Professional Identity for Teaching in FET

National College of Ireland · NCAD DUBLIN National College of Art and Design · MARINO INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION · NUI Galway OÉ Gaillimh · **HEI FET Forum** · Maynooth University National University of Ireland Maynooth · Waterford Institute of Technology INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE · MIC MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL · DCU Dublin City University

- The HEI FET Forum are designing a blended Module on Professional Identity for Teaching in Further Education and Training (FET).

- The aim of the module is to provide FET practitioners with an opportunity to explore professional identity and collaborate on a vision of what this might look like for teaching in FET.

- The 10 credit module will be piloted in Spring 2022 for FET teaching and learning practitioners.

- The module will provide practitioners with a space to explore issues of voice, identity and recognition.

- Themes include professional models of teaching; models of practice; professional identity; teacher identity and self identity (Fig. 1)

- The HEI FET Forum was established in 2012 and consists of Course Leaders of eight initial teacher education (ITE) programmes for teachers in Further Education and Training accredited by the Teaching Council.

- Ongoing research on graduate outcomes by the Forum has found that there is an unclear definition or understanding of teacher professional practice in FET (HEIFET Forum, 2019).

- Wenger (1998, p.149) states "that there is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants".
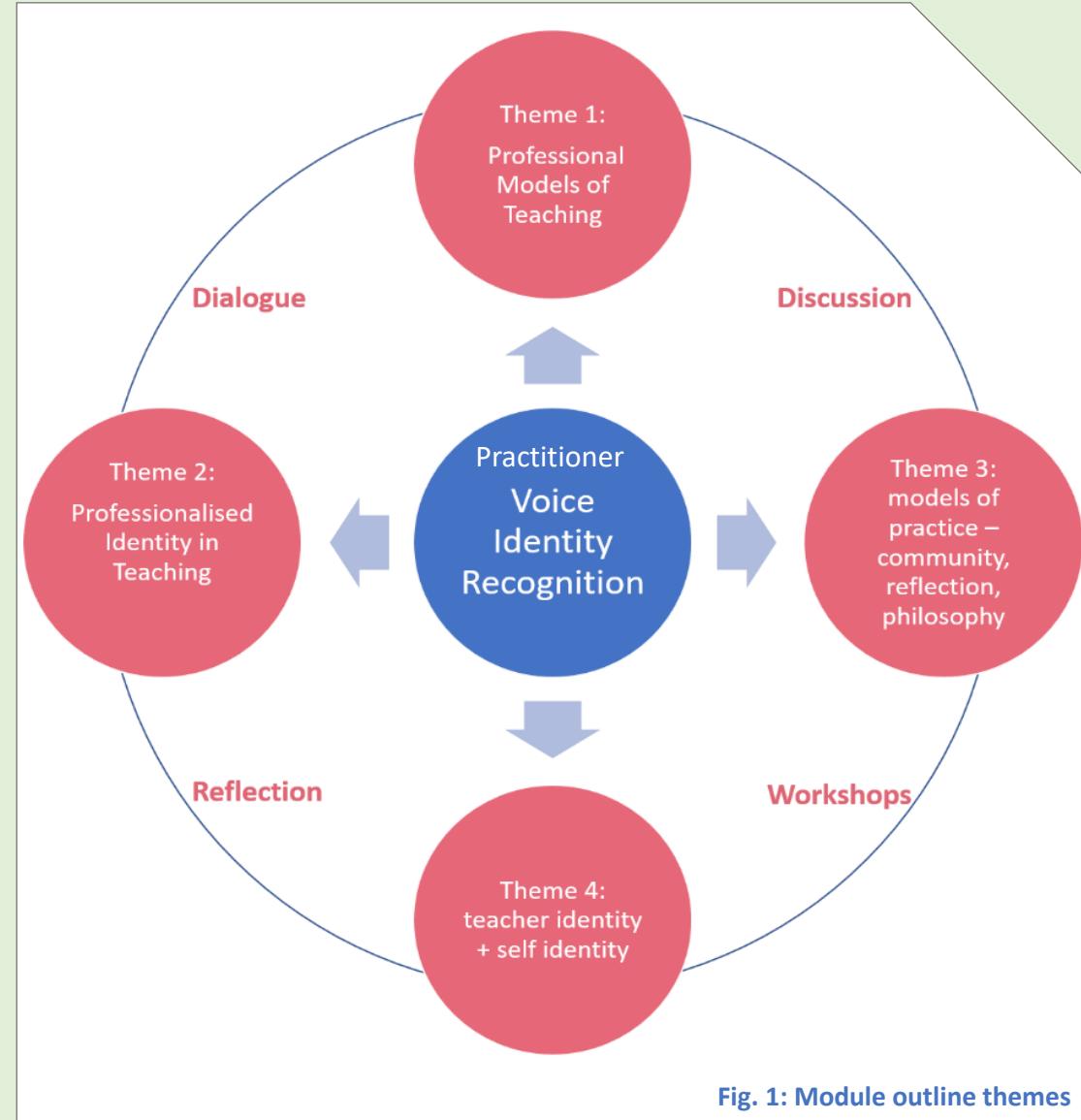

Fig. 1: Module outline themes

HEI FET Forum. (2019). "*Surviving or thriving in challenging times? Tales from Ireland's first FE TEQ graduates*". Presentation at Hellin Conference, 11th December, Waterford Institute of Technology.
Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The HEI FET Forum was established in 2012 and consists of Course Leaders of eight initial teacher education programmes for teachers in FET accredited by the Teaching Council. The HEI FET Forum's Vision is to enhance and contribute to the quality of teaching and learning, engagement, pedagogy and research in FET. The mission of the HEI FET Forum is to contribute to the continual improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in Further Education and Training by drawing on the combined expertise of its members (see https://heifetforumireland.ie/) and its work in partnership with stakeholders.

The HEI FET Forum recognises that there is a lacuna between teacher professional education for the formal system and a consistent, shared understanding of teaching practice across FET. A comprehensive literature review of research on professional identity, teaching, training and related issues across vocational education and training, literacy and adult and community education is being analysed to delineate the key areas of professional practice components that are relevant and of value to FET. Mockler (2011) argues that teacher identity is located at the intersection of three domains: "personal experience, professional context, and the external political environment". Ongoing research on graduate outcomes by the Forum has found that there is an unclear definition or understanding of teacher professional practice in FET.

Wenger (1998, p.149) states "that there is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants". New professionalism approaches acknowledge the need for a multi-level perspective when researching professionalism to explore three levels: (1) State, society and institutions, (2) organisations in the field and (3) professional staff and adult learners (Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt & Lechner, 2018, p.12). See **Fig. 1.** The content and activities in this module will build on synergies between professional practice in higher education and FET that acknowledge diversity in learner cohorts and consider differentiation and varied teaching approaches including Universal Design for Learning and critical reflection on programme design and delivery. These andragogic and pedagogic approaches are used as part of a toolkit of teaching that meets the needs of the students, is value based, and responsive and proactive. Practitioner voice from across FET is key to exploring the current roles, learning environments, resources for practitioners when delivering modules and facilitating learner support, and personal viewpoints that could form an agreed vision of professional identity in FET. The module will provide practitioners with a space to explore issues of voice, identity and recognition both personal and professional and to engage in individual reflection and collaborative dialogue and discussion.
See Fig. 2 for module outline themes.