schools (Rocha et al., 2016).

The importance of a school co-ordinator and a team for the delivery of sexuality education is considered as imperative for implementation success. Rocha and Duarte (2015) found that if a school had such a team, they were ten times more likely to set up a sexuality education programme.

Heteronormativity

It is reported that very few CSE programmes provide information on same-sex relationships. It is noted that sex education lessons only identify two genders and one sexual orientation, creating a heteronormativity that excludes many people of different sexual orientation (Abbott, Ellis, & Abbott, 2015; Thaweesit & Boonmongkon, 2009). Research using discursive analyses to explore ways in which teachers underlying values influence SRE practice has identified that heteronormativity is inherently emphasised in by teachers, even despite assertions of inclusivity (Abbott et al., 2015). It has also been highlighted ways that teachers' discourses emphasise hetero- /homobinaries and can reinforce set notions of sexual identity instead of promoting sexual practices and identities as varied (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008; Preston, 2016).

Abbott *et al.* (2016) purport that the meanings and priorities teachers attribute to SRE influence the type of programme delivered in schools and argue that this prevents such programmes from developing greater inclusivity regarding sexual diversity and different sexual health needs. Furthermore, as sexuality education has focused mainly on heterosexual health and sexual activity as 'normal', 'real' sex is only defined as coital intercourse between a male and female (Abbott et al., 2015). Diversity in sexual identities and practices is mostly missing from the content of SBSE and is further demonstrated by the omission of information regarding non-penetrative sexual practices (Forrest, Strange, & Oakley, 2004). The lack of content

for LGB students does not provide adequate sexuality education and what is a further challenge is that when LGB sexuality is part of formal curriculum, it is full of problems, such as the 'othering' of LGB sexualities (Abbott et al., 2015).

For example, in the US, a qualitative study of 15 public school staff delivering sexuality education (with a range of 4–37 years teaching experience) found that even though they held a specific role as a sexuality education teacher and asserted commitment to positive and healthy sexuality education, the majority of teachers in this role held a stereotypical view of gender and disregarded the seriousness of peer aggression and the bullying of LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning) students (Preston, 2016).

Technological advances

It is also argued that SBSE does not focus on core issues that are relevant for young people today, in particular those associated with technological advances. It is argued that there is a particular need to educate young internet users about secure and responsible use of the internet and its contents (Pizzol, Bertoldo, & Foresta, 2016). Additionally, public education campaigns should be amplified in both amount and occurrence to help improve knowledge (Pizzol et al., 2016).

Other research discusses the potential of educational programmes in safeguarding young people from cyber pornography and cyber sexual predators (Dombrowski, Gischlar, & Durst, 2007). Research has indicated that exposure to pornography creates sexual insecurity in adolescents (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008; Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). A recent review found that pornography-use was associated with more lenient sexual attitudes; inclined to be linked with greater gender stereotyped sexual beliefs; related to the incidence of sexual intercourse; more experience with casual sex behaviour; and more sexual hostility (Peter & Valkenburg, 2016). It is also argued however, that there are positive arguments for accessing online sexual content suggesting that positive or negative consequences of using the internet for activities of a sexual nature depend on how the internet is used in different social contexts (Döring, 2009). While the concept of advantageous use of online sexual media and content may remain contentious, it does not detract from the argument that young people should receive education about the cyber-world and potential positive-use but also of the risks and dangers.

Teachers as sex educators

Comprehensive SRE delivered by teaching staff who have been trained and supported is identified as the best way of educating the majority of young people about sexual health and relationships (Kirby 2002; Mueller, Gavin, & Kulkarni 2008; Rissel et al. 2003; Weaver, Smith, & Kippax 2005). There is ever-increasing awareness that both internally and externally from schools, implementers of sexuality education require appropriate training, support, and facilitation to deliver such programmes in an effectual, empowering and all-encompassing fashion (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016)**.** It is advocated that professional development, along with good quality, evidence-based curriculum materials, can improve teachers' confidence in delivering information on issues such as respectful relationships (Ollis, 2014). In fact, teacher's professional preparation has been identified as the most significant indicator in determining the comprehensiveness of the sexuality education instruction and the number of sexuality topics taught within any curriculum (Hammig et al., 2011). Despite this, it is proposed that training for teachers is still a weak point in most school-based sexuality education programmes (UNESCO, 2018).

Many teachers report a willingness to teach CSE provided they receive sufficient preparation and professional/community support (Brook, PSHE Association, and Sex Education Forum, 2014; Fisher & Cummings, 2015; Goldman, 2016; Sinkinson, 2009). However, it is reported that teachers receive little or no pre-service/initial training for this type of education (Byrne et al., 2016; Carman et al., 2011; Fisher, Price et al., 2015; Jennings and Sherwin, 2008; Shannon & Smith, 2015). In the USA, the *National Teacher-Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education* were developed to enable prospective health education teachers to become skilled in "teaching methodology, theory, practice of pedagogy, content, and skills, specific to sexuality education" (Barr et al., 2014, p. 396). The key role that Higher education will play in securing success for the standards is emphasised (Barr et al., 2014). Seven standards and associated indicators were developed that focus on professional character, diversity and equity, knowledge of content, legal and professional ethics, preparation, implementation, and evaluation (Barr et al., 2014).

Despite the suggestion that many implementers are willing to deliver sexuality education, there is also evidence that suggests that potential implementers are not convinced of the need or are reluctant to deliver CSE (UNESCO, 2009). This reluctance is attributed to beliefs, some of which link to points made earlier in the section: that sex education leads to early sex; children's innocence is taken away; is contrary to cultural or religious beliefs; is parental responsibility or that parents will object, a lack of effective teaching skills, or that CSE is already discussed in other lessons (such as biology) (UNESCO, 2009). It is proposed that the issues that teachers perceive as relevant for young people greatly differs to what young people report, including areas such as pleasure, experimentation, and curiosity (Allen, 2005, 2008). It is argued that there is a dearth of research studies focusing on the way teachers conceptualise their SRE practice (Abbott, Ellis, & Abbott, 2016) and this is a fundamental area which relates to the overall implementation of SBSE.

For instance, teachers' capacity to effectively deliver sexuality education is influenced by a complex mix of internal and external dynamics, including pre and continuing educational experience but also elements such as: self-efficacy; personal values; and practical experience (Goldman, 2010; Goldman & Coleman, 2013; Ollis, 2010). For example, Pound *et al.* (2017) reported in their synthesis that in some instances, teachers are ill-suited to deliver SBSE as they are not appropriately trained, embarrassed or not equipped to discuss sex in open ways.

Another example, in a study by Wilson et al. (2015) described professional training which was developed to assist school health professionals to understand the value of using evidence-based tools, resources, and practices for sexuality education delivery. They outlined key learning points from the planning and implementation of the training.

The first learning point focuses on recruitment of the "right" teacher to deliver the "right" instruction. This relates to the need for recruitment of teachers who support sexuality education yet many teachers are mandated to deliver sexuality education without the necessary background, skills, competency, or comfort levels to effectively implement it (Wilson, Wiley, Housman, McNeill, & Rosen, 2015).

The second learning point is the importance of knowledge and skilled delivery of sexuality education which related to the type of training offered to teachers.

Participants completed online training and a singular two day face-to-face workshop. The training was not designed to create a standard level of knowledge but for every teacher to gain the necessary, important, and essential skills and levels of comfort to both advocate for, and deliver sexuality education (Wilson et al., 2015).

The third learning point related to the need for facilitating networks and leadership among teachers, which were promoted as it was not assumed that teachers would automatically network or link. Opportunities were provided which included organised meal functions and activities, and an online network site to communicate regular announcements and to notify participants of new educational resources/materials, activities, and opportunities in the field of sexuality education. Participants were asked to engage in community-based outreach events in support of sexuality education and were also asked to ensure that the lessons they delivered were based on the information they received in their training. The argument for facilitated networking opportunities was that:

> Many teachers who are teaching a debated subject, such as sexuality, often feel like they are operating in a vacuum. They struggled with some of the challenges they face, and this program offered the opportunity for them to realize they are not alone in their efforts (Wilson et al., 2015, p200).

The fourth learning point described the flexibility of the online training programme which meant that teachers could work at their own speed while the final learning point relates to recruitment of diverse trainers who had various areas of knowledge within the field of sexual health. In addition, all trainers had previous work experience in public schools (Wilson et al, 2015).

These findings highlight the importance of not just receiving teacher training but receiving adequate teacher training that equips participants with the skills, comfort, and confidence for subsequent delivery. For example, a recent systematic review found that some trainees felt that they still lacked knowledge and confidence to address sensitive health issues on entering teaching practice after initial health education training (Shepherd et al., 2016). Implementer readiness is a vital aspect of school-based planned implementation support (Greenberg et al., 2005) and if

teachers are not fully competent or willing to deliver sexuality education, it may result in reduced quality or partial instruction (Cushman et al., 2014).

Partial instruction often results from the omission of core topics and is an area that is often highlighted in relation to teacher-delivered sex education. Eisenberg and colleagues (2010; 2013), have reported that the topics that sexuality educators most frequently omitted were ones such as: sexual violence, sexual orientation, condom use and other contraceptive choices, accessing reproductive health services, and pregnancy choices (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Eisenberg, Madsen, Oliphant, Sieving, & Resnick, 2010). The most common reasons provided for topic omission were structural barriers, concerns about stakeholder responses (parent, student, and administrator) and perceived restrictive policies (Eisenberg et al., 2013, 2010).

The exclusion of key topics will lessen the effectiveness of CSE (UNESCO, 2018). For example, failure to discuss particular topics, such as menstruation can contribute to the continuation of negative socio-cultural perspectives of it (UNESCO, 2018). This may negatively influence girls' lives, adding to lifelong bodily discomfort and lead to hesitation in seeking assistance for problems that occur (UNESCO, 2018). Other examples of topics which are commonly excluded are: sexual intercourse; the SRH needs of young people living with disabilities or HIV; scientific information about pregnancy prevention; unsafe abortion and hazardous practices such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and the Campaign to End Child, Early, and Forced Marriage; or prejudices based on sexual orientation or gender identity (UNESCO, 2018).

1.3 Implementing SBSE

Creating and/or maintaining sufficient implementation levels is a complex issue with regards sex education programmes. Although the benefits, and the many challenges, of sexuality education are acknowledged; there is also the debated question of its effectiveness and a need to explore what works, under what conditions, and with whom. Recent studies have presented explorations of implementing sexuality education (Abbott et al., 2016; Berglas et al., 2016; Newby & Mathieu-Chartier, 2018; Rocha et al., 2016; Schutte et al., 2014; van der Geugten, Dijkstra, Van Meijel, Den Uyl, & De Vries, 2015; van Lieshout, Mevissen, de Waal, & Kok, 2017).

In a number of these recent studies, the main focus has been to explore and describe implementation processes and contexts with the aim of elucidating some facilitators and barriers specifically relevant to sexuality education programmes.

For example in the US, an implementation and outcome evaluation (cluster RCT), of a multi-component sexuality education programme delivered to high school students, reported that the components of the programme were implemented successfully and were positively received by participants which was indicated by high satisfaction levels (Berglas et al., 2016). Although participation in parent education workshops was low, the parents who participated provided mainly positive feedback in relation to learning about communication about sex and sexuality with their children and enjoyed the sessions. Although the study indicated that programme implementation was successful, the outcomes evaluation found very little effect on student behaviours measured after one year of implementation. The study did report that students in the intervention group were more likely to carry a condom and to use sexual health services but no effects were evident for nine other behavioural outcomes included in the study (Berglas et al., 2016).

In an exploration of student and educator perspectives of an SRH programme in Ghana, it was reported that students found the programme interesting and important while their expectations were moderately met (van der Geugten et al., 2015). Overall, students reported that most of SRH programme and family planning session objectives had been achieved. No gender differences were found, although differences were noted in relation to school-type and age (van der Geugten et al., 2015). Interestingly, the majority of topics that were recommended by students were already covered within the programme (van der Geugten et al., 2015). In their additional comments, students reported that they would like to learn more about SRH (particularly protected sex and condom use). The authors hypothesise that this may be attributed to students desire for other types of information or information of greater depth that may not have been possible based on the number of lessons (van der Geugten et al., 2015).

With regards barriers and facilitators reported by educators, there are a number which were highlighted as ‘important’. In terms of facilitators, educators identified: an explicit manual, volunteers from other countries also working as educators, the

increased influence of new media, students' willingness to learn, and the sentiment that the SRH programme truly improved students' lives (van der Geugten et al., 2015). In terms of barriers, educators highlighted: the impact of culture and tradition, insufficient funding and poor programme scheduling in schools (van der Geugten et al., 2015).

In a process evaluation of an SBSE programme for primary schools pupils, Newby and colleagues (2018) found that: few pupils withdrew from the study; pupils enjoyed the programme and responded well; fidelity to lesson plans and achieving learning objectives was high for most school years; teachers were largely positive about the programme; and parents reported that they felt the information was age-appropriate, informative, and handled sensitively. In terms of programme fidelity, fidelity to lesson plans and achieving learning objectives was high for most school years, however, for older school years, teachers reported modifying lessons to meet the perceived pupil needs for years five and six, aged between 9-11 (Newby & Mathieu-Chartier, 2018). In fact, for year six (ages 10-11), there were very low levels of fidelity with only two out of thirteen lessons delivered as intended (Newby & Mathieu-Chartier, 2018). It is also important to note that the themes intended to be delivered during these years are arguably the most challenging and in year six, this is even more evident with lessons: 'does bare make you blush' and 'what is sex' (see Newby & Mathieu-Chartier, 2018, p.93 for topic list). Further to this, although pupils learned and enjoyed the lessons although there was discomfort with some topics, especially ones relating to sex or sexual body parts (Newby & Mathieu-Chartier, 2018). A small proportion of parents reported that their children felt uncomfortable with some of the topics covered. In addition, although teachers were mostly positive about the programme, there was also evidence that indicated that there was discomfort.

For example, in a study by Rocha et al. (2016), they reviewed school-based sexuality education programme plans to explore the way SBSE is implemented at a local level (on paper), critically examining possible strengths and weaknesses. Their sample focused on schools teaching 7th – 9th grade young people, aged between 12-14 years old (Rocha et al., 2016). They found that schools had mostly complied with the requirements of recent Portuguese legislation (Rocha et al., 2016). There was some evidence to suggest multi-sector collaboration in the provision of sexuality education

and aspirations to tailor this provision to context (Rocha et al., 2016). It was also identified that, albeit variously, international suggestions relating to training for teachers, evaluation, community involvement, the holistic nature of sexuality and students' active engagement in learning activities had been considered during planning (Rocha et al., 2016). Potential strengths identified in their study were that there was existence of teams responsible for SBSE and resource provision while weaknesses highlighted related to too much focus placed on health-related issues, problems in cross-curricular teaching, little community participation, and poor-quality evaluation (Rocha et al., 2016).

In a study exploring the implementation processes of a SBSE in the Netherlands, findings suggested that teachers' curriculum-related beliefs were associated with all stages of the programme diffusion process (Schutte et al., 2014). Implementation fidelity/ implementation comprehensiveness was mainly enhanced by contextual factors, such as: training; school policy; student response; and leadership support (from the school governing body) (Schutte et al., 2014). In another study of the same programme in an online context, process evaluation data was gathered from teacher and students to: explore student response; measure levels of fidelity/completeness; and identify factors impacting teachers' implementation of the programme. Overall, it was found that teacher's fidelity levels were high but that many teachers added elements to the programme. It was reported that both stakeholder groups enjoyed the programme (van Lieshout, Mevissen, de Waal, & Kok, 2017). The most important factors that affected implementation were time and organisational limitations, a lack of consciousness on the influence of completeness and fidelity, and student response (van Lieshout et al., 2017).

1.4 The effectiveness of sexuality education

There is a considerable amount of theory and research with respect to the development and evaluation of interventions which promote safe sexual practices among young people (Kirby et al., 2007). The efficacy of such interventions however varies greatly (Aggleton, de Wit, Myers, & Du Mont, 2014) and there are debates regarding the effectiveness of such programmes. On a global scale, it is suggested that most countries do not yet manage to provide effective CSE in schools (UNESCO, 2009). It is also argued that cross-country reviews show minimal

progress in the development of national policies and strategies for implementing CSE or in developing high-quality, large-scale programmes (Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

In their review of 83 studies across countries, Kirby et al. (2007) sought to determine characteristics of effective sex and HIV education programmes through a three-stage process: 1) create a comprehensive list of potentially important characteristics of programs; 2) identify common characteristics of curriculum content; and 3) establish the features of the process for developing and implementing the effective curricula. The authors explain that the process for stage three (identifying the features of developing and implementing the effective curricula) was more challenging, and potentially more subjective, as many studies failed to have a clear and thorough description of the program development, content, and implementation (Kirby et al., 2007).

The review resulted in the identification of 17 characteristics divided into three categories: (1) the development of the curricula; (2) the overall design and teaching strategies of the curricula themselves; and (3) the implementation of the curricula. In relation to *the process of developing the curriculum*, five core processes are described as: a) identified relevant needs and resources of target group; b) involved various stakeholders with different backgrounds in research, theory, and sex/HIV education in curriculum design; c) used a logic model approach that outlined health goals and linked behaviours, risk and protective factors affecting such behaviours, and the activities used to impact on those risk and protective factors; d) activities were designed to align with community values and resources available; and e) tested a pilot version of the programme (Kirby et al., 2007).

In relation to *the contents of the curriculum itself*, there were two overarching categories created: goals and objectives; and activities and teaching methodologies. With regards curriculum goals and objectives, it was detailed that in effective programmes there was: focus on explicit health goals (STD, HIV and pregnancy prevention); in-depth focus on particular behaviours linked to these health goals (not having sex /using contraception), unambiguous messages about these behaviours, and addressed scenarios which might lead to them and how to avoid them; and also

addressed multifaceted sexual psychosocial risk and protective factors that shape sexual behaviours (such as knowledge and perceived norms) (Kirby et al., 2007).

With regards activities and teaching methodologies, there were a number of core areas highlighted: that a safe group setting for youth participation was created; numerous activities to change each of the targeted risk and protective factors were included; the teaching methods used were instructionally sound and involved active participation, encouraging participants to apply the information on a personal level, and that were intended to modify each group of risk protective factors; used behavioural messages, educational methods and activities that were developmentally and culturally appropriate and cognisant of sexual experience; and finally, topics were broached in logical succession (Kirby et al., 2007).

Regarding *the implementation of the curriculum*, it was noted that effective programmes: obtained, even at a base level, minimal support from relevant authorities (such as health ministries, school localities or community organisations); chose and trained educators with desired features (where possible) including tracking progress, providing supervision and support if/where needed, implementing activities to recruit and maintain youth participation and overcome obstacles to their involvement (for example through public awareness of the programme, offering food, or acquiring consent); and implemented almost all activities with reasonable levels of fidelity (Kirby et al., 2007).

In 2018, the updated ITGSE (UNESCO) details the common characteristics among evaluated CSE programmes that have been found to be effective in terms of increasing knowledge, clarifying values and attitudes, increasing skills and impacting behaviours. These common characteristics were drawn from a number of sources (UNESCO, 2009; WHO Europe and BZgA, 2010; UNFPA, 2014; UNESCO, 2016c; Pound et al., 2017) and are presented in Table 1.1. Recommendations for all stages development, design, and delivery of CSE, including implementation monitoring, evaluation and scale-up are included in the ITGSE (UNESCO, 2018).

Table 1.1 Characteristics of an effective CSE curriculum (source: UNESCO, 2018)

Preparatory phase
1. Involve experts on human sexuality, behaviour change and related pedagogical theory.
2. Involve young people, parents/family members and other community stakeholders.
3. Assess the social, SRH needs and behaviours of children and young people targeted by the programme, based on their evolving capacities.
4. Assess the resources (human, time and financial) available to develop and implement the curricula.
Content development
5. Focus on clear goals, outcomes and key learnings to determine the content, approach and activities.
6. Cover topics in a logical sequence.
7. Design activities that are context-oriented and promote critical thinking.
8. Address consent and life skills.
9. Provide scientifically accurate information about HIV and AIDS and other STIs, pregnancy prevention, early and unintended pregnancy and the effectiveness and availability of different methods of protection.
10. Address how biological experiences, gender and cultural norms affect the way children and young people experience and navigate their sexuality and their SRH in general.
11. Address specific risk and protective factors that affect particular sexual behaviours.
12. Address how to manage specific situations that might lead to HIV infection, other STIs, unwanted or unprotected sexual intercourse or violence.
13. Address individual attitudes and peer norms concerning condoms and the full range of contraceptives.
14. Provide information about what services are available to address the health needs of children and young people, especially their SRH needs.

Haberland and Rogow (2015) discuss the effectiveness of CSE, highlighting a number of newer reviews of sexual risk reduction interventions. In some reviews and meta-analyses, it is noted that comprehensive sexual risk reduction programmes are mostly effective (Johnson, Scott-sheldon, Huedo-medina, & Carey, 2011; Kirby et al., 2007; Mavedzenge, Doyle, & Ross, 2011; Underhill, Operario, & Montgomery, 2007) including reviews which report that approximately two-thirds of evaluations show a decrease in targeted sexual risk behaviours (Kirby, 2011; Kirby et al., 2007; Underhill et al., 2007). It is argued that the evidence base on CSE programmes is relatively robust and attributes this to the fact that: such programmes are well-evaluated; there are several randomised controlled trials, longitudinal studies and experimental studies; and there are several systematic reviews and meta-analyses strengthening the reliability and replicability of findings (Browne, 2015). Browne (2015) also suggests that there is strong evidence that CSE helps young people delay sexual debut, improve contraceptive use, decrease the number of sexual partners, and decrease unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections citing Boonstra (2011) and Braeken & Cardinal (2008). This point is supported in part by Haberland and Rogow (2015) who indicate that recent studies suggest that there is potential for specific approaches to sexuality education to decrease STI and unintended pregnancy

rates although they take a deeper look at the evidence (this deeper analysis is discussed in the proceeding paragraphs).

In contrast the reviews detailed above, other reviews purport that there is a lack of effective sexuality education programmes (DiCenso, Guyatt, Willan, & Griffith, 2002; Magnussen, Ehiri, Ejere, & Jolly, 2004; Michielsen et al., 2010; Paul-Ebhohimhen, Poobalan, & Van Teijlingen, 2008). Haberland and Rogow (2015) delve deeper into the evidence of effectiveness regarding sexuality education programmes. They argue there is tension between biological and behavioural outcome investigation. One concern is that although behavioural data are important to collect (and illuminate behavioural pathways through which an intervention produces effects), they are restricted indicators to assess benefits and to inform conclusion about specific programme elements which are essential for such success (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). They also argue that the success of sexuality education programmes in affecting health outcomes, such as reductions in STI and pregnancy rates has been much lower (Kirby, 2011; Kirby et al., 2007; Underhill et al., 2007). In fact, many of the reviews recommend focusing on measuring biological outcomes as an objective way of exploring the efficaciousness of programmes instead of self-reports of behaviour change (Harrison, Newell, Imrie, & Hoddinott, 2010; Kirby et al., 2007; Mavedzenge et al., 2011; Michielsen et al., 2010; Paul-Ebhohimhen et al., 2008; Underhill et al., 2007). As there is a dearth of high-quality trials, especially longitudinal designs, it is challenging to draw clear-cut conclusions on the influence of CSE on biological outcomes (Fonner, Armstrong, Kennedy, O'Reilly, & Sweat, 2014; Lopez et al., 2016; Oringanje et al., 2009).

Haberland and Rogow (2015) purport that there are improvements to be made regarding the evidence-base and critique the positive reports of programme effectiveness arguing that: the scale of the effect is normally quite modest; one-third of programs do not demonstrate a change in even one behaviour; and most interventions define success in behavioural terms (although they acknowledge this is due to the cost and complexity of evaluations which focus on biological outcomes). They also highlight a number of gaps in the evidence: investment in research studies that measure sexuality education programs either alone or as part of complex interventions using biological and/or health outcomes and to expand indicators to also include varying contextual factors such as power in sexual relationships, context

of sex, the school setting, harassment, and "other variables that reflect the multiple factors that influence sexual risk and indicate what the implications are for interventions" (Haberland & Rogow, 2015, p. S20). They also suggest that there is a need to "conduct rigorous evaluations designed to identify 'key characteristics' of effective programs and that recognize the multiple contextual factors that influence *adolescent sexual behaviour; and document implementation of interventions, for program improvement, interpretation of study findings, and to provide adequate detail in study write-up"* (Haberland & Rogow, 2015, p. S20).

Another vital element relating to effectiveness is programme/curricula transfer. Kirby et al. (2007) question if a programme designed, implemented, and evaluated by a well-resourced and highly skilled research team subsequently be effective when implemented in different settings or by others? An example is provided which relates to four interventions in the US which have been evaluated between two and five times. When compared, Kirby et al. (2007) outline that the curricula had comparable positive behavioural effects when they were replicated, although this was dependent on: a) all activities being implemented with fidelity and (2) activities being implemented in a similar setting and with analogous youth populations. When numerous activities were not included or the setting was altered (e.g., from voluntary Saturday to compulsory in-school programmes), the curricula were less likely to demonstrate positive effects (Kirby et al., 2007).

Some of the literature discussed in this section has advocated for more rigorous evaluation designs. While such designs hold scientific merit and provide much detail, Kippax and Stephenson (2005) argue that RCTs and evaluations of one-off interventions do not meet the criteria for meaningful evaluation. In their paper, they consider the varying roles of different methodological approaches in evaluating the implementation process of SBSE (i.e., if it works, how it works, how the programme is locally adapted, and how this will inform future educational developments)? Kippax and Stephenson (2005, p.359) argue that the aim of evaluation of SRE is to:

> contribute to good sexual health through identifying when and how education is promoting agency and changes in sexual practice. Good evaluation takes account of the complexities of the specific object being addressed—sexual practice—which is fluid and essentially social. Innovative study design and the use of rigorous and

> transparent methods enable evaluators to track and understand the slow, unsteady and sometimes unpredictable mechanisms of change. The data gathered (both quantitative and qualitative) require interpretation, and interpretations inform the development of sex and relationship education programmes.

In essence, they argue for a need for various forms of evidence gathered using different methodological approaches from different paradigms. To further this example, Shepherd and colleagues (2014) argue that findings from process evaluations (while complementing outcome evaluations) may be particularly useful to enhance our understanding of why an intervention was successful, or not. Renju et al. (2010) also argue that there is little knowledge about the type and mechanisms of variables that facilitate or hinder the scale-up and further implementation of school-based adolescent sexual and reproductive health interventions (ASRH) and they focus on process evaluation data that examines such factors.

Furthermore, an RCT of a sexuality education intervention may demonstrate strong effect sizes accompanied by high fidelity rates yet this may not be proven in longer-term application or it may be unknown how implementation would be impacted if such an intervention became part of the compulsory curriculum. Conversely, process evaluation research may explore process and context without specific exploration of outcomes for young people. The truth that purely objective research does not exist cannot be downplayed, including an acute awareness that experimental designs, while striving for a more objective and measured approach, are subjective also. In ideal terms, research designs would explore all areas (outcomes, implementation process, and context) and this is linked to points in recent UNESCO reports (2016a; 2018), where it is recommended that all randomised evaluations are improved through the use of process evaluations and other types of qualitative research to shed light on contextual and implementation features and implications.

It also, however, highlights the need for varying types of research and strengthening of the evidence base to include multiple research strategies and approaches. It is advocated that reviewing the evidence should incorporate holistic and comprehensive evaluations that include both formal and participatory, and quantitative and qualitative processes. Further research conducted on CSE should not be limited to specific approaches but should glean information from a variety of

study types, including process-driven and qualitative methodologies. In addition, RCTs are not always feasible and may not provide the type of information necessary to understand the mechanisms underlying CSE programmes. It is specifically identified that there is inadequate information from high-quality research on characteristics relating to implementation processes, context, teacher training, teacher effectiveness, and learning outcomes of students (UNESCO, 2016a; 2018).

As identified in this chapter thus far, sexuality education has potential to be very beneficial but it is complex and there are many challenges. As Wood et al. (2018) noted, while planning and writing their article (that focused on practitioners perspectives), the authors were acutely aware of the challenges faced by sexual health and education researchers who are invested in finding a model for practice based on evidence, theory and needs-base yet face disillusionment when confronted by a socio-political context whereby implementing holistic and inclusive CSE seems almost impossible. In a sense, this point also links to the tension between the ideological development, implementation, and evaluation of CSE and reality. There is arguably a disconnect between the ideal or aspirational goals of CSE as promoted in the literature and how programmes are actually designed and supported, and the practicalities of real-world application of such programmes. The next three sections will be discussing such challenges in an Irish context.

1.5 The historical context and development of Irish SBSE

In Ireland, there have been difficulties regarding sexuality education similar to other developed countries (Rocha et al., 2016; Fernández, Fernández, & Castro, 2007; Haberland and Rogow, 2015; IPPF 2006; Martínez et al., 2012; Parker, Wellings, & Lazarus 2009; Peter, Tasker, & Horn 2015). The introduction of sex education in Ireland was influenced by a number of sociological factors varying from increases in sexually transmitted infections to higher levels of reported sexual abuse (Inglis, 1998; Mayock, et al., 2007). There were also tragic events that received mass media attention in the 1980s, such as the case of Ann Lovett who died alone in a grotto trying to give birth to her baby in 1984 and in the same year, the Kerry babies case which was a complex story (see story source for greater detail) involving the appalling treatment of a woman , Joanne Hayes, by the state in relation to the death

of two babies, one of which was her own (Ferriter[2] & Hickey, 2014; Inglis[3], 2018). In the years following on from this, there were also other national tragedies involving hidden pregnancies and babies abandoned by their young and unmarried mothers which highlighted the shame and silence surrounding sexuality in Ireland, but also the impact of this culture on young unmarried women and girls (Wilentz, 2016; Inglis, 1998).

There were also huge policy reforms ongoing with regards sexuality in Ireland during the 1980s as recently highlighted again in a newspaper article by Inglis in January 2018[4]. Inglis also highlights that in 1980, the Health (Family Planning) Act came into force. Further to this, in 1985, the law was further liberalise, becoming the the Health (Family Planning) (Amendment) Act by allowing condoms and spermicides to be sold to people over 18 without having to present a prescription; however sale was limited to specific places. Ireland was however still a very Catholic society and as noted by Inglis, there were major arguments about sexuality and women's fertility. In 1983, a referendum proposal to give equal rights to the mother and her unborn child was passed by two-thirds. Inglis highlights that in the same year, the bishop of Kerry wrote to *The Irish Times*, warning legislators that making contraceptives freely available to unmarried people would produce gravely detrimental consequences. It would, he wrote, maintain "the moral corruption of youth, the alarming increase in abortion, the spread of pornography and venereal disease, the increase in marital infidelity and the instability of marriage" (Inglis, 2018, para. 12). Also in this year, a High Court judge upheld the dismissal of a woman, Eileen Flynn, from her job as a secondary-school teacher on the basis that her lifestyle was disgusting to the values of the nuns who employed her. She was a single woman who had been living with and became pregnant by a married man. The High Court judge noted: "In other places women are condemned to death for this sort of offence" (Inglis, 2018, para. 13).

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[2] Diarmaid Ferriter published a book in 2009 entitled *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* discussing Ireland and its relationship with sexuality.

[3] Tom Inglis is a professor emeritus from University of College Dublin and author of a landmark novel entitled *Lessons in Irish Sexuality* published in 1998 and another called Truth, Power and Lies (2003), about the Kerry babies case

[4] This article was prompted by an apology by Leo Varadkar, the current head of government in Ireland, on behalf of the state to Joanne Hayes from the Kerry babies case.

Events such as these all prompted the recognition for the need for sexuality education to be introduced in schools, although this was met with strong resistance, particularly from schools with one main religious denomination (Wilentz, 2016). It is important to highlight that the majority of Irish schools are privately owned yet publicly funded with approximately 95 per cent of primary schools remain under the patronage of the Catholic Church or other religious groups although there is movement in recent years to change this (O'Brien, 2018). In 1995, the *Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Relationships and Sexuality Education* was published and concluded that sex education was "generally uneven, uncoordinated and sometimes lacking" (p.8), and recommended that RSE should be "a required part of the curriculum of each primary and post-primary school, starting at junior primary level" (DES, 1995, p.10). Even within this report, it should be noted that the power of religious bodies is still clearly evident. In the rationale, it is stated that "various statements on behalf of church bodies have shown clear support for a positive educational programme on human sexuality within the context of faith and morality" (Department of Education and Science, 1995, p.7).

As a result of this report, the Department of Education and Science[5] (DES) developed RSE to be implemented as a module of SPHE. In 1995 and 1996 the DES issued Circulars (M4/95) and (M20/96) respectively to post-primary schools. The circulars called for schools to start the process of developing their policies to include RSE and wider aspects of SPHE in their curricula for all students from first year to sixth year. In 1997, the DES issued *Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy Guidelines* to help schools with the process of developing an RSE policy with some additional material that has been included to help schools clarify the policy content. In 2000, the approval of the SPHE curriculum for Junior Cycle took place within a range of curriculum changes in the Irish education system (Kellagan and McGee, 2005). The DES issued two more circulars (M22/00) and (M11/03) necessitating schools to introduce the SPHE Junior Cycle Curriculum on a staged basis, with full implementation expected at the start of the academic year in 2003. These guidelines are still in use in 2018 and much of the SPHE/RSE programme has not changed in over 20 years.

[55] The Department of Education and Science was changed to the Department of Education and Skills in 2010 (Education and Science (Alteration of Name of Department and Title of Minister) Order 2010)

There are a number of circulars issued by the DES in relation to SPHE/RSE. These are outlined in Table 1.2 and it is important to highlight that there have been two circulars specifically issued to remind schools of their obligations to implement RSE programme since its introduction.

Table 1.2 SPHE/RSE circulars issued by the DES (Source: SPHE.ie)

Circular No.	Title
0037/2010	Reminder Implement SPHE JC, RSE SC, RSE Policy
0023/2010	SPHE/RSE Visitors – Best Practice Guidelines PP Schools
0027/2008	RSE – Implement SPHE JC, RSE SC, RSE Policy
M11/2003	Schools must timetable over 3 years
M48/ 2000	SPHE Syllabus enclosed, Irish will be issued shortly
M37/ 2000	Phased SPHE Introduction
M22/ 2000	SPHE Syllabus, Teacher Guidelines, Support Service
M20 /1996	RSE – Implementation in Post Primary Schools
M4 /1995	RSE – Implementation in Post Primary Schools

It should also be noted that in 2018, as part of the new Wellbeing courses, circular 0043/2018 was issued by the DES: Best practice guidance for post primary schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, 2018a).

Since the development of RSE, there have been further societal changes regarding views on sexuality directly as a result of reported child sexual abuse in Ireland. In 2003, a national charity was established, One in Four, to provide professional support to men and women who had experienced childhood sexual abuse and they specifically highlight clerical and institutional child sexual abuse (www.oneinfour.ie/about-us). A large amount of evidence in relation to the role of the Catholic Church and child sexual abuse in Ireland was brought to light in the late 00's. The most pinnacle being large scale investigations conducted into clerical child sex abuse in a Dublin catholic archdiocese and in industrial schools controlled by the Roman Catholic establishment (between 1975-2004). The findings of these investigations were published in the Murphy and Ryan reports in 2009. The large amount of evidence and allegations, in addition to the collusion by state representatives, including the Irish police, in protecting the reputation of the church and allowing the abuse to continue with immunity for perpetrators caused public outrage (Wilentz, 2016). There was also the Ferns report (2005) that detailed

extensive child abuse and the cover-up of in the south-east of Ireland (McDonald, 2009). The Church's power in influencing children's welfare and rights was questioned in addition to highlighting the vital role that sexuality education plays in abuse prevention and promoting consent as well as increasing awareness about support and service for victims of sexual coercion and violence (Wilentz, 2016).

The role of the Church in state affairs and the Catholic ownership/control of schools has been called into question in recent years. In 2018, a campaign for a bill to stop schools from using their religious ethos to avoid providing objective and factual sex education was underway (Loughlin, 2018). The bill passed without a vote in the Irish Government chambers (known as the Dail), however as noted in one of the national newspapers, as it is a "private member's Bill it is likely to languish without progress" (O'Halloran, 2018).

It is important to highlight that, as delineated in the RSE policy guidelines, each school's Board of Management (BOM) is responsible for the planning, management and evaluation of RSE. The BOM is mainly comprised of teachers, the school principal, parents, local business people, and clergy. Furthermore, while teachers have the main responsibility for the delivery of RSE, outside facilitators are often used in schools (IPPF, 2018). This includes conservative Christian agencies such as Pure in Heart and Love for Life (IPPF, 2018). It also however includes other non-government organisations that deliver aspects on RSE including local rape crisis centres, STI clinics, and organisations supporting people with HIV/AIDS as well as useful state-funded initiatives, such as b4udecide.ie, SpunOut.ie, ThinkContraception.ie, and positiveoptions.ie (IFPP, 2018). In the past, there have been reminders (identified in Table 1.2) about the use of outside facilitators for RSE, including teacher presence in the room and censuring of content that will be delivered. More recently, media attention has recently provoked further public interest in the use of outside facilitators and the types of message being delivered to young people as part of SBSE, in particular from conservative religious groups (McGuire, 2015).

It can be argued that Ireland is in the process of landslide changes with regards how sexuality is viewed and treated. As aptly identified by Wilentz (2016, p.439), "Ireland is in the midst of a sexual and reproductive health and rights sea change".

She was not wrong. In a monumental political event in Ireland, the abortion bill in 2018 was passed. The result reversed the 1983 referendum whereby 66.9 per cent of voters approved inserting the Eighth Amendment, which affirmed an equal right to life of mother and unborn, into the Constitution while in 2018, 66.4 per cent chose to take it out (McDonald, Graham-Harrison, & Baker, 2018; Henley, 2018)

There was also public outrage on the island of Ireland at the 'not guilty' verdict arising from a rape court case involving a young Northern Irish woman and a number of Irish rugby players which became commonly referred to as the "Belfast rugby rape trial" (McKay, 2018; Gallagher, 2018). The case brought more issues than just rape and consent to light, such as a culture within professional rugby in which misogynistic and sexually debase attitudes towards women seemed to be considered acceptable. It is not surprising that in the wake of such event, in April 2018, the Minister for Education and Skills at the time (Richard Bruton) announced a major review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in schools (DES, 2018b).

The RSE review has been accompanied by major media attention in national newspapers. For example, since April 3rd 2018, there have been many related pieces published in the media. Taking two main national broadsheet newspapers as example: *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Examiner* respectively, the search term "RSE" returned 222 results, with 10 specifically relevant to sexuality education in the former and the latter returned 54 results, with 13 specifically relevant articles published since the review announcement (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Irish media coverage on sex education since review announcement

Article Title	Source	Date
Sex on the syllabus: Our outdated curriculum badly needs an update	The Irish Times	April 3, 2018
Primary school pupils to get classes on sexual consent	The Irish Times	April 3, 2018
33% of parents unaware of sex ed content	Irish Examiner	April 3, 2018
Review of how sex education is taught at all levels	Irish Examiner	April 3, 2018
Richard Bruton: Teaching of consent in primary schools of 'considerable importance'	Irish Examiner	April 3, 2018
School sex ed ‘outsourced’ to Catholic agencies	The Irish Times	April 4, 2018
Sex education: Consent in the classroom	The Irish Times	April 4, 2018
Latest: Sex education in Irish schools 'not fit for purpose'	Irish Examiner	April 4, 2018
Q&A: All the questions about sex education in our schools answered	Irish Examiner	April 4, 2018
Bill would end religious ethos opt out for sex ed	Irish Examiner	April 5, 2018
Minister asks psychologists to visit Davis College as principal admits there were two other such ‘rape lists’	Irish Examiner	April 15, 2018
What are our children being taught about sex?	The Irish Times	April 24, 2018
Schools to get guidelines on use of external groups to deliver sex education	The Irish Times	May 1, 2018
Oireachtas Committee hears sex education content from 'outside facilitators' is not vetted by Department	Irish Examiner	May 1, 2018
Students’ experience of sex education ‘terrible’	Irish Examiner	May 1, 2018
Life lessons: We need to talk to children about sex and relationships	Irish Examiner	May 4, 2018
Result of sex education deficit seen daily in pregnancy counselling centres	The Irish Times	Jun 12, 2018
Government launches policy to ensure LGBTI children are 'visible, valued and included'	Irish Examiner	June 29, 2018
Papal document promoting chastity central to sex education in many schools	The Irish Times	July 5, 2018
Schools ‘like rabbits caught in headlights’ over sex education	Irish Examiner	July 6, 2018
Inadequate sexual health education worrying for Ireland’s youth	The Irish Times	Oct 12, 2018
Teachers to stay in class for external guidance	Irish Examiner	Oct 24, 2018
Government to consider changing law on sex education	The Irish Times	Dec 20, 2018

In relation to reviewing the content of the curriculum, the then Minister has asked the National Council on Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to specifically consider a number of areas in conducting its evaluation:

- Consent, what it means and its importance;
- Developments in contraception;
- Healthy, positive sexual expression and relationships;
- Safe use of the internet;
- Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem;
- LGBTQ+ matters (DES, 2018b)

In addition, the Minister has asked the NCCA to examine the reality and experience of delivering RSE in schools. It will provide an opportunity for stakeholder consultation about RSE in specific contexts:

1. How the RSE curriculum is planned, how it is taught and how parents are involved;
2. That the entire curriculum is being taught in schools to a high standard;
3. The role of the classroom teacher in teaching the curriculum and the appropriate level of supports which are currently being provided by external providers;
4. What time is given to it, what resources are being provided, and what support materials are being used;
5. How effective is the continuing professional development opportunities which are currently provided by the Department and other bodies to RSE teachers. It is important that teachers are fully supported and feel comfortable teaching the curriculum and talking to their students about sexuality and relationships (DES, 2018b)

Comparing the aims of this review to the aim of this PhD study, there is considerable impact for the findings from this study in relation to all points but particularly in relation to point five. As evident from the historical and societal discussions around RSE, the implementation of sexuality education in an Irish context is extremely problematic.

1.6 The RSE programme

The Department of Education and Skills is the national government department responsible for education in Ireland at primary, post-primary, and higher education (third level/university) levels (www.education.ie). It holds responsibility for service delivery, policy formulation, research, and evaluation and works closely with the NCCA which is the statutory body responsible for curriculum development, including SPHE and RSE. It should be noted that the RSE programme is currently under review by the NCCA and while the information presented below remains relevant at present, RSE is currently in a state of change and it is not yet known what changes will be made (NCCA, 2018). What is also important to highlight is that it is RSE but not SPHE that is being reviewed. This focus further highlights the difficulties and implementation challenges with the specific part of programme that relates to sexuality compared to the implementation of SPHE more generally. This links to points already discussed in section 1.1 and 1.5.

RSE is situated within the overall Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme delivered in Irish post-primary schools. Both SPHE and RSE are designed as a teacher-facilitated and experiential in nature. Teachers are non-specialists and are not qualified in health or sex education specifically. The experiential nature of the RSE programme is a shift away from traditional didactic teaching methods used in other school subjects. The experiential nature of RSE is outlined in the RSE Interim curriculum and guidelines for post-primary (NCCA, 1996). The cycle is outlined in Figure 1.3 below.

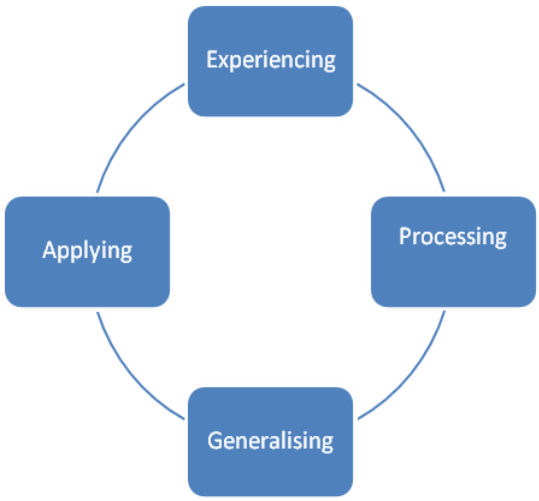


Figure 1.3 Experiential learning cycle (NCCA, 1996)

Each part of the cycle requires a specific approach. Experiencing is described as the preliminary experience which builds the foundation of the whole process and is produced through the use of structured exercises, such as role play (NCCA, 1996). The next part, processing, involves reflection and sharing of the different reactions to the experience followed by method-driven analysis to explore and assess the different reactions (NCCA, 1996). The third part of the cycle is generalising which involves extracting generalisations from the discussions and also explores how these generalisations might be related to behaviours and attitudes with respect to moral, religious, and cultural values (NCCA, 1996). The final part of the cycle focuses on the application of the learning in new situations (NCCA, 1996).

There is expectation for teachers to be responsible for the designing, planning and structuring of the experiential components of RSE. It is stated that the "exercises and their subsequent analysis should reflect the aims and ethos of the school's RSE policy" and that student participation does not always equate with a learning experience and therefore, "it is important that in addition to being involved in an activity, students are facilitated through analysing and processing to application" (NCCA, 1996, p.13).

Teachers are provided with examples of methods which support the experiential learning cycle: group discussion; case studies; brainstorming; role play; artwork; narrative expression; games (icebreakers, simulation); debate; project work; and visitors (NCCA, 1996). There is however no health promotion, health education or SPHE pre-service training offered to post-primary teachers (Mannix-McNamara, Moynihan, Jourdan, & Lynch, 2012; Keating, Morgan & Collins, 2018). Training for SPHE and RSE are offered through in-service provision. In the past (and at the time of data collection), this in-service training was offered by the SPHE support service. This service still exists but has been subsumed into what is now called the Professional Development Service for Teachers (www.sphe.ie/supportservice).

Sometimes, outside visitors are involved in SPHE and RSE provision. With regards visitors, it is stated that "while visitors to the classroom can be a useful addition to RSE, the delivery of the programme remains the responsibility of the teacher" (NCCA, 1996, p. 14). The impact of vistors or what are commonly referred to as 'outside facilitators' remains debated in the literature (for further discussion, see *A*

Review of the International Literature on the Role of Outside Facilitators in the Delivery of School Based Sex Education (de Vries et al., 2009).

Post-primary school in Ireland is divided into two cycles: junior and senior. Junior cycle refers to the first three years of post-primary school (ages 12-15) while senior cycle (ages 16-18) relates to the final two years of post-primary school (in some schools there is an additional year called Transition Year which rests between both cycles) (www.education.ie). The aims and objectives for the junior and senior cycle RSE programme are identical and outlined in the DES syllabus (see Table 1.4 and 1.5).

Table 1.4 Aims of RSE (Source: Government of Ireland, 1998; 1999)

To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships
To promote an understanding of sexuality
To promote a positive attitude to one's own sexuality and in one's relationship with others
To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction
To enable young people to develop attitudes and values towards their sexuality in a moral, spiritual and social framework

Table 1.5 Objectives of RSE (Source: Government of Ireland, 1998; 1999)

RSE should enable the students to:
Acquire the understanding and skills necessary to form healthy friendships and relationships
Develop a positive sense of self-awareness, and the skills for building and maintaining self-esteem
Become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change especially during adolescence and to develop respect for difference between individuals
Understand human physiology with particular reference to the reproductive cycle, human fertility and sexually transmitted infections
Understand sexual development and identity and explore aspects of sexuality including sex role stereotyping, gender issues and cultural influences on sexuality
Value family life and appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood
Develop strategies for decisions and actions consistent with personal moral integrity and respectful of the rights and dignity of others
Develop skills for coping with peer pressure, conflict and threats to personal safety

The structure and content of RSE varies however between both junior and senior cycle**.** The curriculum for SPHE at junior cycle level is presented in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the three-year cycle (see Table 1.6 for an outline of the overall SPHE programme).

Table 1.6 Ten modules of the SPHE programme at junior cycle (Source: Government of Ireland, 1998; 1999)

1. Belonging and integrating	2. Influences and decisions
3. Communication skills	4. Physical health
5. Friendship	6. Relationships and sexuality (RSE)
7. Emotional health	8. Self-management: a sense of purpose
9. Substance use	10. Personal safety

In the curriculum, various topics to be implemented as part of RSE junior cycle programme according to each year are outlined (see Table 1.7 below).

Table 1.7 RSE curriculum topics according to junior cycle year (Source: Government of Ireland, 1998; 1999)

Year one: Me as unique and different; Friendship; Changes at adolescence; The reproductive system; Images of male and female; Respecting myself and others
Year two: From conception to birth; Recognising and expressing feelings and emotions; Peer pressure and other influences; Managing relationships; Making responsible decisions; Health and personal safety
Year three: Body image; Where am I now?; Relationships - what's important; The three R's: respect, rights, and responsibilities; Conflict; No topic outlined

The junior cycle syllabus outlines 24 lessons: a) The Circle of Life; b) Communication and Respect; c) Feelings and Adolescence; d) Saying How I Feel; e) Body Awareness-Body Care; f) Hygiene Hints!; g) Common Senses; h) The Image of Me; i) The Words we Use; j) Puberty; k) Human Reproduction; l) The Miracle of New Life; m) Pregnancy and Birth; n) How I Relate; o) Family Ties; p) You've Got a Friend; q) Boy/Girl Relationships; r) Don't Box Me In!; s) Self-Esteem; t) Peer Pressure; u) Take Care!; v) Time to Reflect; w) Teenage Pregnancy; and x) Respect and Tolerance for Difference (Government of Ireland, 1998, p.5).

Since 2003, the provision of the equivalent of one class period per week (or 70 hours per annum) of SPHE is mandatory for all junior cycle students and it is required that RSE is taught as an integral component of SPHE (Mayock et al., 2018). There is a minimum requirement that RSE is allocated five to six classes per year as part of SPHE while SPHE classes must be timetabled one class per week (NCCA, 1996, p.11). In the RSE curriculum guidelines, timing is described in relation to the number of classes needed to cover a specific lesson. In the majority of lessons it is suggested that one/two class periods (of 35-40 minutes each) are required to cover the lesson, while a smaller number

of lessons require one class period only. In some lessons, it is recommended that two/three class periods are required to cover the lesson. More recently, an *SPHE Short Course* (2015) was developed by the NCCA and introduced as part of a new junior cycle. RSE is integrated across a number of stands and learning outcomes within this course. Within the context of developing a junior cycle wellbeing programme, schools now have scope to allocate additional time (100 hours) to SPHE/RSE within the overall 400-hour programme (www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE).

It is also highlighted in original guidance documents that RSE does not "take place exclusively in a designated set of lessons (e.g., six classes in the school year)" but that it "should be seen by students and teachers alike as an ongoing part of the students' growth and development and as being relevant to all areas of the students' education" (Government of Ireland, 1999, p.9). The curriculum states that there are "more lessons provided in these resources than can be covered in a Junior Cycle RSE Programme" and that selecting resources "will depend on the school policy" (Government of Ireland, 1998, p.9). The curriculum also states that:

In addition, consideration will have to be given to students' familiarity with the topics covered in RSE. What have the students covered before that need not be repeated? Have they covered before that can be built upon? The choosing of lessons may also depend on the level of cross-curricular links that are made with other subjects in the school. For example, if the students have covered the female and male reproductive systems in science it may not be necessary to repeat the same learning in RSE (Government of Ireland, 1998, p.9).

In senior cycle, SPHE is not mandatory, although schools are required to teach RSE even in the absence of a timetabled SPHE class. Building on the existing senior cycle curriculum, the 'Talking Relationships, Understanding Sexuality Teaching Resource (TRUST)' resource package was developed in 2005. The TRUST resource includes a "40 minute DVD and set of 21 lesson plans covering topics on the Senior Cycle RSE curriculum such as communication, decision-making, safety, self-esteem, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, and unplanned pregnancy" (www.pdst.ie, accessed Dec 4th, 2016). It is only available to teachers who have attended senior cycle RSE training (www.pdst.ie).

For each of the lessons in the Trust resource the following information is included: aims, outcomes, age-appropriateness, time, other useful resources (for some lessons), background information for teachers (for some lessons), possible home/school links (for some lessons), materials needed for the lesson, staged lesson plan, procedure in detail, worksheets, and activity guides. A *Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Framework* was published to support planning for SPHE at this level (NCCA, 2011). The five core learning areas for Senior Cycle in SPHE are:

- Physical activity and nutrition
- Mental health
- Gender studies
- Substance use
- Relationships and sexuality

The senior cycle syllabus outlines 20 lessons: a) Communication; b) Assertive Communication; c) Dealing With Feelings; d) Keeping Your Cool!; e) Living with Loss; f) Human Reproduction; g) Human Sexuality; h) Planning for the Future; i) Responsible Parenthood; j) More Than You Bargained For; k) Implications of Sexual Activity; l) Loving Relationships; m) Marriage; n) Life Support; o) Challenging Roles; p) Accepting Sexual Orientations; q) Sexual Harassment; r) When Sexual Assault Becomes a Reality; s) Without Consent; t) Sexual Abuse (Government of Ireland, 1999, p.5).

In the Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education post-primary junior cycle, the need for RSE is framed in a moral context and adolescence is recognised as a particularly important stage for the development of views, attitudes and understanding of relationships and sexuality:

Relationships and Sexuality are key elements of healthy social and personal development in all our lives, but particularly in the life of an adolescent. Adolescence is marked by the onset of physical sexual maturity. This stage of development is also marked by the establishment of first significant boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, by the first experience of sexual attraction and by the experience of falling in, and out, of love. There is greater freedom and responsibility and exposure to a bewildering variety of messages about sexuality, issues of sexual orientation and the place of sexuality in

personal and social life. Sexual development calls for the critical evaluation of the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values with which adolescents are bombarded. Building on the work done in primary school, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) at post-primary level seeks to provide opportunities for young people to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that will enable them to think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way (Government of Ireland, 1998, p.5).

1.7 Extant literature on Irish SBSE at post-primary level

To date, a number of research studies have been undertaken to date that have assessed and informed the development and implementation of the SPHE curriculum in Ireland (SPHE, 2005; Burtenshaw, 2003; Geary & Mannix-McNamara, 2003; Millar, 2003a; Millar, 2003b; Mayock et al., 2007; Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010)[6.]

In 2001, Millar (2003a) conducted a postal needs analysis of 489 schools and reported that 64 per cent offered SPHE to students, up to 95 per cent had developed an SPHE related policy, and 54 per cent of SPHE teachers had received SPHE training. *The SPHE Story - an example of incremental change in the school setting* (SPHE, 2005) is a report that was commissioned by the SPHE support service to review three existing pieces of work which related to the SPHE support service: *Implementation of SPHE at Junior Cycle* (Geary & Mannix-McNamara, 2003); *Report from the Review of Social Personal and Health Education at Junior Cycle by the SPHE Support Service, Post Primary* (Burtenshaw, 2003); and the *Review of Records of In-Service Training for Teachers of SPHE: February 2001 to April 2003* (Millar, 2003b). The core findings of these reports will now be discussed.

Burtenshaw (2003) conducted interviews and focus groups with key staff and partners of the SPHE support service. Her work focused on the nature of partnerships in the delivery of SPHE and the challenges in supporting schools. In terms of the quality of the partnership, it was reported that most regional SPHE Support Service teams were working extremely well (Burtenshaw, 2003). It was reported that respondents found it difficult to provide detail on the effectiveness of the implementation of SPHE. This was due the difficulty in obtaining a clear understanding of the variety of ways in which SPHE is offered at school level

[6] It is important to note that the research listed was conducted prior to the structural changes that occurred within the SPHE support service.

(Burtenshaw, 2003). Burtenshaw (2003) reported implementation barriers to SPHE. For example, respondents suggested that the lack of engagement in SPHE was attributed to the absence of status and reward, in particular being allocated to post of 'no responsibility[7]' and be tasked with more than a fair share of school problems. Timetabling was identified as an issue and it was reported that the Support Service would welcome guidelines from the DES with regards timetabling (Burtenshaw, 2003). It was also reported that although SPHE at junior cycle was mandatory, a number of schools had not yet engaged, mostly single sex boys' schools (Burtenshaw, 2003).

Burtenshaw (2003) noted that some schools offered the role of coordinator as a post of responsibility or allocating time within the school schedule for coordination meetings. Respondents reported that the appointment of the SPHE coordinator was essential for delivery success and integration (Burtenshaw, 2003). Furthermore, some teachers were not consulted about training participation but were sent and that this cohort contained a proportionally large number of teacher trainee students and temporary or part-time teachers (Burtenshaw, 2003). It was also reported that a national qualification in SPHE could be developed at undergraduate and/or postgraduate level, raising the status of SPHE and providing practical experience to teacher-training students (Burtenshaw, 2003).

With regards the training provided by the SPHE support service, it was found that training was successful due to the high and recurrent attendance and positive responses from teachers (Burtenshaw, 2003). It was reported that the training team were self-assured in their skill and capability to provide complex training up to a high standard, while providing a safe and supportive learning environment (Burtenshaw, 2003). Overall, the support service felt they were reaching a large number of teachers and providing a baseline standard of remarkably high quality (Burtenshaw, 2003). Millar (2003b) reported on teachers evaluations of SPHE in-service training programmes.

Millar (2003b) reported on a review of 259 in-house evaluations of in-service training programmes provided by the SPHE support service from 2001-2003. These

[7] This refers to posts which require teachers to do more work as part of their existing role but they do not receive any financial remuneration.

data were generated by 3,558 teachers and demonstrated that a majority reported positively on the training; 60 per cent indicated the training was excellent while 34 per cent considered the training received to be very good. Millar (2003b) also found that male teachers only accounted for 17 per cent of training recipients and were more like to participate in drug and substance misuse than RSE and sexual health training.

Geary and Mannix-Macnamara (2003) reported on their assessment of SPHE implementation from the perspective of school Principals and teachers. They employed a postal self-report questionnaire through which they examined the degree of SPHE provision, the perceived role of the SPHE support service, the difficulties of implementation related to the SPHE curriculum, the selection of teachers, and the co-ordination of SPHE at school level. Sixty-seven percent of Principals said that SPHE was offered in their school. Geary and Mannix-Macnamara (2003) found that there was a high level of awareness among Principals and non-SPHE teachers of the existence of the SPHE Support Service in general but a low level of knowledge of the specifics of SPHE.

Geary and Mannix-Macnamara (2003) reported implementation barriers identified by school Principals as: curriculum overload (90 per cent); lack of time for coordination/planning (66% per cent); staff feeling inadequately trained (45 per cent); physical resources (19 per cent); and adequacy of SPHE school team (7 per cent). Three out of four teachers surveyed indicated that all the main themes of SPHE were very relevant to pupils' lives (Geary & Mannix-Macnamara, 2003). Relationships, sexuality and substance use were viewed as the most relevant and the ones which received the most attention (Geary & Mannix-Macnamara, 2003). It was also reported that many teachers felt that there was a greater need for the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills in RSE as the students reach third year (Geary & Mannix-Macnamara, 2003).

Following these reports, a study was undertaken by Nic Gabhainn et al. (2010) to explore the gaps that remained in the knowledge and understanding of SPHE implementation. A case study approach was adopted with 12 schools and a variety of stakeholders from each school were involved: the Principal, the SPHE co-ordinator, two SPHE teachers, and a member of staff involved in pastoral care, groups of

parents, and all junior cycle students (Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). One area of focus in particular was two key stakeholder groups who had not been consulted in the process up to that period: students and parents (Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). There were two main research questions which focused on the value and worth of SPHE and the facilitators of successful SPHE implementation (Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). In general, stakeholders agreed on the worth of SPHE. However, it's perceived value relative to other areas of the curriculum varied by school context (Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). Factors which promoted successful implementation included teacher training, inclusion of SPHE in school planning and evaluation processes, and organisational support for SPHE via timetabling and resource management within schools (Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). A key point highlighted in the work by Nic Gabhainn et al. (2010, p.463) is that "the issues of perceived importance, worth and relative value cannot be divorced from issues around implementation". All of these reports provide key information on the operation of the SPHE Support Service and/or on the implementation of SPHE in schools. Although difficulties remain with the implementation of SPHE, it can be argued that greater difficulties lie within the delivery of the RSE component of the subject.

While there is research that has documented the successes and challenges with the implementation of SPHE as a whole, there are greater difficulties with the more contentious and sensitive parts of the programme, namely the RSE component of the subject. There are often difficulties with the implementation of SBSE programmes as sex education is a contentious issue within social policy (Measor et al., 2000; Thomson, 1994), with much disagreement on the content and objectives. A report published in 2007, *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in the Context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE),* highlighted a number of issues regarding the implementation of sex education in Ireland (Mayock et al., 2007). Some of the findings of the report include: the need for improved teacher training with regards RSE, the need to introduce SPHE at senior-cycle level (in order to facilitate full RSE implementation) and the need for on-going evaluation of SPHE/RSE at school level (Mayock et al., 2007). It was reported that the role of teacher as facilitator is an important element of RSE delivery. As noted for teachers delivering SPHE and RSE, "they need to make a significant shift in teaching methods from the traditional 'chalk and talk' approach to teacher as facilitator of

learning, using experiential and active approaches to learning" (Mayock et al., 2007, p. 30). However, 77.6% of post-primary teachers felt that RSE was more challenging than other features of SPHE and teacher discomfort was ranked the third highest perceived preventive factor in RSE implementation (Mayock et al., 2007).

The top three factors that would be helpful in the implementation of RSE in post-primary schools were reported as; expanded support service, increased in-service provision, and more outside facilitators in schools (ibid). It is interesting to note that "the factors considered to be most helpful had to do with the general area of support and enhancement of skills" (Mayock et al., 2007, p. 77). Therefore, issues surrounding teachers deserve further examination. Some of these issues include self-efficacy, teacher interest, resources, training, support, the 'pick and choose' element of the RSE curriculum, and whether the teaching role was voluntary or mandatory (Mayock et al., 2007).

Teacher training is vital for the effective implementation of RSE (Mayock et al., 2007). With regards training, a representative of the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) stated that "our in-service model is not a continuum of professional development; it's more like a one-hit-wonder-approach" (quoted in Mayock et al., 2007, p. 126). Other problems regarding in-service training arise from the lack of teacher release for training; the position given to RSE versus academic subjects, some teachers released for training and being expected to relay information to rest of staff, and, rotation of responsibilities within schools which results in loss of skills (Mayock et al., 2007).

There are problems regarding pre-service training for SPHE/RSE. In Ireland, SPHE is not a Bachelors degree subject and newly qualified teachers may not have received appropriate training in their graduate programmes as SPHE/RSE teaching is not viewed as a subject career option (Mayock et al., 2007). Therefore, it is suggested that "in order to raise the perception of RSE teaching as a career option, we need to look more closely at pre-service teacher education" (Mayock et al., 2007, p. 136). Although there have been arguments that outside facilitators may be a better option for sexuality education delivery, Mayock et al. (2007) argued that teacher-delivered RSE is more sustainable and comprehensive.

In 2009, teenage delegates at a meeting of the Irish National Youth Parliament provided a number of recommendations which included: a) all young people should have access to sex education that is appropriate to their needs, all-inclusive, and varied in delivery; and b) structured SPHE course to be implemented to senior cycle students that involves positive awareness of mental health and the creation of an online support service. To explore these recommendations, members of the the Dáil na nÓg Council (the group of young delegates elected to follow up during the year on recommendations made at Dáil na nÓg) explored these recommendations by developing two questionnaires. There was a questionnaire for junior cycle students and a separate one for senior cycle students. It was highlighted that 88% of young people received SPHE classes yet 74% of students *did not* receive RSE classes (Roe, 2010). They also found that RSE was timetabled in only 15% of schools surveyed. In relation to the most emphasised themes for RSE, 'healthy relationships' was the most frequently covered while 'understanding sexual orientation' was least commonly delivered theme. Specifically regarding senior-cycle RSE, in 2013, it was reported that a core teaching team had been established in 63% of schools but there was significant variations in the quality of provision (DES, 2013).

Since the recent call for review of RSE in 2018, a research paper was prepared *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Primary and Post-Primary Irish Schools* and provides further contextual content surrounding RSE (Keating, Morgan & Collins, 2018). It also frames RSE as a holistic sexuality education programme and is being used as a base document for participants of the NCCA review (NCCA, 2018). Consultations are currently underway.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, in many cases SBSE is delivered by teachers. In Ireland, this is the case as RSE (Irish SBSE) is implemented by teachers. As described above, there are complexities to teacher-delivered SBSE which vary from willingness to confidence. In the implementation literature, those who are tasked with delivering a particular programme/intervention are often labelled as the implementers. Further to this, the literature suggests that implementer readiness (i.e., the readiness of the implementer to deliver the programme - this draws on beliefs, attitudes, and skill proficiency) is a core facilitator for successful implementation (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, & Zins, 2005).

It is suggested that the readiness of implementers is a characteristic of individuals and/or organisations that is evident early in the adoption and implementation stage, when programme delivery has been recently introduced (Wanless & Domitrovich, 2015). Implementer readiness is more relevant and inherent in the multiple stages of implementation than this definition allows, particularly with regards implementation of programmes embedded in the school curriculum. In relation to RSE, it has been identified that the loss of teachers with the necessary skills to implement RSE (for example, through timetable changes) and teachers not receiving training are all barriers to its implementation (Mayock et al., 2007). This also includes newly qualified teachers who have no prior experience of teaching RSE. Exploring school-based implementation must include exploration of core implementation components.

1.8 Research rationale

Drawing on the work outlined in this chapter, it is evident that, not only is SBSE and CSE contentious across countries with many core challenge areas; there are intense difficulties with its implementation, ranging from teacher-delivery to appropriate content and how to determine what constitutes effectiveness. This thesis problematises the implementation of SBSE and identifies areas which require further attention from the review of recent published work. There remains a need for more research on teachers' experience and skill-acquisition at training-level and how this translates in practice. There are is also a need to incorporate the school-level context and explore the various factors that influence SBSE implementation. Furthermore, there is a need for greater understanding of how teachers conceptualise implementation and how this compares to published models in the literature. From a context-specific viewpoint, the information provided earlier in this section highlights the difficulties regarding sexuality and the subsequent development of RSE in Ireland, ranging from increases in reported sexual abuse to the low prioritisation RSE receives at school-level. Furthermore, it is evident that there are implementation challenges and a need for greater understanding about such processes.

1.9 Purpose statement

This study will explore the delivery of RSE in-service training and RSE delivery in schools in Ireland through an implementation science theoretical perspective. This study seeks to build on existing research conducted in an Irish context and in the

broader field of school based sex education, with a specific focus on the implementation of such programmes. This study is specifically situated in the field of implementation science. The conceptual framework will be developed from implementation science theory and subsequently applied to explore the implementation of RSE in Ireland. In more general terms, this study is about the implementation process of SBSE in a particular cultural context.

1.10 Study aims and objectives

1. To adopt an implementation science conceptual framework to explore the practice of RSE in-service training and subsequent RSE delivery in schools. This will involve examining the process of training and lesson delivery, from a theoretical perspective, in order to identify factors which facilitate or hinder training/lesson delivery. These factors will also be compared to the existing research in the field, within and outside of an Irish context, to reflect on contributions the research makes to the implementation of school-based sex education programmes.
2. To explore teachers conceptualisations of school-based programme implementation in an Irish context. Teachers' views will be compared to the extant literature in the field of implementation science with the aim of identifying similarities and/or differences between Ireland and other countries, but also to create new knowledge between theory and practice from an implementation perspective.

1.11 Research questions

- Does RSE in-service teacher training equip teachers with the skills and confidence to deliver RSE lessons?
- How well are RSE in-service training sessions, and subsequent RSE lessons, implemented?
- What are the facilitators and barriers for delivery of RSE in-service training and RSE lessons?
- How do Irish teachers conceptualise implementation?

1.12 Synopsis of thesis chapters

Chapter one presented a rationale for the exploration of the implementation of SBSE programmes. It highlighted recent evidence which advocates for further exploration of the implementation of CSE in the field of sexuality education, using a variety of methodological approaches. It also highlighted specific research gaps and the need for further knowledge and understanding of the implementation of SBSE in Irish post-primary schools, particularly in relation to teacher training and the translation of this training to practice. Core arguments within the field of sexuality were presented, outlining considerations in the field of CSE and challenging areas, such as gender, power and the structure-agency debates. Other challenging areas were also identified, including but not limited to, heteronormativity and teacher skill and confidence. The chapter also detailed the debate regarding the effectiveness of sexuality education and challenges between behavioural and biological outcomes measurement. The extant literature in an Irish context was described, further highlighting a lack of knowledge and the resulting need to delve deeper in to the exploration of implementation at post-primary level. The Irish SBSE programme delivered in Irish post-primary schools was then outlined. The chapter concluded with the research rationale, purpose statement, and aims and objectives clearly linking the research gap outlined earlier in the chapter to the research topic being explored in this study.

Chapter two presents the conceptual framework adopted for this study. It provides a critical discussion of implementation science theory and concludes with the adoption of a conceptual model of school-based implementation with minor adaptations (addition of concepts and one cultural adaptation). The school-based conceptual model of implementation was created by experts through a review of literature from numerous fields, namely: education, prevention science, and programme evaluation. The model was selected as it was informed by interdisciplinary research but also as it is balanced in its focus; structured and detailed but also not excessively specific. This was important as this study is being conducted in and Irish context and focuses on SBSE. The concepts in the model, and the additional ideas adopted, are used to inform the design of the methods in chapter three and provide a foundation for the entire thesis.

Chapter three commences with a discussion of the pragmatic position and its relationship to this study. The Mixed Methods (MM) approach adopted for this study is then described. There is a discussion of the approach and an outline of various MM designs, detailing the specific design chosen (triangulation convergence model) and the underlying rationale for selection (which relates to timing of data collection/analysis, equal or unequal weight attributed to quantitative and qualitative data, and how the quantitative and qualitative data will be mixed). The sampling strategy and study design are clearly outlined. This is followed by a presentation of how similar studies that have studied the implementation of SBSE have conceptualised and methodologically explored these concepts. This is followed by a description of each data collection method and rationale for use. The concepts identified from a conceptual model of school-based implementation in chapter two were used to inform the methodological content and this is clearly mapped for the reader in a table linking each concept to a method and specific questions. The approach to data management and analysis is then clearly documented. Quality assurance, in relation to both quality checks and quality in relation to inferences in MM studies is then outlined. Research ethics are then discussed with regards to this study and information on data storage, dissemination of results, and documentation of approvals are provided.

Chapter four presents the results from three stages of data collection and is subdivided into three sections. The first section presents findings from data collection at in-service training and details the thematic analysis of findings from the contextual level section of the study, followed by specific findings related to the implementation of each in-service. Summaries are provided after each in-service to consolidate the information presented. The second section details findings from data collection at participating schools. In the second section, findings are presented by school, with contextual level presented at the beginning and the specific results relating to the implementation of the RSE lesson presented after. The third section provides the findings from a participatory research approach with teachers. The process and development of the schemas created by teachers is presented.

Chapter five discusses the study findings in relation to the extant literature. It is within this chapter that the findings from the various stages of the research are mixed as per the MM design outline in chapter three. The findings are presented according

to these core headings: professional experience and characteristics; training the trainers; implementation fidelity; facilitators and barriers; contextual factors; aspirations for RSE; and conceptualisations of programme implementation.

Chapter six provides a conclusion to the study and restates the study design. It summarises how this study differs to what has been studied before, the main findings of the study, and how this study contributes to the field of SBSE overall. It also highlights how the findings from this study contribute to the field of implementation science, and also how it contributes to what is known about RSE in an Irish context.

The **references** and **study appendices** are then presented.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework which serves as the conceptual foundation for the exploration of the implementation of RSE in-service teacher training and RSE delivery in the classroom at post-primary level. While the programme being explored in this study is an SBSE programme, the lens applied in this study is dictated by implementation science theory. In essence, this is an implementation science approach applied to an SBSE programme in an Irish context. The chapter presents core discussions in the field of implementation science and explores: the rationale for studying programme implementation, a brief history of the development of exploring implementation fidelity, and the tension between fidelity and adaptation. There is also discussion of core concepts highlighted in the field. Conceptual school-based models of programme implementation identified from a review of the literature are then described. One of these conceptual models is drawn upon for this study (Greenberg et al., 2005), with some minor adaptations (Greenberg plus model) and this is described in the final sections of this chapter.

It should be noted early in this chapter that there are some references which appear dated however:

- Some of the references used in relation to the rationale for exploring fidelity and the history of fidelity are the original works and seem dated but are seminal pieces in the field (for example, Dobson & Cook, 1980; Berman & McLaughlin, 1976; and Rogers, 2003)
- The references provided for the core implementation concepts remain applicable (citing the original work) and are still are the main sources cited among recent academic work in this area (Durlak, 2015; 2016)

2.2 What is implementation?

Implementation can be broadly defined as the way a programme is put into practice and how it is delivered to participants (Durlak, 2016). In essence, implementation is concerned with how a programme is delivered in reality in comparison to how it has been planned theoretically (Durlak, 2016). Recent descriptions of implementation

incorporate this distinction as the literature indicates that implementation levels achieved when programmes are delivered in new settings is not ideal (Durlak, 2016). There are a variety of reasons for this; however it is now clear that failure to reach an acceptable implementation level can be highly problematic (Durlak, 2016).

2.3 Why should we explore programme implementation?

Studying programme implementation is a core part of bridging the gap between research and practice and is part of the evidence-based approach. In the past, it has been reported that programme implementation has received relatively limited research attention (Barry, Domitrovich, & Lara, 2005; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Greenberg et al., 2005; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003). For example, in a seminal piece of research in the 90's, Durlak (1998) noted that less that 5% of 1200 prevention studies provided information on implementation. Similarly, to demonstrate the lack of exploration of implementation, Domitrovich and Greenberg (2000) emphasised that there was seldom focus on exploring implementation in their assessment of 32 intervention studies, noting that only 13 analysed the relationship between implementation and outcomes.

The field has however moved on considerably over the past four decades, with at least one main journal that focuses specifically on implementation research, many publication channels which need data on implementation to comprise an element of trial reports, and in some areas of research (such as prevention), evidence standards dictate the need to provide verification of implementation (Gottfredson et al., 2015). Implementation is a currently relevant and important part of all forms of interventions, regardless of the participant, service, or programme type (Durlak, 2015).

Furthermore, time after time, research has shown that the implementation levels achieved has an important effect on program outcomes and this is often demonstrated in two critical ways (Durlak, 2015). First, as a broad rule, when information is gathered to highlight that the same programme is implemented differently across various settings (for example, when one school has a higher implementation level than another), the programme that has higher levels of implementation typically achieves significantly better outcomes than the lower level implementation programme (Barry & Jenkins, 2007; Durlak, 2015). Second,

programmes that are implemented poorly frequently have little or no significant positive effect on their participants (Barry & Jenkins, 2007; Durlak, 2015). The impact of these points has resulted in the assessment of implementation and determining in what way the achieved implementation levels are related to different programme outcomes becoming core parts of programme evaluations (Durlak, 2015).

Examining fidelity is a crucial element of programme implementation. Assessing implementation fidelity is important for a number of reasons. First, it avoids Type III error. Type III error arises when statistical difference is proven but the direction of the difference is incorrect (Dobson & Cook, 1980). For example, Type III error occurs in studies when a programme is not implemented as planned or delivered so poorly as to invalidate the concluding analyses (Barry & Jenkins, 2007; Dobson & Cook, 1980; Durlak, 2015). Second, assessing fidelity aids understanding of *why* programmes succeed or fail (Durlak, 2015; Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003). Third, assessment of fidelity allows researchers to identify what programme changes have occurred and to infer how these changes affect outcomes (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Finally, examining fidelity provides information on programme feasibility. Programme feasibility relates to the likelihood of a programme being implemented with fidelity (Dusenbury et al., 2003). If it is difficult to achieve implementation fidelity in practice, a programme may have low feasibility (Dusenbury et al., 2003). However, if a programme is implemented with high fidelity but fails to produce intended effects, it may need to be restructured (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Furthermore, there is a need to differentiate between implementation outcomes and effectiveness outcomes (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, & Friedman, 2005). This is important as, for example, there is a need to separate ineffective programmes from programmes which are effective but are not implemented well.

Overall, the field has grown and the need to explore implementation is not contested, however there remain many challenges regarding the exploration of implementation. Durlak (2015, p.1123) highlights that *"studying program implementation is not easy but it is essential".* In the field of implementation science, there are the eight components of implementation (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak, 2015; Durlak & DuPre, 2008), more than 20 contextual factors potentially affecting implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008), and the 14 steps considered necessary to achieving

effective implementation (Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012) which presents a very large array of possible variations that can potentially impact on implementation. As a result of this level of variability, researchers are faced with the challenge of exploring multiple factors that may operate in any context and influence program outcomes (Durlak, 2015). What makes this even more complex is that it is not yet clear what methods should be used in different circumstances to measure implementation most reliably and validly, and the frequency with which such measurements should be repeated because levels of achieved implementation can vary over time (Durlak, 2015). It is also likely that there are threshold implementation levels where desired programme outcomes are achieved and pushing beyond this may not actually result in any better benefits for participants (Durlak, 2015). In essence, implementation does not have to be perfect for a program to be effective, but it does have to be good enough. This is very difficult to determine across interventions and over time (Durlak, 2015).

Durlak (2015, p.1125) asserts that: "we need to learn how the level of implementation achieved for different components of implementation affects the types of outcomes demonstrated by participants in different types of programs and what contextual factors facilitate or hinder achieving an effective level of implementation for each intervention". This links to arguments made in earlier literature that there is a need for research on the implementation of programmes in natural settings (Barry, Domitrovich, & Lara, 2005). Barry and colleagues (2005) also identify the need to recognise the main features and conditions which can promote high quality implementation. This incorporates a broadening of the evidence base from research that focuses purely on efficacy (whether programmes work) to include effectiveness (in what conditions, and with whom, programmes can work) (Barry et al., 2005). Exploring programmes in their natural setting is also highlighted by Busch et al. (2013), where the need to work from and within the school setting to achieve sufficient implementation levels is also identified.

In addition to challenges in exploring and measuring implementation, Durlak (2015) highlights further priority areas for future research:

1. develop efficient and reliable measures of different implementation components

2. determine implementation threshold effects for different interventions
3. assess the influence of adaptations
4. evaluate the impact of training
5. ascertain which implementation components are associated with which program outcomes.

Arguably this study could be seen as contributing to the evaluation of training impact and also exploring parts of key research priority areas. Although the RSE programme is not an evidence-based intervention, there is still a need to explore implementation processes, outcomes, and context.

A core finding in programme implementation literature, which specifically focuses on the science of implementation or more simply put, the science of putting a programme into practice, is the need for outside assistance or professional development, to achieve effective implementation. It is rare for implementers to achieve high-quality implementation or intended programme outcomes when adhering to a programme manual or lesson plans alone (Durlak, 2016). It is natural for practical problems to arise while implementing a programme and guidance is needed (beyond written forms) on how to foresee such challenges, deal with them, and to also understand multiple features of the intervention (Durlak, 2016). This type of guidance and support is often provided in pre-programme training but also involves ongoing assistance after the programme begins through consultation or personal coaching (Durlak, 2016). As evidenced from the introductory chapter, teacher delivery of SBSE is particularly challenging although a number of facilitating factors, such as choosing the “right” teachers and also providing adequate training and support hold potential to greatly impact on the implementation level and type of CSE/SBSE.

The next section describes implementation fidelity and provides a brief history of implementation fidelity. This is followed by a discussion of the exploration of fidelity in SBSE programmes. The tensions that exist between fidelity and adaptation are then detailed. The purpose of these sections is to provide background detail, to highlight some challenges in the exploration of implementation fidelity, and how these link to the future research priorities.

2.4 What is implementation fidelity and why is it important?

Implementation fidelity refers to the level to which an intervention or programme is delivered as intended (Carroll et al., 2007). Arguably, researchers and practitioners can only obtain an increased level of knowledge of the how and why an intervention works, and the extent to which outcomes can be improved, through understanding and measuring whether an intervention has been implemented with fidelity (Carroll et al., 2007).

2.5 Fidelity and SBSE

Curriculum fidelity has also been identified as one of the 17 characteristics of effective sexuality education curricula (Kirby, 2007). When taught with fidelity, sex education curricula has been linked to increased pupil self-efficacy and knowledge (Wang et al., 2015; Roberto et al., 2007; LaChausse, 2006; Denny & Young, 2006). One recent SBSE study reported that pupil self-efficacy and intentions were higher among students high/moderate fidelity group versus pupils in the low fidelity group (Wang et al., 2015). In addition to having a positive impact on student self-efficacy and student behaviour, it is reported that fidelity can increase student knowledge about subject material (Benner, Nelson, Stage, & Ralston, 2011; Roberto et al., 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2015).

Additionally, research has demonstrated professional development/teacher training results in higher rates of curriculum fidelity (Bradshaw et al., 2010; LaChausse et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2015). For example, LaChausse et al. (2014) reported health education teachers who completed the two-day programme training were more likely to implement lessons about condom use while another reported that not only did teacher training improve curriculum fidelity, but it also increased teacher comfort in implementing a sexuality education curriculum Wang et al. (2015). It has been reported in a study by Bambara et al. (2009) that teachers believed training was crucial in implementing programs with fidelity. Specifically, 92% of participants described ongoing training as essential to successful program implementation, while 76% of participants cited the lack of training as a barrier to program implementation (Bambara et al., 2009).

Studies have also shown various intrapersonal factors (LaChausse et al., 2014; Beets et al., 2008; Justice et al., 2008) and teacher attitudes impact curriculum fidelity

(Uribe-Florez & Wilkins, 2010; Wang, 2015). In line with this, teacher self-efficacy has been identified as an important factor in curriculum fidelity (LaChausse et al., 2014). In their study, La Chausse and colleagues (2014) identified teacher self-efficacy as a significant predictor of curriculum fidelity, specifically in condom use role-play and condoms while Rauscher et al. (2015) found teacher self-efficacy and teacher enthusiasm toward the curriculum were positively associated with curriculum adoption and curriculum fidelity.

The studies discussed next typify some of the points outlined earlier in this thesis, especially in relation to the diffusion of SBSE. For example, in the Netherlands, Schutte et al. (2014) conducted a study assessing factors associated with programme adoption, implementation and sustainment of the 'Long Live Love' programme among teachers. The successful diffusion of SBSE remains under researched and Schutte et al. (2014) aimed to explore this knowledge gap and increase understanding of the factors that influence programme adoption, implementation completeness, implementation fidelity and sustained use of the programme. Findings indicated that teachers' curriculum related beliefs were related to all stages of the diffusion process. Furthermore, Schutte et al. (2014) found that programme implementation (comprehensiveness and fidelity) was linked to teachers having completed curriculum training. In addition there were other contextual factors, including school policy, support from the governing body and pupil response that also affected implementation and sustained use of the programme (Schutte et al., 2014).

In another study of the same programme in an online context, process evaluation data was gathered from teacher and students to: explore student response; measure levels of fidelity/completeness; and identify factors impacting teachers' implementation of the programme. Overall, it was found that teacher's fidelity levels were high but that many teachers added elements to the programme. It was reported that both stakeholder groups enjoyed the programme (van Lieshout et al., 2017). The most important factors that affected implementation were time and organizational limitations, a lack of consciousness on the influence of completeness and fidelity, and student response (van Lieshout et al., 2017).

Renju and colleagues (2010) found that training was implemented well and resulted in some vital improvements in teachers' ASRH knowledge, attitudes and perceived self-efficacy, with considerable developments in knowledge about reproductive biology and attitudes towards confidentiality. Teachers who received training were more likely to consider ASRH a priority in schools and less likely to link teaching ASRH to the early engagement in sexual activity than non-trained teachers (Renju et al., 2010). Facilitating factors included teacher enjoyment, their identification of training benefits, the participatory teaching approaches, support from local government, as well as the structured nature of the intervention (Renju et al., 2010). Challenging factors included different levels of participation by male and female teachers, restricted availability of materials, and a loss of trained teachers (Renju et al., 2010).

10 sexuality education programmes from different areas in the USA were identified that aim to give young people knowledge and skills to develop healthy relationships, as well as avoid pregnancy and disease (Cushman, Kantor, Schroeder, Eicher, & Gambone, 2014). They found that many programme administrators managed to develop partnerships, contextually adapt programme curricula, employ external evaluators, and gather support from school staff and parents (Cushman et al., 2014). However, few programme developers conducted structured needs assessments before programme development and many struggled to implement curricula with fidelity, to engage with rigorous evaluation designs, and almost all respondents highlighted funding cuts as threats to sustainability (Cushman et al., 2014). In essence, there was a struggle to move through the stages of programme diffusion.

Shepherd et al. (2014) explored the use of process data to understand outcomes in sexual health promotion. In their systematic review, they present findings from a synthesis of nine robust randomised controlled outcome evaluations (which included an element of process evaluation) of skills-based behavioural interventions to prevent STIs and support sexual health for young people in schools (Shepherd et al., 2014). They reported that the methodological quality of the process evaluations was mixed and the review focused on assessing variables potentially associated with the implementation of interventions, pupil engagement and intervention acceptability (Shepherd et al., 2014). Facilitators included high quality teacher training,

motivation and involvement of key stakeholders, and relevance and appeal of components to young people.

While the benefits of fidelity are highlighted in relation to SBSE, there were still challenges. Furthermore, fidelity is not a simplistic idea. To illuminate the challenges, the history and complexities of exploring implementation fidelity are discussed below.

2.6 Brief history of implementation fidelity

Although research on implementation dates back more than a hundred years in relation to farming and scientific-based practices to boost crop yields and productivity (Rogers, 2003), it was not until the 1970s and early 1980s that implementation started to gain traction and attention in the fields of education and applied social sciences (Durlak, 2015). Implementation fidelity is a component of the 'diffusion of innovations theory' (Dusenbury et al., 2003). The 'diffusion of innovations' theory (Rogers, 1995; 2003) offers a way to understand the procedures by which new ideas are put into practice. In the 1960s and 1970s the Research, Development and Diffusion (RD&D) model was used by US federal policy developers and focused on the importance of intensive evaluation and effectiveness in demonstration projects (Dusenbury et al., 2003). In the beginning, the model focused on programme adoption and evaluation, assuming that consumers would use the results of evaluation studies to decide whether or not to adopt an innovation (Dusenbury et al., 2003). It was also assumed that consumers were passive and that they would implement the programme as laid out by programme developers (Dusenbury et al., 2003).

These assumptions were questioned in the mid-to-late 1970s, particularly by the RAND report on the *Implementation of Educational Innovation* (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976). The RAND report noted three patterns in the implementation of innovative educational programmes: (a) co-optation which is the adoption of a programme without any modification in organisational behaviours; (b) mutual adaptation is where the programme is adapted and there are changes in organisational behaviours; and (c) non-implementation and non-adoption is when neither mutual adaptation or co-optation occurred (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976). The RAND report argued that high-quality implementation did not exist in 'real-

world' settings and that co-opted programmes were less effective than ones that were mutually adapted (Dusenbury et al., 2003).

While the RAND report's conclusions have been criticised, it was the first systematic analysis of the issues surrounding fidelity related to the 'diffusion of innovations' (Dusenbury et al., 2003). At approximately the same time as the RAND report, research by Rogers (1977) revealed that 'local adopters' modified innovations to meet their own needs and to derive a sense of ownership over an innovation (Dusenbury et al., 2003). These developments marked the beginning of debates surrounding fidelity and adaptation.

2.7 Fidelity versus adaptation

There has been debate in the literature regarding programme fidelity and programme adaptation. Programme fidelity relates to the level of adherence to a programme as intended by developers. Programme adaptation is defined as *"the modification of programme content to accommodate the needs of a specific consumer group"* (Castro, Barreran, & Martinez, 2004, p.26). The fidelity-adaptation debate is one that is being recognised to a greater degree within implementation research studies and complex interventions in which context is an important mediator (Moullin, Sabater-Hernández, Fernandez-Llimos, & Benrimoj, 2015; Shelton, Cooper, & Stirman, 2018). In early conceptualizations however (in the 1970s), both fidelity and adaptation were not defined operationally and were largely not measured in practice (Hansen et al., 2013). Further to this, Durlak and DuPre (2008) reported that in the past, there were different positions: one which viewed adaptations to a programme as inevitable and actually improving implementation levels and outcomes, and another which suggested that programme adaptation was implementation failure.

As noted in work by Darlington (2016), there is a tension between recognising and working with variation that is entrenched in a particular context and the goal of programme fidelity. It is argued that overemphasis on programme fidelity can manifest as enforcement rather than co-construction. This enforcement around fidelity and efficiency of programmes can be particularly problematic dealing with issues that necessitate the use of multi-level and ecological programmes (Pettigrew et al., 2014). In line with this, it is argued that the adoption and subsequent adaptation of a programme in a particular or 'real world' setting is not just inevitable

but actually required (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Dusenbury et al., 2003). It is also noted that in order for 'local ownership' to occur, modifications made to a programme in a local setting are considered to be a crucial element in achieving this sense of ownership (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Dusenbury et al., 2003).

For example, with explicit reference to CSE programmes, it is argued that community-building is essential for the 'correct' contextualisation of CSE programmes, which refers to the process of adopting and adapting programmes in and to specific contexts (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018). It is argued that while there may be evidence that sexuality programmes may be successfully transferred from one context to another and still have a positive impact on behaviours, attitudes or knowledge (Fonner et al., 2014; Kirby, Obasi, and Laris, 2006; UNESCO, 2018b), it is better if they are adapted to suit local needs in culturally sensitive ways in terms of both applicability and effectiveness, as well as local ownership and sustainability (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2018).

In 2004, Greenberg described that examining implementation fidelity may be more effectively *"recast as focusing on the quality and nature of adaptations"* (p.9). This was later reiterated in work by Durlak & DuPre (2008, p. 341) who state that *"we can thus say now with confidence that some measure of adaptation is inevitable and that for curriculum developers to oppose it categorically, even for the best of conceptual or empirical reasons, would appear to be futile".* Based on this idea, it is argued that it is crucial to monitor the types of adaptations that take place as opposed to viewing them as implementation failure (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Furthermore, despite the arguments rejecting adaptation and promoting fidelity, it is argued in a recent paper that there has always been a movement among researchers to conceptualise the two concepts as orthogonal (Hansen et al., 2013). In other terms, that it might be possible to have high levels of fidelity but also high levels of adaptation (Hansen et al., 2013).

There are challenges with this tension between fidelity and adaptation, even if it possible that it is possible to have high levels of both. To maintain high or acceptable levels of fidelity, it is necessary to know what must be implemented. Acceptable levels of fidelity relate to the implementation of the core elements of a programme or what has been deemed as the 'active ingredients' (Barry et al., 2005). One method is

to determine the main (inadaptable) and peripheral (adaptable) elements of an intervention (Gates, Hughes, & Kim, 2015). In that way, it is clear what elements of an intervention or programme that can/cannot be modified. In work by Hogue and colleagues (2005), they argue that by focusing on the classroom context, it is possible to move beyond a check-list of implementation categories by conducting fidelity process analysis (Hogue, Liddle, Singer, & Leckrone, 2005). This type of analysis investigates how the main elements of a programme are delivered and why adaptations are made (Hogue et al., 2005). The quality and nature of adaptations made in the classroom setting can be investigated through process analysis. Such an assessment aims to shed light on the nature of modifications, positive or negative, made to the programme being examined.

For example, in a study of 32 evidence-based prevention programmes, it was noted that in general, programme adaptations were associated with perceived obstacles whereas fidelity was associated with perceived resources (Dariotis, Bumbarger, Duncan, & Greenberg, 2008). In a recent study of teachers implementing the All Stars drug prevention program by Hansen and colleagues (2013), adaptations were that occurred were rated as either potentially positive in essence (those that could enhance program outcomes), negative (those likely to diminish program outcomes), or neutral (those unlikely to have an effect either way). Results showed that all teachers made some adaptations, and some made many more than others. On average, teachers made nearly six adaptations in each program lesson (Hansen et al., 2013). It was reported that, as one might expect, neutral adaptations had no significant effect, positive adaptations had a positive effect, and negative adaptations had a negative effect (Hansen et al., 2013). Based on this discussion, it is evident that adaptations (the type and reason for) should be documented when exploring programme implementation. This leads us to a question about how implementation fidelity should be explored.

2.8 What elements of implementation fidelity should be explored?

In a seminal piece of implementation research, Dane and Schneider (1998)[8] examined the extant health education literature at that time (162 studies, which appeared between 1980 and 1994) and found that only 39 studies contained procedures for documenting implementation. Dane and Schneider (1998) then identified specific processes for verifying implementation fidelity and coded these processes in five ways: adherence, exposure, quality of programme delivery, participant responsiveness and programme differentiation (Dane & Schneider, 1998). Durlak and DuPre (2008) identified three additional aspects of implementation which are noteworthy: a) monitoring of control/comparison conditions (by detailing the type and quantity of services received by members of the control group); b) programme reach (level of involvement and participation rates); and c) adaptation (any modifications made to original design during delivery). These eight potential aspects were reinforced in later work by Durlak (2015; 2016) and are frequently utilised in research studies.

2.8.1 Adherence

Adherence is the extent to which the delivery of programme components adhere to programme design, as laid out in the programme manuals (Dane & Schneider, 1998). Adherence is also discussed by Dariotis et al. (2008), who note that there are many factors that affect adherence, possibly causing discrepancies between the intended implementation plan and what is actually implemented. Adaptations are extremely common in school-based interventions (Dariotis et al., 2008; Ringwalt et al., 2003). Examination of the gaps between the programme as planned and the programme as delivered is complex as the modifications may be positive or negative (Durlak, 2016). Many programmes consist of essential as well as expendable components (Dusenbury et al., 2003) and it is advocated that a core part of exploring implementation fidelity should be the assessment of the crucial elements of effective programmes (Durlak, 2015). It is also clear, from studies that have observed

[8] While this study is quite dated, it is a seminal piece of work which continues to be referenced in the field of implementation science but also across disciplines. Durlak has extended and discussed this work (2008; 2015; 2016).

implementation, that implementation is often inconsistent and imperfect in real world settings (Barry et al., 2005; Durlak, 2016).

2.8.2 Exposure

Exposure refers to the amount of the original programme being delivered and is often described as dose or quantity (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak, 2016). Examining exposure can include: the number of sessions delivered; the duration of each session; or the frequency with which programme techniques were implemented (Dane & Schneider, 1998). When a programme is implemented *"assessing dose (e.g. number of sessions completed, duration or intensity) may provide crucial information about fidelity"* (Dusenbury et al., 2003, p.241). The amount of exposure of programme delivery is determined by various factors, such as implementer characteristics and implementing organisation characteristics (Dariotis et al., 2008) and the absence of comprehensive information on exposure is a limitation of many programmes (Barry & Jenkins, 2007).

2.8.3 Quality of Delivery

Quality of delivery measures the qualitative elements of programme delivery that are not directly linked to the implementation of agreed content (Dane & Schneider, 1998). Examining quality of delivery can include implementer readiness; implementer enthusiasm; international approximations of session effectiveness; and implementer attitudes toward a programme (Dane & Schneider, 1998). This concept has also been described as how well or competently is the programme conducted? (Durlak, 2016). International approximations of effectiveness are identified as important when examining quality of delivery as they may provide average levels of effectiveness reached when implementing the programme. Apart from this measurement, quality of delivery mainly focuses on how the implementer engages in the programme process; to an extent the implementer is 'measured'. Durlak and DuPre (2008, p.329) interpret quality of delivery stating, *"quality refers to how well different program components have been conducted (e.g., are the main program elements delivered clearly and correctly)?"* This interpretation draws on how the programme is delivered by the implementer. Dusenbury et al. (2003, p.244) also use this aspect in their review, further defining quality of delivery as the scoring of

"provider effectiveness which assess the extent to which a provider approaches a theoretical ideal in terms of delivering program content". Similar to that of Durlak and DuPre (2008), this definition emphasises the implementer's role in delivering programme content 'correctly.'

There are many other dimensions that affect quality of delivery, such as time allowances and classroom atmosphere. Placing sole responsibility for this aspect on the implementer (implementer readiness, enthusiasm and attitudes) is an unbalanced weighting of power. This power imbalance can put the implementer in a position of blame if the programme fails to achieve desired results. The balance of power in this aspect is interesting as the implementer is largely responsible for the quality of delivery but is powerless if observation methods are used to assess this aspect. It is undeniable that the implementer is crucial to the implementation process as they are the programme deliverers. However, this aspect of implementation does not incorporate the 'active ingredients' that affect implementation aspects.

Active ingredients are described as the varying components that actively affect programme implementation. In their assessment of 34 interventions, Domitrovich and Greenberg (2000) note that there is a lack of clarity about what constitutes an active ingredient, for example quality of trainers and quality of training. Implementation quality is affected by the provision of support for the programme. Without adequate support, the quality of implementation will be greatly affected (Barry et al., 2005). The lack of clarity around what an active ingredient is creates unbalanced assessments of implementation as highlighted above. As implementation is variable (Barry et al., 2005), we do not know what level of implementation is possible under certain conditions or what level of implementation is required to achieve the utmost programme impact (Barry et al., 2005). Through examination of quality of delivery it may be possible to create a clearer picture of the active ingredients that affect quality of delivery, allowing an objective assessment tool to be created.

2.8.4 Participant Responsiveness

Participant responsiveness measures the participants' response to the programme and may include measurements for levels of participation and enthusiasm (Dane &

Schneider, 1998). Dusenbury et al. (2003, p. 244) build on Dane and Schneider's (1998) definition, defining participant responsiveness as *"ratings of the extent to which participants are engaged by and involved in the activities and content of the program".* In 2016, Durlak combines both and describes participant responsiveness as the extent to which a programme or intervention holds participants' attention and actively involves them.

School-based programmes are unique as the participants are required to attend school up to a certain age (Dariotis et al., 2008). School structures, attendance policies, and the organisational infrastructure of schools allow for greater consistency over time and a larger group of participants to be addressed, compared to community-based programmes (Dariotis et al., 2008). If participant responsiveness towards a programme is achieved, schools have the potential to target larger groups of young people than other type of programme. The way in which an implementer delivers the programme is also crucial to participant responsiveness. If an implementer fails to engage students through lack of high quality programme delivery, they will not remember what has been delivered or establish a connection between learning outcomes and their own lives (Barry et al., 2005). Participants are less likely to respond to a programme if an implementer fails to focus their energy on programme delivery (Barry et al., 2005).

2.8.5 Programme Differentiation

Programme differentiation is a "manipulation check that is performed to safeguard against the diffusion of treatments, that is, to ensure that the subjects in each experimental condition received only planned interventions" (Dane & Schneider, 1998, p. 45). Dusenbury et al. (2003) noted that measuring programme differentiation can allow for central elements of fidelity, that relate to immediate outcomes, to be assessed. Dusenbury et al. (2003) found that programme complexity had a negative effect on implementation fidelity. Alternately, programmes that simplify implementation are more likely to be viewed as having the potential to be effective (Carroll et al., 2007; Dusenbury et al., 2003). Furthermore, the main elements of a programme need to be explicitly stated (Dusenbury et al., 2003). This affects the implementer's response to the programme as well as the participants. If

the main aims of the programme are unclear to the implementer and thus in turn, the participant; the programme is less likely to be successful.

2.8.6 The eight implementation concepts

Durlak and Dupre (2008) extended this conceptualisation by Dane and Schneider (1998) through the addition of the remaining three concepts: monitoring of control comparison conditions, programme reach, and adaptation. Monitoring of control comparison conditions involves recording what services members of intervention and control groups receive separate from the program being evaluated, while programme reach relates to the level of involvement and representativeness of program participants, and adaptation relates to any changes or modification made to the programme during delivery (Durlak & Dupre, 2008).

The relevance and usefulness of these concepts is generally accepted in the field (Durlak, 2015). The concept of programme differentiation however, is one which is rarely measured (Dusenbury, 2003) and while it appears as a concept in recent work (Durlak, 2015; 2016), it is infrequently measured. In addition, the concept of monitoring control/comparison conditions as defined by Durlak and DuPre (2008) has been extended by Berkel et al. (2011) who propose that the monitoring of additional services received is necessary for the intervention group(s) as well although this relates specifically to trials or studies with comparison groups. These eight potential aspects were reinforced in later work by Durlak (2015; 2016) and are frequently utilised in research studies (see Table 2.1) although rarely in their entirety.

Table 2.1 The eight major components of programme implementation (Durlak, 2016)

Component	Definition
Fidelity	the degree to which the major components of the programme have been faithfully delivered
Dosage	how much of the programme is delivered?
Quality of delivery	how well or competently is the programme conducted?
Adaptation	what changes, if any, are made to the original program?
Participant responsiveness	to what degree does the programme attract participants' attention and actively involve them in the intervention?
Programme differentiation	in what ways is the programme unique compared with other interventions?
Monitoring of control conditions	in what ways might the control condition mirror or overlap with critical parts of the new programme?
Reach	how much of the eligible population participated in the intervention?

These concepts are highly cited in the field of implementation science, however one of the concepts is not relevant to this study (monitoring of control conditions) and another is infrequently measured (programme differentiation) and appears more relevant to interventions than a programme in its sustainability phase. Based on this reading of the literature, six concepts will be adopted for this study: adherence (or fidelity); dosage; quality of delivery; adaptation; participant responsiveness; and reach (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak, 2016; Durlak & DuPre, 2008). These concepts however, specifically focus on implementation fidelity and not on the broader contexts that programmes are delivered in. Context is incorporated into conceptual models specifically related to school-based implementation that have been published. These models provide detail on ways to think about and explore implementation.

2.9 Conceptual models of school-based implementation

It is important to note that "neither the fields of education and prevention in general, nor the subfields of school-based prevention and youth development have a conceptual model of implementation or a solid understanding of the factors that affect implementation to guide work in these areas" (Greenberg et al., 2005, p.13). As effective programmes are translated from science to extensive practice, there is a need for more integration between communities and schools to create frameworks and methods to ensure high-quality implementation and support sustainability (Greenberg, 2004).

The 20 plus contextual factors outlined by Durlak and Dupre (2008) involve: a) community level factors (prevention theory and research, politics, funding, policy); b) provider characteristics (perceived need for innovation, perceived benefits of innovation, self-efficacy, skill proficiency); c) characteristics of the innovation (compatibility, adaptability); d) general organisational factors (positive work climate, organisational norms regarding change, integration of new programming, shared vision), specific practices and processes (shared decision-making, coordination with other agencies, communication, formulation of tasks), specific staffing considerations (leadership, program champion, managerial/supervisory/administrative support), and factors related to the prevention support system (training, technical assistance).

Meyers, Durlak, and Wandersman (2012) aimed to provide an overview of the implementation process by synthesising the literature. To conduct this synthesis, they reviewed implementation frameworks and selected those that described the *"main actions and strategies believed to constitute an effective implementation process related to using innovations in new settings"* (Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012, p.465). In total, 25 frameworks were identified, with three specifically relating to school based interventions (CASEL, 2011; Greenberg et al., 2005; Hall and Hord, 2006)[9].

The Greenberg et al. (2005) model facilitates the understanding of school-based implementation, by providing a comprehensive framework to use when assessing the implementation of school-based programmes or when developing a programme theory. The model is a combination of theory and research from the fields of education, prevention science, and programme evaluation (Greenberg et al., 2005). The broad range of disciplines drawn on in the development of the model, in combination with the specificity of the components that needed to be explored in school-based implementation made this model the most suitable for investigations of SBSE implementation. The Greenberg et al. (2005) model builds on literature focusing on theory-driven evaluations, and in particular on Chen's (1990, 1998) work, which is discussed in greater detail below.

2.9.1 Theory-driven evaluations

Emphasis on process evaluations has grown since the late 1980s, with a shift from method-driven evaluations to theory-driven evaluations (Greenberg et al., 2005). Method-driven evaluations are often referred to as 'black box' evaluations (Chen, 1998; Greenberg et al., 2005). Method-driven evaluations rarely focus on the *process* that leads to effective programmes, on programme improvement or contextual factors (Chen, 1990, 1994, emphasis added). Theory-driven evaluations are offered as an alternative to method-driven evaluations (Chen, 1998) and allow researchers to assess the process of a programme.

[9] The CASEL (2011) model was not published at the time of the research design and the Hall and Hord (2006) model did not match the needs of the research project. In comparison to the Hall and Hord (2006) conceptual model, it was deemed that the Greenberg et al (2005) model provided clearer guidance for the research design.

The theory-driven evaluation perspective posits that evaluators need to have a conceptual understanding of the key assumptions that support a programme before considering or selecting a research method for the assessment or evaluation (Chen, 1998). It is argued that every programme has a set of underlying assumptions and these assumptions are central in understanding theory-driven evaluations (Chen, 1998). Chen (1998) proposes that every action programme is implicitly or explicitly planned and managed under these assumptions. These assumptions are either descriptive or prescriptive in nature. Descriptive assumptions are described as *causative theory* and detail the 'how' and 'why' of the programme by examining the circumstances under which certain progressions will arise, and what their probable outcome will be (Chen, 1990; 1998, emphasis added).

Prescriptive assumptions are referred to as *normative theory* and prescribe what should be done to achieve programme aims (Chen, 1998). Prescriptive assumptions specify what treatment or intervention should be used, what aims should be followed, and what implementations are necessary in order to achieve these aims. Chen (1990; 1998) defines programme theory as a blend of both descriptive and prescriptive assumptions. Chen (1998) outlines six main parts of his conceptual framework: treatment or intervention, implementation system, treatment or intervention implementation, causal mechanisms, outcomes, and the general environment.

Chen's (1990; 1998) work on theory-driven evaluations provide a broader view of the evaluation of implementation. Traditional evaluations of implementation fidelity focus on the differences between the programme as planned and the programme as delivered (Greenberg et al., 2005). Chen (1998) argues that the implementation system is as important to programme effectiveness as the intervention itself and that the implementation system must be assessed as part of programme evaluation.

2.9.2 The Greenberg et al. (2005) Conceptual Model

Greenberg et al. (2005) adapted Chen's (1998) work to create a conceptual model of school-based implementation. Greenberg et al. (2005) differentiated between causative theory (i.e., does the programme theory explain the programme effects?) and prescriptive (normative) theory (i.e., does the programme theory explain the way

in which the programme should be implemented)? Greenberg et al. (2005) focused on the prescriptive portion of Chen's (1998) theory. The importance of prescriptive theory is supported by a meta-analysis of prevention programmes that found that 68.5 % of programmes examined were described too generally to be reproduced (Durlak & Wells, 1998). Greenberg et al. (2005) emphasised prescriptive elements relating to implementer; implementing organisation, programme and school/community context. These elements are detailed in the model (see Figure 1 below) and are described in further detail by Greenberg et al. (2005). Greenberg et al. (2005) replaced Chen's (1998) 'implementation system' with 'implementation support system"' (see Figure 2.1). This replacement is intended to remind school-based programme developers that any programme will not succeed without a suitable support system (Greenberg et al., 2005).

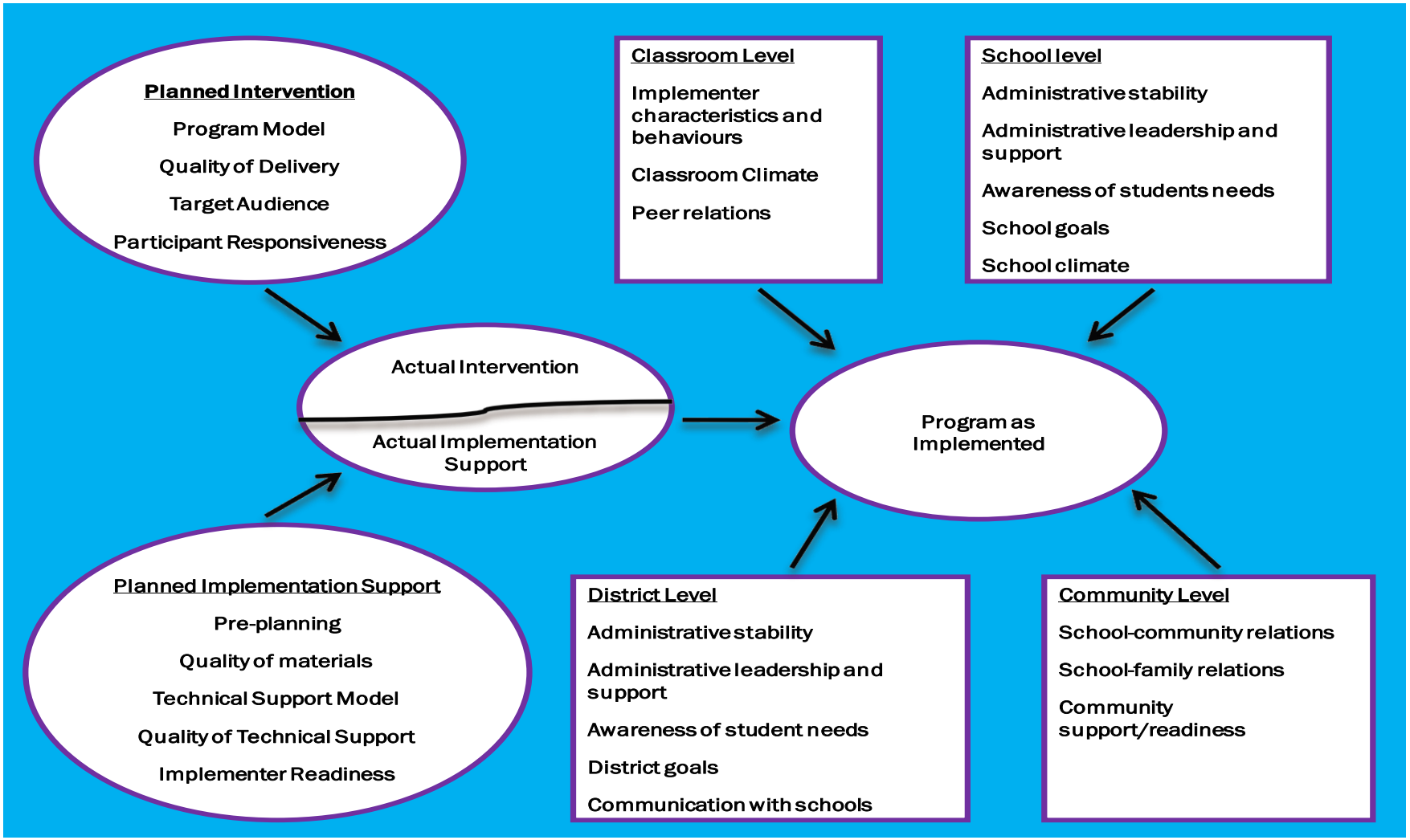


Figure 2.1: Greenberg et al. (2005) Conceptual model of school-based implementation

The model begins with the planned intervention and planned implementation support system. Planned intervention and planned implementation support systems describe the various elements that are in involved in examining *intended* programme delivery.

2.9.3 Planned Intervention

The planned intervention is divided into four main categories: programme model; quality of delivery; target audience; and participants' responsiveness (Greenberg et al., 2005).

Programme Model

There are five components to this sub-section: structure, content, timing, dosage and nature of intervention (Greenberg et al., 2005). Programme structure describes the programme deliverer and the format of delivery. Programme content describes what programme designers refer to as the essential elements of the intervention. The timing of the programme describes the pace that the programme should be administered (for example, twice a week for six weeks or once a week for 22 weeks). This includes the frequency and duration of the intervention. Dosage refers to the amount or level of exposure (for example, the number and length of sessions). Dane and Schneider (1998) also discuss dosage, describing it as the amount of the original programme delivered. Programme content is described as the 'essential components' or 'essential elements' of the intervention. These may be wide-ranging components or methods, specific sessions within a component, or a detailed sequence of activities within a lesson (Greenberg et al., 2005). The final aspect, the nature of a given intervention, may affect implementation quality (Greenberg et al., 2005). For example, the complexity of a programme and programme compatibility for delivery are elements of the nature of an intervention, and can affect the implementation quality.

Quality of Delivery

This aspect includes the affective nature or degree of engagement by implementers, the effective use of intervention methods and the degree to which the intervention ideas are generalised across the intervention environment (Greenberg et al., 2005).

This aspect is also discussed by Dane and Schneider (1998) who describe quality as how clearly and correctly the programme is delivered.

Target Audience

The target audience refers to the actual group that the intervention is targeted towards and if they are actually reached (Greenberg et al., 2005). This element is linked to dosage; however it is mainly relevant when an intervention is targeting a specific group (Greenberg et al., 2005). Greenberg and colleagues (2005) highlight the example of high-risk student absenteeism. Therefore, examining the amount of programme delivered and attendance levels are crucial. This is an important point to note as school-based programmes may overlook the importance of examining attendance due to the fact that school is expected to be a mandatory element of children's lives.

Participant Responsiveness

This element assesses the way participants receive a programme and many programme designers use positive participant scores as an indication of high implementation quality (Greenberg et al., 2005). This aspect is also highlighted by Dane and Schneider (1998), who define participant responsiveness as the level to which the programme holds the interest of the participant. Participant responsiveness is an important element to examine, particularly from a health promotion perspective. The principles of health promotion are: equity; participation; collaboration; empowerment; and sustainability. For example, "adopting an empowerment philosophy requires that programmes be delivered in an empowering and participatory manner, building on the strengths and skills of the programme participants" (Barry & Jenkins, 2007, p.54). If a programme is not well-received by participants, all of these principles are affected and the programme is less likely to be successful. The next section of the model deals with planned implementation support.

2.9.4 Planned Implementation Support

This is divided into 5 categories: pre-planning, quality of materials, technical support available, quality of technical support and implementer readiness (Greenberg et al., 2005).

Pre-Planning

Pre-planning is defined as any preparation by a school before implementing an intervention (Greenberg et al., 2005). Interestingly, the majority of prevention programmes do not identify pre-planning stages (Greenberg et al., 2005). At least seven system factors should be considered in the pre-planning of a school-based programme (Greenberg et al., 2005). These are: need for change; willingness for change; ability to affect change; consciousness of the need for change; dedication or participation in the change progression; motivation for change; and history of successful change (Greenberg et al., 2005). An intervention is more likely to flourish when most of the individuals in a setting are dedicated to the intervention and feel ownership over it (Greenberg et al., 2005). If the implementers are not aware of the problems or requirements of a programme or are unconvinced on the necessity of the programme, even the strongest programme will be unsuccessful (Elias & Arnold, 2006). Therefore, pre-planning is a vital stage in the implementation process.

Quality of Materials

Programme implementation is more likely to be successful if programme materials are "visually appealing, user friendly, age appropriate, and culturally sensitive" (Greenberg et al., 2005, p.25). Instructor manuals are a key resource for implementers and the design and format of implementer manuals may have a noteworthy effect on the quality of programme delivery. Barry et al. (2005) reinforce the importance of expanding and adapting programme resources for the local setting as part of the sustainability phase of a programme. This allows the resources to be tailored for the specific needs of the group.

Technical Support Available

One of the most important elements of the implementation support system is technical support. This type of support provides structure, content and timing of pre-

intervention training and any continuous support needed to deliver a programme effectively (Greenberg et al., 2005). Technical support determines who provides programme support and how this is delivered to implementers, for example direct training or videotape (Greenberg et al., 2005). It also involves observing the implementation system or any extra technical assistance resources supplied by the programme.

Quality of Technical Support

The quality of technical support evaluates the quality of delivery during both training and supervision, the quality of the rapport between trainers and implementers, and the characteristics of the trainers (Greenberg et al., 2005). Implementers are more likely to be interested in a programme when the training is participative and engaging (Greenberg et al., 2005). Another key aspect of the quality of technical support is the experience of programme trainers. There are variations between programmes regarding the training of trainers and research on the effect of these various models on programme quality is deficient (Greenberg et al., 2005). The way implementers are trained significantly affects implementer readiness (McGoey et al., 2014).

Implementer Readiness

Implementation support is involved in preparing implementers to deliver an intervention effectively. Examples of implementer readiness include whether the implementer: feels positive about the programme; has sufficient skills to carry out the intervention; has enough knowledge about the theory underlying the intervention; respects the contribution of the programme in the educational environment; and are dedicated to the goals of the intervention (Greenberg et al., 2005). An implementer is more likely to cover lessons central to the programme if they have increased confidence and comfort when teaching lessons about a particular subject (Greenberg et al., 2005). Sy et al. (2008, p. 270) noted their qualitative findings “supported the conclusion that implementers who were not formally trained in health education may not have had sufficient training on effective health education pedagogy to prevent students’ tobacco use”. The next stage of the model is the contextual factors that influence the programme as implemented.

2.9.5 Contextual Factors

The planned intervention and planned implementation support system highlight factors that are school-specific. The planned intervention and planned implementation support are also affected by factors external to the programme theory and may affect the quality of the process or the outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2005). Adopting a socio-ecological perspective acknowledges the broader influences that affect programme implementation, shifting the focus of programmes from a purely individualistic perspective, to one that includes social, economic and political spheres (Barry & Jenkins, 2007). In relation to school-based programmes, the external environment is comprised of various ecological systems (Greenberg, 2004). The classroom, the school, the district and the community are the ecological systems highlighted by Greenberg et al. (2005) that influence a school-based programme. The environment in which a programme is implemented has the ability to support or weaken the success of a promotional or preventative programme (Barry et al., 2005). Therefore, elements relating to school, community and district level have the potential to greatly alter the implementation of a programme and must be examined.

<u>Classroom Level</u>

Implementer characteristics and behaviours, classroom climate and peer relations all contribute to shaping how a programme is received in a classroom. Buston et al. (2002) emphasise the importance of examining the classroom context. The classroom is the setting where delivery takes place and where the participants engage with the implementer and each other. Assessing classroom characteristics is vital in the implementation of a school-based programme. With reference to this model, the *planned implementation support* and *intervention as planned* can be compared with the actual delivery that occurs in the classroom. It is at this level that implementation fidelity, and the various types and frequency of adaptations made, can be observed.

Implementer characteristics and behaviours are a central component of programme delivery at classroom level. Burnout and efficacy are two psychological factors highlighted by Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, and Jacobson (2009), which affected the implementation of implementer-delivered programmes. The findings highlighted that implementer's psychological experiences only related to

self-reported dosage of additional components of the curriculum (Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009). The findings showed that implementers with higher levels of burnout were less likely to implement the additional components whereas those with higher levels of efficacy were more likely to deliver them (Ransford et al., 2009). The findings highlight the importance of addressing factors relating to implementer attitudes and behaviour as some may be positively or negatively correlated with programme implementation.

School Level

There are various school-level factors identified by Greenberg et al. (2005). These factors include: administrative leadership and support; the general school climate; school goals; awareness of student needs; and administrative stability. A whole-school approach is crucial in the implementation of a school-based programme. The involvement of all stakeholders in the school is essential in maintaining a whole-school approach. For example, students, implementers, Principals, educational psychologists, parents, and boards of management all hold a stake in the school. Staff buy-in is documented as a facilitator for successful implementation (Andreou, McIntosh, Ross, & Kahn, 2014; Coffey & Horner, 2012). A significant factor, as part of administrative leadership and support, is the role of the Principal and other school administrators in supporting programme implementation (Bambara, Nonnemacher, & Kern, 2009; Kincaid, Childs, Blase, & Wallace, 2007; Langley, Nadeem, Kataoka, Stein, & Jaycox, 2010). Many studies emphasise the need for Principal support in assisting effective implementation (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002; Han & Weiss, 2005; Kam et al., 2003).

District Level

Many of the elements that are relevant for the school are applied to the district setting also. Communication with schools is the one vital differentiating factor. Communication between district bodies and the school is vital in maintaining positive relationships. Although implementation normally occurs on-site, district administrators and school board members (part of the boards of management) have the potential to influence implementation. Boards of management have a large stake in school activity and have the potential to support or hinder policies relating to a

particular programme. The political and legislative setting impact upon the district and school-level policies and resources, and can in turn influence what the implementer does in the classroom (Coburn, 2003).

Community Level

Community level factors assess school-community relations, school-family relations and community support/readiness (Greenberg et al., 2005). Particular programmes require cooperation between various community groups. For example, the implementation of a relationships and sexuality education programme often requires parental consent and the use of outside facilitators to teach relationships and sexuality education also requires collaboration with community groups. A randomised trial of PROSPER (Promoting School–Community–University Partnerships to Promote Resilience) aimed to create local partnership teams, in the community, that provided development and configuration for the implementation of evidence-based programs (Greenberg et al., 2005). A goal of PROSPER was to use sustainable systems to create sustainable prevention programming in communities (Greenberg, 2004). This type of approach supported the inter-collaboration of various agencies and promotes a holistic approach to programme implementation.

2.9.6 Greenberg model plus

The Greenberg model plus is detailed below.

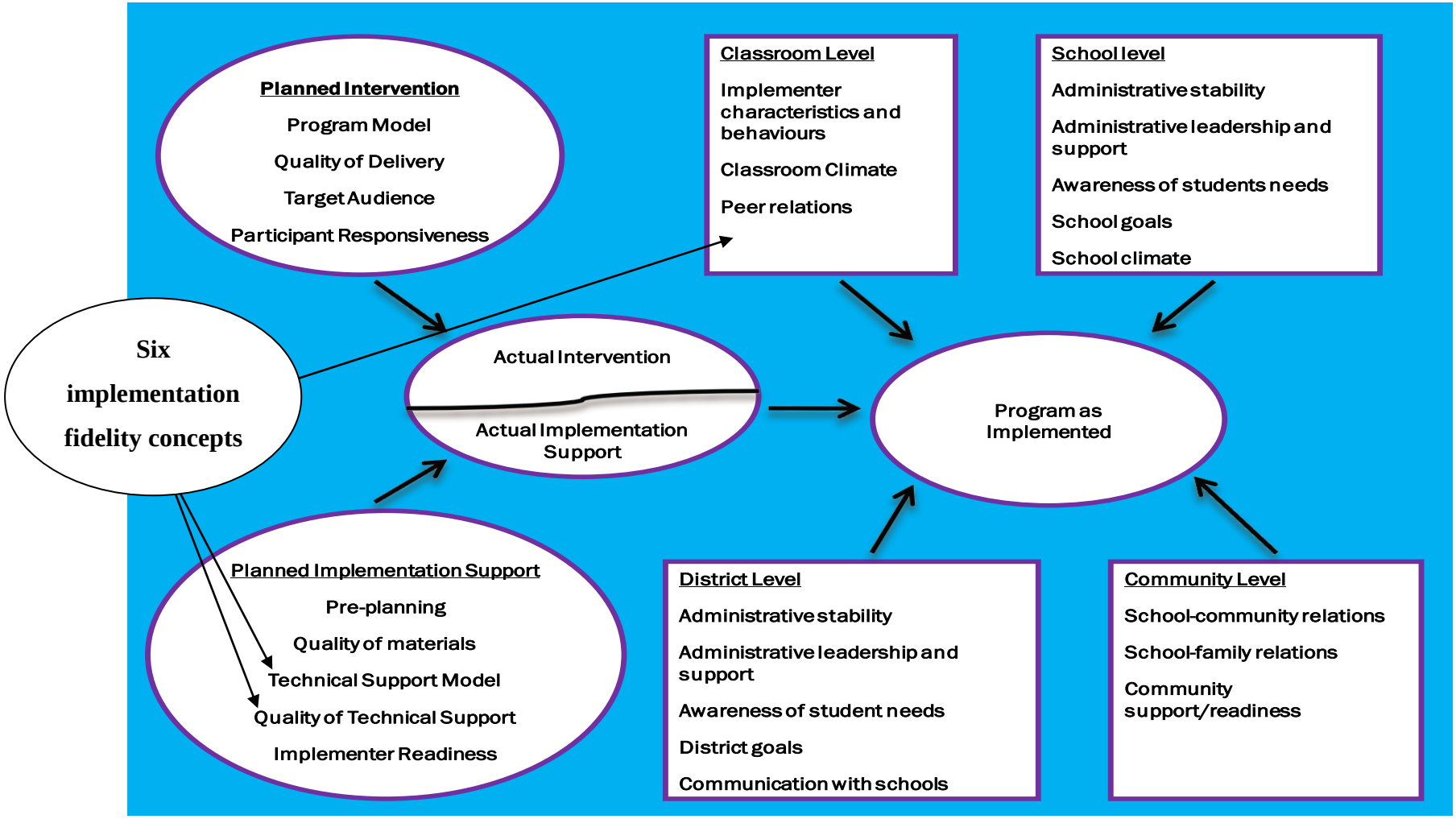


Figure 2.2: Greenberg plus model (+ D&S components)

2.10 Theoretical approach adopted for this study

The Greenberg plus model will be used a guide for the exploration of implementation of RSE. Although most of the factors highlighted by Dane and Schneider (1998) are included in the Greenberg et al. (2005) conceptual model, it fails to clearly outline programme adherence. Greenberg et al. (2005) discuss the intervention as planned, planned implementation support system and the contextual factors that influence a school-based programme. While they do not explicitly state the importance of examining adherence or of noting adaptations made to the programme, the model emphasises the *planned, actual* and *programme as implemented* elements of the implementation system. Therefore, there is space in the Greenberg et al. (2005) model to include the six implementation concepts as described by Durlak (2015) based on the work of Dane and Schneider (1998) and Durlak and DuPre (2008). Furthermore, these specific elements of implementation fidelity should also be applied to the training context to examine implementation at this level. This research study will address the knowledge gap that exists regarding the translation process of SBSE from training to school level. It will specifically focus on this in an Irish context through the application of this conceptual framework developed based on the implementation science literature reviewed. The next section details the methodological approach for this study and clearly maps how the theoretical concepts adopted are being methodologically applied.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This purpose of this chapter is to justify the pragmatic paradigm, wherein the study is situated, and the overall mixed-methods methodological approach that was adopted. The chapter provides a detailed description of the methods used to collect and analyse data. First, the methodological approach and study design are outlined. This is followed by an account of each method used to collect and analyse data. Third, the model components identified from the literature are presented in tabular format to illustrate how the data gathered facilitates a comprehensive, theoretically-informed evaluation of the implementation of the RSE programme. This is followed by a discussion of ethical considerations and an outline of the data collection stages.

3.2 The pragmatic paradigm

Mixed methods research, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a meaningful way, is growing in recognition and utilisation across varying disciplines and countries (Alise & Teddlie, 2010; Coyle et al., 2016; Creswell, 2015; Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015; Ivankova & Kawamura, 2010; Plano Clark, 2010) and becoming increasingly complicated, nuanced, and intensively developed (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Recently, there has been a rapid rise in the use of mixed methods research, leading for some to suggest that mixed methods is a third methodological movement after quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). Although mixed methods research is now *broadly* accepted as a new 'methodological' approach, proponents have been relatively slow in developing, promoting and defending the underlying philosophical paradigms within which mixed methods research is conducted (Johnson & Gray, 2010). This is a significant problem, as philosophical paradigms guide critical research decisions (Greene & Hall, 2010), and the lack of a clear paradigmatic grounding can result in mixed methods researchers being attacked by methodological purists for failing to state their ontological and epistemological assumptions.

While mixed methods may be situated within a range of philosophical paradigms (e.g. transformativism or critical realism), this research is embedded within the pragmatic paradigm. Pragmatism is recognised in the literature as a suitable paradigm for mixed methods research (e.g. Howe, 1988; Tashakkori & Teddli, 1998). Although it has a rich philosophical history, most famously associated with John Dewey and Charles Pierce, the pragmatic paradigm has come to prominence in recent years as a 'solution' to the paradigm wars. The last three decades saw debates around the superiority of particular research paradigms. These debates focused on whether the positivist (quantitative) or the constructivist (qualitative) paradigm was superior for social science research (for an in-depth discussion of the 'paradigm wars' see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). As a result, the pragmatic paradigm was advanced as a resolution to the conflict between these two social science paradigms (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The pragmatic paradigm is situated as a middle road between the philosophical purity of positivism, on one side, and constructivism, on the other.

Paradigmatic purists stringently argue that quantitative and qualitative methods arise from incompatible ontological and epistemological positions about the nature of knowledge (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). For purists, such as Smith (1983) and Smith and Heshusius (1986), the assumptions associated with the positivist and constructivist paradigms are incompatible in terms of their worldviews and what it is important to know and, due to these contrasting assumptions, quantitative and qualitative approaches cannot be combined (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Unlike purists, pragmatists contend that the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative approaches is false (Newman & Benz, 1998) and argue that quantitative methods are not always strictly positivist and qualitative techniques are not rigidly interpretive (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). For example, structured observation, which is used in this study, can be both positivist and interpretivist at the same time. Pragmatists therefore promote the integration of methods within a single study (Creswell, 1995), arguing the nature of the research question should inform methodological choices and that "epistemological purity doesn't get research done" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 21).

The pragmatic paradigm postulates that both positivist and constructivist paradigms can and have been used jointly (Creswell, 2013). It is possible to think of these

paradigms as being on a continuum with positivism at one end, constructivism at the other and pragmatism in the middle (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006). The pragmatic paradigm is viewed as an approach that can take the strengths of the two other paradigms to produce context specific, yet transferable, research findings. Pragmatic research does not view quantitative and qualitative research as incompatible opposites (Newman & Benz, 1998) but, rather, as approaches that have been developed by communities of research to understand different, but associated. 'realities'. For example, in implementation research the adoption of either a positivist or a constructivist paradigm may result in contrasting findings which could be combined to provide a more nuanced understating of programme effectiveness. Using the example of school-based health programme, Ghiara (2019) outlines how the adoption of one or the other of the 'purist' paradigms will lead to very differing evaluation of the programmer. She illustrates how a positivist framing of evaluation could adopt a quasi-experimental design to collect standardised health measures (e.g. the body mass index), which would be compared with previous measurements of the same children and contrast with a control group. A constructivist approach could, on the other hand, adopt semi-structured interviews to explore how children, parents and teachers are engaging with the programme and develop an understanding of the elements that have resulted in changed behaviours and attitudes (Ghiara, 2019). These differing approaches to programme implementation research could result in vastly different results for opposing purist researchers. For example, the constructivist approach might indeed evaluate the program as successful in changing attitudes towards exercise, while the post-positivist might show the absence of bodily changes in the classrooms involved (Ghiara, 2019).

Conversely, a pragmatic researcher would be able to combine the outputs from both research designs to provide a fuller account of programme implementation. They would do this not by assigning the quantitative and qualitative research designs a priori to different ontological and epistemological camps, and would, rather, focus on their approaches to inquiry and the types of reality that are useful for understanding (Morgan, 2014). Thus, Pragmatists argue that the slavish adherence to any one tradition, while ignoring the other, can be disadvantageous, and that these two approaches may be productively combined to develop a more complete understanding of research phenomena (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Adopting a

compatibilist position permits researchers to combine research design components (e.g. data collection and/or analysis methods) into a combination that facilitates the greatest possibility of answering their specific research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

To ground mixed methods within the tradition of pragmatism, it is not sufficient to frame pragmatism as simply drawing from these other paradigms to offer a 'third way', the philosophical and paradigmatic aspects of pragmatism itself must be understood. As a new paradigm, pragmatism supplants the older philosophy of knowledge approach, which understood social research in terms of hierarchy of ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Guba, 1990; Lincoln, 2010), with "a process-based approach to knowledge, in which inquiry was the defining process" (Morgan, 2014 p. 1045). This does not mean that pragmatism is devoid of a philosophy of knowledge (Morgan, 2014). Rather pragmatism's focus on inquiry replaces the older theory of knowledge's emphasis on ontology and epistemology, with a concentration on research questions and methods (Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism begins with the research question to be answered, rather than with an ontological position, and acknowledges that there is more than one 'reality' and, therefore, more than one way to answer research questions. Thus, pragmatism recognises that questions may be answered using a variety of methods, acknowledges the epistemological foundations of varying approaches and selects methods based on their appropriateness to the question, rather than their conformity to established research paradigms. Pragmatism is, therefore, not a rejection of the significance of the philosophy of knowledge, but instead acts as a correction to the prevailing paradigms' privileging of ontology over epistemology and epistemology over method (Morgan, 2007).

Pragmatism, as a philosophy, advocates an inquiry-based approach that places the relationship between research questions and the knowledge required to answer them at the centre of the research paradigm. Rather than consisting of *a priori* assumptions about the nature of being, pragmatism focuses on the questions to be answered, the possible methods that could be used to answer them and the epistemological foundations of these methods. Free from the trap of ontological dogmatism, pragmatism breaks down the hierarchies between contrasting epistemologies and can take what is useful from them both to answer specific questions (Shannon-Baker,

2016). Pragmatism exchanges debates about the nature of reality with a focus on lived human experience and acknowledges the worth of different epistemological and methodological approaches as 'research communities', rather than rigid and incompatible archetypes, that guide choices about how to conduct research (Morgan, 2014).

Pragmatism, therefore, offers an alternative research paradigm, that embraces and mixes both positivist and constructivist traditions, and advances an approach that sees the nature of research problems as determining the degree to which quantitative or qualitative methods are incorporated into the research design and acknowledges the utility of these methods in understanding specific 'realities' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Instead of a strict observance of favoured methods within their discipline, the pragmatic paradigm frees researchers to select methods based on theoretical propositions and associated research questions (McCrudden, 2019; Hilpert & Marchand, 2018; Kaplan et al., 2012). Thus pragmatism provides a middle position both *philosophically* and *methodologically* by being grounded in a paradigm that enables questions to assessed from a variety of 'realities' and enables researchers to select the best mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer these questions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The value of this paradigm has been significantly enhanced by the emergence of a variety of mixed methods research designs (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

As outlined above, pragmatism provides a midway position both philosophically and methodologically by being grounded in a paradigm that enables questions to be assessed from a variety of 'realities'. It is through this paradigmatic rationale that MM research is viewed as a way of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide greater understanding of specific research problems. As aptly captured by Patton (2014, p.1192), *"because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality and social perception, multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the analytical mill".* The research questions in this study are multi-faceted, explore varying components and the researcher argues that the best way to answer these questions is pragmatically. This has led to the adoption of an MM approach. Adopting both quantitative and qualitative approaches is more realistic due to the increased flexibility, thus allowing the researcher to be open to the various possibilities presented during the study. This allows the researcher more

scope, which may not have been possible when strictly adhering to either a quantitative or a qualitative approach. Furthermore, in contrast to a multi-method approach, this study is focusing on the entire implementation system which requires the interpretation of findings across paradigms and data types. Adopting an MM approach will allow for in-depth investigation of the multiple components of the RSE implementation system. This includes examining components of a conceptual model of school-based implementation (see chapter 2.12 on implementation), such as contextual factors and other features that are difficult to measure solely through a single method. Pragmatic research however should not be viewed as being an unstructured approach that uncritically adopts the methods of other paradigms. Within the mixed methods approach, careful consideration is given to the study design, the way methods are combined and how they fit with the research questions.

3.3 MM approach

There are various designs which can be chosen when conducting MM research. There are three important decisive factors to be considered when selecting a type of MM design: the timing, the weighting and the mixing decision. Timing refers to the sequential connection between the quantitative and qualitative parts of a study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Timing can be discussed in relation to the time period during which the data is collected, but it is more closely associated to the time period when the data are analysed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Weighting refers to the emphasis placed on the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study, determining which approach receives highest priority in terms of answering the study's research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). There are two weighting options; equal weight and unequal weight. If unequal weight is chosen, greater emphasis is placed on either the quantitative or qualitative elements of the study. The mixing decision refers to how the quantitative and qualitative methods will be mixed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Mixing relates two data sets in a clear and open manner. If mixing of the data does not occur, then it is only a collection of multiple methods, not a MM design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). There are three strategies for mixing the data: merging the data sets, embedding data at the design level, and connecting from data analysis to data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Merging the data sets refers to when two data sets are integrated together. Merging can occur when the data are analysed separately in the results section and merged during the discussion stage or when the data are merged during analysis stage, by converting one type of data into the other or by combining the data into new variables (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). *Embedding the data at the design level* occurs when one data type is embedded within the design of the other. This involves mixing at the design level as opposed to the data level as the researcher may choose to embed quantitative data into a larger qualitative study or vice versa (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). *Connecting from data analysis to data collection* is when the researcher chooses to connect the two types of data. This mixing style occurs when the investigation of one type of data connects to the other type of data. This connection can occur in multiple ways, such as choosing research participants or creating an instrument or measure (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

At the initial stages of this research various study designs were examined for compatibility with the research questions (see Table 3.1). Based on this information, this study employs a triangulation design. The timing for this study is concurrent. Although data are collected at different stages, qualitative and quantitative data collection phases are blended. The weighting attached to the quantitative and qualitative methods is equal. For the mixing stage, the data will be merged together during the interpretation stage in order to inform the discussion.

Table 3.1: The Major Mixed Methods Design Types, adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007

Design type	Variants	Timing	Weighting	Mixing	Notation
Triangulation	Convergence; Data Transformation; Validating quantitative data; Multilevel	Concurrent: Quantitative and qualitative at the same time	Usually equal	Merge the data during the interpretation and analysis	QUAN + QUAL
Embedded	Embedded experimental; Embedded correlational	Concurrent or sequential	Unequal	Embed one type of data within a larger design using the other type of data	QUAN (qual) or QUAL (quan)
Explanatory	Follow-up explanations; Participant selection	Sequential: Quantitative followed by qualitative	Usually quantitative	Connect the data between the two phases	QUAN→ qual
Exploratory	Instrument development; Taxonomy development	Sequential: Qualitative followed by quantitative	Usually qualitative	Connect the data between the two phases	QUAL → quan

3.3.1 Triangulation Design: Convergence Model

There are five variations/models within this triangulation design: original triangulation design; convergence model; data transformation model; validating quantitative data model, and the multilevel model (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). All models were examined for suitability (see Table 3.1) and the convergence model was considered the most suitable for this type of study. For example, there is a multi-level model within the triangulation design; however each level employs only one approach (data type), either quantitative or qualitative. The multi-level model would not be suitable as this research study requires multiple types of data collection at each level.

In the convergent triangulation model, the researcher collects and analyses the quantitative and qualitative separately on the same topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). During the interpretation phase, the differing results are then grouped together and the results are compared and contrasted during interpretation (see Figure 3.1). The purpose of this model is to "end up with valid and well-substantiated conclusions about a single phenomenon" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 65). It is important to note that there have been extensions in the literature study (Creswell, 2014) which were published after this design was selected to inform this. This specific model is no longer labelled this way but it is identical to what is now called the 'embedded design' (Creswell, 2014).

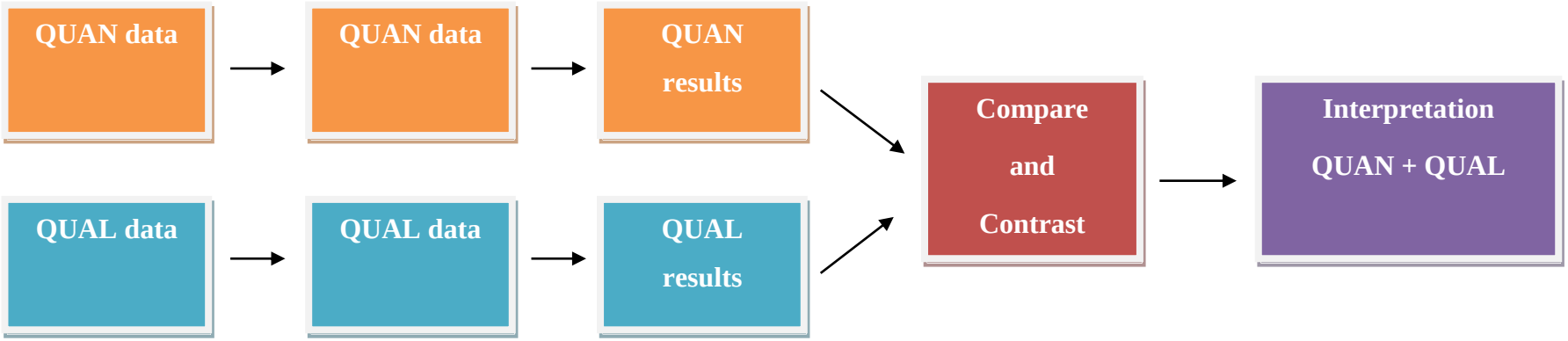


Figure 3.1: The Triangulation Design: Convergence Model, adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 (now labelled 'embedded design' by Creswell, 2014)

3.4 Study design

There were three main stages of this PhD research project (see Figure 3.2). Stage one focused on exploring the delivery of RSE in-service training and training context. Stage two involved the exploration of RSE delivery at school level and school context. The final stage of the study served to explore teachers' views of implementing programmes in schools.

Figure 3.2 Sequential stages of the study

3.4.1 Sampling strategy

This study used a non-probability sampling technique: purposive sampling. The sample size was determined by both the study rationale and the nature of the research question. As a result, there were specific population groups (inclusion/exclusion criteria) who were targeted in this study during the different stages:

- First stage: all RSE trainers and any teacher who attended RSE in-service training during data collection period (Between January and May 2011); training stakeholders
- Second stage: teachers who attended RSE in-service training who were returning to school to teach RSE and the students in their classes; school level stakeholders (parents, teachers, BOM members)
- Third stage: any primary or post-primary school teachers.

3.4.2 Final sample

Training-level sample

At the time of data collection, there were four SPHE Regional Managers responsible for delivering RSE in-service training. All four Regional Managers participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all trainers and the national coordinator for SPHE.

RSE in-service training is divided into junior cycle and senior cycle training. Between January and May 2011, 11 RSE in-services were advertised (seven junior cycle and four senior cycle), but only ten (six junior cycle and four senior cycle) proceeded. Seven out of the ten RSE in-services were attended by the researcher. Two in-services overlapped with other in-services and therefore could not be accessed and the final in-service was cancelled due to low numbers. Some specific details, sample and response rates for each RSE in-service training is outlined below (see Table 3.2). For anonymity reasons, geographical information has been withheld.

Table 3.2 In-service training attendance, sample, and response rates

Training number	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Teacher attendance	19	20	14	16	15	14	14
No. of participants	11	13	12	13	10	9	10
Response rate (%)	58	65	86	81	67	64	71

As outlined in Table 3.2, at most in-services, attendance numbers were high. In total, 111 teachers attended these in-services. Of those teachers, 78 completed the training questionnaire, with an overall response rate of 71%. Training attendance is generally capped, allowing approximately 20 teachers at training. There was greater representation of female teachers at training, with only 20% male attendees. The level of teacher experience varied greatly with the minimum amount of experience totalling five months and the maximum thirty years. The mean level of teaching experience was 8.8 years (SD = 7.2).

School level sample

Five teachers, and the schools that they worked in, took part in the school-level stage of the research. The schools were in different geographical regions (two in the West, one in the Midlands, one in the Mid-East, and one in the North-West). Fifty-eight students participated in this phase of the study (see Table 3.3 below for participation and response rate by school).

Table 3.3 Student numbers, participation and response by school

School	Students (n)	Participants (n)	Response rate (%)
One	13	13	100
Two	11	11	100
Three	21	19	90
Four	6	6	100
Five	9	9	100
Total	60	58	97

School-level stakeholders were recruited to take part in an interview to gather contextual-level information about the school. Three interviews were conducted (two teachers and one BOM member who was also a parent from the school). All interviews were conducted via telephone.

Participatory Research sample

Nine teachers participated in this section of study. Teachers were recruited by a gatekeeper employed in a teacher education centre (an in-service/continuing professional development centre for teachers). Table 3.4 provides the type of school, location, years of experience and subject specialities of the participants.

Table 3.4 PRP teacher profile

Type of school	Urban/Rural	Years exp.	Subjects Taught
Primary	Urban	11	All primary subjects
Primary	Urban	46	All primary subjects
Primary	Rural	29	All primary subjects, currently on secondment
Primary	Rural	10	All primary subjects, resource/learning support
Primary	Urban	40	All primary subjects
Primary	Rural	34	All primary subjects
Secondary	Urban	3	Woodwork, technology, construction studies
Secondary	Urban	33	Maths, Chemistry, Currently in management
Secondary	Rural	18	Woodwork, Technical Graphics, Construction Studies

3.5 Methods

In this section, the way in which implementation of SBSE was explored in a number of recent studies in differing contexts will be presented first. This serves to explore how these studies conceptualised and subsequently measured/explored the adopted concepts, specifically in relation to SBSE. This is followed by a detailed description of the methods selected, the rationale for their use, and the specific items/questions for this study. Third, the relationship between the conceptual framework and the methods is delineated.

3.5.1 Concepts/methods used in studies exploring the implementation of SBSE programmes

In a recent study in the US, an implementation and outcome (cluster RCT) evaluation were conducted to explore the efficacy of a sexuality education programme for high school students (Berglas et al., 2016; Constantine et al., 2015). The study gathered a variety of data on different parts of the intervention and from different stakeholders, see Berglas *et al.* (2016, p.554) for outline of implementation evaluation. The researchers describe that implementation fidelity of classroom curriculum was measured in three ways: 1) student attendance (which was recorded by research staff); 2) the level of delivery of all sections and activities in a session as designed in lesson plan (measured through observations); 3) and delivery levels of session content as designed in lesson plan, which was also measured through observations (Constantine et al., 2015). The data from attendance records was

calculated through the mean percentage of attending students in the classroom. Observations were based on a 16-item tool which included an exploration of:

a) How well the core concepts of the lesson were communicated
b) The level to which the content was delivered as planned
c) How well the facilitator related the content to gender and rights issues
d) The degree to which the facilitator encouraged student discussion
e) Student engagement in discussion and group work
f) Student's level of understanding of the session (Berglas et al., 2016).

Observations were conducted by trained research staff and fidelity was measured using a 5- point scale (1 'not at all closely' to 5 'very closely') and summarised as the percentage of sections and activities delivered faithfully (Berglas et al., 2016; Constantine et al., 2015). Furthermore, a 12 items student posttest survey (using 4-point response scales, 1 'not at all' to 4 'totally') was administered immediately after participation in the curriculum which explored student engagement and enjoyment with the curriculum (Berglas et al., 2016).

In a process evaluation of a SBSE programme for primary school pupils, Newby et al. (2018) used guidance for planning process evaluations of public health programmes designed by Saunders and colleagues (2005). They assessed implementation using the following constructs: reach (participation rates); fidelity (quality); dose delivered (completeness) and received (exposure and satisfaction); recruitment; and context. They incorporated multiple stakeholders: teachers, programme leads, pupils, and parents (Newby & Mathieu-Chartier, 2018). A number of different methods were employed: parent opt-out forms (consent forms but also used for reach data); teacher checklist and feedback forms; teacher, parent, and pupil focus groups; parents' daily diaries; parent, teacher and programme lead interviews; and observations of the parent evening (Newby & Mathieu-Chartier, 2018).

Renju and colleagues (2010) conducted a process evaluation describing the implementation realities for teachers in the scale-up of an ASRH intervention. They explored: the quality and impact of the teacher training; the quality of intervention implementation at classroom level; and environmental and institutional factors

determining teacher attitudes to and experience and ownership of the intervention (Renju et al., 2010). They also evaluated teacher training through the use of observations and pre and post training questionnaires. Data were collected to determine the following items: coverage; attendance; selection; motivation; experiences; attitudes; perceptions; characteristics; ownership; training content and delivery; levels of support; logistics; and other external factors. Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, head teachers, ward education coordinators and school committees occurred before, during and after intervention implementation and the results were triangulated with training results (Renju et al., 2010). Interestingly, in their study, student perspectives were not included.

In the Netherlands, Schutte et al. (2014) conducted a study assessing factors associated with programme adoption, implementation and sustainment of the 'Long Live Love' (LLL) programme among teachers. They utilised a comprehensive self-completion survey comprised of different diffusion-related concepts. These concepts were based on Roger's Diffusion Theory and their use of this theory related to implementation as a decision-making process comprised of different phases: dissemination, adoption, implementation, and maintenance. A questionnaire was sent by post to teachers who were working or had worked with LLL. The questionnaires specifically explored:

- 'Completeness' or 'extent of use' of LLL was expressed as the percentage of the program (i.e. learning activities) being implemented. For each of the 22 core learning activities in LLL, teachers were asked if they had completed that activity. The completeness of implementation of the other four activities was not included in the analyses as these were optional. In the end, completeness was calculated for each teacher by adding up all the activities they completed per lesson, dividing them by the total number of activities (maximum 22) and multiplying them by 100.
- 'Fidelity' or 'quality of use' was measured by asking teachers to indicate, per lesson, how well they followed the instructions in the teacher's manual (1¼considerably modified it, 2¼slightly modified it and 3¼followed it very closely). The scores per lesson were added up for each teacher and divided by

the total number of lessons (6) to produce an average. ‘Continuation’ of current LLL was measured with one item: ‘Do you intend on using the current LLL program next school year for your sexual education lessons?’ (1¼no, certainly not, 5¼yes, certainly). Teachers were asked in an open-ended question to explain their intention level.

- ‘Adoption’ of the ‘revised’ LLL program was measured with one item: ‘Do you intend on using the revised LLL program in the coming years for your sexual education lessons?’ (1¼no, certainly not, 5¼yes certainly). Teachers were asked in an open-ended question to explain their intention level.

They also explored:

- Curriculum-related beliefs (outcome beliefs; perceived importance of student learning outcomes; perceived feasibility of these outcomes; teacher benefits; instrumentality; subjective norms; social support; self-efficacy).
- Interactive context (school policy; governing body support; collegial interaction; descriptive norm; student response)
- Information source (teacher training; contact with regional health service)
- Demographic variables (gender, age; years of experience with LLL; school size; class composition)

They also explored ‘other’ variables in relation to LLL: whether teachers used the DVD, teacher manual and student magazine in the LLL lessons (1¼yes, 0¼no), how familiar they were with the program before using it and how many hours they had spent on teaching the LLL program. ‘Extent of familiarity’ with the program was measured on a 4-point scale from (0) I only bought the program, to (3), I reviewed the program completely and thoroughly.

Another implementation evaluation study by Schutte et al. (2014), explored the Long Live Love+, an online SBSE programme. Teachers were interviewed and students participated in focus group discussions. The implementation constructs used in this study were similar to the previous study described above.

In their study of a professional development pilot programme to strengthen sexuality education for public school teachers, Wilson and colleagues (2015) describe the

conceptualisation and implementation of the programme. The concept of evidence-based sexuality education was used to inform the training program and focused on medically accurate, age-appropriate sexuality education methods. The evaluation of the programme was enacted in two main ways: a) the programme developers evaluated the programme qualitatively through a town hall discussion with participants; and b) programme participants completed a pre-, post-, and 6-month follow-up quantitative survey which explored the perceptions and implementation of the specific sexuality education programme.

As evident from other SBSE studies, similar concepts have been explored in a variety of methodological ways. The way these studies measured or explored implementation of SBSE was reflected upon for this study. Based on this reflection, the following methods were selected as the best way to explore this research problem.

3.5.2 Methods adopted and rationale for use in this study

This section will outline the specific methods selected for this study and a rationale for their utilisation. Methods applied at the three study stages are as follows:

Stage one (training level) - pre and post delivery implementation forms, participant questionnaires, attendance lists, semi-structured interviews, document analysis

Stage two (school level) - pre and post delivery implementation forms, participant questionnaires, attendance lists, structured observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis

Stage three - participatory method

Each method will be described in detail below.

<u>Implementation forms</u>

Both pre and post implementation forms were self-reported measures selected to monitor the implementation of RSE training and RSE lesson delivery. The purpose of these forms was to explore planned versus actual implementation as outlined in Greenberg et al. (2005) model. Furthermore, the use of such forms facilitates the

exploration of adaptations. Specific items in the forms were also included in other methods (participant questionnaires and observation forms) to facilitate the triangulation of viewpoints on core concepts. Such monitoring forms have also been used in other studies. The specific questions were designed based on the implementation literature reviewed.

Participant questionnaires

Self-completion questionnaires were selected to gather implementation data from teachers attending RSE in-service training and students attending RSE classes in schools. Self-completion questionnaires were chosen as they allowed for consistent measurement of implementation but were also selected as there was limited time available to collect the data during training and in schools. Further to this, the consistency in exploration of implementation between methods served to increase the potential for triangulation. Participant questionnaires have been frequently used in other studies exploring SBSE implementation.

There are stages to follow in questionnaire design: pre-questionnaire planning, preparing the questionnaire, drafting the final questionnaire and pre-testing or piloting the final questionnaire (Neutens & Robinson, 2010) and these were followed in the process of questionnaire design (see Appendix A). The questions in the questionnaire were both open-ended and closed-ended depending on the type of information required to answer the question. The main aim of this method was to obtain information on participants experiences of RSE implementation, such as lesson enjoyment and topics covered.

Structured observation

Structured observation was selected for use in this study. Within structured observation, activities are pre-selected and a systematic recording of the events is planned (Neutens & Robinson, 2010). Through the use of structured observation, the context of a particular phenomenon can be examined and a researcher may learn about certain aspects that cannot or will not be disclosed in an interview or questionnaire (Neutens & Robinson, 2010). Structured observation has been selected as unstructured observation generally leads to problems of reliability, memory distortion and researcher bias (Neutens & Robinson, 2010). Observation is a core

method frequently used to observe implementation fidelity and is often used in conjunction with self-report measures (Mowbray, Holter, Teague, & Bybee, 2003).

Structured observation forms were designed for school-level only as observation was not permitted at training. The questions within the structured observation form mirrored the questions asked in the implementation and participant questionnaires. This was to facilitate triangulation. This method has also been used in a number of SBSE implementation evaluation studies.

Attendance lists

Attendance lists were selected to monitor programme reach.

Semi-structured interviews

There are various structural levels of interviews, ranging from highly structured interviews to ones with little or no structure. Partially structured or focused interviews are also known as semi-structured interviews (Dane, 1990). This type of interview involves pre-determined questions but there is flexibility in the process (Dane, 1990). This was imperative to allow for a level of standardisation of questions to be asked of participants (particularly in order to explore study concepts consistently) but also flexibility if other relevant topics arose during the interview process. It was also imperative to explore implementation from a different pragmatic position thus facilitating deeper and more fluid engagement with the stakeholders around the topic of exploration.

Questions for the semi-structured interviews were designed according to the research question being addressed and the stage of the research. This also included the role of the person being interviewed and their relationship to RSE. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school-level stakeholders, in this instance teachers and a Board of Management member. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with training-level stakeholders: the national coordinator for SPHE and SPHE/RSE trainers.

Document analysis

Document analysis is described as a systematic method for document review and evaluation (Bowen, 2009). It is a qualitative methodology and similar to other qualitative methods, document analysis necessitates that data is examined and interpreted in order to extract meaning, gain understanding, and expand empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This method was chosen to facilitate contextual-level understanding of the training and school environments separate to the exploration of personal viewpoints as gathered through the conduct of semi-structured interviews. Application of this method-type also allows for exploration of areas that may not be possible through the utilisation of other methods. For example, official documents may be more objective and also may provide different information types, such as an appraisal of the school environment.

At training level, there were available RSE documents on the DES and SPHE support service website which were included in the analysis, although these proved to be of minor relevance to the analysis stage of this study. At school-level, policy documents and relevant department inspection reports were accessed as they hold potential to provide greater information about RSE implementation and the context for RSE. At the time of data collection, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) conducted two types of external school evaluations: whole school and subject-specific evaluations[10]. These evaluations are also referred to as inspections. The main aim of the inspections are to "provide judgements on the quality of provision in a school, affirm the aspects of practice that are working well and assist in confirming the school's judgement about its strengths and priorities for improvement" (DES, 2016, p.5). The reports from the school and subject evaluations are published on the DES website and publicly available. The selection process for the evaluations is unclear however and reports differ greatly by school. The DES state that a "sample of all schools and centres for education is selected for inspection as part of the Inspectorate's annual programme of inspection" (DES, 2016, p.4). Due

[10] There are now mechanisms and processes for school self-evaluation and further details are provided in a recently published document: *A Guide to Inspection in Post-primary schools* (DES, 2016).

to this, there are varying amounts and types of data available for each school involved in the study.

Participatory Method

This method is adapted from the work of Nic Gabhainn and Sixsmith (2005; 2006) which draws on the photovoice method. Photovoice is a process by which people can "identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p.369). The practice of photovoice is rooted in the production of knowledge and has three core goals: a. "to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns", b. "to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs", and c. "to reach policymakers". This participatory research method has been used in a variety of educational settings and using different data generation techniques (Olufisayo John-Akinola, Gavin, O'Higgins, & Nic Gabhainn, 2013; O'Higgins & Nic Gabhainn, 2010).

This experiential activity involved asking teachers to conceptualise and create their own models of school-based implementation. The method has been adapted for this study. For this study, photographs have been replaced with index cards and participants generate, categorise and analyse their ideas about school-based implementation. This method was selected as it provides a clear methodological process for data generation, categorisation and analysis by participants. As the researcher wanted to explore teachers' views, this participatory process facilitated the idea of teacher-designed schemas. Although the research question and design are dictated by the researcher: the idea, categorisation of ideas, and analysis are dictated by the participants. In this way, there is minimal researcher influence on the data that is generated, and its initial interpretation.

Tables 3.5 and 3.6 below detail the specific items explored by each method for study stage one and two. The PR method is described in detail in the procedure section.

Table 3.5 Description of information gathered by each method for stage one

Method	Information gathered
Trainers' pre-delivery implementation form	Years training experience; training timing; planned topics; planned aims; planned resource materials; resource ratings; comments about resources; planned activities; training manual details; pre-implementation feelings about training; details about monitoring teachers' responses; perceived barriers; and additional comments.
Trainers' post-delivery implementation form	Actual timing; feelings about time; achieved aims; actual topics; modifications to planned implementation; feelings about training delivery and participant responses; training rating; and additional comments.
Teachers' questionnaire	Gender; years teaching experience; SPHE courses undertaken; RSE teaching experience; support for training attendance; training aims; training topics; resource materials; resource ratings; comments about resources; training activities; training delivery; responses to training; training rating, additional comments, feeling about delivering RSE, contact details for participating in further research.
Training-level interviews	Experience and education; teaching subjects; duties of the post; training for the post; CPD description and opportunities; process for follow-up work; school-based work; support service evaluation of training; definitions of implementation; key stakeholders and their role in training development; description of training manual; perceived school-based RSE implementation challenges; DES evaluations; ideal RSE training, the ideal RSE programme, and additional comments.
Official documents	Available RSE documents on the DES and SPHE support service website.

Table 3.6 Description of information gathered by each method for stage two

Method	**Information gathered**
Teachers' pre-delivery implementation form	Class year, planned lesson length, planned lesson topics, lesson topic source, lesson aims, planned lesson resources (incl. source), resource ratings, additional comments about resources, planned lesson activities, teaching manual, feelings about lesson delivery, planned monitoring of student responsiveness, perceived lesson barriers, and additional comments about lesson.
Teachers' post-delivery implementation form	Class year, actual lesson length, feelings about lesson timing, feelings about achieving aims, actual lesson topics covered, lesson adaptations, actual lesson delivery, lesson rating, and additional comments about lesson.
Students' questionnaire	Gender, age, school year, previous RSE classes, interest in RSE classes, lesson aims, lesson topics, lesson resources and resource responsiveness, resource ratings, lesson activities, lesson delivery, lesson ratings, and additional comments about lesson.
School-level interviews	Information gathered relating to components of the contextual part of Greenberg plus model: class-level, school-level, district-level, and community-level.
Direct observation form	Lesson timing, topics, aims, resources, student response to resources, resource ratings, teaching manual-use, activities, student response to activities, lesson barriers, teacher monitoring of student responsiveness, lesson delivery, lesson rating, and additional comments.
Official documents	Information gathered relating to components within the contextual part of Greenberg plus model: class-level, school-level, district-level, and community-level. This was mainly gleaned from school policies and departmental inspection reports.

3.5.3 Relationship of methods to conceptual framework

Tables 3.7 and 3.8 identifies the relationship between the methods that are being used to gather data on the components of the Greenberg et al. (2005) model and identifies the relationship between the methods that are being used to gather data and other core concepts identified in the literature.

Table 3.7: Relationship between components of the Greenberg plus model and data collection methods employed

Component	Description	Methods (incl. question no.) used to gather data
Programme model	Structure, content, timing, dosage, and nature of the intervention	Review of the RSE programme and literature; teachers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q2-Q6, Q8 and Q9) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q2-Q6) ; student questionnaires; lesson observations
Quality of delivery	Affective nature or degree of engagement; effective use of implementation techniques; generalisation of skills	Teachers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q10 and Q12) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q7 and Q8); student questionnaires; lesson observations
Target Audience	Group that the intervention is targeted towards and if they are reached	Teachers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q1) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q1); student questionnaires (Q1-Q4)
Participants' responsiveness	Perceptions; skills; knowledge; beliefs (e.g., efficacy)	Teachers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q11) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q7); student questionnaire ; lesson observations
Pre-planning	Capacity; awareness; commitment/engagement; incentive for change; history of prior program implementation	School-level interviews; review of departmental evaluations
Quality of materials	Design of program materials; format of program materials	Trainers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q6) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q6); training-level questionnaires (Q9); Teachers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q7) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q7); student questionnaires; lesson observations

Table 3.8: Relationship between components of the Greenberg plus model and data collection methods employed continued

Technical support model	Structure, content and timing of training and supervision; implementation monitoring system	Trainers' planned implementation self-report form (Q1-Q5, and Q7) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q1- Q5); training-level questionnaires (Q6-Q8, and Q10) ; training-level interviews
Quality of technical support	Quality of delivery; quality of the working relationship; trainer characteristics	Trainers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q9-Q11) and actual implementation self-report forms (Q6 and Q7); training-level questionnaires (Q11-Q13)
Implementer readiness	Perceptions; skills; knowledge; beliefs (e.g., efficacy)	Training-level questionnaires (Q3,Q4, and Q15); Teachers' planned implementation self-report forms (Q10)
Classroom level	Implementer characteristics and behaviours; classroom climate; peer relations	Teachers' planned implementation self-report forms and actual implementation self-report forms; student questionnaires; lesson observations
School level	Admin stability; admin leadership and support; awareness of student needs; school goals; school climate	Training-level questionnaires (Q5); School-level interviews; review of department evaluations; review of school-level literature
District level	Admin stability; admin leadership and support; awareness of student needs; district goals; communication with schools	School-level interviews; review of department evaluations; review of school-level literature
Community level	School-community relations; school-family relations; community support/readiness	School-level interviews; review of department evaluations; review of school-level literature

3.6 Procedure

The procedure followed at each study stage is delineated below. This includes a description of the recruitment and consent process.

3.6.1 Piloting

Training level

The trainer implementation questionnaires were piloted with a local Health Service Executive with experience of co-facilitating RSE training and an SPHE teacher in post-primary school.

The teacher questionnaires were piloted with an SPHE post-primary teacher in a local school. The teacher completed the questionnaire and provided written comments. The questionnaire was also discussed with the researcher and any edits/improvements suggested by the teacher were incorporated.

School level

The student questionnaire was piloted with two post-primary students and one student in their final year of primary school. One student in first year and one student in third year completed the questionnaire and provided both written and verbal feedback on the questionnaire. The student in their final year of primary school provided feedback on the ease of comprehension and age-appropriate language–use within the questionnaire.

Participatory Research Process

The methods and initiating question for teachers were trialled in a full pilot test with Teachers at university level prior to recruitment for the study. Feedback from pilot participants was used to phrase the initiating question.

3.6.2 Stage one– training level

a) Each trainer was spoken to via telephone about the study. Each trainer then received a letter, information sheet, and consent form via e-mail about taking part in the study (see Appendix B). Once consent was obtained, trainer's

agreed training dates. Each trainer completed and submitted a pre-delivery implementation form for each in-service training.

b) Teachers were briefed on the study at the very beginning of each in-service and were provided with detailed information letters and consent forms (see Appendix C). The conduct of a pre-training questionnaire was not permitted by the SPHE support service. The researcher was present in the building during the in-services but was not allowed to attend or observe the training. At the end of the two-day in-service, the teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire about the in-service and to consider taking part in the school-level stage of the study. Teachers were asked to provide their contact details if they felt comfortable to do so.

c) Trainers submitted post-delivery implementation forms.

d) Training-level stakeholders (four national trainers and one national level co-ordinator) were contacted about being interviewed. Dates were arranged and all interviews were conducted via telephone. Documents were sourced from www.sphe.ie.

3.6.3 Stage two – school level

a) Teachers were invited to take part at the end of training and contact information was gathered for those interested. Teachers were then contacted via e-mail and phone (where provided) about taking part. Each teacher received an e-mail which contained a letter explaining the study, an information sheet, and a consent form (see Appendix D). In total, 28 teachers were contacted, eight teachers expressed interest in taking part, and five teachers actually participated.

b) Once consent had been obtained from teachers, each teacher was sent letters, information sheets, and passive consent forms for children in their class (see Appendix D). Teachers distributed the information to the students in their class. Teachers then provided a date for the planned RSE lesson and completed and submitted the pre-delivery implementation form.

c) The teachers delivered the planned RSE lesson on the pre-arranged dates. Students completed a questionnaire at the end of the RSE lesson. The lessons

were observed and a structured observation form was completed for each lesson. After lesson delivery, teachers submitted their post-delivery implementation forms (submission time varied from immediately to one month after the lesson).

d) School-level stakeholders were recruited to take part in an interview to gather contextual-level information about the school. All interviews were conducted via telephone. Documents were gathered for each school. Administrators in all schools were emailed with a request for school development plans, RSE policies, and an information letter seeking interview participation by a BOM member. One school provided the letter to the BOM and subsequently indicated that all members declined participation. In one school, one BOM member contacted the researcher and agreed to be interviewed. Each school was telephoned seeking to speak with the principal with the hope of interview participation. In one school, the principal was reached but immediately declined participation. In the remaining schools, it was not possible to speak with the principal. Three follow-up phone calls were made to each school. One school administrator replied with the RSE policy. Each school administrator was e-mailed three times in total. The remaining policies sourced were through the teacher contact in the school. One teacher, the SPHE coordinator was recruited through the teacher contact in the school. In relation to the online search for official inspection/evaluation reports, there was variation in relation to available documents for each school and resulting from this, the contextual level sections differ in both the type and amount of documentary evidence.

3.6.4 Stage three – PRP with teachers

There were four steps in this process:

a) Brainstorming activity: participants were asked: ‘what would you need to implement a new programme in the school?’ Each participant was asked to brainstorm individually and write each idea they had on a single index card. Each individual idea on an index card is referred to as a ‘card’ below.

b) Category creation: the cards were then collected, combined, shuffled. Participants were divided into two sub-groups, given half the cards each and asked to combine the cards into categories, and to label the category descriptively on a separate index card. At this stage participants were free to add extra categories if they so wished. Each category comprised a collection of cards and is referred to as a 'category' below.
c) Schema development: the categories created by each of the two sub-groups were swopped. Participants were invited to create a schema (structured/organised framework) with the category descriptors. The researcher explained that the schema could be in any shape or form. Participants were asked to insert arrows if they felt a relationship existed between any of the categories in their schema. It was explained that the arrows could be unidirectional or bidirectional and there was no limit on the number of arrows. Each schema comprised the organisation of a group of categories and is referred to as a 'schema'.
d) Feedback: participants were asked for feedback on the schema and the overall research process and if they had anything else to add.

3.7 Analytical framework

3.7.1 Data entry/management and analysis

Questionnaires/forms

All quantitative data (questionnaires, implementation forms, and structured observations) were entered and analysed using IBM SPSS version 20. Interval data were inputted directly while nominal and ordinal data were assigned codes and then inputted into SPSS. A code (-99) was assigned when participants failed to give any response to account for missing values. Where participants provided two answers to single-response questions, these responses were coded as -99. Responses to open questions were entered as string variables. Specifically, in the case of open questions about adaptations, these were entered as a string variable and then were subsequently categorised to create an additional nominal variable about adaptation type.

Quantitative data from closed questions in questionnaires was analysed using the descriptive statistics function in SPSS 20. The percentage of responses, mean and standard deviation were all used to report the data. Missing data was not included in the final percentages. Data from open questions within quantitative methods were extracted and analysed using basic content analysis or thematic analysis dependent on data type. Some data were analysed using basic content analysis (Weber, 1990), for example training topics, while other data were analysed using thematic analysis (Green & Thorogood, 2013), for example, training aims and trainers' perceived barriers to implementing RSE training. Similarly, data from open questions at school-level were analysed using basic content analysis.

There are complexities regarding the conceptualisation and differential application of basic content analysis versus thematic analysis including a lack of clarity about how these approaches have been applied in research studies (see Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013 for further discussion). For this study, basic content analysis was applied to the data where there was a need to examine commonalities in wording (frequency and identification). Thematic content analysis was used when the data were broad ranging and when the data was generated in a more exploratory capacity.

Attendance lists

Attendance lists were gathered at training and school-level.

Semi-structured interviews and document analysis

All interview transcripts were audio-recorded and transcribed in full. As part of the MOU with regional managers, interview transcripts were sent for member checking. Relevant training and school-level documents were gathered using different search strategies. Documents pertaining to the context of in-service training were sourced directly from the SPHE support service website. Documents pertaining to each schools context (policies and inspections/evaluations) were searched for on each schools website (where applicable), on the DES website, and directly from each school (where possible). Table 3.9 details the contextual level data sources by school.

Table 3.9 Contextual level data sources by school

	Interview	Inspection/Evaluation	Policy
School One	✓	✓	✓
School Two	✓	✓	✓
School Three	x	✓	✓
School Four	x	✓	x
School Five	✓	✓	x

At training level, semi-structured interviews and documents were analysed using thematic content analysis. At school-level, a different approach was taken for the same data type (see table 3.9). Semi-structured interviews and documents were analysed using directed content analysis (Hseish & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis is positioned as part of the overall content analysis approach and can be viewed as deductive (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis aims "*to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory*" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). The directed content analysis strategy requires the researcher to code the data with predetermined codes. Any data that cannot be coded is then set aside. These 'extra' data are subsequently analysed to ascertain if either a new category or a sub-category of an existing code should be created (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The pre-determined codes for the directed content analysis were derived from the Greenberg plus model. The rationale for using this approach solely at school-level was to adhere to the exploration of context as outlined in the model.

<u>PRP data</u>

As this research study was participatory, the data were both generated and subsequently analysed by the teachers who took part according to the stages detailed above and as evidenced in the schemas created from each other's data. Through discussion and working in small groups, teachers led an adapted inductive approach to the analysis. The main deviation from traditional inductive analysis was during the "open coding" stage which, for this research approach, sits in between the "idea generation" and "category creation" stages. The adapted "open coding" analytical stage took place in a group context and was solely through dialogue between teachers while grouping and creating categories from their index cards. Although

similar to an “open coding” process, the approach was fluid, teacher-led and focused on category and not code creation and therefore should be considered an adaptation. The final analytical stage of abstraction was applied when the teachers created schemas with the categories created and indicated the relationships between categories (if any). The audio tapes of the category creation stage were used to extract verbatim quotations from teachers to elucidate the process and these are included where relevant in the results section. A second layer of abstractive analysis was the final stage of analysis. This was a broader level of abstraction which involved comparing and contrasting the schemas to the study findings and also a comparison of the findings to the extant literature and the Greenberg et al. (2005) conceptual model. This final stage represents a marked shift away from presenting the data in solely participatory fashion whereby, for the purposes of this thesis; there is an additional lens to situate the findings within the literature.

In total, four different analytical approaches were applied across the study. For clarity, these are detailed in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10 Analytical approaches utilised in this study

Analytical approach	Training-level data	School-level data	PR data
Use of SPSS 20 for descriptive analysis	Closed questions in questionnaires and implementation questionnaires	Closed questions in questionnaires, implementation questionnaires, and observation forms	-
Basic content analysis	Open questions in questionnaires and implementation questionnaires	Open questions in questionnaires, implementation questionnaires, and observation forms	-
Thematic content analysis	Open questions in questionnaires, semi-structured interview transcripts, training documents	-	-
Directed content analysis (also content analysis)	-	Semi-structured interview transcripts, school documents	A second layer of abstractive analysis on the overall schemas created

3.8 Quality assurance

There are two main points to consider with regards quality assurance in this study. The first relates to quality checks conducted on the data entry and initial analysis process and this will be outlined according to data type and for each method. The second point relates to the quality of data mixing. The difficulties regarding data mixing in MM studies will be discussed and subsequently the quality of the mixing of the data in this MM study will be then be detailed. As noted in the work by Ivankova (2014), quality assurance was enacted on each data type separately before mixing/integration.

3.8.1 Quality checks

There is a need to ensure reliability and validity of quantitative data and results and this can be achieved through quality checks. There is a need to promote credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative data also. A review of quality assurance within

qualitative research highlighted the importance of assuring quality throughout the research process as it is in line with the values of qualitative research (Reynolds et al., 2011). They outline quality assurance strategies identified in the outcome-oriented approach: triangulation; positivist theory: trustworthiness; member checking; negative case analysis; theoretical sampling; peer review and the checklist-use is commonly recommended. In the process-oriented approach they identified that there was the: 'use of field diary to reflect on approach position and assumptions; an audit trail to record methodological decisions made, for reflection at interpretation stage; ensuring researchers' comprehension of and engagement with their role in assuring quality; and there was often recommendations for active methodological awareness over reliance on checklists of techniques quality' (Reynolds et al., 2011, p.7). The process oriented approach was adopted in this study to a degree although triangulation of data occurred at a later stage which arguably situates the quality assurance strategy between an output and process focused narrative.

Quantitative data and quality checks

Following completion of data entry, the checking for errors process was enacted. Using the 'Frequencies' function in SPSS, data were examined for the expected maximum and minimum values and also reasonable means and standard deviations. Once data cleaning had taken place, the researcher randomly chose participant ID numbers and cross-checked the results entered into SPSS with each original data set as a way of screening for accuracy of data inputting.

Qualitative data and quality checks

Semi-structured interviews: upon completion of transcription, the quality of interview transcriptions was checked by simultaneously listening to each audio file while reading the written transcript. This was to check for errors in transcription. Data was analysed and coded using detailed notes on the analytical process and decisions made. After data was analysed and coded, the data was then set aside for a period of time and the data was subsequently reviewed for analytical accuracy. Any differences were noted and the researcher revisited the audio transcripts for the context within which the data arose from to assist in clarity. A final decision was then made on the most accurate presentation of the data and where applicable by also

referring to the Greenberg et al. (2005) conceptual model as the results were aligned with these headings.

Document analysis: Once document were retrieved, they were analysed either thematically (training level) or according to the Greenberg et al. (2005) conceptual model (school level). After data was analysed and thematically organised or coded, the data was then set aside for a period of time and the data was subsequently reviewed for analytical accuracy. Any differences were noted and the researcher returned the original documents to assist in clarity. A final decision was then made on the most accurate presentation of the data.

PRP: as participants generate, analyse and present their own data, the process for quality assurance was enacted differently for this process. Particular attention was focused on the comprehensiveness of the initiating research question. This was achieved during the pre-planning stages and also based on feedback from pilot participants (through the recommendation that the research question was clarified and provided both visually and verbally to participants). The execution of the method in practice was in strict accordance with the research protocol and this also ensured that ethical principles, originally outlined in the approved protocol, were upheld. In order to support transparency on the process and underlying methodological assumptions, decisions taken during the pre-planning, analysis and write-up stages were clearly documented. Detailed reflexive field notes were taken during application of the method, and continuous discussions were held with other researchers with experience of utilising a similar methodological approach.

3.8.2 Quality in mixing and interpretation

Despite progression in the field with regards the adoption and application of MM research (Creswell, 2010; Ivankova & Kawamura, 2010), it is argued that quality assurance or validity in MM studies remain challenging methodological issues and the most controversial topics in the MM field in the recent decade (Ivankova, 2014). In two editions of the Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research, there have been debates detailed about drawing quality conclusions or inferences in mixed methods studies (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; 2010). Further to

this, numerous MM authors have highlighted the complexity of mixed methods validity arising from differing approaches to quality in MM research (Creswell, 2010; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; O'Cathain, 2010; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006).

Ensuring quality in mixed methods studies can be particularly difficult because of the planned integration of quantitative and qualitative results to create reliable meta-inferences. As defined by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) ''meta-inference'' relates to the conclusion arising from the integration of the inference that have been reached from the results of the QUAL and QUAN strands in a MM study. The integrating of findings has been described as difficult to achieve (Bryman, 2008) and as an understudied and under theorised area (Greene, 2007).

Ivankova (2014) argues that this inference integration is a vital stage in the process of a MM study and researchers should observe rigorous standards for assessing inference quality to ensure their credibility and validity. Despite the vital need for this, there are no recognised criteria for assessing the methodological quality of MM research or the meta-inferences that are produced (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Leech, Dellinger, Brannagan, & Tanaka, 2010; O'Cathain, 2010). Furthermore, social science researchers hold differing viewpoints on what constitutes quality in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research (Bryman, Becker, & Semptik, 2008). The research strategies selected and the standard of evaluation are frequently impacted upon by researchers' philosophical views and epistemological practices, which in turn determines the entire study (the language, descriptions, and interpretations of validity) and as a result, the assessment of the quality of the integrated meta-inferences in MM research (Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Greene, 2007; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010).

Some useful points with regards the analysis of MM data; specifically the appropriate and complete analysis through triangulation, have been outlined by Bazeley and Kemp (2012, p.69):

- There are many ways to integrate data.
- Integration might begin at any stage within a study
- Integration needs to occur before conclusions are drawn—and essentially during analysis or during the analytic writing (formulation) of results. Usually and where possible, earlier is better.
- The level of integration must be appropriate to the goals and purposes of the study.
- The ways in which each varied component depends on or is enriched by other(s) will be clearly evident from the report of the study.
- The product of the integration will be something that would not have been available without that integration.
- The write-up of an integrated study will be organised around the substantive issues dealt with in the research, not according to the methods used to carry out the investigation. These substantive issues might then become the subject of different articles rather than having different methods provide the basis for division of articles.
- An integrated study should (ideally) not be written up as separated components as this is antithetical to the concept of interdependence. Where publication demands create limitations, a strategy needs to be adopted to ensure that the whole is kept in view

The researcher will endeavour to apply and reflect on these points, where possible, during the integrative analytical process. It should be noted that point two does not directly relate to the MM model selected for this study as analysis, and thus integration, of both data types should not take place until all data is collected. While the results of each study part are presented separately for clarity, the data within each collection stage are mixed and the findings are subsequently discussed in an integrated way.

3.9 Ethics and the research process

The protection of research participants and their data are central to any research process. Emanuel and colleagues (2000) outline seven ethical requirements identified from a review of literature, including various codes and frameworks dealing with ethics. The requirements they outline are: value, scientific validity, fair subject selection, favourable risk-benefit ratio, independent review, informed consent and respect for potential and enrolled subjects (Emanuel, Wendler, & Grady, 2000).

Ethical approval for this study was sought from the National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway Research Ethics Committee. Queries were raised by the ethics committee and some minor adjustments were made to the research study, for example, broadening the geographical recruitment area. After full ethical approval for both the qualitative and quantitative phase was granted by the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, the consent process began.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is one of the seven core requirements of ethical research and is incorporated in the basic ethical principle of autonomy. Informed consent must be obtained before a participant can take part in any study but it is much more than a signed piece of paper. It "is a process of communication between the researcher and the research participant-a process that requires time and effort" (Macklin, 1999, p. 83). There are three key elements of informed consent: the provision of adequate information, individual capacity for comprehension and voluntariness (Macklin, 1999). Furthermore the recruitment and consent process are interlinked. The recruitment of participants must be on a voluntary basis; that is a research participant must not feel coerced into participating in the research project (Scott-Jones, 2000).

The process of obtaining consent was delineated in the procedure section of the chapter. The principles of informed consent were applied during the various study stages. At training level, consent was initially sought from the national coordinator for the SPHE support service. Following this, the researcher telephoned each in-service trainer to explain the specific study details and what was involved. All in-service trainers were e-mailed detailed information sheets and consent forms. It

should be noted that trust was an issue at the beginning of the research process with the training service and the researcher's approach to involving the national trainers for RSE had to be managed carefully. Ethical principles were upheld at all time through transparency, respect and a clear articulation of voluntariness. While the participation of the national trainers was central to the study, it was important that trainers did not feel coerced into participation.

There was however a sense of distrust as the researcher was going to be exploring the work of the service, seeking teachers' views, and essentially conducting what some trainers saw as essentially an external evaluation of the service. This was also tied in with the way their role was constructed; each trainer was a seconded teacher whose role was renewed yearly and there was some fear associated with a study on the effectiveness of the service. This was managed through the ethical principles. Respect, transparency, and reaffirming voluntariness were key to improving the relationships. The researcher ensured that the trainers were fully informed of the entire research process. As the study progressed, the trust in the research relationship improved, especially once the researcher had met each trainer face to face.

The researcher also stressed the voluntariness of research participation to teachers attending training. It was particularly important in this instance as the trainers were a captive group and may have felt bound to participate by just attending training. To give teachers time to consider taking part, and also to talk to the researcher if they had questions, the researcher spent two days in each training location. On day one, the researcher addressed the group, explained the project, and gave out information sheets. The researcher informed teachers she would be present at the coffee breaks and waited to speak to any teachers. At the end of day two, the researcher again addressed all the teachers, reminded all teachers that participation was voluntary and checked if there were any questions. Consent forms were then distributed to teachers.

At school level, teachers were recruited via e-mail and then with a follow-up telephone call. Information sheets about this part of the study were distributed and the researcher clearly explained what participation involved. This was to ensure transparency of the process. Furthermore, it was emphasised to teachers that they could change their mind at any time if they liked. Passive consent was sought from

parents of children in schools. Further to this, to ensure pupils were appropriately informed, the researcher sought assent from young people. The researcher addressed the young people in each school and explained what the study was about and what would happen with their data. It was stressed that they did not have to take part if they did not want to and that they were free to change their minds at any time.

For the PRP, teachers were recruited via a gatekeeper in a teacher education centre. Due to this, extra time was afforded to participants to first read the designed information sheets and then for the researcher to explain the study verbally. Teachers were reminded they could change their mind about taking part at any time.

3.9.2 Potential risks and benefits

In this study, there were few potential risks to research participants. The data collection methods did not contain questions about sensitive topics or any questions about relationships and sexuality. There is however, an obligation on the researcher to minimise the risks and enhance the benefits of the research for the participants and society in general (Roberts et al., 2006). Based on the feedback from the research ethics committee, it was reported that the study could be potentially onerous for the teachers involved. Based on this, the researcher agreed to emphasise each relevant part of the study to teachers to ensure there was clarity and to ensure the principle of voluntariness was upheld. This was also enacted at the training stage to ensure that teachers who provided their contact information were aware, even before agreeing to potentially participate. Furthermore, at school level, the researcher was aware of the balance between fulfilling the research aims and ensuring that there was no risk or harm to participants. This is the reason why, after a number of attempts, some schools were no longer contacted to try to gather contextual level data as it would have been particularly onerous for the linking teacher in each school and other school stakeholders.

Another potential risk was a breach of anonymity of the national trainers and co-ordinator. As they were such a small and easily identifiable group, data gathered was anonymised immediately and when reporting, some data had to be withheld to avoid

participant identification. This point also links to confidentiality and data protection which is discussed below.

3.9.3 Confidentiality and data protection

All researchers must ensure that the privacy of research participants is respected at all times. Researchers must "strike a careful balance between their pursuit of health improvements for all and their obligation to maintain the privacy of individuals participating in research" (Kalra, Gertz, Singleton, & Inskip, 2006, p. 196). Transcriptions and audio files were anonymised and stored in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer. Paper questionnaire data was scanned and the soft copy files were stored in in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer. The hard-copies were stored in a key-locked cupboard with sole access. The researcher's supervisor was the only other person with a spare key. In line with best practice for data management, all hard and soft copy records were anonymised prevent participants from being identified in any way. The anonymisation process was afforded time t ensure there was an accurate coding system in place, with a data coding key to ensure data was not lost or unidentifiable of the researcher. As identified by Kalra et al. (2006) problems with anonymisation of records can arise due to the removal of some identifying information which may result in the loss of key data.

3.10 Dissemination of results

As mentioned, the sample size was relatively small for this study; therefore much emphasis must be placed on presenting the data in a way that does not easily identify any participant. This is extremely important in the dissemination phase of this study for numerous reasons. A summary of the findings of the study is to be disseminated to all of the participants who take part. As noted by Fernandez and colleagues (2003), providing research results to participants extends the level of respect for their involvement and the provision of a summary report to participants "avoids treating persons solely as a means to an end" (Fernandez, Kodish, & Weijer, 2003, p.12). Other potential benefits of sharing research with participants were discussed by Fernandez et al. (2003), such as that there is a lower likelihood that the participant may feel exploited by the researcher. Offering a summary report of the research must

also follow the ethical principles and guidelines mentioned above. The findings have been disseminated through oral and poster presentations at conferences and relevant events. The final PhD thesis will be available in the NUIG online database (ARAN) and finally, the information will also be contained in any journal articles or reports generated from the findings. Both the PhD thesis and any journal articles generated will be available for all to read and respecting participant privacy must be paramount.

3.11 Documentation of approvals

Any documents relating to the research process, such as ethical approval (see Appendix B) and Garda clearance forms will be safely stored. The participants will be informed of these approvals during the consent process for the study.

The next chapter (chapter four) provides the study results in three separate sections: training, school, and participatory research process findings.

4 Results

This chapter presents findings from three different study phases and is divided into three sections. The first section of this chapter will detail findings from RSE in-service training and relates to the conceptual framework in the following ways: planned and actual support system for RSE, the RSE technical support model (structure, content, and timing of training and supervision, and implementation monitoring system) and quality of RSE technical support (quality of delivery during training and supervision, quality of rapport between trainers and implementers, and trainer characteristics). In terms of presentation of the findings, first, contextual level data is presented, including relevant structural and background information. Second, specific data relating to each RSE in-service that was assessed is presented as follows: (i) support for teacher attendance at training; (ii) teacher's RSE teaching experience; (iii) training timing; (iv) core training content (aims, topics, activities, and resources); (v) quality of delivery and quality of rapport; (vi) monitoring teacher responsiveness; (vii) training ratings; (viii) additional comments about training; and (ix) training summary. Third, trainers' and teachers' resource ratings are presented followed by a description of teachers' post-training attitudes to RSE. Fourth, trainers' perceived barriers to training are presented.

This second section of this chapter presents findings from phase two of the study. The focus of this phase was on the implementation of RSE by teachers who had previously attended RSE training and relates to the conceptual framework in the following ways: planned and actual intervention of RSE in schools (programme model, quality of delivery, target audience, and participant responsiveness), planned and actual RSE implementation support (pre-planning, quality of materials, quality of technical support, and implementer readiness), and contextual factors influencing RSE (class, school, district, and community). In relation to presentation of the findings: first, the results are presented individually for each school as follows: a) school description; b) school context; c) teacher's experience of RSE in-service training; and d) the RSE lesson. The results from the RSE lessons are specifically presented according to: (i) teaching manual; (ii) lesson timing; (iii) core lesson

content (aims, topics, activities, and resources); (iv) lesson delivery; (v) student responsiveness; (vi) lesson ratings; (vii) lesson barriers; and (viii) school summary. Second, a report of students' interest in RSE is described.

The final part of this chapter presents the results from phase three of this study. The findings from the participatory research process conducted with teachers are presented according to the ideas generated by each group of teachers, subsequent categorisation, and the schemas created.

4.1 Phase one results: RSE in-service training

4.1.1 Training Context: The SPHE Support Service

The data presented here are drawn from a number of sources; the written description of the support service as available in public documents (D) is supplemented by data collected during interviews with stakeholders (I) and reports of service delivery (R) as described in the methods section above. Interviews were conducted with all trainers and the national coordinator for RSE. Key findings gleaned from these interviews are presented below. Data from interviewees (regional managers and national coordinator) is presented and clearly labelled using bracketed initials: (RM1), (RM2), (RM3), (RM4), and (RM5). For anonymity purposes, the national coordinator has also been labelled as a regional manager. It should also be noted that two interviewees requested the interview questions in advance (RM4 and RM5).

As explained on their website, the SPHE support service "provides support for schools with all aspects of the implementation of SPHE in a whole school context" (www.sphe.ie). The support service provides in-service courses, whole staff seminars and in-school meetings (D). Although RSE is a component of the overall SPHE programme in schools, RSE in-service training is delivered separately from overall SPHE in-service training (D). During interviews with the SPHE support service staff, it became apparent that the two day junior cycle RSE in-service training, the two day senior cycle RSE in-service training, and the one day sexual orientation and homophobic bullying in-service training are viewed as a set package, with staff referring to this set as 'the five RSE days' (I).

RSE in-service training is delivered by SPHE Regional Managers (trainers). At the time of data collection, all trainers were female and seconded (temporarily transferred to other employment/position) teachers. RSE in-service training is divided into junior cycle and senior cycle training (D). Each trainer plans junior cycle or senior cycle RSE in-service training on an individual basis, although all trainers stated that they had a standard training manual to use (I). In line with the nature of the RSE programme, RSE in-service training is intended to be facilitative (D, I). The interactive nature of training serves to engage teachers but also to replicate the 'ideal' RSE classroom environment (D, I). Both junior cycle and senior cycle RSE in-service training take place over two days and the in-service training is delivered directly (face-to-face) to teachers (D). This requires teachers to be released from their schools to attend the two-day in-service training (D).

All of the data presented in sections 4.9.1.2 has been gleaned from interviews with the SPHE support service team.

The regional manager role

It is important to note that in 2009, there was a restructuring of the SPHE support service. Those responsible for implementing RSE in-service training were known as Regional Development Officers (RDOs). There were 11 RDOs prior to the restructuring. After the restructure, there were four posts (now labelled regional managers) and the geographical remit of the regional managers widened. It was also around this time that the brief of the regional managers expanded to include child protection. The SPHE support service now also work in outreach educational settings (such as Youthreach [11]) and not solely in post-primary schools.

Each trainer described the role of SPHE regional manager as being multifaceted and entailing a variety of responsibilities. One trainer described the work as being three-fold: the cluster in-service training; in-school work; and child protection training. Cluster in-service training relates to SPHE training courses offered by the support

[11] Youthreach is a Department of Education and Skills official education, training and work experience programme for early school leavers aged 15 – 20 (http://www.youthreach.ie/what-is-youthreach/ accessed 17/04/2017).

service, with attendees from a number of schools attending together. In-school work entails a broad variety of options varying from whole staff training to management meetings. Child protection training refers to training and support offered to designated liaison persons with a responsibility for child protection at school-level.

All trainers identified that liaising with key agencies is a central part of the role. One trainer explained that the current partnership with the Health Service Executive was being refigured and there were hopes that the SPHE support service would liaise with the Health Promoting Officers team (this refers to the partnership between health and education with regards to SPHE and RSE).

Other elements of the role include informing best practice, keeping attuned with the latest research, developing and assisting with resources, and supporting each other through their own team meetings. Supporting teachers and schools is viewed of paramount importance as described by one trainer:

> Basically I suppose the key thing was to support the schools and the teachers in the delivery of SPHE in a school setting (lists other responsibilities)…but you know primarily I would have seen my role as supporting the Principal and the teachers in the school actually that would be paramount in my work schedule if I had to prioritise (RM1).

One trainer felt that the role of a regional manager went beyond the duties mentioned above, highlighting the importance of attitudes, leadership and stakeholder involvement:

> At a very very grassroots level, it is about trying to change hearts and minds I believe because I mean I think that its generally understood you know within education that it's all about 600 points [12] and the academic side of things so I would see myself as probably flying the

[12] This refers to the Irish 'points' system whereby final year post primary students are examined and awarded points according to the grades they receive. The points received determine what higher education courses students are eligible for.

> flag for emotional intelligence and for the value in all of that so I suppose it's about trying to convince leaders really, which would be the Principals, deputies you know of the importance of this because you know I think a lot of the success of SPHE and any other related subjects, it's down to the Principal and the value they place on it and a big part of our work isn't just the teacher, it comes from the perspective of a whole school approach you know so we would try and target all the key partners' also empower schools to reach out to parents (RM3).

Training the trainers

There was no *standardised* training provided to the trainers prior to beginning the role as a regional manager. Some trainers were RDOs prior the structural change in the SPHE support service and then secured a position as a regional manager. Those who were former RDOs all mentioned that they brought their previous training and experience to the role but that ongoing CPD also had a huge part to play. A trainer who was not a former RDO identified that they had 'shadowed' other trainers prior to commencing the role:

> I would have shadowed am the RDOs who were in the position when I took up the job so I think I would have spent, I'd say about, about six months or so shadowing the others with regard to the delivering the training so I would never have actually delivered any training unless I had actually shadowed (RM1).

All continuing professional development (CPD) that takes place is essentially mandatory for all regional managers to attend. As explained by one trainer, the question of attendance is never an issue as the need for CPD is self-identified. The SPHE support service team members and national coordinator discuss training needs on a rolling basis and at 'team meetings.' The ability to undertake continuing professional development is also reliant on funding sources as identified by two trainers:

> The CPD would have taken place over one of two day courses do you know what I mean so it wouldn't have been anything long-term or major or anything like that because the funding for that wasn't available from the department. When it had been requested there was one or two things that we would have liked to have done which would have involved maybe a week or so...but unfortunately the funding wasn't there for that (RM1).

> I think that there could be more (CPD) but with restrictions and everything else it's quite difficult (RM2).

When asked about their educational background and work experience to date, each trainer demonstrated that they had wealth of relevant experience and education to support their role [13]. Many of the trainers referred to their experience (personal, professional and educational) as a core component of their capacity to fulfil the role as a regional manager. As described by one trainer "for me, the personal development stuff was huge because I can only teach what I myself have learned" (RM2).

Post-training implementation support and monitoring

Once teachers have completed RSE in-service training there is no *structured* follow-up of their progress. All trainers attributed the lack of structured follow-up to the large volume of teachers being trained. As described by two trainers:

> It's impossible, there's only four of us… twice a year we send out a menu of what we offer in terms of the cluster support but also what we send out is what we do in schools so our work in schools is multifaceted (lists a variety of support options) so they know that they can have the in-school support (RM3).

> I would have quite a lot of schools in the region so ultimately I never had to go looking for work, my diary would always have been full so

[13] Educational experience and background has not been described in more detail to protect anonymity.

> you could have about seventy percent of teachers in a training looking for follow up support, it would be as high as that (RM1).

All trainers outlined that teachers and school staff contact them for further support, ranging from working on the RSE policy in schools to whole staff workshops. Some trainers outlined that they try to prioritise schools that have never been in contact with the SPHE support service. Almost all trainers either implied or explicitly stated that the follow-up work carried out with schools is paramount to the implementation of RSE.

One trainer demonstrated this by stating that "some teachers would want you to come and talk to their Principal because the Principal might not necessarily see (the importance of RSE)" (RM1). This trainer also highlighted how the new child protection procedures have helped with RSE implementation:

> I think though in light of the new child protection procedures in 2011 and in... appendix two...SPHE, RSE, is explicitly stated in the yearly checklist so I think that has raised the profile of RSE and Principals also realising oh my god I need to make sure I have this in place in the school so I think that has helped the teachers on the ground as well (RM1).

Other trainers directly connected the follow-up work to the success of RSE:

> My point is that it (the follow-up work) concretises to an extent what has happened at in-service and it gives teachers the confidence to transfer the skills they've learned at in-service into the classroom setting…it's an integral part of going forward with RSE (RM2).

> I would believe some of the real successes come from where the teachers come for training, are trained and also where we've a bit of in-school contact with them to see and have them practically apply what they've learned and discussed at the in-service (RM3).

In-service training evaluation

All trainers explained that there is an internal evaluation of RSE in-service training provided to teachers. Anonymous evaluation forms are handed out at the end of in-service training and the responses are then collated and recorded [14]. The data are fed back to the management committee every term. There is no external evaluation of the training and one trainer identified that: "we did request at various stages we did feel that was important actually that there would be external evaluation done" (RM1).

The semantics of 'implementation'

Each trainer and the national coordinator provided a description of what implementation meant to them. Each response is presented in Figure 4.1. As displayed in the Figure below, most definitions are very comprehensive and all definitions demonstrate an awareness of the complexity of implementation. Most of the responses recognise the need for translation of knowledge into practice.

[14] These evaluations were requested but access was denied as these were internal documents.

Figure 4.1 SPHE support service definitions of implementation

"How the work is implemented in the school, how it is used, how does it translate into the classroom?"(RM4)

"It would mean getting across whatever I am trying to do across to a bunch of people and that they're actually putting into practice maybe the process or whatever it is in the place in their well the school let's say and that's it's done successfully and I suppose the idea would be that it would be supported till they get to a stage where they would actually run themselves and then I suppose you would have successful implementation at that point of a topic or a programme or whatever it might be" (RM1).

"It means putting into practice...the piece from us delivering in-service to they actually carrying it through...but you see I suppose we in a way we're not a teacher training college, we're the department of education providing a support service so...our role is to support best practice in terms of the delivery of SPHE and RSE in schools...so implementation is about I would think supporting teachers in the delivery of an effective RSE and SPHE programme in the schools to making them aware of the need to plan am to making them aware am helping them to develop skills, being able to challenge attitudes and values, and then there's an aspect of implementation that's also about knowledge so the whole thing about the different aspects of the in-service that we deliver and that would be very much influenced by having a supportive policy as well" (RM2).

"Associated with the other word, practical you know it's how you translate theory that you've learned and the methodologies that you've accrued, the resources that you've learned about you know how do you translate that back into the classroom…how do you incorporate that into your teaching, you're your teaching styles, into your teaching delivery" (RM3).

"Initial attempt to make sure SPHE is on the timetable and senior cycle RSE...what you want then after that is kind of a confident level of implementation um you know where teachers are kind of confident teaching it really and it's the inspectors I suppose really and the inspectors you know reports on the web of how SPHE is working in a classroom...what it means is a teacher who is trained, who is happy teaching the subject, who engages well with students and you know who uses a range of methodologies, that would be really good implementation and what we're trying to push a lot and its difficult. In the current climate is that schools would maybe develop a core team for SPHE, you know that it would be a consistent team of teachers now obviously every now and again there's gonna have to be somebody new and your timetable might fall out but that teachers would, that schools managers would prioritise the development of an SPHE core team who are confident and can you know implement at a deeper level" (RM5).

The role of stakeholders

All trainers identified that the key stakeholder in RSE in-service training is the child in the school. As explained by two trainers:

> At the end of the day, the key person in terms of Relationships and Sexuality Education is the child in the classroom and if what we're doing isn't going to affect how that child lives their lives, how they're protected and how they make choices you know I think we have failed (RM2).

> Student voices are the ones that need to be heard (RM3).

A number of other stakeholders were identified by the trainers: the teachers, the regional managers, the SPHE support service team, the national coordinator, the management committee, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the health service executive, the health promotion department, the crisis pregnancy programme, the national parents council, parents, the schools, the church, and any other outside agency that is connected to RSE.

Parents were highlighted many times by trainers with one trainer highlighting the importance of parental involvement and expressed a desire for more work done with parents: "the more support from parents, the better the delivery of RSE will be in the classroom" (RM2). The role of the church was discussed at length by one trainer, where she gave an example of the church interfering with the implementation of RSE in schools in her region. However, she explained that over times, things had changed:

> In the past I would have been aware of the role of church in schools but I have to say that many many secondary schools, religious run secondary schools, have really bought into RSE and others that might be non-denominational, they may not have done so, so sometimes schools rather than the religious denomination are using the ethos of the school as an excuse because they don't want to do something (RM2).

Many of the key stakeholders identified by trainers are not directly involved in training development. The training is mainly developed by the crisis pregnancy programme and the regional managers. However, some trainers highlighted that outside agencies are often involved in the updating and creation of resources where appropriate. Most trainers explained that teachers are informally involved in training development. For example, one trainer stated that where there are:

> helpful, well-informed requests where teachers go back and they use you know the training, they implement the training I suppose, and they come back and they might tell us what works, what didn't work so well, you know we actually take a lot of that into account and we go back to drawing board again at team meetings (RM4).

Standardised training

Although some trainers indicated that they have a training manual, when questioned further about this, it became apparent that they don't have a training manual as such but rather a guide, this was described as a "consistent training plan for the five RSE days" (RM5), for how to implement the various RSE in-service training courses offered. Two trainers explained how the training has become more standardised over time; with one of these trainers also expressing an opinion that the senior cycle training is more prescriptive than the junior cycle training:

> I would have had the experience of seeing different junior cycle training initially ... it wasn't like the senior cycle one. Now that has been rectified you know I think in light of changes that happened within the support service ah where now the junior cycle one is more comprehensive than it was already but it still wouldn't be as set as the senior cycle one because the senior cycle one has the TRUST pack attached to it so it's a very specific one where there isn't actually one book or pack for the junior cycle one so I think that makes a difference in the training (RM1).

The training guide is not publicly available and was developed by the SPHE support service team. It is updated every two or three years or amended if necessary, for example if there is a new policy or legislation that affects RSE. The trainers viewed the training as something that constantly evolves. This constant 'evolution' of the training guide was linked to the fast-changing nature of RSE and the input from the trainers themselves, as well as the other stakeholders listed above. It was also explained that the training was adaptable due to the complex nature of the training but also that without adaptation, "there'd be a lack of vitality in the training" (RM2).

School-based implementation challenges

Trainers identified a variety of challenges at school-level. Some of the main barriers highlighted by trainers were the importance of management and leadership:

> I actually think if you have management on board and if management believe and value RSE and its implementation and the benefit to their students then you will have RSE and SPHE happening in your school...if you have a Principal on board, you will have the Principal training the teachers and it will be delivered in the school... and even nowadays beyond the Principal I think the board of management even the parent power within that can actually ensure that RSE is delivered in the school (RM1).

> The single biggest problem is about leadership, about leadership not placing a value on this area…that they don't believe that it's the remit of schools to be involved in sex education or they think or minimising it…it's the lack of I suppose placing the value in it, not understanding the rationale, not understanding what relationships and sexuality education is all about...it's the board of managements responsibility to oversee sex education in the school, you know that it's appropriate and relevant but a lot of boards don't know that...we do a lot of am work with boards in the evening time around child protection and ... we seize that opportunity to tell boards, look this is your responsibility…to ensure that every child in school is receiving a

> proper sex education so you know…make sure you collaborate with the Principal, that the right teachers are teaching it (RM3).

The effect of financial constraints on schools and the value of having the 'right' teachers (i.e., those willing to teach RSE and trained to do so) was also highlighted by trainers:

> Huge problems in schools at the moment around middle management and having teachers available to do certain things, you know the whole 'A' post [15] thing puts a huge pressure on schools (RM2).

> The biggest problems are…choosing the correct people, the timetabling issue, I know that is a real struggle it's a real challenge but more and more you know I've just been saying to schools look would you try to prioritise the timetabling of SPHE because you know RSE…relationships and sexuality education is critical and it must be taught properly (RM4).

The key role a Principal has to play was continuously highlighted, with one trainer (RM1) providing an example of how a huge changeover of Principals in schools, due to retirement packages, resulted in a large amount of schools (that she had never worked with previously) contacting her and partaking in training.

DES evaluations

The DES is responsible for the inspection of the implementation of SPHE and RSE. There are two main ways that the subject is inspected. One way is through Whole School Evaluations that take place where the Department evaluates "the quality of the school management and leadership, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the school's own planning and self-review" (DES, 2013). Whole school evaluations are essentially a general inspection of the school, the reports of which often, but not always, mention SPHE and RSE. The other way SPHE and RSE are inspected is through specific subject inspections. Subject inspections "evaluate

[15] This refers to a moratorium on posts of responsibility in schools (assistant principals and special duties posts) in schools.

the teaching and learning of an individual subject in post-primary schools...and inspect how well the school plans for the teaching of the subject and the quality of teaching and learning in the subject department" (DES, 2013). Inspections are not completed regularly and schools vary in the type and frequency of inspections that have taken place.

There is a small amount of collaboration between the DES inspectorate and the SPHE support service. There is a DES inspector on the SPHE support service management committee and there is occasional communication regarding resource changes or other updates. One trainer felt that "if it was too close a collaboration, the schools might be suspicious" (RM5). Another trainer had experienced conflicting views about her own knowledge of a school's practice regarding SPHE and RSE versus the inspectors report:

> I would have had the experience where you would have had an inspection taking place in a school and you would have known that what was being delivered in a school wasn't good, it wasn't best practice but because of the inspectors lack of knowledge around the subject area they would have actually thought that was brilliant, that was great (RM1).

She then explained that there has been an improvement in inspections due to resources being input into inspections. The Department of Education focus on the need for a school plan with regards SPHE and one trainer (RM2) felt that the inspections have made a huge difference in making schools take RSE serious, especially as they must have a plan drawn up for the evaluation process. She also reiterated the importance of planning, "if you don't have a plan, you're going nowhere" (RM2).

The 'ideal' RSE in-service training

All trainers stated that if it was possible to change RSE in-service training, they would like to have more time for training. Some trainers provided examples of how they would like more time. One trainer (RM1) felt that the junior cycle RSE in-service training could be a day longer as "some of the activities can go on" and

there's "a lot of discussion ... end up omitting some activities 'cause day ends at 3.30". This trainer felt that an additional follow-up day would be useful for evaluating teaching experiences and following up on RSE policy. This trainer also felt that all current training should be combined and offered in a five day package as opposed to two two-day in-service trainings followed by an additional one day in-service training. This trainer also thought that it would be very beneficial to work with the same group all throughout the training as it would allow a group dynamic to build and allow for more cohesion.

Another trainer (RM2) felt that the nature of RSE required more training time:

> Oh I'd love to have more days…because there's only so much like five days might seem an awful lot but because of the sensitive nature of what has been covered like there's so many other aspects to RSE.

Other changes mentioned by trainers were: for more men to become involved; to see the course accredited (with the hope of improving its status); more support for the regional mangers; and to train all Principals in RSE.

The 'ideal' RSE programme

All trainers discussed different areas of the RSE programme that they would like to change. The need to give young people age-appropriate information was discussed by one trainer. She explained that some schools don't realise what young people are exposed to, that there is "still a huge cohort of young people leaving school with no RSE", and that there is room for schools to do more work in certain areas of RSE:

> Taking into account technology and social networking, the availability of pornography and just the impact that has on relationships and all of that stuff needs to be brought out to the fore where at the moment it's still kind of in wishy washy land I feel (RM1).

The need to emphasise the positive (and not just the negative) elements of RSE was discussed by another trainer:

> My concern is that sometimes what young people get are the negative things in a school setting, about not getting pregnant, not getting STIs,

> am you know all about using contraception ... whereas I think it has to begin from the child's self-esteem, valuing the self as sexual human being (RM2).

One trainer (RM3) felt that they are addressing training gaps (such as LGBT issues, personal safety, sexual assault, sexual abuse and the whole issue of cyber bullying and pornography) but would like to see more work being done around parenthood and preparing young people to be parents. The recommended amount of school time allocated for RSE is another area that a trainer would change:

> The worst thing they ever did was to say at least six periods a year, I think that's a joke six periods a year like, six classes of 40 minutes like that's just crazy because very often anyway they don't get six periods because something else happens in school (RM4).

This trainer was also worried about current proposals to change the curriculum structure at junior cycle level (the new junior cycle framework). If the proposed junior cycle framework is approved, SPHE (and therefore RSE) will no longer be mandatory but will be an 'optional' course for students. This trainer quoted relevant reports and research to support the need for RSE including that "in child protection procedures it says in black and white that RSE must be taught" (RM4).

4.1.2 Training implementation: delivery and engagement

Teachers' previous SPHE training experience

The SPHE support service stipulates that teachers must have completed the introductory course to SPHE to be eligible to register for any RSE course (D, I). However, overall only 67% of responding teachers had attended the introductory SPHE training (see Figure 4.2). Less than half (42%) of teachers who attended RSE senior cycle training had completed the introduction to SPHE in-service training.

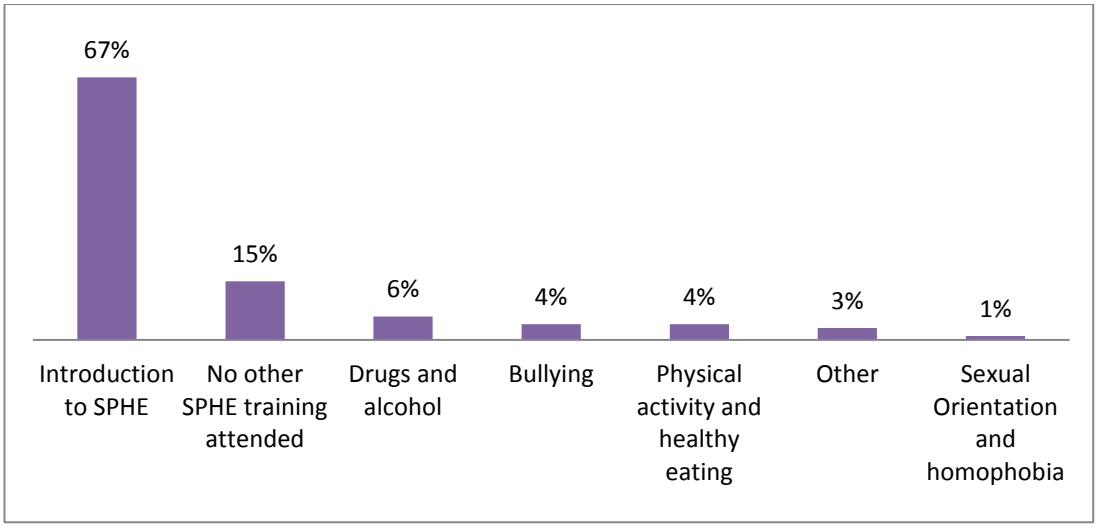


Figure 4.2 Teachers' past SPHE training attendance

This section provides details about each individual in-service training and the data is drawn from trainers' pre and post-delivery implementation questionnaires and from teachers' questionnaires. Each in-service is presented individually and data is described according to the following headings: introduction; training timing; pre-training experience of teaching RSE; feelings and support for training attendance; aims; topics; activities; resources; training delivery; further perspectives; and training summary.

Findings relating to aims and topics are presented in table format. Teachers' reports of training aims and topics are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low). Each table is preceded by descriptive text. Data drawn from the closed and open questions regarding training activities and resources are presented in the text. Training modifications are described where applicable.

4.1.2.1 In-service training one

Training one focused on Junior Cycle RSE, and the trainer reported four years of training experience. Eleven out of 19 (58%) of attendees at training one completed post-training questionnaires.

Training timing

There were no differences between the trainer's pre and post-delivery reports of training timing (10 hours). The trainer also reported that they had enough time to complete the training.

Pre-training experience of teaching RSE

Almost all teachers had not delivered RSE lessons prior to training. One teacher reported that they had been delivering RSE for 27 years and six months (T1). This teacher had not attended any prior RSE training.

Feelings about training participation and school support

The majority of teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support (T0, T4-T10). Two teachers (T1, T3) reported that attendance was compulsory by Principal. One teacher (T2) reported that training attendance was voluntary but without Principal support and explained: "the Principal would have preferred a permanent member of staff to attend – I'm RPT (regular part-time)".

Aims

Teachers' reports of training aims are presented (see Table 4.1) in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.1: Reported aims training one

Trainer's reported aims
a. To enhance the professional and personal development of teachers so that they will be enabled to deliver the RSE programme in their own schools in a confident and effective manner; b. To provide info about RSE in the context of SPHE; c. To explore subject of sexuality to assist in teacher comfort with students; d. To explore different methodologies relevant to deliver RSE in classroom
Teacher's reported aims
Confidence to approach subject (6); Relationships (3); Awareness of the subject (3); Support for teachers (3); Sex education (2); Assist teacher preparation (2); RSE policy (2); Sexuality (1); Keeping safe (1); Resource sharing (1); Methodologies (1); Teacher skills (1); Feelings (1)

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on training aims

Teachers' (*n=11)* main reported aim was: confidence to approach the subject. This aim links to the first and third aim reported by the trainer. Teachers did not specifically report about 'RSE in the context of SPHE' but this could be linked to 'awareness of the subject.' 'Methodologies' was only referred to once.

Achieving training aims

The trainer reported that they achieved training aims and stated:

> I believe that I achieved the aims and objectives of this training: a) I provided information about RSE in the context of SPHE; b) I explored the subject of sexuality and assisted teachers to feel more confident in discussing it with students; c) I explored different methodologies relevant to the delivery of RSE in the classroom and gave teachers an opportunity to experience these methodologies themselves as participants. They explored what it felt like to work in pairs and small groups using these methodologies.

Topics

Teachers' reports of training topics are presented (see Table 4.2) in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.2: Reported topics - training one

Trainer's reported topics
a. Language of sexuality, b. Puberty and Reproduction, c. Answering questions and dealing with difficult issues, d. What young people need / messages young people receive, e. Childhood influences, f. Hopes and concerns around the teaching of RSE
Teacher's reported topics
Language (of sexuality) (11), Science (reproduction and puberty)(5), Media (5), Relationships (4), Difficult questions (4), Limits/ boundaries (3), Age-related information (2), Safe environment (2),Body image (2), Resources (2), Inclusion (1), Ethics (1), Criminal law (1), Methodologies (1), Guidelines (1)

Topics: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the trainer's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding training topics.

Comparative reports on training topics

Teachers (*n=11)* highlighted the majority of topics identified by the trainer (see Table 4.2). Teachers did not report that 'hopes and concerns around the teaching of RSE' and 'childhood influences' had been covered. On the other hand, teachers highlighted additional topics that were not reported by the trainer: 'relationships', 'media', 'safe environment', 'body image', 'resources', 'inclusion', 'ethics', 'criminal law', 'methodologies' and 'guidelines'.

Activities: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the trainer's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding training activities.

Comparative reports on training activities

The trainer's reported activities (group work, brainstorming, visualisations, and games) were supported by teachers' reports (*n=11)*: group work (100%); brainstorming (82%); visualisations (64%); and games (82%). A minority of teachers also reported the use of case studies (T1, T3, T7), artwork (T5, T7), walking debates (T5, T7), and role-play (T7). Two teachers reported additional activities. One (T2) reported 'meditations' while the other reported 'personal sharing opportunities' (T7).

Resources: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the trainer's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding training resources. Post-training, the trainer stated that some resources were missing: *"[U]nfortunately the Before U Decide lessons weren't ready for this training. I assured teachers that I would distribute them when I received them".*

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The trainer reported using the DES *On My Own Two Feet*, and *TRUST* resources. The majority of teachers reported that the *On My Own Two Feet* and *TRUST* resources were employed (100% and 82% respectively). Just over half of teachers (54%) reported that *DES* resources were used. One teacher reported the use of *SPHE in Action* and *Healthy Choices* (T7). The trainer indicated that they also used a variety of other resources (*You Can Talk to Me* DVD; *Busy Bodies* DVD & booklet;

personal reflection on childhood influences; teenage magazines; curriculum & guidelines for RSE in Post-Primary Schools; RSE Policy Booklet). Less than half of teachers (45%) reported the use of the *Busy Bodies DVD* and only two teachers reported that the *You Can Talk to Me* DVD was used. A minority of teachers reported the use of other resources: magazines (T6); cancer awareness pack and breastfeeding information pack (T2); and crisis pregnancy centre materials (T10).

Response to resources

One teacher reported that "The *Busy Bodies* DVD is excellent. I will definitely use this in class" (T8). Another teacher also reported that both the "*Busy Bodies"* and *"crisis pregnancy DVD*" (You Can Talk to Me) were *"*excellent" (T10). One teacher reported that there were "some good practical examples" with regards to resources (T6). The trainer also reported that "a number of teachers have remarked on the fact that the diagram of the female reproductive organs (JC RSE resource materials) needs to be changed as it is not very clear".

Monitoring teacher responsiveness

The trainer indicated that they would be monitoring teachers' responsiveness stating that:

> I work in an experiential way so I constantly check in with teachers that they are comfortable with the material and if not that they have an opportunity to share their concerns in a safe way. Opportunities for sharing are an important part of this training.

Training Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that the training was easy to understand, worthwhile, and that she received support for the training. The trainer reported that the training would be easy to deliver and that there were adequate materials available.

Post-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that teachers understood, enjoyed, and engaged in the in-service training and that she enjoyed and felt confident delivering the training and that the materials used worked well. The trainer also

agreed that it was easy to deliver this in-service and that there were adequate materials. The trainer strongly disagreed that there was disruption at the training.

Training Delivery: Teachers' views

Teachers responded positively to training delivery (see Table 4.3). For example, all teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the training was easy to understand and delivered clearly (see Table 4.3). The majority of teachers (82%) strongly agreed that they enjoyed the training (the remaining teachers agreed). A majority of teachers strongly agreed that they were comfortable with the trainer and with other teachers (91% and 82% respectively).

Table 4.3: Teachers' views of training one

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training delivered clearly	11	n=10 (91%)	n=1 (9%)		
Easy to understand training	11	n=10 (91%)	n=1 (9%)		
Enjoyed training	11	n=9 (82%)	n=2 (18%)		
Trainer interested training	11	n=10 (91%)	n=1 (9%)		
Comfortable with trainer	11	n=10 (91%)	n=1 (9%)		
Comfortable with others	11	n=9 (82%)	n=2 (18%)		
Listened at training	11	n=8 (73%)	n=3 (27%)		
Others didn't listen at all	11	n=1 (9%)		n=2 (18%)	n=8 (73%)
Didn't pay attention	11			n=1 (9%)	n=11 (91%)
Others paid attention	11	n=10 (91%)	n=1 (9%)		
Comfortable with topics	11	n=8 (73%)	n=3 (27%)		
A lot of disruption	11			n=2 (18%)	n=9 (82%)

Training ratings

The trainer rated the training 8/10. Teachers (*n*= 11) also rated training very highly with a mean rating of 9.1 (sd 0.83). The minimum rating was 8 and the maximum rating was 10. Teachers' mean rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating.

Further perspectives

At this in-service, trainers and teacher provided additional comments about the training.

The trainer at this in-service highlighted the importance of the effect of trainer characteristics on the quality of the working relationship. This incorporated being

aware of teacher needs with the trainer stating: “One very important issue for trainers to be mindful of during this training is to be sensitive to the fact that teachers can often, for a range of reasons, be nervous, lack confidence re teaching RSE and feel embarrassed about talking about these issues at training in the first instance”.

The majority of teachers (*n*=9) provided additional comments about training. Many comments were positive: “excellent professional facilitator” (T1); “loved the group work” (T1a); “I found exploring different topics and hearing other SPHE teachers opinions very helpful” (T4); “excellent process. I was encouraged to integrate material and be prepared academically and theoretically for task” (T7); “Excellent” (T9), while some requested minor changes to the training: “first day was too slow for me, not enough learning content, only a little more needed, too much time spent on “fun” classroom activities, do them but be a bit quicker” (T3); “more time on how to deal with questions in class” (T6); “more training please when my school has a senior cycle and this has to be covered in senior cycle” (T8); “more handouts for teaching” (T10).

4.1.2.2 In-service training two

Training two focused on Junior Cycle RSE, and the trainer reported four years of training experience. Thirteen out of 20 (65%) attendees at training two completed post-training questionnaires.

Training timing

There were no differences between the trainer’s pre and post-delivery reports of training timing (10 hours). The trainer reported that they had enough time to complete the training.

Pre-training experience of teaching RSE

The majority of teachers (69%) reported that they had not delivered RSE prior to training. Four teachers reported that they had been teaching RSE prior to training (see Table 4.4). T11, T13 and T18 had been delivering RSE without training. T16 had attended prior Senior Cycle RSE training however the dates provided would indicate that they had also taught RSE for 5 years before receiving any training.

Table 4.4: Teacher pre-training experience teaching RSE

Teacher	Experience teaching RSE	Past RSE training	Training dates
T11	5 months	No	-
T13	4 months	No	-
T16	10 years	Yes	2006 & 2010
T18	2 years	No	-

Feelings about training participation and school support

The majority of teachers (69%) reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher (T23) reported that training attendance was voluntary but without Principal support. Two teachers (T14, T17) reported that attendance was compulsory by the Principal. One teacher selected "other" and explained: "was asked if I would like to take a tutor group" (T11)[16].

Aims

In Table 4.5, teachers' and trainer's reports of training aims are presented. Teachers' reports of training aims are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.5: Reported aims training two

Trainer's reported aims
a. To enhance the professional and personal development of teachers so that they will be enabled to deliver the RSE programme in their own schools in a confident and effective manner; b. To provide info about RSE in the context of SPHE; c. To explore subject of sexuality to assist in teacher comfort with students; d. To explore different methodologies relevant to deliver RSE in classroom'
Teacher's reported aims
RSE (4); necessary skills and info to teach RSE (4); teacher comfort when teaching a sensitive topic (3); relationships (2); materials and resources to support teachers (1); discussing difficult questions (1); types of sex (1); puberty (1); sexuality (1); alleviate any concerns (1); how RSE fits within SPHE (1); how to promote healthy lifestyle and self-esteem (1).

[16] It is unclear what was meant by 'tutor group.'

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on training aims

Teachers (*n=12*) reported aims reflected the first two aims identified by the trainer. The main aims reported by teachers were RSE and necessary skills and info to teach RSE. 'Info about RSE in the context of SPHE' was reported only once while 'methodologies' was not explicitly stated by any teacher. Teacher comfort when teaching a sensitive topic was reported by three teachers and links to the trainer's .

Achieving training aims

The trainer reported that they achieved training aims and stated:

> I believe that I achieved the aims and objectives of this training: a) I provided information about RSE in the context of SPHE; b) I explored the subject of sexuality and assisted teachers to feel more confident in discussing it with students; c) I explored different methodologies relevant to the delivery of RSE in the classroom and gave teachers an opportunity to experience these methodologies themselves as participants. They explored what it felt like to work in pairs and small groups using these methodologies.

Topics

In Table 4.6, trainer's and teachers' planned training topics are presented. Teachers' reports of training topics are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.6: Reported topics training two

Trainer's reported topics
a. Hopes and concerns around the teaching of RSE; b. Childhood influences; c. Puberty and Reproduction; d. Answering questions and dealing with difficult issues; e. Language of sexuality; f. What young people need and messages young people receive
Teacher's reported topics
Puberty and reproduction (5); Emotions, feelings and ideas (5); Teaching sex education and RSE(4); methodologies (4); Dealing with difficult questions and issues (3); Relationships (3); Sex/sexuality (3); Language of RSE (2); Substance abuse (2); What young people need (1); Mental health (1); Sexual and physical health (1); Body image (1); Hygiene (1); Communication skills (1); Gender (1)

Topics: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the trainer's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding training topics.

Comparative reports on training topics

Teachers (*n=12*) reported topics are presented in Table 4.6. Almost all topics identified by the trainer, with the exception of 'childhood influences' were mentioned by teachers. Teachers also highlighted additional topics that were not reported by the trainer. These topics were: 'relationships', 'methodologies', 'sex/sexuality', 'substance abuse', 'mental health', 'body image', 'sexual/physical health', 'hygiene', 'communication skills' and 'gender'.

Activities: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the trainer's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding training activities.

Comparative reports on training activities

Teachers' (*n=13)* reports of training activities supported the trainer's account (brainstorming, group work, games and visualisations). All teachers reported that group work took place. The majority of teachers identified brainstorming (69%), games (69%) and visualisation (77%) activities. A majority of teachers (69%) reported that case studies/scenarios were used however the trainer did not indicate using this activity. One teacher reported role play (T21) while one teacher reported walking debate (T16). One teacher (T11) reported that 'video' was an additional activity that took place.

Resources: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any modifications regarding resources.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

Almost all teachers *(n=12)* responded to a question about resources. The trainer reported that the *On My Own Two Feet* and the *TRUST* resources were used at training which was supported by the majority of teachers (69% and 77% respectively). The trainer also reported using *DES* resources which was reported by

only a minority of teachers (31%). Forty-six percent of teachers reported that the Healthy Living resource and 31% reported the Healthy Choices resource which was not reported by the trainer. A small number of teachers reported the SPHE in Action resource (T12, T15, T18) and one teacher reported the Healthy Times resource (T18).

The trainer indicated that they also used a variety of other resources (*You Can Talk to Me* DVD; *Busy Bodies* DVD & booklet; personal reflection on childhood influences; teenage magazines; curriculum & guidelines for RSE in Post-Primary Schools; RSE Policy Booklet). The *Busy Bodies* DVD was identified by a majority of teachers (69%). The remaining resources reported by the trainer were not reported by teachers. Two teachers (T16, T21) reported that resources from GLEN [17] and the crisis pregnancy (this may relate to *You Can Talk to Me DVD*) were employed.

Response to resources

Three teachers provided comments about resources: *"lots available"* (T14); *"were excellent – great web addresses given also"* (T16); *"they were very good to get to bring back to work"* (T19).

Monitoring teacher responsiveness

The trainer indicated that they would be monitoring teachers' responsiveness stating that:

> I work in an experiential way so I constantly check in with teachers that they are comfortable with the material and if not that they have an opportunity to share their concerns in a safe way. Opportunities for sharing are an important part of this training. I generally give the telephone number for the Employee Assistance Programme/Scheme in case anyone is affected by the training and needs to speak to someone confidentially.

[17] GLEN is the gay and lesbian equality network and is described as "Policy and Strategy focused NGO which aims to deliver ambitious and positive change for lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) in Ireland, ensuring full equality, inclusion and protection from all forms of discrimination" (www.glen.ie, accessed August 13, 2016).

Training Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-training delivery, the trainer at this in-service strongly agreed that the training was easy to understand, worthwhile and that she received support for the training. The trainer agreed that the training would be easy to deliver and that there were adequate materials for the training. The trainer explained why she agreed that she received support for the training:

> Each training is different even though there is a standard training manual for JC RSE. This is because each group of teachers is unique and each teacher brings his/her own unique life experience. Group dynamics therefore will differ and depend on a variety of criteria. Hence my reason for saying that I agree that the training will be easy to deliver rather than strongly agree.

Post-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that the teachers understood, enjoyed and engaged in the training. The trainer agreed that it was easy to deliver the training. The trainer strongly agreed that they enjoyed and felt confident delivering the training and that the materials used worked well. The trainer strongly disagreed that there was disruption at the training.

Training Delivery: Teachers' views

Teachers' views of this in-service were positive (see Table 4.7). For example, all teachers strongly agreed/agreed that the training was delivered clearly and that they enjoyed training. The majority of teachers also strongly agreed/agreed that they were comfortable with the trainer and other teachers.

Table 4.7: Teachers' views of training two

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training delivered clearly	13	n=8 (62%)	n=5 (38%)		
Easy to understand training	13	n=8 (62%)	n=5 (38%)		
Enjoyed training	13	n=9 (69%)	n=4 (31%)		
Trainer interested training	13	n=10 (77%)	n=3 (23%)		
Comfortable with trainer	13	n=7 (54%)	n=6 (46%)		
Comfortable with others	13	n=9 (69%)	n=4 (31%)		
Listened at training	13	n=8 (61.5%)	n=5(38.5%)		
Others didn't listen at all	13			n=4 (31%)	n=9 (69%)
Didn't pay attention	13			n=3 (23%)	n=10(77%)
Others paid attention	13	n=10 (77%)	n=3 (23%)		
Comfortable with topics	13	n=6 (46%)	n=7 (54%)		
A lot of disruption	13	n=1 (8%)		n=1 (8%)	n=11 (84%)

Training ratings

The trainer rated the training 9/10. Teachers (*n*=13) also rated training very highly with a mean rating of 9.4 (SD 1.0). The minimum rating was 7 and the maximum rating was 10. Teachers' mean rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating.

Further perspectives

At this in-service, trainers and teachers provided additional comments about the training. The trainer emphasised the need for trainer sensitivity and to be aware of teacher needs:

> One very important issue for trainers to be mindful of during this training is to be sensitive to the fact that teachers can often for a range of reasons be nervous, lack confidence re teaching RSE and feel embarrassed about talking about these issues at training in the first instance. A common response by participants at the end of this training was that they appreciated the safe comfortable atmosphere created at the training. They also really enjoyed the opportunity to explore how to answer difficult questions which may be asked of them by students. All of the participants at this training appeared to be much more comfortable and eager to start teaching RSE.

A number of teachers (*n=6)* provided comments about the training which were positive: *"Excellent. Very informative"* (T11); *It is being delivered excellently"* (T18); while some indicated the need for training for other school staff: *"Worthwhile, would like to see whole staff training on RSE junior cycle"* (T15); *"Everyone in teaching should do this – it needs be a whole school-united approach"* (T16); *"All teachers should do it"* (the training) (T23). One teacher reported disliking one activity: *"I was not too keen on the visualisations/meditations aspect on the first day"* (T21).

4.1.2.3 In-service training three

Training three focused on Junior Cycle RSE, and the trainer reported 10 years of training experience. Twelve out of 14 (86%) of attendees at training three completed post-training questionnaires.

Training timing

Pre-training, the trainer reported 12 hours for the training. Post-training, the trainer also reported 12 hours while noting that there was half an hour for lunch and 20 minute break within this time. This would suggest that this applied to both days and that training was ten hours and twenty minutes in duration in total. The trainer reported that they had enough time to complete the training.

Pre-training experience of teaching RSE

Half of the teachers (50%) reported that they had been delivering RSE prior to training. T25, T26, T28, T31, and T32 had all been teaching RSE with no prior RSE training (see Table 4.8). T24 had received training one year earlier however this still indicates that they had been teaching RSE for seven years without any RSE training.

Table 4.8 Teacher pre-training experience teaching RSE

Teacher	Experience teaching RSE	Past RSE training	Training date
24	8 years	Yes	2010
25	5 months	No	-
26	3 years	No	-
28	4 months	No	-
31	1 year	No	-
32	7 years, 6 months	No	-

Feelings about training participation and school support

Almost all teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher (T28) selected 'other' and indicated that they were "advised to by trainer and my SPHE co-ordinator".

Aims

In Table 4.9, trainer's and teachers' reported training aims are presented. Teachers' reports of training aims are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.9: Reported aims training three

Trainer's reported aims
a. To enhance the professional and personal development of teachers so that they will be enabled to deliver the RSE programme in their own schools in a confident and effective manner. Objectives: i) To provide information about RSE in the context of SPHE; ii) To explore the subject of sexuality in order to enable teachers to feel more confident in discussing it with students; and iii) to explore and experience different methodologies relevant to the delivery of RSE in the classroom
Teacher's reported aims
How to teach RSE at junior cycle (6); resources and methodologies for teaching RSE (6); confidence/comfort to teach RSE (3); relationships and sexuality (2); ethos, rules, and standards of RSE (1); addressing certain issues (1); outlook to teach RSE (1); student and teacher expectations (1); teach SPHE in open and informative manner (1); boundaries (1)

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on training aims

Teachers (*n=12*) reported aims support the main aim reported by the trainer. The two main aims reported by teachers were: how to teach RSE at junior cycle and resources and methodologies for teaching RSE. The trainer also provided training objectives. Objective i) 'RSE in the context of SPHE' was not mentioned by any teacher while objectives ii) and iii) were reported by teachers.

Achieving training aims

The trainer reported that they achieved the aims of the training. The trainer explained in further detail:

> The group is gone away with the confidence to do this work, a clear understanding of what is involved, aware of role of the teacher and

relationship with students in the classroom. They are clear about the need for RSE policy, the RSE programme at Junior Cycle 1st, 2nd and 3rd year and clear on the resources they need to deliver it. They also practiced answering questions in a carousel. Sensitive issues were addressed. They also had opportunity to see DVD You Can Talk to Me (one section) and overview of busy body.

Topics

In Table 4.10, trainer's and teachers' reported training topics are presented. Teachers' reports of training topics are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.10: Reported topics training three

Trainer's reported topics
a) RSE policy requirement/planning and limits to classroom (questions and guidelines on this); b) Copies of resources; c) Puberty/reproduction; d) Use of language; e) Research on teenage activity (sexual); f) Childhood influences; g) Personal reflection re: RSE and what students need today; h) Relationship of RSE teacher with class and relevant others; i) Answering questions; j) Magazines influence, k) Body as gift; l) Values and attitudes; and m) hopes and concerns re: teaching RSE
Teacher's reported topics
The RSE programme (curriculum, structure) (7); Language/talking about sex and sexuality (6); Reproduction, puberty and body changes (4); Methodologies and activities (4); Self (changes to, sense of and how we view others)(2); Dealing with questions (1); Resources (1); Media (1); Body image (1); peer decisions (1)

Topics: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the trainer's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding training topics.

Comparative reports on training topics

Teachers (n=12) highlighted the majority of topics identified by the trainer. Teachers did not mention 'values and attitudes' and 'hopes and concerns' around teaching RSE. These elements could be linked to both the sense of self and RSE programme category. Teachers also did not report 'research on teenage activity (sexual).' They also highlighted number of additional topics (see Table 4.14). Additional topics that

were highlighted by teachers include: ‘methodologies and activities’ and ‘peer decisions.’

Activities: Planned versus actual

When asked about training adaptations, the trainer reported adding three activities. The first activity added was ‘body as gift exercise.’ The trainer explained that they added this activity because there was a “need to have a common thread, not just with focus on sexuality initially. All linked up later to valuing self/self-esteem”. The second activity was ‘getting to know you games’. This activity was added to create “space for sharing and openness and trust building”. The third activity involved the creation of ground rules as this is “at the centre of this work – how we work together”. The trainer did not indicate if the adaptations had worked.

Comparative reports on training activities

The trainer reported that group work, brainstorming, visualisations, artwork, and games were used. Teachers reports on training activities (*n=12)* supported the trainer’s reports with all teacher reporting group work, 75% reporting brainstorming, and 83% reporting visualisations, artwork and games. A majority of teachers did however report additional activities not reported by the trainer: walking debate (92%) and case studies/scenarios (50%). Two teachers reported that a questions and answers ‘carousel’ was used (T28, T35).

Resources: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any modifications regarding resources.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The trainer reported using the *TRUST* and *DES* resources. Teachers (*n*=12) responses regarding resources differed to trainer’s reports. A majority of teachers (67%) reported the *Healthy Living* resource which was not reported by the trainer. Fifty-eight percent of teachers reported that both the DES and *On My Own Two Feet* resources were used while only 33% of teachers reported the *TRUST* resource. Half of the teachers (50%) at the training identified that the *Healthy Times* resource was used although this was not reported by the trainer. A minority of teachers reported the *Healthy Choices* and the *SPHE in Action* resources (42% and 25% respectively).

The trainer highlighted a large number of additional resources at this in-service (Interim Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE in Post-Primary Schools; RSE Policy Booklet; Copy of RSE policy template on DES website; RSE Parent Booklet, "Going Forward Together"; Copy of RSE Resource Materials Junior & Senior Cycle; SPHE Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines; "Team Up" Training Resource for Parents; You Can Talk To Me DVD; Busy Bodies DVD; A television and DVD machine; Teenage magazines/other teenage media; Photocopies of handouts/worksheets for all participants; Copies of RSE Resource Materials at Junior Cycle). The majority of these "additional resources" could be classified under the DES resources heading. A minority of teachers reported additional resources: SPHE journal (T32); a medical website (T28); handouts (T26); and RSE (T33). A number of teachers referred to the DVDs used in the training (T24, T25, T28, T33, T35).

Response to resources

Two teachers provided positive comments on the resources: "very well presented and laid out. very easy to follow" (T33) and "very easy to follow. All lessons are planned out in advance". (T35).

Training Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that the training was worthwhile, would be easy to deliver, that there were adequate materials and that she received support for the training. She did not provide a response about the ease of understanding training.

Post-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that she enjoyed and felt confident delivering the training and that the teachers enjoyed and engaged in the training. The trainer also strongly agreed that the training was easy to deliver and that there were adequate training materials. The trainer strongly disagreed that there was disruption at the training. The trainer agreed that the materials used worked well. The trainer did not provide a response about teacher's comprehension of training.

Monitoring teacher responsiveness

The trainer reported that she would be monitoring teachers' responses through: "[E]valuation and where possible follow on school visits and support. Also hope to meet with a number of teachers by inviting them back for a day maybe in October to see how they are progressing?"

Training Delivery: Teachers' views

As evidenced in Table 4.11, teachers received training positively. For example, all of the teachers (100%) strongly agreed that training was delivered clearly and the majority of teachers (92%) strongly agreed that they were comfortable with the trainer.

Table 4.11: Teachers views of training three

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training delivered clearly	12	n=12 (100%)			
Easy to understand training	12	n=11 (92%)	n=1 (8%)		
Enjoyed training	12	n=9 (75%)	n=3 (25%)		
Trainer interested training	12	n=12 (100%)			
Comfortable with trainer	12	n=11 (92%)	n=1 (8%)		
Comfortable with others	12	n=8 (67%)	n=4 (33%)		
Listened at training	12	n=5 (42%)	n=7 (58%)		
Others didn't listen at all	12			n=4 (33%)	n= 8 (67%)
Didn't pay attention	12			n=1 (8%)	n=11 (92%)
Others paid attention	12	n= 8 (67%)	n=4 (33%)		
Comfortable with topics	12	n=7 (58%)	n=5 (42%)		
A lot of disruption	12			n=2 (17%)	n= 10 (83%)

Training ratings

The trainer rated the training 9/10. Teachers (n=12) also rated training very highly with a mean rating of 9.8 (sd 0.38). The minimum rating was 9 and the maximum rating was 10. Teachers' mean rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating. Further perspectives

Further perspectives

At this in-service, trainers and teacher provided additional comments about the training. Pre-training delivery the trainer reported that it was "[R]eally difficult to cover all in 2 days" and that "[O]utside facilitators disempower teachers who are nervous from delivering the Module by being readily available and doing the

teachers' work.' Post-training, the trainer commented that she was "[V]ery tired as (while I really enjoy the work) days are demanding".

Two teachers praised the trainer, stating that she was "an excellent facilitator" (T25) and that she was an "excellent communicator who was clearly passionate about her subject" (T34). One teacher indicated that they found the training "interesting and motivating" (T33). One teacher suggested the need for resources in Irish (T35).

4.1.2.4 In-service training four

Training four focused on Junior Cycle RSE, and the trainer reported two years and two months of training experience. Thirteen out of 16 (81%) of attendees at training four completed post-training questionnaires.

Training timing

There were no differences between the trainer's pre and post-delivery reports of training timing (12 hours). The trainer reported that they did not have enough time to complete the training.

Pre-training experience of teaching RSE

Six out of all thirteen teachers had delivered RSE prior to training. Specific details are outlined in Table 4.12. T38, T44, T45, and T47 had been delivering RSE lessons with no prior training. T39 had attended prior training but the date indicates that they had been teaching RSE for four and a half years with no prior training. T46 had prior training experience but no dates were provided.

Table 4.12: Teacher pre-training experience teaching RSE

Teacher	Experience teaching RSE	Past RSE training	Training date
38	1.5 years	No	-
39	4.5 years	Yes	Dec 2011
44	2 years	No	-

Feelings about training participation and school support

Almost all teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher reported 'other' and stated that "vice-Principal brought it to my attention and I enrolled. It was not compulsory but recommended" (T43).

Aims

In Table 4.13, trainer's and teachers' reported training aims are presented. Teachers' reports of training aims are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.13: Reported aims training four

Trainer's reported aims
a. as per DES SPHE syllabus- RSE but also explained that she would inform teachers about: b. 'best practice in teaching RSE in post primary sector'; c. 'male and female reproductive organs'; d. 'explore influences on young people with regards sexuality and relationships and how young people can develop relationships skills'; and e. 'resources and methodologies.'
Teacher's reported aims
Teaching methodologies for RSE (5); Confidence in delivery of programme (4); Intro to JC RSE (3); RSE (3); Adhering to facts/factual approach (2); RSE policy (2); RSE and boundaries (1); RSE and emotion (1)

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on training aims

The trainer's reported aims were as per the DES SPHE syllabus although it is not entirely clear which aims. The trainer also reported four additional aims (see Table 4.14). The main aims reported by teachers (*n=13*) were: teaching methodologies for RSE and confidence in delivery of programme. These aims can be linked to the second and final aim described by the trainer. Teachers did not report 'male and female reproductive organs' or 'influences on young people with regards sexuality and relationships and how young people can develop relationships skills.'

Achieving training aims

The trainer reported that they achieved the aims of the in-service and stated that the: "overall aims were achieved and the evaluations form the teachers also indicated the objectives mentioned on day 1 were achieved".

Topics

In Table 4.14, trainer's and teachers' reported training topics are presented. Teachers' reports of training topics are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.14: Reported topics training four

Trainer's reported topics
a. Puberty/reproduction; b. answering questions; c. Influences; d. Language of sexuality; e. What young people need; f. Boundaries
Teacher's reported topics
Physiology (7); Questions (6); Sex, sexuality and attitudes to sex (5); RSE programme (5); Relationships (4); Emotions and personal experience (3); Body image (2); Factual approaches (2); Legal issues (1); Teaching RSE (1); Resources (1); Methodologies (1); Values (1); Policy (1)

Topics: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any training modifications regarding topics.

Comparative reports on training topics

Teachers reports of training topics (*n=13)* supported half of the topics reported by the trainer (see Table 4.14). Teachers did not report: 'the language of sexuality', 'what young people need', and 'boundaries'. Teachers highlighted a number of additional topics including: 'sex, sexuality and attitudes to sex'; 'RSE programme'; 'relationships'; 'body image'; 'factual approaches'; 'legal issues'; 'teaching RSE'; 'resources'; 'methodologies'; 'values'; and 'policy'.

Activities: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any training modifications regarding activities.

Comparative reports on training activities

The trainer reported that group work, brainstorming, artwork, walking debate, and case studies/scenarios were used at this training. Teachers' (*n=13)* reports of training activities supported some of the trainer's reported activities: group work (100%); brainstorming (92%); and artwork (77%), while a minority reported walking debate (15%); and case studies/scenarios (31%). Games were reported by a majority of

teachers (85%) but this activity was not reported by the trainer. Two teachers reported additional activities: ice-breakers (T36) and poster (T48).

Resources: Planned versus actual

The trainer made an adaptation to their plan by stating they had added a resource. The added resource was the "new website www.b4udecide.ie" and the reason for adding the resource was "to highlight to teachers how they can use it in the classroom and also very good graphics with regard reproduction". The trainer reported that the adaptation worked. Although the trainer categorised this as an adaptation, the www.b4udecide.ie website was included in their training plan, therefore it cannot be truly considered an adaptation. Almost half of the teachers at training reported the use of the b4udecide.ie website.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The trainer reported that they planned to use *On My Own Two Feet* and *DES* resources. Teachers' reports (*n*= 13) indicated *DES* resources (92%) were used while a minority reported the *On My Own Two Feet* resource (15%). A majority of teachers (77%) also reported that the *TRUST* resource was used although the trainer did not report using it. A small number of teachers reported other resources: *Healthy Living* (T41, T42, T44, T46); *SPHE in Action* (T38, T41); *Healthy Times* (T41)*;* and *Healthy Choices* (T41, T44). The trainer reported the www.B4udecide.ie website, You Can Talk to Me DVD, and www.leavingbio.net. A majority of teachers (77%) reported that the www.B4udecide.ie website was used. Thirty-eight percent of teachers reported that YouTube was used. One teacher reported www.healthpromotion.ie (T44) while another reported the You Can Talk to Me and Busy Bodies DVDs (T46).

Response to resources

One teacher commented on the resources stating that there were "good lesson plans but some are very detailed" (T43).

Monitoring teacher responsiveness

The trainer indicated that they would be monitoring teachers' responsiveness stating that she would monitor this through "school visits".

Training Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-training delivery, the trainer at this in-service strongly agreed that training would be easy to understand, was worthwhile, and that she received support for the training. The trainer agreed that there were adequate materials for training. The trainer did not provide a response about ease of training delivery.

Post-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that the training was easy to deliver, enjoyed delivery and felt confident delivering the training. The trainer strongly agreed that teachers understood, engaged, and enjoyed training. The trainer agreed that the materials used worked well. The trainer strongly disagreed that there was disruption at the training.

Training Delivery: Teachers' views

Teachers' reports of training support the trainer's views of training (see Table 4.15). For example, all of the teachers at this in-service strongly agreed that training was easy to understand and a majority (92%) strongly agreed that they enjoyed training. All teachers strongly agreed that they felt comfortable with the trainer and a majority (92%) strongly agreed that they were both comfortable with other teachers and with the topics covered.

Table 4.15: Teachers' views of training four

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training delivered clearly	13	n=11 (85%)	n=2 (15%)		
Easy to understand training	13	n=13 (100%)			
Enjoyed training	13	n=12 (92%)	n=1 (8%)		
Trainer interested training	13	n=11 (85%)	n=2 (15%)		
Comfortable with trainer	13	n=13 (100%)			
Comfortable with others	13	n=12 (92%)	n=1 (8%)		
Listened at training	13	n=9 (69%)	n=4 (31%)		
Others didn't listen at all	13	n=2 (15)%		n=3 (23%)	n=8 (62%)
Didn't pay attention	13	n=1 (8%)		n=1 (8%)	n= 11 (84%)
Others paid attention	13	n=10 (77%)	n=3 (23%)		
Comfortable with topics	13	n=12 (92%)	n=1 (8%)		
A lot of disruption	13	n=1 (8%)		n=3 (23%)	n=9 (69%)

Training ratings

The trainer rated the training 9/10. Teachers (*n*=13) also rated training very highly with a mean rating of 9.5 (SD 0.77). The minimum rating was 8 and the maximum rating was 10. Teachers' mean rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating.

Further perspectives

At this in-service, trainers and teacher provided additional comments about the training. This trainer identified the importance of the relationship between teachers: "The interaction and shared learning among the teachers really enhances the in-service training for all involved. We also had a teacher who was from (states name of country) and her personal experience of RSE was very different to the Irish situation and certainly generated a lot of discussion"

A number of teachers commented positively on the training: "good fun and learning" (T36); "very enjoyable and interaction. Broad amount of resources" (T38); "Really excellent" (T40); "Very informed. And now I feel I am" (T44).

4.1.2.5 In-service training five

Training five focused on Senior Cycle RSE, and the trainer reported three years and 6 months of training experience. Ten out of 15 (67%) of attendees at training five completed post-training questionnaires.

Training Timing

There were no differences between the trainer's pre and post-delivery reports of training timing (12 hours). The trainer reported that they had enough time to complete the training.

Pre-training experience of teaching RSE

Four out of ten teachers had delivered RSE prior to this in-service training. Specific details are outlined in Table 4.16. T53 and T56 had attended other RSE training but the dates provided suggest they still taught RSE for a number of years prior to training (eight years and thirteen years respectively). T50 had received training prior to implementing RSE while T49 had no training but had just started teaching RSE.

Table 4.16: Teacher pre-training experience teaching RSE

Teacher	Experience teaching RSE	Past RSE training	Training date
49	2 weeks	No	-
50	4 years	Yes	2007
53	14 years	Yes	2005
56	13 years	Yes	2011

Feelings about training participation and school support

Teachers' reports (*n=10*) indicated that almost all teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher reported that they attended voluntarily but without Principal support (T56).

Aims

In Table 4.17, trainer's and teachers' reported training aims are presented. Teachers' reports of training aims are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.17: Reported aims training five

Trainer's reported aims
a. To enhance the professional and personal development of teachers so that they will be enabled to deliver the RSE programme in their own schools in a confident and effective manner: b. To provide opportunities for participants to discuss issues; c. To familiarise participants with the TRUST resource; d. To provide information on contraception and sexually transmitted infections; e. To enable participants to experience and evaluate methodologies for teaching these topics
Teacher's reported aims
How to approach RSE module in class (5); RSE (3); effective delivery of RSE (2); ideas and teaching methodologies (2); how to use TRUST pack (1); RSE skills (1); whole-school approach to RSE (1); and RSE policy (1).

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on training aims

Teachers (*n=10*) main reported aim was: how to approach RSE module in class. This links to the first aim reported by the trainer (see Table 4.18). Aims two and four reported by the trainer were not reported by teachers while aims three and five were reported a small number of times (see Table 4.18).

Achieving training aims

The trainer reported that they achieved the aims of the in-service and stated: "teachers were empowered to be more confident in the delivery of RSE S. Cycle module. They became familiar with the content of the module – how to plan it- how to approach sensitive topics like contraception and STI's".

Topics

In Table 4.18, trainer's and teachers' reported training topics are presented. Teachers' reports of training topics are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.18: Reported topics - training five

Trainer's reported topics
a. Contraception; b. STI's; c. Fertility; d. RSE senior cycle programme; e. Answering questions; f. RSE policy
Teacher's reported topics
Contraception (8); Relationships (8); STI's (7); Sex and sexuality (6); Reproduction and fertility (2); Boundaries (2); Self esteem (2); Communication (2); Pressure (1); Sexual health (1); Unplanned pregnancy (1)

Topics: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training topics.

Comparative reports on training topics

Teachers (*n*=10) reported half of topics by highlighted by the trainer (see Table 4.18). Teachers did not mention: 'the RSE senior cycle programme', 'answering questions', and 'RSE policy'. Teachers highlighted eight additional topics:

‘relationships’; ‘sex and sexuality’; ‘boundaries’; ‘esteem’; ‘communication’; ‘pressures’; ‘sexual health’; and ‘pregnancy’.

Activities: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training activities.

Comparative reports on training activities

The trainer reported group work, brainstorming, visualisations, artwork, walking debate, case studies/scenarios, and games. Teachers’ (*n=10*) reports support the trainer’s account of activities: group work (100%); brainstorming (70%); visualisations (90%); artwork (90%); walking debate (100%); case studies/scenarios (90%); and games (100%). Two teachers reported role play (T53, T54). The trainer also reported that they would be using a DVD. This was not reported by teachers. One teacher reported ‘[Q]uestion carousel’ (T54).

Resources: planned versus actual delivery

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The trainer reported that they planned to use *On My Own Two Feet*, *TRUST,* and *DES* resources. Teachers’ (*n*=10) reported that the *TRUST* and *DES* resources were used (100% and 80% respectively). Only fifty percent of teachers reported using the *On My Own Two Feet* resource.

The trainer reported using a number of additional resources. The trainer reported: *Interim Curriculum and Guidelines for RSE; RSE Policy Template and Guidelines from DES website; RSE Parent Booklet – Going Forward Together; RSE Junior Cycle Resource Materials; RSE Senior Cycle Resource Materials; SPHE Curriculum and Teaching Guidelines; You Can Talk To Me DVD; Busy Bodies DVD;* TV and DVD machine; Copies of all worksheets/handouts; A4 pages with qualities written on them; Blank index cards; Coloured pencils/crayons; Copies of HSE guides to STIs; Copies of HSE guides to contraception*; TRUST DVD;* materials from HSE including brochures*; and B4UDecide website.* A small number of teachers mentioned additional resources: B4UDecide website (T49, T50, T55); SPHE journal

(T49, T50); The Facts DVD (T49); internet (T52); www.thinkcontraception.ie (T53); and Busy Bodies (T54).

Response to resources

One teacher commented positively on the TRUST resource: "TRUST pack was extremely helpful, there are many worksheets specifically designed for delivering the RSE senior cycle" (T54).

Monitoring teacher responsiveness

The trainer provided this response: "Would like to bring group back in Oct and see how they progressed and also visit school". It is unclear if this action will take place.

Training Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that the training would be easy to understand, easy to deliver, was worthwhile, she received support for the training, and that there were adequate materials.

Post-training delivery, the trainer at this in-service strongly agreed that teachers understood, enjoyed, and engaged in the training. The trainer strongly agreed that she enjoyed and felt confident delivering the training. The trainer agreed that it had been easy to deliver. The trainer also strongly agreed that there were adequate materials and that the materials used worked well. The trainer disagreed that there was disruption at the training.

Training Delivery: Teachers' views

Teachers' responses are presented in Table 4.19. Teachers' responses indicate training was received positively with all teachers strongly agreeing/agreeing that it was easy to understand training. Almost all teachers (90%) agreed that the trainer was interested in the training. All teachers agreed/strongly agreed that they listened at training.

Table 4.19: Teacher's views of training five

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training delivered clearly	10	n=5 (50%)	n=5 (50%)		
Easy to understand training	10	n=6 (60%)	n=4 (40%)		
Enjoyed training	10	n=5 (50%)	n=5 (50%)		
Trainer interested training	10	n=9 (90%)	n=1 (10%)		
Comfortable with trainer	10	n=6 (60%)	n=4 (40%)		
Comfortable with others	10	n=5 (50%)	n=5 (50%)		
Listened at training	10	n=2 (20%)	n=8 (80%)		
Others didn't listen at all	10	n=1 (10%)		n=6 (60%)	n=3 (30%)
Didn't pay attention	10			n=5 (50%)	n=5 (50%)
Others paid attention	10	n=3 (30%)	n=7 (70%)		
Comfortable with topics	10	n=6 (60%)	n=3 (30%)		n=1 (10%)
A lot of disruption	10			n=4 (40%)	n=6 (60%)

Training ratings

The trainer rated the training 8/10. Teachers (*n*=10) also rated training very highly with a mean rating of 9.3 (sd 0.82). The minimum rating was 8 and the maximum rating was 10. Teachers' mean rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating.

Further perspectives

At this in-service, trainers and teacher provided additional comments about the training. Pre-training delivery the trainer commented on the stress of training and the need for more training time: "[V]ery demanding 2 days for facilitator and participants- really could be 3 days".

Two teachers reported positively on the training: "positive environment created" (T53) and "[E]xcellent. Great TRUST resource" (T58).

4.1.2.6 In-service training six

Training six focused on Senior Cycle RSE, and the trainer reported two years and ten months of training experience. Nine out of 14 (64%) of attendees at training six completed post-training questionnaires.

Training timing

Pre-training, the trainer reported 12 hours for the training. Post-training, the trainer also reported 12 hours. The trainer reported that they did not have enough time to complete the training.

Pre-training experience of teaching RSE

Three out of nine teachers reported that they had been delivering RSE prior to training (see Table 4.20). One teacher reported teaching RSE for ten years but had attended RSE training (in 2000) prior to delivering the subject (T61). T62 had been RSE for 12 years and did not report any previous RSE training. T64 had been delivering JC RSE for four years and had previously attended training however the dates provided indicate that this teacher taught RSE for three years prior to attending training.

Table 4.20: Teacher pre-training experience teaching RSE

Teacher	Experience teaching RSE	Past RSE training	Training date
61	10 years	Yes	2000 (JC)
62	12 years	No	-
64	4 years	Yes	2010

Feelings about training participation and school support

All teachers (*n=9)* reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support.

Aims

In Table 4.21, trainer's and teachers' reported training aims are presented. Teachers' reports of training aims are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.21: Reported aims training six

Trainer's reported aims
a. To enable teachers to meet the following aims within the classroom context: b. To help young people understand and develop friendships and relationships; c. To promote an understanding of sexuality; d. To promote a positive attitude to ones sexuality and the sexuality of others; e. To promote knowledge of and respect for reproduction; f. To enable young people to develop attitudes and values in a moral/spiritual/social context
Teacher's reported aims
RSE/RSE senior cycle curriculum (4); Up skilling in RSE training and delivery to students (3); Defining and identifying sexuality/sexual orientation and gender issues (3); gaining greater understanding of relationships – forming/managing/surviving (3); Resources and methodologies (2); STI's (1); Contraception (1).

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no modifications reported by the trainer regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on training aims

Teachers (*n=9*) main reported aim was: RSE/RSE senior cycle curriculum. This aim could be linked to all the aims reported by the trainer although it was not explicitly linked. The second, third and fourth aims reported by teachers are connected to the first, second, and third aim reported by the trainer. Teachers did not specifically report the fourth or fifth aim indicated by the trainer.

Achieving training aims

The trainer indicated that aims were achieved: "[T]he overall aims were achieved and the evaluations forms from the teachers also indicated the objectives mentioned on day 1 were achieved".

Topics

In Table 4.22, trainer's and teachers' reported training topics are presented. Teachers' reports of training topics are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.22: Reported topics - training

Trainer's reported topics
a. Contraception; b. STI's; c. Relationships; d. Sexuality; e. Disclosure and limits to confidentiality; f. Questions; and g. Fertility
Teacher's reported topics
Contraception (8); STI's (8); Relationships (7); Sexuality (4); Sensitive issues/disclosure (2); Sexual orientation (2); Decisions (2); Sexual health (1); Teen attitudes to sex (1); Methodologies (1); Pregnancy (1); Fertility (1)

Topics: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any modifications to training topics and there were no differences between the trainer's pre and post-delivery reports.

Comparative reports on training topics

Teachers highlighted all of the topics identified by trainers as well as several other topics (see Table 4.23). Additional topics that were highlighted by teachers include:

‘sexual orientation’; ‘decision-making’; ‘sexual health’; ‘teen attitudes to sex’; ‘methodologies’; and ‘pregnancy’.

Activities: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any modifications to training activities.

Comparative reports on training activities

The trainer reported that group work, brainstorming, role play, visualisations, artwork, walking debate, case studies/scenarios, and games were used at this training. Teachers’ reports (*n=9)* of training activities support almost all of the activities reported by the trainer with the exception of visualisations (which received mixed reports): group work (100%), brainstorming (100%), role play (100%), artwork (89%), walking debate (78%), case studies/scenarios (78%), games (78%), and visualisations (44%). Two teachers reported additional activities. One teacher reported ‘film’ (T62) while the other reported ‘Questions and answers’ (T65).

Resources: Planned versus actual

This trainer indicated that they adapted their plan by adding a resource. The added resource was the “new website www.b4udecide.ie” and the reason for adding the resource was “to highlight to teachers how they can use it in the classroom and also very good graphics with regard [to] reproduction”. The trainer reported that the adaptation worked although no teachers specifically reported the www.b4udecide.ie website.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The trainer reported using the *TRUST* and *DES* resources. Teachers’ reports (*n=9)* indicated that the *TRUST* resource was used (100%) while just over half (56%) of teachers reported that *DES* resources were used. A minority of teachers identified other resources such as: ‘internet clips’ (T64); ‘websites on STI’s’ (T65); ‘Irish cancer society folder’, ‘HPU[18] def of health, brochures on contraception and STI’s, and JC and SC RSE pack’ (T67). These resources were not reported by the trainer.

[18] Health Promotion Unit (www.healthpromotion.ie).

Response to resources

Two teachers also commented on the resources with one reporting a heterosexual focus: “DVD shows male-female relationship only- not gay relationship” (T64) while another felt that it was “handy to have a comprehensive list of websites and phone numbers e.g. crisis pregnancy” (T65).

Monitoring teacher responsiveness

The trainer reported that she would be monitoring teachers’ responses through: “school visits and asking teachers how they are finding the resource”.

Training Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed that the training would be easy to deliver, would be easy to understand, and was worthwhile. The trainer also strongly agreed that she received support for the training and that there were adequate training materials.

Post-training delivery, the trainer strongly agreed teachers understood enjoyed and engaged in the training. The trainer at this in-service strongly agreed that the training was easy to deliver and that she enjoyed and felt confident delivering the training. The trainer strongly disagreed that there was disruption at the training.

Training Delivery: Teachers’ views

Teachers’ reports were very positive about training (see Table 4.23). For example, all of the teachers strongly agreed that the training was delivered clearly, that the training was easy to understand, that the trainer was interested in the training, and that they felt comfortable with the trainer (see Table 4.23). The majority of teachers (89%) strongly agreed that they were both comfortable with other teachers and comfortable with the topics covered.

Table 4.23: Teachers views' of training six

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training delivered clearly	9	n=9 (100%)			
Easy to understand training	9	n=9 (100%)			
Enjoyed training	9	n=8 (89%)	n=1 (11%)		
Trainer interested training	9	n=9 (100%)			
Comfortable with trainer	9	n=9 (100%)			
Comfortable with others	9	n=8 (89%)	n=1 (11%)		
Listened at training	9	n=4 (44%)	n=5 (56%)		
Others didn't listen at all	9			n=2 (22%)	n=7 (78%)
Didn't pay attention	9	n=1 (11%)			n=8 (89%)
Others paid attention	9	n=7 (78%)	n=2 (22%)		
Comfortable with topics	9	n=8 (89%)	n=1 (11%)		
A lot of disruption	9				n=9 (100%)

Training ratings

The trainer rated the training 9/10. Teachers (*n*=9) also rated training extremely high with a mean rating of 9.9 (sd 0.33). The minimum rating was 9 and the maximum rating was 10. Teachers' mean rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating.

Further perspectives

At this in-service, trainers and teacher provided additional comments about the training. The trainer highlighted how teacher engagement enhanced the training: "The interaction and shared learning among the teachers really enhanced the in service training for all involved".

A number of teachers commented on the training in a very positive way: "Excellent – would love to do more" (T60); "Excellent. Thoroughly enjoyable. Practical, useful, informative" (T63); "well done to everyone. very enjoyable" (T65); "the facilitator was very 'open', professional and honest. This impacted on the group". (T66); "very valuable for personal development of teachers even if they don't teach RSE. Values/judgements are issues for all teachers to be worked on" (T67).

4.1.2.7 In-service training seven

Training seven focused on Senior Cycle RSE, and the trainer reported 11 years of training experience. Ten out of 14 (71%) of attendees at training seven completed post-training questionnaires.

Training timing

Pre-training, the trainer reported 10 hours for the training. Post-training, the trainer also reported 10 hours. The trainer reported that they did not have enough time to complete the training.

Pre-training experience of teaching RSE

Half of the teachers reported that they had been delivering RSE prior to this in-service training (see Table 4.24). T68 and T70 indicated that they had been delivering RSE with no prior training. T15 and T77 had received training prior to delivering RSE. T75 had attended a course in 2009 but this still indicated that they delivered RSE for one year prior to receiving training.

Table 4.24: Teacher pre-training experience teaching RSE

Teacher	Experience teaching RSE	Past RSE training	Training date
68	2 yrs 10 mo	No	-
70	1 year	No	-
71	15 years	Yes	No dates but attended many courses
75	3 years	Yes	2009
77	1 year	Yes	2010 (SC)

Feelings about training participation and school support

Teachers reports (*n=10)* indicate that almost all attended training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher selected “other” and reported that they were completing teacher training: “doing my Higher Diploma” (T69).

Aims

In Table 4.25, trainer’s and teachers’ reported training aims are presented. Teachers’ reports of training aims are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low)

Table 4.25: Reported aims training seven

Trainer's reported aims
a. To enhance the professional and personal development of teachers so that they will be enabled to deliver the RSE programme in their own schools in a confident and effective manner. Objectives: i) To provide information about RSE in the context of SPHE; ii) To explore the subject of sexuality in order to enable teachers to feel more confident in discussing it with students; ii) To explore and experience different methodologies relevant to the delivery of RSE in the classroom.
Teacher's reported aims
Preparing teachers to teach RSE (3); empowering teachers to deliver RSE in an effective and comprehensive way (3); resources (2); provide students with strategies to assist with life changes (2); practical support to approach RSE (1); platform to discuss problems/difficulties (1); increase student confidence/self-esteem/safety (1); advising on standards, legal requirements, obligations (1); keeping up-to-date (1); teacher confidence in the classroom (1).

Aims: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any modifications regarding training aims.

Comparative reports on training aims

Teachers (*n=10*) main aims were: preparing teachers to teach RSE and empowering teachers to deliver RSE in an effective and comprehensive way. These aims reflect the trainer's reported aim. The trainer also reported a number of objectives. Objectives a) and c) were not explicitly stated by teachers. Objective b) was referred to in different ways (see Table 4.25).

Achieving training aims

The trainer reported that the aims of the in-service were achieved and stated: "I covered all the topics in my training plan as well as responding to their questions and concerns. I really enjoyed the two days and the evaluations were all very positive".

Topics

In Table 4.26, trainer's and teachers' reported training topics are presented. Teachers' reports of training topics are presented in an order that represents the number of times (presented in brackets) they were reported by teachers (from high to low).

Table 4.26: Reported topics - training seven

Trainer's reported topics
a. RSE policy/ programme planning and resource review; b. Puberty and reproduction; c. The language of sexuality; d. Influences on teenagers; e. Teacher concerns around teaching RSE; f. Creating a safe environment for teaching RSE; g. Setting boundaries, h. answering questions and addressing sensitive issues
Teacher's reported topics
Puberty, reproduction, body changes (8); Body image (5); RSE methodologies, resources and activities (4); RSE programme planning (4); Language (4); sexual orientation (4); STIs (3); Sex and sexuality (3); Unintended pregnancy (3); Law and child protection (2); Age-appropriateness, areas of concern (2); Relationships (2); Making decisions (1); Contraception (1); Gender (1); Influences (1); Self esteem (1)

Topics: Planned versus actual

After training delivery, the trainer reported making an adaptation by adding the topic of "sexuality and understanding sexual orientation", including "how to address this topic in a sensitive and appropriate way in the classroom". The trainer identified a reason for adding this topic, stating that "it rose as an issue of concern for teachers in the group". The trainer also reported that the adaptation worked. Sexuality and sexual orientation was reported a number of times (see Table 4.26).

Comparative reports on training topics

Teachers (n=10) reported just over half of the topics reported by the trainer (see Table 4.26). Teachers did not mention the following topics identified by the trainer: 'teacher concerns around teaching RSE'; 'creating a safe environment for teaching RSE'; 'setting boundaries'; and 'answering questions and addressing sensitive issues'. Additional topics that were highlighted by teachers include: 'body image'; 'STI's'; 'pregnancy'; 'relationships'; 'gender'; 'law'; 'child protection'; 'age-appropriateness'; 'areas of concern'; 'making decisions'; 'contraception' and 'self esteem'.

Activities: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any modifications regarding training activities.

Comparative reports on training activities

The trainer at this in-service reported group work, brainstorming, role play, visualisations, artwork, walking debate, case studies/scenarios, and games. Teachers (n=10) reports of training activities supported the trainer's reports regarding: group

work (100%), brainstorming (100%), and games (90%). Half of the teachers reported the role play and visualisations activities. A minority of teachers reported walking debate (T76) or case study/scenario activities (T69, T73, T76). Teachers did not report artwork.

The trainer also indicated that they would use two other activities, stating that they would "show *busy bodies DVD* and introduce them to the new web based RSE resources developed by the CPA *(B4UDecide)".* Three teachers identified other activities: discussions (T70), information technology (T75), and questionnaires (T77).

Resources: Planned versus actual

The trainer did not report any modifications regarding training resources.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The trainer reported a number of resources *Healthy Living, Healthy Times, Healthy Choices, On My Own Two Feet, TRUST, and DES* resources. Teachers reports (*n=10*) of resources supported the trainer's reports: *Healthy Living* (90%), *Healthy Times* (80%), *Healthy Choices* (70%), *On My Own Two Feet* (100%), *and DES* resources (90%). A majority of teachers (70%) also reported the *TRUST* resource although this was not reported by the trainer. A minority of teachers (T68, T74, T76) reported the *SPHE in Action* resource.

The trainer also reported a number of other resources: "*DES RSE Policy Development Template, SPHE 1 2 &3, Minding Me 1,2,&3,* Updated versions of *Healthy Living/Times, Cancer Awareness Pack CAP, Busy Bodies DVD & Booklet, You can talk to me DVD, B4UDecide Website,* and Teenage Magazines".

A majority of teachers (70%) reported that *YouTube* was used. Half of the teacher reported the Busy Bodies resource. A minority of teachers reported additional resources: *SPHE 123* (T69, T77), the *B4UDecide website* (T72, T77), printed handouts (T70), and the *SPHE syllabus and guidelines* (T72).

Response to resources

A small number of teachers commented on the resources: "no resources available in Irish- a problem for Gaelscoils" (T68); "also looked at the new healthy living pack (teacher manual and workbook). It was excellent –visual and age appropriate" (T72); "you need to mix and match between them all" (T72).

Monitoring teacher's responsiveness

The trainer indicated that she would be monitoring teachers' responsiveness through: "Oral evaluation at the end of day 1 and a written evaluation at the end of day 2. The teachers are also offered follow on in-school support which includes support around RSE policy development/programme planning / linking with parents ..etc".

Training Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-training delivery, the trainer at this in-service agreed that the training would be easy to understand, that there were adequate materials for the training, and that she received support for the training. The trainer disagreed that the training would be easy deliver.

Post-training delivery, the trainer agreed that the training was easy to deliver. The trainer agreed that teachers understood, enjoyed, and engaged in the training. The trainer also agreed that there were adequate materials for the training and that the materials that were used worked well. The trainer strongly agreed that they enjoyed and felt confident delivering the training. The trainer strongly disagreed that there was disruption at the training.

Teachers reports indicate that training was received positively (see Table 4.27). For example, all teachers agreed/strongly agreed that it was easy to understand the training and all teachers strongly agreed that the trainer was interested in the training and that they were comfortable with the trainer.

Table 4.27: Teachers views of training seven

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training delivered clearly	10	n=7 (70%)	n=3 (30%)		
Easy to understand training	10	n=9 (90%)	n=1 (10%)		
Enjoyed training	10	n=8 (80%)	n=2 (20%)		
Trainer interested training	10	n=10 (100%)			
Comfortable with trainer	10	n=10 (100%)			
Comfortable with others	10	n=6 (60%)	n=4 (40%)		
Listened at training	10	n=8 (80%)	n=2 (20%)		
Others didn't listen at all	10	n=1 (10%)		n=1 (10%)	n=8 (80%)
Didn't pay attention	10			n=1 (10%)	n=9 (90%)
Others paid attention	10	n=7 (70%)	n=3 (30%)		
Comfortable with topics	10	n=6 (60%)	n=4 (40%)		
A lot of disruption	10	n=1 (10%)		n=3 (30%)	n=6 (60%)

Training ratings

The trainer rated the training 9/10. Teachers (*n*= 10) also rated training very highly with a mean rating of 9.1 (sd 0.99). The minimum rating was 7 and the maximum rating was 10. Teachers' mean rating slightly exceeded the trainer's self-rating.

Further perspectives

At this in-service, trainers and teacher provided additional comments about the training. Pre-training delivery the trainer commented on past teacher feedback and on the follow-on training opportunities: "I have been delivering this training for many years and the feedback from teachers has been very positive. It is training for Junior Cycle RSE and this can be followed on by a 2 day *TRUST Pack RSE Senior Cycle Training programme* and a 1 day training day addressing issues around Sexual Orientation & Homophobic Bullying". Post-training delivery, the trainer felt the training went very well: "excellent group- great participation- lots covered- I think it was very practical and relevant. Lots of experiential learning with a range of methodologies employed*"*

A number of teachers (n= 6) provided comments on the training. Two teachers commented on training timing: "a lot to cover in such a short time, it felt very rushed at times" (T68) and "a lot covered in a day" (T75). Two teachers indicated two areas they felt training was lacking: "lacked tips on methodology in order to write lesson plans in connection with RSE and scheduling" (T68) and "could have been a little

more structured as it jumped back and forth between topics. I have loads of written notes so some form of handout would be great" (T72). One teacher felt the training had benefited them: "hugely beneficial, enlightening and will assist me in delivery of RSE in future" (T76) while another highlighted the importance of training: "all training is vital. Must be ongoing" (T71).

4.1.3 Resource Ratings

Both trainers and teachers were asked to rate (with 1 being poor and 5 being very good) the main SPHE and RSE resources. They were asked to rate the resource according to four components that were identified by Greenberg et al. (2005): visually appealing; user friendly; age appropriate; and culturally sensitive. Teachers and trainers' overall ratings are presented according to each resource along with any additional comments made (see Table 4.28 to Table 4.33 below). It is important to note that response rates for this question were low. A number of teachers reported that they could not answer the question, or parts of the question, as they had not previously used or been exposed to the resources. Some trainers partially completed this question.

Table 4.28: Teachers' and Trainers' resource ratings - Healthy Living

	n	**Trainers' Mean (sd)**	**n**	**Teachers' Mean (sd)**
Visually Appealing	3	4.33 (0.57)	29	4.06 (1.10)
User Friendly	3	3.66 (1.10)	26	4.15 (1.00)
Age Appropriate	3	4.33 (0.57)	23	4.13 (1.00)
Culturally sensitive	3	3.00 (1.7)	23	3.86 (1.10)

Table 4.29: Teachers' and Trainers' resource ratings - On My Own Two Feet

	n	**Trainers' Mean (sd)**	**n**	**Teachers' Mean (sd)**
Visually Appealing	5	2.40 (.54)	29	4.06 (1.1)
User Friendly	5	4.40 (.54)	26	4.15 (1.0)
Age Appropriate	5	4.60 (.54)	23	4.13 (1.0)
Culturally sensitive	5	3.00 (1.0)	23	3.86 (1.1)

Table 4.30: Teachers' and Trainers' resource ratings - Healthy Times

	n	Trainers' Mean (sd)	n	Teachers' Mean (sd)
Visually Appealing	3	4.33 (.57)	14	3.57 (1.5)
User Friendly	3	3.66 (1.1)	12	3.83 (1.2)
Age Appropriate	3	4.33 (.57)	12	4.66 (1.6)
Culturally sensitive	3	3.00 (1.7)	10	3.90 (.99)

Table 4.31: Teachers' and Trainers' resource ratings - Healthy choices

	n	Trainers' Mean (sd)	n	Teachers' Mean (sd)
Visually Appealing	3	1.00 (.00)	12	3.25 (1.4)
User Friendly	3	2.66 (.57)	10	3.80 (1.3)
Age Appropriate	3	3.66 (.57)	8	3.62 (1.0)
Culturally sensitive	3	1.66 (1.1)	8	4.00 (1.0)

Table 4.32 : Teachers' and Trainers' resource ratings - TRUST

	n	Trainers' Mean (sd)	n	Teachers' Mean (sd)
Visually Appealing	3	4.64 (.87)	31	4.64 (.87)
User Friendly	3	4.75 (.76)	32	4.75 (.76)
Age Appropriate	3	4.80 (.74)	31	4.80 (.74)
Culturally sensitive	3	4.48 (.94)	29	4.48 (.94)

Table 4.33: Teachers' and Trainers' resource ratings - DES resources

	n	Trainers' Mean (sd)	n	Teachers' Mean (sd)
Visually Appealing	5	2.20 (.44)	24	3.62 (1.4)
User Friendly	5	4.00 (.00)	25	4.08 (1.0)
Age Appropriate	5	4.40 (.54)	22	4.50 (.59)
Culturally sensitive	5	3.00 (1.0)	19	4.15 (1.0)

As demonstrated in Table 4.28, the *Healthy Living* resource scored well in the visually appealing and age appropriate categories. Teachers rated the resource as more user friendly than trainers did. This resource received its lowest scores for the category of cultural sensitivity.

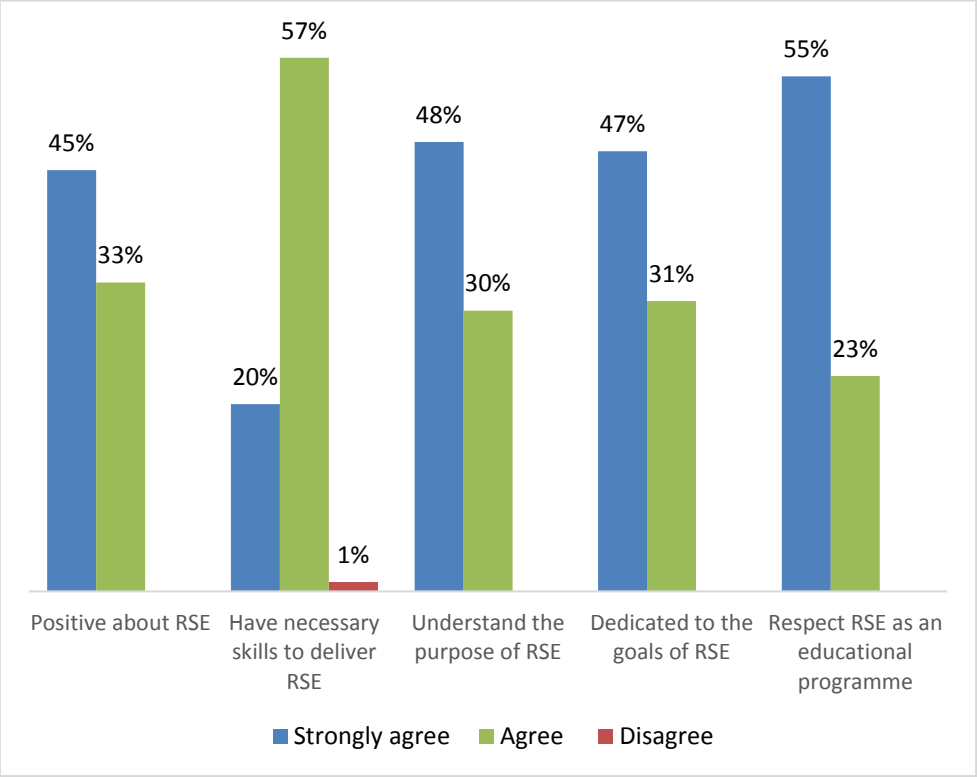
Both teachers and trainers lowest rating for the *On My Own Two Feet* resource was in the visually appealing category (see Table 4.29). Trainers rated the resource three out of five for its cultural sensitivity. The resource scored highest for its age-appropriateness. Teachers' lowest rating related to the visual appeal of the *Healthy Times* resource. For trainers, this resource scored lowest for its cultural sensitivity. Both teachers and trainers rated the resource high for its age-appropriateness (see Table 4.30).

Both trainers and teachers rated the *Healthy Choices* resource lowest under the visually appealing category (see Table 4.31). The highest rating for teachers related to the cultural sensitivity of the resource; yet for trainers its cultural sensitivity received the second lowest rating. Teachers rated TRUST resource very highly under all four categories (see Table 4.32). For trainers, the resource scored lowest for its visual appeal and highest for being user-friendly (see Table 4.32). Both trainers and teachers rated DES resources lowest for visual appeal and highest for age-appropriateness (see Table 4.33).

4.1.4 Teachers' post-training feelings about RSE

After training completion, teachers were asked if they: felt positive about teaching RSE, had the necessary skills to deliver RSE, understood the purpose of RSE, were dedicated to the goals of RSE, and respected RSE as an educational programme. The majority of teachers responded positively to each of these items (see Table 4.34).

Table 4.34 Teachers' post-training attitudes to RSE



4.1.5 Training Barriers

In five out of seven in-service trainings, trainers highlighted a range of perceived barriers to implementing RSE training. These barriers are categorised according to school, teacher or programme-level factors (see Figure 4.3 below).

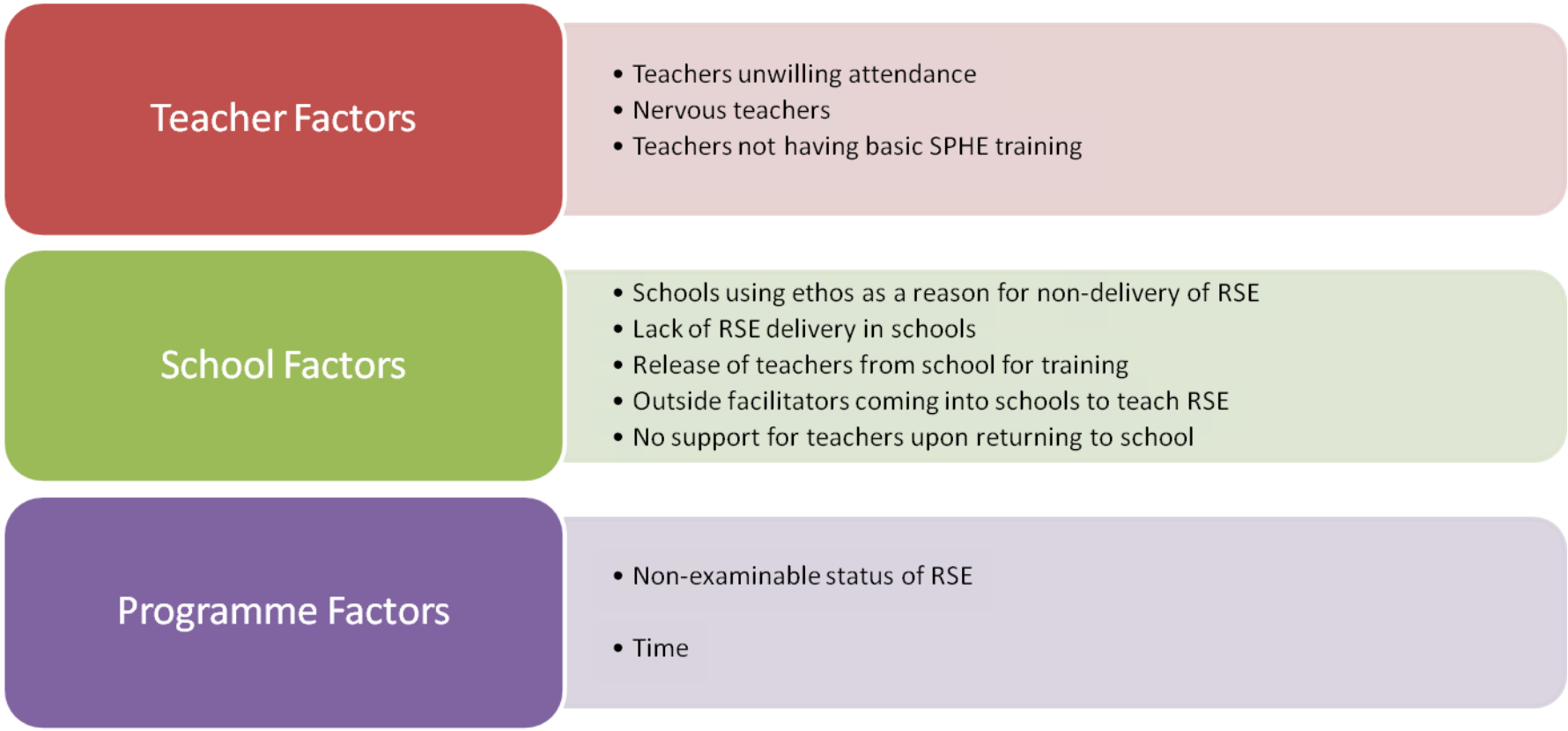


Figure 4.3: Trainer-reported training barriers

Teachers' unwilling attendance at training was the most frequently cited barrier. Reasons provided for teachers' unwillingness ranged from teachers being told to attend training, as opposed to choosing or wanting to teach it, to teachers being disinterested in RSE as a school subject.

Teachers at all in-service trainings were asked about their willingness to attend training. The majority of teachers (86%) attended voluntarily and with Principal support. Four percent attended without Principal support while five percent attended involuntarily. The remaining five percent gave other reasons for attending such as, "it was not compulsory but recommended" or that they were "advised to".

The release of teachers from school for training was a barrier identified by trainers. One trainer described this issue in further detail, stating that "one day attendance (at the training) is requested by school Principals and this obviously isn't appropriate" as the training is two days in duration. A variety of other school-level barriers are highlighted in the data, such as the issue of no support for teachers upon returning to school and schools using 'ethos' as a reason for non-delivery of RSE.

One trainer highlighted the need for trainers to be mindful of nervous teachers at the training, stating that "teachers can often for a range of reasons be nervous, lack confidence re teaching RSE and feel embarrassed about talking about these issues in the first instance".

4.2 Phase two results: RSE delivery in schools

4.2.1 School one

School description

In 2015, the school was described as a post-primary catholic school with a male Principal (www.des.ie, accessed June 12, 2015). There were 333 students (290 boys, 43 girls) enrolled at this time. This is an all-boy's school with the exception of students wishing to repeat their leaving certificate examinations[19]. This explains the gender imbalance described above. The school is designated Delivering Equality of Opportunity in schools (DEIS)[20] and is also part of the School Completion Programme [21]. In 2007, the school received 20,000 euro from the DES for projects to improve outdoor play facilities.

School context

Relevant data from an interview with an SPHE teacher [22], the school's RSE policy (presented within the SPHE policy) [23], and findings from the most recent Whole School Evaluation[24], which was conducted in 2009, are presented in this section. To

[19] The leaving certificate is the final post-primary school examination.

[20] Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, was launched in May 2005 and remains the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years) (www.education.ie, accessed May 20th 2015).

[21] The School Completion Programme aims to help students from disadvantaged areas stay in school to complete their Leaving Certificate. It forms part of the Department of Education and Skills social inclusion strategy Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) to help children and young people who are at risk of or who are experiencing educational disadvantage (www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/the_irish_education_system/measures_to_address_educational_disadvantage.html, accessed June 11th 2015)

[22] This teacher was the teacher who took part in the first stage of the research.

[23] The school does not have an RSE policy but an overall SPHE policy which encompasses RSE. The policy was ratified in September 2007. In 2008, a note was placed on the policy (by the religious education teacher) that it was "to be amended to include senior cycle and input of student council."

[24] The Department of Education and Skills conduct Whole School Evaluations in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. These inspections evaluate "*the quality of the school management and*

aid clarity, findings are identifiable through the following bracketed initials: interview (I-T), SPHE/RSE policy (POL), and the Whole School Evaluation (WSE).

At the time of interview, the teacher had been employed by the school for four years. The teacher's subjects were religion, Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE), SPHE (and the provision of some resource hours were mentioned by the teacher). The Board of Management of the School did not respond in writing to the Whole School Evaluation and thus there were no such responses to include in the data considered.

CLASSROOM LEVEL

Implementer characteristics and behaviours

Positive classroom practices/greater emphasis on learning outcomes needed (WSE)
Four classes were inspected during the WSE and it was reported that: there was very good classroom management; there was innovative use of resources (considered good practice that should be adopted across the school); there was good lesson structure; there was good use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT); that students responded and participated in class; and that a variety of teaching methods were used.
In general, the report recommended greater use of ICT and that "learning outcomes as a means of describing the material to be taught, and on effective teaching strategies for achieving such outcomes" should be applied across the school.

Teacher characteristics and behaviour

The vulnerability of teaching RSE (I)
The interviewee discussed the difficulties of teaching a "vulnerable" subject and how it affected the relationship with some of the students:

> my philosophy of teaching is very much you know that teaching as education is democracy so that philosophy is you know helps me to be able to bridge that gap if you know what I mean now now I do find

leadership; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the school's own planning and self-review" (www.education.ie, accessed June 14, 2015). Boards of Management (BOMs) are offered an opportunity to provide a written response to the report.

> that because I teach RSE, first of all I'm more approachable to the students but I do have issues around some students not recognising the boundary am being over friendly in that context or being difficult to manage so so I can see both sides of the argument you know what I mean. I've experienced both sides of the argument [25].

The interviewee described RSE implementation as teacher-dependant:

> it depends on the teacher to be quite honest. I did implement it am but I know some teachers who do not implement it because they are afraid to deal with those issues in a class context. yeah they wouldn't be confident enough to am really explore those issues with the students

SCHOOL LEVEL

Administrative leadership and support

School leaders (WSE)

The WSE reports many positive aspects relating to the school's Principal and deputy Principal describing them as "characteristically team players" who have excellent communication between them and a sense of joint mission (shared goals and vision). At the time of the WSE, both the Principal and deputy Principal were newly appointed to their roles. The transition is described positively with "very good practice being displayed" by both as they maintained "a teaching workload; have a visible presence in the school; and are accessible to staff and students". The WSE reports that they "share a vision that emphasises the holistic as well as the educational development of students and have a strong sense of moral and social development" (with reference to the school's larger community). In order to achieve this shared vision, the WSE argued that the development of the school plan is urgent. The pastoral care team (the guidance counsellor, part-time chaplain, post holders [26] and staff members) have frequent formal meetings and "extensive informal contact

[25] 'Both sides of the argument' refers to the debate that teaching a 'vulnerable subject' changes your relationship with the students, making you more approachable but also affects the student-teacher relationship in a negative way.

[26] Post-holders refers to Principals, deputy Principals, assistant Principals, and special duties teachers (DES, 2003)

during the school day". They are described as "a support for the school community". The interviewee described their relationship with the Principal[27] as "excellent" (I).

Rationale for RSE (POL)

The beginning of the policy states "Why do we need the RSE programme?" and responds with the following:

> Our students live in a world of many influences. From a young age, they are bombarded with conflicting value systems, each claiming to offer fulfilment and happiness. Fundamental values concerning relationships and sexuality in particular are no longer as clear to our young people as they once were.

RSE aims and objectives (POL)

The aims and objectives outlined in the policy are verbatim to those outlined in the DES syllabus.

RSE programme content (POL)

The policy highlights the three programme content headings: human growth and development; human sexuality; and human relationships. Each is described briefly in the text. The policy states that "teachers will use materials deemed suitable and appropriate for student's needs in accordance with the school ethos".

SPHE timetabling and resources (WSE, I, POL)

SPHE is timetabled once a week for junior cycle students and RSE is assigned five or six of these time slots (POL). The interviewee had not been asked if they would like to teach SPHE but rather was allocated hours on the school timetable, "am I was allocated the hours by the Principal and so that was it, just had to get on with it. I probably showed an interest in it because I quite liked the subject like CSPE, those two subjects I quite enjoy".

SPHE is not timetabled at senior-cycle level but is implemented through religious education (I, POL) and the interviewee highlighted how the RSE component is

[27] Previous Principal

framed within a religious context and how RSE implementation is teacher-dependant:

> It's (RSE) taught through religious education and it's taught through the module on moral behaviour so it's framed within that discussion rather than more explorative elements now it's also framed within the catholic perspective, the catholic moral perspective because of the school's connection to the bishop of [names Bishop] am so the exploration of sexual issues is within that context within that moral context ... it's up to the teacher themselves in subject planning who implement RSE I suppose within their religion class and I would have to say some teachers do it and some of them don't.

The school has an SPHE coordinator however it is actually the interviewee who manages the SPHE resources and describes other teachers' lack of interest in the resources:

> I would tend to do that to be honest yeah um and I would make them available you know and would usually just say when they come back in, put them back in and make sure that they are there for teachers am there isn't a great uptake on them to be honest with you. A lot of people just stick to the face issues.

Evaluation of the RSE programme (POL, I)

The school policy states that the programme is "evaluated each year keeping in mind the changing cultural context. Students, parents, and teachers are consulted in any evaluation" (POL). The interviewee explained that there was no mechanism for the RSE programme to be evaluated (I).

School-level support for RSE (I, POL, WSE)

There was "no clear evidence during the evaluation of an agreed whole-school approach to SPHE" (WSE). The WSE recommended that the "SPHE programme should be formalised and agreed among the teachers of SPHE" also giving consideration to the involvement of year heads in SPHE delivery (WSE).

The interviewee felt that the Principal did support RSE "but he would be very much within the Catholic context". The interviewee provided examples of Principal support: support for in-service training and buying resources; wanting the students "to speak about those issues and be informed of what are the issues and enable them to explore those issues"; and encouraging the invitation of guest speakers. These examples are also provided in the policy (POL). Despite the support just described, the interviewee felt that there was poor uptake of RSE in-service training, "yeah it would not be high on the school agenda".

The interviewee felt that although all teachers in the school would view RSE as vital, none of them actually want to teach it:

> If you were to ask any teacher they'd see it as necessary but don't ask me to teach it. That, that would be the current framework and see teachers believe it's a very vulnerable subject to teach and ... it may be entering crossing the boundaries in terms of dealing with children and then I suppose having a relationship with them as a teacher around behaviour and stuff like that may be challenged by teaching such a vulnerable subject.

<u>Awareness of student needs</u>

Student involvement regarding school-level decisions (I)

Although there is no student representative on the board of management, the interviewee explained that there is "an active student council" which would "make suggestions with regards curriculum improvements". Although there is a student council, the teacher commented "now am because the board of management isn't necessarily representative of the student community one would wonder is that being implemented or are those suggestions being implemented".

Student participation in RSE (POL, I)

The school's RSE policy recognises the importance of being aware of student feelings around participation in RSE, noting that "the dignity and privacy of students is to be respected at all times". The policy explains that students will only partake in class activities that they feel comfortable in (POL). With regard their involvement in RSE, the interviewee explained students' role was limited to classroom participation (I):

> They're in the classroom basically you know they wouldn't be involved in the development of RSE policy. It would be limited to their engagement with the teacher in that particular class and their ability to share or not to share around it.

School goals

School development plan (WSE)

The report also highlights that the school development plan[28] is not at an advanced stage (WSE). The need for a school plan was viewed as a priority during the WSE. Developing the school plan requires proactive leadership. The report states it is a key priority to establish a school planning group. Senior management are praised for innovative changes for first year students which involved them booking outside consultants to provide CPD to the relevant staff members.

Staff roles and responsibilities (WSE)

The WSE highlights the need for post holders roles and duties to be revised continuously. The report also recommends that there is a need to address an imbalance in the allocation of higher ability classes to more established teachers by providing greater teacher rotation.

[28] "The School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI) was established in 1999 by the Department of Education and Science to "*stimulate and strengthen a culture of collaborative development planning in schools, with a view to promoting school improvement and effectiveness*." In 2010, the SDPI, along with other support services, were amalgamated and subsumed into the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) (www.sdpi.ie, accessed June 13, 2015).

Improving student outcomes (WSE)

The report also notes positive work that has been done in the area of guidance but also work that needs to be done, including a need to "take steps" to "improve student outcomes".

School climate

Student-centred approach (WSE)

The WSE describes the school as having a "student-centred approach". The WSE reports that this school has a "strong school community that is friendly, secure, caring and orderly" and that there is "very positive engagement and interaction of students and teachers in and out of the classroom". There is an active student council; inclusive admissions; an emphasis on good behaviour; and high student retention rates. The report states: "the nurture of care and mutual respect accorded by management and staff to students, and vice versa, is a significant achievement".

The physical environment (WSE)

The WSE reports on positive improvements to the building structure but recommends that "the quality and appropriateness of the other school buildings should be reviewed to ensure their suitability for the delivery of modern curricula".

COMMUNITY LEVEL

School-community relations

Community Links (WSE)

The school is described as one that has strong links with the community and local business and industry:

> Effective and valuable links with the local parish, cultural, industrial and commercial communities and with outside agencies providing education-specific services are in place. The range of these is wide and the use made of them is most praiseworthy and a credit to the vision and good practical sense that their utilisation is made apparent (WSE, p.2).

Religious ethos (WSE)

The school ethos is Catholic and "it aims to provide a value-based Christian education in the Catholic tradition". This Catholic ethos is "expressed through the school's general inclusivity of student intake". There are Catholic trustees who support the board of management; regular visits from the bishop to the school; and the local parish priest has been the chair of the board for the duration of several boards.

Outside facilitators (I)

The interviewee explained that outside facilitators are involved in SPHE delivery, particularly in senior cycle:

> we've had a few couples that have come in and just talked about marriage and their experience of marriage and the experience of maybe dating am now I've brought them in when I was teaching the class ... in the senior cycle around that just experience of just relationships and the challenges and just am the pros and cons I spose of just being an adult in a relationship or an adult as well.

The interviewee explained that they also invited outside facilitators from ACCORD (Catholic marriage care service) and used DVDs (names well-known Psychologist who speaks in the DVD). When asked if outside facilitators were mainly from a Catholic and perhaps married perspective, the interviewee indicated that this was true and explained:

> the Principal, we have to walk a thin line I suppose he's a Catholic and wouldn't like students to am maybe be given a wrong message while the students themselves may want to or explore it one has to draw that line between the child I suppose the Principal would be kind of afraid that the child would go home and say this is what we did today. Parent rings up and then it has to be dealt with so his advice around the teaching of it is that it be kept within the particular context of, be boundaried, be heavily boundaried rather than a free-for-all.

School-family relations

Communication (WSE)

The report asserts that "communication between school and parents is good". The report attributes this to the Principal's approachable profile and that it is easy to make an appointment to see him or his deputy. There is a parents association and a number of ways that parents are connected to the school (such as information events, study skills information evenings). The report recommends that there needs to be increased communication by parent representatives to the general parent population (the school website is suggested as a means for this).

Parental involvement at school-level (I)

The interviewee explained that there are two representatives from the parents association on the board of management. There's also "sort of an active relationship between the school in terms of texting, in terms of newsletters and also in terms of parent-teacher meetings so if a parent does want to raise an issue um it can be explored". When asked about parental involvement in RSE, the interviewee explained that it was "just at the board of management level that passing the policy or maybe reviewing the policy". The interviewee gave one example of a parent who was involved in different thematic area of SPHE:

> um I know one parent here who has an interest in addiction studies and has qualified as a counsellor in addiction studies, they have a bit of a programme developed to support people and teams around alcohol and substance use and that's one element in which a parent has sort of taken initiative because of her position and her qualifications.

DISTRICT LEVEL

Administrative leadership and support

The board of management (WSE, I)

At the time of the report, the school's board of management was "correctly constituted, meets regularly, keeps records, and is habitually engaged in supporting the practical administration of the college, notably through the finance committee, through student welfare and discipline issues, and periodically through staff

appointments and promotion" (WSE). Board members were all provided with training for their roles (WSE). It functions well (there are productive outcomes) and there is good attendance at meetings (WSE).

The interviewee was not sure about how board of management members were selected to be on the committee, "I think they volunteer. There are two teachers from the school that are nominated...I think the parish priest is the chairperson" (I).

The interviewee felt the board of management members were representative of the community but also identified the lack of student representation on the board (I):

> From what I know I believe they are. They probably could be younger, you know more younger and could be representative of younger people or even maybe of the students of the school. I don't think there is a student representative on the actual board. That's probably an area that could be looked at but don't you know now positions on the board of management tend to be people that are respected in the community and I think the members on the board are.

RSE policy (I)

According to the interviewee, the school's policy was developed two years before the interview took place. The interviewee did not think there was a separate RSE policy:

> Am I don't believe we have a separate RSE programme we have an SPHE policy am and incorporated in that is the times that RSE would be taught and parents are made aware of that before it is actually taught in the schools.

School development plan (WSE)

The WSE recommends that the board take a proactive leadership role in the production of a school plan (this includes ensuring that the correct structures are in place so statutory requirements of the plan are fulfilled). Increased communication (including a formal report) is recommended between the Principal and the board.

Departmental leadership (I)

The interviewee described how RSE is not viewed with the same importance as other subjects in the school and that the DES's role is demonstrated through the provision of in-service (bold emphasis added):

> It's a double-edged sword. We'd see it as important but yet because it's not am I suppose examined in the way of other subjects we don't give it the importance that we should you know **it's dealt with in a pastoral context rather than championed as important you know an important part of the educational development of the kids so I think we could be doing more** (bold emphasis added) and the department am I know that the department through the in-service section are you know at the end of the day encouraging us to attend in-services and to implement the RSE programme and (names trainer) was very adamant about that and I see the importance of it but am it **it isn't something that's high on our radar here**.

THE RSE LESSON

Teacher's experience of RSE in-service training

The teacher reported that the Principal supported their attendance at RSE in-service training. The teacher had a very positive experience at RSE in-service training. This is indicated through their responses to the training-level questionnaire [29] and their rating of the training (10/10). When asked about if they had any additional comments about training, the teacher reported: "excellent process. I was encouraged to integrate material and be prepared academically and emotionally for task". Post-training, the teacher strongly agreed that they felt positive about teaching RSE, had the necessary skills to deliver RSE, understood the purpose of RSE, felt dedicated to the goals of RSE, and respected the RSE programme.

[29] Post-training, the teacher strongly agreed that the training was clear, easy to understand, the trainer was interested, that they listened, that they were comfortable with the trainer, that they enjoyed the training, that they were comfortable with the other teachers, that they were comfortable with the topics covered, and that other teachers paid attention. They strongly disagreed that there was a lot of disruption, that they didn't pay attention, or that other teachers didn't listen.

The teacher had previously attended the *Introduction to SPHE* course offered by the SPHE support service. The teacher had been teaching for two years at the time of data collection. The teacher reported that they had no experience of implementing RSE prior to training attendance.

Introduction to lesson

This RSE lesson was delivered to students in their second year (junior cycle) of post-primary school. Students in the class were male (*n=13)* and aged 14-16. The mean student age was 14.85 years (SD = 0.69). The teacher reported that they were following a manual. The observation indicated that the teacher was "following a manual" and explained that the teacher seemed "to be following a DES resource from RSE book*"*.

Previous RSE experience by students

The majority of students (69%) reported experiencing RSE classes before this lesson, with most indicating that these classes were received in primary school. All students reported that they *did not* receive RSE classes in their first year of post-primary school and the majority (77%) reported that they *did not* receive classes in their second year of post-primary school (the same year data were collected and after the review of lessons). Students' responses differed to the teacher's report of the lessons that were delivered during the school year. At the beginning of the lesson observed, the teacher provided a review of RSE lessons that had been implemented in the weeks prior to data collection. It was also observed that students had difficulty recalling the lessons reviewed by the teacher at the start of the lesson. After some time, students began to recall the lessons when the teacher used different key words to trigger memories about past lessons.

Lesson timing

There were no differences between the teacher's pre and post-delivery reports of lesson timing (40 minutes). There was a ten minute difference noted by observer (30 minutes). Post-lesson delivery, the teacher felt that they did not have enough time to complete the lesson. This lack of time was also indicated in observation.

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the teacher's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding lesson aims. The teacher did not report any lesson adaptations regarding aims.

Comparative reports on lesson aims

Table 4.35 demonstrates that some differences were noted in teacher, students, and the observed report in response to an open question about lesson aims. The element of friendship and relationship was noted by students and the teacher but was not observed; one student identified the review at the beginning of the class as an aim; the boy/girl friendship was not referred to by students or in the observations; and family was not referred to explicitly by the teacher.

Table 4.35: Reported aims - school one

Teacher's reported aims
Students should: have explored the qualities of relationships e.g. friendship, reviewed reasons for having boy/girl friendship, have identified their own positive characteristics and illustrated them in a creative manner
Students' reported aims
Families (how you were brought up, what people do in families) (4); relationships (2); friends (1); changes (1); personal qualities (1); everything we learned so far (1).
Observation of lesson aims
Relate personal qualities to your family (esp. positive ones), think about relationships, reflecting on memories, main aim was to gain knowledge of physical and emotional self, we should know who we are.

Achieving lesson aims

After completing the lesson, the teacher did not feel that lesson aims were achieved. The teacher stated: "I was not concrete enough with my aims and allowed myself to get distracted in class by answering questions".

Topics: Planned versus actual

The teacher did not report any lesson adaptations regarding topics. During analysis, differences were noted between the teacher's planned and actual topics reported. The teacher's planned topics were: 'respecting myself and others'; 'boy/girl relationship', 'peer pressure', 'self esteem', and 'how I relate'. A comparison of the teacher's

reported topics indicated that only two planned topics matched the actual topics reported (see Table 4.36). ‘How I relate’ would appear to be connected to ‘my changing role in family and society’ and ‘boy/girl relationships’ could be connected to ‘the building blocks of relationships’.

Table 4.36: Reported topics - school one

Teacher’s reported topics
My role in the family, the qualities I would most associate with my family, the building blocks of relationships, the core principles, my changing role in family and society.
Student’s reported topics
Male and female puberty (2), personal qualities (2), sex/sexual intercourse (2), how our bodies work (1), parents talking to their children about RSE (1), memories of a member of your family (1), sexual attraction (1).
Observation of lesson topics
Review of RSE classes to date: confidentiality, busy bodies (understanding our bodies), writing down diff parts. Class itself: relationships, diff types of relationships, romantic relationships, being part of a family, personal qualities you would like, family roles- who does what.

Comparative reports on lesson topics

In this lesson, one common topic was reported by the teacher, the students and was directly observed (‘qualities I would associate with family’). The teacher reported that the ‘role in the family’ was a topic that was covered, and this was supported in the observation (see Table 4.36). The teacher identified three additional topics which were not highlighted by students or observed (‘building blocks of relationships’; ‘core principles’; and ‘changing role in family and society’).

Students reported the topic of ‘personal qualities’ and this was also observed. The ‘qualities you would like to have’ topic was observed although this was not supported by the teacher or students’ reports. In addition, students noted a number of topics which were not reported by the teacher nor observed: ‘male and female puberty’; ‘sexual intercourse’; ‘how our bodies work’; ‘parents talking to kids about RSE’; and ‘sexual attraction’. These reports could be linked to the review which took place at the beginning of the class.

Activities: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported adapting the lesson plan by adapting an activity. The teacher "added a more personal touch to the reflection". The teacher, however, did not feel that the lesson adaptation worked. This was the only reported change during actual delivery.

Comparative reports on lesson activities

There were no common activities reported across all three groups (by the teacher, students or in the observer report). The teacher reported the 'brainstorming' and 'case studies' activities. The use of 'brainstorming' and 'group work' was reported by the observer. The majority of students (69%) reported 'group work'.

The teacher reported that 'digital media' was used. Two students reported 'other' activities: one reported 'laptops' while the other reported 'activitys (sic)'. Findings from the observation indicated that there was "a reflection on activity two and three" and that "the teacher also walked around the class".

Resources: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported one difference between planned and actual delivery. The teacher modified the lesson plan by adding a resource. The teacher "gave the class a roadmap for the students on RSE journey" (a rationale was not provided) and reported that this change worked. This was not reported by students or observed.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The teacher identified the specific RSE worksheets and resources that were being used for the lesson (taken from SPHE in Action, Healthy Choices, DES resources). The teacher also reported that 'SPHE online material' (www.sphe.ie) was used for this lesson. 77% of students indicated that worksheets were used during the lesson and this was supported in the observation.

Forty-six percent of students reported that they liked the worksheets that were used, however no explanation was provided. Twenty-three percent reported that they disliked the worksheets and gave reasons such as: it was "boring" and that there was "too much personal stuff". Thirty-one percent of students did not provide any response about other lesson resources used.

Response to resources

The worksheets scored the lowest in the 'visually appealing' category by both students and in observations (see Table 4.37).

Table 4.37: Student and observer resource ratings - school one

	STUDENT RATINGS					OBS
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD	
Visually appealing	12	3	8	5.7	1.8	2
User friendly	11	4	10	6.7	1.9	9
Age appropriate	11	1	10	7.0	2.6	9
Culturally sensitive	11	5	10	8.2	1.7	9

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

The teacher's ratings are resource-specific (outlined in Table 4.38). The teacher did not rate the SPHE in Action resource although it was reported that it was used for this lesson. The teacher rated the resources highly in all dimensions with the lowest rating for the visual appeal of DES resources.

Table 4.38: Teacher's resource ratings - school one

	Visually Appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
Healthy Choices	4	5	5	4
DES	3	5	5	5

Note: rated on a scale from one (most negative) to five (most positive)

Lesson Delivery: Student's responsiveness

The teacher reported that they planned to "check in with them at next lesson, monitor during week while on duty in school" (I). During the lesson, it was observed that the teacher monitored responses as they "could see when the students were interested and tried to draw out the students' opinions". Observed findings of students' responsiveness during the lesson are outlined in Table 4.39. It was noted that the worksheets "helped to guide students and keep focus". Data from the observation indicated that the PowerPoint worked well as "a singular focus seemed to work best for them as a group". It was also noted that "it was hard to tell if the students liked the activities or not. I think the one they interacted with the most was activity/worksheet 1" and that the "teacher effort and enthusiasm were high but it was hard to get students to interact with the various activities". Although a lot of

activities took place in a short time frame, it was observed that this “may have been necessary to hold the attention of the students”.

Activity	Resource Description	Observed student response
Review of RSE lessons to date	Power Point review of lessons to date: a) language for body parts; b) understanding our parents; c) changes that take place in women; d) having a baby.	There was good student response to this and a clear focus on reviewing what was done. As mentioned previously, students had difficulty with memory recall.
Worksheet 1	The worksheet was about being a member of your family and your earliest memories. Students were supposed to share their responses with the person sitting beside them.	Students were slow to respond but they seemed to like this activity. I think they could apply/understand this worksheet better than the others.
Worksheet 2	This worksheet involved students imagining they had received £100[30] and needed to allocate the money to different personal qualities listed on the sheet (i.e., ranking the qualities using monetary units).	The teacher had to explain the activity a number of times. "Students were slow to respond and seemed very disinterested. They found it hard to understand the money aspect (what they were supposed to do)". Students were unclear about how to complete activity. Students did not really interact with the activity. There was also some "messing" and "slagging"[31].The teacher selected students to read out responses.
Worksheet 3	This worksheet listed tasks, responsibilities and qualities shared in families. Students needed to write the name of the person in their family who was responsible for each one. It was a self-reflection activity.	The teacher shared their own personal experience from a positive quality received from parents. It was observed that all "students completed the worksheet. Some responded in class". One student was singled out by the teacher and was told that they did not have to complete the activity. The student was living in foster care. The students could not keep focus while the teacher linked the activity back to students.

[30] This resource was based on the old Irish monetary unit (Irish pounds IR£). Ireland switched to the Euro currency in 2002.

[31] The first term refer to students not paying attention and causing disruption while the latter term refers to students making jokes about the other students.

Table 4.39: Observer report of student responsiveness - school one

Lesson Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher reported that "in-service training was very helpful in preparing for class and making me aware of resources". Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher strongly agreed that the lesson was worthwhile. The teacher agreed that: the lesson would be easy to understand, that there was support for the lesson and that there was adequate lesson materials. The teacher disagreed that the lesson would be easy to deliver.

Post-delivery, the teacher views about adequate lesson materials and ease of delivering the lesson remained unchanged. The teacher agreed that: they enjoyed delivering the lesson; that they were confident delivering the lesson; and that students engaged in the lesson. The teacher did not feel that there was a lot of disruption. However, the teacher disagreed that the lesson materials worked well or that students enjoyed and understood the lesson.

Lesson Delivery: observer and students' views

The observer strongly agreed that the teacher was interested in the lesson and that the students were comfortable with the teacher. The observer agreed that the lesson was: clear; that the lesson was easy to understand; that students were comfortable participating in class and enjoyed the lesson; and that students were comfortable with the topics covered. The observer reported that there was a lot of disruption during the lesson. The observer did not report that students listened most of the time or that students paid attention. Despite this, the observer did not report that students didn't listen at all.

Students' views are displayed in Table 4.40 below. The majority of students were positive about the lesson. Seventy percent of students agreed that they were comfortable with the topics covered. A majority of students (60%) reported lesson enjoyment. The majority of students (90%) were comfortable with the teacher and that the teacher was interested in the lesson. In relation to classroom climate, while all students reported that they listened in class, eighty percent reported that *other* students didn't listen. A minority of students (30%) reported that they didn't pay attention. A majority of students (60%) reported that there was a lot of disruption.

Forty percent reported that other students didn't pay attention. Seventy percent of students agreed that they learned a lot in the lesson.

Table 4.40: Students' reports on lesson delivery and participation - school one

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lesson delivered clearly	10		n=8 (80%)	n=2 (20%)	
Easy understand lesson	10	n=1 (10%)	n=8 (80%)	n=1 (10%)	
Enjoyed lesson	10		n=6 (60%)	n=4 (40%)	
Teacher interested lesson	10	n=3 (30%)	n=6 (60%)	n=1 (10%)	
Comfortable with teacher	10	n=1 (10%)	n=8 (80%)	n=1 (10%)	
Comfortable participating	10	n=1 (10%)	n=7 (70%)	n=2 (20%)	
Listened to lesson	10	n=1 (10%)	n=9 (90%)		
Others didn't listen at all	10	n=1 (10%)	n=7 (70%)	n=2 (20%)	
Didn't pay attention	10		n=3 (30%)	n=6 (60%)	n=1 (10%)
Others paid attention	10		n=6 (60%)	n=3 (30%)	n=1 (10%)
Comfortable with topics	10		n=7 (70%)	n=3 (30%)	
A lot of disruption	10	n=1 (10%)	n=5 (50%)	n=4 (40%)	
learned a lot in this lesson	10		n=7 (70%)	n=3 (30%)	

Lesson ratings

Both the mean student rating (7.4/10, see Table 4.41) and rating from the observation (6/10) exceeded the teacher's self-rating of the lesson (5/10)

Table 4.41: Lesson ratings - school one

Students' Ratings (*n*=8)			
Min	Max	Mean	SD
2	10	7.4	2.4

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

Further perspectives

Any additional comments by the teacher, students or the observer are reported in this section. The observation suggested there was a number of lesson barriers: 1) the class was directly after a school break and there was a late start; 2) the lesson was possibly overloaded, there was an attempt to cover a lot of topics in a short space of time; 3) it was a difficult subject area to cover in a class and it was difficult to try to get students to interact; 4) and RSE classes re-cap used lesson time.

The observation also suggested that the classroom layout may have hindered implementation of the lesson. The teacher highlighted the issue of classroom layout

at the end of the lesson and indicated that in the past, they had tried an "open format" (classroom in a circle) but that chaos had ensued due to the new layout of the furniture. The teacher needed the ordinary classroom structure for behaviour management.

4.2.2 School two

School description

In 2015, the school was described on the DES website as a mixed post-primary vocational school that was interdenominational with a male Principal (although a new female Principal was appointed in 2015). There were 544 students enrolled (383 boys, 161 girls). The school was designated DEIS school at that time (it is no longer classified as a DEIS school). In 2007, the school received 20,000 euro for projects to improve outdoor play facilities (www.education.ie, accessed June 13, 2015).

School Context

Data were gathered from various sources to describe the school context: 1) the school's SPHE and RSE policy; 2) a WSE of the school which was conducted in 2010; 3) and an interview with a BOM[32] member from the school. To aid clarity, findings are identifiable through the following bracketed initials: interview (I-BOM); the SPHE policy data (POL), and the WSE (WSE).

CLASSROOM LEVEL

Implementer characteristics and behaviours

Need for improved practices and attitudes (WSE)

Best practice was observed when teachers linked learning outcomes to lesson content and the methodologies and resources used supported teaching, learning and assessment. It is recommended that this best practice is extended to all subject areas. It is also recommended that "all teachers, in all subjects, explicitly share the lesson

[32] The BOM member was on the parent committee (parents council) prior to being asked to join the BOM.

objectives with students, establishing a clear sense of purpose from the outset and focusing students' attention" (p.11). It was also reported that, in one subject, teachers could have higher student expectations (particularly at junior cycle).

SCHOOL LEVEL

Administrative stability

Effective communication (WSE)

There are systems in place to facilitate effective communication in the school. These include "announcements at the morning break, calendar of events, teachers' handbook, Principal's notices in the staffroom, text messages and email messages" (p.4). There are weekly timetabled meetings of assistant Principals with senior management. The report highlights that minutes from these meetings are circulated to all staff.

Newly appointed leaders (WSE)

At the time of inspection, the deputy Principal was newly appointed to the role and the report indicates the relationship between the deputy and Principal was "in the early stages of building" (WSE, p.4). Despite this, the report acknowledges that there is openness and co-operation as well as frequent scheduled meetings between both the deputy and the Principal.

Staff training and development (WSE)

It is reported that continuing professional development (CPD) takes place in part in a whole staff context. For example, in 2009 staff attended an SPHE workshop and had meetings relating to other school programmes. Generally, teachers' timetabling is good however there were a small number of whole-time permanent staff who were not fulfilling their class-contact time requirements.

SPHE and RSE Staff Development, Training and Resourcing Issues (POL)

The policy recognises the importance of developing "a core of trained SPHE teachers". The policy also outlines the need to appoint teachers to subjects before timetabling, as well as to endeavour to assign the same teacher to a class for a three-year-cycle. It highlights the importance of student-teacher rapport for SPHE, as well

as the need for a whole school approach. The policy indicates that management are responsible for ensuring in-service needs are met.

Administrative leadership and support

SPHE programme content and timetabling (POL, WSE)
The junior cycle programme is outlined (as per DES syllabus) and it is noted that the "DES recognises that each school has flexibility within this framework to plan the SPHE programme most suitable for the students and the school" (POL). The policy recognises timetabling challenges with regards SPHE:

> Consideration for appropriate timetabling of the subject is also a key concern. Classes should ideally take place earlier in the school day and be blocked by year group to maximise efficiency and the sharing of resources.

Despite this, the school exceeds requirements regarding the provision of SPHE. All junior level students as well as sixth years have two periods per week of SPHE and fifth years have one period. The report indicates that there is "importance placed by school management on students' personal development" (WSE, p.8).

Review and evaluation of the SPHE programme and policy (POL)
The policy states that the programme will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the SPHE team and will consider the views of all school-level stakeholders. It states that the "opinions of students will be included as part of the review". Policy review will occur in line with School's Development Plan and will be supervised by the SPHE coordinator.

Assessment of SPHE (POL)
The policy states that SPHE is not examinable and that students will keep a portfolio of their work.

Participation/Confidentiality/Referral/Sensitive issues in SPHE and RSE (POL)
Participation is discussed in terms of RSE. The first line of this section states that the school "recognises that parents are the primary educators of their sons and daughters in this regard". The aims of RSE are listed (as per DES syllabus) and the policy states "[I]t is acknowledged that in a course of limited duration these aims are

aspirational". The policy explains that parents have the right to withdraw their child from some or all RSE classes but that that "parents are encouraged to provide some RSE at home". The policy states that parents may provide written reasons for withdrawal if they wish and this can sometimes help resolve any "misunderstandings". The policy is very clear about: the need to make arrangements for children who don't participate in RSE; that information may be passed on by other students; and that requests for withdrawal should be communicated in September of each year.

With regards confidentiality, the school explains responsibilities in terms of child protection and that not all issues can be treated as confidential. The need for teachers to communicate this to students is also explained. Student referral to other school supports should occur through consultation with the student where possible.

The policy gives clear guidelines about how to approach sensitive issues, drawing on the need to refer to ground rules. It also states that inappropriate questions, whether teacher-student or student-student, do not need to be answered. The teacher may also exercise discretion if a question should be answered privately and may consult other staff members for assistance while maintaining student anonymity

<u>Awareness of student needs</u>

Student involvement at school-level (WSE)

The school operates a year head and class tutor system to manage normal elements of student life (academic, care, and discipline). The roles have developed over time and are formalised and recorded in the teachers' handbook in order to aid clarity and support effectiveness. There is also a student council comprised of eight sixth-year representatives and four fifth-year observers. The role of the student council is mainly to create a sixth-year year book and organise the graduation ball. The report recommends that (in line with Department guidelines Student Councils: a voice for students) that "the council adopts a wider representative structure and promotes the involvement of students of all ages in school affairs, including policy development" (p.5).

Behaviour support and care structures (WSE)

There is a wide array of student care structures in place in the school. There is a student care team, with membership from *"senior management, behaviour support, guidance, school completion, home school community liaison"* and it is reported that *"SPHE is well established in the school"* (p.14). The report cites an example of how the team became actively involved with Jigsaw (a mental health community project for young people) and how the team tasks individual members with care for named students to ensure intended actions are delivered upon.

There is a behaviour support classroom which provides intense individualised interventions for targeted students. The aim of these interventions is to improve behaviour and increase *"the sense of identification with the school community"* (p.15). There is also a school strategy team who focus on this behaviour support classroom as well as the implementation of whole school support strategies.

Facilitating student achievement (WSE)

The report recommends that teachers use homework feedback opportunities to *"acknowledge students' strengths and to provide them with clear, constructive, advice for improvement"* (p.12). The report cites the relevant link for support for curriculum and assessment.

The school's Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP)[33] has been developed and modified so that it targets those at risk of leaving school early. The draft policy is described as *"admirable"* (p.8) in the report and it is recommended that the policy be ratified. The WSE reported that the school operates an effective system to identify students' special educational needs (including good use of communication with parents, feeder primary schools, teachers and through the use of examinations).

[33] The JCSP is "*particularly targeted at junior cycle (lower secondary) students who are identified as being at risk of early school leaving, perhaps without completing the Junior Certificate*" (www.ncca.ie, accessed August 18th, 2015).

Curriculum innovation (WSE)

Curriculum modification is described as *"ongoing"* and *"innovations introduced to try to ensure students' needs are being met"* (p.8). An example is provided: the addition of music due to a request from the parents' council. The report recommends that greater choice should be available for first-year subject choices, while recognising that a very fair system for subject selection is available for students in senior cycle. The BOM is satisfied with the range of extra and co-curricular activities offered, acknowledging teacher commitment to these areas. There is a good range of extracurricular activities which are on offer for junior cycle students (most of which is funded though the SCP). The student council "*expressed regret that such activities are only available to junior students*" (p.10).

School goals

School planning needs (WSE)

The school plan is described as *"a comprehensive file"* (p.16). There is a special-duties teacher who coordinates school planning. This teacher attends regular CPD run by the SDPI service. However, planning is being conducted on an *ad hoc* basis as there is no dedicated planning group. The report highlights the need for: greater school planning and reporting with regards posts of responsibility and DEIS; the need to establish a planning steering group; and the need for multiple improved approaches to the Leaving Cert Applied (LCA) programme (e.g., LCA only currently enrolled with SEN students and a lack of implementation of recommendations from a previous LCA evaluation). It is recommended that the planning steering group create a checklist to coordinate and organise policies (for example policies that are up-to-date or ones that need reviewing).

School climate

School atmosphere and ethos (WSE)

The school atmosphere was described as "orderly and generally welcoming" (p.3) and mutual respect between teachers and students was noted. Members of the students council (who met with inspectors during the WSE) spoke of the school as "having a friendly school atmosphere and being a place where everyone talks to

everyone else, where there is little bullying, where there are no separate ethnic groups and where teachers are very approachable" (p.15). The school aims to create an inclusive environment and it is noted in the report that the "physical school environment reflects an ethos of inclusion" (p.3) through the artwork and school photographs that are on display.

Code of behaviour (WSE)

The students' code of behaviour emphasises "co-operation with teachers, the creation of a pleasant working environment based on mutual courtesy and respect, and the achievement of each student's full potential" (p.5). The code of behaviour is currently under review and the school's discipline committee is urged to prioritise this. The report recommends that the code of behaviour should "focus more on positive behaviour and the promotion of personal responsibility, and include the school's plan for promoting good behaviour" (p.6).

Physical school climate (WSE)

The school is well-resourced and has multiple specialist rooms for specific subjects, a school library (which is a JCSP demonstration library) and a "base room for the teaching of English as an additional language (EAL), a careers library, a student welfare office, a parents' room, a Youth Café, a canteen, behaviour support classroom and learning support rooms". ICT resources in the school are described as very good and the school building is in "pristine condition" (p.6). There is a careers library which is equipped with Qualifax[34] software which is available for student use. The report recommends that a team of senior students could supervise use of the careers library at lunch time.

Anti-bullying approach (WSE)

The school's anti-bullying policy is based on the 'Cool Schools'[35] programme (the school participated in the programme). Whole-staff training was provided for the

[34] "*Qualifax is Ireland's National Learners" Database. It is the 'one stop shop' for learners*" (www.qualifax.ie, accessed June 15, 2015).

[35] The Cool School programme is an Anti-Bullying programme developed for post-primary schools and specifically tailored to the Irish context . It was developed within the HSE Dublin North East's Child Psychiatric Service. (www.hse.ie, accessed, June 19th, 2015).

programme and systems for the programme were put in place. As part of this, an anti-bullying week and surveys of the student body had taken place (March 2008). The report recommends repeating these measures on an annual basis.

School, School Mission Statement and Definition of SPHE (POL)

The school is described as one which "seeks to enrich students lives and empower them for life's challenges". The philosophy of education is described as a "[C]hristian one respectful of and embracing all creeds". The aims of SPHE are outlined (as per DES syllabus) and the school's holistic approach to education is outlined. There is a range of services, supports and activities listed in the appendix (for example, students' council, breakfast club, retreat, and curricular and extra-curricular activities were listed).

School-community relations

The role of visitors in SPHE and RSE (POL)

The policy states that outside speakers can enhance and support the SPHE programme. Rules for inviting speakers are outlined. Teachers must: "inform the Principal in advance; make the speaker aware of the SPHE policy; agree the content of the presentation; do preparatory and follow-up work where possible; under normal circumstances remain with the class group during the visit".

School-family relations

Informing Parents about SPHE and RSE (POL)

An information letter and consent form is provided to first year students' parents (a copy is provided as an appendix in the policy). The letter outlines the ten different SPHE modules. The topics covered in RSE are outlined in a table and are separated into year one, two and three. The letter explains that the school will keep parents updated and a contact name is provided for parental queries. Parents must indicate if they are happy for their child to participate in SPHE. They also have a choice of stating if they have concerns about course content (they must explain concerns and provide contact details).

Informing staff about SPHE and RSE (POL)

It was noted that the policy was to be available in the policy document section for all staff, while all SPHE staff will have a copy.

DISTRICT LEVEL

Administrative stability

New BOM (WSE)

There was a new BOM at the time of the WSE evaluation. The previous board had attended training for their roles and on the function of a BOM. The report notes that the BOM intends for new members to participate in training. The WSE notes that the board's recent concerns have focused on enrolment issues and policy review, in particular "the achievement of an equitable enrolment of all sectors of the local school-going population vis-à-vis the other schools in the town" (p.3). The previous board reportedly met very regularly (every four to six weeks).

Administrative leadership and support

Perception of leadership (I)

The BOM member described a positive relationship with the Principal. The BOM member stated:

> I find him excellent, I feel he's very open, I don't feel he speaks down to any one of us, be better educated or not, he wants your involvement, he wants the commitment of everyone on the board, on the committee, am he's very open to suggestions, I feel the children are definitely number one and anything that he thinks that comes up as an idea or a suggestion that could better the school, he's very much on board for taking it on.

The BOM member did not feel comfortable commenting on the Principal's level of support for RSE but did explain that "I would honestly believe, of what I know of the man and working with him that anything that would I suppose am that would make the children more equipped to make a better decision he would be very full on for".

Child protection (WSE)

The BOM had formally adopted the *Child Protection Guidelines for Post-primary Schools* (Department of Education and Science, September 2004)[36] and the BOM confirmed that management and school staff were aware of the protection procedures.

Awareness of student needs

Parental involvement for student success (I)

The BOM member explained that there are no student representatives on the board. The board member felt that they were aware of student needs in the school but that there was more work to be done for the BOM to involve parents. The interviewee also highlighted the need for parents to be interested in the young people:

> I suppose I would be (aware of student needs) ... I don't have degrees in anything am but I can see what would be needed for our students to make it a better school. I think in my limited experience and what I've seen with the teachers and what's available to them, in my way of thinking there's actually everything in this particular school for students, complete supports right down the road for them am basically if the parents are on board and I don't just mean obviously don't just mean the few on the committee and the board .. .If the parents are interested in the school and the young people, then the young people can actually do really well in this school. BOM needs to make the parents more aware of what is there.

The interviewee was not involved in the development of the school's RSE policy and explained that they don't know much about RSE: "I wouldn't really know a whole lot about that end of things. I do know the children do have a number of classes for these things and I do know they have an awful lot of chats about different things because my own son is able to come home and tell me".

[36] There are new child protection guidelines for schools (published in 2011) but the 2004 guidelines were the most recent ones available at the time of the WSE.

The need for relationships and sexuality education

The need for relationships and sexuality education in “every level of education from every angle” was emphasised by the interviewee. The interviewee highlighted a lack of parental awareness about their children’s lives and cites a “generation gap” particularly because of the internet. The interviewee felt lucky that their child communicates with them and notes their surprise at some of the information relayed:

> some of the stuff my 14 year old tells me, my hair does be standing, having said that I'm very happy that he's very open with me. I ‘spose I'm one of the lucky ones. Okay, I might have mild cardiac arrest every so often with what he comes home with but it’s good that he's open and that he can talk to me but it just makes me more aware that if I had been possibly asked "do you think (child's name) knows that ?" I would be, "nah, I don't think so" but it shows again, I'm wrong. They are very in touch.

The interviewee felt that the provision of positive information, as well as the disadvantages and dangers of relationships and sex should be provided on the internet (these comments were self-prompted and driven by media controversy over a youth mental health promotion organisation publishing an article on ‘threesomes’ on their website) and through school:

> information is put out there in a positive way and shows the disadvantages and the dangers, while it's not nice to see that it's there, it's a fact of life and I think it should be out there maybe kids won't talk to their parents but if they can get access to that information in the right manner whether they agree out loud or would pretend or god I didn't know that, that's frightening there's still somewhere, it's gone into the subconscious ... you want to keep them protected, you want to keep them children as long as you can but perhaps if they're armed with all the stuff you can hold on to that better than pretending it's not there. It should be done from primary and not just the a's and the b's, it should be more in-depth.

District goals

The general role of the BOM, including RSE (I)

When asked to describe their role within the BOM, the interviewee stated: "any issue arising from the school from building to um students to codes of behaviour, discipline, am anything to do with the uniform". The interviewee stated that there was no student representative on the board and that it was comprised of "teachers, the Principal, local council and two parents".

When asked if the BOM have a role to play in implementing RSE, the member did not think RSE was something the board would discuss:

> I dunno if it would even come before board of management unless there was an issue about it. Now I could be saying something that's totally wrong here but I'm sure if it was brought before the board for whatever reason I know to be fair it would be discussed upside down, inside out.

Communication with schools

Need for increased communication (WSE)

Increased communication between the new BOM and parents and teachers is recommended. The new BOM is advised to consider producing written reports from their meetings to communicate with parents and teachers. The WSE recommends that parents need to be informed about formal procedures and offers suggestions for this (such as uploading the policy to school website or through the parents council AGM).

COMMUNITY LEVEL

School-community relations

Community involvement and awareness (I)

The BOM interviewee describes the school's relationships with the community, noting that there are huge time commitments expected from teachers in this regard:

> Ah well they very much, they reach out am I mean I haven't been involved but I know of the children going out to visit people on their own, the elderly

> and things like that so am I think they want to do more of that perhaps but to get these things organised you know in theory they're great but teacher's time and commitment are already huge and you know very much under demand ... they would be very aware of the community around and things like that yeah.

Shared facilities (WSE)

In the WSE, it is stated that there is "a consciousness at management level of the role played by the school in the wider local community" (p.3). For example, the school has a large adult and continuing education programme, runs post-leaving certificate programmes[37] and allows community groups to use school facilities. There is also a parent's room. The DES inspectors observed a weekly parents' cookery lesson.

Inclusive policy (WSE)

The school has an open and inclusive enrolment policy and it is reported that the school "operates and welcomes an impressively wide range of students, creating quite a unique and vibrant school population" (p.2). There is a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator who has been in their role for ten years and is described as enthusiastic and supportive towards parents. The co-ordinator meets the Principal weekly and there are strong links to other local HCSL co-ordinators, other school-level supportive structures and outside agencies. Every year, the HCSL organises a 'Multicultural Week' and parents and students are involved in sharing traditions and customs from their country of origin.

<u>School – family relations</u>

Parent's council /parental involvement (WSE)

There is an active and long-standing parent's council which plays an important role in the school. Committee members from the council work with the HSCL to increase parental participation in school activities. Members were not trained at the time of inspection but were recommended to do so. The parents' council has been a partner in policy development (e.g. anti-bullying and substance misuse), has proposed initiatives (e.g., peer mentoring) and is heavily involved in fundraising to support

[37] These are often referred to as PLC courses and many of the 1-year PLC courses offer Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) accreditation at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, while other more advanced courses may offer QQI level 6, which can lead to further studies at third level (www.citizensinformation.ie).

school activities. Parents are also involved in subject option choices through information nights during the junior cycle.

BOM response to the WSE

The BOM responded to the WSE. The board congratulated the inspection team on "their rigour, commitment, and professionalism" (p.19) and accepted the content of the report. The board noted that full access to LCA documentation was not available due to industrial action. The board noted that all recommendations would be addressed (through the Principal; senior management; and teachers) and feedback on progress would be given to the BOM regularly.

THE RSE LESSON

Teacher's experience of RSE in-service training

The teacher provided an open response about Principal support for training attendance. The teacher reported that the Principal would have liked them "to take a tutor group" (this may refer to tutor group training). The teacher had a very positive experience at RSE in-service training. This is indicated through their responses to the training-level questionnaire[38] and their rating of the training (at 10/10). The teacher provided an additional comment at the end of training, stating that the training was "excellent, very informative". Post-training, the teacher strongly agreed that they felt positive about teaching RSE, understood the purpose of RSE, felt dedicated to the goals of RSE, and respected the RSE programme. The teacher agreed that they had the necessary skills to deliver RSE.

The teacher had previously attended the Introduction to SPHE course offered by the SPHE support service. At the time of data collection, the teacher had sixteen years teaching experience. The teacher had been implementing RSE for five months prior to attending the RSE in-service training.

[38] Post-training, the teacher strongly agreed that the training was clear, easy to understand, the trainer was interested, that they listened, that they were comfortable with the trainer, that they enjoyed the training, that they were comfortable with the other teachers, that they were comfortable with the topics covered, that other teachers paid attention but also that there was a lot of disruption. They strongly disagreed that they didn't pay attention, or that other teachers didn't listen.

Introduction to lesson

This RSE lesson was delivered to students in their first year (junior cycle) of post-primary school. The class (n=11) was mixed gender although there was a majority of boys (n=9). The age range was 13-15 years old, with a mean student age of 14.18 years (SD = .75). The teacher reported that they were following a manual. Observed reports supported this view: "the lesson was clear and organised and I think some activities were taken from resource material. The teacher had a book with information written so I would say yes, a home-made manual".

Previous RSE experience by students

The majority of students (64%) indicated that they experienced RSE classes in primary school. A majority (73%) also reported that they experienced RSE lessons earlier in their first year (current year) of post-primary school.

Lesson timing

There were no differences between the teacher's pre and post-delivery reports on lesson timing (35 minutes). There was a three minute difference noted in observed reports (32 minutes). Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher reported: "Thirty five minutes once a week is a very small amount of time to cover any topic in great detail. Classes can often feel very rushed". Post-lesson delivery, the teacher reported that they had enough time to complete the lesson. Observed reports also indicated that the teacher had enough time to complete the lesson.

Aims: Planned versus actual

There were no differences identified between the teacher's pre and post-delivery implementation plans regarding lesson aims. The teacher did not report any lesson adaptations regarding aims.

Table 4.42: Reported aims school two

Teacher's reported aims
Changes that have occurred so far in the students' lives. Different feelings associated with changes in life. Begin the discussion on puberty and the changes involved.
Students' reported aims
Puberty (3); changes (body and personal changes)(2); yourself and what is happening to your body (1); To get to know what it is about (1)
Observation of lesson aims
Link changes in life (in age (yrs) to feelings & memories, recognising changes in body also now- in the present, reflect on parent's life as teenager, begin to think about puberty.

Comparative reports on lesson aims

Table 4.42 demonstrates that there was consistency between the teacher, students and observed report. Only one additional aim was noted solely in the observed reports (reflect on parent's life as a teenager).

Achieving lesson aims

After lesson completion, the teacher felt that the lesson aims were achieved. The teacher reported: "we had a lot of discussion around change and the feelings brought about by change. The individual differences in development were touched on but I will cover these in more detail next class.

Topics: Planned versus actual

The teacher did not report any lesson adaptation regarding topics.

Table 4.43: Reported topics - school two

Teacher's reported topics
Change in the past and how it made you feel. The changes that will happen in the next few years (puberty) and how they will affect you. Students brought home a sheet for parents to fill in with them on changes when they were teenagers.
Student's reported topics
Puberty (4); Body (1)
Observation of lesson topics
Changes in your life according to ages in your life, feelings associated with these changes, changes in your body due to puberty & adolescence in general, changes in your parents lives when they were teenagers (take-home activity), brief discussion about puberty as it was being covered in the next class.

Comparative reports on lesson topics

All topics described by the teacher were also supported in the observed report. Students (*n=4)* reported 'puberty' which was only one of the topics discussed the lesson (see Table 4.43). One student reported 'body'.

Activities: planned versus actual

Post-lesson delivery, the teacher reported adapting the lesson by changing an activity (the activity was originally intended to be completed as a group). The teacher explained: "I thought some of the students would find the questions very personal and would prefer to fill this in". The teacher reported that this lesson adaptation worked.

Comparative reports on lesson activities

The teacher reported that group work was the activity that took place. Although a majority of students reported group work, forty-four percent reported that they did not take part in group work. The observation differed to students and teacher's reports by indicating that brainstorming took place. The teacher reported that "students will fill out an individual timeline of changes in their lives so far. They can draw as well as write". A minority of students (n=3) reported the "timeline" activity.

Resources: Planned versus actual

The teacher did not report any lesson adaptation regarding resources.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

Forty-five percent of students reported that worksheets were used in class (the remaining students did not provide a response) and worksheets were also reported in the observations. The teacher reported the specific resource used (On My Own Two Feet – ID lesson 6 & 7). The teacher also reported that they were also using the *"Boys: changes in puberty"* and *"Girls: changes in puberty"* from the SPHE 1 resource (source: Potts and O'Grady, 2010). Two students specifically reported the timeline resource that was used, while one student reported 'how am I'.

Some students *(n=4)* indicated that they liked the worksheets that were used. Two students explained why they liked it: "because it teaches me more" and because it was "remembering our past".

Response to resources

The worksheets scored lowest in the user friendly and visually appealing category for students (see Table 4.44 below). In the observations, the resources scored poorly for their visual appeal but scored highly for age appropriateness and for being user friendly.

Table 4.44: Student and observed resource ratings- school two

	STUDENT RATINGS					
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD	OBS
Visually appealing	9	1	10	6.7	3.0	3
User friendly	8	5	9	6.4	1.5	10
Age appropriate	7	5	10	8.4	1.8	10
Culturally sensitive	6	7	10	9.2	1.3	7

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

The teacher rated the main resource used for the lesson: *"On My Own Two Feet"* (see Table 4.45). The teacher did not provide any rating for the SPHE 1 resource used.

Table 4.45: Teacher's resource ratings - school two

	Visually appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
On My Own Two Feet	3	5	5	3

Note: rated on a scale from one (most negative) to five (most positive)

Lesson delivery: student responsiveness

The teacher reported that they planned to monitor student responsiveness by asking students to bring "home a worksheet which they can complete with their parents. We will discuss this next week". During the lesson, it was observed that the teacher monitored student responses as the teacher "chatted to them and then responded to their responses, for e.g. the erupted laughter over description of pubertal changes".

The observer's report of students' response to the lesson is described in Table 4.46. It was observed that the "students chatted about their feelings/experiences. Mostly the same people/students contributed throughout". It was also observed that the girls in the class were much quieter than the boys (the majority of students in the class were boys - as reported earlier).

Observed reports suggested that there was a normative family focus in the resources used. The normative family focus of this activity was based on the wording in the resources in relation to the topics covered as well as the take-home activity. As the lesson focused on the topics listed above, there was reflection on a young person's life, memories and changes. There was also a take-home activity to be completed with parents (as highlighted on the form) in order to find out about their life as a teenager. There was a student in the class who asked if the activity could be completed with another adult. The teacher later explained that this was because the student was in foster care.

Table 4.46: Observer's report of student responsiveness

Activity	Resource Description	Observed student response
Worksheet 1	Student life timeline: students are asked to mark changes in their life on a line (big things- either good or upsetting, can also include physical changes)	Students seemed to like the timeline worksheet as they "reflected, seemed interested and were asking questions". Students were told to think about how they felt when these changes happened. One student shares a sad change, one shares a positive one. Many of the same students participated throughout. Teacher prompted discussion about types of feelings connected to different changes. Students asked to write feelings next to the changes and they completed this task.
Worksheet 2	Personal worksheet (Me as I am now) – focused on changes due to getting older and puberty (hormones, moods, greasy hair)	Students seemed to like the worksheet as it covered "new topics never touched on before". Students did not share answers but there was a general classroom chat.
Worksheet 3	Take home activity sheet	Students "seemed interested" in the take-home activity but that it was "hard to tell as it was homework".
Resource (read-aloud)	used to define puberty and examples of gender-specific pubertal changes	It was hard to determine student response as it was not an interactive exercise. It related to the next planned lesson. There were only two girls in the class and laughter erupted at pubertal changes in girls (especially when the word vagina was used).

Lesson Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher strongly agreed that the lesson was worthwhile. The teacher agreed that: the lesson would be easy to understand, there was support for the lesson, there were adequate lesson materials, and that the lesson would be easy to deliver.

Post-lesson delivery, the teacher's views remained unchanged with regards adequate lesson materials, ease of lesson delivery, and that the lesson would be easy to understand. The teacher agreed that they enjoyed and felt confident delivering the lesson. The teacher also agreed that: students enjoyed and engaged in the lesson and that lesson materials worked well. The teacher disagreed that there was a lot of disruption.

Lesson delivery: observer and students' views

The observer strongly agreed that the lesson was delivered clearly, was easy to understand and that the teacher was interested in the lesson. The observer also strongly agreed that students were comfortable with the teacher and comfortable participating in class. The observer agreed that students: enjoyed and listened to the lesson, paid attention, and were comfortable with the topics covered. The observer strongly disagreed that others didn't listen and disagreed that there was a lot of disruption.

Students views are displayed below (see Table 4.47). The majority of students were positive about lesson enjoyment (89%), their comfort with the teacher (89%), and their comfort with topics covered (87%). The majority of students agreed/strongly agreed that the teacher was interested in the lesson (89%). All students reported that the lesson was delivered clearly and that it was easy to understand the lesson. In relation to classroom climate, most students felt comfortable participating (88%) however half of students agreed that there was a lot of disruption (50%). All students reported that they listened. The majority of students reported that they paid attention (88%). The majority of students reported that other students listened and paid attention (77% and 88% respectively). Most students (88%) felt that they learned a lot in the lesson.

Table 4.47: Students' reports on lesson delivery and participation - school two

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lesson delivered clearly	9	n=7 (78%)	n=2 (22%)		
Easy understand lesson	9	n=3 (33%)	n= 6 (67%)		
Enjoyed lesson	9	n=2 (22%)	n= 6 (67%)	n=1 (11%)	
Teacher interested lesson	9	n=1 (11%)	n=7 (78%)	n=1 (11%)	
Comfortable with teacher	9	n=1 (11%)	n=7 (78%)	n=1 (11%)	
Comfortable participating	8	n=1 (13%)	n= 6 (75%)	n=1 (12%)	
Listened to lesson	9	n=2 (22%)	n=7 (78%)		
Others didn't listen at all	9		n=3 (33%)	n=6 (67%)	n=1 (11%)
Didn't pay attention	8	n=1 (12%)		n=3 (38%)	n=4 (50%)
Others paid attention	8	n=2 (25%)	n=5 (63%)	n=1 (12%)	
Comfortable with topics	8	n=1 (12%)	n= 6 (75%)	n=1 (13%)	
A lot of disruption	8		n=4 (50%)	n=1 (12%)	n=3 (38%)
learned a lot in this lesson	8	n=2 (25%)	n=5 (63%)	n=1 (12%)	

Lesson ratings

The teacher's self-rating and the ratings from the observation were the same (9/10). Both ratings exceeded the mean student rating (8.5) but only by a small margin (see Table 4.48).

Table 4.48: Lesson Ratings - school two

Students' Ratings (*n*=8)			
Min	Max	Mean	SD
5	10	8.5	2.3

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

Further perspectives

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher reported that the: "timeline may cause problems for students who have issues with events that may have happened in their past". Post-delivery, the teacher provided one comment describing their feelings about the lesson after delivery: "This was my first RSE class. I enjoyed the experience and I am looking forward to covering the rest of the course. I hope to gain a lot of experience as I implement my classes through the students and my own reflections on classes covered".

The observed report highlighted lesson barriers: 1) students being taken out of class for other things (other research); 2) students coming in late; and 3) other teachers interrupting the class.

The observer provided comments on the lesson:

> The lesson had a very clear focus and avoided over complication by having two worksheets/activities for students to get involved in. The lesson moved from general to specific and I think really mastered the experiential learning cycle within the class time. No games/movement were involved but the timeline was interesting and students sat in a circle as the teacher is an art teacher and it was in the art room. The circular/big all together table enhanced the class dynamic. The teacher was very calm and kept the class in order while also allowing the students to participate.

4.2.3 School three

School description

In 2015, the school was described as a mixed interdenominational secondary community school. The school was designated DEIS during data collection (2011/2012) but was no longer classified as DEIS in 2015. The school has a male Principal and there were 756 students' enrolled (381 boys, 375 girls) (www.education.ie, accessed June 1st, 2015).

School Context

Two data sources informed the contextual section for this school: 1) the school's RSE policy; 2) Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) which was conducted in 2012. WSE-MLL aims to "evaluate key aspects of the work of the post-primary school and to promote school improvement. The focus is on the quality of management and leadership and the quality of learning and teaching" (DES, 2011, p.5). Although the descriptions of a WSE-MLL are very similar to the traditional WSE, the DES describes the WSE-MLL as complementary to "the standard WSE model" (ibid, 2011, p.5). The purpose of the WSE-MLL evaluation is to focus on the schools progress in and capacity for, self-evaluation. It

also examines schools' implementation and fulfilment of recommendations from previous external evaluations (emphasis added). It seeks to support existing good practice but also to provide clear suggestions for further improvement and development (ibid, 2011). Findings related to the RSE policy and the DES evaluation are identifiable in the text through the bracketed initials (POL) and (WSE-MLL) respectively.

CLASSROOM LEVEL

Implementer characteristics and behaviours

Quality of learning and teaching and Effectiveness of leadership for learning (WSE-MLL)

Subject lesson observations noted a good range of resources in many lessons. There was also good use of ICT demonstrated by the majority. There was a minority of classes in which "resources used were limited or poorly used, did not engage students, and indicated low levels of planning" (p.7). Most lessons needed greater promotion of oral communication skills and a very good level of interaction between peers was noted in only a minority of cases. In some lessons, teachers spoke too quickly which was unhelpful particularly for students with learning challenges.

In some lessons, there was not enough time allocated to students to construct answers or the level of questioning was too low. The evaluation notes "[V]ery good practice was noted where co-operative learning was facilitated. In the best lessons, challenging, stimulating but achievable tasks were set and this generated a perceptible level of enthusiasm for learning" (p.7). The use of active learning methodologies was encouraged in the evaluation due to a small number of lessons which were didactic and overly teacher-led.

Good classroom management was noted and the school was commended for the creation of a "vibrant learning atmosphere" (p.7). There was a need to improve good practice in relation to student monitoring (homework allocation and feedback to students). The evaluation noted that "little or no homework is recorded in student journals despite a recommendation in a previous report. All teachers and subject departments need to address this issue" (p.7).

SCHOOL LEVEL

Administrative stability

Fairness in post roles (WSE-MLL)

The report notes a lack of fairness in tasks attached to some posts and that this should be reviewed and rebalanced through the action planning for school self-evaluation. The report stated that all "post holders should have clear job descriptions and report regularly to the Principal on the impact of their roles" (p.4).

RSE provision in the school (POL)

The aims of RSE are described and one aim specifically relates to educating students "to be discriminating and about the messages in relation to sexuality that are portrayed in various media". There are two appendices attached to the policy which outline RSE theme development for both junior and senior cycle (as per the DES syllabus). The school's current provision of RSE details that "(C)ertain aspects of RSE are taught within other subjects such as Science, Home Economics and Religion". It is unclear what aspects and if this approach relates to both junior and senior cycle.

Provision for RSE support, development and review (POL)

The policy states that continued support for students and teachers will be provided in relation to RSE, including facilitating teacher training. It also states that RSE will be evaluated and reviewed by the school but that the development and implementation is dependent on the final approval of the BOM. A policy review date of 2011 was provided.

Administrative leadership and support

School leaders (WSE-MLL)

The Principal has been in his role for twenty years and is described as "heavily engaged in a variety of day-to-day management duties" (p.3). He has led curricular initiatives and promoted subject department planning.

There is a good working relationship between the Principal and deputy Principal and they meet regularly (in both formal and informal meetings). The report stated that as

leaders, “Principal and deputy Principal need to develop a clear vision for school improvement in conjunction with the board, staff, students and parents” (p.4). The role of the deputy Principal needs greater clarity and the evaluation also recommends that senior management duties should be documented.

Commended work (WSE-MLL)

There is good quality work in the areas of personal, vocational and educational guidance. The school is praised for the junior cycle guidance programme; staff mentoring senior cycle students; and a student-centred approach to LCA. An RSE programme is in place. The Physical Education programme (PE) is provided for junior cycle and TY students and offers a wide range of activities. There are issues with the provision of PE in senior cycle (it is not offered to LCVP students) and it is recommended that all students have equality of access to PE as advised by DES.

School Planning (WSE-MLL)

There is good school planning: there is an effective planning group and a good school plan. In the plan: priorities have been identified; all policies have been ratified and there is a process of rolling review. In relation to CPD, the recent focus has been on ICT and the report recommends CPD in relation to “whole-school teaching and learning areas such as active learning, differentiation, assessment for learning and whole-school literacy and numeracy” (p.4). Teachers are commended for reflective practice.

Guidelines for management and organisation of RSE (POL)

The guidelines for the management and organisation of RSE indicate that SPHE and RSE are a core part of the pastoral care ethos of the school. This section explains that differing views and sensitivities may arise and five key points are discussed in relation to this: a) parents are viewed as primary educators of their children and their role in school based relationships and sexuality is very important; b) parents will be provided with RSE information letters at the beginning of junior and senior cycle (parents can choose to have their child withdrawn from the programme); c) outside facilitators may be involved in RSE but only as a supplementary tool and not instead of planned lessons; d) children with special needs may need more help and support in relation to RSE (including the need to warn and prepare them against abuse by

others); e) process of reporting child protection issues, including naming the designated liaison person.

Awareness of student needs

Pastoral Care (WSE-MLL)

The pastoral care system functions effectively and there are good relationships between staff and students. The school's care team provides evidence of its dedication to supporting students. The report recommends way to utilise the structure to manage individual cases, including students returning from suspension. Junior cycle year heads play a role in the identification of at-risk students. It is recommended that the care team should "develop profiles, design specific intervention strategies, and measure impact" (p.5) using all data available. There is a small minority of students with significant levels of absenteeism and this should be addressed. There is good SEN provision in the school and there are individual plans for students receiving additional resource hours.

Student council (WSE-MLL)

There is an active student council which plays a role in the school and works well with the prefect system.

Curriculum provision (WSE-MLL)

The school provides an array of subjects and programmes. Programmes are described as being "well-coordinated" (p.5). The school is also very actively engaged in the promotion of extra and co-curricular activities. Students "have the opportunity to learn in alternative settings" (p.6) which indicates that there is a lot of dedication from school staff. The school has won awards in various areas of curriculum provision.

Definition of RSE and relationship of RSE to SPHE (POL)

RSE is defined and the legislative framework for RSE is outlined as per DES materials. Within the section "the relationship of RSE to SPHE", the SPHE programme is described but the relationship that exists between SPHE and RSE is not clearly defined. The sole reference to RSE was that "apart from the specific lessons of Relationships and Sexuality Education, Social, Personal and Health

Education covers other areas which would be pertinent to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and in one's relationship with others".

School goals

School goals to be prioritised (WSE-MLL)

There are a number of school goals that are prioritised in the report, such as ICT development; the school extension; the school's literacy and numeracy plan (the most urgent); and junior cycle review.

Subject planning (WSE-MLL)

The evaluation reports that subject planning is being advanced and "some subject plans have clearly documented learning outcomes" (WSE-MLL, p.5). The report emphasises that "[B]est practice links outcomes, teaching methodologies, resources and assessment methods in each content area" (WSE-MLL, p.5). It is noted that there is evidence of data analysis and the evaluation recommends that the data should be used to improve attainment (through target setting). It is recognised that attainment is quite good in general. The school should aim to increase student uptake of higher level, particularly in subjects where these rates are below national norms.

Progressed school goals (WSE-MLL)

The evaluation highlights that some of the recommendations from previous reports are being addressed: recommendations in relation to management and efforts at progression in the areas of teaching and learning in some areas. The recommendations that PE is provided for all students and consistent practice in homework allocation have not been addressed. The school's self-evaluation process and capacity for school improvement is described as well-developed in some cases but is not operating at a whole-school level. In some cases "instruments such as surveys of stakeholders are used to inform planning, targets are developed based on evidence, and evaluation takes place; this represents good work. Many subject departments have begun to gather data on assessment outcomes" (p.8). Staff responses are submitted to the BOM and this is commended in the report.

School climate

School ethos (WSE-MLL, POL)

The enrolment policy is described as fair and open. The code of behaviour is described as "a good document in most respects" but that it would benefit from emphasis of positive behaviour reinforcement measures (WSE-MLL, p.4). The report commends the school's excellent expectation that students should be respected. Some teachers and class officers communicate positive messages through the school journal (which is commended) but this practice should occur at a whole-school level (WSE-MLL).

The policy describes the school ethos, missions and aims in a general capacity (POL).

School satisfaction (WSE-MLL)

The vast majority of respondents of the evaluation questionnaires (both parents and students) indicated satisfaction with most features of school life.

Physical climate (WSE-MLL)

The school has very good facilities and the school grounds are well maintained. There is an overall caring approach to the environment. One example of this is that the school has won two green flags (and was working towards a third) as part of the 'Green Schools' initiative[39].

DISTRICT LEVEL

Administrative leadership and support

Board of Management (WSE-MLL)

The board of management is correctly formed and is described as "strongly supportive of the school and the senior management team" (WSE-MLL, p.3). The BOM played a role in the development of the school plan and a number of school

[39] This is known internationally as Eco-Schools, which is an "*international environmental education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment*" (http://www.greenschoolsireland.org/, accessed June 30, 2015).

policies. A positive example of the BOM's involvement in the school is provided. The BOM created a sub-committee to evaluate canteen provision in the school.

Awareness of student needs

Child Protection (WSE-MLL)

The BOM confirmed that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools' (September 2011) have been adopted without any adaptations.

Communication with schools

Good quality communication (WSE-MLL)

The evaluation notes that there is good quality communication between the BOM, senior management, and the school community. An agreed account of the BOM meetings is circulated to the staff and the Parents' Association.

Communication improvements (WSE-MLL)

The report recommends inviting school staff (in leadership roles) and members of the student council to present their work to the BOM at regular intervals. Although there are many ways that the school communicates information to parents (school website; open nights; information sessions; and student journal), some parental responses to the questionnaire indicate that "a significant minority may be unfamiliar with the board's work" (WSE-MLL, p.3). The evaluation recommends considering the publication of a newsletter to improve communication.

COMMUNITY LEVEL

School-family relations

Parents' Association (WSE-MLL)

The Parents' Association (PA) is described as "very supportive of the school" (WSE-MLL, p.3) and has raised a lot of funding for the school. The PA is advised to reflect on further ways to communicate with parents based on the findings discussed earlier.

BOM Response to WSE

The BOM responded to the WSE report. The BOM welcomed the very positive findings in the report. The BOM acknowledged the need to work on improving

learning outcomes and to develop an action plan for literacy and numeracy. It was noted that the attendance figures from 2011/2012 showed a vast improvement from the previous year and the 20 day absence figure is now in line with the national average. Cutbacks (as a result of decreased budgets and hiring moratoriums) are cited as the problem in relation to findings about posts of responsibility and the restructuring of the LCA programme. The response also highlights that all staff have received the appropriate CPD (in areas highlighted as weak in the evaluation) but notes that future CPD will focus on key teaching and learning areas.

Teacher's experience of RSE in-service training

The teacher reported that they received support from the Principal to attend RSE in-service training. The teacher's response to training was very positive as indicated through their questionnaire responses[40] and training rating (10/10). The teacher provided an additional comment about the training, stating "excellent facilitator". Post-training, the teacher agreed that they felt positive about teaching RSE, had the necessary skills to deliver RSE, understood the purpose of RSE, felt dedicated to the goals of RSE, and respected the RSE programme.

The teacher had previously attended the *Introduction to SPHE* in-service course provided by the SPHE support service. The teacher had five months teaching experience at the time of data collection. The teacher had been implementing RSE classes five months prior to attending RSE training.

Introduction to lesson

The students in this class (*n=19)* were in their first year (junior cycle) of post-primary school. The class was mixed gender (9 girls and 10 boys). The age range was 13-14 years old, with a mean student age of 13.26 (SD = 0.45). The teacher reported that they were following a manual. The observed report also indicated that

[40] Post-training, the teacher strongly agreed that the training was clear, easy to understand, the trainer was interested, that they listened, that they were comfortable with the trainer, that they enjoyed the training, that they were comfortable with the other teachers, that they were comfortable with the topics covered, and that other teachers paid attention. They strongly disagreed that there was a lot of disruption, that they didn't pay attention, or that other teachers didn't listen.

they were following a manual of sorts, that they were "using a game from the HT resource, all games activities from HT - lesson was laid out (planned)".

Previous RSE experience by students

All students reported that they *did not* receive RSE classes in primary school. A majority of students (90%) reported that they had received RSE lessons previously during their first year of post-primary school.

Lesson timing

There was no variation between the teacher's pre and post-delivery reports on lesson timing (40 minutes). There was a fifteen minute difference between the teacher's and the observed report. Post-lesson delivery, the teacher felt that they did not have enough time to complete the lesson. This was also reported in the observations.

Aims: Planned versus actual

The teacher did not report any adaptations to lesson aims.

Table 4.49: Reported aims school three

Teacher's reported aims
To enable the students to deepen their awareness of stereotyping and its influence on attitudes and behaviour.
Students' reported aims
Gender stereotyping (9); gender (6); sex (2); it was funny (2); easy to know that girls can play sport too (1); walking debate (1); good (1); relationships (1); and learned a lot (1).
Observation of lesson aims
Get students to think about gender roles and stereotyping

Comparative reports on lesson aims

Teacher, students (*n=15*), and the observed report about lesson aims were consistent. Some students reported additional aims (see Table 4.49). Most of these reports seem linked to lesson response and activities covered and not the actual aims of the lesson (see Table 4.49).

Achieving lesson aims

The teacher reported that they did not achieve the aims of the lesson (closed question) however, their response to the open section of the question is ambivalent: "Yes and no, I think they understood what gender stereotyping is but as we ran out

of time we didn't discuss how we could apply what they learnt to their everyday lives".

Topics: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported adapting the lesson plan as there was not enough time to finish the lesson. The teacher reported that students didn't get to apply topic to their lives: *"I presented the material, they understood what gender stereotyping was but I didn't get to close the lesson effectively, if I was to do the lesson again I would only do one activity and leave more time at the end to apply the information".*

Table 4.50: Reported topics – school three

Teacher's reported topics
Gender stereotyping
Student's reported topics
Boys and girls (8); stereotyping/gender stereotyping (5); gender (3); gender types (1); what men and women should do (1), couples matching (1), sexuality (1), walking debate (1),what men and women do for jobs (1).
Observation of lesson topics
Gender stereotyping, using gender roles of parents and also if students do these things themselves. Gender-roles, making beds, meals, washing family car. What is gender?, associating words with specific genders.

Comparative reports on lesson topics

All reports indicated that gender stereotyping was a topic that was covered (see Table 4:50). Student and observer reports suggest a number of other topics that were covered however these all link to the main topic of gender stereotyping.

Activities: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported no adaptations regarding lesson activities.

Comparative reports on lesson activities

All reports indicated that 'walking debate' and 'group work' took place. The majority of students did not report that there were any 'games' (although the remaining 41% of students reported that 'games' did take place). Teacher and observed reports suggested that 'games' took place. The teacher reported a 'brainstorming activity' however this was not reported by students or observed. The teacher reported that a 'Youtube video clip' was used for an activity. This was supported in the observed report. This was not reported by students.

Resources: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported an adaptation regarding resources, stating that: “I didn’t show a clip that I intended to show”. The teacher explained that they had run out of time.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The teacher reported that the Healthy Living resource was used. Observations indicated that an interactive whiteboard, cartoon clips and images, and an RSE lesson resource were used. The majority of students (94%) reported that ‘walking debate’ was a resource that was used.

The teacher also reported that the SPHE 1 resource (source: Potts and O’Grady, 2010) was used for images of males and females. The teacher reported using gender stereotypes in the media (Source: Youtube). The teacher also reported using gender roles interviews with the students (no source provided).

Response to resources

All students (who reported the walking debate resource) indicated that they liked the resource that was used. The main reason for liking the resource was that it was fun (exciting and interesting were also mentioned). Other reasons were provided: “everybodies (sic) reaction wasn’t the same”; “it is better than just putting up your hand”; “you can see peoples (sic) opinions better”; “you talk to people more”; and “you have your own opinion”. A majority of students (89%) also reported that “matching couples” was a resource that was used and that they liked it. The main reasons for liking it was that it was “interesting”/“fun”. A small number of students reported that a video clip was used.

Resource ratings

As demonstrated in Table 4.51, students rated the resources used in this lesson quite highly, particularly with regards age appropriateness. Observed ratings were also high, with the resources scoring full points for their visual appeal.

Table 4.51: Student and observed resource ratings - school three

	STUDENT RATINGS					OBS
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD	
Visually appealing	16	5	10	7.9	2.1	10
User friendly	18	2	10	7.8	2.2	7
Age appropriate	18	6	10	9.2	1.1	8
Culturally sensitive	18	1	10	7.7	3.0	7

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

The teacher only provided ratings for the Healthy Living resource as this was the main resource they had experience using. It was also the resource used for the lesson. The teacher rated the resource very highly; with the resource scoring full points in all four categories (see Table 4.52).

Table 4.52: Teacher's resource ratings - school three

	Visually Appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
Healthy Living	5	5	5	5

Note: rated on a scale from one (most negative) to five (most positive)

Monitoring student's responsiveness

The teacher reported that they planned to monitor responses through "active and verbal participation". During the lesson, the observer noted that the teacher did monitor responses as they "checked to see what students thought of the lesson and their reaction, noted that (in front of students) that the match-up game didn't really work".

The teacher reflected further on this activity and stated: "the activity 'matching pairs' celebrity couples that was in the Healthy Living book was not a success as the students did not recognise names of the 'celebrities', if I was to do that again I would make my own names that the students would recognise". The observed report of student responsiveness are presented in Table 4.53.

Table 4.53: Observer's report of student responsiveness - school three

Activity	Resource Description	Observed student response
Class discussion (group work)	Interactive whiteboard	Students seemed to like this activity and it was visually pleasing. Students were amused by the cartoon clips/images.
Walking debate	Teacher read out statements related to gender stereotypes and students had to agree/disagree or remain neutral.	Students seemed to enjoy the activity and everyone participated. They were not sure about the aim of the activity at first and there was a lot of talking. It was difficult also difficult to coordinate as the classroom was in standard format so there was no "free space".
Matching couples game	This was a game from the RSE resources whereby students had to match-up "celebrity couples".	This activity received the poorest response from students. Most of the celebrity couples listed in the resource were unknown by the students in the class. This meant that the activity did not work.

Lesson Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-lesson delivery the teacher strongly agreed that the lesson was worthwhile and would be easy to understand. The teacher agreed that the lesson would be: easy to deliver; that there were adequate materials; and that they received support.

Post-lesson delivery the teacher strongly agreed: that the lesson was easy to deliver; that they enjoyed delivering the lesson; and that there were adequate lesson materials. The teacher also strongly agreed that they felt confident delivering the lesson and that students both enjoyed and engaged in the lesson. The teacher agreed that the lesson materials worked well and that students understood the lesson. They also agreed that there was a lot of disruption.

Lesson Delivery: Observer and Students' views

The observer strongly agreed that students were comfortable: participating in class; with the teacher and with the topics covered. The observer also strongly agreed that the teacher was interested in the lesson and that students enjoyed the lesson. The observer agreed that the lesson: was delivered clearly; was easy to understand; and that students both listened and paid attention. The observer also agreed that there was a lot of disruption but disagreed that the students didn't listen at all.

Students views are displayed in Table 4.54. Student responses indicate that the lesson was received positively, with all students strongly agreeing/agreeing that it was delivered clearly, easy to understand, and enjoyable. All students reported that the teacher was interested in the lesson, that they were comfortable with the teacher, that they felt comfortable participating and that they listened to the lesson. All students reported that they paid attention and a majority (93%) reported that they were comfortable with the topics covered. The majority of students (80%) reported that they learned a lot in the lesson.

Although a majority of students (57%) reported that there was disruption, a majority of students also reported that other students listened (60%). The majority of students (94%) also reported that other students had paid attention.

Table 4.54: Students' reports on lesson delivery and participation - school three

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lesson delivered clearly	16	n=12 (12.5%)	n=14 (87.5%)		
Easy understand lesson	16	n=5 (31%)	n=11 (69%)		
Enjoyed lesson	15	n= 3 (20%)	n=12 (80%)		
Teacher interested lesson	16	n=4 (37.5%)	n=12 (62.5%)		
Comfortable with teacher	16	n=4 (37.5%)	n=12 (62.5%)		
Comfortable participating	15	n=1 (7%)	n=14 (93%)		
Listened to lesson	15	n=4 (27%)	n=11 (73%)		
Others didn't listen at all	15		n=6 (40%)	n=6 (40%)	n=2 (20%)
Didn't pay attention	15			n=7 (47%)	n=8 (53%)
Others paid attention	15	n=4 (27%)	n= 10(67%)	n=1 (6%)	
Comfortable with topics	15	n= 3 (20%)	n=11 (73%)	n=1 (7%)	
A lot of disruption	14	n=1 (7%)	n=7 (50%)	n=5 (36%)	n=1 (7%)
learned a lot in this lesson	15	n= 3 (20%)	n=9 (60%)	n= 3 (20%)	

Lesson ratings

The teacher rated this lesson 7/10 while the observer rated the lesson 8/10. The students' mean rating (see Table 4.55) and the rating from the observation exceeded the teacher's rating of their lesson.

Table 4.55: Lesson ratings- school three

Students' Ratings (*n*=14)			
Min	Max	Mean	SD
6	10	8.4	1.4

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

<u>Further perspectives</u>

Pre-delivery, the teacher reported that the "lesson might bring certain attitudes that students have about their gender roles".

The observer highlighted a number of barriers to lesson delivery: 1) "students came from P.E., full of energy and late"; 2) "class layout (students sitting at desks)"; 3) "time - not enough time to let students share, seemed to be too many activities"; and 4) "students were talking and messing, so harder for teacher to control class. This was also a positive thing (for interaction)".

4.2.4 School four

School Description

In 2015, the school was described as a vocational, interdenominational, mixed school. The school has a female Principal and all students are taught through the Irish language. The school had 28 students enrolled (11 boys and 17 girls).

School Context

Limited contextual level data were available for this school. There was no whole school evaluation or SPHE departmental reports available. As a result, departmental inspection reports (in subjects other than SPHE) have been analysed and any data relating to context has been reported on. Subject inspections which "evaluate the teaching and learning of an individual subject in post-primary schools" (www.education.ie, accessed July 15th, 2015). The school does not have a website and it was not possible to interview any school-level stakeholder. The teacher who took part in the research was no longer working at the school after initial data collection (the teacher was on a maternity cover contract). The three inspection reports were in the subjects of Science (inspected in 2016), the subject of Home Economics (2015), and the subject of Irish (inspected in 2011). To aid clarity, findings are identifiable through the following bracketed initials: Science inspection (SCI), Home Economics inspection (HE), and the Irish inspection (IR).

CLASSROOM LEVEL

Implementer characteristics and behaviours

Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning was described as *"good or very good"* during two inspections (SCI, p.3; IR, p.3). In the third inspection, the *"standard of teaching*

and learning was of a high quality, with many aspects of excellent practice observed" (HE, p.3). In this subject, it was also reported that teaching and learning was *"very student-centred and the preferred learning styles of students were well accommodated"* (HE, p.3).

Classroom management/climate

In one subject, classroom management was described as 'very good' and student behaviour was described as 'exemplary' (SCI, p.3). It was also reported that "very positive student-teacher rapport was evident throughout all lessons" (SCI, p.3). In another subject, it was reported that "[V]ery good teacher-student rapport was evident, which led to a positive classroom atmosphere. Students' behaviour was very good in all lessons observed and their work was monitored carefully in a supportive and encouraging manner" (HE, p.4). In the subject of Irish, classroom management was described as "good in all lessons" and that "all teachers gave very supportive affirmation to the quality of the students' efforts and opinions" (IR, p3).

Methodologies

A range of teaching and learning methodologies, which included "good differentiation strategies", were reported in one subject (SCI, p.3). In another subject, the best methodologies that were used were described (language specific skills) and it was recommended that greater "use should be made of AfL methods as an aid to learning" (IR, p.3). In Home Economics, it was noted that there was a "very good range of active learning methodologies including some differentiation strategies" (HE, p.3).

Planning and preparation

The quality of lesson planning and preparation was described as "good" (IR, p.4); "very good" (SCI, p.4); and "of a very high standard" (HE, p.4). In one subject, teachers were described as being "well-prepared" and made good use of available resources (SCI, p.3). In another subject, good use was made of ICT and text-books as well as "an excellent range of Irish-medium class notes" (HE, p.4). In the subject of Irish, teachers were described as being well-prepared for their lesson "in terms of worksheets and PowerPoint presentations' which greatly improved students' learning and participation" (IR, p.4).

SCHOOL LEVEL

Administrative leadership and support

Subject provision and whole school support

Whole-school support for subject of Science was described as "very good" (SCI, p.4) with the school being described as well-resourced, supportive of teachers' CPD, encouraging of student participation in co- and extra-curricular activities, and utilising a variety of assessments. The subject of Home Economics was described as being well-supported by the school (for example regarding timetable provision, resources, related co- and extra-curricular activities, and relevant school policies). For the subject of Irish, it was reported that "satisfactory provision is made for teaching and learning the language in the timetable" (p.4). Whole-school support is described very positively for this subject (IR) and a number of actions are commended (plans to develop an Irish resource library; encouraging student participation in relevant co and extracurricular activities; summative examination system which includes oral skills; and teachers use of recommended methodologies from in-service training courses).

Main recommendations from the inspections

In the subject of Science, it was recommended that: a) teachers should ensure that "learning intentions are recapitulated during lesson and implement strategies to aid students in reflecting on these intentions to improve their learning skills"; b) "teachers should ensure that all lesson have a good balance between teacher instruction and student activity"; c) "the schemes of work should be extended to include specific teaching and learning methodologies and assessment modes linked to learning outcomes" (p.2).

In the subject of Home Economics, recommendations were: a) a need to "reflect existing good practice in home economics lessons, short-term schemes of work should be further developed to include more specific details regarding suggested teaching resources and assessment modes", and b) the existing policy for homework "should be reviewed and further developed into a more comprehensive whole-school homework and assessment policy" (p.2).

In the subject of Irish, it was recommended to: a) make more use of assessment for learning methods; b) include the oral competency of learners in reports which are sent home; c) design an action plan "based on the priorities of the department itself" and based on the main findings of the inspection in order to "further develop the Irish department"; and d) "enhance short term planning" by creating a "specific number of learning objectives appropriate to the length of the lesson" (p.2).

BOM responses to the inspections

In response to the Science inspection, the BOM warmly welcomed the positive comments of the report. The BOM indicated that staff had been advised to modify strategies outlined in the first and third recommendations, while the second recommendation was not referred to.

In response to the Home Economics inspection, the BOM welcomed the positive opinions of the report. The BOM reported that the teaching staff had been advised to modify strategies as outlined in the first recommendation. It was reported that the second recommendation which related to the homework and assessment policy was under review.

The BOM did not provide a response to the Irish inspection.

Teacher's experience of RSE in-service training

The teacher reported that they received support from the Principal to attend RSE in-service training. The teacher's response to training was positive as indicated through their questionnaire responses[41] and training rating (9/10). The teacher provided an additional comment about the training, stating "perhaps some resources as gaeilge" ('as gaeilge' means 'in Irish'). Post-training, the teacher agreed that they felt positive about teaching RSE, had the necessary skills to deliver RSE, understood the purpose of RSE, felt dedicated to the goals of RSE, and respected the RSE programme. The teacher had previously attended the *Introduction to SPHE* and an *Anti-Bullying* in-

[41] Post-training, the teacher strongly agreed that the training was clear, easy to understand, the trainer was interested, that they were comfortable with the trainer. The teacher agreed that they listened to the training, that they enjoyed the training, that they were comfortable with the other teachers, that they were comfortable with the topics covered, and that other teachers paid attention. The teacher disagreed that they didn't pay attention. They strongly disagreed that there was a lot of disruption and that other teachers didn't listen.

service course provided by the SPHE support service. The teacher had one year of teaching experience at the time of data collection. The teacher reported that they had not implemented any RSE classes prior to attending RSE training.

Introduction to lesson

The students in this class (*n=6)* were all female. It was a mixed-year group (students in both first and second year of junior cycle) of post-primary school. The age range was 14-16 years old, with a mean student age of 14.83 (SD = 0.75). The teacher reported that they were not following a manual. The teacher explained that "[A]ll students have different abilities depending on area, age etc and having a standardised manual may not benefit some of these situations. Lesson plans in resources are easy to follow and allow for alterations or updating with current information (e.g. up to date pics of celebs etc that students are aware of). All classes are different and I think teacher must teach content outlined by the syllabus but how this is delivered in the class must relate to students own lives and be current information for the students".

The observer indicated that the teacher was not following a manual and explained that the teacher "didn't seem to follow a manual but they had a plan ... used a story from the curriculum (RSE book - blue one). Not sure where the activities were taken from. Video clips were not included".

Previous RSE experience by students

All students indicated that they *did not* receive RSE classes in primary school. All students, including those in second year at the time, reported that they had received RSE lessons in their first year of post-primary school.

Lesson timing

There was no difference between the teacher's pre and post-delivery reports of lesson timing (40 minutes). The observed report indicated a ten minute difference (30 minutes). Post-lesson delivery, the teacher felt that they had enough time to complete the lesson. The observer also indicated that the teacher had enough time to complete the lesson.

Aims: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported no adaptations regarding lesson aims.

Table 4.56: Reported aims school four

Teacher's reported aims
To explore the concept of body image, in order to promote a healthy body image and enable students to accept themselves as they are. Students will identify pos. and neg. body image, students will explore effects of peer pressure on body image, students will apply their knowledge to develop ways to promote a positive body image.
Students' reported aims
body image and confidence in yourself (1); I really think it was very interesting to find out about airbrushing and what people really look like (1); I think today's RSE lesson was about accepting who we are and not try to be super skinny or have perfect skin just because you saw someone in a magazine with it. Positive body image (1); I think todays class was about to be comfortable in your own body. Really skinny doesn't look good it's better to have a Figure and that everyone is different (1); models; self confidence and your image (1).
Observation of lesson aims
how this applies to their life, no-one's the same, media can have more negative influence, positive body image and how to promote this, life has many difficult elements

Comparative reports on lesson aims

As demonstrated in Table 4.56, teacher, students and the observed report of lesson aims were the same. The specific aim of "exploring the effects of peer pressure on body image" was only reported by the teacher.

Achieving lesson aims

After lesson completion, the teacher reported that lesson aims were achieved. The teacher explained: "students understood the aim of the lesson as they were able to explain and identify the way the media influences the perception of body image. The students could give examples and ways in which the media could promote a positive body image".

Topics: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported no lesson adaptations regarding topics.

Table 4.57: Reported topics - school four

Teacher's reported topics
body image, influence of the media on person's body image, air-brushing
Student's reported topics
Airbrushing, models and airbrushing (1); different body shapes/sizes, how what people say affect your life (1); celebs, body image, we are all different and we don't have to look like models (1); fashion and style (1); we should feel good about ourselves (1); we wrote down on a piece of paper good things about each other and it really does make you feel good (1).
Observation of lesson topics
self-esteem, confidence, feelings (positive/negative), the influence other people can have on our feelings, moved on to body image, weight, looks, media influence on young girls body image, various types of media- magazines, internet- comparing Marilyn Monroe to Keira Knightly.

Comparative reports on lesson topics

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher noted that "some of this topic has been covered in Home Economics and as I'm the Home Economics teacher it can be difficult to put a new slant on the information".

The teacher's planned topics (body image, self-esteem, peer pressure and influence of media), and actual topics covered, remained largely unchanged after lesson delivery (see Table 4.57). Post-delivery, the teacher did not specifically report self-esteem and peer pressure although these two topics were referred to by students and in the observation. A number of additional topics were reported by the students and observed but they all link to topics reported by the teacher (see Table 4.57).

Activities: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported no adaptations regarding lesson activities.

Comparative reports on lesson activities

The teacher reported case studies and brainstorming and these activities were also reported in the observations. Students did not respond to the closed question about activities. Half of the students (50%) reported an activity. They reported: "we wrote nice things about each other on a piece of paper"; "story"; and "we wrote down all the positive things about each other".

In response to the open question about activities, it was observed that: “a walk around-activity took place” in which “students had to write positive things about each other”. The teacher also reported that “discussion” was an activity that took place.

Resources: Planned versus actual

The teacher did not report any lesson adaptations regarding resources.

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The teacher reported that DES resources were used. Observations indicated that DVD, power point, and an RSE lesson resource were used. Students did not reply to the closed question about resources. They did respond to the open question about resources, with most students indicating that visual resources were used.

The students liked the resources and gave a variety of reasons, such as: it “helped you visualise the work”; “everyone can see it”; “it showed us the differents (sic) airbrushing does”; and “it showed us that pictures are changed”. One student reported that a story was used and that they liked because it was a “good example”. Another student reported that “models” were used but did not provide further explanation.

Response to resources

The resources used in this lesson received high scores from students and in the observations (see Table 4.58). For students, the resources scored lowest in the user friendly category while in the observed reports, resources scored lowest in the culturally sensitive category.

In the observations, it was noted that “some of the resources used were not DES/education materials but the teacher had picked some really interesting clips and kept the attention of the class. There were no materials available in Irish although this is an Irish-speaking school”.

Table 4.58: Student and observed resource ratings - school four

	STUDENT RATINGS					OBS
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD	
Visually appealing	6	7	10	8.7	1.2	9
User friendly	6	5	10	7.7	2.0	10
Age appropriate	5	6	10	9.2	1.8	10
Culturally sensitive	5	9	10	9.8	.45	7

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

The teacher provided ratings for a number of resources. Three of the resources (Healthy Living, Healthy Times, and Healthy Choices) scored very poorly for their visual appeal (see Table 4.59). All resources achieved full scores for being user friendly. The teacher noted that they had the *"*old edition of *Healthy Living and Healthy Times".*

Table 4.59: Teacher's resource ratings - school four

	Visually Appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
Healthy Living	1	5	3	3
On My Own Two Feet	4	5	4	4
Healthy Times	1	5	3	3
Healthy Choices	1	5	3	3
DES	4	5	4	4

Note: rated on a scale from one (most negative) to five (most positive)

Monitoring student responsiveness

The teacher reported that they planned to verbally monitor responses by "asking questions at end of lesson. Home Work task was to look at magazines they buy and bring them to next class".

During the lesson, the observer noted that it was difficult to tell if the teacher was monitoring responses. "The teacher appeared to have a good relationship with the students. She knew when to move on to next item/topic. Although nothing was explicitly said, such as "did you like lesson", I think she monitored responses non-verbally". The observed report of student responsiveness is presented in Table 4.60.

Table 4.60: Observed report of student responsiveness - school four

Activity	Resource Description	Observed student response
Positive comment activity	Students had to walk around to each other's desks and write a nice thing about the person on a piece of paper and fold it up. At the end of the activity each student then selected one comment to share with the class.	There was good student response to this. The students were laughing and giggling.
Story from DES resource materials	This story was about a girl named "Paula". The teacher read about a day in Paula's life and the students had to get a piece of paper and rip off a bit of paper every time they felt that Paula had been "put down[1]".	Students interacted in the activity and listened to the story (they ripped pieces of paper when they felt that the girl in the story had been hurt). They were quieter than during the other activities but it was also due to the nature of the activity.
Magazine clips and photos	Students were shown internet clips and they were told "real-life" facts about celebrities which were unknown by the students.	Students responded well to the magazine clips and pictures. Students chatted and responded, they knew the stars that were presented and were surprised by some of the information. They definitely enjoyed this.
YouTube clips	Students were shown different clips related to body image and shown how these clips are targeted at different societal groups. Students were shown a video of *"airbrushing"*.	Students chatted and responded to the teacher during the discussion about the video.
Homework	Each student was asked to bring a magazine into the next class to discuss the topic in greater detail in the next class.	N/A

Lesson Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher strongly agreed that the lesson was worthwhile. The teacher agreed that the lesson would be easy to understand; easy to deliver; and that they received support for the lesson. The teacher disagreed that there were adequate lesson materials.

Post-lesson delivery, the teacher's views about having adequate lesson materials remained unchanged. The teacher strongly agreed that the lesson was easy to deliver and that students understood the lesson. The teacher strongly agreed that they enjoyed and felt confident delivering the lesson. The teacher also strongly agreed that students enjoyed and engaged in the lesson. The teacher agreed that the lesson materials worked well and strongly disagreed that there was a lot of disruption.

Lesson Delivery: Observer and Students' views

The observer strongly agreed that: that the lesson was clear; the teacher was interested in the lesson; and that the lesson was easy to understand. The observer strongly agreed that students were: comfortable with the teacher; enjoyed the lesson; listened most of the time; paid attention; were comfortable with lesson topics; and were comfortable participating in class. The observer strongly disagreed that students didn't listen and that there was a lot of disruption.

Students views are displayed in the table below (see Table 4.61). All students were positive about: the lesson (clear delivery, easy to understand, enjoyable), their comfort with the teacher, their comfort participating in class, and comfort with the topics covered. All students reported that the teacher was interested in the lesson and that they listened. All students reported that they paid attention and reported the same for other students. They also reported that all students listened. No student reported that there was a lot of disruption. All students reported that they learned a lot in the lesson.

Table 4.61: Students' reports on lesson delivery and participation - school four

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lesson delivered clearly	6	n=3 (50%)	n=3 (50%)		
Easy understand lesson	6	n=5 (83%)	n=1 (17%)		
Enjoyed lesson	6	n=4 (67%)	n=2 (33%)		
Teacher interested lesson	6	n=5 (83%)	n=1 (17%)		
Comfortable with teacher	6	n=5 (83%)	n=1 (17%)		
Comfortable participating	6	n=5 (83%)	n=1 (17%)		
Listened to lesson	6	n=4 (67%)	n=2 (33%)		
Others didn't listen at all	6			n=4 (67%)	n=2 (33%)
Didn't pay attention	6			n=2 (33%)	n=4 (67%)
Others paid attention	6	n=4 (67%)	n=2 (33%)		
Comfortable with topics	6	n=5 (83%)	n=1 (17%)		
A lot of disruption	6			n=2 (33%)	n=4 (67%)
learned a lot in this lesson	6	n=2 (33%)	n=4 (67%)		

Lesson ratings

Students' mean rating (9.5/10, see Table 4.62) and the rating from observation (10/10) exceeded the teacher's own rating of the lesson (9/10).

Table 4.62: Student ratings of lesson – school four

Students' Ratings (*n*=6)			
Min	Max	Mean	SD
8	10	9.5	.84

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

Further perspectives

The teacher commented that one lesson activity would be adapted for future lessons. The task was "where the students would write a good thing about the name of the person on the sheet". The teacher explained that "I would leave them to read what was written until the end of the lesson so students would feel more positive about themselves leaving the class as the impact of what was written was gone by the end of the lesson".

One barrier was observed in this lesson: "resources are all in English - teacher working between Irish and English". The observer also reported that the lesson was "well-prepared and the four parts of the experiential learning cycle were clearly implemented throughout the class. Instead of being set (1,2,3,4) as such the four

stages were blended into each topic and I think it worked very well. A lot of topics covered in a short space but there was a good relationship between students and the teacher (students addressed teacher by her first name)".

4.2.5 School five

School description

In 2015, the school was described as a Catholic, all-girls school. The school has a female Principal. The school was designated DEIS and there was 226 girls enrolled (www.des.ie, accessed June 15th, 2015).

School Context

Data were gathered from a number of sources to inform the contextual level section of this study: 1) Interview conducted with an SPHE teacher who had been teaching at the school for nine years[42]; 2) SPHE subject inspection which was conducted in March, 2011. Subject planning and the quality of learning and teaching in the subject department are inspected [43]. Verbal feedback is provided to the school community and a written report is published on the DES website. The BOM were afforded the opportunity to respond to the subject inspection but no response was provided; and 3) WSE-MLL which was conducted in this school in 2013. Findings from the interview are marked with (I), findings from the subject inspection are marked (INSP); and findings from the WSE-MLL are marked (WSE-MLL).

CLASSROOM LEVEL

Classroom climate

Quality of learning and teaching and Effectiveness of leadership for learning (WSE-MLL)

The curriculum is broad and reviewed regularly. Staff are praised for their flexibility which is essential to providing the broad curriculum. Teaching and learning was

[42] This interviewee placed a strict time limit on the interview.

[43] During the inspection: relevant documents were reviewed; eight classes were observed; the inspection team interacted with students; some students' work was examined; discussions took place between the Principal and relevant school staff; there were structured interviews with senior cycle students; questionnaires were completed by third-year students; and feedback was provided to the Principal and relevant staff.

good in most lessons, with some examples of very good practice. All lessons observed by the inspectors were conducted in an "atmosphere of mutual respect and positive rapport" (p.6). Teachers were described as caring, supportive, and strived to provide clear explanations. It is noted that "(G)ood classroom management resulted in the creation of an ordered learning environment" (p.7). Individual teacher preparation was described as very good and a variety of good quality resources were used (including effective use of ICT).

In most lessons, learning outcomes were clarified at the beginning of the lesson which assisted students to identify what they needed to learn. Teachers also checked if the objectives were achieved throughout, and at the end of, the lesson. The evaluation recommends that this good practice should occur in all lessons. In three-fifths of the lessons, methodologies were well chosen and assisted in student engagement. In the other lessons, there was a need to extend the range of methodologies to adjust the balance between teacher instruction and student interaction and to "cater for the different learning styles and to achieve more active involvement of students" (p.7).

In all lessons, teachers used questioning to monitor students' progress and understanding. In almost half of the lessons observed, "there were some very good examples of differentiation strategies through the use of teacher intervention, questioning and student tasks" (p.7). The evaluation recommends that developing differentiation practices is emphasised in subject departments. In most lessons "assessment for learning (AfL) practices were employed and students received written feedback on their work indicating strengths and areas for development" (p.7).

The evaluation notes the school has made very good progress in some areas of curricular planning. It also highlights that "(B)est practice in subject department planning was observed where there was a focus on learning outcomes linked to methodologies, resources and assessment methods" (p.7). The report emphasises that these good practices should be consistent in all subject areas. It is recommended that the analyses from certificate examination results are submitted by each to department in order to "develop a culture of self evaluation and to inform future planning" (p.7).

SPHE teaching approaches, methodologies, and assessment (INSP)

The inspection reported that there was a good standard of teaching and learning in the observed SPHE lessons and in some cases, there was very high quality of teaching and learning. Some very good examples of using appropriate active learning (or experiential) methodologies were observed during the SPHE lessons. The inspection observed best practice in group work "when the activity was time-bound, group members were nominated to key roles and there was an effective reporting-back phase, followed by effective processing of the feedback to ensure that learning occurred" (p.3). The report recommends that the SPHE department need to refine group work skills. The report also recommends increased use of ICT to support teaching and learning. The report notes that outside facilitators are occasionally involved in the delivery of RSE. For example, the Brothers of Charity Services [44] deliver RSE to senior cycle resource students.

Students' folders and workbooks were well-organised and displayed good progression in their work. Although assessment practices are described as varying among teachers, there was multiple assessment methods used for SPHE in general. The report commends the use of personal reflections as an assessment tool and recommends that this practice is developed by all teachers. The report describes students as working well together and individually. The inspection also states that students displayed "good knowledge and understanding of the concepts related to the various topics appropriate to their class group and ability" (p.3).

The report notes that there is capacity to develop a written module for RSE (in the context of religious education) at senior cycle although it is noted that most aspects of RSE are being delivered. The report notes that senior cycle RSE is occasionally supplemented by guest speakers.

SPHE assessment is progressing well but it is recommended that assessment practices and procedures are formalised with the school's relevant policies.

[44] The Brothers of Charity are a charitable organisation that offers a wide variety of services to people with intellectual disabilities. Services include early intervention services for young children, school age services, and services for adults (www.brothersofcharity.ie, accessed July 15, 2015).

SPHE classroom climate (INSP)

The inspection highlights that there was very good rapport between teachers and students. Teachers were described as warm and considerate in their manner and showing concern for students. Students "demonstrated great enthusiasm for SPHE and were engaged and eager to participate in class activities" (p.3).

SCHOOL-LEVEL

Administrative stability

Approaches to CPD (WSE-MLL)

Both the BOM and senior management support CPD and it is recommended that a feedback system is created to facilitate the sharing of structured information from CPD events among staff. The evaluation highlights that the "schools future CPD agenda should include differentiation and active learning methodologies" (p.4). The evaluation highlights that, since previous evaluations, there has been good progress in relation to self-evaluation and cites some examples.

SPHE co-ordinator (I)

There was an SPHE coordinator at this school but that coordinator is now retired. A new coordinator has not been designated but the teacher explained that "we all work together we're a small school and we work as a team". There are five SPHE teachers in the school (including this teacher interviewed).

Consultation and continuity in SPHE teaching (INSP)

SPHE teachers are not assigned but consulted about teaching and this is commended in the report. There is continuity with students and SPHE teachers as management tries to allow the same teachers to stay with the class group from first to third year. SPHE teachers also teach the class another subject and this helps to build rapport. The report praises management for its approach to training, nothing that all SPHE teachers have completed the introductory training and almost all teachers have completed RSE training.

SPHE resource management (I, INSP)

The RSE resources are stored in the staffroom and when needed, are taken out and photocopied (I, INSP). The teacher explained that each teacher has their own individual resources in the classroom and the students purchase their own workbooks (I). All of the teachers manage the resources, "oh we all work together. At the start of the year we kinda say have we enough resources and then one of us decides to ring" (I). When asked what RSE resources the school has, the teacher explained that "we use the HSE resources and we are sticking religiously to that" (I).

The school works closely with the SPHE support services and other external services (INSP). The SPHE team make use of a wide variety of educational resources and these are stored in the staffroom (INSP).

<u>Administrative leadership and support</u>

School leaders (WSE-MLL)

It is reported that the Principal and deputy Principal consult and communicate on a daily basis and this "co-operation contributes to the very good management of the school" (p.4). Senior management is also described as providing "very effective leadership and its members work very well as a team in a diligent and organised manner" (p.4). Senior management engage in a consultative and open management style and as a result are highly supported by the BOM and staff. In addition, they share a common vision for the school: to provide a student-centred learning environment, support SEN students, maintain good academic standards and support all staff.

Equity in posts (WSE-MLL)

Members of middle management are described as being diligent with their duties and non-post holders are commended for their work. The evaluation recommends that the post structure is reviewed annually to ensure that the posts match school needs and to ensure that there is equity between posts. The evaluation also recommends that two separate roles need to be reviewed in order to respond more holistically to students' needs. It also recommends that, in line with best practice, "procedures be developed

for structured reporting on the performance of duties of all post holders to senior management and to the board of management" (p.4).

SPHE teacher allocation (I)

The teacher described her relationship with the Principal as "very good". The teacher was consulted about teaching SPHE, went for training the year after being asked, and began teaching the following year. The teacher indicated that all teachers are approached and asked about teaching RSE. The teacher explained that all SPHE teachers have to go for training prior to teaching it.

SPHE timetabling and RSE implementation (I)

SPHE is timetabled at junior cycle. When asked about RSE implementation, the teacher explained that it is implemented as part of SPHE:

> It is because it is set down and you see you have your timetable or you have your yearly plan and we all follow it and we have structured in our year plan how many weeks and then teaching it and at the same time we use the HSE am book and work book so we follow their plans as well we follow their lesson plans.

The teacher explained that RSE is taught through religion at senior cycle but she had no teaching experience with that age group.

Whole-school support for SPHE (INSP)

There is very good whole-school support for SPHE (organisation, teaching and learning). The SPHE programme is a core part of pastoral care and all school staff and parents work in partnership to address student needs. At the time of the inspection, there was a well-established and experienced SPHE co-ordinator. SPHE, including RSE, is timetabled for all junior cycle students. Resource classes have two periods of SPHE per week.

Awareness of student needs

Student participation in the school (WSE-MLL)

There are many ways in which students participate in the school. There are many leadership opportunities such as: the student council; the house system[45]; big sisters[46]; and green flag initiatives. The evaluation recommends that the student council should include representatives from all years.

Care structures and supports (WSE-MLL)

The evaluation notes that the "care of students is a significant strength of the school" (p.5) and that there is a dedicated care team that meets weekly. In addition, there is a SCP, a breakfast club, after school supports (through sports) and a HSCL co-ordinator. The school's support and provision of services for students with extra educational needs (SEN, LS and EAL) and are described as very good and well managed.

Student involvement in school-level decisions (I)

Students are involved in school-level decisions through a number of initiatives. The school operates: a house system; the big sister system; the student council; and the prefect system.

Facilitators for RSE (I)

The teacher explained that sometimes they use outside facilitators from the HSE to teach learning support classes as they can't use the same materials.

School goals

Literacy and numeracy (WSE-MLL)

The school has a variety of strategies to promote literacy but the evaluation notes that systems should be established to "to monitor systematically the impact and effectiveness of any of these strategies for literacy improvement" (p.4). Any data

[45] The house system refers to a process where students are divided into groups irrelevant of school year or age. The aim is to bring everyone together regardless of age, race, creed or nationality. The school organises fun events throughout the year and each group participates in the events.

[46] The big sister system refers to transition year students who mentor first year students.

gathered should be used to inform the school improvement plan. The report highlights that the school needs to prioritise a whole-school approach to numeracy.

School-board communication (WSE-MLL)

The evaluation recommends that (based on the school's progress on recommendations from previous evaluations) "progress reports be sent periodically by subject departments after an inspection to management and the board" (p.7).

Progression (WSE-MLL)

It is noted that the school has made extremely good progress regarding use of: ICT; learning outcomes; and formative assessment and feedback.

Improving AfL and differentiation practices (WSE-MLL)

The report notes that there is "some scope for improvement in relation to the implementation of AfL practices and planning for differentiation in line with the range of abilities of students" (p. 7).

SPHE subject planning and RSE at senior cycle (INSP)

There was good individual lesson planning and preparation based on the school's SPHE programme. Subject planning should be further developed to include more detailed information for "learning outcomes for each year group, agreed assessment procedures and a review section" (p.4). For future planning, a "coherent senior-cycle RSE programme in the context of RE [47] should now be documented and included in a revised RSE policy" (p.4). The report recommends that to assist in delivery, teachers should consult the Department's Guidelines for Teachers. The report also suggests that teachers "should formalise the sharing of professional expertise, in terms of subject knowledge and mechanisms for assessment in SPHE" (p.4).

School climate

Inclusive ethos (WSE-MLL)

There is an "open, inclusive and non-selective admissions policy" (p.5). The school is described as "well-organised" and has a "warm welcoming atmosphere" (p.5).

[47] Religious Education

Parental responses to the questionnaire indicated that the school makes their children feel welcome. There are also good structures in place to support new students and their parents.

School staff as strength of the school (WSE-MLL)

School staff members are described very positively, as a "key strength of the school" (p.4). Staff members are hard-working and show high levels of school dedication (including giving extra time to school activities outside formal school hours). This view was also supported by both students and parents during the evaluation. There is good communication with staff though regular meetings as well a texting system.

Code of behaviour (WSE-MLL)

The code of behaviour is regularly reviewed; it has a positive focus, and includes principles of restorative justice. The code has a clear ladder of referral which students are aware of. The code is linked to the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), "where relevant students are given responsibility to take steps to improve their own behaviour through a system of target setting and support interventions" (p.5). There are a number of motivational-based systems that are very effective in student management, for example the house system which increases rapport across student groups.

Physical school climate (WSE-MLL)

The school building and facilities are well maintained and the school has earned its Green School status. Although the school works in partnerships to offer a PE programme, the lack of PE facilities is a described as a concern for everyone. In most classrooms "the learning environment was enhanced with visual displays of students' work and subject materials" (p.7), but the report notes that rooms could be further developed to be more visually stimulating.

School support for RSE (I)

The teacher felt that the Principal really supported RSE. When asked if other teachers in the school supported RSE, the teacher replied "definitely". When asked to explain, the teacher stated:

> They all think it's very important to teach it ... yeah it's not kind of a big deal. It's just part of the course well and you always make sure that you teach it as you would teach other parts of the course as well.

COMMUNITY LEVEL

School-community relations

Communication with the community (WSE-MLL)

In order to support partnership with the wider school community and parents, the BOM should create a summary version of their annual report which should provide details of school performance and operation in addition to "including references to the achievement of the school's development priorities" (p.3).

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School-family relations

Parental involvement in SPHE and RSE (I)

There is a parents' council which the teacher described as being "involved very much in fundraising" but she did not know if they operated in any other capacity. The school send information letters and consent forms to parents "cause sometimes they might not be comfortable, it depends you know what level their child is at although they always do consent".

Communication with parents (INSP)

The school communicates students' progress in SPHE with parents through annual teacher meetings and school reports.

Parents' association (WSE-MLL)

The school has a parents' association which is described as "active, well-informed and works well in partnership with senior management" (p.3).

Positivity towards the school (WSE-MLL)

Responses from evaluation questionnaires suggest that both students and parents feel positive about the school. The evaluation recommends that formal meetings should occur between the parents association and the student council.

DISTRICT LEVEL

Administrative stability

The BOM and its role in school planning (WSE-MLL)

The BOM is correctly constituted, meet regularly, and the majority of members are trained for the role. Some members are described as having a "long association with, and understanding of, the school and there is a good level of experience and expertise which supports the school well" (p.3). The board plays an active role in the school planning process (through school policy development and overseeing DEIS action planning). Providing a broad curriculum is an on-going challenge for the school and the evaluation commends their work in this area, noting that "a board of studies was convened in 2011 to review the curriculum provided to students" (p.3).

Administrative leadership and support

The RSE policy (I)

The teacher was not involved in developing the school's RSE policy but explained that: "(I)t was drawn up last year (2011). But there were teachers from senior cycle religion and SPHE in that policy group". The teacher did not know how often the policy is reviewed.

Child Protection (WSE-MLL)

The BOM confirmed that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' have been formally adopted without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of those procedures.

Awareness of student needs

The student council (WSE-MLL)

The evaluation recommends that the BOM meet the student council formally and on an annual basis.

Communication with schools

Good communication between BOM and stakeholders (WSE-MLL)

The evaluation notes that there is good communication between the BOM and senior management and the BOM and other stakeholders. The report recommends that a formal agreed written report should be produced and made available to all the main stakeholders.

THE RSE LESSON

Teacher's experience of RSE in-service training

The teacher indicated that they received Principal support to attend training. The teacher had a very positive experience at RSE in-service training. This is indicated through their responses to the training-level questionnaire[48] and their rating of the training (10/10). The teacher did not provide any additional comments about the training. Post-training, the teacher *strongly agreed* that they felt positive about teaching RSE, understood the purpose of RSE, felt dedicated to the goals of RSE, respected the RSE programme, and that they had the necessary skills to deliver RSE.

The teacher had not attended any other course offered by the SPHE support service. At the time of data collection, the teacher had twenty-four years teaching experience. The teacher had been implementing RSE for two weeks prior to attending the RSE in-service training.

[48] Post-training, the teacher strongly agreed that the training was clear, easy to understand, the trainer was interested, that they listened, that they were comfortable with the trainer, that they enjoyed the training, that they were comfortable with the other teachers, that they were comfortable with the topics covered, and that other teachers paid attention. They strongly disagreed that there was a lot of disruption, that they didn't pay attention, or that other teachers didn't listen.

Introduction to lesson

The students in this class (n=9) were all female. Students were in their fifth-year (senior cycle) of post-primary school. The age range was 16-19 years old, with a mean student age of 17.22 (SD = 1.1). Just over half of students (56%) reported that they did not receive RSE classes in primary school. The teacher reported that they were following a manual. The observed report was ambivalent: "It's hard to tell but I don't think so, the worksheet used looks like it from a booklet/resource for RSE".

Previous RSE experience by students

The majority of students reported that they *did not* experience RSE lessons in their junior cycle (first, second, and third year) of post-primary school. The majority of students (89%) reported that they had experienced RSE lessons previously in fifth year.

Lesson timing

There was no difference between the teacher's pre and post-delivery reports of lesson timing (40 minutes). The observed report noted an eight minute difference (32 minutes). Post-lesson delivery, the teacher felt that they did not have enough time to complete the lesson. This was also reported in the lesson observation.

Aims: Planned versus actual

The teacher reported that they did not complete the planned lesson aims.

Table 4.63: Reported aims - school five

Teacher's reported aims
Students will (i) reflect on beliefs and attitudes about sex, (ii) consider consequences of being sexually active, (iii) Be more aware of the way intimacy develops in relationships
Students' reported aims
Sex/sexual activity (3); I think it was about how people can put peer pressure on people on things they don't want to do (1) ; If it's wrong to have sex before your 18 (1); It was about making wise decisions about sex (1); It was looking at relationships and sex in relationships (1); to look a bit deeper before making choices and judgement (1); just because people don't want to have sex doesn't mean there's something wrong with them (1); what our views are(1)
Observation of lesson aims
Getting students to think about all the diff decisions, the importance of safety, trust, privacy and confidentiality, different sexualities

Comparative reports on lesson aims

The teacher's first two aims correspond with students' and observed reports about lesson aims (see Table 4.63). The third aim that relates to intimacy was not explicitly mentioned by students or observed. The observed report did not detail the words 'relationship and sex' but mentioned other terms (importance of safety, trust, privacy and confidentiality, and different sexualities) which link to relationships and sex.

Achieving lesson aims

The teacher reported that lesson aims were not achieved, stating that the "lesson took place over two classes. Aims were completed at the end of the second class".

Table 4.64: Reported topics - school five

Teacher's reported topics
Increasing intimacy in relationships
Student's reported topics
Sex/sexuality (4); contraception (3), relationships (3), same-sex relationships (1), about people having sex (when should they) (1), communication (1), sexuality, pressure and judgement (1), when you're ready for sex and how it changes your relationship (1)
Observation of lesson topics
becoming sexually active, statutory rape, weighing up your choices around sex, age of relationships- normality of being single (all diff statements on sex and views), pressure boys encounter to have sex, heterosexuality and homosexuality, having sex and consequences after if the relationship breaks up, self-respect

Topics: Planned versus actual

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher reported that *"[I] have done this already with the leaving certs*[49] *and most found it very helpful".*

Comparative reports on lesson topics

Some of the topics reported by students were also supported by observed reports (see Table 4.64). The observed report indicated that contraception, communication, and judgement were topics that were covered but these were not reported by students or the teacher. The teacher did not report the specific topics reported by students and

[49] 'Leaving certs' describes students who are in their final year of post-primary education. These students complete the Leaving Certificate which is their final school exam.

observed. The topic reported by the teacher ('increasing intimacy in relationships') was not reported by students or observed (see Table 4.64).

Activities: Planned versus actual

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher reported that individual reflection would take place and a DVD would be played (approx 7 minutes duration). Post-lesson, the teacher reported that the lesson was adapted as they "had to present lesson without use of DVD" (the DVD player did not work). The teacher reported that the adaptation worked.

Comparative reports on lesson activities

Teacher and students reported that group work was the activity that took place and this was supported through the observation. There were no other activities reported.

Resources: Planned versus actual

The teacher removed one resource for the lesson (DVD - as indicated above).

Comparative reports on resource deployment

The teacher reported that the TRUST resource was used. The observed report indicated that worksheet and power point resources were used. Students reported that a worksheet was used.

Response to resources

The majority of students (89%) reported that they liked the worksheet that was used. Some provided reasons for linking the handout such as: "they were fun"; "it showed how people think different from others"; "we get to fill out what we thought"; "interesting"; "[I] was involved when I filled in the worksheet". Three students reported that a DVD that was used and explained why they liked it: "it was interesting"; "DVD is usually used"; and "gave a more detailed opinion on what happens to teens". The DVD player did not work for this lesson but it is possible that students are reflecting on past lessons for responses about the DVD.

Students rated the lesson resources highly (see Table 4.65), with the lowest score for the resource reported in the "visually appealing" category. Observed ratings scored

the resource very highly with the lowest score also being reported in the "visually appealing" category (see Table 4.65).

Table 4.65: Student and observed resource ratings- school five

	STUDENT RATINGS					OBS
	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD	
Visually appealing	9	6	10	7.5	1.6	2
User friendly	9	7	10	9.3	1.1	10
Age appropriate	9	8	10	9.7	0.7	10
Culturally sensitive	9	7	10	9.2	1.1	7

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

The teacher provided ratings for two resources (see Table 4.66). DES resources scored very poorly in relation to visual appeal.

Table 4.66: Teacher's resource ratings - School five

	Visually appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
TRUST	3	5	5	3
DES	1	3	5	3

Note: rated on a scale from one (most negative) to five (most positive)

Monitoring student responsiveness

The teacher reported that if there was "time available, feedback from group work and responses to work sheet. If not, this will be done in the class following".

During the lesson, it was observed that the teacher did not seem to be monitoring responses: "I think in ways it was a taught lesson where there was student/teacher interaction but I don't think there was monitoring of student responses". The observation of student responsiveness are presented in Table 4.67.

Table 4.67: Observed reports of student responsiveness - School five

Activity	Resource Description	Observed student response
Worksheet 1	"What's your view" worksheet from TRUST resource.	The worksheet that was well received and "facilitated a lot of discussion when the students were put into groups".
Group work	Teacher moved students into groups to discuss the worksheet. One student per group took notes to feedback to class. Whiteboard was used "used to go through each groups responses to the worksheet".	"There was good response to the group work. Students very comfortable in the class and were chatting…they were divided/mixed-up and lots of conversation flowed". They were also comfortable talking to the teacher.

Lesson Delivery: Planned versus actual

Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher strongly agreed that the lesson was worthwhile and easy to understand. The teacher also strongly agreed that there were adequate lesson materials and that they received support. The teacher agreed that the lesson would be easy to deliver. Post-lesson delivery, the teacher strongly agreed that students understood, enjoyed and engaged in the lesson. The teacher strongly agreed that the lesson was easy to deliver and that they enjoyed and felt confident delivering the lesson. The teacher also strongly agreed that lesson materials worked well. The teacher agreed that there were adequate lesson materials and strongly disagreed that there was a lot of lesson disruption.

Lesson Delivery: Observer and students' views

The observer strongly agreed that: the lesson was clear and easy to understand and the teacher was interested in the lesson. The observer also strongly agreed that students: were comfortable with the teacher; listened most of the time; were comfortable participating; and paid attention. The observer agreed that students enjoyed the lesson and were comfortable with the topics covered. The observer strongly disagreed that students didn't listen and that there was a lot of disruption.

Students' responses to lesson delivery are detailed in Table 4.68. Students responded positively to the lesson indicating that it was clear, that it was easy to understand, and that they enjoyed it (see Table 4.68). All students felt comfortable: with the

teacher; with the topics covered; and participating in class. All students agreed/strongly agreed that the teacher was interested in the lesson. All students indicated that they listened and paid attention to the lesson. The majority reported that other students listened (89%), while all students reported that other students paid attention. Students' responses indicated that there was not a lot of disruption during the lesson. All students reported that they learned a lot in the lesson.

Table 4.68:Students' reports on lesson delivery and participation - School five

Statement	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lesson delivered clearly	9	n=3 (33%)	n=6 (67%)		
Easy understand lesson	9	n=3 (33%)	n=6 (67%)		
Enjoyed lesson	9	n=2 (22%)	n=7 (78%)		
Teacher interested lesson	9	n=6 (67%)	n=3 (33%)		
Comfortable with teacher	9	n=5 (56%)	n=4 (44%)		
Comfortable participating	9	n=5 (56%)	n=4 (44%)		
Listened to lesson	9	n=4 (44%)	n=5 (56%)		
Others didn't listen at all	9		n=1 (11%)	n=5 (56%)	n=3 (33%)
Didn't pay attention	9			n=4 (44%)	n=5 (56%)
Others paid attention	9	n=3 (33%)	n=6 (67%)		
Comfortable with topics	9	n=6 (67%)	n=3 (33%)		
A lot of disruption	9			n=2 (22%)	n=7 (78%)
learned a lot in this lesson	9	n=3 (33%)	n=6 (67%)		

Lesson ratings

Students' mean lesson rating (8.8/10, see Table 4.69) exceeded the teacher's own rating (8/10). The rating from the observation was lower than both the students and teacher (7/10).

Table 4.69: Students' lesson ratings – school five

Students' Ratings (*n*=9)			
Min	Max	Mean	SD
7	10	8.8	1.1

Note: rated on a scale of one (most negative) to ten (most positive)

Further perspectives

Post-lesson delivery, the teacher commented: "if the DVD had been working it would have been an excellent lesson".

Two lesson barriers were reported by the observer during delivery: 1) “DVD player didn’t work”; 2) “more didactic than facilitative in many parts which was a barrier for student participation”.

It was also reported that the lesson was “quite didactic and a lot of the teacher’s opinions about the “right” course of action. The teacher highlighted the Catholic ethos. The lesson was good as the teacher did not try to do too many activities or focus on too many topics. Although a lot was actually covered in the class, the focus seemed clearer and was more simple which I think made the lesson very effective. It would seem unlikely that the aim or the point of the class was unclear in any way. The teacher also introduced some data from research for the class to discuss. There was quite a heterosexual focus to the lesson”.

4.2.6 Student response to RSE

Table 4.70 outlines students’ responses about whether they find RSE interesting or not presented by school (all of the children’s responses have been grouped). The majority of students surveyed (80%) reported that they found RSE classes interesting (*n=55).*

Table 4.70: Student interest in RSE by school

	n	Interesting	Not interesting
School one	12	67%	33%
School two	9	67%	33%
School three	19	79%	21%
School four	6	100%	-
School five	9	100%	-

Some illustrative quotes are presented below. The main reason for student interest was because they found it informative, as illustrated by quotes from these children:

“You learn about a lot of different things like a positive body image, drink drugs and how it affects your body etc.”

“It clarifies what relationships should be like”

The main reason for feeling disinterested was that they felt they had learned about sex already. For example:

“You already know all the stuff that’s said in it”

“I had it in 6th class at primary”

4.2.7 Training and school summaries

Training summaries

Training one

- The majority of teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support
- Only one teacher had been delivering RSE prior to attending this in-service training. This teacher had been delivering RSE for 27 years and six months and had no prior RSE training
- The trainer reported training dose was 10 hours both pre and post training delivery. The trainer also reported that they had enough time to complete training
- Teachers' main reported aim was: confidence to approach the subject and this linked to the first and third aim reported by the trainer
- The trainer reported that they had achieved their training aims
- Teachers identified the majority of topics identified by the trainer but also reported ten additional topics which were not reported by the trainer
- The trainer's reported training activities were supported by teachers' reports of activities
- The trainer's reports of the resources employed were supported by the majority of teachers
- The trainer reported positively on training delivery and training rapport. This was supported by teacher's reports
- Teachers rated training very highly (M=9.1/10). This rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating, which was 8/10)

Training two

- The majority of teachers (69%) reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support
- Four out of eleven teachers reported that they had been delivering RSE prior to this in-service training. One out of the four teachers had prior RSE training

however this teacher had delivered RSE for a number of years without training

- The trainer reported training dose was 10 hours both pre and post training delivery. The trainer also reported that they had enough time to complete training
- The main aims reported by teachers reflected the first two aims identified by the trainer
- The trainer reported that they had achieved their training aims
- Almost all topics identified by the trainer were mentioned by teachers
- Teachers' reports of training activities supported that reported by the trainer
- Teachers reported three out of four resources reported by the trainer
- Three teachers provided positive comments about the resources which related to abundance, usefulness, and excellence of resources
- The trainer reported lesson delivery positively and this was supported in teachers' responses
- Teachers rated training very highly (M=9.4/10). This rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating (9/10)

Training three

- Almost all teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher indicated that they were advised to
- Half of the teachers (6/12) reported that they had been delivering RSE prior to training
- The trainer reported 12 hours for training pre and post-delivery however they also noted that breaks were part of this. The trainer reported that they had enough time to complete the training
- Teachers reported aims support the main aim reported by the trainer
- The trainer reported that they achieved the aims of the training
- Teachers highlighted the majority of topics identified by the trainer, with the exception of three topics. Teachers highlighted a number of additional topics

- The trainer reported an adaptation to their training plan by adding three activities. The trainer did not indicate if the adaptations had worked
- Teachers' reports on training activities supported the trainer's account. A majority of teachers did however report two additional activities not reported by the trainer;
- The trainer reported using two resources, one of which was supported by teachers' reports. A majority of teachers reported two resources which were not reported by the trainer
- Two teachers provided positive comments on the resources indicating they were clear to the user
- The trainer indicated that the training was well-received and this was supported in teacher's responses about training delivery and rapport
- Teachers rated training very highly (M=9.8/10). This exceeded the trainer's self-rating (9/10)

Training four

- Almost all teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher reported that it wasn't compulsory but recommended
- Six out of thirteen teachers had delivered RSE prior to training
- There were no differences between the trainer's pre and post-delivery reports of training timing (12 hours). The trainer reported that they did not have enough time to complete the training
- The trainer's reported aims were as per the DES SPHE syllabus although it was not entirely clear which aims. The trainer also reported four additional aims, two of which were reported by teachers
- The trainer reported that they achieved the aims of the in-service;
- Teachers' reports of training topics supported half of the topics reported by the trainer
- Teachers' reports of training activities supported three out of five activities reported by the trainer
- The trainer made an adaptation to their plan by stating they had added a resource. The trainer reported that the adaptation worked;

- The trainer reported two resources. One of these resources was reported by teachers
- The trainer reported positively on training delivery and rapport. This was supported by teachers' views
- Teachers rated training very highly (M=9.5/10). This rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating (9/10)

Training five

- Almost all teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support. One teacher reported that they attended voluntarily but without Principal support
- Four out of ten teachers had delivered RSE prior to this in-service training. One out these four teachers had previous RSE training prior to implementing RSE while the remainder did not
- The trainer reported training dose was 12 hours both pre and post training delivery. The trainer also reported that they had enough time to complete training
- Teachers' main reported aim linked to one of the aims reported by the trainer
- Teachers reported half of topics by highlighted by the trainer. Teachers also highlighted a large number of additional topics which were not reported by the trainer
- The trainer's reports of training activities were supported by the majority of teachers
- The trainer reported three resources they intended to use for training. The majority of teachers reported two of these resources while 50% of teachers reported the third resource
- The trainer reported positively on training delivery and rapport. This was supported by teachers' views
- Teachers rated training very highly (M=9.3/10). This exceeded the trainer's self-rating (8/10)

Training six

- All teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support
- Three out of nine teachers reported that they had been delivering RSE prior to this training. One out of the three teachers had prior RSE training while the remainder did not
- The trainer reported training dose was 12 hours both pre and post training delivery. The trainer reported that they did not have enough time to complete the training
- Teachers main reported aim was: RSE/RSE senior cycle curriculum. This aim could be linked to all the aims reported by the trainer although it was not explicitly linked. Teachers reported three aims which could be connected to three aims reported by the trainer
- The trainer indicated that aims were achieved
- Teachers highlighted all of the topics identified by trainers as well as several other topics
- Teachers' reports of training activities supported almost all of the activities reported by the trainer with the exception of one
- This trainer indicated that they adapted their plan by adding a resource. The trainer reported that the adaptation worked although no teachers specifically reported the resource
- The trainer reported using two resources which was supported by teachers (one resource was supported by 56%)
- The trainer reported positively on training delivery and rapport. This was supported by teachers' views
- Teachers rated training very highly (M=9.9/10). This rating exceeded the trainer's self-rating (9/10)

Training seven

- Almost all teachers attended training voluntarily and with Principal support

- Half of the teachers (5/10) reported that they had been delivering RSE prior to this in-service training. Three teachers had received prior RSE training although one of these teachers had delivered RSE for one year with no prior training. The two remaining teachers had been delivering RSE with no prior training
- The trainer reported training dose was 10 hours both pre and post training delivery. The trainer reported that they did not have enough time to complete the training
- Teachers main aims reflected the trainer's reported aim
- The trainer reported that the aims of the in-service were achieved
- Post-training delivery, the trainer reported making an adaptation by adding one topic. The trainer also reported that the adaptation worked. The topic was reported a small number of times
- Teachers reported just over half of the topics reported by the trainer. Teachers highlighted a large number of additional topics
- The trainer reported eight activities. The majority of teachers reported three of these activities, while half of the teachers reported another two
- The trainer reported a number of resources, all of which were supported by teachers' reports;
- The trainer reported positively on training delivery and rapport. This was supported by teachers' views
- Teachers rated training very highly (M=9.1/10). This rating slightly exceeded the trainer's self-rating (9/10)

<u>School summaries</u>

School one

- The school is reported to have very good school leadership, with a student-centred environment, mutual respect between and among staff and students; and a supportive pastoral care team which serves the school community

- It is noted that is a need for greater teacher rotation in roles to address an imbalance in the allocation of higher ability classes to more established teachers and positive work was identified in the area of guidance but also that more work needs to be done to improve student outcomes

- The timetabling of SPHE is as per DES requirements however it was noted that "*there was no clear evidence of a whole-school approach to SPHE*"

- The interviewee was not asked to teach SPHE but allocated the hours on their timetable and the perceived vulnerability of teaching RSE was highlighted by the interviewee on a personal level and as a reason why other teachers in the school did not want to teach the subject

- The interviewee described the implementation of RSE at junior and senior cycle as teacher-dependant, highlighting that senior cycle RSE is heavily framed within a religious context and outside facilitators are involved in SPHE delivery, particularly at senior cycle

- The policy states that the RSE programme is evaluated every year and consults stakeholders in the process (POL). The interviewee stated that there is no mechanism for RSE to be evaluated (I)

- The teacher had a positive experience at RSE in-service training, rated training fully (10/10) and the teacher *agreed* they had the necessary skills to deliver RSE

- There was a ten minute difference between teacher's reported class timing and observed reports and the teacher felt they did not have enough time to complete the lesson and this was also observed

- Only two of the teacher's reported planned and actual topics matched and there were differences in reported aims, topics and activities across the three perspectives (teacher, students and in the observations) and the teacher reported that they did not achieve lesson aims

- Less than half of students (46%) reported liking resources while 23% reported that they did not like the resources
- The lesson was received positively by students and this was supported in observations. The teacher reported lesson delivery more negatively
- A number of lesson barriers were observed, some of which related to timing (school timetable and observer influence) and the rest related to lesson planning

School two

- The school is described as orderly, generally welcoming and friendly, "well-resourced" with a good school climate, that there is respect among all stakeholders; and a focus on the promotion of student welfare with an array of student care structures
- The school has a student council although it is recommended that the council becomes more representative of all students and becomes involved in all school affairs
- There is a need for improved teaching practices (focusing on learning outcomes) and attitudes (about student achievement)
- Challenges with regards timetabling of SPHE are identified however the school exceeds requirements regarding SPHE provision with junior level students and sixth years receiving two SPHE classes per week
- The interviewee (a parent member of the BOM) described the Principal as "excellent" and that the "children are definitely number one" yet the interviewee did not identify RSE as part of the BOM and did not think RSE would be discussed by the board
- The teacher in this school had a very positive experience at RSE in-service training and rated training fully (10/10) and the teacher *agreed* they had the necessary skills to deliver RSE upon training completion

- The teacher reported that they had enough time to complete the lesson and this was supported by the observer.
- There was consistency in the reported aims across the three perspectives (teacher, students, and by the observer) and the teacher reported that lesson aims were achieved
- All topics reported by the teacher were supported in the observations. A number of students reported one of the topics reported by the teacher and in the observation
- Both the teacher and the students (66%) reported that group work took place but this was not reported by the observer
- There was consistency in the reported resources across the three perspectives with all indicating that worksheets were used and the majority of students who reported worksheets indicated that they like the resource that was used
- Reports on lesson delivery were very positive and proved consistent across all three perspectives, with the exception of classroom disruption. Half of students reported that there was a lot of disruption
- The teacher reported that they would monitor student responsiveness by asking students to bring "home a worksheet which they can complete with their parents. We will discuss this next week". It was observed that the teacher monitored student responses during the lesson
- The observed report of student responsiveness indicated that students participated in the class, although the girls were much quieter than the boys. Students appeared interested in all the activities. There was a normative family focus to the lesson and this affected a child in the class who was in foster care
- The teacher's self-rating and the ratings from the observation were the same and high. Both ratings exceeded the mean student rating by a small proportion (0.5%)

- The teacher reflected on the lesson reporting enjoyment of the first RSE class with this group, looking forward to covering the rest of course, and hopes to gain experience through delivery and upon reflection
- General observations on the lesson describe the lesson as clear, well-structured, and mastering the experiential learning cycle. The class format and teacher's skills helped to keep class in order but also allowed students to participate

School three

- The school was designated DEIS during data collection and the school has very good facilities and there is an overall caring approach to the environment
- The Principal is described as being heavily engaged in daily management duties
- The school is commended for its "vibrant learning atmosphere", good classroom management and good relationships are reported between staff and students
- The majority of parent and student respondents to evaluation questionnaire indicated satisfaction with most elements of school life (WSE-MLL)
- Subject lesson observations reported that in most lessons there was good use of ICT and lesson resources although it was reported that greater promotion of oral skills and better levels of interaction between peers was needed (WSE-MLL)
- The WSE-MLL report notes a lack of fairness in post roles and provides recommendations to achieve this
- The distinction between junior cycle and senior cycle RSE is not clearly outlined in the school policy while it outlines continued support for students and teachers for SPHE/RSE, including facilitating teacher training

- The school is commended for their work in personal, vocational and educational guidance. A number of examples are provided, including recognition that the school has an RSE programme in place
- It is noted that there is good school planning, all policies are ratified, teachers are commended for reflective practice but that there is a need for CPD in relation to "whole-school teaching and learning areas such as active learning, differentiation, assessment for learning and whole-school literacy and numeracy" (WSE-MLL, p.4)
- There is an active council and prefect system
- RSE is defined in the policy, the legislative framework is outlined but the relationship between RSE and SPHE is not clearly defined (POL)
- The board of management is correctly formed and is very supportive of the school
- There is good quality communication between the BOM, the senior management and the school community. BOM meeting minutes are circulated to the staff and the PA. The PA is described as very supportive for the school (WSE-MLL)

- The teacher had a very positive experience at RSE in-service training, rated training fully (10/10), and agreed they had the necessary skills to deliver RSE upon training completion
- There was a fifteen minute difference between teacher's reported class timing and in the observed report
- Post-lesson delivery, the teacher felt they did not have enough time to complete the lesson and this was also observed
- There was consistency in reported aims across all three perspectives (students, teacher and observed)
- Both the student and observed report supported the teacher's view on topics covered. A number of additional topics were reported by students and in the observations but these could all be linked back to the main topic which was reported by all
- There were some variations in reports about lesson activities and resources
- The students who reported on the "walking debate" resource indicated that they liked it
- Students rated lesson resources quite highly, particularly regarding age appropriateness. Resources were rated highly in the lesson observations, scoring full points for visual appeal. The teacher rated the "Healthy Living" resource the highest, with full points in all areas
- The teacher's post-delivery responses were more positive with regards ease of lesson delivery and adequate lesson materials than pre-delivery reports
- The lesson was received positively by participants and this was supported in both the observations and teacher's reports on lesson delivery

- The teacher reported that they would monitor students' responses in the lesson and this was supported in the observation. The teacher reported that one of the activities had not worked well

- The observed report indicated that students responded well to the lesson. Both the students' mean rating and observed rating was high and exceeded teacher's self-rating of the lesson

- Pre-lesson delivery, the teacher reported that one barrier may be that "the lesson might bring about certain attitudes that the students have about their gender roles". A number of lesson barriers were observed which related to class scheduling; timing; and managing students behaviour

School four

- Classroom management/climate was described favourably in all inspections with good classroom management and supportive environments reported

- A good range of teaching and learning methodologies were reported in all inspections. The use of differentiation strategies were reported in two inspections (SCI, HE), while in Irish it was recommended that there should be more use of assessment for learning methods to assist student learning

- It was reported that there was good whole-school support for all subjects. Examples provided ranged from school support for teachers' CPD to encouragement of student participation in co and extracurricular activities

- Recommendations from the subject inspection highlighted the need for improvements: in linking methodologies and assessment to learning outcomes; to re-cap learning intentions to students to improve learning skills; balance between teacher instruction and student activity; review of homework policy; include the oral competency of learners in reports which are sent home (languages); further develop the Irish department (designing action plan based on the department and the inspection findings); and to improve short term planning by creating an exact number of learning objectives suitable to lesson length

- BOM responses mainly reported that recommendations were relayed to teachers. There was no response to the inspection in the subject of Irish
- The teacher had a positive experience at RSE in-service training and rated training highly (9/10) and the teacher *agreed* they had the necessary skills to deliver RSE upon training completion
- All students reported that they received RSE lessons in previous years and current year of post-primary school (where applicable as this was a mixed year group)
- There was a ten minute difference between teacher's reported class timing and the observed report
- The teacher reported that they had enough time to complete lesson and this was also observed
- There was consistency in reported aims across the three perspectives (teacher, students, and observed). The teacher reported one additional aim
- Post-lesson delivery the teacher reported that lesson aims were achieved
- Although the topics reported across all three perspectives were not identical, both students' and observer reported topics linked back to the teacher's reports
- There was consistency between teacher's reported activities and the observed report. Half of students described the activities that took place in response to an open question
- The teacher reported that DES resources were used. This was also observed as well as the reporting a number of visual resources (DVD, PowerPoint). Students responded to the open question about resources with most indicating that visual resources were used
- Resources were rated very highly by students and by the observer. The teacher rated a number of RSE resources. Three resources (Healthy Living,

Healthy Times, and Healthy Choices) received low scores for their visual appeal (1/5). All resources received full scores (5/5) for being user friendly

- The teacher's post-delivery responses were more positive with regards ease of lesson delivery and understanding the lesson than pre-delivery reports
- The lesson was received very positively by participants and this was supported by the observer and teacher's reports on lesson delivery
- The teacher reported that they planned to verbally monitor students' responses in the lesson and give lesson-related home work. The observed report indicated that it was difficult to determine if the teacher monitored responsiveness and reported that it seemed non-verbal
- The observer indicated that students responded well and participated in lesson activities
- Both the students' mean rating and observed rating exceeded the teacher's self-rating of the lesson. The lesson was rated very highly by all
- One lesson barrier was observed which related to a lack of resources in Irish
- The teacher provided reflection on the lesson which related to adapting an activity to increase its impact

School five

- There is an "open, inclusive and non-selective admissions policy" and the school is described as "well-organised" and has a "warm welcoming atmosphere" Parental responses indicated that the school makes their children feel welcome
- Teaching and learning in the observed SPHE lessons and in some cases, there was very high quality of teaching and learning
- Some very good examples of using appropriate active learning (or experiential) methodologies were observed during the SPHE lessons;

- The report recommends that the SPHE department need to refine group work skills, increasing the use of ICT to support teaching and learning
- Students' folders and workbooks were well-organised and displayed good progression in their work. The report commends the use of personal reflections as an assessment tool and recommends that this practice is developed by all teachers
- The report notes that there is capacity to develop a written module for RSE (in the context of religious education) at senior cycle although it is noted that most aspects of RSE are being delivered
- The inspection highlights that there was very good rapport between teachers and students
- Both the BOM and senior management support CPD and the evaluation highlights that future CPD plans should include differentiation and active learning methodologies
- The school had an SPHE coordinator who is now retired. A new coordinator has not been designated but it was explained that everyone works together as a team
- It is reported that SPHE teachers are not assigned but consulted about teaching and this is commended. There is continuity with students and SPHE teachers as management tries to allow the same teachers to stay with the class group from first to third year. The report praises management for its approach to training, noting that all SPHE teachers have completed the introductory training and almost all teachers have completed RSE training;

- Senior management is described very positively, members of middle management are described as being diligent with their duties and non-post holders are commended for their work
- SPHE, including RSE, is timetable d for all junior cycle students. Resource classes have two periods of SPHE per week. It was also explained that RSE is taught through religion at senior cycle (I, INSP)
- There is very good whole-school support for SPHE (organisation, teaching and learning) (INSP)
- The parents association is also described as "active, well-informed and works well in partnership with senior management"
- The school communicates students' progress in SPHE with parents through annual teacher meetings and school reports
- The BOM is correctly constituted, meet regularly, and most members are trained for the role. The board plays an active role in the school planning process (WSE-MLL)
- The BOM confirmed that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' have been formally adopted without modification (WSE-MLL)

- The teacher had a very positive experience at RSE in-service training and rated training fully (10/10) and the teacher strongly agreed they had the necessary skills to deliver RSE upon training completion
- There was an eight minute difference between the teacher's reported lesson timing and the observed report
- Post-lesson delivery, the teacher felt they did not have enough time to complete lesson and this was also observed

- There was consistency in the aims reported between teacher and students
- Post-lesson delivery, the teacher reported that lesson aims were not achieved and that the lesson took place over two classes
- There were differences in topics reported by all however there was consistency in reported activities across all three perspectives (teacher, student, and in the observed report)
- The teacher reported that the TRUST resource was used and the majority of students (89%) reported that they liked the worksheet that was used;
- Lesson resources were rated highly by students and the observer. The resources scored lowest in the visually appealing category for both groups
- The teacher rated two resources (TRUST and DES). The DES resources scored lowest in the visually appealing categories. Both resources scored well in the age-appropriate category
- The teacher's post-delivery responses were more positive with regards ease of lesson delivery and less positive about the provision of adequate resources than pre-delivery reports
- The lesson was received very positively by participants and this was supported by the observation and teacher's reports on lesson delivery
- The teacher reported they would monitor students' responses if there was time available and through feedback from group work and responses to worksheet. The teacher also indicated that if monitoring would occur in the next lesson if not possible for this one. The observed report suggested that the teacher was not monitoring responses in the lesson
- The observed report indicated high levels student responsiveness and participation. The students were comfortable in the class
- The students mean rating of the lesson was high and exceeded the teacher's own rating. Both the students' mean rating and the teacher's self-rating of the lesson exceeded the observed rating

- Two lesson barriers were observed which related to the DVD player not working and a didactic approach to the lesson
- The teacher reflected on the lesson and felt that if the DVD player had worked: the lesson would have been excellent

4.3 Phase three results: Teacher's conceptualisations of programme implementation

The cards, categories and schema developed by participating teachers are presented in this section.

4.3.1 Categories created by group one

Group one developed six categories from 28 individual cards. The six categories are presented below and include specific descriptions of the ideas that were generated on individual cards to create the various categories.

Time

The time category was developed to represent eight cards: 'time inside school time to implement and write a school plan for this new subject. this plan should include review dates'; 'change of attitudes towards other subjects-less time to spend on same: lowering of standard demanded from other subjects'; 'time: how will the subject slot into the timetable ? how often per week will the subject be taught?'; 'time' (x2); 'a curriculum/programme to help implement the subject'; 'available time'; 'speak to other schools teachers who teach the subject'; and 'opportunity to talk to other schools that have implemented the new subject.'

Time was raised very frequently, and was the first category to be created by the group. As one teacher said, "time is major" and another stated: "there's certainly a category there". After creating this category, the teachers in this group had a discussion about the importance of time and the major role it plays in programme implementation.

Incentives

The incentives category was developed to incorporate the 4 cards: 'influence'; 'has teacher's interest in delivering the subject been investigated?'; 'willingness'; and 'incentives.' The group was unsure about how to label the category and 'incentives' was eventually agreed upon.

Public Relations (P.R.) - Perception is everything

The P.R. category was developed to incorporate the two cards: 'good advertising'; and 'you need an early win (success) for the training team (e.g., Obama in Iowa).' This category was formed after a lengthy discussion among participants. Some participants were trying to interpret the meaning of the 'good advertising' card, with one participant stating: "what they really meant is that you'd have to advertise it amongst the staff and sell it to them". The person who had created the card was in this group and identified that it was their idea. This person explained what they meant by 'good advertising': "having implemented a couple of new subjects down the years, the staff wouldn't have a clue, what's that about? (gives example of a programme)… and I found with parents and other things that you kind of have to put it out there and almost have a kind of information night". Some participants liked the concept of an information night.

The group moved on to discuss the card 'early win'. It was decided that an 'early win' was about Public Relations (PR) and getting the programme off to a good start. This component was then paired with the 'good advertising' card and the 'PR' category was created. A participant commented *"perception is everything"* which was approved by the group and written beside the category title.

Resources

The resources category comprised the following three cards: 'materials/resources'; 'resources - books, hands on materials etc'; 'resources.' This category was created quickly and easily by the group.

Training

The training category comprised the following five cards: 'training & support'; 'is there staff training available? in-service'; 'teacher training'; 'everyone familiar with aims and objectives'; and 'teacher training support'. Similar to the 'time' category, training was clearly and quickly identified by the group as a category.

Collegiate/Management Support

The category 'collegiate/management support' comprised the following six cards: 'provision of equipment in most subjects (e.g., IT equipment in T4 [50])'; 'collegial support'; 'a lot of support'; 'a member of staff to be in charge of implementing this new subject'; 'support from school management'; and 'a cohort of teachers already qualified in a relevant/related subject area'.

Initially this category was labelled collegiate support. However one member of the group felt that the different types of support were not accounted for. A discussion took place about the different forms of support and the group agreed to broaden the category by calling it 'collegiate/management support'.

4.3.2 Categories created by group two

Group two developed three categories from 28 individual cards. The three categories are presented below and include specific descriptions of the ideas that were generated on individual cards to create the various categories.

Department [51] Directive (External-department decisions: training/support, budget, and syllabus)

The 'department directive' category comprised the following 19 cards: 'a need for subject to be taught/good rationale'; 'DES approval and backing'; 'DES motivation'; 'justification- regarding importance of subject matter'; 'training'; 'training during school time from an outsider to come in and train the staff'; 'training for teachers'; 'subject knowledge'; 'training- subject knowledge essential'; 'will there be a budget available? resources will be essential'; 'materials'; 'proper resources'; 'use of computers'; 'money to buy resources and employ somebody to do the training'; 'resources- subject materials written by practicing teachers with expertise in specific areas of the subject'; 'budget'; 'resources'; 'is there a syllabus available? will all

[50] T^4 is a full time support service within the Department of Education and Science in Ireland. It serves to prepare and support teachers to implement the subjects: Architectural Technology, Design and Communication Graphics; Engineering Technology; and Technology at senior level in Irish post-primary schools.

[51] The term department and the abbreviation DES both refer to the National Ministry of Education and Skills.

levels be taught i.e. juniors/seniors'; 'a curriculum for this new subject'; 'at second-level, change is definitely helped if the subject is going to be examined.' This was the largest category developed by the second group and is very broad-ranging.

Internal Support (Internal (school) - whole school plan, support from management, integration)

The 'internal support' category comprised just three cards: 'whole school plan'; 'what class sizes are envisaged?'; 'integrate the new subject into other subjects already taught.'

Time/Support (External and Internal)

The 'time/support' category comprised the following six cards: 'time-maybe swap another subject'; 'more time in the day, perhaps teach it during lunch period or after school, extra money or reducing time i.e. standard given to other subjects'; 'good time allocation in timetable '; 'support'; 'support from management and staff'; and 'support from the Principal and all the staff.'

4.3.3 Schemas

Both groups created a schema with the categories developed by the other group. These are presented and described below.

4.3.3.1 Schema A

The schema created out of the categories (developed by group one) is presented in Figure 4.4 below. The directional arrows indicate the relationships between the categories.

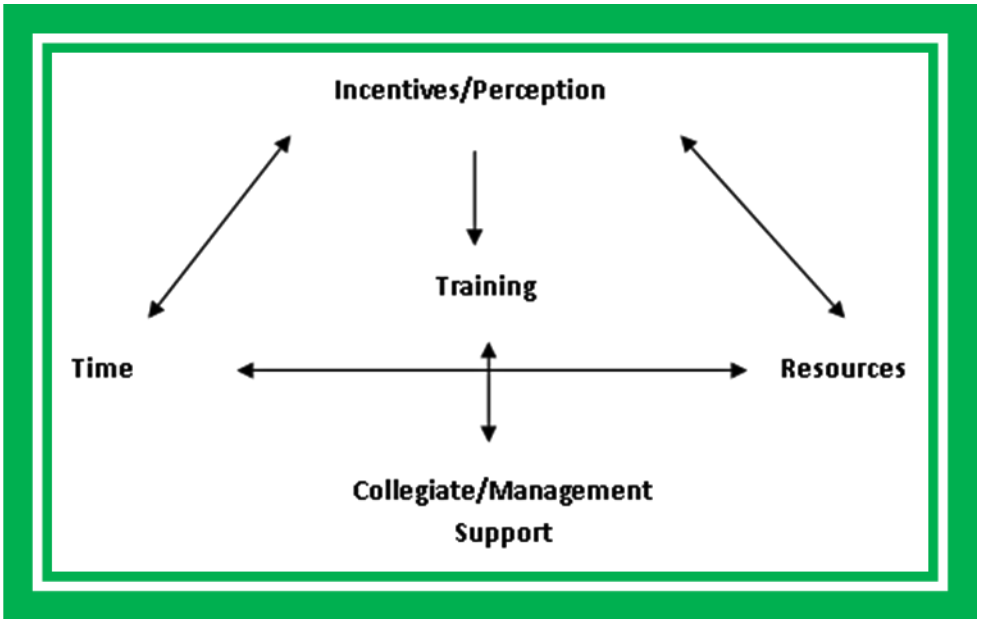

Figure 4.4 : Schema A

When describing Schema A and the rationale behind the arrangement of the categories, one participant explained that incentives/perception was placed at the top as there was a need to get this "correct" and if incentives/perception weren't correct, then you were in difficulty. The process of creating the schema was described by a group member:

> We took you're (group two's) headings and what we felt was that the incentives and perception ... if they're not correct, then you won't get as far as here (points to training, time and resources) ... so any of the incentives … and perception create whatever goes on here, if you haven't got them correct then you're in difficulty as regards the training and what happens and we saw these very much tied together the training, resources and time because they're to some degree internal but they're also external .. .then we felt the base of it really was ... that you need the collegiate and the management support, is what ye have (looks to other group), and also to tease out that without this as a base (collegiate/management support) ... then the whole thing isn't a success.

4.3.3.2 Schema B

The schema created out of the categories developed by group two is presented in Figure 4.5 below.

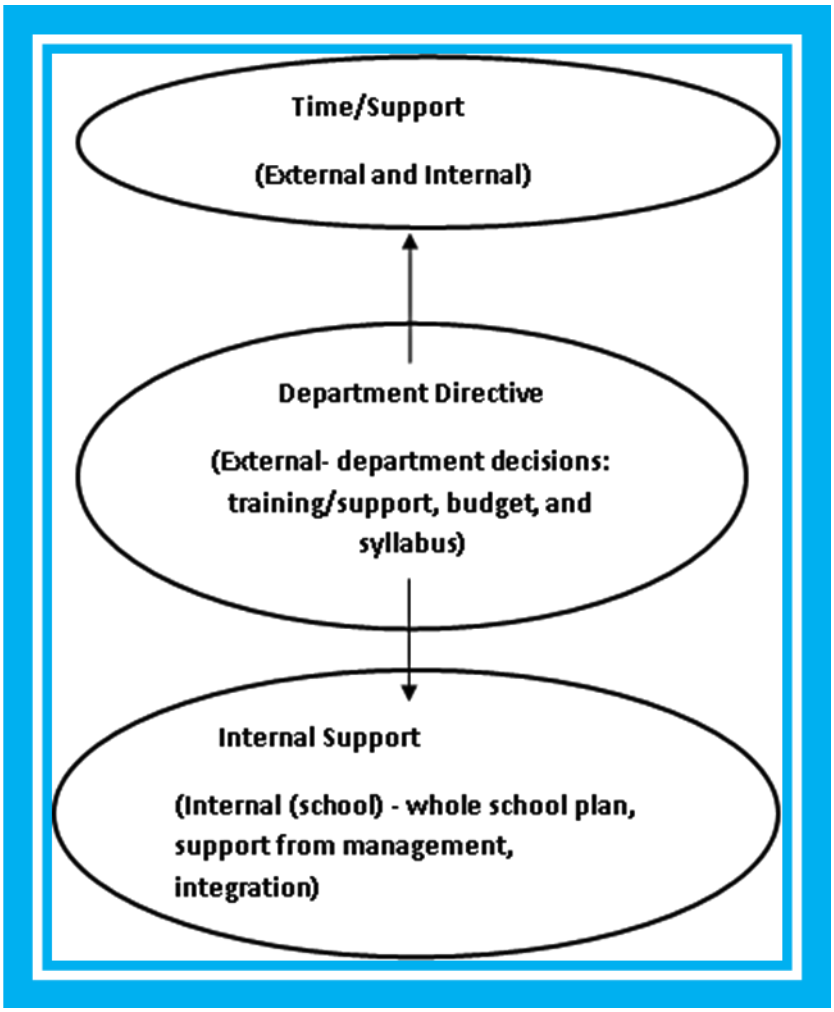

Figure 4.5: Schema B

The group discussed how to present the categories and the possibility of creating a hierarchy. They also discussed the need for both time and support from the Department but that these elements were also required from the school. It was decided that everything was interdependent but the group debated which was most important: “sure you could get the training and resources and no-one would want to do it” and “things come in the door and they’re not done”. One teacher commented that “it’s the person at the top that makes all the decisions” and this prompted further discussion. It emerged that the support from management was considered most important, with one teacher stating: “you could have all the money in the world and

all the resources and yet it couldn't be implemented because the localised level … if it's not going to be accepted, it's not going to happen". Following this, the group decided to put 'department directive' in the middle with everything else originating from it.

The different types of support were discussed and this prompted a conversation about the practicalities of implementing a new subject. This included two participants using a real example of trying to implement a new subject from their own teaching experience. Participants mentioned that there was the incentive to do it, but not enough time. Time was then placed at the top of the model.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This purpose of this study was to explore the delivery of RSE in-service training and RSE lesson delivery in Irish post-primary schools through an implementation science theoretical perspective. Specifically, it sought to: a) adopt an implementation science conceptual framework to explore the practice of RSE in-service training and subsequent RSE delivery in schools by examining the process of training and lesson delivery to explore fidelity, context, and to identify factors which facilitate or hinder training/lesson delivery and b) explore teachers conceptualisations of school-based programme implementation in an Irish context and compare these findings to the extant literature with specific focus on the Greenberg et al. (2005) conceptual model of school-based implementation.

As evidenced from the findings of this study, teachers displayed positivity about a number of key features, such as: programme delivery; skill acquisition for delivery; clarity about the purpose; dedication to the goals; and respect for RSE as an educational programme upon training completion. This is despite the fact that a number of teachers reported that training attendance was compulsory or directed. Teachers who attended training reported very positively on the training environment and rapport between other teachers and trainers. Teachers who participated at school-level reported positivity about acceptance of the RSE programme. However, less than half of the teachers fulfilled planned lesson aims. There were practicalities of implementation that related to lesson and resource structure and timing in addition to teachers' pre-planning skills. Student engagement and responsiveness to lessons was high as was teacher motivation. There were some factors which related to the need for updated and revised programme materials, particularly with regards sexual citizenship and changing family structures. Schools varied in the type of support offered to RSE teachers.

The schemas developed by teachers, and the discussions which accompanied the process, illustrate the complexity of implementing school-based programmes from the perspective of teachers. The need for localised acceptance was emphasised by teachers, which incorporated components such as interest/willingness, incentives and perceptions of a programme. Support, time, training and resources emerged as common components. Students and other educational stakeholders did not feature in either schema. Structurally, the schemas are presented as a hierarchy and leadership is presented as structurally fundamental to both of them as it features in either the core or base of each schema.

The main findings will now be reviewed in the context of existing literature in the field. Firstly, trainers' reported experiences of their own training will be discussed. This will be followed by an examination of the key findings in relation to implementation fidelity including: adherence; adaptations; reach; dosage; quality of delivery; and participant responsiveness at both training and school-level. Where relevant, findings from the teacher-created schemas will be included in the discussion. Barriers and facilitators identified in this study will also be discussed. The discussion will also include implementation context findings. Teachers' schemas will be compared to existing models in the field. The implications for practice, policy and research will then be presented, along with an appraisal of the study's limitations. This chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research.

5.2 Training the trainers

In relation to training for SPHE trainers, there was no standard training with all trainers 'shadowing' their predecessor. One trainer noted that there were differences in the type of training offered before the support service was restructured. There is a need for consistent training approaches to ensure that all teachers receive the required content. For example, one trainer commented on differences in the training being offered prior to a re-structuring of SPHE training (which then became the SPHE support service). This trainer also reported that the training offered at senior cycle using the TRUST resource is much more prescriptive than the junior cycle training.

Another trainer reported that there was a need for the training plan to be adaptable to improve training vitality and other referred to the need to keep up-to-date with changes. Further to this, one trainer reported that each training was different due to the differences in group dynamics and teacher characteristics. This is interesting in relation to the need for consistent and standard implementation versus adaptive approaches to programmes, whereby modification is encouraged.

5.3 Implementation fidelity

In this study, **programme reach** was recorded through attendance and reflected a short period of time. At training level, reach was measured and achieved more easily as all teachers who attended the first day of the training also attended the second day as the training is of two-day duration. At school level, it was clear how reach is a much more challenging concept. In schools, some children were absent from school or just absent from the RSE lesson (some children were taking part in another research project, at resource lessons, or partaking in sport activities). Therefore determining the exact level of involvement as defined (Durlak, 2015; Durlak & DuPre, 2008) is actually far trickier in practice in schools especially for programmes that continue for a period of time. The extent to which reach was explored in this study was at a single point in time.

The importance of examining **dosage** is well-documented in implementation science (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak, 2015; Dusenbury et al., 2003). In this study, there were variations between dosage reports for some in-service trainings and RSE lessons. At school-level, this was particularly evident in the triangulation of teacher and observer reports on lesson timing. For example, for effective programmes, positive results have emerged from programmes that offer 12 or more sessions, and sometimes 30 or more sessions, with each session lasting around 50 minutes (UNESCO, 2018), which is much longer in duration than RSE lessons. Based on this guidance, it is essential to carefully apportion sufficient time and space to CSE classroom curricula and lesson planning throughout the school year, and across school years (UNESCO, 2009) and this guidance could be applied in an Irish context to improve timing.

Time as an implementation barrier is also frequently referred to in the literature (Dariotis et al., 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Hill, Maucione, & Hood, 2007). For example, Barr et al. (2014) argue that effective sexuality education requires planning adequate time for students to practice skills and the lack of time is a major factor in school-based programme implementation with evidence suggesting that schools are complex and face many implementation challenges (Butler et al., 2010; Firth et al., 2008). These arguments are supported by the findings in this study. In particular, the timing issues in this study mainly related to teacher and programme factors although implementation in this study was only recorded at a single point in time.

At school level, crowded curriculum and academic pressures often result in social and emotional learning programmes being shortened or reduced in number (Dariotis et al., 2008) although what has emerged in some cases in this study is that implementers did report some but not all of these discrepancies. As noted by Barry and Jenkins (2007), the lack of comprehensive information on dosage is a limitation of many programmes. Implementer's reports on feelings about time, in some cases, was a more accurate reflection of dosage than specific questions relating to what they did or did not implement. Trainers felt they did not have enough time to complete training in a number on instances, and this was also reported by some teachers at the school-level. Greenberg et al. (2005) argue that it is imperative to explore training dosage to ascertain what is delivered at training, as the implementation fidelity of training impacts on the type of training teachers receive.

The inability to complete training for teachers due to time can impact on intended delivery and potentially effect teachers' skills, capacity, and confidence to subsequently deliver the programme which links back to Durlak's (2015) point about incomplete or partial instruction reducing effectiveness, and Hammig et al.'s (2011) point about teacher training as one of the most important factors for comprehensiveness of SBSE delivery.

Time as a requirement of school-based implementation emerged in both schemas created by teachers. Teachers in one group specifically referred to the major role it plays in programme implementation and suggested that spending time on a new subject affects both time management and attitudes towards other subjects. This

insight into teachers' conceptions highlights the importance with which teachers view time and its impact. There is a need for research into how teachers conceptualise implementation (Murphy, Barry, & Nic Gabhainn, 2018) and linked to this is a need for greater understanding of how teachers conceptualise their practice in relation to implementation and its measurement. There is also a need for research into the way teachers conceptualise their SBSE practice and this is supported in arguments by Abbott et al. (2016). This is a vital point in relation to the implementation of SBSE, particularly as the implementation of contentious programmes is a greater challenge than other programme types (Pearson et al., 2015).

Adherence to programme content was difficult to determine at training and school level. There were consistencies in reports of content, for example there was consistency in reported training activities and regarding the main resources used at training and in schools. There were however also discrepancies in reports of delivery (topics, activities and resources), which was evident at both training and school-level, in varying degrees. It is harder to determine whether fidelity was high or low when there were variations in reported content. If high fidelity results in achieving the desired benefits for young people in comparison to programmes that do not remain faithful to original programme content design or delivery styles (Michielsen et al., 2010; Shepherd et al., 2010; Wight, 2011) then it would appear that some areas of RSE implementation were patchy, particularly at school level. As noted difficulties arise when there is a lack of teacher adherence to programme fidelity (e.g. Flink et al., 2017; Rijsdijk et al., 2013; Sidze et al., 2017; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016) and could result in a reduction of effectiveness.

There was consistency in viewpoints regarding reported aims and the achievement of aims at training-level. This differed greatly to school-level experiences whereby although the aims pre-and post-lesson were largely consistent, only two teachers reported that they had achieved lesson aims. This finding was related to timing but also to lesson structure, programme materials and skills. Overall, the findings would suggest implementation fidelity was higher at training than at school level and that high levels of fidelity were achieved in certain content areas but not others.

In terms of **adaptations**, at training level the only type reported were additions (materials or resources) to existing plans. This type of adaptation was also present at school level in addition to adaptations which could be classed as negative as they had not covered a planned lesson component. In a study by van Lieshout and colleagues (2017), it was reported that teacher's fidelity levels were high but many reported adding elements to the programme. These findings relate to the concept of fidelity in two main ways: the first being the difference between delivering the programme as intended by the developer and what is actually delivered in the classroom (Greenberg et al., 2005). For example, Holliday et al. (2009), their descriptions of adaptations made during delivery as broadly *avoidable* or *unavoidable* in practice, and *acceptable* or *unacceptable* in relation to the intervention protocol. As identified Hogue et al. (2005), it is important to understand what these elements have been implemented, adapted, or omitted during the process of implementation and subsequently this could assist with the determining of the adaptable or not adaptable elements of an intervention (Gates et al., 2015).

It is interesting to note that trainers in this study identified the importance of adaptation with regards their training manual and thus their training and one teacher specifically highlighting the importance of teaching with fidelity but also making the content relevant to students lives and using current information. Also, although teachers stated use of a lesson plan/curriculum, it was clear that some teachers used what they deemed as relevant content from other sources. Furthermore, in some of the lessons, it appeared from observations that teachers who had modified the RSE planned lesson from the curriculum were more successful in their implementation of the lesson. This again links to arguments surrounding fidelity and adaptation. On the one hand, the literature presents evidence that suggests that curriculum fidelity is associated with positive outcomes and on the other, there are arguments about the need for adaptations for delivery in local contexts, that adaptations are not only inevitable (Greenberg, 2004) but necessary (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Dusenbury et al., 2003) or that in fact, adaptations and high fidelity can occur together (Hansen, 2013; van Lieshout et al., 2017a).

This is difficult to determine within the context of RSE as the ‘active ingredients’ of a programme are not yet established and there is no evidence of effectiveness. For example, in this study some teachers reported not fulfilling some of the planned lesson and not achieving lesson aims. Some adaptations reported related to adding something to the training/lesson which could be viewed as positive adaptation, especially if lesson aims were fulfilled. This type of adaptation would suggest, as argued by Hansen et al. (2013), that high fidelity and adaptations can in fact co-exist. However, some complexity arises when it has been reported in this study that aims were achieved but that in fact there was not enough time to complete the lesson or training. The combination of these factors could be viewed as contradictory although this depends if the unfinished lesson/training parts were of core importance.

Furthermore, in relation to programme consistency and the concept of fidelity, participants had different resource experiences. The level of differing resources means all participants can have different **resource experiences** and this impacts on the level of curriculum fidelity across training but particularly at a school-level. The scores were mixed at training level as the scores for RSE resources varied within and between teachers and trainers. Overall, resources scored highest for their age appropriateness and for being user-friendly and lower for their visual appeal and cultural sensitivity. In terms of response to resources overall at school level, the majority of students indicated that they liked lesson resources. Resources scored lowest in the ‘visually appealing’ category at school-level. Programme implementation is more likely to be successful if programme materials meet all four criteria: age appropriateness; culturally sensitive; visually appealing; and user-friendly (Greenberg et al., 2005). It has been identified that a lack of appropriate resources is a barrier for SBSE (Browne, 2015; UNESCO, 2009) particularly in making sure that young people receive the messages they need and as highlighted by Ollis (2014) the provision of effective resources can actually improve teachers confidence for delivery.

In relation to **participant responsiveness and quality of delivery** at training level, existing evidence suggests that teacher training can influence knowledge, perceptions, comfort levels, intentions and actions for implementing sexuality

education (Clark, Clark, & Brey, 2014; Cohen, Byers, & Sears, 2012; Cushman et al., 2014; Fisher & Cummings, 2015; Wilson et al., 2015) and that it is important to evaluate the impact of training (Durlak, 2015; Greenberg et al., 2005). The importance of teacher training was also highlighted in teacher's schemas. In this study, all teachers reported positive experiences of RSE in-service training and rated training highly. It is well-documented that the provision of and ability to access appropriate teacher training facilitates the implementation of health education/social and emotional learning programmes (Hargreaves, 2013) or sexuality education specifically (Wilson et al., 2015). Upon completion of training, almost all teachers reported that they felt positive about teaching RSE, had the necessary skills to deliver RSE, understood the purpose of RSE, were dedicated to the goals of RSE, and respected RSE as an educational programme.

Interestingly, in trainers' definitions of implementation, it was recognised that there was a need to translate knowledge into practice. One trainer specifically identified the need for a core team to train teachers to promote sustainability. There is also a need for comprehensive training, particularly as evidence suggests that it results in an increase in implementation fidelity (Little, Sussman, Sun, & Rohrbach, 2013).

Implementers are more likely to be interested in a programme when the training is participative and engaging (Greenberg et al., 2005). It is also supportive if teachers perceive that the trainer is respectful of their personal needs and interests and aware of their skill level and learning style (Greenberg et al., 2005). This is evidenced in this study through the quantitative and qualitative responses provided by teachers. Many of the comments were very positive about the training and/or the trainer and all trainers reported positively on training delivery and rapport which was supported by the majority of teachers. This included an assessment of teachers' perceptions of trainer's interest in training and their comfort with the trainer. Furthermore, the majority of teachers indicated that training was delivered clearly and was easy to understand.

Wehby and colleagues (2012) explored teachers' perceptions of the quality of the teacher-coach [52] alliance, teachers' perceived effectiveness of the usefulness of the treatment, and a measure of teachers stress. Their results indicated that the teacher-coach relationship and social validity were distinctly associated with treatment implementation (Wehby, Maggin, Partin, & Robertson, 2012). They also found that a model with all predictors uncovered that the alliance between teacher-coach had the strongest relationship with treatment implementation (Wehby et al., 2012). The findings of that study support the notion that teachers' practical adherence to a treatment is impacted by the level of support and training received (Wehby et al., 2012).

The findings from this study suggest feelings of confidence and knowledge after training completion for almost all teachers. Implementer readiness is highlighted in implementation literature and is a vital aspect of school-based planned implementation support (Greenberg et al., 2005). Based on the findings, teachers reported readiness to implement RSE. If teachers are not fully competent or willing to deliver sexuality education, it may result in reduced quality or partial instruction (Cushman et al., 2014). It is difficult to determine, however, the extent to which teachers felt confident in discussing sensitive issues. As highlighted by Shepherd and colleagues (2016) in their recent systematic review, they found that some trainees felt that they still lacked knowledge and confidence to address sensitive health issues on entering teaching practice after initial health education training.

At school-level, the triangulation of viewpoints suggested student responsiveness was high and that there was interest and enjoyment in the lessons. This is similar to findings by Newby et al. (2018) and in addition to this; a study by van Lieshout (2017) found that student response was one of the most important factors affecting implementation. It is recognised that participant responsiveness is an important factor in programme success (Barry et al., 2005; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak, 2016; Dusenbury et al., 2003). The majority of students reported that they learned a

[52] A coach can be largely defined as a person who 'works collaboratively with a teacher to improve that teacher's practice and content knowledge, with the ultimate goal of affecting student achievement'(Yopp et al., 2011, p. 50).

lot in the lesson and triangulated views supported high lesson ratings. Although this is measured in a variety of ways, it is one of the most important factors: do students like and respond well to the programme? While there is an obvious need for a programme to work (as delineated in the literature review for this thesis), it is also imperative that a programme is also well received by the intended recipients. Based on the findings, RSE in-service training and RSE lessons are well received by participants. Participant responsiveness is vital as a programme may work in controlled settings but if it does not hold the interest or remain relevant for the core stakeholders, it has a less likely chance of success (Barry et al., 2005; Pearson et al., 2015; Pound et al., 2017). There was a minority of young people who did not find RSE interesting, mainly as they felt they had learned about this already. The relevance and appeal of components to young people has been identified as a facilitator for sexual health promotion (Shepherd et al., 2014) and should be considered in relation to programme content.

Furthermore, at school level, the relationship with the teacher was reported upon positively by both stakeholder groups. This was also found in a study by van Lieshout et al. (2017) where programme success was reported and is also a major influential and facilitating factor in implementation (Greenberg et al., 2005). In addition, post-lesson delivery, a number of teachers felt more positive about some elements of the lesson than pre-lesson delivery suggesting that experience in the delivery of SBSE can increase teachers' confidence for subsequent classes and reduce any nervousness or lack of confidence that may exist. Positivity among teaching staff attitudes has been found to facilitate effective health education (Hargreaves, 2013).

5.4 Monitoring and evaluation

In terms of monitoring responsiveness, at training level all trainers indicated that they would be monitoring teachers' responsiveness at training however, some trainers indicated that they would be monitoring responses *after* training was completed, for example through school visits although this is a variable approach to assessing responsiveness as identified in interviews with trainers, this is not a service that is provided to all schools. At the end of each in-service, the support service ask

participants to complete a simple evaluation of the training and indicate that they use this information to improve the service. There only type of evaluation post-training completion is the follow-up work in schools, which however, as indicated by the support service is variable due to limited resources (staff). As noted by Durlak (2016), it is rare for implementers to achieve high-quality implementation or intended programme outcomes when adhering to a programme manual or lesson plans alone as it is natural for practical problems to arise and guidance is needed (beyond written forms) on how to foresee such challenges, deal with them, and to also understand multiple features of the intervention (Durlak, 2016). This type of guidance and support is often provided in pre-programme training but also involves ongoing assistance after the programme begins through consultation or personal coaching (Durlak, 2016).

At school-level, only one teacher reported in advance that they would be monitoring responses *throughout* the lesson. All other teachers reported that they would monitor responses at the end of the class or in the following class. This is also an unusual way to monitor responsiveness by focusing on the end of the lesson or in fact not exploring responsiveness to a specific lesson within the lesson frame. Interestingly the triangulated viewpoints suggested differences with observed reports suggesting that, in some instances, teachers appeared to be monitoring student responsiveness throughout the lesson even when they reported otherwise. There were however, no other evaluations of the lesson. As argued by Rocha et al. (2016), the absence of routine and effective evaluation of sexuality education in schools is a barrier to improving quality and highlights a number of ways to improve this, with one specifically identifying the need to detail exact process for planning, implementation, and evaluation. In addition, Haberland and Rogow (2015) argue that despite the widespread recommendation for the evaluation of effectiveness, there is a lack of user-friendly tools to do this, while Rocha et al. (2016) further identify the importance of taking the school’s specific context into consideration when doing this.

5.5 Delivery

As evidenced in the findings from the lessons, teachers varied in implementation style but also in the resources and programme materials used. Most teachers reported that they were using a teaching manual. This was supported in the observations with the exception of one school. Although a single specific teaching guide for RSE does not exist, the varying resources provide instructions on delivery and materials to use for each lesson and in many ways act as a guide. The lack of a clear specific RSE programme is arguably an obstacle when compared to the literature surrounding the constitution of effective programmes (Kirby et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2018).

In a number of schools, teachers reflected on their lesson and engaged in critical reflective practice. Lessons that were observed to be the most successful were clear and well-structured but also demonstrated the experiential learning cycle as outlined in the introductory chapter. These lessons were also timed appropriately (teachers reported that they had enough time to complete the lesson and this was supported in observations) and the teachers reporting fulfilling lesson aims. In some of the lessons, it appeared that teachers who had modified the RSE planned lesson from the curriculum were more successful in their implementation of the lesson. This was particularly important with regards timing, but also in terms of overloaded lessons with too many activities/resources and complicated messages. As identified in the ITGSE (UNESCO, 2018, p.93) guidance, content development in relation to effective programmes needs to “focus on clear goals, outcomes and key learnings to determine the content, approach and activities and “cover topics in a logical sequence”. It could be argued that a more prescriptive programme could improve the implementation of RSE. If implementation adaption to some degree is inevitable, the provision of a well-resourced programme which is appropriately designed according to timing, structure, content, age-appropriateness and has clear outcomes could assist in implementation variability.

5.6 Barriers and facilitators

In a number of in-services, trainers highlighted a range of perceived barriers to implementing RSE training. These barriers related to school, teacher, or programme-level factors. The barrier most frequently cited by trainers was teachers’ unwilling

attendance, which included reasons such as teachers not wanting to or being forced to teach the subject. There is evidence that suggests that potential implementers are often not convinced of the need or are reluctant to deliver CSE (UNESCO, 2009). Although the majority of teachers reported attending training voluntarily and with Principal support, there were some teachers who reported that training was 'compulsory', that they attended voluntarily but without Principal support, or that they were 'advised to.'

At school-level, one teacher reported that the timetabling of SPHE was not discussed and the teacher was simply allocated the hours. Furthermore, there were teachers who directed, but not asked, to attend training. This timetabling and teacher allocation issue, without a discussion about voluntariness, is also reported in previous literature in Ireland (Mayock et al., 2007; Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). The recruitment of SBSE teachers is important and often teachers are selected to teach sexuality but do not have the skills, competence, background or comfort level to deliver it effectively (Wilson et al., 2015). A qualitative investigation into secondary level teachers' perceived value of health education in schools found that positive teaching staff attitudes were reported as facilitators for effective implementation while low motivation of teaching staff was reported as a barrier (Hargreaves, 2013).

In their schemas, teachers in this study identified interest and willingness as important parts of the implementation process. The need to investigate teachers' interest and the appropriate promotion of a school-based programme links to the pre-planning implementation stages. The need for acceptance of a programme was also identified by teachers. As previously identified in other studies, teacher perceptions and attitudes towards an intervention are important factors to consider and can positively or negatively impact on implementation levels (Biggs, Vernberg, Twemlow, Fonagy, & Dill, 2008; Domitrovich et al., 2008). Pearson et al. (2015) identified the need for pre-delivery consultation with parents and staff as vital when preparing to implement a school-based health promotion programme. As identified by Elias and Arnold (2006), even the strongest programme will fail if implementers are not aware of the problems or remain unconvinced of the programme necessity, or the requirements of a programme.

In their schematic development, teachers debated the underlying impetus for implementing a new programme in schools. It was identified that a programme must be mandated from the national Department of Education to be delivered. Despite this, it became clear through conversations, and in the schemas developed, that a programme would have to be accepted locally and also advertised to relevant stakeholders, although there was no reference to the inclusion of students. This tension between directed programme implementation and the interest and willingness to implement a programme was not discussed in detail between teachers, although differing opinions on the matter were voiced. It would appear that even mandated programmes may not be delivered if they are not locally accepted. Exploring teachers' perspectives can inform the local adaptation of programmes to suit specific implementation needs and assists in uncovering some core aspects needed for local ownership. Local ownership is described as the adaptation of a programme in a local setting whereby adaptations made to a programme are considered to be a crucial element in deriving a sense of "ownership" (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Dusenbury et al., 2003). This leads to deeper questions about school-based programme planning and also programmes which may be deemed more challenging to teach, such as sex education.

Other barriers identified by trainers related to schools not releasing teachers for training attendance and teachers not having basic SPHE training. The SPHE support service stipulate that teachers must have completed the introductory course to SPHE prior to enrolling in the RSE courses however in this study, some teachers reported that they had not attended this course. Furthermore, in this study, there were teachers who attended training that reported delivery of RSE classes with no prior RSE training. In a study of SPHE implementation in Irish post-primary schools, teachers with no prior in-service training noted discomfort or lack of confidence to teach the subject (Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010).

It was identified in this study that nervous teachers can be a barrier to training delivery. Research suggests that few in-service and pre-service teachers feel prepared and confident to deliver sexuality education (Barr et al., 2014; Goldman & Coleman, 2013). In Ireland, teacher discomfort and a lack of willingness to teach

RSE have been identified as barriers to RSE implementation (Mayock et al., 2007; Roe, 2010). An Irish study on pre-service teachers views on SPHE found very low rates of intention by pre-service teachers to become involved in teaching SPHE potentially indicating that pre-service teachers require motivation to realise the role they play in SPHE particularly as the DES states that the subject is cross-curricular and SPHE is expected to be embedded across the whole school (Mannix McNamara, Moynihan, Jourdan, & Lynch, 2012). In addition, timetabling was identified as a problematic issue with some Principals reporting that it was a subject they allocated to new staff members or to staff who had vacant slots in their timetable (Mayock et al., 2007; Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010) which would suggest that a number of the pre-service teachers surveyed by Mannix-McNamara et al. (2012) will actually become SPHE teachers.

Programme level barriers identified by trainers related to time and the non-examinable status of RSE. The lack of time is a major factor in school-based programme implementation with evidence suggesting that schools are complex and face many implementation challenges (Butler et al., 2010; Firth et al., 2008). For example, Dariotis et al. (2008) found that out of the three types of programmes assessed (school-based, community-based and family-based), school-based programmes had the lowest levels of adherence with all school-based programmes reporting adaptations. An overcrowded curriculum and academic pressures often result in social and emotional learning programmes being shortened or reducing the number of lessons (Dariotis et al., 2008). The non-examinable status of RSE can influence how it perceived by both staff and students. Formby and Wolstenholme (2012) found that in the UK, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) was sometimes devalued due to the lack of assessment. One example provided was that students did not prioritise PSHE as it was not assessed and in other schools PSHE *was* assessed yet some students reported that it was a waste of time (Formby & Wolstenholme, 2012). This has also been found in previous research on RSE and SPHE in Ireland, with some students and teachers perceiving the subject as unimportant and a waste of time while others highlighting its interest and importance (Mayock et al., 2007; Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010; O'Higgins & Nic Gabhainn, 2010; Roe, 2010). It has been argued that student disinterest or perceived lack of value in

PSHE is likely to be related to their school experiences of the subject (curriculum, delivery model and methods) as well as the comfort and enthusiasm of their PSHE teachers (Formby & Wolstenholme, 2012).

Facilitators of school-based implementation were identified in teacher-developed schemas. These have been discussed earlier in this chapter but to view these as facilitators, time was identified as an important category as was training. Adequate teacher training is central to effective programme delivery (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Greenberg et al., 2005) but also to teacher confidence. McGoey et al. (2014) reported that that a majority of teachers highlighted "serious barriers" to implementation when delivering evidence-based programmes in the classroom. For example, 70 per cent of teachers emphasised a serious lack of time as a barrier to implementing interventions (McGoey et al., 2014). This is an interesting finding as although an intervention may succeed with regard to acceptability, teachers may not feel that it is possible to effectively implement the intervention due to other factors. Although teacher burnout is often discussed in the literature (Shoji et al., 2016), this sample of teachers did not refer to burnout specifically. There was, however, much discussion about the need for support and time.

Trainers identified further barriers which related to the school level. Schools using 'ethos' as a reason for non-delivery of RSE, lack of RSE delivery in schools, lack of school support for teachers post-training, and outside facilitators teaching RSE in schools have also all been identified in previous research in Ireland (Mayock et al., 2007) and the data presented in this thesis would suggest that these barriers persist in the implementation of RSE.

At school level, few teachers reported perceived or actual barriers for the lesson compared to observed reports whereby barriers to every lesson were reported. It was observed that teacher approaches to implementing the RSE lessons varied. Some activities did not work well for various reasons. Specifically with regards core programme content, some activities were unclear and the materials were outdated which is the opposite of what is needed for effective delivery as outlined in the ITGSE (UNESCO, 2018) or by Kirby and colleagues (2007). In some there was normative family focus which further marginalised children partaking in the RSE

lessons who were in care. In another, relationships were framed as heterosexual and coital, including one lesson in which both the programme materials and the teacher reinforced heteronormativity. This has also been found in other research studies (Abbott et al., 2015; Diamond & Butterworth, 2008; Preston, 2016; Thaweesit & Boonmongkon, 2009). Classroom level factors affected some lessons: disruption during lesson; gender imbalance in the class; and classroom layout. Teacher behaviour also impacted in some instances, such as poor class management or an overly didactic approach.

A study by Eisenberg et al. (2013) focused on teacher barriers to delivering SBSE reported that there were barriers (which related to parent, student or administrator responses) for teachers. It is recommended that there is a need for a multifaceted approach to address barriers for teachers which incorporates training, curriculum development and evaluation, and a reframing of the policy debate to support a broader selection of sexuality education content (Eisenberg et al., 2013). There is need to explore teachers' perceptions of lesson barriers and in particular the perceived effects on implementing lessons. It is also important to highlight the difference between an external individual observing a lesson and a teacher who is delivering a lesson in an everyday context, where specifics of that given setting may be the status quo.

5.7 Contextual factors

5.7.1 Leadership and support

Trainers identified that although their job is multifaceted, supporting teachers was the primary role. It is identified that technical support involves providing continuous assistance that is needed to deliver a programme effectively and also includes observing the implementation system or any extra technical assistance resources supplied by the programme (Greenberg et al., 2005). This type of support is offered by the SPHE support service in a variety of ways although trainers identified that the support was sought from teachers and schools and was not a uniform approach. This lack of standard follow-up from training or contact with schools was mainly due to a lack of resources and it was identified that the need for post-training support was much greater than the capacity of the support service.

With RSE in-service training, the 'training manual' was not publicly available and a request to access the training materials was denied. When describing the training manual, one trainer described it as a *"consistent training plan"* which appeared to be equated with a manual by the support service team. It was difficult ascertain what was intended to be delivered by developers (the support service and management) without viewing a manual or plan. This also creates difficulty in determining the extent of variability among trainers' approaches. Furthermore, there was much reference to the experiential nature (and for some the inevitable variation in training) of the training during conversations with trainers. This is also interesting with regards to debates around teacher CPD which is concerned with maintaining "*quality, competence, and accountability*" (Sturrock & Lennie, 2009, p.12) versus CPD which adopts more lifelong learning approach including both professional and personal development (Lammintakanen & Kivinen, 2012). The latter approach appears to be adopted by the SPHE support service regarding training with recognition that the personal development aspect is central to the delivery of RSE and it is more than skills that are needed to equip teachers to deliver RSE. It could be argued that this approach by the SPHE support service in this regard is quite unique in Ireland with those who propose that CPD in Ireland is mainly provided by the DES and focuses on teachers skills rather than capacity (O'Sullivan, McConnell, & McMillan, 2012).

The key stakeholder for RSE, identified by all trainers, was the student in the classroom. Parents were also highlighted many times as a key stakeholder and the need for their support for RSE. A number of other stakeholders were identified by the trainers, ranging from teachers to outside agencies. There was discussion of the past influence of the church and schools using religion as an excuse not to deliver RSE, even though many religious-run secondary schools have now actually embraced RSE. Despite the identification of numerous stakeholders of RSE, many of these are not directly involved in training development (even teachers). Most trainers did however explain that teachers are informally involved in training development through feedback. This is a very ad-hoc approach to teacher involvement in training planning. As identified by Pearson et al. (2015), when preparing for implementation, uncontentious and well-established programmes take less consultative effort to be

perceived as acceptable compared to programmes with more novel components. There is a risk that the lack of familiarity with novel components may be viewed as unacceptable by staff and deeper consultation is required. If a programme or some of its content are contentious for some stakeholders, then the consultation must involve this group (Pearson et al., 2015). This pre-planning/preparing for implementation stage is intended to be focused during programme inception and is also documented in implementation literature (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). A core problem lies with ongoing contention with regards to SBSE. This can result in programmes which remain in a phase whereby the components of the programme are deemed unacceptable by some stakeholders at different points of time.

In almost all schools, leadership (which particularly related to Principals) was described very positively with an emphasis on good communication. The relationships between the Principal and deputy Principal were highlighted as important in some school inspections, particularly around the need to communicate and work effectively as a team. The role of leadership and in particular the role of the school Principal is cited as a core driver for school-based implementation, particularly with regards social and emotional learning programmes (Greenberg et al., 2005; CASEL, 2006). Further to this, research suggests SEL programmes are implemented better and deliver more positive outcomes when classroom teachers have Principal support (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Kam et al., 2003). In most schools, it was reported that there was an active school community which engaged with the wider community, in particular with parents. As described by Greenberg et al. (2005), this is an important facilitator for implementation. The BOM was referred to in most departmental inspections and it became clear that the BOM plays a fundamental role in school planning and school communication. It also became evident that the level and type of engagement by the BOM can vary between schools.

Interestingly, the main components identified in both schemas created by teachers were leadership and support. Leadership is identified as an important factor in the implementation process, for example, in terms of setting goals, reaching consensus, offering incentives and managing the overall process (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This

was discussed by teachers and also demonstrated through the positioning of leadership/support at the base/foundation of the schemas. The positioning of elements which relate to leadership at the core or base of the schemas is similar to the CASEL (2011) framework which places effective leadership at the core of implementing school-wide SEL. The Greenberg et al. (2005) model places leadership at various stages of the implementation process, recognising the role leadership plays in planning a programme and programme support, the actual programme delivered and at a contextual level. Teachers' reference to support in both schemas mirrors the complexity of the notion of "leadership". In the current study teachers identified the importance of collegial, school-level, parental and the Department of Education support in their schemas, which all relate to leadership in either in an individual, institutional or national capacity.

Examples of this are evident in this study with Principal support described positively and teachers implementing RSE. Despite this, it is difficult to discern the extent of Principal support for RSE, with one such teacher explaining that the Principal desired RSE to have heavy boundaries and to be framed in a moral and Catholic context. The main reason cited for this was parental objection. Parental objection or a lack of parental support is often cited as a barrier to implementing relevant SBSE (Eisenberg, Madsen, Oliphant, & Resnick, 2012; UNESCO, 2009). This is a recurring barrier to SBSE implementation. Although parental objections are often problematic for the delivery of SBSE (Goldman, 2008; UNESCO, 2009) research also suggests that many parents agree that SBSE is imperative (McKay, 2004; Peter, Tasker, & Horn, 2015). It can be difficult to discern if parental objections are a true reason for not delivering SBSE or if this reason is often used as an excuse to avoid teaching SBSE.

It was also highlighted in this study, by a parent, that there is a generation gap between parents and children. This included the idea of incorrect parental perceptions about their children's level of knowledge of sexuality and thus the importance of parent-child communication, parental involvement in school affairs, as well as a need for comprehensive sex education. Despite evidence of parental objections as discussed earlier, there is also evidence that suggests that parents

believe that their children should have access to a wide range of sexual health education information (Peter et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2009). This does not detract from the importance of parental communication, monitoring, and involvement with their children about sexual health issues, particularly as this is related to a reduction in risky behaviours (Huebner & Howell, 2003; Hutchinson, Jemmott, Jemmott, Braverman, & Fong, 2003). This finding is also supported in an Irish context, with recent data indicating that children who report being able to talk to their mother and father about things that really bother them are less likely to report having had sex (Callaghan et al., 2014).

5.7.2 Ethos and climate

It has been reported that sometimes Irish schools use their religious 'ethos' as a rationale for non-delivery of RSE (Mayock et al., 2007). As identified in this study, in one school, RSE was situated within a Catholic and married context, especially at senior cycle level. Outside facilitators involved in RSE delivery in this school were from a Catholic association. It is suggested that "although a causal relationship between school-based sex education policies and outcomes cannot be proved, the analysis does suggest that that young people's sexual health is best served when sex between young people is acknowledged, accepted, and regulated rather than proscribed in all contexts outside marriage" (Weaver, Smith, & Kippax, 2005, p.171). In Irish schools, it is a requirement of RSE that RSE policies should be aligned with school ethos which further complicates programme design and delivery. In most schools, classroom climates and classroom management were described favourably. Relationships between staff and students were described as good or respectful. Further to this, a positive school ethos and climate was described for the majority with one school described as having a vibrant learning atmosphere. In keeping with the concept of HPS, there is a need for supportive environments for education and development (Samdal & Rowling, 2012) and the atmosphere and ethos of a school is an important part of this. The need for a whole-school approach and collegiate support is important for implementing SEL programmes. As noted by Durlak et al. (2011), when districts and schools support high-quality programme implementation, the impact of a programme is improved. In all the schools involved in this study, it can be argued that there was evidence of school support for the

implementation of RSE albeit it with different forms and strengths. This links to earlier discussions in this text about willingness to teach RSE (Mayock et al., 2007; Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010) and furthers this notion of a whole-school approach as implementation is not simply delivery in the classroom but a mindset and a culture.

For example, in this study, one interviewee reported that from their perspective, all of the teachers in their school would view RSE as important and worthwhile, yet none of the other teachers wanted to teach it. This is both a negative and positive finding. From an ideological perspective, teachers in this school supported SBSE however not so from a practical professional perspective. Furthermore, it is clear how RSE teachers could feel unsupported in such an environment or like they are operating in isolation. There is ever-increasing awareness that both internally and externally from schools, implementers of sexuality education require appropriate support and facilitation to deliver such programmes in an effectual, empowering and all-encompassing fashion (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016)**.**

Classroom disruption was reported in some schools and can often act as a barrier to delivering sex education (Buston et al., 2002). This is an important factor to consider for the delivery of SBSE and requires pre-planning to minimise the amount of disruption during the lesson. As identified in the Greenberg et al. (2005) model, implementer characteristics and behaviours, classroom climate and peer relations all contribute to shaping how a programme is received in a classroom. What is important to identify is that implementer characteristics and behaviours is a very broad term and encapsulates many elements of the classroom dynamic. As the example of classroom disruption highlights, a core element of teacher characteristics and behaviours involves the ability to manage the class. This skill does not specifically relate to SBSE but to more generic transferable skills required by teachers. In fact, it was evidenced throughout this study that many of the positive facilitating factors for successful delivery were not specific ‘specialist knowledge’ but the practical application of general teacher skills which could be applied to any lesson.

One interviewee reported on the low demand on SPHE and RSE resources in the school and that the subject was low on the school agenda/not very high on the radar.

In this study, the issue of teacher vulnerability with regards problems with boundaries in teacher-student relationships resulting from teaching SBSE arose and a reason why other teachers did not want to teach it. This has been noted in previous research in Ireland (Mayock et al., 2007). Mayock et al. (2007) found that teachers who delivered RSE became known as the sex education teachers in their school and as a result were treated differently by both staff and students. This differential treatment can be attributed to the lack of a whole-school approach to RSE. If only certain teachers are tasked with delivery of RSE, without other school staff supporting and also implementing the subject, the risk of being singled out for being 'that teacher' remains high. It has the potential to create stigma associated with the role and contains negative potential to prevent other teachers from wanting to become engaged with the subject. It also has potential to create a 'pigeon-hole' effect whereby teachers who are requested or required to deliver RSE remain in that role because they may have received training or because they have become experienced in delivery. There is also a positive element to this, with SBSE teachers building relationships with young people.

Hargreaves (2013) found that the low position of health education within the school subject hierarchy was identified as a barrier among study participants. In Ireland and the UK, other studies have also reported on school-based health education as having lower status than other school subjects (Brown, Busfield, O'Shea, & Sibthorpe, 2011; Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). Mayock et al. (2007) also found evidence that the subject was not a school priority for many schools and that some teachers did not want to teach RSE. As identified in previous research in Ireland, in the twelve schools involved, SPHE was regarded as both challenging and worthwhile (Nic Gabhainn et al., 2010). In the current study, the challenging nature of RSE was not deemed as a relevant issue by another teacher interviewee, who identified that RSE was just another part of the SPHE subject and was delivered just like any other subject in their school. Interestingly, this school had very positive reports from both WSE and INSP reports which suggested a whole-school approach and positivity towards SPHE.

Almost all schools reported having methods for student engagement in the school (for example school council, prefect system) however student involvement was more related to social and peer engagement and classroom-level responsibility rather than being involved at a policy, curriculum or school planning level. There was evidence that in one school, student suggestions were provided to the BOM but it was difficult to ascertain implementation of those suggestions, particularly as there was no student representative on the board. In two schools, it was reported that there was low student engagement with RSE and in one of these schools it was also reported that there was no evidence of a whole-school approach to RSE. It is argued that student engagement in the design and delivery of SBSE is imperative to make sure it is relevant and interesting to young people (O'Higgins & Nic Gabhainn, 2010; Pearson et al., 2015).

On the whole it was reported that schools aimed to promote student welfare in various ways and had good approaches to pastoral care. School factors such as discipline policies, school structures, and procedures directly influence children's development (Bear, 2010) and also the implementation process of evidence-based programs (CASEL, 2013). In two schools, SPHE provision in particular was viewed favourably in inspections, with one school exceeding the minimum timetabling requirement at junior cycle. In one school, it was recommended that a written curriculum was provided to clarify the implementation of RSE at senior cycle. This is particularly important as RSE in senior cycle is delivered as part of other core subjects, most notably through RE. It was also noted that in this school, there was a need to formalise SPHE assessment in their policies. Also, in most schools, in relation to academic subject inspections, it was emphasised that there was a need for improved teaching practices (focusing on learning outcomes) and attitudes (about student achievement).

5.8 Aspirations for RSE

All trainers stated that if it was possible to change RSE in-service training, they would like to have more time for training. Other changes mentioned by trainers were: for more men to become involved; to see the course accredited (with the hope of improving its status); more support for the regional mangers; and to train all

Principals in RSE. The need to give young people age-appropriate information was discussed by one trainer while it was also reported that some schools don't realise what young people are exposed to with a lot of young people leaving school with no RSE. One trainer identified the need to focus on the impact of technological advances and the availability of pornography on relationships and the need for this to receive more attention, particularly in schools. There is literature which focuses on the negative effects of online pornography use but also differences between wanted and unwanted desires to access online pornography. For example, a representative sample of adolescent internet users (aged 10–17) revealed that 25% had unintentionally come across online pornography in the previous 12 months and one quarter were very or extremely upset by the experience which suggested a need for interventions to reduce such negative effects (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2003). The need to emphasise the positive (and not just the negative) elements of RSE was discussed by another trainer and this is also supported in the literature (Ingham, 2005, 2016). One trainer would like to see more work being done around parenthood and preparing young people to be parents. The recommended amount of school time allocated for RSE is another area that one/this trainer would change.

5.8.1 A comparison of conceptualisations to the Greenberg plus model

It was also relevant to compare the structure and content of the published Greenberg et al. (2005) model to the developed teachers' schemas. The structure of teachers' schemas are arranged in a hierarchy. In Schema A, the base is the foundation of the schema from which the rest of categories emanate from. In Schema B, there is a core to the schema, which all other categories of the schema rely upon. In both schemas, the core or base of the schemas refer to leadership, as explained and described by the teachers. The emphasis on leadership is a much more fundamental component in Irish teachers' schemas than in the Greenberg plus model. This suggests that there is a need for school-level leadership, but also the role of the DES in the delivery and implementation of subjects. This divergence is an example of the potential usefulness of exploring these issues in local or national contexts.

Similar to the Greenberg et al. (2005) model, the schemas created by the teachers emphasised leadership and support (including leaders of various types and multilevel leadership); and quality and availability of resources and equipment. The importance of the pre-planning (readiness) and planning stages and training and continuing professional development (both pre and in-service training) was also stressed.

The role of the programme implementer (incorporating implementer feelings and perceptions willingness, readiness and capacity to deliver a programme) and specific programme features, including curriculum and design, were also referred to throughout the schemas but to a lesser degree. Teachers mainly focused on the planning process and how the programme would be implemented.

There was very little, and in some cases no reference, to school stakeholders; programme delivery and how a programme was received; system and organisational perspective (incorporating context); or assessment and evaluation. The way in which the programme would be delivered (which relates to implementation fidelity components and the importance of implementer characteristics and behaviours within the Greenberg plus model) did not form a part of teachers' schemas. Furthermore, students' responses did not feature as important factors. In fact, students were not included in the schemas by any teacher.

5.8.2 Challenges in the measurement of implementation

In this study, there were variations in reports relating to training and lesson fidelity in some areas. For example, dosage self-reports by trainers varied for different in-service trainings. This could be attributed to the way timing was reported by trainers (e.g., not accounting for breaks uniformly). Despite this, of the trainers who accounted for breaks, there remained reported differences in timing. It is difficult to distinguish if there were actual differences in training dosage or differences in reporting on training timing. There were other variations reported, such as x at training level and topics in some lessons at school level.

The findings also challenge how we measure and examine implementation. The variations in reports may not be due to implementation variability but in fact could reflect issues in method selection, question formation, problems with assuming high levels of memory recall. Also central to this discussion, is that different people will interpret/receive a lesson differently, which does not necessarily indicate that a topic has not been covered but perhaps that it did not impact/affect some students. The issue of ability to engage, concentration levels, and personal relevance are also relevant to this discussion.

As noted by Durlak (2015) it is not yet evident what methods should be used in different situations to measure implementation most reliably and validly. Harn, Parisi, and Stoolmiller (2013) report research findings which indicate variation in relation to outcomes by type of fidelity measure, across school sites, and across the duration of the intervention. With regards training, observation was not allowed and this affected the number of methods which could be used for triangulation. Observation is a core method frequently used to observe implementation fidelity and is often used in conjunction with self-report measures (Mowbray, Holter, Teague, & Bybee, 2003).

5.9 Study Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this PhD study. The main study limitations are outlined below:

1. The study design that was adopted placed no restrictions on the geographical spread of participants. All RSE training offered in Ireland over one semester was sampled in this study. As a result, any teacher from any training could take part, therefore the teachers and schools that participated could be located anywhere in Ireland. It may have been more beneficial to have selected specific geographical regions which may have assisted in increasing the level of primary data gathered in schools. It was very difficult to reach school level stakeholders due to the nature of the study design and as a result, there were a very small number of school stakeholders interviewed.
2. The sample size for each part of this study was small. There were low numbers of teachers who agreed to take part in the school-level stage of the study. This makes it difficult to generalise the findings from the quantitative data generated.
3. The method of observation is commonly used in studies on implementation but it is resource-heavy and was viewed by many as a barrier to participating in the school-level stage of the research. When discussing with teachers who refused to take part in stage two, many responded that they were too nervous to be observed as it was their first time delivering RSE. While the researcher explained that there was the possibility of taking part without observation, teachers were still not interested. It may have been better to ask about contact details for stage two during training but have presented more detailed explanations on a one-to-one basis to clarify what was being asked of participants.
4. Interviews with research participants were conducted via telephone. It was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews and this may have limited the quality of the data generated.
5. Research participants, particularly the teachers who took part in the school-level stage of the study, were willing and happy to take part and this in turn has an impact on findings. Furthermore, the majority of teachers who

participated in RSE training attended training willingly and were released from school for attendance. It could be argued that these schools and teachers are already more positively disposed towards RSE in comparison to schools with untrained teachers, teachers who do not want to deliver RSE, and those who are not released from school to attend training.

6. Upon study completion, there were many opportunities to reflect on the 'should haves' or in essence, what could have been done differently to improve the study. Pre data collection, there was much focus on the theoretical foundation for the thesis, including methodological approaches; however the experience of the PhD student during this study was that the concept of control as written about and emphasised in the world of research is vastly different to the 'real world' application of research. There is often no way to control many factors which hold negative and/or positive potential for a research study. In this study, issues such as research participation, personal worldviews, and gatekeepers all impacted on the data gathered. Therefore a core limitation is the difference between intended research design versus the realities of application.
7. In this study there was tension between the application of the MM model selected and the conceptual framework adopted. For clarity, for each delivery session (training or school), it was deemed necessary to first view each individual session as slightly separate for initial analysis. Furthermore, the differing study stages and contextual elements needed separate presentation in order to triangulate the implementation fidelity findings and contextual level information. This could be viewed as a deviation from the recommended 'mixing' approach to the triangulation model selected for this study. This limitation only became apparent during data analysis and write-up stages.
8. Further to the point four above, there were questions that arose due to the subjectivity of research. This relates to the study design but also to the methods and specific questions used in the study. If a different methodological approach was adopted, would the data that was generated be dissimilar? This is an unknown factor in any research project, but one that it

is necessary to continuously revisit in order to maximise external validity of any research process.

6 Conclusion

This PhD study adopted a conceptual model of school-based implementation for the exploration of an SBSE programme in Irish post primary schools. The study specifically focused on the implementation system of RSE as a whole, which included the implementation of teacher training and how this translated into practice at school. Furthermore, viewing the RSE system as a whole incorporates context which was explored at both training and school level. This study addresses the dearth of knowledge that exists on the relationship between professional preparation and teacher outcomes in addition to limited knowledge from research studies on aspects such as teacher training, dosage, teacher effectiveness and student outcomes within the field of SBSE. It is also the first study to apply the conceptual model of school based implementation to the implementation of an SBSE programme. Specifically, this study addresses the lack of research that explores the implementation fidelity of SBSE at training and how this impacts on SBSE delivery. There is also no such existing study in an Irish context. Furthermore, this study also explored teachers' conceptualisations of implementation, which is an under researched area.

Overall the findings of this study indicate that RSE in-service training was implemented as planned and teachers reported positivity about the training process upon completion of training. Additionally, almost all teachers felt equipped to deliver RSE. At school level, similar to training, students reported positively on RSE lesson delivery. However, the actual delivery of RSE was more complex at school-level and barriers were much more evident. This prompts questions about the degree to which teachers were actually equipped with the adequate skills for SBSE delivery post-training completion and to what extent teachers were supported in RSE delivery. Furthermore, outdated programme content and materials with no evidence of effectiveness or in-built evaluative processes contribute to lessons which lack in relevant content and are not updated with sexual rights and citizenship. Teachers developed schemas which emphasised the importance of leadership and support for school-based implementation, with these concepts forming either the base or the core of their schema.

This study also prompts questions about some of the ways implementation is measured. In many implementation studies, although there is a large movement to explore process and not just outcomes, the core implementation concepts are often measured quantitatively with closed questions about the specific number of lessons or if participants enjoyed and responded to the lesson. While it provides some indication of implementation success or failure, it does not necessarily really uncover the specific workings of an intervention and its delivery. As identified in chapter two, there is an ever growing field of implementation science which is largely focused on evidence-based interventions, RCTs that explore process also (albeit to varying degrees) that is gaining traction. There is danger in an overly-positivist approach to exploring programme implementation.

It can be argued that fidelity is not merely a concept that can be viewed as low, medium, or high or even that high fidelity can co-occur with adaptations, but that it is actually far more complex. In some ways, the extent to which implementers of SBSE are equipped for delivery can be classified as varying degrees, which is all hugely dependent on a number of other variables (support in various forms, evidence based curriculum with user-friendly evaluation tools). Based on the findings from this small-scale study, it could be suggested that RSE in-service training, while self-reported as beneficial by participants, may provide some but not all of the adequate skills necessary for SBSE delivery at school-level. It also highlights that the training service and teachers who deliver RSE are often without the necessary school or department-level support.

Some of the challenges encountered by trainers and teachers suggest problems with some of the core components that comprise school-based implementation processes, such as ones identified in the Greenberg et al. (2005) model and in the ITGSE (UNESCO, 2018). Furthermore, it is clear that from an ecological viewpoint, programmes do not merely exist as stand-alone but are in fact influenced by many factors ranging from planned support and planned resources to what is actually delivered and the contextual factors surrounding its delivery. As identified by Vanwesenbeeck (2016) and in the model by Hague, Miedema, and Le Mat (2017) there is a need for multicomponent approaches to CSE and a need to address the

social drivers impacting on sexuality education at many levels (meso, macro, and micro) and while each driver is vital, there is a need for these to all work together.

For example, there is a lack of a clear and measurable RSE programme that is evidence-based with sufficient resources. The schools in this study appeared to have high leadership levels and community engagement reemphasising the importance of contextual support. This was not the case in every school however and there was evidence to show that despite positive reports of leadership, there was poor whole school approaches to RSE. Furthermore, as identified by trainers, huge barriers still exist in the overall implementation system for RSE: some which related to teachers, many which related to school level but many which are really relevant at the DES level, which includes resourcing (time, staff) at training-level also. While there are varying levels related to the operationalisation of RSE implementation, it can be argued that the lack of departmental leadership can be viewed as the biggest failure in the RSE implementation system.

In an Irish context, as identified in the introduction to this thesis, sexuality and sex education in Ireland have been greatly impacted upon a by a tradition of unhealthy attitudes, silence, and stigma. The political and cultural resistance to sexuality education is evident in its lack of implementation. In the Greenberg et al. (2005) model, the corresponding district-level context in Ireland is the Department of Education, who have placed responsibility for RSE on schools. This indicates not only a low-level of leadership, but also low levels of accountability for RSE. It also questions the extent to which educational policy has really embraced the need for adequate RSE since its inception in 1995.

Overall, the findings from this study are in keeping with a broader base of international evidence on the benefits of teacher training for SBSE, particularly with regards teacher confidence. There was however, complexities regarding subsequent teacher delivery at school level. The results from this study highlight that while SBSE teacher training can facilitate RSE delivery, there are many other variable factors to be considered, particularly with regards support and curriculum resources. In an Irish context, there is a need for dramatic changes in the current RSE programme, training and support package and evaluative processes. These changes

should be based on best practice, exploring the characteristics of effective curricula and implementation processes but also with extensive stakeholder engagement, including students and teachers who deliver RSE. This study of programme implementation provided valuable information on the relationship between RSE in-service training, the implementation system and the programme as delivered. At a broader level, the findings from this study contribute to the advancement of knowledge regarding the planning, implementation and effectiveness of SBSE programmes.

6.1 Implications

6.1.1 Implications for Practice

Overall, the results from this study indicate that teacher training for SBSE, in this instance, was largely successful in equipping teachers with confidence. There were however greater challenges during school-level delivery which ranged in type. One implication of this study relates to the finding that when the SBSE programme is implemented with generally high quality and fidelity, it can have a positive impact on teachers' perceptions of SBSE, and on their confidence and preparedness. Similarly, this positivity translated into the classroom exemplified through the high levels of enjoyment and engagement by pupils. In addition, the results from the study confirm the important role of teacher training but also highlight that there is possibly a greater need for the training to be longer, more comprehensive, and with a suitable follow-up support challenge to ensure teachers are truly equipped with the necessary skill set. It also highlights the need for leadership and support at various levels, as identified through the findings at all study stages. Another implication of this study relates to the important role the school context plays in SBSE programme delivery and should be incorporated in the pre-planning, implementation, and sustainability phases.

The issues of time and overloaded lessons which arose during the implementation of RSE lessons are also relevant for the broader implementation of SBSE programmes in schools. Effective approaches to the delivery of SBSE lessons could be facilitated by a clear, evidence-based, time-measured programme with supporting materials that

is afforded the amount of time in line with best practice, such as outlined in the recent ITGSE (UNESCO, 2018) and by Pound et al. (2017). In keeping with this, there are implications based on the varying nature of the resources, outdated programme content and materials, and a lack of in-built evaluation processes that suggest that a review of such RSE materials is needed. These findings are also relevant to the field of SBSE, particularly in countries where SBSE is a require part of the curriculum and may need revision based on the ever-evolving field of CSE.

Based on the findings of this study, there is a clear need for a revision of current practices in relation to RSE in Ireland based on the existing approach to both teacher training and school-based delivery. The lack of pre-service SBSE training is another vital area which should be addressed. Viewing the implementation system as a whole highlights important aspects beyond just the provision of a SBSE programme to areas such as school ethos and climate, leadership and management, communication, teacher preparation, the physical environment, relationships with parents and relationships with the community. As part of this, schools need to be provided with the appropriate resources and training that they need to help them work collaboratively with pupils, parents and the broader community.

Participatory schema development could be a useful resource for trainers working with specific groups of educators. The generated schemas provide detail on current perspectives, which could be helpful at key points of any training process. Furthermore, there is potential for this methodological process to be utilised during the pre-planning stages of programme implementation, either within a specific context such as school self-evaluation or development planning, but also for groups (e.g. researchers, policy makers, educationalists and programme developers) aiming to develop or modify an existing curriculum or programme. With regard to the local ownership and local adoption of programmes, these data suggest some key factors that are potentially important in contexts across Ireland and other western countries

6.1.2 Implications for Policy

The results from this study contribute to the growing international evidence base which recognises the importance of teacher training for SBSE and its relationship with the effective delivery of SBSE for young people. It also, however, has reemphasised the importance of context and the complexity arising from programme delivery in a given context, but particularly schools. Schools are often typified as having greater implementation challenges than other programme types. It also implies that teacher training cannot be viewed as the sole strategy for equipping teachers with the tools necessary for effective implementation. There is a need for adequate policy which plans, updates, supports, and monitors RSE in a meaningful way. In this regard, specifically in an Irish context, there is a need for greater departmental leadership is required for RSE. More broadly speaking, it is clear the vital role that the department or organisation responsible for SBSE design, implementation, and evaluation can have in the overall implementation system. There is a need for greater linkage between both education departments and national curriculum councils with the local level environment, ensuring that there is not overly top-down process for SBSE which do not work in localised contexts.

There have been movements in the field for teacher preparation standards for the facilitation of SBSE (Goldman, ; Barr et al., 2014). At a national level, benefits could accrue from the establishment of such standards for Ireland. The development of a national coordinating committee for SBSE in schools, which draws on best practice and the evidence base and also brings together teams of sexual health promoters, those working in the national curriculum service, the relevant pdst team, relevant governmental agencies, professional organisations within the teaching and health professions, family, youth and community advocacy organisations could drive change in the way SBSE is currently approached. Such a national body could function as a key driver for both local and national level project training and support centre. The functions could include: (i) providing policy guidelines and advice to schools undertaking SBSE (iii) strengthen the relations between education and health for SBSE (iii) provide adequate training, technical assistance and ongoing support to ensure that SBSE is implemented and sustained with high quality.

It is unclear as to the actions that will be undertaken as part of the national RSE review. One core initial task would be the design and development of a new RSE programme based on the evidence and tailored to an Irish context. A clear, implementable, relevant, and measureable programme is needed. There is evidence which suggests that is in fact easier to start a new programme than to try and change a programme in its sustainability phase (Durlak and DuPre, 2008).

6.1.3 Implications for Research

Unlike previous SBSE studies focusing on teacher training, this study applied a specific conceptual model of school-based implementation, exploring both implementation fidelity and context. Furthermore, this study is unique as it specifically explored implementation fidelity and context at both training level and school level which is an under researched area. In addition, this study specifically studied a group of teachers from their experience of SBSE training and into the classroom which is a relatively unique approach to the exploration of SBSE implementation. The results of this exploration highlight that it is not enough to just explore teacher training but also the translation of such training into practice, remaining aware of the various implementation components that impact on delivery.

The findings from this study imply that there are structural and content commonalities between the developed schemas and published conceptual frameworks of programme implementation. Specifically with regard to leadership and teacher motivation, it can be argued that there is some connection between the views of published theorists and this sample of teachers. There are also gaps that deserve further research, particularly the lack of reference to students and the concept of “PR”. The methodological approach described can be viewed as a simple, useful and engaging way of exploring participants’ views in a group setting. It can also be viewed as an alternative method to more traditional approaches, such as focus groups. As identified earlier, discussion and engagement in the process is impacted by the specific research context and interpersonal characteristics. If applied with a group of teachers familiar with one another, or already working together in a specific setting, the quality of the interaction, and the value of paying attention to the

discussions within groups, is likely to be higher. There is potential to adapt this methodological process to include more structured discussion time to facilitate greater exploration of teachers views complementary to the dialogue created through task completion. To an extent, this would alter the naturalistic process of interaction between teachers but, if it was restricted to after schema creation, it may facilitate more conversation between group participants, and thus more insight into their views.

The results from this study also emphasise the importance that leadership and support plays, and this was identified as the core driver for school-based implementation. First, it is clear from this study that teachers' views about the SBSE programme and feelings about preparedness was related to their training experience and classroom environment. Second, the findings suggest that there are broad ranging factors which have the potential to impact on lesson delivery in a given context. Third, trainers provided valuable information in term of factors that facilitate and hinder implementation and recommended changes to support ongoing implementation and sustainability of RSE in Ireland. Fourth, the complexity of implementation and its measurement was typified in this study, particularly in relation to adaptations, how fidelity should be viewed when triangulated viewpoints offer differing points of view, and prompts questions about the best way to measure/explore implementation. Fifth, the challenges of adopting a MM model which demands data mixing at both the analysis and interpretation phase became evident in this study and imply a greater need for methodological guidance for this specific MM design.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Stages of questionnaire design

	Training-level	School-level
Pre-questionnaire planning		
	Reviewed relevant literature, available training documents, and past research;	Review of relevant literature, RSE curriculum and available documents, past research
Preparing the questionnaire	Review of sample questionnaires, designing questions based on core implementation elements and key aspects of RSE training and the RSE programme	Review of sample questionnaires, designing questions based on core implementation elements and key aspects the RSE programme
Drafting the final questionnaire	Editing wording, proofing all questions, adjusting format and improving visual aspects	Editing wording, proofing all questions, adjusting format and improving visual aspects
Piloting the final questionnaire	The teacher questionnaires were piloted with an SPHE post-primary teacher in a local school. The teacher completed the questionnaire and provided written comments. The questionnaire was also discussed with the researcher and any edits/improvements suggested by the teacher were incorporated. The trainer implementation questionnaires were piloted with a local Health Service Executive with experience of co-facilitating RSE training and an SPHE teacher in post-primary school.	The questionnaire was piloted with two post-primary students and one student in their final year of primary school. One student in first year and one student in third year completed the questionnaire and provided both written and verbal feedback on the questionnaire. The student in their final year of primary school provided feedback on the ease of comprehension and age-appropriate language–use within the questionnaire.

Training-level questionnaire components

Method	Questions
Trainers' pre-delivery implementation form	Years training experience; training timing; planned topics; planned aims; planned resource materials; resource ratings; comments about resources; planned activities; training manual details; pre-implementation feelings about training; details about monitoring teachers' responses; perceived barriers; and additional comments.
Trainers' post-delivery implementation form	Actual timing; feelings about time; achieved aims; actual topics; modifications to planned implementation; feelings about training delivery and participant responses; training rating; and additional comments.
Teachers' questionnaire	Gender; years teaching experience; SPHE courses undertaken; RSE teaching experience; support for training attendance; training aims; training topics; resource materials; resource ratings; comments about resources; training activities; training delivery; responses to training; training rating, additional comments, feeling about delivering RSE, contact details for participating in further research.
Training-level interviews	Experience and education; teaching subjects; duties of the post; training for the post; CPD description and opportunities; process for follow-up work; school-based work; support service evaluation of training; definitions of implementation; key stakeholders and their role in training development; description of training manual; perceived school-based RSE implementation challenges; DES evaluations; ideal RSE training, the ideal RSE programme, and additional comments.
Official documents	Available RSE documents on the DES and SPHE support service website.

School-level questionnaire components

Method	**Information gathered**
Teachers' pre-delivery implementation form	Class year, planned lesson length, planned lesson topics, lesson topic source, lesson aims, planned lesson resources (incl. source), resource ratings, additional comments about resources, planned lesson activities, teaching manual, feelings about lesson delivery, planned monitoring of student responsiveness, perceived lesson barriers, and additional comments about lesson.
Teachers' post-delivery implementation form	Class year, actual lesson length, feelings about lesson timing, feelings about achieving aims, actual lesson topics covered, lesson adaptations, actual lesson delivery, lesson rating, and additional comments about lesson.
Students' questionnaire	Gender, age, school year, previous RSE classes, interest in RSE classes, lesson aims, lesson topics, lesson resources and resource responsiveness, resource ratings, lesson activities, lesson delivery, lesson ratings, and additional comments about lesson.
School-level interviews	Information gathered relating to components of the contextual part of Greenberg plus model: class-level, school-level, district-level, and community-level.
Direct observation form	Lesson timing, topics, aims, resources, student response to resources, resource ratings, teaching manual-use, activities, student response to activities, lesson barriers, teacher monitoring of student responsiveness, lesson delivery, lesson rating, and additional comments.
Official documents	Information gathered relating to components within the contextual part of Greenberg plus model: class-level, school-level, district-level, and community-level. This was mainly gleaned from school policies and departmental inspection reports.

Appendix B

Copy of ethics approval letter

Sent on behalf of Dr Molly Byrne, Research Ethics Committee.

Dear Miss Murphy

RE: Ethical Approval for "Moving from paper to practice: an examination of teachers' implementation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Irish post-primary schools".

I write to you regarding the above proposal which was submitted for Ethical review. Having reviewed your response to my letter, I am pleased to inform you that your proposal has been granted **APPROVAL**.

All NUI Galway Research Ethic Committee approval is given subject to the Principal Investigator submitting an annual report to the Committee. The first report is due on or before 30th September 2011. Please see section 7 of the REC's Standard Operating Procedures for further details which also includes other instances where you are required to report to the REC.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Saoirse NicGabhainn

Chairperson

Research Ethics Committee

Appendix C

Copy of information sheet and consent form for trainer

Project Title: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) training and implementation study

Q: Why is this study taking place?

A: This study is primarily interested in how RSE is implemented and how teachers/schools are supported in implementation.

Q: Why I am I being asked to participate?

A: You are a regional manager who delivers RSE in-service training.

Q: Do I have to participate?

A: The decision is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time you wish to do so.

Q: What will it involve?

A: You will be asked to fill out lesson plans for the RSE training sessions. You will then be asked to fill out self-report forms after the training. All of the information you provide and the observations will be confidential. There will be no information linking you personally to the findings.

Q: What are the risks and benefits for me?

A: There are no potential risks identified in this study. Anonymity is ensured throughout the process. The project aims to find out more information about RSE and its delivery in schools and you will help provide valuable information. When the study is finished, you will receive a summarised version of the findings.

Q: What if I have a complaint during my participation in the study?

If you have any complaints in relation to the research process you may refer these to the Director of the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway:

Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn
Tel: 091- 493092.
Email: saoirse.nicgabhainn@nuigalway.ie

Each complaint will be dealt with as quickly as possible and in a confidential manner
If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact 'the Chairperson' of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI Galway, ethics@nuigalway.ie

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information sheet and I understand what is involved. I have had time to think about whether or not I would like to participate. I understand that taking part is voluntary (it is my choice) and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without consequences.

Print Name:

.....
.....

I am willing to participate in the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) training and implementation study 2011.

Yes [ ] **No** [ ]

Signature:……
…….

Date:……
……

Copy of pre-delivery implementation questions at training level

Q1. How long have you been delivering this training?

_____Year(s) _____Months

Q2. How long will the training be?

_____ Hour(s) _____ Minutes

Q3. What topic(s) are you covering in this RSE in-service training?

Q4. What are the main aims or learning outcomes of this RSE in-service training?

Q5. What resource materials do you intend to use? Tick all that apply.

Resource	Tick all that apply	Page number/section
Healthy Living	☐	
SPHE in Action	☐	
On My Own Two Feet	☐	
Healthy Times	☐	
Healthy Choices	☐	
TRUST resource	☐	
DES Resource Materials for RSE	☐	

If you are using other resources. Please state:

Name of resource material	Source

Q6. Using a scale from 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being very good, please rate the following resources according to each heading. Rate the resource by writing the appropriate number in the box.

	Visually appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
Healthy Living Resource				
SPHE in Action Resource				
On My Own Two Feet Resource				
Healthy Times Resource				
Healthy Choices Resource				
TRUST Resource				
DES Resources Materials for RSE				

Do you have any additional comments about the materials?

Q7. What type of activities do you intend to use in this training? Please tick all that apply.

Group Work ☐

Brainstorming ☐

Role Play ☐

Visualisations ☐

Artwork ☐

Walking Debates ☐

Case Studies/Scenarios ☐

Games ☐

Other (please state) ☐

_____

Q8. Do you have a standard training manual that guides you through the RSE training?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If no, do you think a standardised manual would be useful?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Please explain your answer:

Q9. Here are some statements about this training. Please circle the appropriate response.

The training is easy to understand			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I think the training is worthwhile			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training will be easy to deliver			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There are adequate materials for this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received support for this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q10. Do you intend to monitor teachers' responses to this training?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, how?

Q11. Do you feel there will be any barriers affecting training delivery?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, what do you think they will be?

Q12. Do you have any additional comments about this training?

Copy of post-delivery implementation questions at training level

Date:
Training Location:

Q1. How long was this in-service training?

_____Hour(s) _____Minutes

Q2. Here are some statements about time. Please tick the box which applies best.

I had extra time left after completing this training	☐
I had enough time to complete this training	☐
I did not have enough time to complete this training	☐

Q3. Do you think you achieved the aims or learning outcomes of this in-service training?

YES	NO
☐	☐

Please explain your answer:

Q4. What topic(s) did you cover?

Q5. Did you change anything in this training (add or remove anything that you intended to deliver)?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, please explain what you changed, reason(s) for the change(s) and if you think the changes worked:

Change(s)	Reason(s) for change	Did it work?
		Yes ☐ No ☐
		Yes ☐ No ☐
		Yes ☐ No ☐
		Yes ☐ No ☐

Q6. Here are some statements about this in-service training. Please circle the appropriate response.

It was easy to deliver this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed delivering this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I felt confident delivering this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The teachers enjoyed this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There were adequate materials for this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The materials used worked well			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The teachers understood this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The teachers engaged in this training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There was a lot of disruption (for e.g. talking during training)			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q7. How would you rate this training overall?

Poor									Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q8. Do you have any additional comments?

Copy of teacher questionnaire at training level

Q1. Are you:	
Female	Male
☐	☐

Q2. How long have you been teaching?	
_____ Months	_____Years
Q3. Have you attended any RSE or SPHE training other than this one?	
Yes	No
☐	☐
If yes, please specify:	
Training	Approximate date
Q4. Have you taught RSE previous to this training session?	
Yes	No
☐	☐
If yes, for how long?	
_____ Months	_____Years

Q5. Would you say your decision to enroll in this RSE training course was:		
Voluntary with principal support	☐	
Voluntary without principal support	☐	
Compulsory by principal	☐	
Compulsory by other (please state)	☐	
_____		
Other (please explain)	☐	
_____		

Q6. What do you think this training was about?

Q7. What topics were covered?

Q8. What resource materials were used? Tick all that apply.

Resource	Tick all that apply	Page number/section
Healthy Living	☐	
SPHE in Action	☐	
On My Own Two Feet	☐	
Healthy Times	☐	
Healthy Choices	☐	
TRUST resource	☐	
DES Resource Materials for RSE	☐	

If other resources were used. Please state what they were:

Name of resource material	Source (if known)

Q9. Using a scale from 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being very good, please rate the following resources according to each heading. Rate the resource by writing the appropriate number in the box.

	Visually appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
Healthy Living Resource				
SPHE in Action Resource				
On My Own Two Feet Resource				
Healthy Times Resource				
Healthy Choices Resource				
TRUST Resource				
DES Resources Materials for RSE				

Do you have any additional comments about the materials?

Q10. What types of activities were used in this in-service training?
Please tick all that apply.

Group Work ☐
Brainstorming ☐
Role Play ☐
Visualisations ☐
Artwork ☐
Walking Debates ☐
Case Studies/Scenarios ☐
Games ☐
Other (please state) ☐

Q11. Here are some general statements about this in-service training. Please circle the appropriate response.

The training was delivered clearly			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The trainer was interested in the training			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I felt comfortable with the trainer			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training was easy to understand			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q12. Here are some specific statements about this in-service training. Please circle the appropriate response.

I listened most of the time			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed the session			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Other teachers didn't listen at all			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was comfortable with the other teachers			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I didn't pay attention at all			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Other teachers paid attention			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There was a lot of disruption (e.g. talking during training)			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was comfortable with the topics covered			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q13. How would you rate this training overall?

Poor									Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q14. Do you have any other comments about this training?

_____

_____

Q15. Here are some general statements about RSE. Please circle the appropriate response.

I feel positive about the RSE programme			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have the necessary skills to deliver RSE			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I understand the purpose of RSE			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am dedicated to the goals of RSE			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I respect RSE as an educational programme			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q16. If you are willing to continue participating in this research project, as outlined in the information sheet, please provide a contact phone number:

Contact Number: _____

School: _____

Thank You

Copy of interview topic guide at training level

1. Can you describe your education and experience?

2. When you were teaching, what subjects did you teach?

3. Can you describe your duties as a regional manager?

4. What type of training did you receive for this role?

    a) Who conducted the training?

5. Is CPD offered to regional managers?

    a) If yes, is it optional or obligatory?

    b) If yes, can you explain what CPD you have had to date and who conducts the CPD?

6. Do you engage in follow-up work after a teacher has completed RSE in-service training?

    a) If yes, can you describe what this involves? Is there a system for this follow-up?

    b) If no, please explain.

7. What other type of school-based work are you involved in?

    a) Is there a system in place for this work?

8. How is in-service training evaluated?

9. What does 'implementation' mean to you?

10. Who are the key stakeholders in RSE in-service training?

11. Are these stakeholders involved in training development?

    a) If yes, can you give examples of how each stakeholder is involved?

12. Can you explain what your training manual contains?

    a) Do you know who developed the manual?

    b) Do you know when it was last updated?

    c) What do you think of the manual?

13. Based on your own experience, what are the biggest problems facing schools when trying to implement RSE?

14. Do you know what criteria and guidelines are used for DES SPHE and RSE evaluations?

15. If you could change RSE in-service training, what would you change?

16. If you could change RSE, what would you change?

17. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

18. Do you have any feedback, either positive or negative, on the interview questions?

Appendix D

PRP Participant Information Sheet and Consent form

Q: Why is this study taking place?

A: This section of the study is concerned with seeking teacher's views on implementation through a participatory research process.

Q: Why am I being asked to participate?

A: If you have been asked to participate, you are a teacher in an Irish setting. Your views will provide insight based on your experiences as a teacher.

Q: Do I have to participate?

A: The decision is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time if you wish to do so.

Q: What will it involve?

A: There are four stages to the process. The first stage is individual and the second and third stage involves group work. The final stage is concerned with receiving feedback on the process. The process will take approximately one hour. There will be no information linking you to the findings. It is entirely confidential. A group contract will be discussed and created at the beginning of the process to ensure confidentiality.

Q: What are the risks and benefits?

A: There are no potential risks identified in this study. Please note that the entire process is anonymous. Your name will not appear on the data. If you decide to take part, you will help provide valuable information that will assist with this PhD study.

Q: What if I have a complaint during my participation in the study?

If you have any complaints in relation to the research process you may refer these to the Director of the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway: Dr Saoirse Nic Gabhainn
Tel: 091- 493092. Email: saoirse.nicgabhainn@nuigalway.ie
Each complaint will be dealt with as quickly as possible and in a confidential manner

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact 'the Chairperson' of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI Galway, ethics@nuigalway.ie

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information sheet and I understand what is involved. I have had time to think about whether or not I would like to participate. I understand that taking part is voluntary (it is my choice) and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without consequences.

Print Name:

.....

I am willing to participate in the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) participatory research study

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Signature:……
.

Date:……

Appendix E

Copy of information sheet and consent form for teachers

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information sheet and I understand what is involved. I have had time to think about whether or not I would like to participate. I understand that taking part is voluntary (it is my choice) and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without consequences.

Print Name:

.....

I am willing to participate in the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) training and implementation study 2011.

Yes [ ] No [ ]

About RSE classes

How many RSE classes do you teach?	
Can you provide the names of the classes? E.g. 6a etc.	
Are there any of these classes that will not participate in the study?	

Are there any features of your classes that you think we should be aware of?

.....

Signature:……
.

Date:……

Copy of information sheet and consent form for students and parents

Student Information Sheet

Project Title: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) training and implementation study

Q: Why is this study taking place?

A: This study aims to find out more information about RSE teacher training and RSE classes in post-primary schools.

Q: Do I have to participate?

A: The decision is entirely up to you and your parents. You may change your mind about participating at any time

Q: What will it involve?

A: You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about your RSE classes. All of the information you provide will be confidential. Your name will not be on the questionnaire.

Q: What are the risks and benefits for me?

A: There are no potential risks identified in this study*. Please note that the entire process is anonymous and there will be no information linking you personally to the findings. The project aims to find out more information about RSE and its delivery in schools and you will help provide valuable information. When the study is finished, you will receive a summarised version of the findings.

Q: What if I have a complaint during my participation in the study?

If you have any complaints in relation to the research process you may refer these to the Director of the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway: Dr Saoirse Nic Gabhainn
Tel: 091- 493093. Email: saoirse.nicgabhainn@nuigalway.ie
Each complaint will be dealt with as quickly as possible and in a confidential manner

*Please note: the researcher is obliged, under the principles of the *Children First* (OMCYA, 2010) national guidelines, to be responsible and act accordingly to support the welfare and protection of children.

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact 'the Chairperson' of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI Galway, ethics@nuigalway.ie

Parent Information Sheet

Project Title: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) training and implementation study

Q: Why is this study taking place?

A: This study is primarily interested in how RSE is implemented and how teachers/schools are supported in implementation.

Q: Why is my chid being asked to participate?

A: As this study begins by focusing on teacher training, only children who are taught by an RSE teacher who has attended training in 2010/2011 are eligible. Your child is in this group.

Q: Does my child have to participate?

A: The decision is entirely voluntary on the part of all involved. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time if he or she wishes to do so.

Q: What will it involve?

A: Your child will be asked to fill out an anonymous questionnaire in class. There will be no information linking your child to the questionnaire. It is entirely confidential.

Q: What types of questions will be asked?

A: The types of questions asked will focus on RSE classes, such as frequency and duration of lessons. Questions will focus on your child's understanding and enjoyment of the lesson. There are no questions on sex or relationships. Children do not have to answer questions if they don't want to.

Q: What are the risks and benefits for my child?

A: There are no potential risks identified in this study*. Please note that the entire process is anonymous. Your child's name will not appear on the questionnaire. The project aims to find out more information about RSE and its delivery in schools and your child will help provide valuable information. When the study is finished, your child and their school will receive a summarised version of the findings.

Q: What if I have a complaint during my participation in the study?

If you have any complaints in relation to the research process you may refer these to the Director of the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway: Dr Saoirse Nic Gabhainn
Tel: 091- 493092. Email: saoirse.nicgabhainn@nuigalway.ie
Each complaint will be dealt with as quickly as possible and in a confidential manner

*Please note: the researcher is obliged, under the principles of the *Children First* (OMCYA, 2010) national guidelines, to be responsible and act accordingly to support the welfare and protection of children.

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact 'the Chairperson' of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI Galway, ethics@nuigalway.ie

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information sheet and I understand what is involved. I have had time to think about whether or not my child will participate. I understand that taking part is voluntary (it is his or her choice) and that we are free to withdraw from the research at any time without consequences.

Name of child (please print):

……

Parent/ Guardian: Please sign and return only if you do not want your child to take part.

Name of parent (please print):

.....

My child DOES NOT have my permission to participate in this study

Signature: ……..

Date: …….....

Please note: If you are happy for your child to participate, you do not need to return this form

Copy of pre-delivery implementation form at school level

RSE TEACHER LESSON PLAN

Name:
Date:
Location:

Q1. What year are the students in this class in?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Transition	5th year	6th year

If years are mixed, please state what years:_____

Q2. How long will this lesson be?

_____Hour(s) _____Minutes

Q3. What topic(s) are you covering for this lesson?

Q4. Did you get the topics(s) from the RSE curriculum?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If no, where did you get the topic(s) from?

Q5. What are the main aims or learning outcomes of this lesson?

Q6. What resource materials do you intend to use? Tick all that apply.

Resource	Tick all that apply	Page number/section
Healthy Living	☐	
SPHE in Action	☐	
On My Own Two Feet	☐	
Healthy Times	☐	
Healthy Choices	☐	
TRUST resource	☐	
DES Resource Materials for RSE	☐	

If you are using other resources. Please state:

Name of resource material	Source

Q7. Using a scale from 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being very good, please rate the following resources according to each heading. Rate the resource by writing the appropriate number in the box.

	Visually appealing	User friendly	Age appropriate	Culturally sensitive
Healthy Living Resource				
SPHE in Action Resource				
On My Own Two Feet Resource				
Healthy Times Resource				
Healthy Choices Resource				
TRUST				

Resource				
DES Resources Materials for RSE				

Do you have any additional comments about the resource materials?

Q8. What type of activities do you intend to use in this lesson? Please tick all that apply.

Group Work ☐

Brainstorming ☐

Role Play ☐

Visualisations ☐

Artwork ☐

Walking Debates ☐

Case Studies/Scenarios ☐

Games ☐

Other (please state) ☐ _____

Q9. Do you have a standard training manual that guides you through the RSE training?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If you ticked no, do you think a standardised manual would be useful?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Please explain your answer

Q10. Here are some statements about this lesson. Please circle the appropriate response.

This lesson is easy to understand			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I think this lesson is worthwhile			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This lesson will be easy to deliver			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There are adequate materials for this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received support for this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q11. Do you intend to monitor student's response to this lesson?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, how?

Q12. Do you feel there will be any barriers affecting lesson delivery?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, what do you think they will be?

Q13. Do you have any additional comments about this lesson?

Copy of post-delivery implementation form at school level

RSE TEACHER SELF-REPORT FORM

Q1. What year are the students in this class in?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Transition	5th year	6th year

If years are mixed, please state what years:_____

Q2. How long was this lesson?

_____Hours _____Minutes

Q3. Here are some statements about time. Please tick one box.		
I had extra time left after completing this lesson		☐
I had enough time to complete this lesson		☐
I did not have enough time to complete this lesson		☐

Q4. Do you think you achieved the aims of this lesson?

YES NO

☐ ☐

Please explain your answer:

Q5. What topic(s) did you cover?

Q7. Here are some statements about this lesson. Please circle the appropriate response.

It was easy to deliver this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed delivering this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I felt confident delivering this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The students enjoyed this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There were adequate materials for this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The materials used worked well			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The students understood this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The students engaged in this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There was a lot of messing			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q8. How would you rate this lesson overall?

Poor									Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q9. Do you have any other comments about this lesson?

_____

Copy of student questionnaire at school level

RSE class questionnaire

Date:

Class Name:

Teacher:

Q1. Are you a:

Boy☐ Girl ☐

Q2. What month were you born in?

Jan☐ Feb☐ Mar☐ Apr☐ May☐ June☐ July ☐ Aug☐ Sep☐ Oct ☐Nov☐

Q3. What year were you born in?

1992☐ 1993☐ 1994☐ 1995☐ 1996☐ 1997☐ 1998☐ 1999☐ 2000☐ 2001 ☐ 2002 ☐

Q4. What year of school are you in?

1st☐ 2nd☐ 3rd☐ 4th☐ Transition☐ 5th☐ 6th☐

Q5. Have you had RSE classes before this class?

Yes ☐ No☐

If you answered Yes, what year or when did you have the classes? Please tick all that apply.

Primary school☐ 1st☐ 2nd☐ 3rd☐ 4th☐ Transition☐ 5th☐ 6th☐

Q6. Do you find RSE classes interesting?

Yes ☐ No☐

Please explain:

_____
_____

Q7. What do you think today's RSE lesson was about?

_____

Q8.What topic(s) were covered (for eg., what were the different things that the teacher talked about)?

_____

Q9. What types of activities were used in this lesson? Please tick all that apply.

Group Work ☐

Brainstorming ☐

Role Play ☐

Visualisations ☐

Artwork ☐

Walking Debates ☐

Case Studies/Scenarios ☐

Games ☐

Other (please state) ☐ _____

Q10. Please fill out the table about the resource materials used during this lesson (for eg. DVDs, handouts)

Resource material	Like resource		Why
	Yes	No	
	Yes	No	

Q11. Using a scale form 1-10, with 1 being the loweets score, do you think the resource materials (for eg. DVDs, handouts) that were used were:

Visually appealing (nice to look at)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
User friendly (easy to use)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Age appropriate (suited to your age)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Culturally sensitive (fair to all cultures)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q12. Here are some general statements about the lesson. Please circle your response.

The lesson was clear			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The teacher was interested in the lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I felt comfortable with the teacher			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The lesson was easy to understand			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q13. Here are some statements about this lesson. Please circle your response.

I listened most of the time			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed the lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Other students didn't listen at all			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was comfortable participating in class			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I didn't pay attention at all			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Other students paid attention			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There was a lot of messing during the lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I was comfortable with the topics covered			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learned a lot in this lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q14. How would you rate this lesson overall?

Poor									Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q15. Do you have any other comments about this lesson?

_____

Copy of observation form at school level

RSE class observation form

School: _____

Class: _____

Lesson start time	
Lesson end time	

Q1. Here are some statements about time. Please tick one.

The teacher had extra time left after completing this lesson

The teacher had enough time to complete this lesson

The teacher did not have enough time to complete this lesson

Q2. What topics were covered?

_____

Q3. What were the aims or learning outcomes?

_____

Q4. Resource materials used and response to them

_____

Q5. Please fill out the table about the resource materials used during this lesson (for eg. DVDs, handouts)

Resource material	Students like resource		Why
	Yes	No	
	Yes	No	

Q6. Using a scale form 1-10, with 1 being the loweets score, do you think the resource materials (for eg. DVDs, handouts) that were used were:

Visually appealing (nice to look at)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
User friendly (easy to use)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Age appropriate (suited to the age)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Culturally sensitive
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do you have any additional comment about the materials?

_____

Q7. Is the teacher following a teacher manual? Explain.

_____

Q8. What types of activities were used in this lesson? Circle all that apply.

Group Work

Brainstorming

Role Play

Visualisations

Artwork

Walking Debates

Case Studies/Scenarios

Games

Other:_____

Please note response to activities:
_____
_____

Q9. Did you think there were any barriers to delivering today's lesson?

_____

Q10. Do you think the teacher monitored student responses to the lesson?

_____

11. Here are some general statements about this RSE lesson. Please circle the appropriate response:

The lesson was clear			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The teacher was interested in the lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The students seemed comfortable with the teacher			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The lesson was easy to understand			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q12. Here are some statements about this lesson. Please circle the appropriate response.

Students listened most of the time			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students enjoyed the lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students didn't listen at all			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students were comfortable participating in class			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students paid attention			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There was a lot of messing during the lesson			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students seemed comfortable with the topics covered			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Q13. How would you rate this lesson overall?

Poor									Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q14. Do you have any other comments about this lesson?

General Notes:

_____

_____

_____

Appendices

Copy of interview topic guide at school level (BOM and teacher)

Interview schedule- BOM member

1) How were you selected to be a BOM member?

2) How long have you been a BOM member?

3) Can you explain your role in the BOM?

4) Are you aware of students needs in the school?

a) If yes, can you provide an example of this?

5) Are there any student representatives on the BOM?

b) If yes, please describe their role.

c) If no, do you think there should be student representatives?

6) Can you describe your relationship with the principal?

7) Do you know about RSE?

8) Were you involved in the development of the school's RSE policy?

a) If yes, can you explain how it was developed?

b) If yes, can you identify the key stakeholders that were involved?

9) What is your opinion of RSE?

10) Do you think the principal supports RSE?

11) Do you think the BOM has a role to play in the implementation of RSE?

a) Please explain.

12) Do you have any involvement in RSE?

a) If yes, can you explain your involvement?

13) From your point of view, can you describe the relationship that this school has with the community?

Interview schedule- for SPHE co-ordinators/teachers

1. How are members of the Board of Management (BOM) for this school selected?

2. Do you think the current BOM members are representative of the community?

a) Why do you think this?

3. How long have you been a teacher at this school?

4. What subjects do you teach?

5. How long have you been an SPHE teacher?

6. Can you explain the process of how you became the SPHE teacher?

7. Is there an SPHE co-ordinator?

a) If yes, can you describe their role.

8. Is SPHE timetabled at junior cycle level? Please explain.

a) How is RSE implemented?

9. Is SPHE timetabled at the senior cycle-level? Please explain.

10. Can you describe your relationship with the principal?

11. To what extent are students involved in school-level decisions [do students have input into or organise things that happen at school - for example, is there a student committee?]

a) Can you give some examples?

12. To what extent are parents involved in school-level decisions?

a) Can you give some examples?

13. What is your overall opinion of RSE?

14. Were you involved in the development of the school's RSE policy?

a) If yes, can you explain how it was developed?

b) If yes, can you identify the key stakeholders that were involved?

15. How often is your RSE policy reviewed?

16. How are teachers selected to teach RSE?

17. Could you describe the uptake of RSE training at your school?

18. Is RSE implemented at senior-cycle level?

a) If yes, how is it implemented?

19. What RSE resources does the school have?

20. Where are the RSE resources kept and who manages them?

21. In your opinion, do you think other teachers in the school support RSE?

a) If yes, can you provide an example of how they support it?

b) If no, can you explain why you think that they don't support RSE?

22. Do you think the principal supports RSE?

a) If yes, in what ways does s/he support RSE?

23. To what extent are students involved in RSE?

a) Can you give some examples of student involvement?

24. To what extent are parents involved in RSE?

a) Can you give some examples of parental involvement?

25. Are outside facilitators involved in the delivery of RSE?

a) If yes, can you describe and explain their involvement?

26. Is the RSE programme evaluated?

a) If yes, how is it evaluated?

b) If yes, how often does this occur and what happens to the evaluations?

c) If no, why isn't it evaluated?

27. Can you describe the role the Department of Education and Skills (DES) plays in RSE implementation?

28. To what extent does the DES support RSE implementation at school-level?

29. Do you think the DES monitors RSE implementation?

a) If yes, how do they do it?

30. If you could change RSE, what would you change?

31. Do you have any other comments about RSE at your school?

32. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

33. Do you have any feedback, either positive or negative, on the interview questions