HOW TEACHERS LEARN ACROSS THE CAREER CONTINUUM IN SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Chris Furner

B.A. Dip Ed (Macquarie University)

Masters of Education (NICE)

Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods – Education (Macquarie University)

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Faculty of Human Sciences

Department of Education

Macquarie University

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HIGHER DEGREE THESIS

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(Signature of Candidate)

Date: 12th September 2014

Dr. Norman McCulla.

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I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number**:**

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Christine Furner

Student ID: 80051154

Date: 12th September 2014

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the ways in which teachers learn in school contexts and the development of whole-school programs for teacher professional development from the perspective of working in schools themselves. While it is grounded in many facets of the literature regarding teacher learning and professional development, and what might be construed as good practice from that literature, it is also noted from the literature that development of whole-school professional development programs remains problematic in many schools. This study therefore was grounded in the perspectives of three schools attempting ongoing improvement of their programs, and what might be learnt from that.

The schools which participated in the study did so voluntarily and were drawn from the Independent School Sector in NSW, Australia and ranged from a large non-denominational school to a small faith-based school. The research looked at what was unique to those schools and what might be learnt across them.

To investigate the work of schools an exploratory approach was adopted, centred on the principles of action research, where the researcher acted as a participant observer as well as a facilitator of action research cycles at each school. The emphasis was on working alongside and with schools, with qualitative methods of enquiry used to enable learning conversations at individual and whole-school level. This allowed schools to reflect upon their practice in relation to teacher professional development and learning, and plan for improvement.

Learning conversations with teachers in these schools revealed how qualitatively different the learning was at each of the career stages. Further, it emerged that the impact of school context and ethos on teachers as learners, and the role played by the principal, were pivotal to teacher development at every career stage.

The study revealed the complex nature of teacher learning in schools and suggested that generic solutions in relation to the development of effective professional development programs at school level are not necessarily accessible to individual schools. Rather, processes that enable whole schools to reflect, evaluate and plan were shown to be beneficial in enabling gradual improvement to their practice in ways that were meaningful and sustainable for their school communities. The development of frameworks derived from the literature by the researcher, in response to a specific request in a school in its action research cycle, assisted schools in bridging the theory-practice divide.

Overall, the outcomes of the study gave new insights into what might be learnt about teacher career-stage learning and the coordination of strategic whole-school professional development programs from the perspective of the process of seeking ongoing improvement in each school.

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PREFACE

This study has its origins in professional practice and was motivated by an ongoing commitment to teachers and their learning and the expectations surrounding my role as the Director of Staff Development in a large, independent school in Sydney's northwest. With 120 teaching staff responsible for the learning of 1020 students from 3-18 years of age, the question arose as to how teachers might best learn, both individually and collectively, in the context of that school and, indeed, across the continuum from neophyte to school leader that characterises the career trajectory of teachers. The question also arose as to what within-school practices might enable such learning.

Much of the recent interest in understanding teacher professional development has focused on professional learning communities or teams focused on a strategic goal at the school or on a specific problem related especially to student learning. While invaluable, this literature does not address the broader question of how teachers might work together across the career continuum to address not only a strategic goal at the school, but also their own professional learning needs. My personal experiences and observations while acting in my leadership role led me to understand that this was not only a vital part of school culture, but also something that seemed to be placed in the 'too hard basket' for many working in schools.

An interest in teacher learning began in my early career years as I taught in a "disadvantaged" school amongst diligent teachers who poured their minds and hearts into the academic care of their students, but had little time or energy left to look to their own requirements as professionals. Issues relating to teacher efficacy, resilience and burn out were present on a daily basis and impacted my thinking about the needs of teachers, not only students. Over time I began to engage in my own directed reading around the experiences of teachers, finding that seminal texts such as Huberman's *The Lives of Teachers* (1993), along with a growing body of literature on the centrality of the teacher in the student learning equation, led me in the direction of working beside teachers as they learnt in school contexts.

The literature in this area, as the literature review attests, is extensive and encompasses multiple perspectives on teacher professional development and professional learning. From the perspective of the practicing professional, it is often viewed as either exhortations as to what constitutes good practice or checklists to be followed that sometimes assume a ready transference to other school contexts.

The transformative work being conducted around building effective professional learning communities is acknowledged. Studies relating to professional learning communities have

tapped into the learning cultures of, and communities within schools, that have achieved significant results in areas of student learning identified in school strategic planning to make the links between the two, again assuming transferability to other school practices.

By their nature, professional learning communities promote teacher engagement in an area defined by the school's executive, often with staff involvement, as a strategically important target for the school. I was interested in finding out what may be learnt through exploring community learning more holistically, beyond the strategic focus, within specific school settings. How teachers do and might learn from each other as an integral part of school culture would be considered, as well as whether or not what was found could then be harnessed to inform a planned school approach to teacher learning and professional development in schools.

In addition, working with and alongside teachers and schools in their journey of learning appealed to me and I was keen to find out if facilitating inquiry and discussions, based on the literature, would assist schools to reflect upon their ideas about teacher learning and how they planned and coordinated their internal professional development programs for their particular teachers.

Within the literature there is comparatively little centred on how those charged with the responsibility for teacher development in schools are going about their roles and, indeed, how they might be supported in doing so. In my own experience, I have found it difficult to know with confidence how to strategically plan, develop and deliver a comprehensive school based professional development program which both incorporates, and is evaluated against, good practice examples and recommendations provided in a wide literature base. In addition, the literature does not address the question as to the extent to which school context- its place and its ethos and values- influence teacher learning, or if individual schools can use their unique contexts to enhance the learning of their teachers. Nor does it adequately address how those given responsibility for teacher professional learning can address the entire career continuum for those for whom they are responsible.

It was these thoughts that influenced the study. What could be learnt about how practice in my own school and other schools could be further improved? What could be learnt as a participant observer in other schools as they went about planning and implementing their professional development programs? How might a school staff be supported in initiating conversations about all of career-stage professional learning as the basis of school improvement, and what might be learnt in the process? What new insights might be

developed into school-based planning and evaluation of teacher professional development from the research, and practical strategies to assist other schools in their work?

The study begins with a review of the literature with a view to establishing a theoretical framework relevant to school-based enquiry.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

The literature on the professional learning of teachers is both broad and diverse. DeCourcy (2012) has observed from the literature, for instance, that the professional learning of teachers has tended to centre on five key pillars:

1. Teacher learning
2. Teacher learning and its relationship to student learning
3. Collegial teacher learning
4. School leadership and teacher learning
5. Leadership learning

For the purposes of this study, these pillars provide a means of categorising the literature as it might apply to school-based practice supporting the professional development and learning of teachers. To these, for the purposes of the study, a sixth area can also be added:

6. The contemporary context of school-based teacher professional development

Together, these provide a structure through which the literature can be considered in relation to teacher professional learning and the school context.

TEACHER LEARNING

How teachers learn and the nature of effective professional learning

An emerging theme worldwide in the literature is an attempt to identify the type of professional learning which is most valuable to contributing to quality teaching and learning. This is evident in research conducted in New Zealand (Hattie, 2009; Timperley et al., 2007) and Australia (Dinham, 2008; NSW Department of Education and Training 2004, 2005; South Australia Council of Education Associations, 2008). Although progress is being made in identifying models and types of professional development which are effective, continuing research into the nature of what strategically developed professional development programs may look like and the way in which these can be best delivered in the school context, is warranted. Hattie (2003) comments that teacher professional development seems to be anything but strategic, being defined by the "latest fad" rather than the development of policy that "produces professional learning aligned to our current knowledge of teacher expertise and performance and to ensure that student learning is optimised" (p.16).

Borko (2004) writes within the context of changing dynamics in education in the United States, asserting that, throughout the world, teachers are under pressure to achieve "ambitious goals for student learning" (p. 4). As a result of her research relating to professional development and student learning, she also confirms that professional development is "essential to efforts to improve our schools," being vital to enabling teachers to "enhance their knowledge and develop new instructional practices" (p. 5). However her comments also reveal the lack of a strategic approach to the professional development on offer, stating that in the United States it is "fragmented, intellectually superficial and usually inadequate" (p. 6), is administered with little planning, and is "lacking in cohesiveness and rigour and not taking into account what we know about how teachers learn" (p. 8). Borko states that the variety of programs implemented to deliver professional development to teachers are enormous but that little is known about "how each intervention operates in diverse settings, program fidelity across sites, impact on teacher and student learning, resources required for enactment and policies that support enactment" (p. 10).

In her exploration of the "most damaging myth" that "good teachers are born and not made" Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) makes the point that this often-held assumption in educational institutions throughout the world has led to a critical undervaluing of the capacity of professional learning to develop teachers into excellent practitioners. This has resulted in "harmful consequences for teacher education and schooling" (p. 30). Scott and Dinham (2008) call upon educators to provide professional learning which enables teachers to be challenged and learn how to become expert in their practice, stating that "teachers need the opportunities, incentives, structures, standards, knowledge and experience to change their thinking and practice" (p. 124).

The literature consistently identifies the professional learning of teachers as an essential element to developing and maintaining quality teaching practices (Muijis & Reynolds, 2001; Timperley & Robinson, 2001; Marzano, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Timperley et al. (2007) cite a number of studies conducted in New Zealand which indicate "substantive student outcomes associated with teacher learning and development" (p. 24). Hattie's (2009) research identified teacher professional development as a key influence on student achievement. Rowe (2003) states that "what matters most is the development and retention of quality teachers," adding that they then need to be "supported by strategic teacher professional development" (p. 3). Borko (2004) agrees, stating that professional development is "essential to efforts to improve our schools" (p. 41).

Although the literature reveals significant research in teacher learning, quantifying and describing the way in which teachers learn is not a simple matter, as revealed in an Australian Government report on the professional learning of teachers. In the *National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning Project* (2008), Doecke et al. (2008) state that "there is no agreement about an overarching definition for professional learning practices", nor for what constitutes "successful" teacher learning in the current literature (p. 18).

Some of the current thinking about how teachers learn in relation to concepts that consistently emerge about teacher learning in the literature have been loosely categorised, and are as follows.

Teacher collaboration

The literature indicates that teachers best learn when they plan their learning together and then collaborate as a part of the learning (Fullan, 1992, 2005; Clarke, 1994). Hargreaves (1994) found that teachers are more consciously committed to developing and refining their practices through professional learning if they have ownership within a collegial environment where there is ongoing support. Joyce & Showers (1995) note that without companionship and help in reflecting on practice and instruction of fresh teaching strategies, most people can make "very few changes in their behaviour, even when well-intended" (p. 6).

In a study looking at productive learning in networked learning environments, McCormack, Gore & Thomas (2006) identified that teachers benefitted from engaging in networked learning through scaffolding, which allowed engagement and participation in the learning process, and then the effective adaptation of knowledge learnt to their teaching situations. Teachers also valued the flexibility in the use of time available in relation to on-line learning, which included access to collaborative forums when it suited their learning needs.

Lamb et al. (2007) examined the validity of teaching experiments and professional learning when combined in a research project. Ten teachers across five Brisbane primary schools were observed before the implementation of professional learning related to a new mathematics syllabus. It was noted throughout the professional learning of new material that teachers learnt how to implement their knowledge best when adopting collaboration as co-learners. Essential ingredients observed that were noted as required for teacher learning included teachers being involved in identifying what they needed to learn, and then being provided with time to "reflect, plan and trial ideas together" (p. 76).

The study done by Doppelt et al. (2009) showed that deep learning by teachers is achieved through using a context based collaborative and inquiry approach, where teachers worked

together to create deeper understandings of how their students think and learn. They found in particular that providing time for teachers to discuss and compare their learning, and then reflecting upon how the workshops could impact on their practice, was an essential part of their learning, stating that "This sharing was a basis for further discussion and reflection" (p. 347).

In Little's (2003) study examining the out of classroom interactions of teachers, it was found that teacher learning was strengthened when they worked collectively to "support one another's professional growth" (p. 926). She also remarked that little research was available which examined the way in which specific school professional communities act as a resource for teacher learning and innovations in teaching practice.

Professional learning communities

For the purposes of the study, and in accord with the latest literature, "professional learning community" is defined as an activity within the school culture that focuses teacher learning on a specific target, considered to be strategic within the school plan. Professional learning communities (PLC's) are about collaborative action (Massey, 2009; Horde & Rutherford 1998; Horde & Hirsh, 2008). They are communities where teachers are led to work together in purposefully, strategically designed teams with a focus on improving student achievement.
Educational researchers of school improvement lead the focus on PLC's including Du Four (2004), Fullan (2005), Hargreaves (2001), Senge (2000) and Hord (1997). Research indicates that teams of teachers involved in purposeful action in relation to examining and improving practice is a characteristic of effective schools (Fullan, 2001; Dinham, 2008). Further, teacher collaboration and reflection which is based on evidence has been found to be effective professional learning which changes and improves teaching, and results in improvements in student learning (Hargreaves, 2003; Schmoker, 2005).

Stoll et al. (2011) comment that "Professional learning communities don't just happen; they need to be nurtured and developed. Planning is an important part of this" (p.2). Seven essential processes within PLC's to ensure success in developing and sustaining improvement in student learning were then described.

Massey (2009) states that creating professional learning communities with a collaborative culture for action that focuses on improving student achievement, is a "complex undertaking" (p. 1). Professional learning community literature reveals key areas that need to be considered to enable and further develop schools as effective learning communities. These include teacher and student learning, leadership will and capacity, a shared purpose, collaborative teamwork and a willingness to evaluate programs authentically within an environment where

continuous learning is expected and invited. According to Du Four (2004) four interconnected factors determine the capacity of a learning community, these being establishing new structures and procedures, improving communication, enhancing teacher learning, and fostering collective ownership and intelligence. Principals and school leadership are clearly nominated as having the responsibility to develop, nurture and improve their schools in these ways.

Timperley (2011) provides case study results of effective improvement in teaching and student results where collaborative teacher professional learning opportunities were "constructed systematically, not left to chance" (p. 116). She drew significant conclusions about the need for quality teacher learning within PLC environments, stating that "It is not simply the presence of a professional learning community or professional development that determines effectiveness, but rather what happens, the expertise that is brought to bear on the participants' deliberations, and the extent to which the processes promote learning and changes to practice in the interests of students" (p. 116). Dietz (2009) emphasises the key importance of building relationships and encouraging professional conversations which respect teacher experiences and are mindful of the school context. She states that some conversations will be about problems that are complex and not easily solved.

Collegial conversations

In her research in Melbourne schools, Landvogt (2005) observed that teachers learn through activating their intellectual character when engaging in "discussions which are at times heated – about curiosity, about metacognition, about scepticism and the role they plan in learning" (p. 6). Through these conversations they learnt more about how each other learn, and ultimately about how they themselves learn. Schuck et al. (2008) also note the value of professional learning conversations, particularly after observing lessons and noticing similarities and differences in teaching styles.

Sustained learning that involves observation and rigorous reflection

Swaney (2007) states that teachers learn effectively when given time in the learning experience, including time to think, discuss, reflect, argue and then apply the learning to their practice. Reflection is also identified as a main way in which teachers learn, often resulting in more learning. However she points out that this requires time, spreading the learning over planned time periods when material can be re-visited. She also states that teachers learn best from each other if they are engaged in a known and shared context and that watching how someone else has actually applied the information to programming, planning and practice is beneficial. Timperley's (2005) research provides insight into how teachers learn, stating that

"sustained learning is achieved by watching others do it and access to each other in classrooms as a place of learning" (p. 401). Hattie (2003) also comments on the benefits of time and opportunity to talk to each other about teaching and using reflective dialogue which "allows for self-awareness as learners as in depth conversations about teaching and learning occurs" (p. 27).

When defining features of high quality professional development, Desimone et al. (2002b) noted that teachers enjoyed opportunities to learn through active learning, such as becoming engaged in meaningful analysis of teaching and learning. Teachers participating in their research also noted learning as a result of feedback on their teaching, experiments with pedagogies consistent with goals set for their classes, and through communication with other teachers. Easton (2008) states that teachers "must become learners and they must be self-developing" (p. 759). She also comments that the paradigm of professional development, which focuses on completing activities to "train" is shifting towards the concept of learning, which enables flexibility and innovation in practice, so that teachers can "change what they do on a daily or sometimes hourly basis, as they respond to the needs of the learners they serve. Doing this takes learning" (p. 755).

Learning through multiple modes, both planned and incidental

Learning for teachers occurs in a variety of contexts including in their classrooms, staff rooms, school communities and professional development workshops. According to Borko (2004), learning can occur in a brief "hallway conversation" or when "counselling a troubled child" (p. 10). Borko's study shows that teachers learn from other teachers about what they want to learn about, which includes their subject content, the use of pedagogical tools, how other teachers are teaching, the impact of their learning and practice on their students and the way in which their students think and learn.

Ingvarson et al. (2005) conducted a study on factors affecting how professional development programs impacted on teachers' knowledge and practice. In the study they identified a variety of effective learning occurrences to which teachers were exposed including workplace learning through action research, coaching and mentoring, institutional learning, online learning, participation in award programs and conferences and seminars.

Fullan (2007) calls upon educationalists to abandon "professional development" which occurs in the form of courses and workshops and "make professional learning an everyday experience for all educators" (p. 35). According to Fullan, a powerful form of regular professional learning involves collegial lesson observations accompanied with debriefing. He

cites Cole's (2004) call for continuous and sustained learning and Elmore (2004) who states that learning occurs within the setting that teachers work.

Brady et al. (2008) found that teacher release time was a major factor in teacher capacity to learn and that sustained projects were more successful than one-off learning opportunities. Their research on the use of action learning, defined as "a process through which people come together to learn from each other and share their experience" (p. 17) provided a workable but rigorous model that facilitated teacher learning.

Easton (2008) also found that teachers learn when engaging in action research, assessment design, book studies, critical friend groups, lesson study, access to student voice when discussing specific student cases, visiting classrooms and analysing data such as assessment results. Learning was also achieved when teachers mentored and coached each other and prepared reflective portfolios.

Action learning

In a study which tracked the implementation of innovative science curriculum in Queensland primary schools, Peers, Diezmann & Watters (2003) noted that teachers were motivated to learn when they were presented with information on how to program and deliver the new approaches and when provided with a comprehensive program of support. Their learning relied upon the provision of an appropriate program of professional development and an understanding of curriculum innovation, which then made them willing to "engage with change and modify their professional practice" (p. 89). They also learnt through having successful experiences in implementation, which then facilitated deeper learning through reflection and replanning. Teacher engagement in learning was secured by adopting a comprehensive approach to teaching them new material and then supporting them through an action learning cycle. Recent research (Brady et al., 2008a, 2008b; Aubusson et al., 2009) also indicates that teachers learn well through being supported in the implementation of comprehensive action learning cycles.

Teacher reading and writing

McLelland & Talbert's (2001) paper on setting up a reading circle for teachers revealed that teachers learn through engaging in reading books pertinent to their curriculum with other teachers, meeting regularly to collaboratively share their perspectives, and asking questions of each other about how they may use and teach the material. Teacher writing in particular was noted as a strong tool for their professional learning in the *National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning Report* (2008), completed in Australia.

Student feedback

Teachers learn through gaining feedback from their students. McLelland (2007) reported on a teacher's experience in the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Program*, where feedback from students was found to be a significant learning tool. In one case in a Melbourne school, teachers learnt through student comments on the mistakes they had made and from "experience in real life in the classroom" (p. 40). Other research also documents the use of "student voice" in the learning of teachers (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Brady et al., 2008a; Dinham, 2008; Schuck et al., 2008; Doecke et al., 2008).

Situation specific learning

Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) speaks of "situation specific" professional development as the way to achieve meaningful teacher learning and stresses the important role played by teacher working environments in facilitating meaningful learning. Teacher professional development needs to go beyond the "acquisition of new skills and knowledge" and into allowing them the time to "reflect critically on their practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy and learners" (p. 2).

Teachers need to learn about deepening their understanding of the processes of teaching and how their students learn. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (1995, p. 6) to learn, teachers need the opportunity to engage in activities which:

- include concrete tasks, including teaching, observation, assessment and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development
- include inquiry, reflection and experimentation
- are collaborative, involving sharing amongst participators
- are connected directly to teachers' work
- are sustained, ongoing and intensive and supported by coaching, modelling and collective problem solving, and
- must be connected to other aspects of school change.

Desimone et al.'s (2002a) study of teacher professional development programs across schools revealed that teacher learning was enhanced when it focused on specific instructional practices and when active and interactive learning opportunities were used.

Elmore (1997) states that successful professional development is contextual and "focuses on concrete classroom applications of general ideas, exposes teachers to actual practice rather than just descriptions of the practice, involves opportunities for observation, critique,

reflection, group support and collaboration, deliberate evaluation and feedback by skilled practitioners with expertise about good teaching" (p. 19).

International reports on teacher learning

The need to ascertain how teachers learn in a way that improves and transforms their practice is identified internationally as a crucial element of building effective schools where the learning outcomes of students are enhanced and improved. International reports on teacher professional learning from Australia, New Zealand and the United States provide a useful summary of the themes which emerge in relation to teacher learning.

The report from The United States of America, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the U.S. and Abroad* (2009) was published by the National Staff Development Council and Stanford University as a part of a multi-year study. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) state that teachers need to be able to "teach increasingly diverse learners, be knowledgeable about student learning, competent in complex core academic content and skilful at the craft of teaching" (p. 2). To facilitate teacher learning professional learning needs to be planned, high quality and sustained, effectively led with use of experts, mentors and peers and within a school community which values teacher learning. It is characterised by learning teams, taking responsibility and seeking continuous improvement. The report notes that effective learning is "high intensity, job embedded collaborative learning" (p. 3), and that "development is not enough" (p. 1). The report emphasises that school leadership is needed where teachers are well supported and encouraged to improve their effectiveness throughout their careers and that teachers learn collaboratively and in context, within a learning community culture.

A summary of how teachers learn in the report is extensive and includes that which is planned, organised, high quality, sustained, continuous, in cycles, reflective, job embedded, research based, concrete, embedded in the tasks of teaching including content knowledge and instructional practices, and includes the whole learning cycle – planning, implementation, reflection and change. Furthermore, it was noted that teachers engage more rigorously in learning which is focused, intense, thoughtful and explicit, involves reading and discussing educational research, is active – allowing transformation of approach, not just extra layering; and is embedded in teachers' work.

Effective ways of engaging in this learning included working in collaborative teams school-wide; working together in the classroom, with experts, mentors and coaches; and through the observation of others. Also important to fostering effective teacher learning was the provision

of the opportunity for teachers to learn as a coherent part of school goals and reform within the school, and in an environment of common respect and supportive leadership.

Furthermore, the development of a collectively held standard of quality teaching, and ongoing analysis of student outcomes and performance was also identified as important to teacher learning in a way that changed and improved teaching. Effective professional learning was found to have facilitated innovation, experimentation, changed practices, evaluation, reflection, continuous dialogue, critiquing – including peer critiquing, risk taking and experimentation.

The National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning Project Final Report (2008) was carried out through the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia. The literature review emphasises that teachers learn well in the context of their schools, when engaging in open ended projects and programs which require sustained application, and when given the opportunity to build on existing knowledge. The review also referred to learning that was both incidental and planned, including at unexpected times when conversations occur randomly and naturally during the course of the day. Involvement in action learning and enquiry, when the opportunity was given to design and plan goals for the learning, was also noted as beneficial. Team teaching and observation of others in sustained, collaborative and reflective situations were found to be of value to teacher learning. The review also noted that teachers learn through directed reading and writing.

The report entitled *Teacher Professional Learning and Development* (2007) was commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. It includes many of the elements on how teachers learn mentioned in the two previous reports. In addition, it looked closely at the learning processes of teachers, stating that three processes were needed for learning which impacts on practice; cueing and retrieving prior knowledge, integrating new information into current values and belief systems, and then creating dissonance between the knowledge and practice (p. 8). They also identified teacher attitudes to their own learning as a strong factor in determining if learning would take place, and having important implications for the success of any professional learning program. They provided details on the way in which teachers can be encouraged and supported in their learning. Teachers were also identified as "diverse learners", needing to be provided with a range of opportunities that would meet their own individual learning preferences and also meet their need for variety, creativity and expression of their craft (p. 77).

The literature indicates that continuous professional learning is required to ensure ongoing teacher effectiveness, particularly in relation to the changing nature of education (Hargreaves,

2000; and Fullan, 2004). Muijis & Lindsay (2007) assert that continuing professional development for all professionals is required to maintain their competence, and that this approach needs to be scrutinised in educational research and practice. They cite studies conducted by McLaughlin & Talbert (2001), Hargraves (1994) and Muijis & Reynolds (2001) as clearly demonstrating that continuing professional development is the key to teachers sustaining their commitment to improving the outcomes of students, and is also a "key part of the career development of professionals, including teachers" (p. 196). The result of long term neglect of engagement in continuous professional learning can result in substandard, stagnated teaching practices, as summed up by Dinham (2008), who states that "There is a saying that while some teachers have 25 years of experience, other teachers have the same year of experience 25 years over" (p. 19). Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997) assert that it is crucial that all teachers have both the opportunity and commitment to be more effective and that "more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than any other single factor" (p. 63). Both authors infer the need for a comprehensive approach to be adopted in relation to the provision of effective professional learning opportunities in which teachers engage in an ongoing manner, with Dinham (2008) remarking that the information he has provided about professional learning has emerged from the range of research he has done in schools, none of which however had been about "professional learning per se" (p. 101).

Hargreaves (2000) argues that there is a close correlation between teacher professionalism and professional learning. He asserts that teachers in Canada and throughout the world are experiencing commonality in their professional lives, stating that "overworked and underpaid teachers have had to master and comply with centrally imposed learning standards, detailed curriculum targets and pervasive testing regimes" (p. 151), consistently experiencing conflicting pressures and higher demands. He states that one way that teachers can empower themselves in this environment is to "value and defend" their entitlement to continually engage in professional learning which "keeps them in close congruence with their knowledge base including access to educational research and ongoing quality education opportunities throughout their teaching careers" (p. 170).

TEACHER CAREER-STAGE LEARNING

Research into the career stages of teachers has revealed the complexity of what teachers experience and the difficulties this presents in being able to definitively provide both a definition of "career" and a determination of the phases of career development within the profession.

Bayer, Brinkkjaer, Plauborg & Rolls (2009) make the observation when discussing teacher career trajectories that the term "career" "usually refers to positions and to rising through the ranks" (p. 2) but that in relation to teachers, this is not easily defined or described. They state that research completed to date on the issue of teacher career trajectories and work lives is "diverse in nature, including methodological approaches and use of terms, which are not conclusive, due to different understandings of what constitutes a career and how it can be examined" (p. 2).

Pallas (1999) define a career in education as a "well-travelled sequence of education related transitions that are shaped by cultural and structural forces" (p.39). Keichtermans (1993) notes that *career* is understood as a "chronological chain of positions, roles and so on, a teacher is involved in during his or her teaching years" (p. 445).

Since Lortie's seminal work *Schoolteacher: a sociological study* (1975), a growing interest in the development of teachers has appeared in the literature, giving rise to a variety of models of career development. Lortie's study of teachers was school-contextualised, at a time when research into the work of teachers and their personal and professional perspectives on the job was rare. His work sought to explore the "ethos" of teachers and the "pattern of orientation and sentiments" (1975, xviii) inherent in those in the teaching occupation. He was particularly interested in observing how their experiences played out in their school context, which as microcosms of the society in which they operated, were in a constant state of change. Lortie concluded that it was difficult to clearly identify career stages, noting that teachers often withdrew from the classroom to take up what were perceived to be career progression opportunities which were related to more administrative tasks.

Sikes et al. (1985) conducted case study research and described five career stages that were age based (21-28, 28 – 33, 30 – 40, 40-50/55, 50 – 55) with teachers affected by these stages of life both in and outside of school. Fessler's (1985) career cycle included the phases of pre-service, induction, competency building, enthusiastic/growing, career frustration, stable / stagnant, career wind-down and career exit.

Huberman's *The Lives of Teachers* (1993) applied life cycle theory to teachers and their careers, making a significant contribution to the literature about how teachers develop throughout their professional lives. The career phases were applied to teachers of one to forty years' experience, being described as career entry, stabilisation, experimentation/ diversification, reassessment, serenity/relational distance, conservatism/complaints and finally, disengagement.

Louden's *Understanding Teaching: Continuity and Change in Teacher's Knowledge* (1999) places teachers at the centre of enquiry. As expressed in the current literature, Louden also noted that it is what teachers do that makes a difference to student learning and that understanding teachers at a deeper level is important. He chose a biographical study approach to researching the unfolding careers of teachers, finding that such a study enabled a deep insight into the complexity of teachers in their working contexts.

Day et al. (2006) in the research report *Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness* state that assigning year lengths to each stage in a teacher's working life can be problematic, as considerable variations occur amongst individuals and contexts. When conducting further research in relation to teacher effectiveness and how this changes over the course of teachers' careers and lives, Day and Gu (2010) identified six professional life phases related to the years of teaching, 0-3, 4-7, 8-15, 16-23, 24-30 and 30+. They also explored the career phases of teachers through the category of "professional commitment trajectories" (p. 13), identifying career stages based on years of teaching in three bands, 0-7, 8-23 and 24+.

Importance of teacher learning at all career stages

The variety of definitions, research approaches and models of career stages are helpful in confirming that teacher career phases are multifaceted and complex. Whatever approach is taken, it is clear that the professional learning of teachers is crucial to their development as they progress along their collective and individual career trajectories. According to Hargreaves, working with teachers should be "at the top of our research and improvement agendas", especially since "the quality, range and flexibility of teachers' classroom work is closely tied up with their professional growth – with the way that they develop as people and professionals" (Louden, 1991 p.vi).

Hargreaves and Fullan's (1992) *Understanding Teacher Development* considers the ways in which educational systems deal with, and often hinder the ongoing development of teachers. According to the authors, "the context of teachers' working environment provides conditions in which teacher development initiatives succeed or fail" (p. 13). They site three approaches to teacher development as knowledge and skill; self-understanding, and ecological change, which apply to all teachers regardless of their career stage.

Hargreave's *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age* (1994) focused on how teachers change as they progress in their career as a result of both external and internal factors. He found that teachers' engagement and reactions to teacher learning opportunities throughout their careers had a significant impact on their personal and professional wellbeing.

Kelchtermans (2009) used a narrative biographical perspective to study teachers' careers and work lives and related his research directly to the professional development of teachers. He suggests that in relation to teachers, the definition of "career" should be "in terms of one's learning processes on the job" (p. 29), and that there should be a focus on the process of professional development when researching the careers of teachers. To Kelchtermans, "professional development is a process of career-long learning, resulting in changes in teachers' actions as well as in their thinking" (p. 30). He sought to reconstruct teachers' professional learning over time, concluding that learning situations influenced how the teachers "constructed" narratives about their career experiences (p. 33). He also found that teachers sometimes used professional learning opportunities as "parallel careers", enabling them to cope with frustrations generated by internal or external influences on the job. Opportunities for professional growth were seen to be a motivating factor at some stages in their careers, including opportunities to collaborate with other teachers.

Day et al.'s (2006) report revealed that three out of the five core findings related to the provision of professional development throughout the working lives of teachers. Their findings challenged "linear conceptions of teacher development and expertise" (p. 60) and considered the role of professional development in identifying and describing career stages. One of the core findings was that teachers' sense of positive professional identity was associated with well-being and job satisfaction, with access to quality professional development cited as a significant contributor to this state.

Studies looking at the careers of teachers recognise that the different stages of their careers and personal lives can affect their perceptions of work satisfaction, commitment and motivation, and that this in turn, impacts on schools. Access to professional development in an environment where the growth of individuals and organisations is expected, has been found to be essential to the growth of teachers and the school as an organisation. Owens (2001) refers to the importance of growth in its impact on motivation, stating that "Responding to growth leads to increased growth, first by meeting their (teachers) deficiency needs and, second, by encouraging their growth and development needs. This is the essence of creating growth – enhancing environments in schools as an organisational approach to motivating participants" (p. 354). Davenport (1999) notes that "opportunity for growth which includes opportunities to increase one's abilities, personal growth and advancement within the organisation is an emerging pattern in contemporary workplaces" (p. 38). Recognition for accomplishment by peers and supervisors is also noted as important throughout the working life of teachers.

Teachers in their mid-career, described by Huberman (1993) as being in the reassessment phase, seem to reach a point, according to Fessler and Christensen (1992), where they experience "either disillusionment and frustration or a rediscovered enthusiasm" (p. 257). Teachers can experience phases of disengagement (Huberman, 1993; Bayer et al., 2009; Sikes, 1985) which can include a reduction in attendance at professional development activities in their mid to late careers and a perception that they had not fulfilled their ambitions in relation to promotion or career satisfaction. This phase can culminate in a loss of motivation, resulting in leaving the profession or if near retirement, retiring early (Day et al., 2006), with teachers in their later years of teaching being at greater risk of becoming less effective due to their needs not being met. The recommendation to remedy this situation was again related to their learning, and provided tailored strategies for their professional development and learning to support them at this stage of their careers.

The benefits of teacher engagement in professional development strategies and activities, leading to professional learning and growth across their careers, are well documented in the literature, as are the negative impacts of not engaging in such learning. Fully understanding the career trajectories or the nature of teacher learning needs is problematic, as the literature reveals that there are many mitigating personal and professional factors that occur over the working life of teachers.

TEACHER LEARNING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT LEARNING

Hattie's *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement* (2009) reported on his implementation of a meta-analysis approach when scrutinising thousands of studies on school and teacher effectiveness to ascertain and measure variables effecting student learning. Earlier, in a presentation to the Australian College of Educational Research (2003), he asserted that teachers accounted for approximately 30% in the variance of the influences on student learning, stating that "it is what teachers know, do and care about which is very powerful in this learning equation" (p. 2). Furthermore, he asserted that if this was so, schools needed to ensure that "this greatest influence is optimised to have powerful and sensationally positive effects on the learner" (p. 3).

Rowe's (2003) focus when conducting a review of the literature on student learning and teacher effectiveness was on determining the importance of teacher quality in relation to student outcomes and school effectiveness. He is highly critical of the way in which the ideologies of "biological and social determinism and post-modernist claptrap" (p. 23) have been applied to the process of gauging school effectiveness, distracting the focus of educationalists from what he considers the research really tells us, that "the quality of

teaching and learning provision are by far the most salient influences on students' cognitive, effective and behavioural outcomes of schooling" (p. 24). Furthermore, Smith (2008) asserts that the role of the teacher has become even more critical, stating that "Since the mid 1980's the pendulum has swung from equality to excellence. National attention has turned to higher academic standards" (p. 57), necessitating consistent quality teaching in schools.

Timperley et al. (2007) cite a number of studies conducted in New Zealand which indicate "substantive student outcomes associated with teacher learning and development" (p. 24). Hattie's (2009) research identified teacher professional development as a key influence on student achievement. Rowe (2003) states that 'what matters most is the development and retention of quality teachers", adding that they then need to be "supported by strategic teacher professional development" (p. 3). Borko (2004) agrees, stating that professional development is "essential to efforts to improve our schools" (p. 14). She cites a range of research (Anderson, 1989; Carpenter and Fennema, 1992; Clark and Borko, 2004; Cohen, 2004) that provides evidence that high quality professional development programs can help teachers deepen their knowledge and "transform their teaching" (p. 6), particularly in specific content areas.

COLLEGIAL TEACHER LEARNING

The school context and continuum models of teacher learning

For the purpose of this review, a continuum of school-based professional learning might be defined initially as a strategic and comprehensive approach to the delivery of professional development to teachers on school sites, aligned with the stages of their career development from beginning teachers through to principal. The characteristics of teaching expertise that are usually apparent within each stage would be taken into account, as well as an acknowledgment of the individual variances among teachers in the ongoing development of teaching proficiency.

The notion of sustained learning across the career of the teacher is not new, with Darling-Hammond (1995) mentioning this almost twenty years ago. In her review paper on US policies that support the professional development of teachers, she states that there are two cornerstones of the reform agenda in the USA. The first mentioned was "a career-long conception of teachers' learning" (p. 560), but that there is little literature or research available on the concept of the delivery of professional development aligned to the notion of the career continuum of teachers within specific school contexts. Darling-Hammond also pointed out that policy makers need to rethink the staffing, management and funding of schools to ensure that teachers are given time to work collegially, so they can engage in "peer

reflection, examine the effectiveness of teaching and student learning, enable teachers to change their view of effective models of practice and create a process of transformational learning for teachers" (p. 561).

In addition to the call for professional development to be career- long, there are also calls for it to be comprehensive in nature. Turner & Mitchell (2004) purport that there is a distinction between training "which is short term in nature and 'plugs' an identified gap for groups of individuals, compared to staff development, which is essentially seen to be more medium term in nature, involving the whole staff of a school, is career oriented and longer term" (p. 71). Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) present three perspectives on how a comprehensive program of professional development may be regarded. Ideally, programs would have the capacity to enable the development of knowledge and skills to assist in the acquisition and assimilation of new knowledge into the classroom; self-understanding amongst teachers where it is acknowledged that they have different needs according to the point at which they have reached in their development, and as able to produce "ecological change", where continued professional development has a positive influence on improving standards of teaching (cited in Turner & Mitchell, 2004, p. 72). A career continuum approach may enable a comprehensive delivery of professional development, drawing upon current research which identifies the types of professional development activities that are effective and then delivering these over the career continuum of teachers.

The discussion on how teacher professional development should be designed and delivered continues worldwide. More recently, governments and their education departments have been considering the type and style of professional development available to their teachers. The General Teaching Council of Wales has identified five different forms of continued professional development activities (CPD): sharing good practice and exchange of ideas; international visits to share good practice; scholarships to focus on relevant CPD activity; sabbaticals to enable staff to develop transferable skills in a different environment, and funding to support professional networks (Turner & Mitchell, 2004). Mention is made that taking into consideration the needs of individuals and programming professional development at key stages should be considered, with the study concluding that there is more to be done in the implementation of effective professional learning coming out of a system approach. Although considering the variables of the needs of teachers and attempting to clarify useful professional development instruments, the notion of using a career continuum approach as a possible framework was not mentioned.

Similarly, when considering the district management of teacher professional development in the USA, some strategic work has been done as a result of the Eisenhower Professional Development Program funding, which focused on the provision of higher quality professional development to teachers. Desimone & Porter et al. (2002b) demonstrate that the implementation of professional development based on research literature that includes "active learning opportunities, duration, collective participation and the use of networks and study groups" (p. 1265) reveals a strengthening in the link between system policies and the large scale implementation of quality teacher professional development.

The literature reveals an emerging tendency to align the professional development of teachers in schools more effectively with government goals and policy. Desimone et al. (2002b) state that it is acknowledged that the professional development of teachers is a "key component of national efforts to improve student learning through teaching to high standards" (p. 1266) and that school districts play a critical role in disseminating the program. Their study measured the alignment between district goals and coordination practices and noted the difficulty in measuring continuous improvement in teacher learning and practice. Exploring the learning needs of teachers at all career stages within schools was not a part of the study.

In Ontario Canada an overhaul of the way in which the Ministry of Education approaches the professional learning of teachers was considered as a possible change agent and has been generated as a result of a concerted effort to build confidence in the Ontario Public Education System for all stakeholders; student, parents, teachers and the community. The report *Energising Ontario Education* (Levin et al., 2008) refers to the improvement in teacher professional development as an important agent for change. The Ministry of Education has recognised the need to provide professional development within a policy framework which is "specific, context-linked and working towards aligning schools with the State vision" (p. 74).

Ramsey, in his *Review of Teacher Education in NSW* (2000) highlighted the role of the professional learning of teachers within the context of providing quality education. The recommendation was made that an Institute of Teachers be formed and a framework of teaching standards be developed (p. 86). The resulting professional teaching standards describe the work of teachers, were designed so they can be demonstrated by teachers, and provide opportunities for accreditation and professional reflection. Developed by the NSW Institute of Teachers (2004), they relate to the major stages of teacher career progression, starting at pre-service level through to professional competence, accomplishment and leadership. Although these standards clearly articulate what teachers should be able to do,

they do not make reference to what professional development may be required to achieve these outcomes.

The NSW Department of Education and Training *Teacher Professional Learning Policy* (2004) embraces the concepts of teachers engaging "in ongoing professional learning throughout their career" (p. 5) and also promotes the alignment of professional learning at school level, including its relationship to the "endorsed school plan", the "needs of staff and the school community" as well as strategic alignment to the "priorities of the school and the Department" (p. 5). Schools are encouraged to apply a distributed leadership approach through forming school-based professional learning teams to "plan, implement and evaluate" the professional learning component of the endorsed school plan (p. 6). Furthermore, the policy recommends and encourages the formation of collaborative and collegial professional learning communities within schools. McCulla and Gereige - Hinson's (2004) initial evaluation of the NSW DET policy, using data collected through feedback loops, was that early in the implementation and funding phases, implementation of the policy at school-level was "off to a strong start" (p. 720). Further research and case studies to enable the ongoing evaluation of aspects of the policy in practice were recommended, particularly in relation to the strong emphasis on school level planning and implementation.

The NSW Department of Education and Training also issued a document in 2005 entitled, *The Professional Learning Continuum* which presented a framework for professional learning programs in government schools. Key strategies to support professional learning were mapped against the developed continuum referred to as "stages of development or roles" (p. 3).

Turner and Mitchell's (2004) study based in 13 secondary schools in New South Wales examined what over 200 staff thought about the management of professional development. They noted different responses from teachers according to their position on the career continuum from the least to most experienced staff, but this was not taken further. This may indicate that a career continuum approach to evaluating professional learning in the school context could be useful when attempting to establish strategic and comprehensive professional development programs within schools.

As outlined, the literature suggests that education bodies are rapidly acknowledging the need for continued and sustained professional learning at policy level. However, few are exploring a teacher career continuum approach as a possibility for teacher professional development programs within schools, with the exception of NSW, Australia and to a lesser degree in other Australian States (see for instance Victorian DEECD, 2005; and South Australia, CEASA,

2008). At this point, no research could be found on the development of a career-stage professional development program within the school context in the NSW Independent School Sector. A preliminary review of school websites enabled the identification of two schools touching upon a career continuum approach, including St Ignatius Riverview (2009) which developed a Master Teacher Program that incorporated five levels of teacher development, and The Hills Grammar School's (2010) teacher enrichment program, which provided some professional development for particular career stages. Of some significance to this study, no research could be found on the use of a strategic career continuum approach as the centrepiece for the development and coordination of an in-house, ongoing professional program within a school context.

Strategic planning is identified as an important element of ensuring that professional development programs are comprehensive in nature. Smith (2008) advocates a strategic approach to the provision of professional learning which is continual, stating that a plan to both select and develop staff is needed to "develop a competent and qualified faculty and staff – one that will improve instruction to increase student learning" (p. 56). He insists that a "methodical, persistent approach can help us create cultures of excellence" and that "we can have schools where all children learn and reach their full potential" (p. 57). Other proponents of strategically designed professional learning include Fullan (2004), Hattie (2009) and Timperley et al. (2007).

The career continuum and teacher professional development

In addition to an emerging consensus that access to continuing professional development is needed, there is an increased interest and recognition of the stages of teacher development throughout the career continuum, from pre-service through to principal. The teaching continuum can be described in terms of skills development, such as that espoused by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980), who noted these positions as being that of novice, competence, proficiency, expertise and mastery. It can also be described in terms of career progression, as is the case in Australia, where the NSW Institute of Teachers (2004) identified four levels of career progression from graduate teacher, through to professional competence, accomplishment and leadership, which are aligned to a deepening proficiency and expertise in the use and sharing of specific professional teaching standards. There is also an increased interest in the various stages of teacher development throughout the career continuum from early career to principal, often accompanied with information on the typical qualities of teachers at each level and the teaching standards that could be expected at each point. However there was no information provided about how teachers learn at each level.

Researchers have identified particular traits of teachers within this career continuum to more closely examine what makes a teacher an effective practitioner. Some concentrate their research on descriptors for beginning or early career teachers (McCormack et al., 2006; Levin et al., 2008). Others such as Hattie (2003) identify the attributes of experienced, or "expert" (p. 5) teachers, arriving at five major dimensions, including their capacity to identify essential representation of their subject, guide learning through classroom interactions, monitor learning, provide feedback and attend to affective attributes, and influence student outcomes (p. 6).

Literature which relates to the delivery of professional development for teachers at particular and specific points along the career continuum is favourable in relation to its capacity to improve teaching effectiveness. In the case of early career teacher professional learning, the literature indicates that providing a range of learning experiences, often through a collegial mentor within a supportive learning community culture, is important to the survival and development of teachers at this stage (Beattie, 2002; Ewing & Smith, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2003, 2006; McCormack et al., 2006). Darling-Hammond (2001), Bubb (2000) and Williams, (2002) provide educators with information on important aspects of professional learning at this point on the continuum, including "high quality induction and mentoring" (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p. 14), classroom management instruction (Ewing & Smith, 2003) and the use of non-formal and unplanned learning in a collaborative environment, including exposure to professional discussion (Williams, 2002).

McCormack et al. (2006) tracked sixteen early career teachers through their first year of teaching to ascertain the importance of continued professional learning for this group, using the scaffold developed by Feiman-Nemser (2001) which identified key central tasks in learning to teach. They cite the importance for "teacher capacity building" which is when skills are provided to "enable further development and improvement via both planned professional learning and collaborative peer support" (p. 96). As a result of the study, the teachers participating strongly indicated that the quality of professional learning was instrumental in both the "development of a professional identity" and the "construction of professional knowledge and practice" (p. 109). McCormack also concluded that "the current study confirmed that learning to teach is a complex and lengthy process and that professional learning is vital in this process" (p. 112).

Professional learning at the continuum level of an experienced teacher is also identified as extremely important to developing excellent teachers and enhancing student learning (Smith, 2008). The literature provides a variety of qualities which describe the practice of experienced

or expert teachers, including Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) and more recently Bransford, Brown & Cocking (2000), Rowe (2003) and Hattie (2009). Although a variety of traits are described, Dinham (2008) observes that "experts/masters tend to be skilled at reading context and noticing detail, need autonomy, and find rules and structure inhibiting" (p. 8). Dinham contrasts this to the needs of novices which he states are almost opposite and who "barely notice detail and context and how it all fits together and who need considerable structure to remain buoyant" (p. 8). This seems to indicate that tailored professional development for teachers at specific career stages may be an effective approach which could be used well in a career continuum approach to the design and coordination of teacher professional development.

In addition to providing tailored professional learning at career stages, an aspect of implementing a career continuum approach to the professional development of teachers could also include the strategic interaction across the specific groups collaborating together as they engage in professional learning. Dinham (2008) asserts that research reveals that expert teaching results from considerably "rich" professional learning, including that gained from "collegial work and discussion, experimentation, role modelling and reflection" (p. 110).

In summary, the literature indicates that there is an increased interest in the various stages of teacher development throughout the career continuum from early career to principal, often accompanied with information on the typical qualities of teachers at each stage and the teaching standards that could be expected at each point. However, less is available on how this information could be used to further progress the provision of effective and relevant teacher professional learning at these career stages.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER LEARNING: DEVELOPING LEARNING COMMUNITY CULTURE

Teacher learning in the school context within a learning community culture

There is ongoing interest and research into the building of schools as learning communities and the impact this has on the learning of both teachers and students (Voulas and Sharpe, 2005; Timperley, 2005; Ewing, 2002; Dinham, 2008). School learning communities are collaborative in nature, draw "on individual strengths, respect a variety of perspectives and actively promote learning opportunities" (Kilpatrick, Barrett & Jones, 2003, p. 28), and can "influence teacher effectiveness" (Dinham, 2008). Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis (2005) stress the importance of learning communities which provide varied opportunities for professional learning, including those which have a content focus and include active learning,

collaboration and feedback. These factors are readily achievable within school contexts, in comparison to one-off in-services away from colleagues and specific school situations.

Barab, Barnett and Squire's (2002) study of communities of practice using four participant observers amongst teachers, found that teachers learn best as "participants in collaborative learning communities where they have the freedom to experiment with teaching strategies" (p. 489). They assert that teachers learn through being members of a community of learners and that when teachers come together in learning communities they develop powerful relationships which "construct notions of what it means to not only teach, but also how to transform current practices" (p. 490). They also draw a strong link between learning content in context, as a participant and community member (p. 533).

Ewing (2002) states that there is little literature that "attempts to describe, analyse and understand the explicit nature and characteristics of a successful professional learning culture in schools and the processes by which such a culture is realised" (p. 25). However in her case study at Curl Curl North Primary School, several salient features of the way in which teachers learn arose. Firstly, teachers learnt well in contextualised, coherent and ongoing professional development provided in the school context. Secondly, they learnt in their preferred learning style, which was found to be in groups or teams of teachers working on well-defined projects where "teacher personality was recognised, rights were accepted, strengths and limitations were understood and they worked together as a team" (p. 27). Collegial and professional rapport, respect and understanding across leadership and amongst teachers meant that teachers could learn through experimentation and risk taking. Teachers also learnt effectively with a mentor, through observation of teaching pedagogy in action within classrooms, and by sharing and reflecting on their learning in conversations and debrief sessions.

Hargreaves (2000) provided information on the effect of teacher learning if teachers were isolated within a school which did not embrace learning community culture, where teachers only interacted when necessary, and where individualism and individualistic classes were the norm. He states that this effected teacher confidence, impaired improvement as a practitioner and fostered an experience of guilt and frustration at the incapacity to re-shape practice to attain improved student outcomes. This resulted in a tendency to focus only on short-term improvements in practice (p. 160).

School leadership is an important factor in building a learning community culture (Rowe, 2003, Dinham, 2008; Hattie, 2009). Ailwood & Follers (2002) state that within school learning community culture, leaders should particularly focus on "the ongoing professional collaboration and learning of the teachers in the school" (p. 4). Ingvarsen et al., (2005) found

that teacher learning was impacted by school leadership, depending upon whether or not they encouraged staff to engage in professional development, provided sufficient time, follow up and support, and encouraged teachers to work collaboratively to resolve teaching and learning issues.

A robust learning community school culture makes time for learning. A lack of time is one of the biggest disincentives to the learning of teachers found in the literature. Heid et al. (2006) found that limited time given prevented teachers from being able to monitor if their students' outcomes improved and this was then a disincentive to commit to further learning. A lack of time was also found by Heid as causing teacher inability to sustain their learning. Peers, Diezmann & Watters (2003) also nominate the availability of time as a major influence on teacher learning. The teachers involved in their research said that their "major concern was time to learn" (p. 98) so that adequate understanding of the innovation that was acquired could then translate into changes in professional practice. Swaney (2007) laments that teachers are meant to learn at events "typically squeezed in" at the end of a teaching day, sometimes stretching until 7pm with "a biscuit at the halfway point" (p. 25) and that this timing and environment was not conducive to learning. Easton (2008), along with Fullan (2007), Cole (2004) and Elmore (2004), asserts that an essential ingredient to provide teachers the opportunity to learn is time. She states that they need to have time to move through four "distinct stages" in their learning; "awareness, planning, implementation and reflection" (p. 8).

Swaney (2007) emphasises that the research consistently demonstrates that teachers learn more effectively within their schools, in the proximity of their classrooms or the subject work of the teacher, as opposed to attending workshops or conferences. She states that one-day unrelated in-service courses have negligible impact on actual learning, which is vaguely related to the classroom in content or pedagogy, requires no preparation or preliminary reading, are based on a dissemination of information approach with little accompanied activities, and provide no follow up on classroom application. She notes that teachers consistently reported that there was "little transference of anything they have learnt into their practices" (p. 25).

Further, Swaney (2007) suggests that the use of teacher-driven professional learning teams, set up to investigate an educational direction or feature of practice within their school context leads to deep learning for teachers. She noted that teachers learnt when they were focused together on a manageable issue and explored this within the context of their school. Desimone et al. (2002a), in their research into the planning of professional development, found that

teachers best learn when they participate in the planning stages of their learning at school level, where they share a common knowledge base and expectations for their professional learning.

Hargreaves (2007) asserts that teacher learning out of the school context can actually be a disincentive to learning and improving practice, as it may be outside the teacher's moral purposes or the "culture and contexts" (p. 14) in which they work. He warns against teacher learning taking shape as one-off events with little or no follow up, and minimal application to the daily pedagogical practices they use within the context of the school community in which they work.

Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis, (2005) stress the importance of learning communities which provide varied opportunities for professional learning, including those which have a content focus, and include active learning, collaboration and feedback. However, Vaulalas & Sharpe (2005) note that the concept of learning communities is "abstract" (p. 206) and their research in NSW schools reveals that although there is a developing consensus on the importance of nurturing learning communities in schools, an understanding of how to change or develop the school towards a learning community culture is not yet clear. Recent research is beginning to draw tentative links between the notions of distributed leadership and learning communities and their impact on effective schools, but focused attention on the professional learning of teachers within specific schools is not well explored.

School effectiveness, teacher quality and teacher professional learning

Research on school effectiveness in relation to the capacity to enhance the learning outcomes of students has considerably increased over the past three decades. Reynolds & Teddlie, (2000) note that three areas of research - school effectiveness research, effective schools research and school improvement research - have contributed to an evolving body of knowledge which attempts to both define and quantify school effectiveness, while informing the ways in which educators can implement policies and procedures to improve the effectiveness of schools. More recently, the professional literature and research has consistently indicated that the quality of teachers and their teaching has a direct influence on school effectiveness (Cuttance, 2001; Hattie, 2009; Borko, 2004; Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2005; Timperley et al., 2007; Brighouse, 2008) and has a significant capacity to positively impact on the learning outcomes of students (Reynolds et al., 2000; Rowe, 2003; Hattie, 2009; Borko, 2004; Timperley et al., 2007; Dinham, 2008; Brighouse, 2008). Dinham (2008), states that the teacher is "*the* major in-school influence on student achievement" (p. 5).

The literature also indicates that teacher professional learning is being increasingly recognised as central to improving teacher effectiveness (Hattie, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2006, Dinham, 2007a; Dinham, 2007b; Hattie, 2009). Some studies have attempted to describe and typify quality professional learning and identify what kind best increases teacher effectiveness (Ailwood & Follers, 2002; Marzano, 2003; Berliner, 2004), resulting in an emerging consensus that continuous and comprehensive professional learning is required to enable teachers to improve their practice.

LEADERSHIP LEARNING

School leadership and the strategic planning and delivery of teacher professional development

More recent developments in educational research in relation to teacher professional learning involves a consideration of leadership and how this impacts on the development of effective schools and as a part of this, the planning and implementation of professional learning which improves teacher performance. Dinham (2008) states that the two ingredients underpinning teacher effectiveness are "educational leadership and teachers' professional learning" (p. 96). Determining how leaders themselves learn and what kind of leadership may most effectively facilitate and optimise teacher professional learning would be an important feature in any future research. A consideration of the major leadership roles which are regarded as having an impact on the professional learning of teachers and the newer notion of distributed leadership, may assist in exploring this focus.

Traditional leadership roles

<u>School Principal</u>

Human resource management literature consistently asserts that workplace learning needs to be ongoing, strategic in nature, aligned with organisational vision and planning and address the continuum of age and positional status of staff (Dessler et al., 2007; Nankervis et al., 2008; De Cieri et al., 2008; Mortimer, 2008). This literature also emphasises the crucial position of CEOs in ensuring the ongoing strategic learning of their staff and the importance of their modelling of continuous learning to their staff. According to Guinn (2004), CEOs and executives who succeed in their roles are "continual learners who constantly strive for excellence" (p. 240). They engage in activities that enable them to consolidate their leadership through reflecting on their style and monitoring staff performance, resulting in higher organisational success. Cavanagh (2007) points out that principals as leaders of their organisations are ultimately responsible for the "learning and educational outcomes within classrooms" (p. 96). He consulted 389 teachers in Western Australian schools to gather

observations of their principals' behaviours. His research indicated that teachers acknowledged the pivotal role of their principal in the learning and teaching task and highly valued the principal's leadership in the planning of their professional development.

Dinham (2005) conducted case study research into the roles of principals in producing the educational outcomes of junior secondary students in NSW government schools and derived information on attributes and practices which contributed to significant educational outcomes. His resulting model of leadership for achieving outstanding educational outcomes describes a principal with a central focus on students and their learning, accompanied by the effective promotion of teacher learning as one of their main functions. Successful principals provided a model as a learner, released staff for professional learning and placed "a high value on teacher learning" (p. 342) both inside and outside the school, with a rigorous approach to maximising the benefits of staff learning. However, Dinham's research did not include a concentrated exploration of the professional learning that occurred at specific school sites, or an evaluation of how this may have been affected by the principal within these same schools.

Middle Management

The role of middle managers in supporting teacher professional learning is considered critical in the day to day impact on teacher effectiveness (Adey, 2000; Doig, 2008; Morgan & Clonts, 2008). Dinham (2007c) found when researching the impact of the secondary head of department on student outcomes, that the leadership of both subject departments and teams responsible for cross school programs was a key factor in the achievement of exceptional student educational outcomes. He found that as a part of a leadership style conducive to producing such outcomes, these leaders placed a high value on professional learning in assisting staff to identify and address their strengths and weaknesses, share subject knowledge and pedagogy and be active in both in-house and externally provided professional development activities.

Avila de Lima's (2008) work in Portugal on department networks and distributed leadership in schools identified the importance of the role of department coordinators as teacher leaders. She states that "many teachers' professional experiences are framed in important ways by the departments in which they work in their schools" with these "organisational units often serving as critical points of reference for teacher identity, interaction and professional development" (p. 159).

Distributed leadership

In their compilation of research on educational leadership for a review paper for Education Queensland, Cranston, Ehrich & Morton (2007) noted that the notion of "distributed, shared

and multiple" dimensions of leadership has emerged as one of the most significant areas of research into school effectiveness over the past decade (p. 12). Distributed leadership is where "the focus of attention has moved from the leader to leadership with the importance of delegation, trust and empowerment being increasingly recognised", resulting in "every teacher being a potential leader" (Dinham, 2008, p. 104). Effective distributed leadership does not have to mean spreading existing leadership across more people, but rather, in action, draws upon "the synergies that can occur when people come together to work, plan, learn and act, thus gathering further leadership capacity within the individual and the organisation" (Dinham, 2007d, p. 22). The important roles of leadership positions, including the principal and middle managers, are confirmed in the distributed leadership context. MacBeath & Mortimore (2001), in their development model of distributed leadership, state that the principal's main contribution to an effective school is to enhance its leadership capacity through recruiting, retaining and developing leaders who can be assigned key responsibilities and then equip them to "share their expertise with others" (p. 182). In their support of a distributed leadership approach, Brown et al. (2002) assert that "it is the head of department who should be the focus for supporting the classroom teachers, who actually have the frontline responsibility for the enhancement of teaching, learning and achievement in classrooms" (p. 36).

However, the literature also cautions hasty connections of the impact of distributed leadership on the professional learning of teachers and the outcomes of students (Harris, 2008; McCaughlin & Talbut, 2001). Robinson's (2008) research in New Zealand sought to investigate the notion of distributed leadership in schools in relation to whether or not it contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning, looking closely at the research underpinning current assertions about the interrelationship of distributed leadership and student outcomes. She particularly examined the criteria used by researchers to define leadership tasks and the perceived distribution of influence processes. Her paper highlighted the relative newness of these concepts, stating that of "thousands of published studies of educational leadership, less than 30 have empirically tested the relationship between leadership and student academic and non-academic outcomes" (p. 636). Her conclusion that "research on distributed leadership in schools, like research on educational leadership itself, is only very barely coupled to research on the improvement of teaching and learning" (p. 662) reveals that even less is known in terms of empirical evidence and case studies on the effects of leadership on the professional learning of teachers within school contexts.

Possible case study research into providing a career continuum of teacher professional learning in school contexts would include working in and through school leadership frameworks, and could contribute to increasing and clarifying our knowledge of the way in which leaders impact on teacher professional learning, quality teaching and student learning.

School-based professional learning coordinator

The potential role of a professional learning coordinator as a component of either a traditional or distributed leadership model is not explored well in the literature. Where short term, specific professional learning programs at school level have been coordinated by a teacher, usually at the level of middle management in a voluntary capacity or as an adjunct to their allocated duties, they have been found to be effective learning experiences for teachers and successful in enhancing the learning outcomes of students (Doig, 2008; Morgan & Clonts; 2008; Olney, 2007). Adey (2000) conducted some research in the United Kingdom on the views of middle managers in secondary schools on professional development priorities, which included the position of their District Professional Development Coordinator. However, this role was regionally as opposed to school-based. The main function was to assist heads of departments in their role in relation to the changing needs and priorities as set by the education system at the time, including developing their understanding about whole-school issues, finance and staff appraisal systems. The promotion or development of teacher professional learning within specific schools was not the focus of these coordinators.

Since short term programs have been found to be effective when coordinated at school level, and more research could be useful in relation to investigating the nexus between leadership and teacher learning in schools, it may be of value to research the impact of a teacher leader in designing, implementing and evaluating a professional development program within specific school contexts.

Adopting a strategic approach in school contexts

No matter which approach or model to the leadership of teacher learning is used at school level, a strategic approach to the planning and delivery of professional development of teachers on school sites should be adopted as a priority by school leadership. As already discussed, Fullan (2004), Hattie (2009), Timperley et al. (2007) and Smith (2008) are advocates of a strategic approach to the provision of professional learning. Smith (2008) states that a plan to both select and develop staff is needed to "develop a competent and qualified faculty and staff – one that will improve instruction to increase student learning" (p. 56). He insists that a "methodical, persistent approach can help us create cultures of excellence" and that "we can have schools where all children learn and reach their full

potential" (p. 57). The literature is indicating that the provision of professional development within a school context, linked to the school's strategic goals, can enhance teacher quality (Leithwood et al., 2004; Timperely, 2005). However, it is difficult to find research which looks at school-based models of professional learning, strategically and comprehensively provided across a continuum of teacher career and development within specific school contexts.

THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF SCHOOL- BASED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Schools find themselves in fortunate circumstances in relation to the volume of literature and research being generated worldwide on teacher professional learning. As discussed in this review, a number of studies have identified key ways in which teachers prefer to learn, including collaboratively, through receiving feedback, engaging in collegial conversations, directed reading and writing and using observation, reflection and networking. It has also been noted that internationally, teacher professional development has been nominated as absolutely essential to student learning in numerous government reports. At this time, when teacher professional learning is identified in the literature as critical to creating effective school learning environments and enhancing the learning outcomes of students, schools find themselves in both exhilarating and challenging positions. They have a clear mandate and opportunity to be creative and innovative in their thinking and development of teacher learning opportunities, but are also at the centre point of competing pressures both internally and externally around teacher professional development in relation to its design, coordination and evaluation.

A number of issues arise internally for schools in relation to the professional development of their teachers, including grappling with the problem of ascertaining what sort of programs would be best to provide. The current literature provides some examples of what effective professional development programs look like, as reported in substantial reviews including the *National mapping of teacher professional development* by the Australian Government (McRae, Ainsworth, Groves, Rowland & Zbar, 2001). In broad terms, the literature consistently identifies key elements of effective professional development including that which is strategic in nature (Smith, 2008; Fullan 2004), well-coordinated (Dinham, 2008), comprehensive (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) and sustained (Turner & Mitchel, 2004; Muijis & Lindsay, 2008), while reporting that the widespread use of traditional forms of teacher professional development delivery are considered to be inadequate (Borko, 2004; Sykes, 1996; Dinham, 2008). There is less literature however, on how schools may go about

accessing the recommendations from a variety of sources on what to do, and what to avoid, in relation to teacher professional development programs, and where to begin their journey of building upon and improving what they already do.

Building genuine learning community cultures within school communities is also reported in the literature as important to enabling schools to initiate, facilitate and follow through with the sort of professional development that translates into teacher professional learning; that is, learning which finds its way into developing, improving and maintaining quality teaching practices that enhance the learning outcomes of students (Ewing, 2002; Timperley, 2005). However, Vaulalas & Sharpe (2005) explain that the process of developing and sustaining such a school environment is complex, can be difficult in some circumstances, and should not be regarded as an easy or simple evolution for schools to achieve.

Within specific schools there is also a unique mix of variables which have an impact on their ability and capacity to initiate, develop and deliver professional development programs that their teachers find effectively assist them to learn and transform their practices. By reading the literature in a number of areas including effective schools, educational leadership, human resource management, learning communities and professional learning, a number of factors emerge which enable us to appreciate the complex mix of circumstances which may impact upon the professional development program within any one school. These include the role of strategic planning, resource availability and allocation, decision making about the content of the program amidst the variety of recommendations provided, and how to best utilise professional development strategies and teacher learning preferences on offer in the literature. Other factors that are considered at school level include making decisions about the implementation and coordination of professional development, providing professional development which meets the developmental stage of individual teachers, considering government legislated teacher accreditation and standards requirements, allowing for leadership implications and development, the implementation of an effective and helpful evaluation procedure, and ensuring the sustainability of the program going forward. McCulla (2011) highlights the difficulty schools may have in relation to using the literature to assist in the planning and delivery of professional development to their teachers, stating that "while there is a substantial literature on aspects of teacher professional development, it remains disconnected among its components with regard to how those in leadership positions might best proceed in whole-school planning for teacher professional learning" (p. 14).

A consideration of external factors also contributes to an appreciation of the complex contemporary context of school-based teacher professional development experienced at the

school level. Schools find themselves in an era characterised by consistent calls for school accountability, not only collectively at system level, but on an individual, school by school basis. In Australia for example, the Government has recently established the "My School Website" (2010) which provides data on every school across a number of aspects including the results of state and national skills testing, but with little explanation of the unique characteristics or mitigating circumstances of individual school communities. There is also a growing number of external performance development, review and compliance issues to consider as schools try to reconcile the need to respond to goals and targets, registration and legal requirements. Schools are also called to consider succession planning; the effective use of evidence-based practice, and the implementation of programs that are responsive to the specific school context and culture, all while attending to the individual academic, emotional, social and physical needs of students and the growing expectations of parents and the broader community. It is within this busy and demanding agenda that they endeavour to provide professional development opportunities for their teachers.

In addition, governments have introduced teacher accreditation systems (AITSL, 2011a) which have arisen from the call to formally professionalise teaching by providing explicit standards of practice which are specifically and evidentially achieved on an ongoing basis. These accreditation frameworks and policies require careful consideration at school level in terms of implementation and sustainability and their contribution to the professional development of teachers. While there has been some research on the benefits of these accreditation systems for the learning of teachers (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 2000; Hattie, 2009; Ingvarsen et al, 2005), there is little on how schools are coping with the extra workload and what resourcing may be helpful to ensure that these programs are both made relevant to the development of teachers as practitioners, and are successfully integrated into the existing professional development program at school level. There is also little research on how teachers are regarding the accreditation systems in relation to the contribution that they make to their professional development and learning. At the time of writing in NSW, some teachers who are members of the Independent Education Union (2012) were passing no confidence motions in relation to the system being implemented by the NSW Government that requires teachers to maintain their accreditation of the State's professional teaching standards in blocks of five years throughout their career. It seems that schools may have to grapple with the competing pressures of external expectations in relation to accreditation requirements and the internal reaction, both positive and negative, of their teachers and find a way forward to meet the needs of both parties.

DISCUSSION

Having considered a number of perspectives pertaining to teacher professional learning and the school context, there are several areas that can be identified that the literature may not sufficiently address.

Site based studies of schools at work

There has been no shortage over the years of international studies that provide insights on how teachers learn, both individually and collectively, and to what constitutes good practice in teacher professional development. Combined with a broader literature on adult learning, words such as *active learning, student-focused, school-focused, learning community, action research, capacity building, collaboration, capacity-building, sustainability, reflection on practice, evidence-based* have all become part of the general discourse as to the kind of conditions that foster teacher development or that are integral to it.

Research into the nature of what effective teacher professional learning actually is and how and in what ways teachers best learn in a way that results in more effective teaching, continues to emerge in the literature as a critical area requiring further and sustained research (Aubusson et al., 2009). In addition, the literature is indicating that the most effective teacher learning is that done within the context of the school in which the teacher works (Desimone et al., 2002a; Hawley&Valli, 1999; Swaney, 2007), in collegiality with their peers (Ewing, 2002; Dinham, 2008b) and within schools that are building and maintaining a learning community culture (Burbank & Kauchak, 2003; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2000). Although the literature is indicating that teachers learn well within their school context, the research is not currently exploring the concept of the holistic planning and coordination of professional development at school level as the focus of enquiry. There appear to be relatively few site-based studies of schools actually at work in developing their professional development programs and of the professional conversations that ensue.

Much of the available literature tends to fall into two fields: that which seeks to assist school leaders and teachers by describing good practice; and that which critiques current educational trends, but falls short of identifying what might be done at a school level to respond. It could be observed that these are among the reasons why case studies of well-coordinated, school-based approaches to professional learning remain rare in the literature, given that they are at the point of intersection of the two fields.

Little research is available where a comprehensive consideration of the place and impact of professional development within a school community has been studied from the perspective of its teachers at all levels of experience. Holistic research in schools on how, if at all, the

particular school culture impacts on the learning of its teachers, or how, if at all, it effects the development of teachers both personally and professionally, are difficult to find.

There is also little in the literature on how schools are interpreting the recommendations for professional development programs which are strategic, well-coordinated, comprehensive and sustained. Nor is there very much on how they are, if at all, effectively self-evaluating their professional development programs against these recommendations or against other specific measures derived from the literature.

School-based development of contextualised professional development programs

Although there is a rich literature base on teacher learning and effective professional development interventions, much of the research has been done on schools with the implication that the results might be transferable to other schools. There is less literature on how specific schools may go about accessing the recommendations from the variety of sources on offer, in ways that enable them to continue their individual journeys of building effective professional development programs which meet the specific needs of the school and their teachers. In addition, research conducted on school sites may not be readily transferrable to other schools which have a different mix of external and internal pressures.

Career-stage professional development on school sites

While we now have a better understanding of the career-stage development needs of teachers, less is known about how multiple career stages can be best integrated and catered for in school-based contexts. An interest in the career continuum of teachers is emerging, with the literature illustrating that teachers do have different needs at different stages of their careers, with the needs of new teachers substantively different to mid-career teachers, and again for those in leadership roles. A small amount of case studies reveal that professional development delivered at particular intervention points according to a teacher's level of skill and/or knowledge development have been effective in enhancing teacher learning and student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2003, 2006; Hattie, 2003). However, fewer studies have been found where the learning of teachers across their career continuum within one school is closely examined, or where such information may be used to inform current professional development practice or programs at the same school.

Career-stage progression is also implicit in emerging teacher accreditation frameworks which categorise professional standards at the developmental stages of teachers. Although these accreditation frameworks increasingly use a career continuum approach, little research could be found on the use of a whole-school career continuum approach to planning, implementing and evaluating the coordination of a professional development program across the career

stages of teachers as they engage in these accreditation frameworks, within the contexts of specific schools.

The literature is also beginning to indicate that the use of continuum-based professional teaching standards provides the opportunity for teachers to use a shared language in relation to their performance and learning. However, even though the standards are specifically linked to career-stage progression, implicitly inferring that teacher development occurs, at least in part, as a result of years of experience, there is little research available on how teachers across all levels within specific schools learn, nor if teachers themselves recognise these differences. Of significance, no literature could be found where schools had explicitly attempted to develop school-based professional development programs that attempted to meet the developmental or learning needs of teachers at all career stage levels on the site, or how they may be providing learning opportunities designed to enhance their progression from one level of development to the next.

Leadership and the planning and delivery of teacher professional development programs

One conclusion that could be reached from the above discussion is that further investigation into the way teacher development is planned and enacted at school level could be beneficial. This is particularly so in relation to the literature which indicates that effective educational leadership is an imperative to the quality of teacher professional learning that results in improved practice and enhanced student outcomes (Fullan, 2008; Leithwood, 2004). With strong data emerging on the integral importance of the principal in assuming the role as leader of learning and driving the planning and implementation of professional development programs, and some recommendations for a distributed leadership approach to devolving and implementing professional development in schools to encourage ownership and staff buy in, there is still relatively little research on looking closely at the way in which professional development is being coordinated on school sites in a way which compares the effectiveness of specific school coordination approaches to that of others. As specific examples, the notion of investigating how the coordination of professional development arises as a result of specific school contexts and cultures has not been well explored. School studies are also scarce that focus on how the planning and delivery of professional development may initially emerge out of, and be characterised by, the specific learning culture of a school, and then impact back upon it, and how this influences, if at all, the learning of teachers in that school context.

School ethos and the professional learning of teachers

The literature is clear that a robust school-based learning community culture provides the best context for teacher professional development and for teacher learning (DuFour et al., 2006). Others refer to the cultural contexts of schools as "powerful influences that shape teacher learning" (McCulla, 2011, p. 4). However, although there is reference to some facets of the school context, there is less literature on the impact of a school's ethos on the personal and professional development of teachers and how this may differ between schools. A consideration of how, if at all, the school's ethos informs or energises the professional development program within the same school has also not been well explored.

SUMMARY

The literature surveyed in this chapter and the observations made on it were instrumental in providing a theoretical framework for the research project, which is now discussed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

THE FOCUS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, the nature of the problem to be investigated is outlined, the research questions are identified and the context in which the study is set is provided. The significance of the study and the proposed learning outcomes are also discussed.

THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The literature that was considered in Chapter 1 indicates that there is a strong nexus between effective schools that enhance the learning outcomes of students and teacher quality. Further, it is consistently emerging that teacher quality is directly linked to the professional development school culture, the resulting learning opportunities in which teachers engage, and how effective these are in providing sustained professional learning and an improvement in teaching practices. The problem posed by the literature is that the insights generated by it will somehow be translated into effective school practice. It is this dynamic that the study seeks to explore.

At the school level, both the literature and practical experience reveal that schools are contending with a variety of external and internal issues which are impacting on their planning and delivery of effective professional development programs. As noted, there is a lack of holistic, school-based case studies on teacher learning which examine the relationship between teacher learning and school context. This study, which seeks to investigate how teachers plan, implement and evaluate professional development across their career continuum within the context of their school, was seen to be warranted as a useful contribution to the literature.

One approach could have been to identify and investigate case studies of good practice, but the outcome would be to identify another list of characteristics of good practice, and there is no shortage of these in the literature. While this may have contributed to theory building, it would not necessarily add to our understanding of the dynamic of actually planning and coordinating teacher professional development and learning in the context of particular schools.

The literature suggested two dimensions through which research might be considered:

1. a horizontal dimension as it relates to teacher professional development and learning across a continuum of key career stages.

2. a vertical dimension as it relates to whole-school planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's goals and practices in relation to teacher professional learning, and the resulting internal professional development program.

The study sought to investigate therefore:

- how teachers learn across their career stages in the specific context of their particular school (the horizontal dimension)
- how this learning and approach to professional development aligns with what is described as good practice in the literature, and
- how a school-based process of supporting teacher reflection on professional learning might contribute to the further development of each school's professional development capabilities and programs (the vertical dimension).

KEY QUESTIONS GUIDING THE RESEARCH

The fundamental research question arising from the literature is:

How do teachers learn, and how might they be supported in their learning, across the career continuum in the context of their school?

A consideration of how teachers learn across the career continuum includes:

- modes of learning
- their experiences of learning
- how they prioritise and plan their learning, and
- learning style preferences in regards to:
  - their perceptions of selves as learners
  - the role that learning plays in their professional lives
  - perceived barriers to their learning.

A consideration of how teachers learn in the context of their schools includes:

- the ways in which aspects of the way they learn, as listed above, impact on their learning in their specific school
- the impact on their learning of the way in which teacher learning is regarded at the school and how professional development is planned for teachers at the school site, including policy, programing, processes and resources, and
- the impact that school leadership has on their learning.

The research question is underpinned by a range of subsidiary questions within four areas:

1. **The career continuum and teacher learning (horizontal dimension*)***
    - How do teachers learn across the career continuum within a whole-school context?
2. **School planning for teacher learning (vertical dimension)**
    - How is teacher professional development across the career continuum planned for, implemented and evaluated in the context of a specific school?
    - How, and in what ways, does the planning for and coordination of professional development impact on teacher learning in the context of a specific school?
    - What implications arise that might assist schools to plan professional development for teachers in a way which provides a more substantial alignment with good practice as defined by the literature?
3. **School context**
    - How and in what ways does school context and ethos influence teacher professional learning?
    - How, and in what ways, does school leadership impact on teacher learning in a specific school?
4. **Facilitation of school-contextualised conversations**
    - How can conversations about teacher learning be facilitated with view to ongoing improvement of school-based professional development programs?
    - What can be learnt from schools as they go about their work with a view to the continuing improvement of their professional development programs?

Put another way, school context and ethos are at the starting point of the study. While a number of studies have indicated good practice, the take up of this practice at the school level is still relatively rare in the literature. Therefore this study attempts to work from the schools themselves, back towards statements of good practice, and what we can learn in that process.

The research questions suggested a number of implications:

i. the study would need to be a holistic study of individual schools at work
ii. the schools would need to volunteer to be part of the study
iii. the schools involved would not necessarily be selected because of some perceived good practice in teacher professional development; rather they would be schools attempting to go about their work supporting and enabling professional development for their staff

iv. any such research would need to be a co-operative endeavour with schools and ideally lead to a program of improvement in the schools
v. processes would need to be established through which teachers and school executive would feel free to talk about their professional development and learning, and
vi. materials would need to be developed from the literature review that would provide a theoretical basis for analysing and discussing teacher learning across the career continuum at the particular schools, as well as school practices in relation to teacher learning and professional development.

DEFINITIONS

In this section, terms used in the study are explained.

Professional development and learning

The literature has provided a comprehensive way of understanding professional development and professional learning, including their distinctive qualities and the way in which they work together to improve the professional practice of teachers. In a discussion about the latest research literature on professional development and learning, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2011) outlined the complexity and interrelationship of the terms. They have adopted Day and Sachs' (2004) definition, referring to it as expansive and encompassing of both development and learning:

> …all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute ...to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (2011, p. 34).

For the purposes of this study, definitions of teacher professional development and learning are taken from the NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation Framework (2004). Teacher professional development is described as:

> *an activity, experience or process that provides an opportunity for professional learning (the input)*

Teacher professional learning is described as:

> *the growth of expertise as a teacher as demonstrated through professional practice (the outcome)* (p. 6).

Career continuum

For the purposes of this study, "career continuum" is defined as the ongoing growth in the knowledge and skills of teaching expertise, aligned to the stages of the career development of teachers.

Career stages

In the research report *Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness*, Day et al. (2006) stated that assigning year lengths to each stage in a teacher's working life can be problematic, as considerable variations occur amongst individuals and contexts. Mindful of the complexities in identifying teacher career stages and the characteristics of each, for the purposes of this study, teacher stages along the career continuum are defined as *Early Career, Experienced, Expert, Leading Teachers and Executive Leaders*. Definitions and descriptors of each stage, except executive leaders, were taken from the frameworks provided by the NSW Institute of Teachers (2004) and the NSW Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority (2005). These frameworks include descriptions of teacher expertise across the career continuum, based on international literature in the area of teacher development. The executive leader descriptors were taken from the *Australian Professional Standards for Principals* (AITSL, 2011b).

Table 2.1: Teacher career stage definitions and descriptors used in the case studies

Career Continuum Stages and Definitions used in the Case Studies	
Early Career Teachers (<1-3 years)	According to the NSW Institute of Teachers, teachers at this level: • Have demonstrated successful teaching experience • Effectively monitor, evaluate and plan for learning • Are able to tailor teaching programs to meet the needs of individuals and groups within the class • Have a record of effective and ongoing professional learning • Work collegially and in teams to further enhance their professional practice • Take responsibility for collaboration with others to identify and address their own learning needs • Are effective members of the school and its broader community and interact professionally with all stakeholders

Experienced Teachers (4-7 years)	According to the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority and the NSW Institute of Teachers, teachers at this level: • Are skilled and competent teachers with an in-depth knowledge of their subject content • Are able to effectively enhance the learning outcomes of a range of students • Understand the background and stage development of their students • Use a variety of teaching and assessment strategies to enhance the learning experience of students • Reflect on their teaching practices • Use effective communication and develop productive and professional relationships with colleagues, students and parents • Participate in a range of professional learning experiences to improve their professional knowledge and practice • Involve themselves in the school and the wider community and positively promote the teaching profession
Expert Teachers (8+ years)	Expert teachers are described as exhibiting classroom and professional excellence by the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority. Teachers at this level: • Are skilled and competent teachers with an in-depth knowledge of their subject content • Are able to effectively enhance the learning outcomes of a range of students • Understand the background and stage development of their students • Use a variety of teaching and assessment strategies to enhance the learning experiences of students • Reflect on their teaching practice • Use effective communication and develop productive and professional relationships with colleagues, students and parents • Participate in a range of professional learning experiences to improve their professional knowledge and practice • Involve themselves in the school and the wider community and positively promote the teaching profession
Leading Teachers (Formal leadership role)	For the purposes of this study, Leading teachers not only exhibited the qualities as listed below, but were also in middle management leadership positions of some sort within their schools, relating to students, curriculum or staff. Characteristics of Leading teachers according to the NSW Institute of Teachers at this level include: • Have a record of outstanding teaching • Strive to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in their school communities • Are committed educators who can articulate a vision of education to their students, peers, the professional and the

	wider community • Knowledgeable about the latest developments in pedagogy and can apply this to improve student learning • Have outstanding interpersonal and leadership skills, underpinned by principles of fairness, compassion and integrity • Recognise the talents of others and promote and encourage them to reach their potential • Consistently engage in professional learning and assist and support the professional learning needs of others • Communicate effectively to support and promote the development of the school and promote student learning
Executive Leaders (Principal and deputies on the executive team; may vary at each school)	According to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (AITSL, 2011b), key components of a principal's role are noted as: • Vision and values • Knowledge and understanding • Personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills

For the purposes of the study, the following definitions were adopted in relation to school context, ethos and culture.

School context

For the purposes of this study, context is defined as the unique features of the school as it is shaped by socio-economic, cultural, historical and geographical circumstances. School contexts are regarded as "complex organisms" (Boyd, 1992, p. 9), and in this study, are considered holistically.

School ethos

Ethos is defined as "those values and beliefs that the school officially supports" (Donnelly, 2012, p. 134) which shape the overall purpose and direction of the school, and that permeates and impacts upon school culture.

School culture

Culture is defined as the social dimension within the school, created as a result of the school's belief system and values (Tagiuri, 1968), and which "acts as a social mechanism directing behaviour through institutionalised norms" (Smey-Richman, 1991, p. 4). In this study, school culture is examined through the lens of teacher professional development and learning.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY AND POTENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

As outlined above, the thesis seeks to investigate:

- how teachers learn across their career stages in the specific context of their particular school
- how, and in what ways, if at all, this learning and school-based approaches to professional development and learning align with what is described as good practice in the literature, and
- how a process of teacher reflection on professional learning might contribute to the further development of each school's professional development program.

Such a study of individual schools at work is seen to have value and significance in a number of areas and to a variety of key stakeholders. This includes a contribution to the literature and international research on how teachers learn at the school-based level, and on the building of effective school learning communities through both school policy and practice.

The significance of the study also lies in its potential to provide learning outcomes in areas which are being called for in the literature, by addressing them from the "grassroots" level of school-based practice which needs to be addressed in the overall literature. Potential learning outcomes of the study relate to theory, policy and practice, and are as follows.

Theory

Internationally the literature is clearly and repeatedly stating that effective and sustained teacher professional development is required to enhance teacher quality and increase effectiveness and, in turn, enhance student learning outcomes. However, as noted, very few studies have been conducted at the individual school level working with schools as they have attempted to go about their work. This is therefore a grass roots look at holistic teacher professional development in the school, which by its nature is complex, and is perhaps one of the reasons why studies such as this remain relatively scarce in the literature.

Given the lack of school-based enquiries on teacher learning in the teacher professional development literature, and the need for more research in this area, the study is seen to be addressing a number of key areas arising from the literature that include:

- a holistic school-based plan for professional development
- strategically designed professional development

- leading school professional development
- the maintenance of teacher quality
- coordination of a range of programs and initiatives that support teacher learning
- career-stage teacher development and learning
- school context impacts on teacher learning
- teacher learning impacts on the teacher, and
- the role of researcher in facilitating conversations about teacher learning.

Policy

Governments, policy makers and developers of teacher professional development programs may also be assisted through insights into career-stage learning and the impact of school contexts on this learning. If we could better understand teacher professional development at the school-based level, we are then in a better position to then determine the implications for educational policy.

Employing authorities spend significant amounts of money on teacher professional development, and are required to demonstrate its effectiveness. It accounts for major resource allocations in schools, often from teachers themselves, both in time allocation and in financial commitment. The NSW Department of Education and Communities, for instance, has provided some $36 million directly to schools annually for this purpose (McCulla & Gereige-Hinson, 2004). This study may generate useful data on the ways in which school context impacts upon teacher learning, which could have far reaching implications for policy direction in relation to the coordination of professional development and the resourcing of schools in the areas of leadership, teacher development and learning.

A better understanding of the possibilities for career-stage professional development within the school context may also enable broad guidelines to be provided to assist school systems and/or individual schools to deliver professional development programs strategically and effectively across the career continuum of teachers, thereby enhancing teacher learning, student learning outcomes and ultimately, school effectiveness.

Although teacher accreditation frameworks based on the career stages of teachers are currently in place in Australian schools, and elsewhere internationally, there has been little research to this point on how to design professional development across the career continuum effectively within school contexts, to assist and support teachers as they develop and progress along these standards-based frameworks. Providing information on how and what teachers

should learn to enable them to meet these standards, and what to learn to enable them to progress to the next developmental level, has not accompanied the frameworks. This study may contribute to enabling policy makers to enhance the effectiveness of government driven career-stage accreditation frameworks by providing information which can facilitate the formation of professional development programs within schools that support and enhance the learning of teachers at each accreditation/career stage.

Practice

Working with and alongside schools, it was hoped at the outset of the study that it would give insights into both processes and materials that would assist other schools in developing conversations with a view to continuous improvement in their professional development programs, and ideally to bring them more in line with what is recognised as good practice.

It was hoped that the study would make a contribution to the development of effective professional development programs. Case studies of schools at work that explore the planning, implementation and evaluation of whole-school professional development programs by schools are scarce. No research could be found which documented a well-coordinated, sustained and strategic implementation of professional development at school level that had been implemented and evaluated against specific measures in the literature, by the school itself. Any materials designed for use in the case study schools, based on literature findings about teacher learning, and good practice in the literature on professional development, could be useful for other schools to adapt to their own context when considering how to approach improving their own professional development programs.

This study may also assist those in other schools as they endeavour to plan and improve their professional development programs within the unique context of their school. It will provide information on the journey of case study schools as they engage in facilitated discussions about teacher learning on site. Reading about the experiences of these schools may enable others to undertake a process of exploration in their own schools.

A closer analysis of the impact that school leadership has on teacher learning across the career continuum within real school contexts may also assist schools to reflect upon their own leadership approaches and structures, specifically as they relate to their teacher professional learning approaches and the resulting teacher professional development program. This may lead to decisions within schools about leadership and coordination of teacher professional development programs that are purposefully made to positively impact upon teacher learning.

Also of interest in setting up the study was the potential use of a career continuum approach to evaluate professional learning programs in schools, which the literature currently reveals is not done well or consistently at systemic or school level. A career continuum approach embedded within professional development programs could facilitate a practical and comprehensive method of evaluating the professional learning within a school community, drawing upon feedback from early career teachers through to principal, along with empirical data on the learning outcomes of students and other methods of enquiry. This style of evaluation may also be useful to policy makers and/or educational systems in relation to further developing a model that groups of schools could use to evaluate their teacher professional learning approaches and professional development programs.

Just as importantly, the study was also seen as potentially having value for teachers. Specific research on how and in what ways teachers learn at all career stages within specific schools may have wide ranging benefits for teachers, as it focuses on the learning needs of teachers from the outset. Benefits may include a contribution to more deeply understanding and appreciating the role that learning has in the development of teachers, and how the planning of effective professional development opportunities within schools may impact upon and shape their learning.

On an individual level, teachers who read and reflect upon the study may enhance their understanding of their own learning and development as practitioners in their school context, and in doing so, be supported in their endeavour to plan and prioritise their learning purposefully and strategically, within their daily work in schools.

THE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY/CONTEXT

The opportunity to conduct research in independent schools arose through inter school contact with schools that were interested in evaluating and improving their professional development programs.

The state of New South Wales (NSW), Australia has the largest education school system in the southern hemisphere, comprised of State Government and Independent school sectors. Statistics from 2010 indicated that there were 2,947 registered schools in NSW, with 66% of students enrolled in government schools and the remaining 34% attending independent schools, totalling over 1.1 million students (www.picture.kids.nsw.gov.au).

The Independent School sector in NSW includes schools of many different types and sizes, with various religious affiliations and educational philosophies and employs over 33,000

teachers. The sector is made up of individually operated schools as well as those belonging to larger religious bodies and smaller groups or systems. These schools are located in all areas of NSW covering metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas. Schools vary widely in size from those with less than 20 students to larger schools with more than 2,000 students enrolled. Included within the Independent school sector are schools which cater for indigenous students, those with disabilities, identified special needs, and severe multiple physical, emotional, learning or behavioural issues.

All Independent schools in NSW are registered by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) and are financially and educationally accountable to the Board and to the Australian and NSW Governments. These schools undergo rigorous and regular government accreditation and registration processes.

Schools and teachers within the Independent School sector contribute liberally to the NSW State development of new and innovative teaching and learning pedagogies, the training of pre-service teachers, teacher associations and cross-sectoral education committees. They are also involved in government mandated examination and student skills benchmarking processes, and contribute to state wide and national programs dedicated to the development of effective schools which enhance the learning outcomes of students.

SUMMARY

Chapter 2 has outlined the research questions, highlighted the significance and learning outcomes of the study, provided the working definitions to be used and described the context in which the research was to take place. In Chapter 3 which follows, the methodology for investigating these questions is outlined and the research instruments derived from the literature are discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, the design of the research and the methodologies to be employed are discussed as well as the processes and instruments to be used.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research questions suggested a multi-phased, site-based, case study design working with schools that had an interest in whole-school programs for teacher professional development and the improvement of those programs. It also suggested a collegial design with the researcher working with teachers in those schools. The research would aim to facilitate ongoing school improvement, while at the same time, generating new insights for the theoretical base. The schools would volunteer to be involved in the study. It was considered that three case study schools would allow for a picture to be developed of teacher learning across the career stages in the unique community contexts in which they work.

The question then arose as to what kind of methodologies would enable this researcher to work as a co-researcher collaboratively with teachers and school executive in those schools, as they considered their individual professional development needs, and how these might best be coordinated in the school.

Questions such as these suggested that approaches which involved face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, posit surveys and a consideration and analysis of school print and electronic documents would all be of value in the research design. They also suggested that it would be useful to develop frameworks from the literature against which practice might be observed and discussed.

Five phases to the research were envisaged:

1. An introductory phase in which the research frameworks would be trialled and refined in the first case study, participation of other schools invited, and school executive and teacher commitment secured
2. An initial exploratory phase in which data would be gathered through teacher interviews, focus group discussion, questionnaires and artefacts in each school
3. Initial data collection and analysis of the data utilising the instruments derived from the literature
4. Feedback to each school, and
5. School response to data and analysis, reflection and planning for further action.

The design therefore was informed by cycles of action and reflection on practice in specific case study settings. These are discussed in the sections which follow.

Case study approach

A case study approach was selected for this research as it is the "preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, particularly within some real-life context" (Yin, 1994, p. 1). It is an approach that allows for research to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics. According to Yin (1994), case study research is demanding on a researcher's "intellect, ego and emotions far greater than those of any other research strategy" (p. 55). It requires "asking questions, listening, adaptiveness and flexibility, a grasp of the issues being studied, a lack of bias and a clear direction for the study" (Baker 2002, p. 204), all of which apply to the proposed study's methodology and research design.

The use of case studies as a qualitative research tool, it was thought, would also facilitate a collegial process of researching with and for schools, rather than 'in' or 'on' schools per se. Respect for the starting point of each school in relation to their unique learning culture, and where they were up to on their journey to provide professional development for their teachers would be of utmost importance. It was envisaged that through a relationship with the researcher based on respect, teachers and leaders would be able to engage in reflection upon their own learning and on their schools as unique learning communities.

Action research

Action research is a systematic enquiry for the purpose of gathering information with a view to improving practice (Mertler, 2012; Mills, 2011). According to Brown et al. (1982) it is an approach which can be used by anyone who is engaged in educational practice "using strategic action as a probe for improvement and understanding" (p. 338). Kemmis & McTaggart (2010) define action research as "collective self-reflective enquiry" (p. 5), regarded as a practical way of working for educational researchers and practitioners when researching to improve specific local issues (Grundy & Kemmis, 1981; Creswell, 2008).

Lewin's (1944) action research approach provided the opportunity to advance both theory and social changes simultaneously when improvement or change was desirable. The Lewinian spiral embraced the individual, the cultural and the collective (McTaggart, Henry & Johnson 1997, p. 27). Lewin held that knowledge could develop as a result of observing the effects of actions in context. It was also important that participants within the context being observed be involved in every stage of the action research taking place. As a result of Lewin's work, where the observed became active participants, action research became "an expression of an essentially democratic spirit in social research" (Kemmis, 1998, p. 33). The cyclic nature of

his approach recognised the need for action plans to be flexible and responsive, which further provided a "dynamic for collaborative programs of action in schools" (p. 33).

Numerous models of action research cycles have been used by researchers, including Lewin's Action Research Cycle (1944), Calhoun's Action Research Cycle (1994), Riel's Action Research Model (2007), Stringer's Action Research Interacting Spiral (2007) and Hendrick's Action Research Process (2009). All have common elements that relate to school-contextualised research including collaboration, critical reflection, the intent to improve practice, shared and individual learning journeys, open mindedness, and due to the cyclical nature, they enable ongoing planning for change and improvement. Mertler (2012) points out that action research is not about simply problem solving, but seeks to "explore, discover and work to find creative solutions to educational problems" (p. 22). Further, action research is not conclusive and allows for tentative solutions, based on observations and data collection, to be further explored in order to identify areas requiring improvement or change.

Appropriateness to school settings

The value of using action research methodology in school settings has been well documented (Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban, 2009; Cresswell, 2008; Mertler, 2012; Parsons & Brown, 2002). Aubusson et al. (2009) reflected upon more than a decade of the authors' experiences in school-based action research and learning, stating that the learning which arrives from action research "is not merely a process but a dynamic interaction" (p.2) that can lead to practical and successful school initiatives. According to Passfield (2001), "action learning within an organisational context involves learning in and through action while collaborating with others on personal and organisational improvement" (p. 39). Action learning promotes personal and organisational transformation together because "it involves learning in-context". Passfield refers to this learning as "real life engagement supported by a form of interpersonal interaction that builds personal and organisational capacity" (p. 39).

Within a school context, the action research approach combines support with challenge and enhances organisational learning. It encourages relationship building due to the collaborative and inclusive nature of the research and can raise awareness of both personal and whole-school learning. Passfield (2001) states that action research "increases the capacity for participants to relate to and work with others" (p. 40), leading to new understandings and confidence.

A further strength of using action research in school settings is its capacity to allow participants to model to each other, and in doing so, to build a positive and inclusive school culture. According to Kemmis & McTaggart (1988a), action research is an approach to

improving education by participants who are willing to engage in change, and then learn from the consequences of this change. It enables self-reflection, collaboration and open-mindedness amongst colleagues (Craig, 2009). In doing so, it helps establish communities that are self-critical, and provides systematic learning processes that enable rationales for practice to be explored and developed. All elements of reflective practice are engaged including critical analysis, problem solving, self-analysis, professional growth, and the application of learning to the new situation. This systematic process of inquiry into existing practices is a way, therefore, of "sharing our educational understanding, discussing our intentions in a collaborative manner, acting out and generally sharing these ideas in the total school improvement process" (Wilkinson, 1996, p. 17).

The inquiry nature of action research encourages participants to ask questions and look for answers together and to then continue in this process of learning. This can benefit school communities looking to improve their professional development programs over time as "the application of such knowledge beyond the study is one reason action research is effective in promoting change" (Craig, 2009, p. 24).

Benefits to teachers

According to Grundy (1995), action research is itself a process of professional learning. It provides a model of inquiry which allows for a record to be made and reflected upon of the learning that has occurred throughout the cycle. Action research implies a 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' view of teacher development (Burns, 1998, p. 356). The knowledge generating model assumes that improvements in educational practice would be grounded in insights created by teachers. It also provides teachers with the potential to be empowered as practitioners, able to "transform their practice in a process of continual self-renewal" (McTaggart et al., 1982, p. 339). It encourages collaborative effort, rigorous critique and self-reflection. Collaborative practices allow the opportunity to refine thinking, clarify issues and encourage growth within individuals and schools (Grundy, 1995). Teachers are also encouraged to reflect on both their internal and external behaviour. As a mechanism which facilitates a journey of learning, it provides the opportunity for growth and change, and finally, the sharing of this new information with others (Cherry, 1999).

Participation in action research has been noted as being beneficial to teachers, enabling them to engage in deeper reflection whilst "advancing the notion of teacher empowerment and affirming the professionalism of teachers" (Mertler, p. 25). Carr and Kemmis (1986) state that action research is "emancipatory", providing teachers with the opportunity to engage together in inquiry based learning and in doing so "organising their own enlightenment" (p. 221). They

continue, stating that "This is a uniquely educational task - emancipatory action research is itself an educational process" (p. 221). Grundy (1995) states that the experience can be transformative for teachers as a result of active participation and a sense of ownership. Participation in action research which intrinsically integrates theory and research with practice may also assist teachers to adopt a "researcher attitude" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 12), which they can then utilise over time when exploring a range of classroom and school-wide issues. Teachers are also encouraged to extend themselves and explore unfamiliar concepts about themselves (Passfield, 2001. p. 39). They are challenged to share, acknowledge and discuss issues and their practice within a safe environment that supports self-exploration and differences of opinion. Other researchers have found that it improves teachers' professional self-esteem, creating a positive mindset towards professional development and school change (Parsons & Brown, 2002).

Wilkinson (1996) notes that a benefit for teachers engaging in action research is that it capitalises on their preference for collaborative learning, but organises an approach that is "systematic and academically more rigorous than what is the usual way in a busy workplace" (p. 16). To Wilkinson, action research provides teachers with the capacity to improve their own practice through "enlightening, empowering, personalised professional development" (p. 16). A "snow-balling" of growth in expertise is created as a result of teachers' actioning and researching their own practices.

Capacity for school improvement

Action research seeks to research a specific school situation with a view towards improving practice (Creswell, 2008; Schmuck, 1997). According to Clauset, Lick & Murphy (2008), collaboratively designed and implemented action research is an "ideal mechanism" (p. 2) for engaging teachers in school-based improvement initiatives. It can be regarded as an approach where groups of educational practitioners strive for concrete improvement at the school and classroom level (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988b; Burns, 1998). Further, it provides a method for testing current practices and systematically exploring a variety of aspects of the school as an organisation, including those that impact upon teachers, students, parents or the surrounding community. In each case "action research offers a way of theorising current practice and transforming practice in the light of critical reflection" (Carr & Kemmis 1986, p. 221). It provides a vehicle through which schools can self-exercise their function to examine and reflect upon their practices, and take responsibility for the ways in which they conduct educational processes.

Grundy and Kemmis (1981a) define the aims of action research as "improvement and involvement". The inherently collaborative nature of action research brings about real improvement because people are "acting together to bring about change" (1995, p. 11). A commitment to collaborative enquiry, rather than solitary reflection and action, creates a culture which is prepared for "real change" (Grundy, 1995, p. 5), and where collaboration facilitates "informed, practical decision making" (Mertler, 2012, p. 24). According to Kemmis (1998), "action research is concerned equally with changing *individuals* on the one hand, and, on the other, the *culture* of the groups, institutions and societies to which they belong" (p. 16).

According to Passfield (2001), action learning develops confidence and competence of participants in the area of exploration. This can then create greater synergy and alignment between individuals and organisations. These areas of synergy are highly applicable to school improvement in the area of teacher professional development and to this study, contributing to:

- the meaningful exchange of information
- increased understanding of organisational systems
- increased awareness of, and utilisation of resources
- creation of new linkages
- closure of information gaps and chasms
- growth in personal and group confidence, competence and resourcefulness
- development of change agents committed to organisational improvement, and
- closing gaps between what is espoused and what is practiced (p. 43).

Appropriate to this study

The qualities of action research noted reveal that this methodology is highly appropriate for use in the proposed study which poses the question of how a school staff might be supported in initiating conversations about all of career-stage professional learning as the basis of school improvement, and what might be learnt in the process. As discussed, it relates well to research conducted in situations where context, culture, learning, change and a commitment to ongoing improvement are present.

Action research "thoroughly integrates theory and research with practice" (Johnson & Christenson, 2008, p. 12), which, according to Mertler (2011), is a distinct advantage of this methodology, resulting in an improvement to educational practice which is explicitly linked to school improvement. Using action research in this study should therefore enable the development of instruments, data analysis, and school-based planning for improvement, to be

based on good practice from the literature about teacher professional development and learning, ultimately leading to an improvement in school practices.

Action research is also appropriate to a study that sought to support teachers in their learning and growth, wherever they be along the career continuum. Koshy (2005) notes that "When you consider action research for the purposes of professional development or improving a situation, it is difficult to list many disadvantages" (p. 21). To Koshy, the "purpose of action research is to learn through action, leading to personal or professional development" (p. 3). Action learning also "takes people outside their comfort zone, provides supportive challenges, builds relationships, raises personal and group awareness, and builds confidence along with competence" (Passfield, 2001, p. 39).

An aim of the study was also to support schools holistically in their journey of developing teacher learning approaches and professional development programs that would further build their communities as effective schools. According to Grundy and Kemmis (1981b), a single loop of acting, learning and planning is only the beginning, with further loops leading to deeper understanding and improved practice. Thus this study could assist schools to continue to build cultures where ongoing inquiry into practice, with a view to improvement, was the norm. Schools participating in the study were supported as they recognised the need for improvement to take place as "an ongoing cycle of action rather than as the consequence of a one-off activity" (Grundy, 1995, p. 12).

Action research could also assist schools to identify particular areas which needed improvement. Koshy (2005) lists multiple advantages of using action research as a method of researching into specific aspects of practice. These include her observations that action research promotes continuous evaluation and open ended outcomes, enabling participants to move towards an understanding that continuous learning about situations and how to improve them is an ongoing commitment.

An important aspect of the study was to reflect upon the role and impact of the researcher in the case study schools. According to Koshy (2005), a researcher using action research can have a positive impact on participants because they "can bring the story of a community of learners to life" (p. 21), resulting in a sense of common direction and shared journey which can transform school culture. Action research is also particularly useful to case study research as it "can bring enormous satisfaction" (Grundy, 1995, p.5) to participants, enabling them to reflect upon a mutual journey of investigation and learning.

McNiff and Whitehead (2005) state that action researchers undertake their enquiries for two simple purposes:

- To contribute to new practices (this is the action focus of action research), and
- To contribute to new knowledge and theory (this is the research focus of action research) (p. 55).

These purposes are applicable to researching school situations when improvements are desired (McTaggart, 1997) and allow for the combination of the expertise of a researcher and the research rich environment of the classroom (Passfield 2001, p. 30). Further, engagement of teachers in action research provides justification for change within a school context, which can assist leaders and teachers to work together towards improvement.

This study was also structured to enhance the researcher's capacity to work with, rather than "on" schools, as teachers learnt more about their learning and the school reflected upon their practices and plans for improvement. The characteristics of action research as listed by Burns (1998, p. 347) provided a natural fit for what was proposed in this study, including:

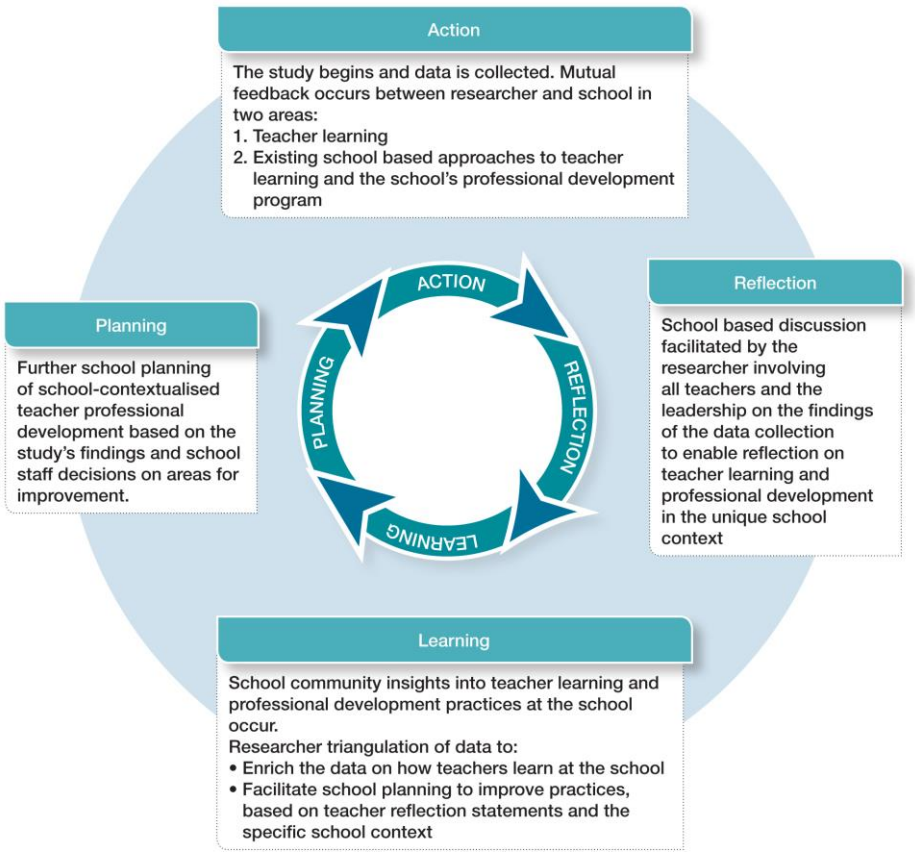
- situational – case studies of three schools
- collaborative – the researcher and teachers explored teacher learning together
- participatory – feedback to schools and from schools provided loops of action research and triangulation of data, and
- self-evaluative – the researcher provided feedback from the study to participating schools. This started the schools' action research cycles, and supported them through the reflection and learning phases, after which the school communities planned their improvement strategies. School reflection on the data generated by the study was embedded in the action research approach, thereby enabling them to consider and make decisions about improvement to their practices in relation to teacher learning and professional development programs, based on good practice in the literature and their unique school contexts.

Action research cycle

The school-based action research cycle following indicates the voluntary start of the cycle at *action*, as schools voluntarily decided to participate in the study and engaged in the collection of data, which was then provided as feedback to each school. This led to whole-school *reflection* with the researcher on the data collected and then to further *learning* at the school level. This led to *planning* by the school to improve their approaches to teacher learning and the professional development program, which continued after the research had concluded, and was outside the scope of this study.

A diagrammatical summary of the action research cycle is below.

Diagram 3.1: Action research cycle used at the case study schools



The qualitative research approach

Qualitative research has its roots in anthropology and the social sciences and draws upon theoretical frameworks of symbolic interaction and phenomenology. Methodologies such as ethnography and case study provide a framework for the use of instruments like interviews, questionnaires and the use of participant observation. The research design is often refined as the research proceeds (Crotty, 1998; Johnson et al., 2008) and the researcher seeks to build trust with participants so they can effectively express their beliefs, experiences and perspectives (Cresswell, 2008). Qualitative interviewing provides an "open ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience," often combined with considerable insight (Charmaz 2003, p.312). The analysis of data can include thematic or document analysis techniques and inductive logic to draw together unique pieces of evidence of people's experiences. Research validity and ethical considerations are high on the agenda with the qualitative research approach (Fink, 2003a; Mutch, 2005).

The study suggested that the proposed nature of the study would be centred on qualitative research methodologies. Drawing upon qualitative approaches and tools was most appropriate to the purpose of this study, which was to explore the place and impact of teacher learning within school communities from the perspective of its teachers across all levels of experience. Qualitative research enabled a focus on the experience and insights of each teacher, as well as the way in which this sat amongst the perspectives of others with whom they work. Glesne & Peshkin (1992) state that this approach seeks "to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect" (p. 42). Furthermore, this research was highly school-contextualised, with qualitative methods particularly apt to this focus. Bogden and Bilken (1992) observe that this methodology "assumes that human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs" (p. 30).

The role of the researcher in the study was also explored, with a qualitative approach enabling this, being one "which enables the researcher to learn from participants" (Cresswell, 2008, p. 54). Content rich data which emerged as a result of using qualitative research methodologies (Crotty, 2008) was then considered in light of the current literature, and provided information that could further inform our knowledge of teacher learning and school-based professional development.

Grounded theory

The basic question driving the research in grounded theory is "What is happening here?" (Glaser et al., 1978), which in relation to this research, raises the question of how teachers believe they learn in a particular school context. The study, using a grounded theory approach with face-to-face and focus group interviewing and open ended questioning, allowed for a "flexible and emergent technique as ideas and issues emerge during the interview and the interviewer can then immediately pursue these leads" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 312). It enabled the researcher to start with the respondent's story and perspectives and then fill it out by probing further, without leading. The importance of being patient and allowing the story to unfold first, being careful not to "lead" the discussion, was noted (Ely et al., 1991, p. 62).

Grounded theory also facilitated the identification of themes in the data as the study progressed and provided the capacity to study and reflect upon the data between each case study school to expand and refine the questions used, and fill in any conceptual gaps that emerged. This combination of control and flexibility in the process increased the data collected and allowed the researcher a more detailed results and analysis (Mason, 2002).

The role of the researcher

Since working alongside schools and their staff in exploring the professional development of teachers was proposed as an important aspect of this study, it was vital to consider the role and approach of the researcher. Charmaz's constructivist design of grounded theory (2000) declares the central importance of the researcher, who brings valid questions, values, experiencers and priorities to the research task. According to Charmaz, these should not be regarded as contaminates to the data, as they allow the researcher an insight into the context of the participants with a focus on capturing "experiences of participants in their own words" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 315). The researcher's knowledge of the literature also allowed them to make perceptive decisions about emerging categories and themes throughout the process of the research.

The main concern for conducting research as a participant observer was remaining as objective as possible. Full objectivity is not possible within qualitative research but the emphasis is on being self-aware, self-reflective and "aware of our own eye glasses" (Wilkinson, et al., 2003, p. 54). The participant observer also needs to adopt an approach which is "flexible, accepts ambiguity, has empathy, accepts the emotion of self and participants and goes about their work in good faith and humour" (Wilkinson et al., 2003, p. vi). It requires "ongoing and intense observing, listening and speaking" (Suchman et al., 1992, p. 42). It can also involve skillful interviewing (Wolcolt, 1988, p. 192) and the capacity of the researcher to adopt an attitude of "curiosity and heightened attention" (Suchman et al., 1992, p. 44). According to Morton -Williams (1993, p. 9) the interviewer has a vital role in the process with the "duel" responsibility of asking the questions and recording the answers, while ensuring that the interview was a worthwhile experience for the participant.

During face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions, the knowledge of the participant observer researcher of the particular school context assisted in gaining a more complete picture of the data. Researching within the school qualitatively encouraged the researcher to adopt a learning role as observer; open to acknowledging and positively receiving data provided in interviews, with a willingness to learn as a teacher practitioner from the perspectives provided and the discussions had. The intention was that this learning would further enrich, rather than contaminate, the data collection and analysis.

According to Becker et al. (1961) participant observation allows for a more comprehensive reflection on the data gathered, as it takes into account "a measure of the completeness of data" (p. 33) because the researcher is able to contextualise recipient responses through drawing upon knowledge of some of the events which had occurred that preceded the

research. In this study, initial knowledge of the case study schools' culture, ethos, and professional development programs was gained through studying electronic and hard copy documentation. As the research unfolded through the implementation of face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires, the researcher developed a deeper understanding of each school's context and practices in relation to teacher learning approaches and professional development programs, thereby enabling "completeness" in the data (Baker, 2002, p. 204).

Action research methodology also enabled the researcher to work alongside participants in the study. McTaggart et al. (1997) discuss the role of the facilitator in the implementation of action learning cycles, as one who promotes conditions under which the participants' reflection, planning and acting are "fruitful" (p. 125). They create opportunities for comparing experiences and sharing professional conversations, as well as supporting the initiative for change and improvement.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data collection

Since the proposed study focused on site-based research to collect qualitative data, face-to-face interviews, focus groups and questionnaires were used as the main ways of collecting data on how teachers learn. School documentation was also perused to enable a better understanding of the context of the school and what it believed about teacher professional development and learning.

The use of face-to-face interviews

Face-to-face interviews allow a free flow of information between the participant and interviewer, providing a safe forum in which individual perspectives are always acceptable and go unchallenged, whereas in groups participants are more guarded (Morgan, 2002). Interview participants in qualitative interviews are not regarded as "passive conduits" but are "meaning makers" (Warren, 2002, p. 83). The data emerging from a semi structured approach is more easily coded and analysed compared to using a completely unstructured approach, where the area of interest, teacher learning, is introduced but the discussion is almost completely guided by the interviewee (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p. 45).

A semi-structured interview approach was used for the face-to-face interviews. This allowed the researcher to use pre-determined open questions, while having sufficient flexibility for the respondent to shape the flow of information. It also allowed the researcher to probe without leading.

Face-to-face in-depth interviewing allows both parties to explore the meaning of the questions asked and the concepts which flow from them. Holstein & Gubrium (2002) observe that the advantage of face-to-face interviews is that there is an implicit and explicit sharing of information. The main advantage is the capacity to clarify what each other means instantly, particularly if the interview is less structured and more conversational. In this study, standardisation was used to expose the respondents to the same interview experience, which is still important for consistency, even when using open-ended questions.

The use of focus groups

Focus groups are defined as "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher" (Morgan, 2002, p. 141). Focus groups combine the qualitative research approaches of the use of individual interviews and participant observation, but are distinctive because they can generate different data than that gathered in face-to-face interviews (Morgan, p. 116). The main advantage of using focus groups in this research was the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on the topic in a limited time, with the researcher having control over the running of the focus group sessions to ensure that the conversation stayed on track. Another benefit to using focus groups was that group interaction between teachers across the career continuum allowed for the collection of data on themes and issues about teacher learning that could only arise out of professional conversations and collegial discussion across career stages.

The use of focus group discussion also allowed the researcher to gauge the effect of teachers' perceptions on the learning of their colleagues, and evaluate how flexible teachers were in their opinions on how they learn. Anderson (1996) describes the usefulness of the focus group interview as a carefully planned and moderated informal discussion "where one person's ideas bounce off another's, creating a chain reaction of informative dialogue" (p. 34). The product of a focus group is a unique form of qualitative information which brings understanding about how people react to an experience or product (Anderson, 1996, p. 200). Its purpose is to address a specific topic in depth in a comfortable environment to elicit a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from a group of individuals who share some common experience relative to the dimension under study. This was highly appropriate to the proposed study.

The focus group approach allowed the researcher to monitor how teachers engaged in a conversation about their learning. This was done by having open questions discussed first, and then closed questions presented that loosely linked to the literature on how teachers learn. From the use of open and closed questions it was hoped that a variety of responses would

occur and that through these responses information may be gathered which would throw light on questions like: Is teacher learning perceived as an important subject? Are they sure about their perspectives or are they open to be persuaded in another direction? Are they learning about how they learn from each other? Are they positive or negative in approach? Does the topic cause a heated response, indicating passion or frustration?

Thoughts, feelings and opinions may be heightened in a focus group interaction compared to the face-to-face interview environment. The focus group may encourage teachers to recall experiences, use examples to explain perspectives to each other and respond to comments of others in both "supportive and critical ways" (Wilkinson, 2003). Hess (1968) states that the benefits of focus group discussion include synergism, snow balling, stimulation, security and spontaneity, with the intention that the discussion is richer, deeper and more honest than any interview with a single participant could produce.

Questionnaires

Fink describes a survey questionnaire as a "system for collecting information about people to describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour" (2003a, p. 54). Survey research is "the principal means of obtaining data about the social world" (Suchman et al. 1992, p. 241). Converse (1987) mentions in his history of survey research in the United States, that the primary focus of research using the survey/questionnaire method has been attitude assessment, with the secondary goal of measuring behaviours (p. 287). These dynamics were of interest to the researcher and worth considering in relation to the proposed study.

Suchman et al. (1992) state that every question implies a perspective, particularly in surveys where the goal is "attitude measurement" and that defining all "potentially imprecise or ambiguous terms" (p. 244) is important. The questionnaires in this study were standardised to ensure consistency in the collection of data, with teachers selecting from a list of preset choices. The questionnaire format and instructions followed Fink's recommendation that they should be "uncluttered, the instruction should be clearly distinguishable from the questions, scales should be self-explanatory, with categorical, ordinal or numerical values which are easy to interpret and use according to the style of questions" (2003c, p. 55).

Questioning and research validity

Ensuring validity of data relies initially on the careful construction of questions. Clark and Schober (1994) state that "how a question is worded makes a difference" (p. 15), as does how questions are introduced and the order of the questions. In relation to the face-to-face and focus group questions, they state that an understanding of the "intentions inherent in

language" (p. 16) is important to ensure that participants are not led and data is not contaminated. The interview is in itself a social process and a way through which participants make meaning of the culture and 'world' from which they belong. This signalled the need in this study to ensure that when questions were asked such as "What did you learn?" and "How did you learn it?" that there was clarity in defining 'what', 'how' and 'learn' without leading the participants too readily. Clark and Schober (1994) also stress that "respondents can fail to see when the surveyor or interviewer is using words differently from the way they use them" (p. 28), assuming that the researcher is using each word in a way that it is conventionally used in their culture. An appreciation that the construction of the interview questions stemmed from an ethnographic approach, where the individual experiences of how teachers learn are valued, allowed for the question schedules to embrace the concept of the school culture and beliefs on what constitutes learning.

Open ended questions used for face-to-face and focus groups in this study allowed respondents to answer in their own words, providing the opportunity for "unanticipated answers" (Converse, 1987, p. 33) and a personal reflection on the subject matter. The open ended questions were designed to gather data about what individuals thought, in this case, what teachers thought about the ways in which they learn. The selection of vocabulary for the open ended questions used in face-to-face and focus group interviews was clear and simple to encourage teachers to free flow their perspectives and ideas (Clark & Schober, 1992, p. 27).

Data coding and analysis

Notes were made throughout the face-to-face and focus group interviews. Preliminary coding occurred after the face-to-face interviews, based on themes and ideas that emerged. Using grounded theory, this coding developed as the research phases progressed and other themes and ideas came to light.

An ethnographical approach to coding data was adopted, as it was thought that it could contribute to analysing how teachers talked about their learning, not just what they said, showing "culture in action" in relation to how teachers learn in their school context (Baker, 2002, p. 793). According to Miles and Huberman (1994) "coding is analysis" and provides researchers with a tool to "differentiate and combine data" that has been gathered and allows the researcher to reflect on the information (p. 55). Coding also allowed for meaningful dissection and collation of the material, and in this study, descriptive codes were used which related linguistically to the emerging themes in the data.

The coding for the research followed grounded theory processes in two parts: initial open coding which enabled the researcher to make analytic decisions about the data, and then

selective focused coding, where the most frequently appearing codes were used to "sort, synthesise and conceptualise" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 320). Coding closed questions was done based on the categories of responses, choosing letters to code with, and then transferring the results to a grid. The data was then described and interpreted.

Using a grounded theory approach, data analysis methods were developed and decided upon as the data emerged to enable the most effective process of data analysis according to the purposes of the research, with "coding being the pivotal first analytic step that moves the researcher from description towards conceptualisation of that descriptor" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 319).

SETTING UP THE STUDY

The methodological considerations suggested that schools be identified that would be willing to participate in the study. These schools ought to be involved not because of any perceived excellence in their professional development programs, but rather for their willingness to consider their current programs with a view to their improvement.

To prepare for a wider study of schools it was considered that the study might begin with the home school of the researcher to pilot possible approaches and seek teacher feedback. It was then considered that working in an additional two schools with differing ethos, historical and socio-economic backgrounds would be of value.

Ethical considerations

Mutch (2005) states that an ethic "is a moral principal or code of conduct which actually governs what people do" (p. 77). She asserts that researchers are in a position of power as they are gathering personal information which is of importance to their participants. Some key ethical concepts for conducting educational research includes gaining informed consent, ensuring that participation is voluntary and that participants have the right to withdraw at any time, without consequence. Respect for school communities is also important and involves gaining formal permission to access school sites and staff and ensure participant confidentiality. Transparency in both the purpose and intended audience for the publication of the research should be up front and consistently stated. Fink notes the importance of the Belmont Report (1979), which set out guidelines that are regarded as the foundation of ethical research, including the consistent respect for persons and being particularly mindful of treating them as autonomous agents. Participants also need to be protected from any harm or injustice and a balance for participants in receiving the benefits of research and bearing its burden is required (Fink, 2003c, p. 89).

A number of ethical considerations were considered in relation to this research including the role of the researcher, participant selection procedures and confidentiality. The ethical considerations applied to both the teachers and the case study schools participating in the study.

The case study approach carried out in this research was essentially exploratory in nature, and sought to draw out teachers' personal and professional perceptions of their learning. It also involved interviewing those in leadership positions and reviewing a number of documents, policies and procedures used within each school in relation to the professional learning of teachers and the school's professional development program. The researcher needed to be mindful of respecting the confidentiality of individuals and the school and the importance of developing an awareness of the culture of each school and the context from which teacher perspectives were generated. It was critical that the relationship between the researcher and participants was not power-coercive, either actual or perceived, and that the school leadership was confident that their staff would benefit from the relationship with the researcher on both personal and professional levels.

Practical application of an ethical approach to this research included:

- implementing a process of contact and engagement with schools which was professional, respectful and sensitive to the school's culture, operational and confidentiality requirements
- ensuring that information about the purpose, process, feedback and reporting of the research was thorough and clearly communicated to the whole-school community, and
- using a participant selection procedure which was purely voluntary in nature, with the option for participants to withdraw at any time without having to provide a reason, and without consequences.

The study contained herein was based on these approaches, which were deemed appropriate for use with teachers and in schools by Macquarie University's Ethics Committee.

Instrument design

The initial intention was to engage in the study using a semi-structured approach that would enable conversations to take place which could be analysed within a theoretical framework. It was thought that other research instruments might also be designed as a result of working with specific schools. This study was informed by a small scale pilot that was conducted as a part of postgraduate study (Furner, 2010). During this preparatory pilot process, a small group of teachers trialled the initial face-to-face and focus group question schedules and the teacher

questionnaire, which provided useful feedback to further develop and refine these instruments. These tools will be later discussed in the case study chapters.

To focus discussion at the school-based level, the following approaches were seen to be of value:

- Face-to-face interviews with teachers across a number of career stages, including the school executive
- Focus group discussion with teachers across the career continuum
- Teacher and school executive surveys, and
- Review of school print and electronic documentation which enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the approach to teacher professional development and learning in each school.

To link the site based studies to the literature and to provide a basic theoretical framework for analysis, two preliminary instruments were designed:

- A tool to investigate individual teacher perceptions of their learning within the context of the school (the Teacher Questionnaire), and
- A tool to consider the views on how teachers learn in the school from the perspective of the school's leadership (the Executive Questionnaire).

The teacher questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was devised to enable a comparison of how teachers at the case study school sites learn in relation to key areas identified in the literature. In developing the questionnaire, the busyness of teachers' lives was a consideration and required the questionnaire to be certainly substantive, but not time consuming.

The Teacher Questionnaire is included as Appendix 3.1

As an outcome of the literature review a number of areas were identified that were indicative of how teachers learn, as well as barriers to teacher learning. A summary of the literature used to form up the questionnaire is outlined in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2., which follow.

Table 3.1: Teacher learning modes

Aspect **Teachers learn through:**	**Found in the literature**
Collaboration	Clarke (1994); Fullan (1992, 2005); Hargreaves (1994) Joyce & Showers (1995); McCormack et al. (2006)
Reflection	Darling-Hammond et al. (2009); Doppelt et al. (2009)
Being creative	Darling-Hammond et al. (2009); Lamb et al. (2007)
Feedback	Brady et al. (2008a); Desdimone et al., (2002b); Dinham (2008); Easton (2008); McLelland (2007); Timperley (2010)
Collegial conversations	Landvogt (2005); Schuck et al. (2008); Timperley (2009)
The nature of the school context	Elmore (2004); Ewing (2002)
Peer observation	Fullan (2007); Hattie (2003); Swaney (2004); Timperley (2005)
Reading & writing	Duecke et al. (2008); McLelland & Talbert (2001)

Table 3.2: Barriers to teacher learning

Aspect **Barriers to learning include:**	**Found in the literature**
Fragmented professional development programs, lack of incentives, lack of release time, learning was not sustained, learning was not strategic, learning was not comprehensive, professional development opportunities were not adequately resourced, learning did not take into consideration the individual needs of teachers	Borko (2004); Dinham & Scott (2008); Brady et al. (2008); Fullan (2004); Hargreaves (2000); Borko (2004); Rowe (2003); Dinhan (2008); Wright, Horn & Sanders (1997); Darling-Hammond (1995); Turner & Mitchell (2004)

The executive questionnaire

A similar questionnaire was developed for school executive (i.e. principal /deputies). Their views were sought on teacher learning at their schools, which enabled a comparison with the data generated by their teachers. In addition, the questionnaire explored how the school's approach to teacher learning and the internal professional development program related to school vision, culture and strategic planning.

The Executive Questionnaire is included as Appendix 3.2.

School selection

The schools which participated in the study did so voluntarily out of an interest in the research topic. The schools preferred for voluntary participation were K-12, allowing for both primary/elementary and secondary teacher input, across the career continuum of teachers. A research kit, including information on the aims of the research and the way in which it would be implemented was developed and offered to a number of independent schools, inviting each principal to meet with the researcher to discuss the possibility of participation.

The School Research Kit is included as Appendix 3.3.

The Principal Consent Form is included as Appendix 3.4.

Participant selection

Teacher participation in the case studies was voluntary. Fink's (2003c) notion that the best sample is "representative or a miniature version of the population of which it is a part" (p. 33) was implemented to ensure that sampling requirements of capturing participants along the career continuum was achieved. Stratified random sampling was then applied, with participants divided into sub groups or "strata". Groups were then formed according to the position of participants along the career continuum, as follows:

- Early career (<1-3 years teaching)
- Experienced (4-7 years teaching)
- Expert (8 + years teaching)
- Leading teachers (Teachers with leadership roles)
- Executive leaders

Selection across school leadership structure

The principals, deputies and teachers in leadership at the case study sites were also voluntary participants, and engaged in the same process of volunteering to be a part of the study as described in the first case study (Chapter 4).

School context: documentation review

A review of the school's website and documentation was included in each case study to ascertain where teacher professional development or learning was mentioned and what was said. It was envisaged that this would assist the researcher to better understand the learning community culture, these resources being cultural artefacts (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). They could enable, it was thought, comparisons to be drawn between what was articulated in writing by the school, compared to what teachers said about themselves and their learning. This could further build an understanding of the school context in relation to the approaches to teacher learning and professional development that were in place. In addition, it was thought that providing feedback about this comparison to teachers could assist them in reflecting on the way in which they articulated messages and described professional learning within their community.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While much of the literature disaggregates aspects of teacher professional learning, the reality is that it is much more holistic in the way it operates within school communities. It should be noted that the holistic nature of this study of school context and practice recognises that, by implication, some areas of research may be treated more superficially than if they had been the whole focus of the study. For instance, a study of career stages or indeed of one career stage could have been a study in itself. Similarly, a consideration of just one variable deeply in relation to teacher learning, such as the barriers to learning as perceived by teachers and schools, could have been pursued.

In any study of teacher learning there are important and appropriate questions to ask about how learning transfers into practice, and how much this changed or improved practice impacts upon the learning outcomes of students. These questions could not be addressed in this study, where the holistic nature of the study was broad enough in itself.

While acknowledging that the research interrelates with a number of other areas, the focus on whole-school teacher learning in the school context, with the researcher seeking to work with and alongside school staff, is the centre of the study.

SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the basis of the research design and its methodologies, as well as the initial instruments to be used. In Chapter 4 which follows, the application of these to the first case study school is discussed.

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CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY 1: BROOKLEE COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the process for the collection of data on how teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of the first case study school is described, and the results are analysed. The feedback of this data to the staff began an action research cycle within the school which is also documented.

PART 1: COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

SCHOOL BACKROUND AND CONTEXT

School context

Brooklee College is a co-educational, non-selective, secular, Prep to Year 12 school that commenced operation thirty years ago. The foundational vision was to be a:

> *Leader in Learning*, with a mission to *prepare students for the future by providing a supportive co-educational learning community where each student is encouraged to strive for excellence in scholarship, personal development and citizenship.*
> (Annual School Report, 2011, p. 6).

The school was initially begun by a group of local parents who desired to foster and support a school that sought to educate and nurture the whole person. These parents mortgaged their family homes to buy land and began to build a school community which is now comprised of over 1000 students and 120 teaching staff.

Whole-school planning and coordination of the internal professional development program is designated to a member of the school executive team, who works with and reports directly to the principal. This role is currently held by the researcher.

School selection rationale

This school was selected as a research site for case study research for the following reasons.
The researcher works on the site as the director of staff development, a position dedicated to assisting teachers with their professional development and supporting them in their accreditation. It was proposed that this school would provide a basis for investigating collegial approaches to working with schools and teachers to explore contextualised school-based teacher learning and professional development programs.

The school has a large teaching staff including practitioners with K-12 expertise and a range of experiences along the career continuum from early career through to experienced teachers and teacher leaders. This provided a broad base from which to invite participation.

Participant selection

Using the process described in Chapter 3, participants were drawn from the voluntary pool which emerged. In all, twenty seven teachers volunteered for the study, accompanied by the principal and two executive staff, falling into the following groups:

Table 4.1: Teacher study participants from Brooklee College

Junior School	9
Senior School	18
Across the School	3
Male	12
Female	18
Years Teaching	
<1-3 (Early Career Teachers)	2
4-7 (Experienced Teachers)	3
8+ (Expert Teachers)	13
8+ (Leading Teachers)	9
7+(Executive Leaders)	3

Participants completed the Participant Information and Consent Form which is included as Appendix 4.1.

STUDY SET UP WITHIN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

The principal requested that the initial research be conducted over a designated two week period. It was thought that this would both minimise disruption within the school, as well as highlight to staff that the research was proceeding and that attendance at the scheduled interviews was a priority for the voluntary participants. This ensured that these teachers were not requested to perform other duties at the time of their interviews.

Face-to-face interviews

Volunteers met with the researcher at a prearranged time over a two week period. The school provided a quiet, private and comfortable office space for the 45 minute interviews.

The question schedule for face-to-face interviews is included as Appendix 4.2.

Focus groups

Two focus groups were formed, both containing teachers from across the career continuum. The discussions were 45 minutes in duration.

The question schedule for the focus group discussions is included as Appendix 4.3.

Teacher Questionnaire

The week after teachers had finished their face-to-face interviews they completed the teacher questionnaire. As the questionnaire included examples of the ways in which teachers learn taken from the literature, it was important that the participants completed their interviews on how they learn first, before finishing the questionnaire, to avoid influencing their responses.

The teacher questionnaire is included as Appendix 3.1 (As noted in Chapter 3).

Executive leadership interviews

Interviews of 45 minutes with the executive included the principal, deputy principal and director of learning and teaching and were scheduled within the two week period designated for the research, at the convenience of each of these executives.

The question schedule for executive interviews is included as Appendix 4.4.

Executives also completed an executive questionnaire the week after their interviews which is included as Appendix 3.2 (As noted in Chapter 3).

Website and documentation review

As the researcher was a participant observer, employed at this case study site, access to the website and internal documentation was readily available.

HORIZONTAL DIMENSION: TEACHER LEARNING ACROSS THE CAREER CONTINUUM

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

Early career teachers

Sample

Two early career teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 7% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Key areas for learning

Respondents identified common areas for key learning as follows:

1. Improving and consolidating their teaching within their classrooms was their main focus. For one teacher, working with classes other than mixed ability was a new challenge, and one to be relished.
2. Consolidating classroom management strategies and applying theoretical components of teaching pedagogies.
3. Completing accreditation processes, including being able to apply the professional teaching standards to their work and further develop their teaching through using the standards to foster self-reflection and further improvement.
4. Availing themselves of professional development opportunities outside the school so that they could meet with other teachers and form networks.

How they prioritise their learning

Prioritising learning differed between the two teachers, with one who was in her first year of teaching focusing on accreditation and classroom management, while the other in her third year was beginning to look to new opportunities for growth and learning. This included the opportunity to take on new class levels and networking with other teachers outside the school. Both remarked that they essentially prioritised their learning on their own and could have benefitted from a formal discussion on the topic, particularly with a more experienced colleague or leader within the community.

How and in what ways they learn

When considering what ways they learnt, these teachers identified the following:

1. Mentoring from particular teachers in the same stage/faculty. These mentors were not officially designated but occurred naturally, depending upon professional friendships which formed over time. This was seen as more powerful in terms of learning than the mentor 'system' in place at the school, which provided them more formally with a specific mentor chosen from the experienced teachers on site.
2. Teaching provided by specialists on the school site, who addressed specific questions and needs as they arose in their daily work. This included random discussions and consultations with ESL and special needs teachers as required and professional development sessions booked in advance with an ICT Integrator on site.
3. Being requested to take on roles within the stage/faculty, including coordinating the organisation and administration of a subject and updating and enriching specific programs of work. Being designated a specific role or project was identified by one early career teacher as:

> *Invigorating and challenging, making me feel like I was a professional and had something worthwhile to offer the team, not just feeling like I am often needing advice.*

This teacher was able to explain the process of learning in detail and was highly motivated by the experience which involved learning new skills on site from a teacher who specialised in the area, incorporating these approaches into the teaching program and then conducting experimentation in the classroom using these skills.

Main themes on how early career teachers learn in this school

The learning of early career teachers was focused on the consolidation of teaching within their classroom, including elements such as developing a knowledge base, working on classroom management strategies and completing NSW Institute of Teachers accreditation at the level of *Professional Competence*. Their ways of learning were heavily skewed towards forming collegial relationships with mentors, both formally assigned and casually occurring, learning from specialists within the school and networking with other teachers outside the school, usually other early career teachers.

The major factor in prioritising their learning was dealing with what was most urgent or pressing that day or week at work, according to school expectations as they arose which included marking, report writing, programming, discipline issues and contribution to stage/faculty/group initiatives.

Implications for this school

Implications for this school when considering the professional development of this group would include reviewing the mentor program and practices used throughout K-12 to better meet the support needs of these teachers. Also, the provision of content rich learning experiences with specialists, focused on classroom management and pedagogies, could assist them to develop a range of skills to boost student engagement, with a flow through effect to strengthening classroom management.

Assisting early career teachers more regularly with prioritising their learning to meet their ongoing needs, which tended to emerge quickly and required a more urgent response, could also assist them to be resilient and learn how to develop robust responses to their own needs. The least desirable professional development that could be offered to this group would be about school strategic development.

Experienced teachers

Sample

Three experienced teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 11% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Key areas for learning

Areas of key learning for this group changed in focus from those identified by early career teachers. Their learning choices were still centered on the classroom, but in the area of developing creativity, innovation, new techniques and exploring pedagogical approaches. They were also more focused on enhancing student outcomes and enriching curriculum rather than managing concerns about classroom management. This was still on their "learning radar," but increasingly in relation to creating stimulating and rigorous supportive learning environments, rather than evaluating discipline strategies.

Areas of key learning included:

1. Mastering specific tools to enable pedagogical exploration, including the use of interactive whiteboards, Blooms Taxonomy, MOODLE and internet databases.
2. The need to be better organised and able in terms of evaluating the use of assessment for learning pedagogy and how this could be used to inform programming, assessment task content, feedback, and to generally enhance student learning outcomes.
3. Further diversification of teacher knowledge of the specific courses/subjects being taught. This included learning the latest techniques to improve the literacy skills of students through to deepening their own knowledge in specific subjects so they were better equipped to teach extension classes and stretch the learning of all students throughout their classes.
4. Desiring more feedback from experienced teachers about their teaching style, content and work within the stage/faculty/group.

How they prioritise their learning

Prioritisation of their learning was a more planned and considered activity which happened over time compared to that of the early career teachers, who tended to prioritise learning based on the relative urgency of needs related to their own classrooms. Experienced teachers tended to reflect more regularly and discussed their own learning with colleagues and their stage/faculty leaders.

They also considered that their learning was advantageous for staff with whom they worked closely in their stage/faculty/groups, compared to early career teachers who had not given consideration to how their learning impacted upon more experienced colleagues or mentors. In general, the experienced teachers were more confident in their own capacity to prioritise their learning needs, and more aware of the need to do so to improve their teaching.

How and in what ways they learn

Teachers in this group were more assertive in expressing how and in what ways they learn. Their ways of learning tended to be less reliant on others, in contrast with the early career teachers who cited mentoring and assistance from more experienced teachers as prime elements of their learning. Their ways of learning included:

1. Teaching themselves perspectives or content knowledge through personal directed reading and inquiry.
2. Specifically selecting professional development activities delivered by specialists in their field on particular subjects, such as core numeracy strategies for a particular stage and NSW High School Certificate marking feedback delivered by markers of a specific subject topic.
3. Self-directed experimentation, including the use of ICT programs and integration practices and 'trial and error' of pedagogies in the classroom.
4. Student feedback was also nominated as a developing area in teacher learning, one teacher stating:

   > *Now I know what to look for in student feedback to inform my teaching, programs and preparation. Before I only honed in on feedback that showed how my classroom management was going, and then mostly so I would know what to do next to keep the class, and individual students in some cases, on track.*

5. Self-reflection practices, one teacher stating that:

   > *As I go away from the classroom and the staffroom I sometimes know that a lesson has not been successful and make a mental note on what not to do again.*

Another mentioned that he had begun to keep a folio on what he deemed were successful classroom experiences so he could refer to them the next time he taught that program. He said he was able to:

> *See patterns in my own teaching and debrief myself, so to speak.*

Main themes on how experienced teachers learn in this school

The learning of more experienced teachers was still essentially focused on the classroom, but more centred on being creative, innovative, using new techniques and exploring pedagogies.

This included the use of particular tools, gaining knowledge on a variety of pedagogical approaches and possibilities, differentiating their resources and using collegial and student feedback more frequently to improve their practice.

Prioritising their learning was usually planned in advance, but leadership and modelling in this area could assist these teachers to develop, implement and reflect on their planned learning. These teachers were more independent than early career teachers in their ways of learning, using self-directed approaches and experimentation more confidently.

Implications for this school

Implications at a school level could include adjusting the professional learning program to include hands-on experiences, with specialists targeting the needs and interests of this group. Time alone to experiment with what had been learnt to create unique innovations and variations, according to the individual expertise of the teacher, would also be regarded as valuable by these staff. Utilising the style of learning of this career continuum group when designing professional development sessions for teachers at the school and involving them in the delivery of these initiatives, could result in effective learning for others.

This group required learning which was engaging and challenged them to propel their teaching pedagogy further forward. The least effective professional development that the school could offer on site to these teachers would be a repeat of what they already knew, with nothing fresh to capture their urge to be creative and dynamic in their approaches.

Expert teachers

Sample

Thirteen expert teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 48% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Eight teachers completed face-to-face interviews, with another five volunteering to contribute to focus group discussions. This group showed a high level of enthusiasm to be involved and an increased interest in the literature and research related to how teachers learn. They contributed to the study with a more relaxed and reflective approach, and in general were more certain about the ways in which they learn than those at earlier stages on the career continuum.

Key areas for learning:

1. Enhancing student learning through close evaluation of results (junior school teachers – literacy, numeracy results; senior school teachers – assessment, assignment and examination results).
2. Contributing towards and in some cases, spearheading stage/faculty/group programs to enhance the learning of students in specific areas was a key area of learning for this group. Examples included specific programming for students with special needs, how to engage struggling students across the stage/faculty, assisting a particular student with learning difficulties, the use of ICT learning platforms, and how to assist students in particular subjects to develop higher order thinking skills.
3. Engaging in teacher accreditation processes at the higher levels to enhance their own teaching expertise and as a result, increasing the learning outcomes of students.

How they prioritise their learning

Prioritisation of their learning was squarely based on setting goals around how to improve practices and enhance student learning. Teachers in this group went to great lengths to improve teaching and collegial practice, including setting specific goals and then seeking professional development which would have a high probability of reaching these goals. This included directed reading and registration in university postgraduate courses, seeking out co-professionals recognised for their expertise in the area and job-sharing or shadowing a teacher with relevant knowledge and experience.

These teachers, compared to others on the career continuum, expressed a particularly low tolerance for engaging in any professional development which did not value add to their teaching practice or student outcomes, or was not perceived to be related to their own professional development goals. This was expressed clearly with opinions such as:

> *I can't stand being talked at about things that I already know or can't use. It is a waste of time doing professional development which is too general. I would rather a couple of hours by myself to improve my own work and practices.*

How and in what ways they learn

Their ways of learning were strongly self-driven, with a higher propensity for their own reading, writing, reflection and study.

They highly valued collegial discussions with other leaders, educationalists and specialists that enabled a comparison of approaches in developing the capacity of their teaching staff, and enjoyed attending courses with other leaders.

Main themes on how expert teachers learn at this school

Teachers within the expert range with experience of 8-30 years in the classroom had the widest variety of ways in which they learn compared to other groups and were not easily categorised or described in broad terms. The qualitative data on this group was invaluable in revealing a significant difference in their ways of learning which seemed embedded in their professional personalities, becoming integral to the way in which they approached their teaching practice and perceived roles as colleague, mentor, leader, up-holders of school ethos, vision and traditions, and professional educators.

Their learning was firmly focused on enhancing student learning and drawing upon their considerable knowledge and experience to plan, instigate, evaluate and modify teaching practices which "work." Engaging in postgraduate study while leading very busy professional and private lives was a "given" for many, and another example of how they had integrated the personal and professional into their identity.

Implications for this school

Implications for the professional development of this group include the provision of opportunities to be mentored when planning their learning goals by a leader in the school or a specialist in a nominated area. Opportunities to develop, lead, mentor, enrich, show, share, and present initiatives within a school setting that they regard as important to enhancing the learning of colleagues and students, would also be required. The least effective professional development for this group would be that which lacked rigour or was considered as not worth sharing with colleagues.

Leading teachers

Sample

Nine leading teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 33% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Four teachers completed face-to-face interviews with another five contributing to focus group discussion. Teachers in this group were involved in middle management across the school in both curriculum and pastoral roles.

Key areas for learning

Areas for key learning for these teachers included:

1. A strong focus on the learning of their staff. This included developing them as teachers, assisting them to become more effective as contributors to their

stage/faculty/group and how to best support them as they juggled work/life balance issues.

2. How to assist the group which they led to set goals in ways that were practical and fruitful, particularly in ways that would enhance the development of stage/faculty/group goal setting and that could have a positive impact on the learning outcomes of students.
3. Their own learning was important, not so much for self, but to enable the teacher to be a better leader, mentor and advisor for their staff. All participants were either considering or already engaging in higher level postgraduate study, including specialised Certificates, Masters and Doctoral work.

How they prioritise their learning

Prioritisation of their learning was strongly skewed towards meeting school goals which were set by the principal and executive for their stage/faculty/group. In addition, several mentioned their desire to deepen their own understanding and use of pedagogical practices that would improve practices across their stage/faculty/group. They also prioritised in relation to what they perceived should be their growth areas as leaders. All four mentioned that they would like professional, dedicated assistance with prioritising their learning and in developing a learning plan.

How and in what ways they learn

These teachers learnt through:

1. Actively seeking out learning which would enhance their leadership capacity to 'deliver' on the school's strategic goals. This included being involved in secondments with state and national leading educational bodies, including the Board of Studies and the Association of Independent Schools, or other professional bodies.
2. Attending educational conferences linked to their area of leadership and engaging in on-line learning experiences which included networking with those in similar positions.
3. Completing higher level university study and personal directed reading.
4. Learning directly from the principal and deputy principal through listening to their presentations to staff and during informal and formal discussions was seen as desirable. Data also revealed that they learn from the school's executive members and that they would like more exposure to this bank of knowledge, experience and

expertise rather than listen to “speakers from outside” who did not align their material with a working knowledge of school culture and strategic intent.

5. This group consistently referred to learning as both an individual pursuit of knowledge and a collegial process. Every leader mentioned that they engaged in directed research and reading according to their own needs and interests. All regularly browsed the internet for information and some had teacher research centres or universities as home pages or marked as ‘favourites’. A few had begun to follow prominent national and international educationalists on Twitter and regularly used these contacts as a resource for further reading.
6. They also consistently mentioned that they learnt from fellow leaders, both within the school and at external networks. A few also commented that learning aside, it was important to be able to have professional friendships with other leaders so they could “let off steam” at times and consult with each other about how to deal with “difficult” staff or school situations. Only one leader had a formal mentor who was external to the school, arranged through a cross-sectoral mentoring program.

Main themes on how leading teachers learn at this school

Teachers who were leaders in middle management had distinctive ways of learning and particular learning needs. They were clear and definite in their learning goals and prioritised these according to explicit stage/faculty/group or school goals, both short and long term. Their main focus for learning was on being better equipped, informed and effective leaders.

Being an excellent leader of teachers was seen as the main way in which they could support, extend and enrich teachers in their everyday practices and development as practitioners over time. They believed that by doing so, student learning outcomes would be enhanced.

Implications for this school

Implications for coordination of professional learning at a school level were significant. Many of these teachers consistently stated that they would like specialist mentoring to assist them to develop professional learning plans that matched their particular needs in growth and development and that were sufficiently aligned with school goals and expectations.

These teachers also desired access to a variety of higher education opportunities and innovative ways of learning including sabbaticals, engaging in university study overseas at institutions regarded as being outstanding, and the opportunity to conduct educational research both inside and external to the school. These types of experiences were not readily

available to them due to school financial constraints and other priorities. The least effective professional development for this group would be mass presentations to large groups of teachers, as they desired one-on-one discussions and specialist mentoring.

Executive leaders

Sample

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the principal, deputy principal and the director of learning and teaching. The interviews enabled information to be collected on how teachers learn at this point on the career continuum in the context of Brooklee College. An executive questionnaire also enabled data to be captured on their perspectives on the school's professional development program and the impact of leadership and culture on the learning of their teachers.

Key areas for learning

The three respondents were similar in the way in which they learn, in relation to being independent, self-driven, highly motivated learners. They tended to plan their learning strategically in relation to school goals and sought to generate material from which others could learn as a priority. This could involve extensive research on a topic, issue or educational concept, taking notes, and then reflecting on how what had been found could be contextualised to benefit the school. This learning assisted them to write policies, proposals or materials to guide middle management or inform school council of imperatives or possible initiatives.

The second common factor was in relation to learning in-situ, rather than quickly, with all participants using reflection on past experiences alongside any new learning which took place as a critical way of learning. Sabbaticals were also regarded as useful, but only the principal was offered this opportunity. A key area for learning was keeping up with the latest educational research and thinking. This new material was often sourced through directed reading and was consciously 'sifted' through and analysed against the ethos of this particular school. In this way, learning was highly contextualised and the context of the school was actually a driver for how new experiences, ideas or knowledge were learnt and then used.

Networking with other leaders and attending high level conferences with an emphasis on learning in the key areas of research, pedagogy, leadership, school development or educational change was also mentioned. Collegial discussions at these conferences, or while

participating on a range of committees and educational associations, were cited as critical to the learning of this group.

How they prioritise their learning

All participants stated that they prioritised their learning according to school ethos, priorities, needs, effectiveness and strategic goals. They considered this appropriate given their levels of responsibility to staff, students and the school. One commented that what they were learning to improve their performance was usually of great interest anyway, as:

> *I am in the job to learn in this area and lead others in their learning in this area.*

All participants had developed a specific plan for learning, both individually and as a part of the executive team. One leader was "setting up a major school initiative program from scratch" which required new learning on a strict timeline. They consulted with government departments, researched legal and compliance aspects and visited other schools that ran similar programs, thereby engaging in a steep learning curve in relation to policy writing and implementation timelines. Their professional learning plan was detailed and targeted.

Reflection featured highly as a way to plan and prioritise learning. One mentioned the need to *"think deeply, read, write, look for connections and develop my learning over time"* to enable several new programs to be researched and made ready for successful implementation in the school community.

How and in what ways they learn

The respondents mentioned directed reading, postgraduate study and association membership, such as with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), and networking with other leaders at their level as the main ways in which they learn.

Their learning was characterised by deep thinking and reflection, clear alignment with the school's goals and targets and explicit planning to enable innovation, and new initiatives to be developed. Their learning was driven by a timeline according to school needs, expectations and priorities.

They were autonomous, experiential and collegial learners and clearly intended on learning in ways that would improve their performance as leaders in the school.

Not one of the participants was interested in workshop style learning, as were teachers across the earlier career stages, nor did they declare themselves as visual or kinesthetic learners.

Their learning was targeted, experiential, reflective and more intellectual in nature, with a focus on generating highly school-contextualised outcomes as a result.

Main themes on how executive leaders learn at this school

A major theme that emerged in relation to this group was the way in which they explicitly and consciously aligned both their approach and selection of content for their own learning with the needs of the school.

Further, their self-concept as learners and leaders had become interwoven with the school's ethos and context. They considered that to be authentic leaders at a school with the vision "Leader in Learning" they needed to genuinely engage in rigorous and continuous learning. They believed that this would enable them to be more effective in their representation of the school community to external audiences, while modelling best practice according to this school to internal stakeholders including teachers, students and parents.

Implications for this school

Due to the school's ethos, executive leaders interested in rigorous professional learning were attracted, employed and then encouraged to be highly engaged personally and professionally in their own learning. As a result, these leaders had high expectations in relation to the learning opportunities that should be provided to them by the school. There was a sense amongst the leaders that higher levels of learning which were not currently available, should be, including access to overseas sabbaticals and paid leave to complete Doctorates.

FOCUS GROUPS

How teachers learn at this school

Two focus groups discussed information about teacher learning and school context. Each focus group included teachers from across the career stages in the study, from early career through to leading teachers.

According to the focus groups, teachers at the school learn through:

1. Listening to an expert and then sharing this information together when applying it to their practices and reviewing the results together. Action learning cycles were being used by some teachers informally after professional development activities had been attended to trial the new knowledge in classrooms.
2. Being collectively informed by the principal and executive staff about global school goals assisted with focusing their own learning as well as the learning of their close colleagues within the same stage/faculty/group.

3. Engaging in stage/faculty/group projects which were aligned with school ethos and goals and that were evaluated and assessed against stated criteria. This directed teacher learning was described by a teacher as "generating enthusiasm and belonging", as teachers worked together to learn together.
4. Engaging in new programs within stages/faculties/groups also contributed towards learning which was described by one teacher as "worthwhile and permanent." Examples included ICT integration projects, university research and using new tools such as laptops. Teachers said that they enjoyed:

   > *Structured learning which led to achieving common goals in learning and better outcomes for many students across the stage/faculty/school.*

5. Collegial learning and mentoring was highlighted, as was team teaching. Time to visit other classrooms was the most common request to further teacher learning during focus group discussions. This led to further discussion about barriers to their learning, including little time to actually visit other classrooms.

Career continuum learning

A rigorous discussion about career continuum learning occurred amongst the groups. Participants expressed that they had not given a lot of thought to how their own learning had progressed and developed over time. It was agreed amongst the groups that the discussion had encouraged them to think more about challenging their perceptions of their own learning and the learning of those around them. An experienced teacher asked the question:

> *Why aren't more experienced teachers actively mentoring teachers lower on the continuum in relation to understanding themselves as learners first, rather than just as teachers, and helping them build a strong identity first before double questioning themselves and their capacity as teachers? Why isn't it a school program to do this?*

Another asked:

> *Well if teachers do learn differently across the career continuum, and it is common sense and obvious that they would, why don't we split teachers up for professional development according to their level more, rather than just mostly across faculty or subject groups?*

School-contextualised learning

Focus group discussion yielded new data on the impact of school culture and the resulting professional development program for teachers in the school. Teachers stated that a more planned approach to teacher professional learning in the school from 2008 onwards had "encouraged them no end" and had invigorated their creativity and confidence as learners.

Teachers also appreciated the school's attention to detail that the school was implementing in relation to gaining their feedback during the planning stages of the internal professional

development program. These school-based professional development activities provided as a result of staff requests and needs were referred to by the group as "deep learning," "rigorous," "thorough," "challenging" and "highly appropriate."

Several teachers remarked how school-based professional development, related to school vision, ethos and goals had:

> *Re-invigorated our practice and allowed for deep engagement, reflection and the implementation of some of the ideas in practice.*

Internally-provided professional development was now much preferred by most teachers in comparison with attending one-off professional development activities external to the school.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: HOW TEACHERS LEARN AT THIS SCHOOL COMPARED TO THE LITERATURE ON TEACHER LEARNING

Results

Appendix 4.5 details the data collected from the teacher questionnaire. Numerical values were used to ascertain the number of responses given by participants to the particular questions and categories. Teachers were also able to write comments in each section if desired.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the literature on how teachers learn identified a range of aspects. The teacher questionnaire grouped these aspects into focus areas. The following table contains the total number of teacher responses to the questionnaire for each mode of learning:

Table 4.2: Teacher responses to modes of learning

Ways (modes) of learning	Responses Agree/Strongly Agree	Responses Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Collaborative	83	11
Reflection	51	11
Hands-on and creative	55	11
Feedback from students and colleagues	56	6
Collegial conversation	64	7
Within the school context	129	17
Directed study, reading and writing	47	8
Observation and being taught by others	53	12

Discussion

Questionnaire results confirmed the data on teacher learning gathered during the face-to-face and focus groups. The strongest results were that teachers regarded that they learn most productively *within the school context*. This included working within the context of their stage/faculty/group, team teaching within classrooms, mentoring others and assisting teachers to plan their own learning. The results also showed that teachers saw clear benefits in learning

within a shared ethos and knowledge of school goals and strategies and that these guided their learning. In addition, the opportunity to undertake professional development activities based on needs identified by the school, and having input into the planning and development of professional learning within the school, were noted by teachers as strong supports which fostered both their learning and a learning community culture.

The results also indicated that the preferred modes of learning for teachers in this school community were those that were *collaboratively* planned and instigated, collegially supported, and *hands-on* in approach. This included inquiry and action learning and being taught and mentored by others, including peers and specialists.

Singular approaches to learning tended to include *reflection*, both formally and informally, considering and using *feedback from students and colleagues*, and *directed study, reading and writing*.

VERTICAL DIMENSION: TEACHER LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Website and documentation review

A detailed review of the school's website and documentation can be found in Appendix 4.6. Overall, the school's website and documentation revealed that teacher professional learning was a strategic priority. It was also noted as being an expectation of staff from application for employment, through to induction and in their ongoing work as a teacher at the school. The school's professional development program was comprehensive and based on a long term school development plan, professional development policies and some feedback from staff.

Teachers at this school were regularly referred to as "leaders in learning," "on-going learners" and "professionals." Data from the face-to-face, focus groups and leadership interviews indicated that there was a synergy between what was said by teachers in relation to their perception of themselves as learners, and the school's provision of learning opportunities.

Emerging themes on school leadership views about teacher learning at this school

The face-to-face interview question schedule for executive (Appendix 4.4) and the executive questionnaire (Appendix 3.2) were designed to enable executive staff to broadly reflect on how teachers learn at the school. A number of themes emerged in relation to what school leaders thought about how teachers learn in the school context, as follows.

THE NATURE OF TEACHER LEARNING

Teachers as professionals

The executive were of the opinion that teachers were professionals and lifelong learners and should be regarded as leaders in learning within the school community. The assumption was that teachers would want to learn as an integral part of their professionalism.

Teacher learning and teacher welfare

Most teachers who participated in the study thought that teacher learning was critical for school effectiveness and student learning, but it was only the executive who felt it absolutely essential to teacher well-being and "staying in the job". One stated that:

> *Teacher learning does not necessarily come naturally when early in their career, even though it is often assumed by leadership in schools that this would be the case because they had just come out of a university learning environment.*

This executive asserted that some early career teachers struggled so much with what they perceived they should learn that their:

> *Sustainability as practitioners was severely compromised and their resilience may always remain low.*

According to the principal, teacher learning was "absolutely essential for every member of the teaching service" stating that:

> *Whether a beginning teacher or in the winter of their career, learning needs to be tailored to meet the needs of the individual and is required to enable one to reenergise and reinvigorate.*

Transformative learning

The deputy principal remarked that teacher learning was becoming more competency-based, stating:

> *That's dangerous for professional learning as it runs the risk of becoming 'training' instead of transformational thinking which informs practice.*

He reiterated the school's resolve to ensure that all accreditation processes and procedures were about learning:

> *Observing, debriefing, reflecting and improving, as opposed to a punitive tick-a-box approach.*

Differentiated teacher learning

The leadership acknowledged that there was much they did not know about teacher learning and that the action research process had considerably boosted their understanding and appreciation of the complexity of teacher learning at the school.

All participants from early career through to principal agreed that teachers learn differently according to their career stages, but that they were not particularly knowledgeable about these

differences. They also commented that the school was only "scratching the surface" of this concept and had more to do in relation to understanding career-stage learning and the individual needs of teachers.

Teacher accreditation

Leadership was strong in their belief that teacher accreditation processes were an important aspect of teacher learning and development. The principal had delegated this responsibility to a member of the executive team who he had worked with closely. He also regularly met with teachers at critical points along their accreditation pathways to discuss their learning on an individual basis. These meetings did not occur for teachers in the school who were not involved in accreditation processes.

TEACHER LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Strategic teacher learning

The principal provided information on how teacher learning was regarded as a strategic element of the school, especially the expectation that teachers would model the school ethos of excellence in scholarship and learning to their students. He cited teacher learning as only secondly important to student learning, and provided examples of teacher learning in the school over the past year that had clearly led to an improvement in student outcomes. To this principal, it was critical to strategically align teacher learning with school imperatives, both in the short and long term.

Coordination of professional development

The principal emphasised that the effective coordination of professional learning within the school was imperative to teacher learning. He referred to a restructure of executive positions several years previously which had enabled an executive position of the *Director of Staff Development* to be formed. This role carried the strategic responsibility for the professional development and accreditation of teachers to be established, which he considered as "the key to the current proliferation of teacher learning in the school." He also mentioned that he thought the school was doing a much better job in consultation with staff in relation to their learning needs, and wanted to further improve teacher access to higher levels of accreditation at a faster pace as a key professional development opportunity.

Barriers to learning within the organisation

When asked about what teachers at the school thought about their learning, the principal echoed responses from teaching staff across the career continuum, stating that the "tyranny of time was always a barrier to learning" and that he was aware that high demands upon staff

effected time available for more structured professional learning programs. He considered that individualised professional learning plans should also be a part of school culture, but that finding the time to do this well was difficult. His comments on the barriers to teacher learning were consistent with what teachers had identified, including a crowded curriculum, lack of time, educational changes and the struggle to maintain the life/work balance.

A number of external pressures were identified as impacting the school and in doing so, the learning of teachers. The deputy principal provided a "helicopter view" of pressures on the school which he considered affected teacher behavior, including their learning. He stated that teacher learning was being further compromised by external pressures including student examinations, political changes to educational philosophy and content, and the litigious nature of society. These effected the:

> *Preparedness of teachers to learn through creativity and risk taking, rather, preferring to meet requirements and "play it safe" within the tension between compliance and education.*

The executive leaders lamented that schools must react to and accommodate external pressures, but that teachers did not usually understand this level of operation and why it legitimately impacted on their learning. They expressed an awareness of the constraints on teachers in relation to their learning, but considered that changing school culture, routines or structure to ease these barriers seemed difficult and unlikely.

Leadership and teacher learning

The leadership was reflective, both individually and as a team, about what teacher learning is and how it could be best achieved in the context of Brooklee College. They articulated the importance of teacher learning, not only to student learning, but to the resilience and survival of teachers within a busy environment. They regarded it as imperative that executive staff were committed to building and sustaining a school community where teacher professional learning was strategically embedded into school culture and contextualised to the unique goals of the school.

Leaders identified gaps in their own knowledge, including a difficulty in evaluating the school's performance in relation to the professional learning of teachers and the professional development program, as in their opinion there was a lack of time to do so. They also identified a lack of knowledge about the literature in relation to career-stage learning and tools that may be readily available to use with ease to assist in evaluating the school's performance in relation to teacher learning.

Further, it was held that leadership should model the vision of being leaders in learning within the community. The principal believed that executive and middle management teams which explicitly modeled continuous improvement and a love of learning were imperative to supporting teachers in their learning. In the context of this school, he expected leaders to be dedicated in their roles to assist in the planning, coordination and provision of professional development for staff, as well as supporting teacher learning, innovation and creativity through modeling and sharing effective teaching practices. In addition, ongoing mentoring was also considered to be a collective responsibility of all teachers in leadership positions.

CONCLUSION TO DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS – BROOKLEE COLLEGE

What teachers and leaders thought about the learning of teachers in this school context has been analysed and reported. The next step for the researcher was to provide feedback on this data to the school, and in doing so, initiate the next action research cycle unique to the needs of this school. The process undertaken and its outcomes are described in the following section.

PART 2: SCHOOL-CONTEXTUALISED ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE

Feedback on the data collected was provided to the staff to contribute to the school's planning and further action, as well as to gain a sense of the purpose of the study as to where this may lead in regard to school improvement. This feedback is included as Appendix 4.7.

Providing feedback marked the beginning of an action research cycle centred on reflection and planning that was developed by the principal and staff in the context of Brooklee College.

THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE AT BROOKLEE COLLEGE

Action

Feedback of data to the school

The feedback, which included a summary of the data on how teachers learn, was presented to all teachers during a staff meeting.

Whole staff input to triangulate the data

After receiving the data feedback, teachers then randomly formed discussion groups comprised of a mixture of career continuum stages. Using the discussion questions provided (Appendix 4.8) they reflected upon and discussed the feedback. They focused on their perceptions of what it meant within the context of teacher learning at the school and how the data could be used to improve the professional development program. Their ideas were written on poster size paper and then groups shared their thinking during a whole staff

discussion. This information was collated by the researcher for use by the school executive in the planning phase of the next action research cycle.

Reflection

Feedback of whole staff discussion to the executive

The researcher presented the collated staff feedback to the school executive. In their role as director of staff development, a discussion was facilitated at executive level based on the study data, and the subsequent feedback from teachers provided during the whole-school discussion.

Development of the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF)

At the executive meeting a keen desire to know more about how the school was performing in the planning and delivery of professional development which met the learning needs of their staff was expressed. It was proposed by the executive that although professional development surveys were completed by staff annually, that these were only useful in identifying broad themes in relation to staff learning needs and that a more rigorous approach to benchmarking school performance in the provision of effective, sustainable and appropriate professional development activities, within the context of the school's culture, was needed. As an outcome, the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) for both teachers and executives was designed by the researcher, as discussed in Chapter 5.

The School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) for teachers is included as Appendix 4.9.

The School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) for executives is included as Appendix 4.10.

Completion of the teacher and executive SBF

At the principal's request, the researcher presented the pilot SBF to all staff, explaining why and how it was developed and that the purpose was to enable the school to benchmark its teacher learning approaches and professional development program against good practice in the literature. Volunteers were invited to complete the survey.

In addition to the principal and deputy principal, 19 volunteer teachers completed the SBF.
The school was then able to evaluate its performance against the ten dimensions of good practice in professional development listed, from the perspectives of both the executive and teachers, in the areas of:

1. Strategic alignment
2. Resource allocation
3. Professional development strategies and content

4. Program implementation
5. Learning across the career continuum
6. Teacher accreditation
7. Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment
8. School leadership
9. School culture
10. Evaluation processes

Teacher and executive feedback using the SBF revealed a consistent view of the benchmarked areas in the school where school performance was regarded as high, or in need of improvement. This may be attributed to the strategic nature of professional development at the school and the ongoing opportunities for all staff to participate in the planning and development of staff development in the school.

Learning

The results of the teacher and executive SBF were discussed at an executive meeting, adding to what had been learnt previously from the study data and whole staff discussion feedback.

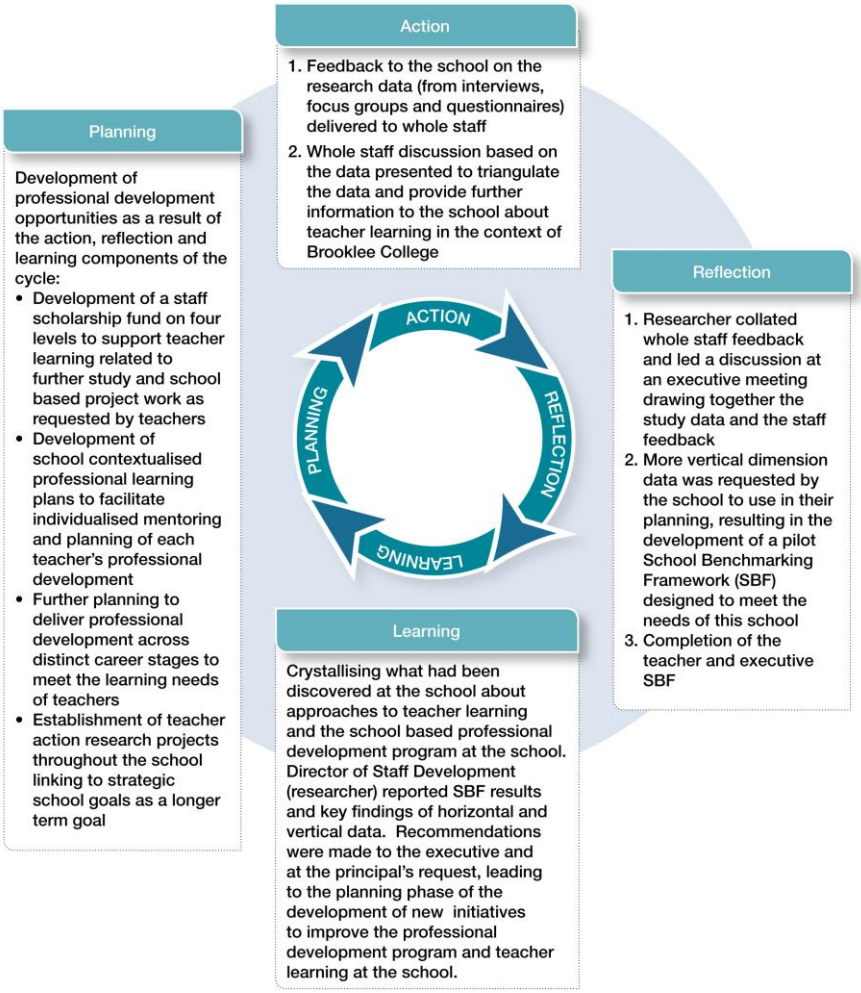
As a result of further discussion at executive level, the principal then requested that the researcher, in their capacity as director of staff development at the school, crystalise what had been learnt and discussed to this point, and present to the executive a proposal of recommendations and actions to improve teacher learning approaches and the professional development program at the school. This proposal was to be based upon both horizontal and vertical data generated by the school throughout the study and the action research cycle. This action adopted by the principal, in this instance, was consistent with the role expectation of the researcher, who was also an executive member.

Planning

The action, reflection and learning led to a number of planning decisions being made by the school which were regarded as significant improvements in their understanding of teacher professional learning and the provision of professional development to staff. This phase of the action research cycle is outside the scope of the study and documented in Appendix 4.11.

A diagrammatical summary of the school's action research cycle follows.

Diagram 4.1: Brooklee College action research cycle



SUMMARY

This chapter has centred on a case study about teacher learning and professional development at Brooklee College, that then proceeded through an action research cycle with the staff to facilitate further conversations with a view to school improvement of their teacher professional development program. It has outlined the horizontal dimension of teacher and school leader professional learning across the career continuum and the vertical dimension of how teachers plan, coordinate and learn together in that school context. A number of themes were identified in the case study. The question arose as to the extent to which any similarities or differences might emerge in the second case study.

Chapter 5 following documents the development of the School Benchmarking Framework.

Chapter 6 summarises the main themes and speculative questions arising from the first study and provides a transition to the second school case study undertaken, which is documented in Chapter 7.

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CHAPTER 5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (SBF)

INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in Chapter 4, as a result of the data collection and feedback provided to teachers at Brooklee College, the school staff desired to benchmark their professional development program and approaches to teacher learning more rigorously. This chapter provides details on how this was done.

The principal asked the researcher if they had an instrument that could be used. The researcher then began the task of finding a relevant tool, based on good practice in the literature, that the school could use to benchmark the teacher professional development program, and that could be used as a part of this study.

The literature was surveyed to find examples of holistic frameworks that might be applied to whole-school practice as it relates to the development of professional development programs. No comprehensive frameworks were found, so some enquiries were initiated to identify elements of professional development planning and coordination that could be considered as good practice. From these enquiries, four sources were selected to be used as a basis for developing the pilot school benchmarking framework.

SOURCES USED TO DEVELOP THE FRAMEWORK

1. McCulla and Gereige-Hinson (2005)

As a part of the Professional Learning Directorate of the NSW Department of Education and Training, which is the largest school system in the southern hemisphere, McCulla and Gereige-Hinson (2005) drew on research into the best ways to support teacher professional learning. They asserted that "educational jurisdictions everywhere face the same key issues" (p. 1) in relation to supporting teacher professional learning, and identified four areas as particularly important: Responsibility (for teacher professional learning), Resourcing, Policy Frameworks, and Focusing on professional learning (in relation to identifying the source of decision making). As a part of the study, they created a "School Professional Learning Self-evaluation Guide" detailing some of the factors to be considered in these four dimensions.

2. The Victorian Government (Australia) Inquiry into Effective Strategies for Teacher Professional Learning: Final Report (2008)

This report devoted a chapter to implementing a policy framework in schools. Imperatives mentioned included adequate resourcing, the support of leadership to build and sustain a learning culture, and assistance for schools which were recognised as "the key agencies in the

implementation of effective strategies for teacher professional learning" (p. 128). The report also cited the Victorian Department of Education and Training Report (2005) which identified seven principles of professional learning for teachers. These were considered when designing the school benchmarking framework:

Seven Principles of Highly Effective Professional Learning

1. Focused on student outcomes
   (not just individual teacher needs)
2. Focused on and embedded in teacher practice
   (not disconnected from the school)
3. Informed by best available research on effective teaching and learning
   (not just limited to what they currently know)
4. Collaborative, involving reflection and feedback
   (not just individual inquiry)
5. Evidence-based and data driven *(not anecdotal)* to guide improvement and measure impact
6. Ongoing, supported and fully integrated into the culture and operations of the system - schools, networks, regions and the centre
   (not episodic and fragmented)
7. An individual and collective responsibility at all levels of the system *(not just the school level)* and is not optional (p. 14 - 16).

3. Thesis Chapter 1: Literature Review

The literature review structured on DeCourcy's (2012) framework for teacher learning provided guidance in relation to the qualities of professional development programs recommended as good practice.

4. Researcher's school-based experiences

Working as the director of staff development at the first case study school enabled an ongoing insight relating to the literature in this area. Contextualised work experiences, observations and responsibilities, required the researcher to be strategically involved in the ongoing evaluation of both the school's approaches to teacher professional learning and the resulting teacher professional development program.

The matrix in Table 5.1 was developed from these sources to form the basis of a school benchmarking framework containing ten aspects of school community culture that relate to the planning, programming and implementation of school-based teacher professional development programs.

Table 5.1: School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) aspects and sources

Aspect	McCulla & Gereige-Hinson (2004)	Literature Review	Victorian Gov. Report	Researcher's Experiences
Strategic alignment	✓	Borko (2004) Fullan (2004) Hattie (2007) Smith (2008) Timperley (2007)	✓	✓
Resource allocation	✓	Borko (2004)	✓	✓
Professional development content		Scott & Dinham (2008) Swaney (2007) Timperley (2005)	✓	✓
Implementation		Darling – Hammond et al. (2009) Desimone & Porter et al. (2002)	✓	✓
Learning across the career continuum		Darling-Hammond (1995) NSWDET (2005)	✓	✓
Teacher accreditation		NSWDET (2004)	✓	✓
Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment	✓	Doppelt et al. (2009) Lamb et al. (2007) Little (2003) McCormack et al. (2006)		✓
School leadership		Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) Dinham (2008) Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis (2005)	✓	✓
School culture	✓	Dinham (2008) Ewing (2002) Timperley (2005) Voulas & Sharpe (2005)	✓	✓
School evaluation procedures	✓	Dinham (2008)		✓

OUTCOMES

The resulting School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) developed for teachers is included as Appendix 4.9 and the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) used with the executive is included as Appendix 4.10.

SUMMARY

This chapter has provided the rationale for developing a framework that allowed Brooklee College to benchmark its approaches to teacher professional development and learning at the school. Chapter 6 considers the main themes emerging from the first case study and the implications that these had on the second.

CHAPTER 6

REFLECTIONS ON BROOKLEE COLLEGE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SECOND CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Major themes arose in relation to how teachers learn across the career continuum in their school context at Brooklee College. In keeping with the overall action research focus of the study, these themes are now reflected upon. The emerging themes connected to the key areas of the study are noted, and the implications and questions that relate to the next case study initiating a second action research cycle are discussed.

HOW TEACHERS LEARN ACROSS THEIR CAREER CONTINUUM

Teachers learn differently according to their career stage

Face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires completed as a part of this study revealed that teachers do learn substantially differently across the career continuum from early career through to principal. This was further confirmed in the feedback arising from the group and whole-school discussion in the action phase of the school's action research cycle. Their needs as learners at each continuum point were found to be distinct and comprehensive across the three aspects explored in the study: key areas for learning, how they prioritise their learning and how and in what ways they learn.

The impact of the school context on their learning was also found to be considerable and far reaching in terms of teacher development and wellbeing, across all career stages. During the whole staff feedback which occurred in the first action research cycle, teachers mentioned the dilemma of working in a school context where they were considered as "leaders in learning". This was considered to be both exhilarating and motivating, but also capable of drawing teachers towards burn out and exhaustion if not well managed.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Do teachers learn in similar ways at each continuum point in the next case study school? If not, why not?

School impact on teacher learning could be considered by the researcher more deeply at the next school. For example, does school context, culture and ethos impact on teacher learning differently, according to their career stage?

Teacher learning has an impact on teachers

Teacher responses revealed that their learning was not just connected to improving their practice. Teacher learning or lack thereof was found to have both professional and personal

ramifications for the teacher in relation to their perception of themselves as learners, their resilience and wellbeing.

Executive participants also mentioned that teacher learning has a personal impact, one commenting for example that some teachers struggle in their early career through a lack of knowledge about teacher learning and that this has an effect on their practice in relation to confidence and career direction. It was found at this school that learning not only improved teacher practice but was needed to "survive" emotionally, enabling teachers to be "energised", "resilient" and "sustainable" as practitioners. This data confirms emerging studies in the literature that point to a possible link between teacher learning and the way they think, feel and survive as professionals.

During the whole-school discussion in the reflection phase of the action research cycle, teachers engaged in animated and enthusiastic discussion. They were notably comfortable speaking about their learning with each other, indicating that teacher learning had become a usual discussion point within this school culture. They also used sophisticated language when discussing how their learning impacted upon them as professionals, including reference to learning pedagogies:

> *Doing an action research project through AGQTP was great. It really helped me to be in control of what I was doing and accountable to myself, not only the team. I also got a lot from the readings we were given.*

Feedback from the discussion also confirmed the data collected in the study about the way in which teachers at this school closely connected their sense of professionalism with both their capacities and opportunities to learn.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Does teacher learning affect the way that teachers think about themselves at the next school case study, or is it just the case at Brooklee College?

What do leaders believe in relation to the role that teacher learning plays in the lives of their teachers?

<u>Catering for career continuum learning is only just beginning</u>

Although Brooklee College is a school context where teacher learning is considered strategic to fulfilling educational goals for students and to building a rigorous learning community culture, the school was nevertheless only just beginning to consider the provision of professional development across the career continuum of its teachers. Teachers commented that this was largely due to engaging in, and learning from, this study.

Initially, teachers themselves did not think about the possibility of their learning being "differentiated" according to their ongoing development and needs, even though they regularly did this for their students at different levels of understanding and achievement. However as a result of the study, teacher enthusiasm throughout the school (not limited to those who had participated in the study) about learning across the career continuum grew markedly. It was noted that during the whole-school discussion about the study data, teachers began to state that there was not enough professional development for teachers at specific career stages, which took into account the different ways in which they learn. The study, and resulting school-contextualised action research cycle, had in fact broadened their understanding and expectations of themselves as learners, which led them to request that the school's professional development program offer more options according to career stages and learning preferences of the teachers.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Is professional development along the career continuum mentioned at the next school?

Is it being explicitly addressed as a part of the professional development program?

Do teachers express an interest in the concept of career-stage learning?

Does the study enable teachers at the next school to learn more about themselves as learners?

Do their expectations of what the school delivers in relation to professional development opportunities change as a result of the study?

Accreditation as teacher learning

Teacher accreditation was regarded as extremely important at the school by both teachers and executives.

The use of the externally provided standards-referenced accreditation frameworks, which align with teacher development stages, meant that the school was indeed implementing a learning program for its teachers which in part related to their career stages. However, this was by coincidence, rather than as a result of school intent to so, and career-stage learning did not appear in any school policy or program documentation related to teacher learning.

At Brooklee College, teachers were actively encouraged to participate in accreditation programs through two systems, accessing these at three levels along the career continuum. These programs were considered to be a part of the school's teacher professional learning philosophy in relation to teachers being regarded as professionals and attaining the highest teaching standards, as provided by government policy and professional associations. It was thought that accreditation activities provided a unique professional learning opportunity and

as a result of this approach, a comprehensive program of teacher support, mentoring, observation and feedback was provided. This lead to the development of programs which had become embedded in the school's learning culture and which were positively received by teachers, who stated that engaging in them built their capacity for learning.

However, the school executive had not asked how they were therefore providing professional development opportunities that could build teacher knowledge and expertise specifically at each career stage, nor how to provide learning opportunities which could accelerate development to the higher levels of expertise.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

How is teacher accreditation regarded at the next school?

What impact, if any, does the next school's approach to teacher accreditation have on the learning of their teachers?

HOW TEACHERS LEARN IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR SCHOOL

School context is important to teachers

Teachers consistently identified learning in the context of their school as most valuable and effective in improving their teaching practice. They cited several main ways that this occurred including:

- the way in which they could see that their learning was linked to stated school goals and strategic planning. It was thought that this assisted with focusing their learning and reaching specific outcomes. Teachers reported that this process was exhilarating and affirming, enabling them to feel like professionals who were actively contributing to further building the school's effectiveness in advancing student learning
- the provision of comprehensive school-based professional development opportunities and mentoring provided through the staff development program and coordination was often mentioned. Many stated that they had not previously experienced this level of in school resourcing, planning and focus on their development previously in their career
- working directly with their peers on the school site including engaging in lesson observations, formal and informal collegial discussions, project work and in-house stage/faculty programming were cited as powerful ways of learning compared to offsite professional development courses, and
- significant learning occurred when talking and/or listening to the principal and other members of the school executive, some remarking that this had not been the case at previous schools.

During the whole-school discussion, groups of teachers referred to the ongoing and explicit impact of the school context on their learning. One group provided feedback on direct links between a session provided at school by a leader which included specific reference to several student case studies that then enabled them to change and improve their teaching of these students.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Do teachers at the next school connect their learning to the school context? If so, in what ways?

Do they mention the coordination of the professional development program as important to their learning?

Do they cite learning with their peers as significant learning experiences?

Do they regard their leaders as a source of learning?

The impact of school vision and ethos

The humanist and value centred vision and ethos were strong and important to the Brooklee College community. The vision 'Leader in learning" was related directly to teachers in both writing and rhetoric, with school documentation and leaders referring to them often as "leaders in learning". The school's development plan listed "Staff" as a key area, and contained goals and benchmarks for teacher development. As found in school artifacts and on the website, the school's vision, ethos and strategic goals directly led to the planning and implementation of a comprehensive professional development program.

The teachers in the study referred to school culture positively and the executive staff and teachers ranked it highly in most areas on the study's School Benchmarking Framework (SBF). Teachers regularly referred to school ethos and staff goals and stated that these assisted them to be positive about professional learning and consider it as important amidst a high powered, multi-dimensional and busy environment. These perceptions seemed to be encouraged and supported by their awareness that teacher learning was a clearly nominated area of school life which was not only featured in school planning strategic documents, but regularly in other school community publications and newsletters.

Similarly, whole staff discussion at the action phase of the school's action research cycle yielded many comments about the positivity towards teacher learning within the school, and the favorable impact that this had on teacher learning and wellbeing. In particular, new staff compared this aspect of school life to other schools at which they had recently taught,

explaining that they had not noticed the impact that a school could have on their learning until coming to this school.

Teachers reported feeling further engaged in learning as a result of teacher professional development being discussed at all levels in the school. They also made reference to it being recognised and celebrated in speeches made by the principal at important events and in a variety of communication forms from his office.

Further, it was found that the humanist, secular ethos of the school guided, impacted upon and contributed to the formulation of teachers' educational philosophy, as they aligned their thinking and practices with the context of the school. This was mostly evident at the expert and leading teacher career stages. The formation of their philosophy about teaching and learning, and importantly their own learning, seemed highly influenced by the school context. This was then found to be a significant driver of how they learnt, what they learnt and what they aspired to learn.

The school context was very much molding the teacher as a practitioner and professional in their beliefs about teaching, their practice, learning, development, outlook, sense of self, inspiration and expectations as teachers. It also impacted upon the way in which they thought about their colleagues and the leadership team. Data about the impact of school ethos on teacher learning, it was noted, is scarce in the literature.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Is the ethos and culture of the next school strongly promoted and discussed?

Is school ethos found to influence or drive the teacher professional development program?

Does the school vision and ethos impact on teacher learning at the next school?

How is teacher learning discussed and recognised, if at all, at the next school? Does this impact on the learning of its teachers?

Does school ethos influence the educational philosophy formation of the teachers at the next school?

Does the school context at the next school produce a particular "type" of teacher?

The impact of school resourcing

Teachers stated that the school resourcing for their professional development was generous when compared to other schools where they had previously worked. In particular, teachers constantly mentioned that having a staff member dedicated to staff development in relation to

teacher learning and accreditation was highly beneficial to their learning in several ways, including that:

- this position and the resources available as a result, revealed to them that the school was authentic in practically living out its vision and ethos. Within a tight budget, the school had chosen to resource an executive position dedicated to supporting teacher learning, thereby equipping them to strive to be "leaders in learning" as they were regularly referred to in the school community
- they cited that the strategic planning, coordination and evaluation of extensive professional development programs was edifying and was a strong and consistent motivator to spend more time on lesson and assessment task preparation and to teach well within their classrooms
- it was important to them that they were able to work closely with a member of the executive team, as this enabled them to give feedback directly to the executive, thereby having a clear "voice" in relation to their own learning and how this could further improve student learning, and
- it was mentioned that the positioning of this role in the school's K-12 Learning/Library Centre, rather than in the main offices housing other executives, was particularly encouraging as both planned and incidental access to the teacher learning centre was possible. They considered that this easy access, and the discussions which occurred as a result, had often added to their learning as professionals.

Feedback from the whole-school discussion further confirmed the data collected in the study in relation to the positive impact on teacher learning as a result of human resources dedicated to developing, implementing and evaluating the school's professional development program. All groups made reference to their learning being enhanced as a result of the school providing an on-site executive member with the dedicated role of supporting teacher learning and accreditation processes. One group mentioned that it had changed the school's culture, how they thought about themselves as learners, and was an "ongoing encouragement to continue to improve learning and practice."

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

At Brooklee College the main resource nominated by teachers in relation to resourcing was the provision of a designated staff member with expertise in teacher learning to plan and coordinate the professional learning and development program at the school. Is the

coordination and delivery of the professional development program important to teachers at the next school? If not, what is?

Do teachers have an avenue to give feedback to the executive about their learning? Does this impact on their learning?

Is there a "significant leader" or teacher nominated as important by teachers in relation to their learning?

The impact of school leadership

In relation to their learning, teachers cited executive school leaders as:

- important to their thinking about themselves as learners and professionals
- potential sources of learning, but most were not accessible enough, and
- having legitimacy as learners themselves, resulting in them being well informed, knowledgeable and capable, even if not always making the choices and decisions that they may have preferred.

In relation to their learning they referred to their middle managers as:

- important to their learning
- always available
- capable of exhibiting excellence in teaching, and
- greatly supportive of their development.

During face-to-face interviews the perceived synergy between what the principal, executive staff, middle managers and teachers thought about professional learning emerged as an important factor for teachers in their ongoing understanding and achievement of specific outcomes. Results from the School Benchmarking Survey supported this view, with responses from teachers that aligned well with those from the executive. It could be asserted that this synergy was due to the nature of the school in that strategic development, school improvement and goal setting were regularly discussed at all levels, and that teacher professional development was embedded as a component of these discussions, planning and goals.

Consistency in leadership was mentioned by a few teachers as encouraging to their learning as this produced "a settled and politically calm environment". The current principal and executive had been at the school for between 5-15 years and teachers reported that there had been consistency in the messages relayed about professional learning for at least the past five years. In addition, a goal for the director of staff development had been to raise the profile of teacher learning and further develop the school in the area of staff professional development.

This may have significantly contributed to the consistent nature of the messages relayed about the professional development program and teacher learning.

One teacher stated that this settled environment in relation to leadership turnover allowed them and their colleagues to regularly engage in pedagogical risk taking, trialling new ideas and sharing innovations in their teaching with others. He regarded this as:

> *The best learning you can get…coming up with new ideas, having your students switched on by them and then showing it to teachers in my faculty. We try to outdo each other sometimes in relation to how our students are learning…a bit of professional sprucing amongst blokes.*

This was a comment made by a teacher at the experienced teacher career stage, with data drawn from this case study revealing that being innovative in their teaching was a preferred way of learning for this group.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Does teacher perception of school leadership affect their attitude in relation to their learning?

How significant are middle managers to the learning of teachers at the next school?

Is there a synergy in thinking about teacher learning and development across the school's leaders and teachers? Does this matter to the learning of teachers at the school?

Is the leadership environment perceived as "settled" to teachers and does this matter to their learning?

Does a school's ethos happen to align with and support the learning needs, styles or preferences of teachers at a particular career stage?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Part of the study was to observe the effect of the role of the researcher on the purposes of the study. It was thought that it could be useful to consider whether or not it was helpful to schools to conduct a holistic study where the researcher worked alongside school staff, generating data and providing feedback on how their teachers learn and seeing how, and in what ways this might facilitate improvement in their practices.

At Brooklee College, the researcher worked in the capacity of a participant observer, being an employee of the school at the time. The following was observed:

- That participant observation was a useful research method to use when researching teacher learning in a school context because it may have initially encouraged greater volunteer participation. Most volunteers mentioned that one reason for volunteering was the prospect of discussing their learning with the person in the school who they

perceived was well equipped to respond, and who they felt knew the context of their workplace. Teachers felt that this knowledge of the organisation would assist the researcher to understand their comments and perspectives more comprehensively, and that this made them feel more comfortable.

- The researcher was able to include probing questions which came to mind as a result of being knowledgeable about this school context. This may have led to the capacity to more deeply explore teacher ideas and perceptions.
- The principal and executive were keen about the research being carried out by a researcher who had an understanding of the unique qualities of the school, which was a rare opportunity in their opinion. They felt that this led to receiving feedback and analysis of the data which was highly contextualised, had depth, and was applicable to their situation. The principal stated that as a result of the research conducted internally using participant observation, that the full cycle of receiving feedback, requesting recommendations (as the researcher was also an employee of the school) and then acting upon them to improve practice, was simplified and made achievable within a busy school community.
- As a result of working alongside this school within the action research cycle, the School Benchmarking Survey instrument was developed and piloted. This was done in response to the principal's request for the researcher to provide a tool to benchmark the school's professional development program. According to the school, this instrument did assist them to reflect upon their program in ways not previously possible.

During the whole-school discussion teachers were asked to consider if having such a study, led by a participant observer who worked at the school, had been useful to their learning. Teachers who had engaged in the study again commented that they had found this particularly useful because they were able to speak about and reflect upon their learning more easily because the researcher had knowledge of their school context and culture. General feedback from the session included teacher comments on why it was not normal practice in schools to research how their teachers learn across career stages, and then use this information to further improve a school's professional development program. Overall, the role adopted by the researcher could be seen to be a good fit with the culture of this school.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Would the needs of the next school in relation to reflecting upon their professional learning approaches and professional development program be the same? Why / Why not?

The researcher was a teacher at the second case study school in the past, is known by some teachers and knows the organisation well. Is this "participant observer one step removed" helpful to working alongside the next case study school?

The same full cycle of feedback, including the provision of recommendations which resulted in the development of professional development initiatives occurred at Brooklee College because the researcher, as participant observer, also held a position on the executive. What will the action research cycle look like be at the next school, according to their needs and requests?

What frameworks, if any, might the researcher develop to meet the needs of the second school within their contextualised action research cycle?

Would the next school see value in using the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) developed by the researcher to also assist them to reflect upon and benchmark their professional development program against good practice in the literature?

SUMMARY

This chapter has reported on the main themes emerging in relation to the research questions at the first school case study site, Brooklee College. Reflections on and implications of the findings for the next case study site have been noted. Chapter 7 describes the collection and analysis of data at the second case study school.

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CHAPTER 7

CASE STUDY 2: JACKSTON GRAMMAR

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the process for collection of data on how teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of the second case study school is described, and the results are analysed.

PART 1: COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

School context

Jackston Grammar was established in the mid 1960's by a group of parents who sought to establish a Christian school-based on reformed theology. The foundation parents established an association, physically built the school, enrolled their children and took up a collection on a weekly basis to pay the teacher they employed. From this beginning, the school has developed into a pre K-12 co-educational, non-selective Christian school in a working class area, employing 56 teaching staff and educating 650 students. The vision of the school is:

> *To see parents and children experience the benefits of Bible-based, Christ-centred parent controlled education, in order that they might be prepared and equipped for a life of service as disciples of Jesus Christ.*
> (Annual School Report, 2012, p. 2).

The school's express goal was to be an extension of the Christian home, providing an education from a Christian worldview perspective and integrating Biblical precepts and information into policy development, curriculum, programs, pastoral care and all areas of school life. The school board consists of parents who can demonstrate their Christian faith according to the school's guidelines, and who are members of an association of parents who nominate and support board members. The board and association of parents set the policy and direction for the school, recruit and employ staff and run a variety of committees which direct school policy.

School selection rationale

This school was selected as a research site for case study research for the following reasons.

1. It was an adequate size in relation to staffing, which enabled access to a pool of volunteer teachers across all stages of the career continuum, thereby allowing for a comparison of the core data on how teachers learn at the school with the first case study school.
2. The school had a similarly strong vision and ethos to Brooklee College, which enabled the researcher to again consider how school ethos may impact upon how

teachers learn, their concept of themselves as learners, and the formation of their educational philosophy and practice.

3. The school had undergone recent changes to the principal and executive team, which would allow the researcher to assess the impact of this, if any, on teacher learning and the school's professional development program.
4. The school was from a lower socio-economic area than Brooklee College, with assumedly less resources available in relation to budget, facilities and staffing. This would allow the researcher to continue to study the impact of resourcing on the professional development of teachers.
5. The researcher could continue exploring the effect of participant observation when working with schools. In the case of Jackston Grammar, this would be "one step removed," with the researcher having worked at the school five years before. This would allow the researcher to approach the task again with a deep understanding of the context of the school, but as an external person entering a workplace that had undergone a significant turnover of staff at all stages along the career continuum.

Participant selection

Using the process described, participants were drawn from the voluntary pool which emerged. In all, fifteen teachers volunteered for the study, accompanied by three executive staff, falling into the following groups:

Table 7.1: Teacher study participants from Jackston Grammar

Junior School	6
Senior School	9
Across the School	3
Male	8
Female	10
Years Teaching	
1-3 (Early Career Teachers)	4
4-7 (Experienced Teachers)	1
8+ (Expert Teachers)	6
8+ (Leading Teachers)	4
14+ (Executive Leaders)	3

Participants completed the Participant Information and Consent form which is included as Appendix 4.1.

STUDY SET UP WITHIN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

The principal was contacted by the researcher to discuss the possibility of conducting the study at the school. An introductory package about the research, including documents detailing a description of the study, possible benefits to the school and example consent forms (Appendix 3.3) was sent to the principal for his consideration. The researcher and principal then met and permission was given to the researcher to speak to the staff about the study at a whole staff meeting and to invite voluntary participation. This resulted in teachers from across the career continuum volunteering to participate. The study then proceeded in the same manner as the first case study, as documented in Chapter 4.

HORIZONTAL DIMENSION: TEACHER LEARNING ACROSS THE CAREER CONTINUUM

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

Early career teachers

Sample

Four early career teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 22% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Key areas for learning

Key areas for learning for the teachers in their first year of teaching included the following:

1. Classroom management was an absolute priority, with one teacher trialling several approaches to gain enough 'control' of her students to enable the course content to be taught. The teacher was already able to identify some of the behaviour cycles of her class, including trying to assist them to 'settle' during Term 1 and then remain motivated in Term 2. She had experimented with a number of tools that she had used on her teaching practicum to build positive relationships with students through establishing agreed classroom rules and norms. She also learnt more about classroom management by asking another colleague to watch her teach and provide feedback on how she could improve in this area.
2. Learning more about the content to be taught was also a priority, with one teacher taking a class outside of her area of expertise. Being an extension class and requiring a unique approach of blending two syllabi, she 'felt under great pressure' to develop the new course content and resources while trying to form relationships with students. She began to ask the school for professional development related to teaching extension and enrichment courses and for assistance with developing courses.

For the teacher in his second year, having taught for 18 months, key areas of learning were quite different. He had recently experienced a career change, having previously worked in

management and running a small business. His learning focus was on completing his Masters of Teaching on-line. He thought it a bonus that he could use this material while he started to teach, citing a unit on Aboriginal History as providing resources and content for a history class he was teaching. The Literacy Unit also assisted him to develop strategies "on the spot" to assist ESL students in his classes.

The teacher just completing his third year of teaching cited time management and refining his organisational skills as his key area for learning over the past semester. He had recently taken on a position assisting with the coordination of sport and was highly motivated to do this well.

How they prioritise their learning

The two teachers with one or less years' experience were both a little surprised at the question as to how they prioritise their learning and paused before responding. They remarked that they would have valued the opportunity to discuss their learning needs and for one, her "dilemmas about learning" with a more experienced teacher, mentor or leader in the school. Both also mentioned that that they would have liked to have engaged in their accreditation as a learning priority but had been discouraged in beginning anything formal in relation to an accreditation process until after completing a year at the school.

For the teacher with less than a year's experience, prioritising learning was dependent on "what surfaced as being needed to be done first". Further discussion revealed the possible difficulty that very early career teachers experienced in lacking crucial knowledge of school "seasons" such as assessing, marking and reporting, which required varying levels of preparation and time for completion by teachers. Not yet having experienced a full year cycle of school life left this teacher "in the dark" with their only means of engagement being:

> *Reactive rather than pro-active, in terms of time management and understanding and meeting expectations.*

For the teacher with one full year of experience, her description of prioritising her learning in the first year was one of being "thrown in the deep end" and that survival had been her main priority. Now in her second year, she was more "familiar with the way things happen and pan out" and while still "playing it by ear," was able to also plan in advance. This capacity to understand the school context in relation to work cycles and the expectations of colleagues and leaders had reduced the pressure she felt both personally and professionally and she was "looking forward to getting used to it more".

A marked contrast in how the career change teacher and the teacher with three years' experience prioritised their learning compared to the first year teachers was noted. The career changer prioritised his learning based on his interests, not particularly related to perceived

needs. With a background in management, the expectations of managers were not of concern to him and he was happy to meet requirements and move on. He would often bring his learning interests from both his personal life and professional reading into the school and his classroom, and overlay and integrate them into the curriculum, which in his opinion assisted him to form solid relationships with students. He had a deep understanding of the vision and mission of the school and openly explained that any faith related learning in his personal life became a priority to share and in this way, he continued to learn and develop with colleagues and students in his role as a Christian teacher.

The teacher who had three years' experience was also more relaxed about the way in which he prioritised his learning. He felt no urgency or pressure in relation to learning, stating that:

> *Rather than plan it I like to dive in, experience it and give it a go.*

He felt that prioritising learning was artificial as teachers were constantly learning that it would be more helpful to:

> *Learn what needs to be learnt in the sequence that it presents itself rather than do too much planning.*

When asked about his accreditation at the level of Professional Competence, he said that this had been a priority the year before, but at this stage, maintaining accreditation as required by the NSW Institute of Teachers had not surfaced in his thinking as a priority for learning. He was unaware that there were further requirements and the school had not yet approached him in relation to assisting or providing guidelines for maintaining accreditation as a teacher in NSW.

How and in what ways they learn

The teacher with less than one year experience lamented over her inability to find time to learn through reading research papers as she had done at university. She had been looking forward to using best practice models and research in her teaching but had not been "within miles of a data base in months." Her disappointment revealed a possible dilemma in the way in which teachers are expected to base their learning on the literature, but have little time to revisit this in their first years of teaching. As a result of her disappointment, she remarked that she often explained the purpose of pedagogies including Bloom's Taxonomy and de Bono's Hats to her students, sharing this knowledge with them. She enjoyed drawing these concepts into diagrams and charts for students to use as a part of their classroom activities. She then led them to reflect upon their learning as a result of using these strategies.

Learning through mentoring featured highly with both teachers who had been teaching for a year or less. Both teachers shared their concern that they had not been assigned specific mentors and that they had found these themselves along the way. They both wanted to begin on their accreditation processes with a mentor, but this was to occur sometime in the future.

Also, these teachers did not recall having been through a formal induction when starting at the school. One mentioned that they had been told that there was a first and second year induction course at the school, but had not yet been approached to engage in the courses. They both cited a change in leadership and leadership roles over the past year as a probable cause. As a result, they had begun to find learning opportunities as they arose in everyday practice. For example, one of the teachers gravitated towards a casual teacher employed by the school that had taken the class and mentioned to her that it had been a rather difficult class to cover. She asked this casual if she could observe her lessons to advise on classroom management skills and said:

> *It was the most practical advice I have ever received, including how to adjust my stance, use my voice, and pause to bring the tone of the class down.*

This casual teacher continued to mentor her over an extended period, sharing various classroom management and teaching strategies. When asked further about how she learnt, this teacher lamented that she was not really sure and asked the researcher:

> *Why is the topic of how teachers learn not covered in undergraduate teaching courses, including providing advice on how various ways of learning can be utilised in the first couple of years to assist teachers to survive and grow in their knowledge and acceptance of themselves as a teacher?*

Both teachers teaching for a year or less felt that they had never had a lecture at university about teacher learning, nor had they been challenged to think about how they learn, or what they should expect to learn, and asked the researcher why this was the case.

The career change teacher was more confident and assertive in the statements he made about how and in what ways he learns. He described himself as a visual learner preferring to learn with a ‘live’ presenter rather than in an ICT forum/blog environment. He also learnt through pursuing an interest himself and then showing how this applied to his teaching practices or subject content to other teachers. He said that he had always loved learning, was a lifelong learner and innately curious. His private learning from the Bible was cited as crucially important to his learning as a teacher at this school, as he was always looking for ways to implement a Christian worldview into the curriculum and to advise students on issues pastorally from a biblical perspective.

The teacher who had completed three years of service was also more confident in his learning style. He no longer felt the need for a mentor as such, but valued watching others and having other teachers model and describe their teaching approaches and practices to him. He was beginning to want to talk about how teachers teach, whereas beforehand he had been focused more narrowly on how he was teaching and managing the classroom. He expressed an interest in testing and trialling different approaches. He preferred interactive, hands-on learning, having enjoyed a few ICT learning sessions which occurred informally with another colleague after he had expressed concern about not knowing how to use the school's MOODLE portal properly.

This teacher cited the open staffroom, where teachers in the senior school were housed together, as beneficial to his style of learning, as it provided a collegial environment where sharing discussions about various ways of teaching and relating to students was possible and encouraged.

Main themes on how early career teachers learn at this school

Classroom management emerged as a strong theme amongst the early career teachers. Two teachers expressed a concern about needing more development and knowledge in this area. However, this need was not as imminent for teachers who had previous experience with working in other industries.

The desire to be mentored was also a strong theme amongst this group. However, whereas the early career teachers who were just starting to teach wanted a more formalised approach by being allocated a mentor, those with more experience were confidently seeking out their own mentoring opportunities amongst the staff.

Implications for this school

Introducing an induction and mentoring program for teachers at this career stage could be useful. Tailoring the mentor to the teacher carefully, based on their past experiences and needs as early career teachers, may address the diverse needs expressed by this group.

The school could consider providing a more structured professional development program for early career teachers in classroom management skills and pedagogical approaches that would enhance the establishment of positive, well routined learning environments. More assistance from experienced teachers within the school in relation to classroom management may also be beneficial.

The school could also consider introducing professional learning plans for new early career teachers to assist them to plan their learning over a longer term, rather than only focussing on

reactive planning according to urgent needs. The desire for deeper learning according to the literature could also be captured in such a plan.

The data on this group revealed that even within career stages there can be a wide variety of personal and professional circumstances, learning styles and learning needs. This has further implications for this school if they wanted to provide learning to teachers based on career stages, as more modifications may be needed for teachers at the early career stage.

Experienced teachers

Sample

One experienced teacher volunteered to be a part of the study, 5% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Key area for learning

The key area for learning for this teacher was in mastering the content of a new mathematics course and learning new techniques to teach this course innovatively and creatively. He sought out in-service courses and settled on one that included how to engage senior students in the learning of mathematics. His aim was to increase knowledge of both pedagogical approaches and resources to enhance his delivery of the material, with a view to increasing student motivation and ultimately, increase their learning and improve results.

How they prioritise their learning

This teacher was more relaxed about how he prioritised his learning than the early career teachers at the school. He did not feel an urgency to identify areas, addressing immediate needs as they arose out of the curriculum and/or pastoral program for students. He had a methodical and committed approach, using checklists and responding to the ebb and flow of school expectations.

His prioritisation was also effected by discussion with his Head Teacher who he found to be an experienced and knowledgeable practitioner and leader. Respect for the ideas of this leader allowed him to expand his repertoire of thinking about his learning. These conversations occurred randomly and he expressed an interest in the school providing more formal discussions about his learning priorities, along with the opportunity to set specific goals.

How and in what ways they learn

This teacher was a career changer with a background in another industry. He had been accustomed to an apprenticeship style of learning, with the more experienced practitioner modeling how to complete tasks as well as providing guidance on “innovative and creative ways of doing things, in addition to the norms”. He felt that:

> *Teaching should be much more like an apprenticeship in providing plenty of time to observe "master teachers" in the area, analyse the way they teach, compare it to your own, and then improve.*

The professional development session he had attended in relation to the new mathematics course he was implementing was effective in his opinion, because it had been delivered by an experienced mathematics teacher who explicitly modeled the pedagogical ideas. The practical approach of providing specific examples of teaching practices and resources suited his learning style of learning from a more experienced practitioner.

He also mentioned that he missed having key performance indicators and targets to meet on an annual basis, stating that these provided a scaffold for his learning and a clear pathway ahead. When asked if he had considered using the Professional Teaching Standards in this way, he said that they had been useful in his accreditation period, but wanted more specific targets provided for him and then assistance to grow to meet them. He commented:

> *I guess I would be interested as a new scheme teacher in expanding the use of the standards as one progresses. I always had the impression that maybe teaching should be more like a trade where it is more formalised in a sense and that you have your learning while you're teaching. Maybe due to my experience and background in other industries I always expect to know where my KPI's are. I don't have those boxes to tick or even be working with, even if it's self-directed. What's my box I need to tick? What is my box I need to focus on?*

Lastly, this teacher emphatically declared that he did not like "the group work" component of many professional development sessions, much preferring a lecture style which included academically rigorous material or the targeting of specific skills. He then wanted opportunities for follow up, trialling the ideas with another teacher in his area. He lamented that this 'follow-up' was never a part of professional development as a teacher, in his experiences to this point.

Main themes on how experienced teachers learn at this school

Two main themes emerged in relation to the learning of this experienced teacher. Firstly, experienced teachers drew heavily on their prior knowledge and experiences to explore and improve their own learning. According to this teacher, this was partially due to an absence of discussion about teacher learning in general at the school.

Secondly, it was again noted that regardless of career continuum stage, teachers had distinct and different preferences for the ways in which they preferred to learn. For this teacher, apprenticeship style learning involving the modelling of more experienced teachers, and then sustaining and practicing what had been observed, would be preferred.

Implications for the school

As only one teacher at this level of the career continuum volunteered for the study it was difficult to assess the implications for the school on anything except an individual basis. An important consideration in relation to this staff member would be how the school could harness his considerable experience and energy to share his learning with colleagues.

Implications for this school would also include managing the learning of this teacher to further develop his capacities, and then providing opportunities for him to share innovative practices with others.

Expert teachers

Sample

Six expert teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 33% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Key areas for learning

These teachers enthusiastically volunteered to be a part of the study as they were interested in learning learn more about educational research within schools, their own learning, and the notion of career continuum professional learning for teachers. They also expressed an interest in contributing as a way of indicating to their school that they supported recent moves by the executive team to improve professional development opportunities for teachers. They expressed a hope that their participation may also contribute to further building the learning community culture at this school.

The teachers were confident about expressing their key areas for learning which strongly related to specific areas of teaching and/or the school. Key areas included:

1. To improve the literacy and numeracy strategies used by the support department with children who were experiencing learning difficulties.
2. Developing advanced skills in using a new interactive whiteboard, primarily to share this learning with others.
3. Assessing the pastoral care needs of specific year groups and reporting back to middle managers for their use in developing the pastoral care program.
4. Further developing differentiation strategies as a result of attending in-services using a matrix approach to learning, Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's models.
5. Becoming more competent in using ICT learning platform programs, particularly in the development of assessment tasks.

6. Staying abreast of new curriculum requirements of the Australian Curriculum and keeping others informed, readying themselves for curriculum development and subject changes.

How they prioritise their learning

Four teachers in this group considered that they were able to prioritise learning quite easily depending on their workloads, school expectations, external pressures on the school and the general busyness of teaching and school life. Common approaches to prioritising learning included:

1. A focus on the classroom and the needs of their students.
2. That student learning was the top priority, so their learning targeted student learning needs.
3. Meeting school deadlines was an appropriate reason to take a break from self-directed learning and that it was important to model this to less experienced staff. They considered that building collegiality through being reliable and responsible was also a "learnt" trait of an expert teacher.
4. One teacher mentioned that:

   > *It was a priority to regularly sit down, reflect and evaluate with the intention of assessing self and then moving to plan and implement my learning. For example I decided on an approach to take to learn how to integrate ICT more rigorously and authentically into my teaching repertoire.*

5. Two teachers mentioned that they had not prioritised their learning proactively over the past year; as they had been too busy assisting other teachers to adjust to the restructure of executive positions in the school. This had meant that they had concentrated on ensuring that new staff had the information they needed to settle into their classroom and the school culture.

How and in what ways they learn

These teachers were autonomous and confident learners, drawing upon experiences over extensive careers (13-26 years) that had enabled them, in their estimation, to establish successful learning styles and the ability to prioritise their learning in and around the cycles of work that occurred on this school site. They mentioned the following in relation to how and in what ways they learn:

1. Directed reading and research, followed by informal discussions about this material with colleagues, including at lunch or when on playground duty.
2. Working with colleagues on a particular project or task.

3. A preference for conferences where a range of views and ideas were presented around a theme rather than one day in-services. According to one teacher, conferences also provided:

> *A wealth of material to think about, reflect upon and sift through in relation to its potential use at this school. When I attend a conference I am aware of the cost to the school, so I select presentations and workshops which may be of use to us back here.*

4. Only one teacher stated that visual or hands- on learning was preferred. The majority cared more about academic rigour, interest level or being challenged by the professional development, whether that be in the form of reading a book, attending a lecture or engaging in a workshop.
5. Collegial learning was cited as the main way of learning for one teacher, who actively approached colleagues regarded as proficient for assistance to improve her practice. This was done as an individual, not as a part of a school initiative or program.
6. One mentioned that the Christian ethos of the school had changed her way of learning as a teacher. Previous to joining the school she had not been in highly collegial environments and now looked to her colleagues more readily for assistance, ideas and exploration of pedagogies in what she called "a safe and supportive learning environment". She said:

> *I regard my colleagues as welcoming, collegial, helpful and as having a high level of ethical behavior and this impacts greatly on my willingness and capacity to engage in learning at the school.*

Main themes on how expert teachers learn at this school

A main theme emerging was this group's enthusiasm and energy in relation to their learning. They were open to reflecting upon and evaluating their learning, including talking about professional development experiences which had been formative in their development as teachers.

Prioritising their learning confidently and with a sense of enjoyment was clearly evident.

Further, they relished the opportunity to share their learning, using both informal and more planned opportunities to do so.

This group of teachers felt restricted in their learning due to the pressures upon them in performing other duties, although finding these enjoyable.

Implications for the school

This group's energy and willingness to contribute to the professional learning of other teachers could be harnessed as an asset by the school. Sharing their expertise could contribute

to and further assist in developing the school's professional development program within a limited budget.

Leadership development of this group could also be advantageous to assist them to perform their duties more effectively and develop them further as teachers and leaders within the community.

Leading teachers

Sample

Four leading teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 22% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Key areas for learning

These teachers had been working for 17-38 years and were in leadership positions at Jackston Grammar. Key areas for learning related to both their classroom practice and leadership responsibilities. Classroom practice learning included:

1. ICT integration into their programs.
2. Implementation of the new Australian Curriculum reading and preparation.
3. The use of YouTube videos and web tools for innovative student learning.
4. The planning of excursions to expose students to industry environments in practical subjects.

Key areas for learning in their leadership roles included:

1. Researching best practice in the use of technology within their subject areas to contribute to policy development in this area and to assist other teachers.
2. Learning how to use the internet, YouTube, eBook and MOODLE more successfully when teaching students.
3. Learning how to blog and set up forums to use in teacher forums outside the school.
4. For one leading teacher, learning to teach from a Christian worldview was a priority, having spent most of his career in secular schools. This was important to his leadership, as a part of his role was to assist teachers in his subject area to write program rationales from a Christian perspective and be able to make higher order links between Biblical concepts and syllabi content.
5. Reading widely about content and rationale changes in draft Australian Curriculum documents, discussion papers and teacher professional journals and association websites.

How they prioritise their learning

These teachers mainly prioritised their learning based on the needs of others and were happy to do so. One stated that they regularly asked teachers in their team "what they need and then endeavour to supply this". When asked to give more information about what they meant about "what their teachers need" this related mostly to troubleshooting, administration tasks and what was needed to meet the requirements of upcoming events or tasks. What they needed in terms of their learning was not mentioned.

Another mentioned that NSW Board of Studies syllabi was a driver to prioritising learning for himself and his department and that he regularly checked with staff what they wanted to know, so he could learn about it, source the material and then assist them.

These leaders were proactive in setting their learning goals around the needs of others, but did not directly talk to staff in terms of setting professional learning goals for their teams or on an individual level. All of them left the face-to-face interviews with the intention of thinking about this further and placing this item on their agendas and the team's "radar". Three expressed an interest in talking to the next level of management about discussing teacher learning more often as a staff.

When asked about whether they would like to pursue more formal study as a learning goal, all said that there was no time in their professional or personal life to consider this as an option at this stage, with the school context being described as "all consuming", "wearing", "draining" and "high maintenance".

How and in what ways they learn

One leading teacher preferred to learn through individual reading and postgraduate study but others were visual and hands-on learners. They learnt through watching or participating in practical experiences, preferring guided practice with colleagues and the opportunity to master a skill or pedagogical approach. Collegial and one-to-one learning was preferred.

All leading teachers mentioned that personal learning about Christianity at church and in private Bible study led them to think and reflect upon what they were teaching in the classroom, and how they may be expressing their leadership according to their faith within the school community.

Main themes on how leading teachers learn at this school

These teachers found it highly enjoyable to talk about their own learning, as according to them, it was not a topic that was discussed often in the school community. They regularly

paused and thought carefully about their responses to how and in what ways they learn, and were unsure about how these preferences for learning may have changed or developed over time. They were uncertain about how the teachers they led may learn, as it had not been discussed at a school or one-to-one level.

All leading teachers responded to all survey questions with connections to biblical precepts and perspectives, revealing their intuitive and strong alignment both personally and professionally with the school's ethos.

Implications for this school

Leading teachers could benefit from learning more about themselves as learners and then assisting their staff to do the same. Mentoring in relation to the formation of professional learning plans could further assist these leaders to make time for their own learning and broaden their thinking on possibilities for learning.

The school's strong inclusion of professional development of its teachers in relation to understanding and applying Biblical perspectives had resulted in a deep understanding amongst leading teachers of this part of their role within the school.

The preference for practical, hands-on, collegial learning may have developed as a result of the school's emphasis on service to one another in community. Formalising some of these learning opportunities within an internal professional development program could be beneficial as it would harness the capacity of these leaders to teach others.

Executive leaders

Sample

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the principal and two deputy principals.

Key areas for learning

All members of the executive team were relatively new to their positions. They nominated areas of learning which related to the content of their positions including:

1. Board of Studies policies and procedures.
2. Student Duty of Care.
3. Building and development/Council regulations.
4. NSW teacher accreditation policies.
5. Getting to know families in the community.
6. Fund raising and financial matters.

How they prioritise their learning

The executives prioritised their learning according to what they perceived to be most important to fulfilling their roles, predominantly over the short term.

The principal reflected heavily on the task at hand for the next semester and then worked back to identify any areas of need in relation to his learning. He prioritised according to legal or statutory requirements and then towards what he would need to know to lead the community as key representative of the school's Board and association of parents, in the everyday working of the school.

The deputies priorised their learning according to what they needed to know in the short term, but stated that this may change on a daily basis according to urgent needs which may arise.

How and in what ways they learn

All three executives were new to their roles over the past two years. The three respondents revealed quite unique differences in the way in which they preferred to learn, with one nominating networking forums and conferences, another directed reading, research and writing and the other "hands-on" workshops, demonstrations and visuals. Common to all three however, was the desire to model learning to their colleagues and encourage staff to pursue professional interests and areas of growth in their teaching.

There was a sense of excitement about their own learning directly related to the recent growth in school development including the completion of new buildings which offered innovative potentials for student learning. Being a relatively new executive team, and welcoming several new middle managers, was also a source of motivation and excitement. A turnover of staff which had led to new teachers being employed throughout the school was also identified as a strong motivation to "learn more and give more". Mentoring others was identified as a main way of learning in relation to stretching and developing their leadership skills.

Main themes on how executive leaders learn at this school

The main theme emerging was that the learning needs of these relatively new leaders directly related to meeting the needs of the school community and teachers first, even if the areas of learning were not their particular preference. Many of their comments about their learning were similar in nature to early career teachers, as they were also learning 'on the run', and in the short term, in response to the need to complete immediate tasks.

Implications for this school

These leaders were channelling their learning into the steep learning curve of early leadership in a changing and developing school. The provision of external mentoring from leaders at

their level outside the school could assist them with troubleshooting, reflective practices and decision making. In the longer term, the school could monitor their learning progress to ensure that they were able to move from short term, needs based learning to learning about best practice in leadership, developing short and long term strategic plans in their areas of responsibility and considering how to best strengthen the learning of others in the community.

FOCUS GROUPS

Two focus group discussions occurred at Johnston Grammar with participants drawn from early career, experienced, expert and leading teacher career stages. The first focus group centred on a discussion around teacher learning and school context, while the second group discussed teacher learning across the career continuum.

Focus group 1 - How teachers learn at this school

According to Focus Group 1, teachers learn in the following ways at Jackston Grammar:

Collegial learning

There was widespread agreement that teachers learn mostly from each other at ground level through incidental "along the way" conversations, or when seeking out assistance or guidance from each other. This learning was largely informal and was based on friendship and collegiality. When asked how this effected new teachers, who may not have yet had the opportunity to form collegial friendships, teachers in the group said that this definitely could be a problem for them. As most had been at the school for a long period of time, they had not considered this possible barrier to learning for new staff.

One teacher referred to the collegiality at the school as a "part of the culture". He remarked that this culture had greatly impacted him as a professional in that it had changed the way he learnt:

> *My perspective has changed a lot since I started at Jackston Grammar. I started learning from my colleagues. I mean I used to depend more on books and things like that but now I think I learn from others more. It could be a difficult Christian perspective, or to get across an academic skill or programming that is what I want to learn.*

Informal mentoring

Participants agreed that the mentoring of staff often led to learning opportunities. The early career teacher in the group stated that she was still getting to know her colleagues and during her first school Term "had no idea who to approach and hadn't been assigned a formal mentor". She went on to explain however, that as she and her colleagues were engaged in Christian education and regarded their roles as Christian teachers as being colleagues who would support, assist and nurture, that this had indeed allowed her to approach others more confidently. She had been concerned not to ask too many questions about the behaviour of

students or the quality of teaching in her classes until she felt more comfortable and had "gravitated to one or two other teachers over time". More experienced teachers in the group also commented strongly on the willingness of others to informally mentor, on both personal and professional levels, comparing it favorably to other schools at which they had taught. Comments included:

> *Going to others for help is encouraged and I think it is our strength here. I've taught in a school where you wouldn't dare go and ask another teacher to do something because immediately the coordinator's meeting would be called and you're told you're weak in that area.*
>
> *At a previous school you could just sit in your classroom very easily dying, not knowing what you were doing because it was seen very much like a mark against you if you admitted that you didn't know.*
>
> *The strength of the staff is that we tell each other regularly that we want to learn something new. The conversation in the staffroom may be "Hey, I've noticed you doing such and such. Have you got anything on that I can look at too? Is it working well? Why do you do it?"*

An example was given in the junior school where major decisions about class allocations for the next year were based on the capacity of more experienced teachers to mentor, acting as the "Grade buddy" for a less experienced teacher. The less experienced teacher on that Grade would be encouraged to share new ideas and improve and invigorate the program, so they felt that they were becoming a part of the team.

School ethos and learning

The school's ethos was often referred to as significantly impacting on the learning of teachers. One remarked:

> *This whole-school culture revolves around being valued and accepted because basically this is the ethos of Christian education. If you want to fit in here as a member of staff you need to be authentic about your faith, which is being on the lookout to serve others in all areas, including their survival and learning as a teacher.*

School vision and mission, the context of school history and the perception of teaching at the school as being a service and faith journey had a powerful impact on the way that teachers thought about their learning and how they sought to develop as practitioners. Reference to the mission about assisting students to become knowledgeable disciples of Christ was declared as the central role of all teachers at the school during the focus group discussion.

Planning teacher learning

The group was also asked if anyone had approached them to talk to them in a more formal way about their learning. One teacher who had been at another school two years previously commented that he had attended meetings once a year with school leaders about career direction, including with the principal. These meetings related to developing him as a potential leader, but did not include setting specific learning goals. He then went on to share

that once a year his Head Teacher would meet to specifically discuss his needs related to curriculum and possible class allocations for the next year. This was the closest that any of the participants in this group had come, throughout their teaching careers, to having a formal discussion about their learning within a school setting.

Learning valued in this school

When asked about what sort of teacher learning was valued in the school, all participants agreed that learning how to teach from a Christian worldview authentically in their subject areas was critical. In addition, using the Bible in context skillfully and expressing their Christian faith and precepts sensitively and helpfully when in pastoral situations with students and colleagues was highly valued within the school culture. It was remarked that this learning could be a "steep learning curve" when coming to the school, with all participants agreeing emphatically that they had never taught at another school, be it secular or Christian, that had such a strong ethos and sense of vision and mission that guided teacher thinking and actions on all levels. They also agreed that they had never taught at a school where, as one teacher explained:

> *100% of teachers were on the same page in relation to why we are teaching, and the sort of servant teacher we strive to be*

The group thought that this was due to the policy of only employing practicing Christians. It was mentioned that the school's induction program in the first and second year targeted this aspect of teacher learning heavily, including the latest readings and books about Christian education, the distinctives of the movement and the unique history of Jackston Grammar. In addition, 50% of course costs towards completing a Masters in Education through the National Institute of Christian Education was offered to all staff, but not in relation to Masters programs from secular universities.

When asked how this priority to learn Christian perspectives to teaching impacted on other areas of teacher learning, the teachers offered many comments about how it could sometimes minimise learning in other areas of teaching including the use of pedagogies, innovation in the classroom and the updating of curriculum knowledge. One teacher lamented at the 'imbalance' during some years at the school, where professional development days called 'curriculum weeks':

> *Were always on theology. It was never about teaching or pedagogy either. It was always Biblical stuff. You need the other stuff too as a teacher.*

The teachers then began discussing how this was changing and that a balance was being restored. They stated that this was mainly due to a change in the executive, with one of the deputies taking on teacher professional development as a part of their new role.

Teacher accreditation and learning

When asked about teacher accreditation in the school's context, there was some discussion about how the delivery of this program to new scheme teachers had changed hands through several staff over the previous few years. The early career teacher in the group said that she was confused about the process and wanted to start, but had been told to wait. Other staff in the group seemed surprised, with one commenting that:

> *Normal teachers don't know much about teacher accreditation full stop, let alone how it is done at Jackston. I guess we should know more so we can get beside new teachers and help them out. Clear guidelines for accreditation should be available and broadcasted to all staff, including new schemers of course. If we are all taking a Christian interest in each other, we should all know this stuff.*

Another suggested that it would be a good professional development opportunity for all teachers to look at the professional teaching standards to see what could be learnt from them.

Focus Group 2 – Career continuum learning

The second focus group at Jackston Grammar was also comprised of teachers at each career stage of early career, experienced, expert and leading teachers. The focus of discussion for this group was teacher learning along the career continuum. A summary of the group's responses related to the question as to whether teachers learn differently or distinctively as they progress through their career, follows.

Early career learning

In relation to how teachers learn at the early career stage, the following ideas emerged:

- Classroom management and student pastoral care were the most significant learning issues for early career teachers. However, it was noted that older career changers seemed to have less difficulty with these two areas. It was also felt that the main ways for teachers to learn in these areas was through a clear support structure being available, including discipline policies and procedures and a supervising teacher who could be called upon when experiencing difficulty. Being a part of a pastoral care team and a "third wheel" when others were talking to students was also seen as important, particularly when teachers were provided with modeling from those with more experienced.
- One teacher felt strongly that classroom discipline was only managed well if the teacher knew their subject curriculum adequately and could present an image of a

"master teacher, or at least very capable". The idea of teacher persona, and needing to develop one of confidence, reliability and intelligence was something that these teachers thought was an important part of learning and development as a teacher during the early years of teaching. It was mentioned that the topic of 'persona' never arose at university in their training and was never really talked about during practicums or first positions. The early career teacher in the group agreed and wanted to talk more about his, not having heard this discussed so overtly in this way before.

Experienced teacher learning

One teacher in the focus group discussion mentioned that there was a questioning early on in this stage about how well one was teaching. The group agreed that classroom management and pastoral issues were "under control" and a developing knowledge of curriculum was occurring. According to one participant:

> *Teachers start asking questions such as 'I don't know how to get them (students) to think here, or how do I give them that knowledge, or how do I maximise their ability, and then how will they show me this?'..... You start wondering about how you are teaching them.*

This teacher continued to remark that no-one at that stage had approached him about:

> *Jumping into teaching boots and all... accelerating my teaching ability. It's like, if we did know more about how teachers learn at each stage ... really knew ... we could prepare them for it; we could capitalise on them being ready and wanting it (professional development). I guess we miss the boat over and over because we don't know about it, or how to use it for the best.*

The point was made that when towards seven years of teaching, teachers start asking not how they are teaching, but why. One teacher mentioned a:

> *Seven year itch, thinking well right, I've got to do something, be a bit fresher, or move on. Should I go into a job where I would get to learn, gain higher qualifications and earn more money?*

Others mentioned the need for mental stimulation, to discuss higher order thinking about teaching methodologies and pedagogies and taking up study opportunities. One teacher mentioned three colleagues at other schools who had dropped out of teaching at this point:

> *After doing the hard yards, and things were better, they had had enough.*

Expert teacher learning

One participant mentioned that the best learning in his opinion for teachers at this stage was to attend conferences, either in specific subject areas, or about student wellbeing or teacher leadership. He remarked that this learning environment:

> *Challenged your thinking, assisted you to reflect, gave you network opportunities related to you in terms of research and innovation, and enabled you to talk to peers right across the career stages about material which was of interest to you. This was effective in motivating and refreshing me at this crucial stage when I was considering both my teaching and my future as a teacher.*

Comments made in relation to expert teachers included the following:

- Energy levels can be low and this can affect the capacity and motivation to engage in professional development, particularly if it is:

  > *PD that is boring and repetitive aimed at the 'middle' and something you've already done, which is what school-based PD can be like.*

- These teachers planned learning intuitively, were self-starters and did not need workshops to practise applying material. The teachers agreed that workshops and 'group work' were not ideal for teachers at this career stage.
- Teachers at this point needed access to learning about career options and directions but were not provided with this sort of professional development on school sites. One teacher said that:

  > *Leaders often expect you to know what your vision is for your career, but many teachers have never been nurtured to think about their learning, or their future, or encouraged about what they could offer.*

- Because many teachers at this career stage had entered leadership or coordination roles, their learning was often related to developing leadership or mentoring skills and learning information related to their position.
- Teachers at this career stage often engaged in postgraduate study, preferring sustained academic learning compared to one-off sessions or offsite professional development.
- Teachers also wanted to learn about ways to enhance their instruction, and improve in their knowledge about how individual students learn. They preferred to learn through experimentation, particularly when merging a variety of techniques that could assist an individual student. According to one teacher in the group:

  > *They usually do this without the school even knowing about it.*

The impact of school culture on teacher ideas about career-stage learning

A major theme that arose in the discussion about career-stage learning was that even though examples of distinct learning patterns were identified, the group thought that learning was more related to attitude and personality than career stage. When asked why this seemed to be, reference was again made to the ethos of the school:

> *Because God makes everyone an individual who is accountable to him for their teaching, not only the school, and I think it comes down to how obedient a teacher is in the way they teach before God. Are you going to try and be the best for him, and engage in learning and pushing yourself at every opportunity or are you going to coast, just get by? This is a decision of faith, personality and attitude, not where you are on the career levels.*

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: HOW TEACHERS LEARN AT THIS SCHOOL COMPARED TO THE LITERATURE ON TEACHER LEARNING

Results

Appendix 7.1 details the data collected from the teacher questionnaire. Numerical values were used to ascertain the number of responses given by participants to the particular questions and categories. Teachers were also able to write comments in each section if desired.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the literature on how teachers learn identified a range of aspects. The teacher questionnaire grouped these aspects into focus areas. The following table contains the total number of teacher responses in the questionnaire to each mode of learning:

Table 7.2: Teacher responses to modes of learning

Ways (modes) of learning	Responses Agree/Strongly Agree	Responses Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Collaborative	27	19
Reflection	27	10
Hands-on and creative	21	10
Feedback from students and colleagues	31	3
Collegial conversation	29	8
Within the school context	61	10
Directed study, reading and writing	21	9
Observation and being taught by others	27	4

Discussion

The survey was a useful instrument to shed light on the qualitative responses provided in the face-to-face and focus group discussions. The researcher would have expected that *collaborative* would have had a higher response rate in the agree/agree strongly category, and less in the disagree/strongly disagree, as the feedback from the face-to-face interviews and focus groups was that teachers learn collegially and rely on each other to assist and advise in relation to their learning. Even though *collegial conversations* scored highly, there was a high response rate in the disagree/disagree strongly for *collaborative* learning. In addition, there were comments from staff in the *collaborative* comment boxes about not being given opportunities to mentor, have input into the planning or evaluation of teacher professional development at the school, or to plan their learning with other teachers or leaders.

The data for *observation and being taught by others* was consistent with teacher feedback in the face-to-face and focus groups in relation to teachers assisting each other and sharing resources and expertise as a part of their daily work. Again, it can be noted that teachers wrote comments in the comment boxes about wanting more opportunities at school level to observe others, be observed and to team teach as a part of their learning. As the survey was highly

school-contextualised, with teachers requested to respond to each question on how it related to the school context, this data revealed what teachers desired in relation to observation and learning. They considered it their role to be collegial mentors for each other, within the Christian ethos of the school. However they noted that the school was not embedding this practice more formally into the professional development program. It would seem that utilising the preference of teachers to learn collaboratively, and through observation, could be a powerful way to improve the professional development program at this school.

Learning *within the school context* scored highly amongst staff. Their adoption of the Christian ethos at the school was for many an extension and expression of their Christian faith and service. The personal and professional were tightly interlinked.

VERTICAL DIMENSION: TEACHER LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Website and documentation review

A review of the school's website and documentation in relation to teacher learning is included as Appendix 7.2. Overall, school documentation revealed that the emphasis was on teachers being part of a Christian community and committed to the school's vision, with their main responsibility being to be authentically Christian in their teaching, pastoral care, modeling and learning. Documentation reviewed did not indicate that information or school planning documents were available that may refer to the strategic alignment of teacher learning to the school's goals in either short or long term planning. There were no policy documents at the time of the research about professional learning or the professional development program at the school, but the principal mentioned that the executive were working on a draft teacher professional learning policy.

Emerging themes on school leadership views about teacher learning at this school

The face-to-face interview question schedule for leadership (Appendix 4.4) and the executive questionnaire (Appendix 3.2) were designed to enable executive staff to broadly reflect on how teachers learn at the school and the school context for their learning. A number of themes emerged in relation to what school leaders thought about how teachers learn in this school context, as follows.

THE NATURE OF TEACHER LEARNING

Teachers as professionals

The principal considered teacher learning at the school as:

> *Critical ... vital for the staff to remain professionally astute and up to date and current because nothing is static.*

He continued to comment that teachers could only claim to be professionals if they were constantly aware of what was happening in the literature in their discipline areas and endeavored to remain current in relation to new developments, research and practice.

He also considered that more needed to be done to ensure that the "credibility of teachers as professionals was recognised" at school level and that contributing to the broader educational community was important for both the school and for their teachers' learning.

Teacher learning and teacher welfare

One member of the executive referred to the impact that teacher learning could have on "staying happily in the job". They stated that:

> *If a teacher was not taking responsibility for their own learning, this would probably lead to a floundering in their performance, which could then lead to them complaining about their job and becoming unhappy.*

Teacher learning is essential to student learning

According to the principal at Jackston Grammar, teacher learning was essential to enhancing student learning. In particular, he considered the modeling of teachers who were "continual learners and lifelong learners" important to students. Also, modeling Christian leadership skills for students, both in and outside the classroom, was essential for student pastoral and personal learning. He provided the example of a teacher who was running a leadership course for students at lunch time as not only having an impact on student learning, but providing an ongoing discussion about Christian leadership that provided learning opportunities for other teachers.

The leadership team agreed that teacher learning was:

> *Absolutely essential to enable a culture of learning and to model learning to students.*

A further comment was made that:

> *The best way to improve student learning is to improve teacher learning. So for that reason alone the more effort you can put into teacher learning, the better school you'll have.*

Effective teacher learning

Effective teacher learning was described by the principal as that which was "recognised by teachers as beneficial to them". The deputy principals thought that teachers could decide themselves on what they needed to learn to improve their teaching, and that professional development which was chosen by them was probably going to be the most effective.

The executive considered that the following professional development would be valuable:

- Visiting another school and observing innovative teaching techniques.

- The introduction of professional development for the use of technologies and the integration of ICT into teaching programs.
- Professional Development sessions on multiple intelligence delivered by one of the executive to the staff which were contextualised to the students who attended the school.
- One executive stressed the need for professional development to be varied and suggested that a way to provide this could be the establishment of learning teams.
- External courses in pastoral care to assist compliance and understanding of methods to use for student welfare.

TEACHER LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Strategic teacher learning

When asked about the strategic nature of teacher learning in the school, the principal spoke of recent developments at school board level to produce a strategic plan. This would include setting specific goals for the direction of the school and teacher learning would be a part of this plan. He considered that the school was at an important stage of development in relation to their professional development program, which up to this point had been "adhoc" and not linked to school-based goals, or goals for teacher learning. In addition, the recent restructure of executive positions had reflected the need for more concentrated planning and development of a school-based teacher professional development program, particularly with the appointment of a deputy whose role included overseeing the professional learning of teachers.

Coordination of professional development

The designation of teacher learning to an executive member was noted as an important step by the principal:

> *Certainly having the division of the deputies roles with one having a component devoted to teacher development means that there is a more strategic focus on teacher learning and a better way of knowing what staff members are doing, but also a better way of putting in place things that the school sees as significant or important.*

School-contextualised learning was preferred

School-based contextualised learning was emphasised as extremely worthwhile, with an example given of the use of a consultant to observe two teachers with their students and then assist with the development of programs and teaching techniques. This was considered useful as it took the context of the learning and teaching situation in this school directly into account.

The sharing of biblical understanding, both formally and informally to ensure that teachers contextualised their programming, teaching in classrooms and discussions with students to the ethos and vision of the school, was regarded as imperative.

Induction processes as an important source of essential learning

A highlight in the current teacher learning program according to the principal was the first and second year induction process which had a Christian education focus and included a school-based action learning project. Major impacts on the teacher learning of staff were cited as the recent change in principalship and complete restructure of executive positions, which "shifted the focus for a number of people" and made it difficult to plan and set goals in this area. A new era was emerging however, with positives including new buildings being completed, including a library complex, that had the potential to provide teachers with opportunities to accelerate their learning in ICT and other pedagogies. Similarly, a new database management system coupled with the introduction of MOODLE had opened up "possibilities for teacher learning, growth and creativity".

School resourcing of teacher learning

Other factors effecting teacher learning at the school level included being mindful of the limited budget and remaining realistic in relation to what could be spent on teacher learning. The principal stated that the preference was to strengthen school-based learning, primarily by using the ten student free teacher professional development days each year more carefully by filling these days with professional development opportunities that were more "appropriate, relevant and timely". He also thought it was important as a Christian school to acknowledge the examples of excellence in teacher learning and pedagogy in local secular schools and to create opportunities for staff to value and learn from this practice.

CONCLUSION TO DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS - JACKSTON GRAMMAR

To this point this chapter has reported on the findings about what teachers and leaders thought about the learning of teachers in the context of Jackston Grammar. The next step for the researcher was to provide feedback on this data to the school, and in doing so, initiate the next action research cycle unique to the needs of this school.

PART 2: SCHOOL-CONTEXTUALISED ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE

In consultation with the principal, the researcher developed a plan for initiating an action research cycle contextualised to the needs of the school. The data generated from the study was utilised to assist Jackston Grammar staff to reflect upon and engage in further discussion about teacher learning at the school. It was thought that the resulting action research plan would be useful to assist them during the planning of the next phase of their school-based professional development program. The detail of this was outside the scope of this study.

A workshop was designed by the researcher to provide feedback to the staff on the study. It included:

- Provision of current knowledge about how teachers learn in two school communities involved in the study, including their own. The principal of Brooklee College supported the use of the data collected in the study from their school being incorporated into the feedback to Jackston Grammar.
- Enabling the school to generate further data on both the horizontal (teacher learning across all career stages) and vertical (school-based professional development program) dimensions. This comprehensive feedback from teachers, in addition to data generated by the study, could then be used by the school in the planning phase of the action research cycle.

Workshop feedback and frameworks

A PowerPoint summarising the data collected at the two case study schools, Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar was presented as feedback to the school, included as Appendix 7.3. Data about how teachers learn was mixed to provide a wider sample so as to ensure the confidentiality of results from the school community.

Specific school-contextualised frameworks were designed for use within the action research cycle at Jackston Grammar, as follows.

- An action research cycle for the school indicating how the workshop was a part of the cycle and the perceived benefits of participation in the workshop to teachers and the school. This is included at the end of this chapter.
- Career-stage group worksheets, designed around five career stages (early career, experienced, expert, leading teacher and executive leader) which allowed teachers to reflect on learning at each continuum point within their specific school context, both individually and collectively. This framework is included as Appendix 7.4a.
- Teacher survey: vertical dimension, which provided the opportunity for teachers to comment on the school's professional development approach and program against the ten areas from the literature used in the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) designed for Brooklee College. This survey used the categories of the SBF, but was customised to suit the requests of Jackston Grammar's school principal for data that would allow for a comparison of what teachers thought was the current situation in the school, compared to what they considered was an ideal situation for the school's professional development program. This framework is included as Appendix 7.4b.

The frameworks completed in the workshop were left with the school for their consideration and evaluation within the next planning phase.

A My Thoughts sheet (Appendix 7.5) was issued at the conclusion of the workshop to encourage final teacher reflection on learning. This was collected by the researcher and used to triangulate the data collected in the study.

The cycle of action research at Jackston Grammar and the main outcomes are explained in the following section and summarised diagrammatically at the end of this section.

THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE AT JACKSTON GRAMMAR

Action

Feedback of data to the school

Prior to a presentation of the data to the whole staff on how teachers learn in two case study schools, a description of the study was provided. This included information on the research question, structure, methodology and qualitative data collection and analysis. This summary was important to ensure that teachers who had not participated voluntarily in the study were well informed and able to contextualise the workshop within the purposes of the study.

Development of school-contextualised workshop and framework

Teachers were informed about the development of school-contextualised frameworks and resources used within each school's action research cycle, designed to meet the individual needs of each school in the study. This was followed by an introduction to the purposes, structure and customised frameworks to be used in the action research cycle workshop at Jackston Grammar.

Reflection

School-contextualised workshop

Teachers were led through a session that enabled discussion about individual and career-stage teacher learning. A group work structure was selected as the format for reflection due to the consistent data that emerged in the study from teachers at all career stages at Jackston Grammar that they preferred to learn collegially, and that there was a high level of trust and respect between teachers.

Group focus on the horizontal dimension of teacher learning

Teachers were grouped according to their career stage from early career through to executive leaders. Each group was provided with a summary of the study data on teacher learning for that continuum level. They then discussed and reflected upon the data together around four questions:

- What are your impressions of the results? Are you surprised in any way or do they seem fairly accurate in relation to early career teacher learning at Jackston Grammar?
- Is there anything missing that you think should be there in relation to your school ethos/culture?
- What does the school currently provide in its professional development program for teachers at this career stage?
- From the data above, highlight two points in each of the three sections that you think relate most to teachers at Jackston Grammar at this career stage.

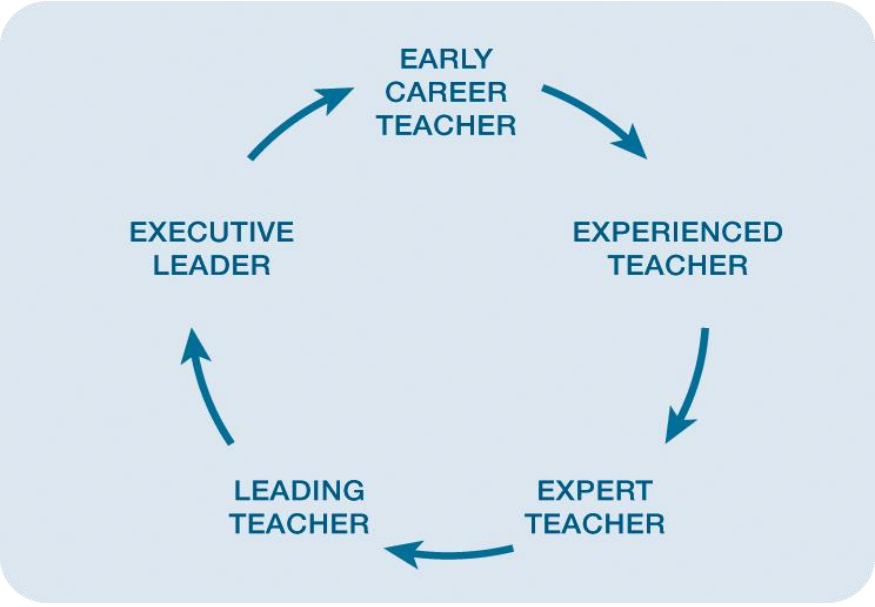
Focus on the vertical dimension of school-based program

Teachers then reflected upon the data within the context of their school, discussing the question:

- Considering what you have highlighted, and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

Groups then rotated to read the responses to these questions noted by their colleagues at the next career stage. Rotation was a follows:

Diagram 7.1: Teacher rotation in career stages during the feedback workshop



The purpose and benefits of the group rotations were explained to teachers, in that this movement provided extra learning within the workshop for teachers so they could:

- generate and share more ideas, while also learning through collegial conversations, to further increase their knowledge about teacher learning and their school context

- consider what their learning might be like when they themselves reached the next career stage, and have some input into generating ideas for the professional development program for teachers at this stage at the school, and
- enhance their understanding and empathy for the learning needs of teachers at other career stages, and in particular, their colleagues in this school context.

Teachers were requested to read and discuss the information generated by the teachers in the previous career continuum stage. They considered their responses and the school's ethos and culture, and noted what they thought the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at that career stage.

Time only permitted one rotation for groups of teachers to reflect upon the research data, and the reflections of their colleagues at the next career stage. However, it was mentioned by the researcher that the school could revisit this exercise at their convenience, thereby using multiple action research cycles related to the learning of their teachers. If desired, they could complete the full cycle of rotations, enabling their teachers to learn more about how their colleagues learn in the context of their school at every career stage, thereby generating more data that could be used for further planning of their professional development program.

To conclude the group exercise, teachers from each career stage provided feedback to the whole group about the information they had learnt about the next career stage.

Learning

Referring to the ideas which emerged out of the reflection on the data on how teachers learn, and their further discussion about teacher learning in the context of Jackston Grammar, the researcher facilitated a discussion on using these insights as a starting point to generate further learning about professional development practices at the school. This involved two exercises:

- Completion of the Teacher survey: vertical dimension (Appendix 7.4b) of school-based professional development, and
- Triangulation of the responses using the My Thoughts feedback sheet, included as Appendix 7.5.

Planning

The school considered that the study had assisted them to:

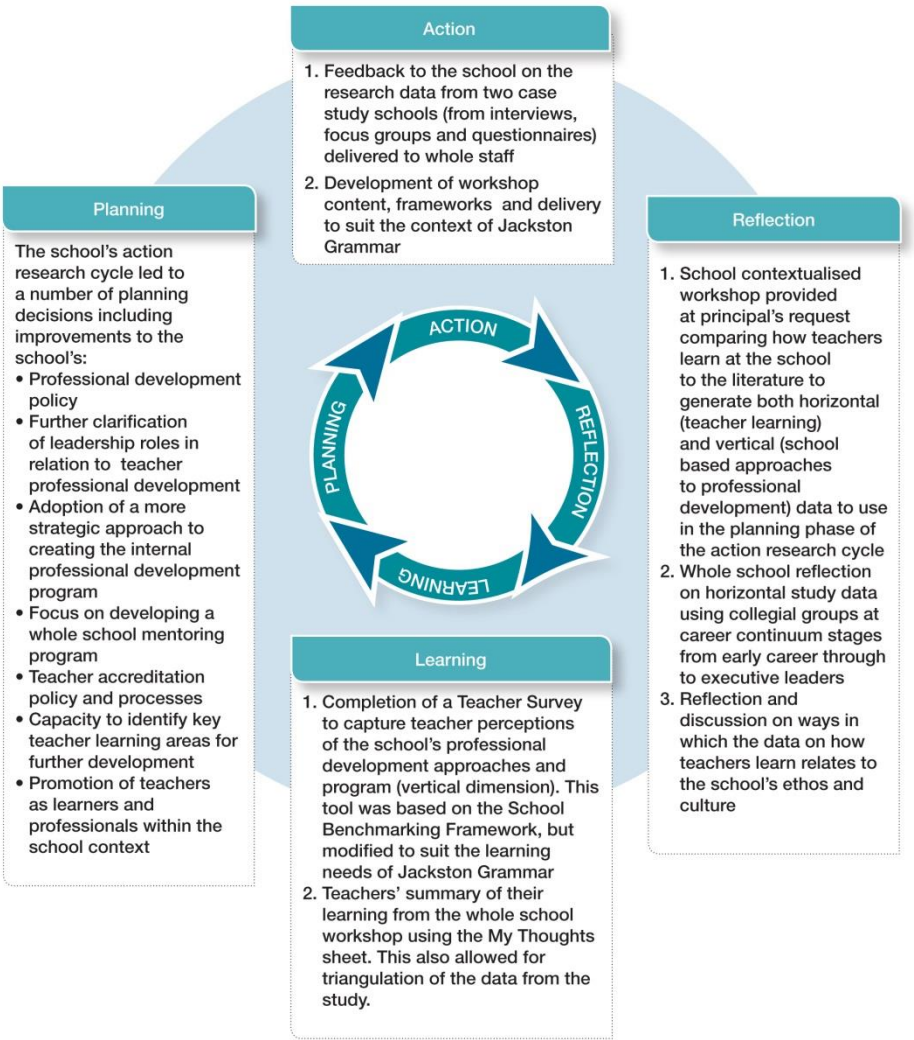
- further refine their draft professional development policy
- consider how they were planning for teacher learning across the career continuum, in light of the study data on the learning needs and preferences of teachers at all career stages

- engage in further discussion about how to enhance the component of the deputy's role related to the staff development of teachers
- consider the introduction of a school-wide mentoring program
- look to improve their teacher accreditation program
- report comprehensively to the school board about areas where the school could further improve or develop, related directly to the benchmarks based on the literature and the SBF, which were featured in the teacher survey
- consider how the professional development of teachers could be linked strategically to school development goals, and
- foster more discussion and higher level discussions about teachers as learners and professionals within the school.

The action, reflection and learning led to a number of planning decisions being made by the school which are outside the scope of this study.

A diagrammatical summary of the school's action research cycle follows.

Diagram 7.2: Jackston Grammar action research cycle



SUMMARY

This chapter has reported on the data collected at the second case study school and how this was used to develop a further action research cycle, including approaches and frameworks which were unique to the context of Jackston Grammar. Further, the way in which a school community was able to harness the data from the study within a workshop facilitated by the researcher to generate further learning on both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher professional development, was found to be helpful to the school in enabling them to launch into further planning for improvement to their school-based professional development program.

Chapter 8 which follows, reflects on the main themes that emerged in relation to the implications posed after the first case study to investigate what was new and different in relation to teacher learning at the second case study school.

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CHAPTER 8

REFLECTIONS ON JACKSTON GRAMMAR AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE THIRD CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

When reflecting on Brooklee College (Chapter 6), a number of implications for the second case study were noted in relation to the key areas of the study. This reflection discusses the data collected at Jackston Grammar that relates to the implications which were posed in Chapter 6, in order to further build a picture of career-stage learning in the school context.

HOW TEACHERS LEARN ACROSS THEIR CAREER CONTINUUM

Teachers learn differently according to their career stage

Implications noted in Chapter 6

Do teachers learn in similar ways at each continuum point in the next case study school? If not, why not?

Data collected at Jackston Grammar confirmed that teachers learn in different ways according to their career stage. Generally, teachers progressed through a focus on classroom management at the early career stage, through to further enhancing their considerable pedagogical knowledge as leading teachers.

However it was found that new and different data on how teachers learn at each career stage emerged at Jackston Grammar. For example, whereas the early career teachers at Brooklee College had quite common areas for learning, including consolidation of their classroom teaching in relation to content and management, the teachers from this group at Jackston Grammar varied in their key areas for learning. A difference in sample size and composition impacted upon the data drawn from early career teachers. At Brooklee College, two teachers participated who were both in the latter half of their third year of teaching, whereas at Jackston Grammar, four teachers volunteered, with two in their first year, one in their second and the other late in their third. A variation in data also emerged which may be explained by a difference in age and experience, with one participant being an older "career changer," while the others had just completed their teaching qualification.

Differences in how teachers learn at the experienced and leading teacher level at Jackston Grammar compared to Brooklee College also occurred. Experiences of learning seem to have been affected by the varied background of the teachers, including an experienced teacher with a background in other industries and a leading teacher with extensive experience in government schools.

A close examination of these sub-groups allowed the researcher to conclude that even within a career stage level, teacher learning preferences and needs can vary considerably between two schools.

Observation of teacher discussion during the action research workshop at Jackston Grammar allowed further insights about teacher learning at each continuum point. Teacher discussion within the career-stage groups of early career through to executive revealed a deep sense of collaboration and flexibility amongst teachers when completing the summary sheet of preferred professional development activities for teachers at each career stage. Teachers actively listened to each other as they shared their individual ideas on how they learn, and then drew these together to categorise main themes that would be inclusive and representative of teacher learning and desired professional development at that particular career stage. This collegial process was most evident amongst the experienced, expert, leading teacher and executive leader groups, whereas the early career teachers were less able or interested in drawing ideas together to create themes. Rather, they listed all the items to ensure that each individual's thoughts were represented. This may infer that at the early stages of teacher development, with less experience in monitoring, evaluating or discussing their learning, that a more global picture of their learning needs and desires was harder to conceive, so they focused on listing all the ideas from those in the group.

Does school context, culture and ethos impact on teacher learning differently, according to their career stage?

Although teachers at Jackston Grammar agreed that teachers learn differently according to their career stage, the focus group discussion provided a deeper insight into how the school context impacted on teachers' opinions and ideas about their learning. During discussion it was posed that teacher learning was intrinsically generated by the belief system of the teacher, regardless of career stage.

The group then discussed and agreed that the motivation to learn went beyond the professional, to being regarded as an important response to serving God and being a disciple to students. For these teachers, the motivation for learning was linked to personal faith and ethical, Christian behaviour, revealing that the school context and ethos impacted significantly on the ways in which teachers thought about their learning and development. Another possibility could be that teachers who initially thought this about their learning were attracted to working at a school with this type of ethos.

During the reflection phase of the action research workshop similar comments about intrinsic motivation to learn as a result of personal faith were made in the feedback from each career-stage group. The expert teachers group also mentioned that alignment of their learning with the mission of the school to disciple students was a priority.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Would data reveal that even within the same career stages, teachers learn differently in the context of the next school?

Would different ideas again emerge about teacher learning that appear to be influenced by the school's ethos?

Teacher learning has an impact on teachers

Implications noted in Chapter 6

Does teacher learning affect the way that teachers think about themselves?

A variety of teacher responses from Jackston Grammar provided an extra dimension to the impact that learning can have on teachers, both personally and professionally. With less focus on teacher learning in the Jackston Grammar community, teachers sometimes expressed a hunger to learn in ways that were not readily available. At the early career stage this included the capacity to engage in reading academic papers and applying this knowledge to the classroom, through to leading teachers who desired learning about leadership effectiveness and development. These desires were readily pushed aside within a fast-paced work environment and a school context where resources were known to be, and accepted, as limited. Within the Christian context, teachers were willing and prepared to think of their learning needs 'coming last' as a means of expressing their servant-hood realistically and helpfully within a whole community context. Not having their learning needs specifically addressed was not regarded as impacting on their identity as professionals. This contrasted with teachers at Brooklee College, who regarded their learning as intrinsic to their sense of professionalism.

Another new area which emerged was that teachers regarded that their spiritual and biblical learning affected the way in which they thought about themselves as practitioners. School-contextualised professional development was often ethos-based and related to the roles that Christian teachers played in the development of curriculum and pastoral care initiatives, and in their "servant leadership" amongst students, colleagues and parents in the community. Broadly, where as teachers at Brooklee College regarded themselves as "leaders in learning",

which aligned to the school's vision and ethos, teachers at Jackston Grammar linked their learning as Christians directly to how they regarded themselves as leaders in serving and discipleship.

In summary, in the second case study, teacher learning was seen again as affecting the way that teachers thought about themselves. However, the affect and resulting teacher perspectives were quite dissimilar at each case study school, with school context and ethos influencing the formation of very different teacher identities.

When reflecting upon the tone and atmosphere of the workshops at Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar the researcher was able to compare and contrast this data collected from the study. At each school teachers spoke about themselves differently, both as individuals and collectively, according to the ethos of the school. Comments were made about how their learning and resulting thoughts about themselves as practitioners included direct reference to the school ethos and its beliefs about its teachers.

What do leaders believe in relation to the role that teacher learning plays in the lives of their teachers?

Leaders at Jackston Grammar made similar comments to those at Brooklee College in relation to the ways in which teacher learning contributed to the wellbeing and 'happiness' of teachers. However, leaders at Jackston Grammar considered that teacher learning was deeper than its link to professionalism, stating that it was:

> *Intrinsic learning, resulting from a deep faith commitment.*

A second difference arose in relation to how teachers were regarded as learners within the school communities. At Brooklee College, teachers were regularly referred to as learners and leaders in learning, which complemented the school's vision and ethos. The focus on teacher learning was not as prevalent at Jackston Grammar, where the leaders thought that more promotion and support of teachers as learners in the school community was required to both lift the professional status of teachers in the school, and further enrich their capacity to model a love of learning to their students.

Implications for the next case study

The following question arose:

The school context in the first two case study schools influenced thinking in the schools about teacher learning and teachers as learners. Does school context affect what teachers and

leaders think about teacher learning and identity in the next case study school? If so, how and in what ways does it do so?

Catering for career continuum learning is only just beginning

Implications noted in Chapter 6

Is professional development along the career continuum mentioned at the next school? Is it being explicitly addressed as a part of the professional development program? Do teachers express an interest in the concept of career-stage learning?

Similar results to Brooklee College emerged in relation to career continuum learning. During face-to-face interviews teachers regularly remarked that they had not thought very much about how key areas for learning, prioritisation of learning and preferences for learning may be different according to career stage, nor the implications for teachers at each stage or across the teaching body. Teachers at Jackston Grammar also expressed a keen interest in learning more about career-stage learning and development and for the school to consider this in their professional development planning. Also similar to Brooklee College was that the school's professional development program did not include reference to, or specific planning for, teacher learning across the career continuum.

As the feedback and resulting workshop of Jackston Grammar was presented to the whole staff, not just participants in the study, feedback emerged which strongly confirmed both a lack of knowledge and high interest amongst teachers about career-stage learning. After the initial PowerPoint presentation of the data on how teachers learn taken from two case studies was presented, teachers immediately began to ask questions about career stages. These included enquiries such as:

> *How did you know what to call each of the five stages?*
>
> *Where can I find more information on career-stage development?*
>
> *Why don't you learn more about this at university when doing teacher training?*
>
> *Can you do a course in this as a leader so you can help your staff at each stage learn better?*
>
> *Why don't schools do this sort of research every few years or so, so the PD suits the mix of teachers at the school? You know staff turnover happens all the time.*

Does the study enable teachers to learn more about themselves as learners?

Although teachers at Brooklee College were interested and active participants in the study, teacher volunteers at Jackston Grammar were particularly enthusiastic participants, with almost all teachers during the face-to-face interviews expressing a sense of excitement at the opportunity to discuss their learning. Their language about themselves as learners was less

diverse and fluent than that of teachers at Brooklee College. When considering these differences, the researcher thought that it may, once again, relate to the school context. At Brooklee College, teacher learning and teacher learning methodologies were mentioned at whole-school level throughout the year, whereas at Jackston Grammar, teacher learning as a focus of discussion did not occur at whole-school level at the time of the study. This may account for why teachers at Jackston Grammar considered that they learnt more about themselves as learners as a result of participating in the study, than those at Brooklee College.

Similarly, individual and collective feedback from teachers as they completed the group work reflection activity during the workshop was resoundingly clear. Teachers engaged in animated discussion around the inquiry questions about learning at their career stage. Written comments relating to the study data recorded on the group worksheets also showed enthusiastic engagement and deeper learning. Comments included:

A good description (of my learning)

Had not thought of that before (about this learning)

This is exactly how I learn!

Some comments were emotive, with the study enabling them to express ideas about their learning within an appropriate context for them as professionals. For example one teacher said:

We are to meet deadlines, full stop. We need to be heard about our learning needs.

Further, the My Thoughts final reflection activity included a variety of comments by teachers that indicated that the study had assisted them to reflect on their learning, build a picture of career-stage learning, understand the needs of their colleagues more deeply and be aware of the ways in which school context could impact upon their learning and development.

Do their expectations of what the school delivers in relation to professional development opportunities change as a result of the study?

Teacher notes on the My Thoughts feedback sheets indicated that teachers had begun to challenge and expand their ideas in relation to expectations of the school's provision of professional development which was specifically relevant to career stages. The most pronounced feedback was from early career teachers who wrote emphatically about more clarification and assistance with teacher accreditation requirements. They requested that the school provide processes and documentation to guide their practice and suggested that a mentoring system could assist them throughout this process. They also noted that they missed

the collegiality of early career learners experienced at university, and would like to network regularly with early career teachers at other schools.

Implications for the next case study

The following question arose:

How, if at all, is the next school dealing with the career-stage learning of teachers?

Accreditation as teacher learning

Implications noted in Chapter 6

How is teacher accreditation regarded at this school?

At Brooklee College teacher accreditation was broadly promoted and accepted as a major element of the school's professional development program. There was a vast difference in responses related to teacher accreditation in both face-to-face and focus group discussion at Jackston Grammar. Teachers involved in accreditation practices were not accustomed to considering these in terms of their potential for their professional learning or career path progression. They were unsure about the process and procedures of accreditation internally and externally to the school.

Focus group discussion revealed that teachers across the school had a general concept that accreditation involved teaching standards, but were not involved in the process. According to the school executive, teacher accreditation was an area earmarked for further development as the new leadership established themselves and their roles. The executive expressed an interest in discussing with the researcher how accreditation could be considered as a professional development activity, rather than their current focus on teacher appraisal.

Teacher accreditation surfaced on several occasions during the whole-school workshop. Early career teachers nominated it as the top professional development activity that they would like to see strengthened and improved at school level. Leading teachers also listed it in their top three professional development activities that they would like included in the school's internal professional development program, suggesting that all staff should know about teacher accreditation, both for their own professional use and to enable them to support and lead the new scheme teachers amongst them.

The group rotation activities within the workshop were particularly helpful to the school in enabling a broader picture of staff feedback to surface around the subject of teacher accreditation. In addition to focused comments from early career and leading teachers, executive staff who rotated to read the feedback from early career teachers expressed that the

rotation had allowed them to gain feedback from all six early career teachers as a group, and provided them with the time and opportunity to begin discussing the current teacher accreditation program together. This resulted in the decision to dedicate more time to continue evaluating current procedures at future executive meetings.

What impact, if any, does the school's approach to teacher accreditation have on the learning of their teachers?

Generally, accreditation had not been considered by teachers as a potentially significant part of an internal professional development program. They were not aware of the professional learning that could be gained around a close study and implementation of the Professional Teaching Standards at the time of the study. Therefore, it was not a factor that they considered was influential for their learning.

As mentioned, accreditation surfaced as a major point of whole-school discussion at the workshop. It was earmarked by the staff and executive as a part of the professional development program that would be considered for further evaluation and improvement as a matter of priority as a result of the study.

Implications for the next case study

The following question arose:

Does the school context impact on what teachers know about, and how they regard, teacher accreditation?

HOW TEACHERS LEARN IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR SCHOOL

School context is important to teachers

Implications noted in Chapter 6

Do teachers at the school connect their learning to the school context? If so, in what ways?

Teachers at Brooklee College identified with the school's ethos as professionals and expected that the school would provide high quality learning experiences to enable them to be part of the school's vision of "leader in learning." However, teachers at Jackston Grammar connected their learning to the school context in a deeply personal and spiritual way. For example, a leading teacher spoke of his commitment to the school over many years as a part of his "*service to God"*. He spoke about the founders of the school, now Grandfathers of current students, and how they:

> *Had physically, emotionally and spiritually built the school with nails, hammers and prayer.*

He continued to explain that:

> *It doesn't matter if the school or my colleagues see my learning, God does, and he sees what I am trying to do to honour the vision of the school through to this day, and what I am trying to do for the kids. It's about discipleship. My learning, even in the middle of the night, is a service to this school community and for these Christian families.*

Do they mention the coordination of the professional development program as important to their learning?

Several teachers mentioned how one of the new deputies had been allocated staff professional development as a part of their portfolio. When asked what this led to in relation to coordination of the school's professional development program, teachers responded in a variety of ways. One mentioned that professional development days were running more smoothly, another that they still needed some planning around the use of ICT, while another "didn't really know." One teacher mentioned attendance at a professional development session delivered by this deputy as "very beneficial and done well", but had not had the time to implement any of the material on the topic and that what had been presented had not been re-visited. Responses from other staff indicated that at this stage in the school there was a lack of knowledge about what role the new deputy played, or may play, in relation to school-based professional development. There was also a consensus that although some aspects of professional development were improving, that staff had little input into the planning of professional development days and they were unsure how this was impacting, if at all, on their learning. One teacher explained:

> *So much of our professional development happens incidentally because we are a really tight knit group. We learn through helping colleagues. We are all in it together and we learn from each other. What the school does or offers has less to do with us than the way we help each other in the school.*

Teachers at Jackston Grammar did not speak about a whole-school approach to teacher professional learning, or the way in which the professional development program was coordinated, like teachers had at Brooklee College. Teachers at Brooklee College often mentioned the positive impact on their learning of having a specific member of the executive employed to coordinate and deliver a strategic professional development program within the school which involved staff consultation, staff evaluation and ongoing planning.

Results from the teacher survey on the school-based professional development program completed at the workshop strongly revealed that teachers at all career stages thought that ideally, the coordination of professional development throughout the school should be effective, and that there was room for improvement in this area.

Do they cite learning with their peers as significant learning experiences?

Whereas teachers at Brooklee College cited that learning with their peers was one of a few significant learning experiences, one noting it as "*powerful learning*", teachers at Jackston Grammar unanimously referred to it as not only significant to their learning, but to their resilience and wellbeing and to their understanding of their school context. For teachers at Jackston Grammar, learning with their peers was significant on both professional and personal levels. Some learning experiences cited were also spiritually significant to the teachers. One gave the example of significant learning with a peer involving praying together about finding a way forward to assist a student with learning difficulties more effectively. As a result of regularly praying for the student, while implementing pedagogical and literacy strategies, the teacher considered that their learning was further enhanced because prayer allowed them to think about and reflect deeply on the unique qualities of the student and the difficulties they were experiencing. The teacher also thought that it helped to "keep them accountable to find a solution" more than just talking about the student would have done. The teacher stated that this mixture of learning, implementation, reflection and prayer was:

> *Life-changing, not just teacher changing, as it was living out faith in a real way at the school.*

Do they regard their leaders as a source of learning?

Teachers at Brooklee College referred to deep learning as a result of listening to and working with their executive and middle leaders. In particular, they referred to their capacity for strategic planning and goal setting. Jackston Grammar teachers did not refer to their leaders in the same way, but did value their spiritual modelling and leadership, regarding this as essential within their faith-based community.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

School context was found to be important in relation to teacher learning in different ways at Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar. Would it be regarded as important to teachers at the next case study school, and if so, in what ways?

The coordination of the professional development program was cited as very important to learning at one school, and not at all important at the next. How would teachers at the next case study school regard the impact of the coordination of a school-based professional development program on their learning?

Teachers at Brooklee College cited learning with their peers as professionally significant. At Jackston Grammar, learning with peers included professional, personal and spiritual dimensions, all related to school vision and ethos. Would teachers at the next case study school consider learning with their peers as important, and if so, would school context again be seen as significant in shaping these perspectives?

The impact of school vision and ethos

Implications noted in Chapter 6

Is the ethos and culture of the school strongly promoted and discussed?

The ethos of providing a Christian school community as the basis of education at Jackston Grammar was continually promoted by the school, as was the quite different ethos at Brooklee College. The school's documentation and website material (Appendix 7.2) consistently documented the core beliefs and mission of the school, including an intimate relationship with God revealed in references such as "God's faithfulness to the school through all seasons". At every day school events such as school assemblies, through to special times of celebration, prayer and expressions of community dedications to serving God were included. According to one leading teacher, staff meetings provided time:

> *For prayer and reflection on the week's occurrences and to ask God for his guidance in all matters relating to the school.*

Teachers also met each morning for staff devotions, where the Bible was read, with the material contextualised to the school and teachers then praying together.

Is school ethos found to influence or drive the teacher professional development program?

The school's ethos was a driver for the school's professional development program, but in different ways to that which had occurred at Brooklee College. At Brooklee College the vision clearly referred to teachers as "leaders in learning", and through consistent strategic planning at the executive level accompanied by some staff input, the professional development program was developed. An important assumption was made about teachers from within the culture that they would want to engage in a rigorous professional development program if they were indeed aligned to the vision of the school, which regarded them as highly skilled professionals who would strive to continuously improve, refine and innovate their teaching practices. As a result, the school had resourced a comprehensive annual professional development program and other initiatives including a staff scholarship program and mentoring program, to allow teachers to implement individualised professional learning plans.

School ethos was also seen as a driver of the teacher professional development program at Jackston Grammar. Teacher and leader responses in the face-to-face interviews revealed the emphasis on teachers developing deeper spiritual and biblical understandings as critical to their teaching at the school. This emphasis could be accountable for the learning and support mushrooming "on the ground" in the school. Data emerged that indicated a link between the ethos of the school, the resulting teacher learning culture, and the impact that this then had on the development of the teacher professional development program. With such a culture of collaboration and sharing, the introduction of a comprehensive professional development program may have been considered as less necessary within the school.

Feedback from staff during the action research workshop indicated a disparity between the way in which the school's ethos was liberally applied to pedagogy and practice, but significantly less applied to teacher professional development. During the group feedback, expert teachers asked why the school did not appear to be developing a rhetoric around teachers as learners and professionals that was an extension of the school ethos. One teacher mentioned that the school had extensively thought through how vision and mission related to classroom and pastoral care practices, but not to:

> *The actual nature of being a teacher learner at Jackston Grammar. Us as Christian learners. Can we talk about that?*

Further numerous comments in the My Thoughts feedback sheet related to suggestions around the school working on linking professional development activities to school goals. Comments to the question "What does what you have learnt mean for further planning of the whole-school professional development program?" included:

> *More systematic community focus on PD is needed.*
>
> *Hopefully more of a whole-school approach to planning effective goals for staff PD.*
>
> *Need goals/direction each year for communal PD.*
>
> *Appropriate PD will only come out of careful planning about what the school wants to achieve.*
>
> *More planned PD is needed and focusing on a specific aspect of learning might help structure PD exercises.*

Teachers also made suggestions about developing professional development options based on teacher learning goals and feedback. Comments included:

> *Within a mentoring system, plan teacher PD that is personalised.*
>
> *We need particular knowledge of PD at an individual or even KLA level as well as a more general, whole-school level.*
>
> *There needs to be more consultation and planning of PD.*

Does the school vision and ethos impact on teacher learning at the school?

Teachers at Jackston Grammar clearly articulated the significant impact that the school's ethos had on their learning, with one teacher saying that:

> *At this school your first job is to be strong in Christ. So your first job is to be as whole a person as you can in God. After that, and in relation to that, comes your learning.*

She then continued to explain how this had driven and impacted upon her learning, including a commitment to:

> *Know your students personally, spiritually and academically and then trying your best to meet their needs. Then you assess how you have gone with this. Have you met their needs? What do you need to know or learn about to improve in this? Sometimes I do this on my own, or other times with other teachers who know the students and who know me.*

Thus, although Jackston Grammar was not consciously developing a professional development program from the top down based on the school's vision, as was occurring at Brooklee College, the teachers themselves were participating in their own individual and group learning with the school's vision as a powerful driver, from the bottom up.

How is teacher learning discussed and recognised, if at all, at the school? Does this impact on the learning of its teachers?

Whereas teachers at Brooklee College were regularly exposed to ideas about teacher learning and engaged in teacher learning methodologies based on the literature (action learning, inquiry learning, reflection practices etc.) as featured in the school's professional development program, data from the study indicated that such discussions were rare at the whole-school level at Jackston Grammar.

Less discussion and recognition of teachers as learners within the school was found to impact upon the learning of teachers at Jackston Grammar. Focus group discussion revealed that there was a sense amongst teachers that their identity as professionals and their learning were not considered as important to the school in comparison to other aspects of school community life. One early career teacher spoke about their difficulty in discerning what she needed to learn to improve her classroom management. This had left them feeling unsure, but:

> *Still expected to get the class right and come up with a test paper by the due date.*

The principal mentioned that he had observed that the image of teachers as professionals was not apparent to the extent that he would wish in the community. He stated that:

> *I would imagine this has had an impact on their learning inadvertently, particularly in teachers sharing an articulated understanding and expectation that teachers were professionals who consistently learn, develop and improve.*

Does school ethos influence the educational philosophy formation of the teachers at the school?

Similar to Brooklee College, the school ethos at Jackston Grammar has influenced the educational philosophy of teachers. Biblical tenets were actively referred to as principles which guided their teaching personas, approaches and selection of pedagogies. For example, adopting a servant attitude within the classroom meant that as teachers they modelled humility, inclusiveness, forgiveness and kindness. Favoured pedagogies included differentiated curriculum and the use of Bloom's Taxonomy. According to teachers, both pedagogies enabled the principles of equality, love and acceptance to be put into practice, which was, they regarded, important within the school's Christian ethos. Teachers at Jackston Grammar spoke more freely and knowledgably about aligning their pedagogical approaches to school ethos and core values than those at Brooklee College, this being an on-going professional development discussion at Jackston Grammar and regarded by teachers as one of the most important responsibilities that teachers had at the school.

This data was further triangulated at the whole staff workshop where teachers often referred to their Christian beliefs when talking about their roles in both the classroom and the broader community, and in relation to their learning.

Does the school context at the school produce a particular "type" of teacher?

Research data at both Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar led the researcher to consider an added dimension to understanding how teachers learn in their school context. The school context of both schools was found to influence the nature of the teachers and produced a particular type of teacher. At Jackston Grammar, when asked what made a "good" teacher at the school, the following comments were made:

> *Striving to serve God with gladness – like the motto – in all that you do and think.*
>
> *Committed to sharing your faith in what you do and say to help the kids know what it means to serve God and be a disciple.*
>
> *Knowing how to teach your subject from the inside out, from a Christian perspective – with God and Biblical truths at the centre, and then the knowledge that humans have of the subject on the outside. God's truths emanate from within, then our knowledge, and then back to his eternal plans and knowledge that we don't know about yet.*
>
> *Serving God with truth and helping the Christian families to bring their children up in the Lord.*
>
> *Helping students develop the skills they need so they can contribute as Christians in society, their churches and with their families in the future.*

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

How does school vision and ethos impact upon the school's planning for teacher professional development and does this effect teacher learning?

How does school ethos impact, if at all, on teacher development of educational philosophy and identity?

The impact of school resourcing

Implications noted in Chapter 6

At Brooklee College the main resource nominated by teachers in relation to resourcing was the provision of a designated staff member with expertise in teacher learning to plan and coordinate the professional learning and development program at the school. Is the coordination and delivery of the professional development program important to teachers at this school? If not, what is?

At Jackston Grammar the new executive stated that improving the professional development of teachers was to be a future priority. At the time of the study, a policy on professional development was being drafted as the first step of placing teacher learning into the strategic development of the school. Teachers at Jackston Grammar did not nominate the coordination of professional development within the school as important to their learning. They gave no indication of being aware of possibilities or approaches in this area that could be used by schools to strategically implement a sustained professional development program.

Most teachers found that Jackston Grammar's approach to the coordination of teacher professional development, which at the time of the study was not clear to all teachers, was normal when compared to other schools at which they had taught. Teachers with experience in Government schools mentioned that they were accustomed to a little more structure being provided to staff, mostly in the form of a list of regional professional development sessions offered externally to the school each semester, but that "on the ground it was about the same." In the absence of detailed planning or consultation with staff about an internal program of professional development, learning collegially and informally had surfaced as more important to teacher learning at Jackston Grammar than the coordination and delivery of an onsite program.

Teacher comments from the My Thoughts sheet completed during the action research cycle workshop provided further insights into the impact on teachers of the coordination of professional development on site, including:

- a lack of clarity about who was responsible for the professional learning of teachers or the school's professional development program
- a desire for more input into the planning and evaluation of school-based professional development
- suggestions that one person should take charge "and just do it", and
- questions about who could run a mentoring program in relation to teacher professional development throughout the school.

Do teachers have an avenue to give feedback to the executive about their learning? Does this impact on their learning?

Unlike teachers at Brooklee College who noted that the executive staff member with the dedicated role to design the internal professional development program enabled a free flow of feedback about their learning to the executive, teachers at Jackston Grammar did not consider that they could readily communicate with the executive about their learning. With the exception of requesting to attend external professional development sessions, there was no process in place at the time of the study for the executive to communicate whole-school learning goals to teachers, or for staff to have input into their development. There was also no formal written or verbal process for individual teachers, or at stage/faculty group level, to develop or communicate their learning goals or needs to the executive.

Teachers at the expert stage who participated in the study consistently expressed a desire for more encouragement to talk about their learning and to engage in more planning of some sort around their learning. Teachers at the early career stage had less developed ideas about whether conversations with executive about their learning would be of any value. This compared markedly to teachers at Brooklee College who had begun to think of this input and feedback with the executive as a professional expectation, and that this had a significant impact on both their motivation to learn and the quality of their learning. Overall, the more input into the executive, and feedback from the executive, resulted in teachers feeling more motivated and focused about their learning. They also thought that this resulted in there being learning opportunities that were more targeted and relevant, and of a higher quality.

Is there a "significant leader" or teacher nominated as important by teachers in relation to their learning?

There was no "significant" leader on the executive nominated as influential to their learning by teachers at Jackston Grammar. However, middle management was mentioned on several occasions in relation to modelling the school's ethos of Christian service while going about their everyday work, and in assisting with any issues which needed troubleshooting as they emerged.

Implications for the next case study

The following question arose:

How, if at all, do teachers perceive that school resourcing, including human resources in relation to the development of a professional development program, impacts on teacher learning?

The impact of school leadership

Implications noted in Chapter 6

Does teacher perception of school leadership affect their attitude in relation to their learning?

Teacher perception of school leadership also affected teachers' attitude to their learning at Jackston Grammar. Whereas attitudes and ideas about leaders and teacher learning were fairly consistent across study participants at Brooklee College, perceptions were markedly different at various career stages at Jackston Grammar. In relation to their learning, early career teachers were unsure about where middle managers and executive staff fitted into their schema of professional learning. Data emerged which indicated that they relied on professional development from experienced or expert teachers, consultants brought to the school, informal collegial friendships and sometimes teachers' aides, rather than leading teachers at middle management level, or executive staff. Their concerns in relation to learning and leadership included the desire to be designated a "good teacher" as a mentor, and for more clarity to be provided in relation to school expectations and processes in relation to professional development. Some comments included:

> *I feel isolated in my learning.*
>
> *Aside from obvious PD sessions I don't know what the school wants me to learn, who from, who to ask, or where to go.*
>
> *I thought teacher learning would be a focus, based on what they said at uni.*
>
> *During prac I was spoon fed and now I am left to my own devices.*

I would like a clearer vision of myself as a learner given to me by a leader.

There is no time to talk about me as a learner or what my learning goals should be with a leader.

Experienced teachers had an understanding of what the school expected in terms of their learning and to a degree accepted the "status quo" without question. The impression was that they had acclimatised to the culture and grown used to consulting with each other and their leading teachers when needing to learn. Comments included:

I figure out in the classroom what I need to learn and then see if someone can help me.

I learn well through over hearing conversations of other teachers and then chipping in. Then we share with each other what we have.

I can go to my head teacher when I need something and if they can't help, they usually have a suggestion.

Expert and leading teachers expressed self-sufficiency when talking about their learning in relation to leadership in the school. They accepted collegiality and helpfulness amongst early career through to leading teachers, but did not feel that there was time to talk about planning their learning with executive leaders.

Executive staff spoke about building a learning community, and their intention was that teacher learning would be more emphasised as new executive staff settled into their roles.

How significant are middle managers to the learning of teachers at the school?

Middle managers were perceived by early career teachers as important supports to their daily work in the school, as approachable and helpful, but not as leaders who assisted them with a planned learning timeline or with setting learning goals. They also noted that they would appreciate more structured mentoring and regular meetings. They were not sure how much their managers knew about teacher accreditation, or about their role, if any, in assisting them with accreditation processes.

During the action research workshop leadership development arose strongly as a theme across several career stages. Experienced and expert teachers made reference to the need for those in leadership positions to learn more about leadership and mentoring. Leading teachers also noted on their My Thoughts sheets at the conclusion of the workshop that they would like the opportunity to engage in professional development related to leadership development.

Comments included:

I have been a leader here for years and I have not heard other teachers, like what has been said today, say that they would like leaders to do leadership courses.

What are the best mentoring programs? Where can I learn more about it? The school could get someone in like the researcher to explain it to us.

It sounds like staff want us to help them more in their learning; setting goals, reflecting, planning it.

I would like to do some leadership courses.

Can we meet with other leaders regularly from similar schools and talk about Christian leadership?

Is there a synergy in thinking about teacher learning and development across the school's leaders and teachers? Does this matter to the learning of teachers at the school?

In comparison to the clear messages about teacher learning at Brooklee College, which appeared to increase teacher confidence in their learning, less information and discussion at Jackston Grammar seemed to result in a reduction to what they expected of the school in relation to their learning.

At the workshop, teachers at Jackston Grammar revealed their willingness to make requests of their leaders in relation to their learning. On the My Thoughts reflection sheets they noted that they had enjoyed separating into career-stage groups, as they had never done this before. They listed requests for their leaders to consider providing professional development for specific career stages at the school.

Feedback from leading teachers was overwhelmingly in favour of the executive completing professional development which was based on spiritual growth, and then to share this with leading teachers in the school. They requested that there be more explicit communication from executive staff about their learning and that some time be spent with them on planning their learning. Leading teachers also requested professional development in the area of leadership skills which they felt they had not had access to as a group. Several expert teachers also made comment on their My Thoughts feedback sheet requesting that leading teachers be provided with professional development in both the art of leadership and mentoring.

Is the leadership environment perceived as "settled" to teachers and does this matter to their learning?

Unlike the leadership at Brooklee College, which had been consistently in place for over a decade at principal and deputy level, a new principal and executive team had been formed at Jackston Grammar over less than three years. The way in which this impacted on teachers varied, with some expressing hope that the new leadership would improve professional development opportunities at the school, while others did not expect executive staff to do

anything in this area. Teachers consistently spoke about how busy and overloaded the executive staff were, growing into their roles, juggling new building works, staff changes including middle management, fluctuating enrolments, new curriculum and escalating parental expectations.

Although there was confidence in the executive amongst staff, the changing environment, including the change in leadership, tended to lower teacher expectations about their learning and what could be realistically provided within the school at that time. This contrasted markedly with teachers' perception of their learning within the perceived settled leadership and school environment at Brooklee College. Comprehensive data emerged at the College in relation to the impact of a seasoned leadership team at executive and middle management levels who provided consistent and strong messages about teacher learning and how it related to school ethos and strategic planning, which was not present at Jackston Grammar at the time of the study.

Does a school's ethos happen to align with and support the learning needs, styles or preferences of teachers at a particular career stage?

The school ethos at Jackston Grammar did not align with the specific learning needs or preferences of teachers at any particular career stage at the school. However, all teachers expressed that school ethos impacted upon their attitudes to learning, such as their wish to learn collegially as an expression of Christian community living.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

Teacher perception of school leadership was found to affect teachers' attitudes to their learning at the first two case study sites. Would this again be found at the third school?

Are there "significant others" in leadership in relation to teacher learning at the third school?

Do leaders and teachers at the next school think similarly about teacher learning, and does this impact on teacher learning at the school?

Does the school's ethos align with or impact upon the ways teachers learn at any particular career stage?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Considering the role of the researcher in working with and alongside teachers within school contexts continued at the second case study school, Jackston Grammar. As noted, the research design once again appeared to be a useful approach at Brooklee College in relation to enhancing the capacity to draw upon common knowledge and an understanding of the school culture throughout data collection procedures at the school. The following observations allowed for a comparison of the impact on the study of the changing role of the researcher at the second school.

Implications noted in Chapter 6

Would the needs of the school in relation to reflecting upon their professional learning approaches and professional development program be the same? Why / Why not?

As noted in Chapter 7 in relation to the workshop designed around the school's action research cycle, the needs of Jackston Grammar were distinctive to the context of the school. The school desired that there be a further opportunity for teachers to reflect upon their learning as individuals and at each career stage. This request was consistent with the data which revealed that teachers at the school rarely had the opportunity to reflect upon or analyse their learning. The school also desired that teacher learning at the workshop be explored in a way that would enable feedback related to the horizontal dimension. They wanted school-contextualised data on how their teachers learn to both assist the executive to better know their staff, and to use in future planning of their professional development program.

Secondly, in comparison to Brooklee College where embedding the teacher professional development program strategically into school planning was a standard operation in the school's culture, the teachers at Jackston Grammar were aware that this process was being considered by the relatively new executive staff. Their need to evaluate what their staff thought about the school's approaches to professional development and resulting program was clearly expressed, and they desired a workshop which contained activities that would also enable them to collect information from their staff related to this vertical dimension of teacher professional development.

These distinctive differences in school needs led to a different approach by the researcher to enable working alongside the teachers at Jackston Grammar to be effective. The emphasis was on engagement in a workshop that would enable the school to continue with learning about both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of how their teachers learn at the school. The instruments designed for the school enabled them to conduct their own internal research

and planning processes to improve the professional learning of their teachers and their professional development program.

Three themes emerged from the workshop in relation to desired professional development within the school. These included the research and implementation of a school-based mentoring program, specific leadership training for leading teachers, and improvement to teacher accreditation processes.

The workshop resulted in a number of planning decisions being made by the school in relation to both their professional development program and their approach to teacher learning, as documented in the school-contextualised action research cycle in Part 2 of Chapter 7.

The researcher was a teacher at the second case study school in the past, is known by some teachers and knows the organisation well. Is this "participant observer one step removed" helpful to working alongside this second case study school?

The relationship that the researcher had with the second case study school was again noted as helpful to the purposes of the study. Advantages to the study included that:

- There was an enthusiasm amongst staff to volunteer for the study across career stages. Teachers who had worked with the researcher previously were keen to discuss their learning with a person who they perceived was trustworthy and who understood and respected the school's ethos and culture. Other teachers who were new to the school also considered volunteering to participate due to what they had heard about the researcher by their colleagues.
- During face-to-face interviews teachers often expressed a position of trust with the researcher, declaring that they felt relaxed and knew that confidentiality would be maintained, enabling them to be frank in their responses. This may have led to more details about the school context being shared, with one teacher saying:

  > *I know I can trust you to talk about my learning in the school because you get where I am coming from. For example sometimes I get frustrated about having no time for PD, but you understand that this isn't really a criticism of the school, just a reality with all the pressures we are under.*

- As was the case at Brooklee College, enriching the data drawn from emerging conversations by asking probing questions which were purposeful and appropriate was again possible because of a more intimate understanding of school context and ethos by the researcher.

It was also found during the school's action research cycle workshop that a knowledge of the researcher as a past employee at the school was advantageous. The staff appeared to be relaxed, and able to ask questions and provide feedback which assumed that the researcher appreciated and respected the school's ethos, and would be able to understand the comments which were made.

The same full cycle of feedback, including the provision of recommendations which resulted in the development of professional development initiatives occurred at Brooklee College because the researcher, as participant observer, also held a position on the executive. What will the action research cycle look like be at the next school, according to their needs and requests?

As described in Part 2 of Chapter 7, and in Diagram 7.2, the action research cycle at Jackston Grammar was developed in consultation with the school principal. It was designed to enable staff feedback for the school in both horizontal and vertical dimensions of the study, so the school could use this information for their ongoing planning of the school's professional development program.

What frameworks, if any, may the researcher develop to meet the needs of the second school within their contextualised action research cycle?

As detailed in Part 2 of Chapter 7, several frameworks were developed to meet the needs of Jackston Grammar:

1. Group worksheets at each career stage

These frameworks allowed for individuals and groups to consider the study data on teacher learning, and discuss this with reference to the ethos of the school. Teachers were overwhelmingly positive about this experience, making numerous verbal comments throughout the workshop and written comments on the My Thoughts reflection sheet related to what they had learnt, discussed and experienced together.

2. The Teacher Survey

This was developed in response to the principal's request that a part of the workshop would enable teachers to reflect on what they considered to be important aspects of professional development at school level, compared to what was the actual position of the school. The researcher developed a modified framework which was based on the original School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) developed for Brooklee College. This enabled the 'real' and 'actual' to be contrasted at Jackston Grammar, against good practice in the literature.

Would the school see value in using the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) developed by the researcher to also assist them to reflect upon and benchmark their professional development program against good practice in the literature?

Similar to teachers at Brooklee College, teachers at all career stages at Jackston Grammar valued the opportunity to evaluate the school's performance in relation to the vertical dimension of the planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's professional development program. They also expressed satisfaction with using the modified School Benchmarking Framework (SBF), as they considered that the benchmark categories were pertinent to the school's current learning needs in relation to the identification of specific areas for improvement to their professional development program.

Implications for the next case study

The following questions arose:

The first two case studies revealed that school needs in reflecting upon their teacher professional learning approaches and professional development program were different. Would this again become evident at the third school?

The researcher was an executive leader at the first case study school and had taught previously at the second. At the last case study school the researcher was completely unknown to staff. How will this impact, if at all, on the purpose of the study to work alongside the next case study school?

What will the action research cycle look like at the next school, according to their needs and requests?

What new or modified instruments, if any, may the researcher need to develop to meet the needs of the third school within their action research cycle? Would these be helpful in assisting the school towards the planning phase of improvement to their professional development program?

SUMMARY

This chapter has reported on the main themes emerging in the second case study school related to the implications identified from the first case study. The implications of these findings for the next case study site have been noted. Chapter 9 following describes the collection and analysis of data on how teachers learn, and the resulting action research cycle at the third case study, Maxvale College.

CHAPTER 9

CASE STUDY 3: MAXVALE COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the process for collection of data on how teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of the third case study school is described, and the results are analysed. The main themes and implications emerging from the second case study at Jackston Grammar are taken into account, beginning with the reasons for the selection of Maxvale College as the third case study site.

PART 1: COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

School context

Maxvale College is a new school which was established in 2004 and has slowly expanded, graduating its first cohort of Year 12 students in 2011. The school now teaches 200 boys from Years 3 to 12 and employs sixteen teachers. The school is a member of a foundation which has its roots in an international movement of the Catholic Church and is dedicated to assisting parents to exercise greater responsibility in the education of their children. The vision of the school is strongly focused on four tenets, which guide the school community:

- Parents as the primary educators
- Consistency between home and school
- Close co-operation between home and school
- Education tailored to the individual person

In addition to the belief that the school should support parents in their responsibility and privilege to educate their children, the school also focuses on "personalised" education, defining this as:

> *By education here we mean education beyond academic proficiency …education in values, education in our correct attitude to material goods, education in love and charity, education in freedom and justice, education in faith.*
> (Annual School Report, 2013, p. 4).

The school holds that it should be an extension of a faith believing family and that the community of teachers, parents and students work together to educate, support and nurture the students to a point of personal, intellectual, spiritual and emotional maturity.

School selection rationale

Maxvale College was selected as a site for the third case study due to a number of distinctive features which were contrasting to the first two case study schools, including:

- A small school of sixteen teachers
- A relatively new school (6 years old)
- Located in a lower socioeconomic area than the other case study schools
- A same-sex school, with all boys and all male teachers
- Completely unknown to the researcher.

Participant selection

Using the process described, participants were drawn from the voluntary pool which emerged. In all, five teachers volunteered for the study, accompanied by the principal.

Table 9.1: Teacher study participants from Maxvale College

Junior School	2
Senior School	3
Across the School	1 (Principal)
Male	6
Female	0
Years Teaching	
1-3 (Early Career Teachers)	0
4-7 (Experienced Teachers)	2
8+ (Expert Teachers)	2
8+ (Leading Teachers)	1
14+ (Executive Leaders)	1

Participants completed the Participant Information and Consent form which is included as Appendix 4.1.

STUDY SET UP WITHIN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

The school was a part of a collegial principals' network in the region and expressed an interest in being a part of the study. The researcher met with the principal and gave him the introductory school research kit, included as Appendix 3.3, and participant information and consent forms, included as Appendix 4.1, for his perusal. The principal invited the researcher

to speak to staff during a professional development day to invite voluntary participation. As a result, six teachers from a staff of sixteen volunteered to participate in the study. Although there were no early career-stage volunteers, it was thought beneficial that the study proceed for both the school and the researcher.

The principal was keen to proceed as the school was relatively new and in the process of thinking about incorporating the professional development of teachers more deeply into ongoing strategic planning. In addition, the school considered it beneficial to engage in a study that would facilitate discussion about teacher learning, the results of which could then be used by the school to improve their professional development program. Thirdly, due to the high volume of work managed by staff within a small team, the school expressed an interest in the study providing the opportunity for teachers to draw back from their daily work and individually discuss their learning with the researcher. This was regarded as a potentially beneficial professional development exercise for the voluntary participants.

Although further data would not be collected about how early career teachers learn, the researcher regarded the participation of this school as an important and significant contribution to the study. It was thought that due to the small size of the relatively new school of boys, with all male teachers, that a variety of different perspectives on how teachers learn in their school context may emerge.

The study then proceeded in the same manner as documented in the first and second case studies.

HORIZONTAL DIMENSION: TEACHER LEARNING ACROSS THE CAREER CONTINUUM

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

Early career teachers

Sample

There was one early career teacher at the school but they did not volunteer to be a part of the study.

Experienced teachers

Sample

Two experienced teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 33% of all participants interviewed at this school.

Key areas for learning

Key areas of learning for the teachers related to curriculum development and increasing their expertise as practitioners. Learning more about the Australian Curriculum in relevant subject areas was a clear priority and attending external professional development on this was noted by both as being enjoyable and useful experiences.

One teacher reflected comprehensively about how the key area of learning about classroom management had developed into a more sophisticated body of knowledge, enabling the creation of positive and purposeful learning environments as he moved out of the early career phase and into the following years. This significant area of learning early in his career had become a source of pedagogical challenge and growth, enabling him to implement more student centered learning and effectively facilitate higher order classroom discussions.

How they prioritise their learning

Responding to external pressures was cited as instrumental to prioritising learning. These influences included those external to the school, with new curriculum or student duty of care requirements mentioned. However, far more important to these teachers was arranging their learning according to school requirements and needs. Prioritising within the scope and ethos of the community was a strong theme for these teachers, who both planned much of their learning according to what they needed to know to uphold and enrich the processes and traditions of pastoral care for students at the school. This included:

> *Really reflecting upon the growth of character formation in the boys (students) and how to do this well as a main priority in my learning.*

Prioritising learning was done mainly alone and when time permitted. One teacher said that he carefully analysed his planning to ensure that his goals were aligned to school goals and priorities so he could:

> *More fully contribute to the life of the school.*

Another explained that he would like the opportunity to talk about his professional learning goals or areas of need with another teacher at the school, but within a very busy agenda this had not been something that he had requested. School implementation of a more structured mentoring approach was mentioned by the teachers as a possibility to assist teachers to set learning goals at the school.

How and in what ways they learn

Both teachers enjoyed the opportunity to talk about their own ways of learning as they had not discussed this comprehensively within the school context.

Learning styles varied between the teachers, with one preferring visual and hands-on workshops, compared to the other who preferred directed reading and perusing university research papers. Listening to lectures and sharing what they had learnt in informal collegial discussions was also mentioned.

One teacher said that they would like a more structured professional development program at the school in addition to professional development days. He also mentioned his desire to meet more regularly with teachers at similar schools who were involved with preparing curriculum and trialling teaching pedagogies with students at the same stage of learning.

Main themes on how experienced teachers learn at this school

Four themes emerged in relation to the learning of experienced teachers at this school. Enthusiasm to learn within the school context in ways which would enhance their capacity to further build the school community was prevalent. This particularly related to the areas of the school ethos of faith, pastoral care and student character formation. The teachers were highly committed to the school and actively thought about their learning in relation to the ethos and mission of the school. They considered that their learning was a part of their sacrificial commitment to the parents, students and their colleagues.

Secondly, responding to internal and external pressures was an important priority. In this small school environment, teachers at this level assisted with the responsibilities that the school had to ensure that curriculum and pastoral care content and processes conformed to internal parental expectations. The layers of leadership positions in the larger case study schools were not present, and teachers also needed to actively plan to contribute to the school's ongoing compliance to external curriculum and student wellbeing requirements.

Thirdly, the varying learning styles of the experienced teachers revealed that even within career stages, a wide variety of learning preferences existed.

Lastly, teachers expressed their pleasure in having the opportunity to talk about their learning one-to-one as the focus of the conversation, with one teacher saying:

> *I am really enjoying just talking and reflecting on my own learning. It is really incredible – a new experience.*

Implications for the school

Data emerging from teachers at this level revealed that they were highly committed teachers, dedicated to learning in ways that aligned with the school ethos and in their opinion, assisted them to further contribute to the positive effect of the school's ethos in the daily life of students, parents and colleagues. Although this may be considered to be a strength by the school, the teachers also revealed a desire for school-based provision of ongoing mentoring and more frequent conversations and structured planning of their professional learning goals.

In addition, the school could consider ways in which it could provide more networking opportunities for teachers at this level. It may be particularly useful to team these teachers with others carrying curriculum responsibilities at similarly small schools to enable the sharing of content and approaches, and further build collegiality networks.

Expert teachers

Sample

Two expert teachers volunteered to be a part of the study, 33% of all participants who volunteered to be part of the study.

Key areas for learning

A concentration on the curriculum was the key area for ongoing learning for these teachers. Teaching in a small school meant that they were the only subject specialist teachers in their area. A high level of expertise was required and learning in their curriculum areas was a key priority so that students received excellent specialist teaching.

A key area of learning was the identification of the best sources of information on subject content and pedagogical approaches. In particular, the teachers were seeking out information on assessment for learning practices, with one currently learning themselves about how to use student results more effectively in their subject area to plan the next steps in their students' learning.

Learning how to assist parents and build solid working relationships with them was nominated as a key area for ongoing learning and growth. Important to these teachers was learning how to manage student learning within the context of the whole family. They stated that it was important to the school that teachers had a deep understanding of family-based educational practices. A respect and love for the family was also mentioned as integral to working in the school community.

How they prioritise their learning

These teachers prioritised their time around two areas: curriculum and the pastoral care of students at the school. They usually planned their learning on their own, sometimes drawing upon informal conversations with colleagues in the staffroom which assisted them to reflect on what they were planning in some areas.

School expectations amidst a busy agenda were considered important priorities, but overall both teachers felt confident in understanding these expectations and considered that further learning for important but routine responsibilities, including writing reports and designing teaching programs, was not required.

One teacher kept a list of curriculum priorities related to planning units and scope and sequence documents, but this related mostly to the prioritisation of tasks to be completed, not prioritising learning related to these tasks. Similarly, the second teacher tracked his students closely in relation to their pastoral care and learning needs, making this a priority. During the individual discussions about prioritising learning, both teachers reverted to talking about prioritising their workload and time to complete key tasks professionally and thoroughly, rather than talking about prioritising their own learning as such.

How and in what ways they learn

Both teachers drew upon a range of ways in which they learnt. They were grateful for learning opportunities and so tended to accept a variety of modes of learning rather than expect that professional development delivery would necessarily marry with their preferences for learning or their career stage. To these teachers, learning in community was far more important, with one saying that:

> *I fit around what's on offer and tend to go with the flow. You can't always have what suits you in a school. You work with others and it's good to learn and share your learning in a variety of ways.*

As a result, their learning preferences were quite broad including directed reading, university study, short hands-on courses on particular skills completed during holiday time, and engagment in collegial conversations. They enjoyed lectures or group work, with one preferring visuals to be a part of a presentation if possible.

Although both teachers commented that they rarely had the opportunity to think about their learning as a focus while at school, they were enthusiastic about their learning, with one in particular commenting on the effects both personally and professionally:

> *Learning affects you personally. If you are genuinely interested in the area that you teach, then your personal and professional interests become one.*

One teacher mentioned the internet as a major source of learning, including reading websites about some of the pedagogies that they would like to try in their classroom. Online learning through downloading readings and material on curriculum and child development was also mentioned.

Although the school's professional development days were appreciated as times of collegial and communal learning, both teachers spoke about their wish for a variety of learning opportunities, both at the school and externally. This included being exposed to:

> *New processes, techniques, ideas and resources, with the sky the limit!*

Both also desired more conversations with others about their learning preferences and needs as individuals, and that the learning of teachers be discussed more deeply and regularly at the whole-school level. One teacher said that:

> *The school context is very important to my learning. I would like to see more time put aside for workshops in addition to the strategic planning and conversations that we have at professional development days.*

Main themes on how expert teachers learn at this school

The expert teachers who participated in this study were accustomed to focusing on school priorities and the thorough completion of school expectations, responsibilities and tasks. However, they were so intent on prioritising tasks that they had not reflected upon the differences in prioritising their learning, compared to prioritising the completion of everyday work. They were enthusiastic about engaging in learning when these opportunities arose at the school, and during their own time. They were also willing to be open about the ways in which they could learn, while being mindful of what could be available in a small, busy school.

Community and school-contextualised learning surfaced as being important to this career stage within a tight-knit small staff that were focused on contributing to the faith-based ethos of the school.

Implications for this school

Expert teachers at the school relished the opportunity to talk about their learning, considering it as a rare opportunity to speak one-to-one about their learning preferences, priorities and desires. This group would value school consideration about what could be implemented to provide them with more structured and regular conversations about their learning.

The learning of these teachers was sometimes isolated and they desired the opportunity to learn about new ideas and pedagogies from colleagues within their career stage. The school could consider the provision of external networking opportunities for these teachers with others at the same career stage.

Utilising these teachers' enthusiasm for innovation and the trialling and sharing of new ideas could be useful as a way to enrich the school's professional development program.

Leading teachers

Sample

One leading teacher volunteered to be a part of the study, 16% of all participants who volunteered to be part of the study.

Key areas for learning

This teacher fulfilled a variety of classroom and leadership roles within the school community. His use of pedagogical approaches was a key area of learning, particularly in enabling his students to gain confidence in learning and increasing their expectations of themselves. He had developed a series of student games to encourage study and memorisation of key syllabus content so that students could increase their capacity to use information well in essays and assessment work. His current interest was in experiential learning and in maintaining a dynamic, interesting and fast paced environment, which he had found in his research as having the capacity to enhance the learning of boys.

Another key area for learning was in the area of developing and refining pastoral care approaches at the College. He had been networking with an educational group dedicated to boys' education and had found and read papers about the pastoral care of boys on the internet and through this network.

As a leading teacher he was involved in the tutorial program which sought to implement a holistic family approach to achieving the best outcomes for students, encompassing the academic, personal and spiritual domains. He identified this role as a key area for learning, requiring ongoing reflection and improvement to increase the effectiveness of this approach.

How they prioritise their learning

Learning was prioritised according to the needs of others in the school, particularly in relation to student needs as they surfaced. This teacher had adopted a personalised approach to the ethos of service within a small school setting. A willingness to put into action the ideals of

character formation as a way of illustrating this ethos to others was at the core of his motivation for prioritising his own learning.

Discussions with the principal about strategic goals and directions were regarded as important to his own learning and influential when prioritising his learning. These discussions were also considered valuable in relation to his career development and progression as a leader in the school, and the broader school organisation.

How and in what ways they learn

This teacher was both a practical and academic learner. He enjoyed trialling pedagogical ideas and approaches in his classroom and learnt by reflecting upon how they enhanced the learning environment. He also enjoyed directed reading, reflecting upon his own learning at a university level, and how this academic environment had influenced his learning style and preferences.

Discussions with the principal and leaders at other schools were identified as important ways of learning about himself, both personally and professionally. He enjoyed being mentored by leaders, particularly within the network of leaders of similar local schools, and this had impacted on his own learning preferences and his career path. He was now in a position in this school community where he could mentor others in a variety of ways including practicum teachers, colleagues, the students and their parents, and considered that these mentoring opportunities provided many opportunities for learning.

Reflecting on his own leadership and service within the context of his school community was cited as "powerful learning" by this teacher. He actively considered his leadership and collegial qualities in the light of the school's values and what he was learning about character formation within this ethos.

This teacher also mentioned listening as an important way of learning, especially when accompanied with a "humble attitude, a willingness to change and to improve".

Main themes on how experienced teachers learn at this school

The major theme that emerged for this career stage was that learning was a personal endeavour, not just professional. This applied to all aspects of teacher learning in the study including key areas of learning, prioritisation and ways of learning. The teacher reflected upon each deeply in relation to the ethos, values and goals of the school community. Furthermore, he thought about them in the context of specific colleagues amongst the small staff in a personal and heart-felt way. His learning was both an expression of his "walk in this

community" and ideally, a model of how to reflect the school's mission to others, including colleagues, students, families and other leaders.

Implications for this school

Continuing to provide opportunities to be mentored and learn from other leaders would be important to teachers at this level. Ensuring that leading teachers could access networks of teachers with similar responsibilities could assist to build resources and organisational knowledge at the school in the areas of student pastoral care, curriculum and administration. Providing forums more regularly where leaders could mix with other leaders could also assist the school to achieve its goal for the ongoing learning of leading teachers about how to reflect upon, internalise and then model the ethos and values of this school.

Executive leaders

Sample

The principal was the chief executive leader of the school. His leadership team consisted of teachers with responsibilities for pastoral care, curriculum and administration. Information about the learning of these leaders was provided by the principal.

Key areas for learning

Key areas for learning of the executive team focused on the core operations at the school in light of its mission and service to students and families. The principal was proactive in regularly discussing and assigning areas of learning to team members. There was a focus on attaining the best learning possible and bringing it back to the school to share with others as an important contribution to the shaping of the school's ethos and policy development.

Boys' education was a key area for learning, with an example given of a team member having been requested to attend an interstate conference of the International Boys' School Coalition to:

> *Give him access to a lot of expertise in boys' education which I want him to bring back here.*

The principal considered that further learning amongst his team in the area of effective service-based leadership was an ongoing journey which was of key importance in the school community.

Continuing to work on applying personal faith and beliefs to the commitment to serve families was also a priority for all members of the executive team, including the principal. This goal was openly discussed and shared amongst the team and was a matter for both private and collegial reflection.

How they prioritise their learning

The prioritisation of learning was done in relation to strengthening and fulfilling the ethos of the school. An example was continuing to learn about faith in relation to the school's pastoral care and service to families. Other ongoing priorities were around developing teachers as tutors, which was imperative to guiding the students in the school's program of character formation.

Strategic priorities were discussed regularly by the team, which the principal regarded as tight-knit and collegial. Discussions about priorities were "sincere and enjoyable", with the team very aware of the considerable tasks to be shared and led within a small school context. Priorities for the learning of the executive team were also influenced by the needs and requests of staff. Examples provided included the feedback from staff at recent professional development days on the ways to evaluate students holistically and assist them to thrive while in the school's care. Some of the questions and issues raised led to discussion at executive level, which then influenced their learning in relation to further development and implementation of the school's pastoral care policy.

How and in what ways they learn

Learning for this group appeared to be a highly sophisticated mix of personal, professional and spiritual domains. Deep reflection and thinking about one's core beliefs and values as the basis for equipping a leader to "walk authentically" in the community was considered to be a natural way for their leaders to learn. Faith-based activities including prayer, devotions, attending chapel at school and church retreats, were also ways of learning that impacted on both personal and professional growth.

Other ways of learning included directed reading, academic study, networking with leaders outside the school and attending external professional development sessions.

Main themes on how executive leaders learn at this school

Executive leaders drew upon their personal values and Christian faith as a factor that influenced how they learnt. They used reflection and prayer individually and collectively as a part of their process of prioritising their learning.

They regarded their learning as important to upholding the school's ethos and mission, and further strengthening and enriching school practices in relation to serving families within their community.

Their learning was regarded as important to equipping them to meet the needs of others including colleagues, students and parents, and they were willing to put their personal learning needs aside for a time if required, if it meant that the needs of others were met first. This was particularly evident in their enthusiasm and commitment to learn in ways that would benefit the community most, focusing on core work including curriculum, teaching pedagogies for boys, pastoral care programs and initiatives, and the student character formation program.

Implications for this school

The high demands on the executive staff within a small school environment were evident. Their task was extensive, including the rigorous thinking required to design, implement and evaluate core policies and practices against the strategic intent of the school. Supporting teachers, many of whom were in one teacher subject departments, was also a priority. The main implication for these staff could be 'burn out.' Providing a structured mentoring program, including professional development planning, may be beneficial. Utilising staff from a larger school with a similar ethos as mentors on a regular basis may assist them in their reflective practices and general resilience to continue functioning at high levels.

FOCUS GROUP

One focus group discussed career-stage learning and professional development in the school context. Participants included four teachers across the career stages of experienced, expert and leading teachers.

How teachers learn

Teachers in the focus group were keen to talk about their own learning, but often reverted to talking about the learning of their students. They were enthusiastic educators and commented at the conclusion of the focus group that it had been:

> *Different and challenging, in a good way, to connect the learning of the boys with our own learning and see the impact our learning has on them.*

The focus group discussion revealed the close relationships between the teachers and the strong sense of collegiality that existed. Within this high atmosphere of trust, teachers explored similarities and differences in the ways in which they learnt.

An important way of learning identified by all teachers was networking with teachers from similar schools, both formally and informally. Almost immediately after discussing this, the group reverted back to talking about the learning of "the boys" in relation to attending classes or larger special events at other similar schools to improve their learning.

Discussion around learning preferences and styles revealed that teachers in the group engaged in a variety of ways of learning including directed reading, postgraduate study, hands-on experimentation, collegial conversation and listening to school leaders on professional development days.

Mentoring was identified as a major way in which teachers learnt at the school. This occurred informally, and as a result of the close collegial bonds formed across the small staff. However, the group discussed their desire for a more structured mentoring program to support teachers in their everyday work and the opportunity to discuss their learning and goals more formally at least once a year. The comment was made that they would not want the situation to become "like a box-ticking exercise" however, as was the case in schools where some had worked in the past. One commented:

> *I went through the process (of goal setting) when I first started teaching and it was just paperwork, paperwork. It was just a nuisance making people jump through hoops when they're busy enough as it is.*

The discussion which followed had the teachers agreeing that professionals at the school were:

> *Authentic and real and that such a system would need to be genuine to survive.*

The group also discussed how their professional practice had accelerated while working at the school due to the settled learning environment. One mentioned:

> *At this school I think you can focus a lot more on trying to refine your craft because the kids are quite good. There are no kids that are really difficult so you can – there are things like knowledge content you can have opportunities to work on that. So what you do within the class or discussions, or maybe you can work on writing good extended responses for the whole class and they'll really listen and work well, and you can tell they are learning well. New teachers have a good chance of developing here as opposed to other situations where you're just focusing on classroom behaviour and planning lessons and just getting them done.*

Career continuum learning

Discussion about learning across the career continuum at the school led to a group decision that career stages impacted upon both the individual and larger collegial groups in which teachers circulated.

On an individual basis, it was considered that regardless of the career stage of teachers, when coming to the school there was always:

> *A steep learning curve as you realise that in a small school you have to up-skill and multi-skill a lot, and quickly.*

This related to numerous tasks including learning how to develop scope and sequence documents over several years, updating programs, extending curriculum options, setting and

marking assessment tasks and performing important functions as a tutor in the student wellbeing system.

Regardless of the career stage, it was considered as being a totally different learning environment for all teachers and just as:

> *Difficult and exhilarating, whether one or ten years' experience.*

Expressed as important by the teachers however, was that although the learning curve of all individuals at all career stages was steep and unavoidable due to the small numbers on staff, the collegial atmosphere provided a highly supportive and fertile learning environment. Many examples of this were provided, including the way in which assistance was provided with double marking, proof reading, the formatting of documentation and the culture of genuine encouragement and positivity that surrounded the teacher.

One teacher remarked on how more experienced teachers had often provided personalised assistance and had adopted a non-judgmental approach to developing him as a teacher. He offered the following example:

> *Here it is a team. Teachers help each other across the school, no matter what subject or year group they are in. It is anything from that, to then someone sits down with me for half a day with blank pieces of paper and says, 'How do you think you'd write a program and why? And now here is an example of one and this is why I did it that way, and let's poke holes in what I've done and see how it could be improved'. So there can be a bit of a structured learning situation, yet organised or happening informally.*

Another teacher stated:

> *It's very collegial here, no matter your experience or background. It comes down a lot to individual relationships too, that can be built in a smallish staff. You don't feel like you can't approach any of your colleagues to ask for advice.*

When teachers reflected on their learning in the very early stages of their career they mentioned that they had attended external professional development sessions that had been "a waste of time." The group agreed that early career teachers in particular needed assistance to select potential learning opportunities wisely, and then be offered a time of debrief with a more experienced teacher on their return to the school, to enable them to decide on how to apply their learning to their classroom.

School-contextualised learning

Teachers openly discussed the advantages and disadvantages of learning within a small school context. They agreed that it could be limiting in terms of being able to exchange ideas, lesson resources and programs. They also mentioned that they missed gaining opposite points of

view or opinions, as teachers usually enjoyed and learnt from rigorous conversations within faculty staffrooms where a variety of opinions were present.

The teachers were active in seeking out networks and experiences at similar schools, including attendance at marking sessions in their subject areas, which assisted them to "recalibrate marking approaches and schema". Collegial friendships formed at previous schools were utilised regularly by experienced teachers, and these had become informal sources of reciprocated mentoring and support.

Although working in a small school meant that these teachers felt "isolated in terms of expertise at times", they also mentioned that there were distinct advantages. These included having more flexibility and being led by one's own professional judgment and creativity, one teacher stating:

> *I think one of the things I've really enjoyed is being able to actually organise all the programs and choose what areas I'd like to focus on, which has been great. This has increased my learning as a teacher.*

Teachers in the focus group then discussed how this sense of autonomy had led to increased confidence as learners and practitioners, and a deeper understanding of their own level of expertise. This included:

- Being able to control the budget for the area, with this responsibility increasing a sense of accountability and professionalism as a result of being trusted with this important aspect of resource building in specific areas for the school. Teachers also mentioned that this made them feel included in important decisions about their own teaching and student learning, and therefore what they needed to learn.
- Learning about the individual needs, strengths and weaknesses of students was more thorough and focused. The example was given that in a small school, where one teacher teaches all classes in a particular subject, monitoring assessment for learning practices and support needs was easier and more efficient. Whereas in some schools "students may fall through the cracks", it was considered that students could be tracked carefully over the years of their attendance at the school. When asked how this impacted on teacher learning, the discussion included examples of how knowing particular students well had led to teachers individually seeking out knowledge or information on pedagogical practices to meet student needs. This learning was achieved through attendance at external professional development activity, speaking to other teachers at the school or follow-up investigations on the internet.

- The opportunity to accelerate one's learning in relation to teaching senior students was regarded as an important bonus to working in a small school. One teacher shared his learning journey from a large to small school:

> *When I first started teaching, basically the idea of teaching a senior class was just a – it was very much hierarchical, you do your time. I never got a look in, in terms of Year 11 and 12, and basically all my assessments and my exams were prepared for me. I was given the content that I had to teach. My main objective was to look after the class, teach the material, make sure that the boys – make sure they handed in their assessments on time, marked them and they stayed on task, and their behaviour as well, right. But in terms of basically my head of department – we had a department of 10-15 people. Basically he would turn up at the start of term and say, 'Here is your assessment schedule for X, Y and Z, here's the assessments they've all done, these are the dates that you give them out, these are the dates that they're due. Any questions ask me later'.*
>
> *They were great – high quality programs and assessments so in a way fantastic for a new teacher, and it was a great department, but when I came here I'd moved into a situation where I had to grade an essay out of 25 and I had to be able to tell the difference between a 24 and 25. So it could take me hours to mark a set of papers, because before you could just grab the matrix. So in a small school context, all of a sudden I was – my head of department was great, he just said to me, 'I need you to write a set of programs'. I'd never seen anything like it and I said, 'Well I can't do that'. He said, 'Well you go away and do it and bring them back and we'll talk about it'. Here at this school I got individualised and personalised attention. My head teacher gave me in-house learning and in a lot of ways, it was like learning on the job, and the feedback from him was so vital and spot-on that within six months I was writing my own programs, assessment tasks etc., and learning how to reflect on them to improve them. I thought, 'Gee I've came a long way in six months.' If I had – for my first three years of teaching to never have had to do this much and to all of a sudden be teaching and writing and evaluating a program in six months, I thought, 'Gee now I'm really learning – I felt like I was developing'.*

Other teachers in the focus group expressed similar experiences about how the small, collegial nature of the staff had led to their growth in the use of pedagogy and assessment practices, and in their understanding of student needs and development.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE: HOW TEACHERS LEARN AT THIS SCHOOL COMPARED TO THE LITERATURE ON TEACHER LEARNING

Results

Appendix 9.1 details the data collected from the teacher questionnaire. Numerical values were used to ascertain the number of responses given by participants to the particular questions and categories. Teachers were also able to write comments in each section if desired.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the literature on how teachers learn identified a range of aspects. The teacher questionnaire grouped these aspects into focus areas. The following table contains the total number of teacher responses from Maxvale College in the questionnaire to each mode of learning:

Table 9.2: Teacher responses to modes of learning

Ways (modes) of learning	Responses Agree/Strongly Agree	Responses Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Collaborative	9	5
Reflection	8	6
Hands-on and creative	7	4
Feedback from students and colleagues	11	3
Collegial conversation	9	2
Within the school context	21	5
Directed study, reading and writing	10	2
Observation and being taught by others	7	7

Discussion

Questionnaire results both confirmed and added new dimensions to the data collected from the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussion. Learning *collaboratively* was favoured, reflecting the data collected at all career stages that teachers at the school were extremely collegial and supportive of one another. The agree/strongly disagree result in this mode of learning was accompanied by comments that referred to the lack of time to learn deeply using collaboration. Learning through *collegial conversations* returned strong results, reflecting the close relationships between teachers that were evident during the focus group discussion, and mentioned regularly during the face-to-face interviews. However, data which arose within these two modes of learning enabled the researcher to identify important aspects about teacher learning in this school context.

Firstly, the *collaborative* learning which took place was that which occurred randomly and informally. Collaborative learning opportunities which would require some degree of school-wide planning such as team teaching, observation and debriefing of lessons were noted on the survey by most teachers as rarely occurring. Some teacher comments indicated a desire for this type of professional development to occur on a regular basis.

Learning through *collegial conversations*, which was regularly mentioned in the face-to-face interviews, was again identified as a strong area of learning, but only in relation to randomly occurring or lunchroom style conversations. Teachers noted on the surveys that opportunities to learn deeply through planned professional conversations were limited. Although the survey

scores indicated a highly collegial workplace, teacher comments indicated that one result of teachers taking responsibility for their learning was that they tended to learn alone and sometimes felt isolated. Data also indicated that the school was not currently utilising the high regard amongst teachers for collaborative and collegial learning in their professional development program.

As was found in the face-to-face interviews, teachers at Maxvale College had a high preference for engaging autonomously in *directed study, reading and writing,* particularly university study. The teacher questionnaire provided data which clarified this preference further in that this propensity to study alone could result from a number of factors. Data from the leadership team indicated that it was held that teachers, while supported and encouraged, were responsible for their own learning as professionals. This ideal, coupled with limited planned opportunities for more focused collegial discussion, observation or more structured and regular opportunities to learn collaboratively, could provide the reasons why teachers in this school context tended to learn deeper pedagogical approaches often on their own, using self or university sourced information.

It also emerged that while teachers often engaged in academic reading as a way to guide their own learning, there was little available at school level to assist them to methodically reflect upon their learning and apply it to their teaching. For example, at the time of the study the professional development program at the school did not provide them with resources such as action or inquiry learning scaffolds, or structured mentoring that could be used to guide, document and then reflect upon the use of new ideas in their classrooms.

Learning within the school context scored highly, with teachers commenting on the way in which their learning was supported by, and aligned to, the school's ethos. However, low scores were recorded for teacher opportunities to be involved with the planning, coordination or evaluation of the internal professional development program within the school context.

VERTICAL DIMENSION: TEACHER LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Website and documentation review

A detailed review of the school's website and documentation in relation to teacher learning is included as Appendix 9.2.

At the time of the study there were no policy or planning documents available specifically related to the professional learning of teachers or the school's professional development program. An overview of content for professional development days revealed an emphasis on

discussion about the school's ethos, mission and faith statements. Sessions on these days directly related to thinking deeply about the relationship between teachers and parents, and the ways in which this relationship in the school community had the potential to enhance student learning.

School documentation emphasised the importance of the teacher in maintaining and modeling the virtues, or 'strength of character' being taught to the students. Their contribution to the life of the school and those they led was regarded as essential to enhancing their own roles in the community and the very authenticity of the school's statements about education, learning and life.

Emerging themes on school leadership views about teacher learning at this school

The face-to-face interview question schedule for executive leaders (Appendix 4.4) and the executive questionnaire (Appendix 3.2) were designed to enable executive staff to broadly reflect on how teachers learn at the school and the school context for their learning. Data used in this section was drawn from the principal and a teacher who was both a leading teacher and a member of the executive team. A number of themes emerged in relation to what school leaders thought about how teachers learn in this school context. When analysing this data from the executive it was difficult to separate it into the categories of *the nature of teacher learning* and *teacher learning in the school context* because it emerged that the school context so influenced the nature of teacher learning at the school.

THE NATURE OF TEACHER LEARNING

Teachers as professionals

The school's leadership considered that the professional nature of teachers at Maxville College was embedded in the larger picture of faith-based motivation to improve and excel as practitioners as a means of service to the community. According to the principal, the personal and professional were not separable, as:

> *There is a well-known expression that a school can't rise above its staffroom. You can't deliver to the kids what you haven't got in your own lives.*

A professional teacher at Maxvale was regarded as one who could engage personally and academically with the students and be capable of teaching empathy, fairness, justice and virtues of character, while modeling these 'from the inside out'. Teachers should also be able to engage well with parents and be regarded by them as authentic and knowledgeable about curriculum, the progress of the students and 'about life'.

Teacher love of learning

The leadership was of the opinion that teachers were accountable for their learning and that this arose from an intrinsic love of learning. This was regarded as essential as it was thought that only an authentic passion for learning could be effectively passed onto the students. Of importance was that teachers had a love of learning outside of their curriculum areas which encompassed their life experiences, reflections, learning in and about relationships, ongoing spiritual growth and their empathy for humanity. Respecting and valuing this learning would help students move to a "deeper understanding of their position in the world".

Transformative learning

Just as the school sought to emphasise the development of human virtues in the students, so too it was hoped that what teachers learnt at the school both personally and professionally would contribute to transforming their character and assist them to grow spiritually, ethically and in strength of character. The school's vision and ethos, considered to be a truthful and correct view of the educational task, embraced and undergirded the learning of all of the school community, including teachers.

Effective teacher learning

Effective teacher learning was described as that which would enable the teacher to confidently implement engaging and purposeful lessons for the students. However, just as important was learning that enabled teachers to model the core principles of the school within the community. Learning how to communicate well with parents in meaningful ways and importantly, how to establish and maintain fruitful relationships with parents to support them to educate their children, were indicators that teacher learning had been effective.

Learning is personal and devotional

The conversations about teacher learning with the principal often gravitated towards the concept that teacher learning was that which was deep and personal. This related to the idea that teachers were not only accountable to be continuous learners so their practice improved, but that the ethical and spiritual levels were core motivators for learning. Teacher learning was a part of faith supported character formation, and was seen and recognised as such within the school community.

TEACHER LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Being a relatively new school, the principal was keen for teacher professional development initiatives to be considered more holistically in the school's strategic plan. It was stated however, that teacher learning by nature at this school was essentially strategic all the time, as

learning within the ethos of the school and then modeling and sharing this within the community, was an important premise of the school's strategic intent.

Coordination of professional development

Within a small school environment, creative ways of designing and delivering an internal professional development program had to be found. At present the principal led the development of the program with a focus on professional development days. He was assisted by his leading teacher, who oversaw the student pastoral and character formation programs.

The principal was interested in continuing his learning about best practice in the delivery of professional development to teachers, this being a contributing factor to his enthusiasm for the school to be involved in the study. It was mentioned that it would be beneficial to be able to have teacher professional development delegated to someone's role in order to assist teachers to select external professional development courses carefully, and according to an ongoing plan for learning in particular areas.

Teacher character and learning

A recurrent theme emerged of the impact of the teacher's character on their motivation to learn and their approach to their learning. For example, it was important that teachers modeled learning to the students because:

> *The boys learn more from what they see, as opposed to what they hear.*

It was also important to be humble and to be able to take professional criticism and feedback, with one commenting from a book they had read:

> *Until you accept that you know nothing, only when you accept that you know nothing, do you begin to learn. If you see everything as personal criticism you can't advance. You need to sit back and evaluate and sort of say 'Well okay, is there something here for me to look at? Yes there is. Well what am I going to do?' Because then you can only get better, and importantly, it makes you a better person.*

The impact of a small school context

The leadership was aware that the busy workloads of teachers, often as the only specialist or year teacher in the school, impacted upon their time to both reflect upon and plan their learning. However it was considered that as the school continued to grow, that roles and responsibilities related to pastoral care, curriculum development and teacher learning could be delegated and centralised in some areas, thereby enabling teachers to "do less juggling of tasks". However the leadership considered that the small school context was also highly beneficial to the learning of teachers on the school site. The synergy in common purpose,

commitment to school ethos and the "in it together" attitude provided an environment of intrinsic motivation and sense of collegiality that led to:

Fertile professional conversation, one-on-one assistance and follow up.

CONCLUSION TO DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS – MAXVALE COLLEGE

To this point this chapter has reported on the findings about what teachers and leaders thought about the learning of teachers in the context of Maxvale College. The next step for the researcher was to provide feedback on this data to the school, and in doing so, initiate the next action research cycle unique to the needs of this school.

PART 2: SCHOOL-CONTEXTUALISED ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE

Data emerging from this case study suggested unique circumstances related to the ways teachers learn due to a small school context. In addition, the newness of the school meant that approaches to developing a strategic, comprehensive and sustainable professional development program for teachers were at the initial stages. The school's principal was enthusiastic about developing a school-contextualised workshop which would generate further teacher learning and support the school to gain further insights relating to the professional development of its teachers.

The study's face-to-face interviews revealed that teachers at Maxvale College had expressed high interest in setting learning goals. As instruments such as professional learning plans are usually the outcome of a teacher professional review and development process within individual schools, it was thought that developing a workshop where teachers completed such personalised professional learning plans was outside the scope of the study. However, it was thought that facilitating further teacher learning about themselves as learners at their current career stage, and exploring how this may impact upon the school's ongoing planning of their professional development program, would be both useful to the school and its teachers, as well as being appropriate to the study.

Benefits to the school and teachers

The principal was enthusiastic about the possibility of customising a workshop's approach, content and frameworks to the unique ethos and circumstances of the school. The two factors of being a new school and having a small staff had meant that human and physical resources had been largely devoted to starting up curriculum programs, forming relationships with students and parents, developing pastoral programs and establishing a presence in the community. The principal saw this opportunity of facilitated discussion as a useful step towards now establishing a focus on teacher professional development and learning.

Due to leaders and teachers having important and significant levels of responsibilities, time and energy to develop a strategic professional development program had not been available. As a result, the program mostly consisted of professional development days, which focused on school ethos, curriculum and pastoral program development. It was considered by the principal that the workshop would be useful to further support teachers in their understanding of themselves and each other as learners, as well as providing data which could be used by the school to jump-start a focus on school planning for the professional development of teachers. The workshop was therefore contextualised to enable feedback from teachers to generate both horizontal and vertical data for the school's use in the planning phase of the action research cycle.

Benefits to the study

Although the small size of the school resulted in less generation of data, it was considered by the researcher as a prime candidate for the study, being a small, community-based, multicultural school in a low socioeconomic area, and desiring input around the professional development of their teachers. The school's ethos was one of meeting the needs of students and families with a number of educational and social disadvantages, including English as a second language and having less access to a range of educational resources and support systems. It was considered that working alongside Maxvale College through facilitating an action research cycle, within a small school which had previously little time to devote to reflecting upon teacher learning and the planning of teacher professional development, would be beneficial to the school and could provide new insights for the study.

Workshop feedback and frameworks

As with the previous two case studies, specific frameworks were produced to be appropriate to the school's ethos, optimise the learning of their particular teachers, and generate school-contextualised data for use by the school in the planning phase of the action research cycle.

A PowerPoint summarising the data collected at the three case study schools was presented as feedback to the school and is included as Appendix 9.3. The principals of Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar supported the use of the data collected in the study from their schools being incorporated into the feedback to Maxvale College. Presenting data from all three case studies provided more information about career-stage learning to the teachers than if the data had only been drawn from that generated at Maxvale College. It was important for confidentiality to immerse the data from Maxvale College, drawn from only six voluntary participants, into the data from the first two case studies. Also, a presentation of the data from

the three case studies enabled teachers at Maxvale College to consider teacher learning at the early career stage, as there had been no participants at this career stage volunteer for the study from the school.

School-contextualised frameworks were designed to meet the desired school outcomes and the learning needs of Maxvale College teachers. These frameworks are included as Appendix 9.4.

1. Maxvale College teacher learner profile

   The data from the three case studies was used to develop a learner profile, included as Appendix 9.4a, for each career stage – early career, experienced, expert, leading teacher and executive leader. Confidentiality for the teachers at Maxvale College who had participated in the study was assured, as the profile sheet contained a mixture of data on how teachers learn from the three case studies.

2. Teacher Survey: Professional development program teacher feedback

   The Teacher Survey, included as Appendix 9.4b, was based on the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) which was developed for Brooklee College, as discussed in Chapter 5 of the thesis. It was designed to suit the context of Maxvale College which, at their early stage of planning professional development programs, wished to gain teacher feedback on the school's professional development program, while benchmarking their progress against the literature. This survey was designed to enable the school to collect data from each career stage on the vertical dimension of school-based teacher professional development.

3. Career continuum professional development ideas teacher feedback

   This framework, included as Appendix 9.4c, enabled teachers to reflect upon their discussions about teacher learning in the school context and complete an exercise which drew together and summarised horizontal and vertical data. This could then be used by the school in the planning phase of the action research cycle.

These frameworks were completed in the workshop and left at the school for their use within the planning phase of the action research cycle.

A My Thoughts feedback sheet, included as Appendix 9.5, was issued at the conclusion of the workshop to encourage final teacher reflection on learning. This was collected by the researcher and used to triangulate the data collected in the study.

The cycle of action research at Maxvale College is explained in the following section and summarised diagrammatically at the end of the chapter.

THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE AT MAXVALE COLLEGE

Action

Feedback of data to the school

The PowerPoint presentation of the study data from the three case studies was presented, including a description of the study to both refresh the memory of participants, and inform others who had not participated. The explanation provided about the school-based action research cycle positioned teachers at the reflection and learning phases so they could see how their input during the workshop may assist the school at the planning phase of the school's action research cycle.

Development of school-contextualised workshop and frameworks

The purpose of the workshop was explained to the whole staff in relation to the benefits for teacher learning and whole-school reflection on the school's current professional development practices. Future planning of teacher professional development would also be enhanced through the opportunity for teachers to provide feedback on both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning at the school through completing frameworks that had been specifically tailored to the needs of Maxvale College.

Reflection

Building learner profiles

Teachers were given the Maxvale College Teacher Learner Profile sheets relevant to their career stage to read and consider individually. The purpose of this exercise was to allow teachers to individually reflect upon themselves as learners, using the data generated by the study about how teachers learn at each career stage, in their school context. From this data, teachers at Maxvale College selected which criteria applied most to them and added other information if desired, enabling them to formulate a personalised learner profile, while generating horizontal dimension data for the school.

The Learner Profile was then used in relation to the unique school context of Maxvale College, assisting teachers to provide feedback on what style of professional development they would like to see occur at the school within a school-based professional development program. School context was considered, which enabled the collection of data related to the vertical dimension of teacher learning. In this way, both horizontal and vertical data were generated for the school to use in the planning phase of their new action research cycle.

Teachers then formed groups at their career stages. They discussed their learner profiles, and tentative professional development ideas, gaining feedback and knowledge about themselves and others as learners. They then added any group ideas about relevant and helpful professional development activities onto their learner profile sheets. A whole group discussion on their individual and group work then proceeded.

School Benchmarking Survey – Maxvale College Teacher Survey - professional development program feedback

The researcher refreshed the group's knowledge about the vertical dimension of the study, which considers school-based approaches to professional development, and explained the benefits to the school in collecting this data from their teachers. The process of developing the benchmarking survey for Maxvale College, which was based on the SBF and related to the literature about teacher professional development, was also discussed. The teachers completed the Teacher Survey framework and discussed their feedback.

Learning

Career continuum professional development ideas

In career-stage groups teachers discussed what they had learnt through completing the learner profile and teacher survey activities. They then completed the Career continuum professional development ideas sheet to provide a summary of feedback to the school about what sort of professional development the school could consider adding to their professional development program. Teachers were encouraged to consider this in the light of the distinctive ways in which teachers learn across career stages, and their specific school context in relation to ethos and culture.

Triangulation and teacher reflection

To further triangulate the data, the researcher issued the My Thoughts reflection sheet for teacher completion. This allowed teachers to reflect upon what they had learnt across the horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning in the context of their school.

Planning

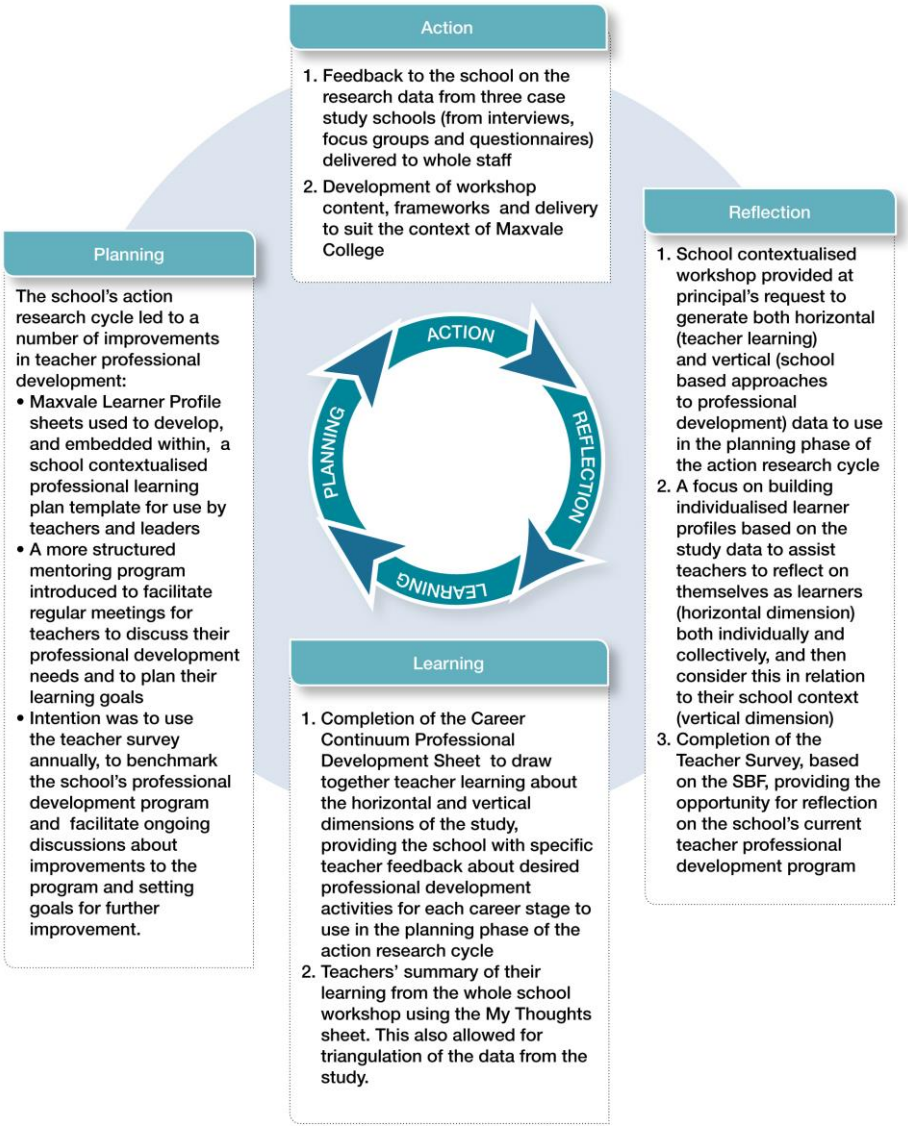
The workshop led to a number of planning decisions by the school including:

- The development of a school-contextualised professional learning plan which included a section for teachers to describe their learner profile, based on what they had learnt from the workshop.

- School-wide discussion about the implementation of a whole-school mentoring program which was focused on the development of professional learning goals based on the teacher's learner profile and school goals.
- Ongoing evaluation of the professional development program, with reference to the career continuum professional development sheets and the teacher survey to enable regular benchmarking of the school's professional development program against good practice in the literature.

A diagrammatical summary of the school's action research cycle is included below.

Diagram 9.1: Maxvale College action research cycle



SUMMARY

This chapter has reported the data collected at the third case study school and the whole-school action research cycle which followed. Although the researcher was unknown to the community before the study began, working alongside this school within its unique context was found to be beneficial to teacher learning and the school's ongoing planning at their professional development program.

Chapter 10 which follows discusses the main themes which emerged from the third case study and new insights into teacher learning which arose in relation to the two previous case study sites.

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CHAPTER 10

REFLECTIONS ON MAXVALE COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

A number of implications and questions arose from working in the second case study school, Jackston Grammar. These are discussed in relation to the key themes which arose, and new perspectives which emerged when working alongside Maxvale College are noted.

HOW TEACHERS LEARN ACROSS THEIR CAREER CONTINUUM

Teachers learn differently according to their career stage

Implications noted in Chapter 8

Would data reveal that even within the same career stages, teachers learn differently in the context of this third school?

Even with the smaller sample size of participation in the study at Maxvale College, it was again found that common trends continued in relation to teacher learning within each career stage, but that teachers also learn differently within each career stage. For example, the participants at experienced teacher level were both mindful of aligning learning with the ethos of the school and in focusing their attention on curriculum development. However, learning styles and preferences differed considerably between the primary and secondary teachers, with one more comfortable with lectures, academic reading and self-paced research, while the other preferred hands-on workshops and the opportunity to network with teachers from other schools.

Within the expert teacher career stage the same trend was found; mainly common elements for learning but also distinctive differences in style and preferences. Both expert teachers were confident in their approaches to their multi-facetted roles within a small school, and able to speak at length and in detail about the ways in which they took into account the ethos and priorities of the school in relation to their learning.

New data emerged at this case study school about how school contexts may affect career-stage learning.

First, group discussion at the action research cycle workshop indicated that teachers were happy to adjust their learning preferences to suit the school context. The experienced teacher group openly talked about how they had channelled their energy into learning around aspects of school ethos, such as how to assist students as a part of a family unit, rather than other areas of their teaching. They also spoke about restricting, or putting a "cap" on their learning

to match the resources available to them at the school for teacher learning, including human resources and funding. This group was found to adjust their thinking and expectations about learning to align with school ethos and resourcing more than any other career stage in the three case study schools.

Secondly, teacher feedback during the workshop provided an insight into how teachers could apply the data on teacher learning across the career continuum to further analyse their own learning. The discussion within career stages was animated and teachers in the expert teacher group began drawing a chart of quadrants which contained areas of development that were common to the group. They then used this to complete the Career continuum teacher feedback sheet later in the workshop.

Would different ideas again emerge about teacher learning that appear to be influenced by the school's ethos?

School ethos was again found to be an influence on teachers' ideas about their learning. This surfaced strongly at the workshop when teachers discussed their learner profiles. The teachers engaged in enthusiastic discussion about how the school context influenced their learning to an extent that they had not recognised in the past. Influences were perceived as both positive, including collegiality and having the opportunity to perform multi-facetted roles, and negative, including the time poor environment and level of resources available.

The school's mission to serve families, empower parents in the education of their children and encourage character formation in the students were strong themes in teacher discussion throughout the workshop. Teachers saw themselves as a committed team with common purposes and thought that this not only did, but should impact on their learning, if they were to be "good" teachers at Maxvale College. This was defined as:

> *Likes teaching boys and prepared to be engaged with the whole family.*
>
> *Knows and shares and enjoys the school ethos and communicates well with the boys and families.*
>
> *Passionate about the content area and teaching boys and educating parents.*
>
> *Drawing boys into character formation as it is at this school.*

When discussing the impact of this on their profiles as learners, comments made included:

> *Willingness in your learning to be caring, patient, flexible, adaptable, a good communicator and resourceful.*
>
> *Able to adapt your thinking and learning to the values of the school.*

The workshop provided triangulation of the data collected in the study at Maxvale College in that teacher learning and identity was found to be intimately influenced by the school's ethos and culture.

Teacher learning has an impact on teachers

Implications noted in Chapter 8

The school context in the first two case study schools influenced thinking in the schools about teacher learning and teachers as learners. Does school context affect what teachers and leaders think about teacher learning and identity in this third case study school? If so, how and in what ways does it do so?

New data emerged at Maxvale College when compared to the distinctive ways that teacher learning impacted upon the way that teachers thought about themselves at the first two case study schools.

The multi-faceted roles that all teachers had at Maxvale College provided an insight into the contrasting teacher learning environment within small, compared to larger schools. Teachers felt both isolated in their learning and highly enthusiastic and challenged by the higher level of autonomy, creativity and accountability within one teacher departments or year groups. As a result, teachers at the school drew upon collegiality and common mission to reduce the isolating effects often caused by being the only year or subject specialist at the school. This then impacted the school, further strengthening the commitment of staff to the vision and the development of a mission focused team.

Secondly, the multi-facetted roles also led to inbuilt, self-generated and highly targeted professional learning. Teachers engaged in their own cycles of professional development, which was usually focused on evaluating the impact of their practice on the learning of their students. This cycle began with determining, usually alone, what needed to be learnt, sourcing this learning, again, often alone, or after a random discussion in passing with another teacher or leader. They then engaged in the professional development activity, reflected upon what had been learnt, developed resources that were improved as a result of what had been learnt, contextualised this to the school's learning environment and students, implemented the learning in the classroom, and finally, evaluated the impact on student learning.

The school context also affected what teachers and leaders thought about teachers at the school. Leaders readily referred to teachers as "the team" collectively, and as "capable", "dedicated" and "committed", individually. Teachers themselves exuded a humble, quiet

confidence in their capacities as practitioners during the study's face-to-face interviews. Their identity was connected intimately with the school's vision to serve families and the perceived opportunity to positively influence the emotional, spiritual and personal growth of 'the boys'.

The school's values of service, respect and common mission were also obvious in the ways that teachers mingled, discussed and provided feedback during the workshop at the school. Again, school context was found to have a significant impact on what teachers and leaders thought about teacher identity and learning.

Catering for career continuum learning is only just beginning

Implications noted in Chapter 8

How, if at all, is this school dealing with the career-stage learning of teachers?

Learning along the career continuum had not been considered at school level at the time of the study. School documentation and artefacts had little reference to teachers or their learning. During face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions, teachers demonstrated curiosity and motivation to learn more about teacher learning, including along the career continuum. As a result of the study, the principal was also keen for teachers to learn more detail about themselves as learners, according to their career stage. These factors contributed to the development of the Teacher Learner Profile framework used in the action research cycle workshop.

The My Thoughts feedback sheet from the whole-school workshop indicated that teachers had thoroughly enjoyed learning about teacher learning in general, and specifically about teacher learning within career stages. Comments included:

> *The importance of individual learning was made obvious by looking at how individuals are a part of a bigger invisible group – the career level you are on.*
>
> *Through talking to other teachers at the same career level it opened up new ideas about teacher learning and made me more aware of my own learning.*
>
> *I learnt that we learn differently at career stages. Is this important to the school? Should it be, or doesn't it really matter?*

Accreditation as teacher learning

Implications noted in Chapter 8

Does the school context impact on what teachers know about, and how they regard, teacher accreditation?

Teachers knew very little about teacher accreditation frameworks or processes in NSW. All participants in the study were classed as "existing teachers" in NSW and as a result, were not required to engage in government-driven teacher accreditation programs. Aside from the

principal, participants had very little knowledge about the professional teaching standards and at the time of the study, the professional teaching standards were not being used by the school in their professional development program. These factors worked together to result in teachers at Maxvale College not being up to date in their knowledge about State or national expectations of teachers, nor the possibility of using the professional standards of teachers to reflect upon practice. As the government implemented accreditation frameworks are based on teacher career stages, minimal knowledge about them may have also contributed to a reduced awareness about the career stages of teachers.

On returning to the school to participate in the implementation of the action research cycle, the number of early career teachers had grown to three. Similar to Jackston Grammar, these teachers expressed definite opinions about wanting more clarification at school level about teacher accreditation processes and the implementation of a more formalised and consistent approach. They also provided feedback within the whole group discussion that they would like all teachers at the school to know about teacher accreditation so that their needs and development were understood, and shared as a communal priority.

HOW TEACHERS LEARN IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR SCHOOL

School context is important to teachers

Implications noted in Chapter 8

School context was found to be important in relation to teacher learning in different ways at Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar. Would it be regarded as important to teachers at this case study school, and if so, in what ways?

School context was again considered important to teachers at the third case study school. They aligned their thinking with the school's imperatives in relation to the pastoral care of students, character formation, and supporting parents to educate their children. They then considered it appropriate to focus on these attributes of school life at school professional development days. However, an emerging theme at the school was the desire to learn more about other areas of teaching and learning in a consistent ongoing fashion. Mentoring, goal setting and networking with teachers at other schools with a similar ethos was also desired.

Feedback from the experienced and expert groups during the workshop again revealed that teachers desired more focus on professional development related to pedagogical ideas, ICT integration and the development of teaching resources. They commented on the usefulness of the content of professional development days which related to school ethos and pastoral policies, but requested that a broader and ongoing professional development program be

designed which concentrated on a range of teaching skills that were valued and could be developed within the College ethos.

The coordination of the professional development program was cited as very important to learning at one school, and not at all important at the next. How would teachers at this third case study school regard the impact of the coordination and delivery of a school-based professional development program on their learning?

Most teachers at Maxvale College expressed the desire for a more comprehensive professional development program at the school. They were not however, easily able to articulate what this may look like in any detail. They were also unsure about how such a program may be coordinated in the school in ways that could be contextually beneficial and effective.

To enable teachers individually and collectively to reflect upon and learn more about possibilities for developing a school-based professional development program, the researcher provided the "Teacher Survey" framework as a stimulus in the workshop. This framework was received with great interest by the group, who asked more questions about the literature and good practice in the delivery of professional development programs. Discussion within the workshop revealed that teachers collectively appreciated the opportunity to learn about the vertical dimension of teacher learning within school contexts, to benchmark the school's current performance, and provide feedback for improvement.

Teachers at Brooklee College cited learning with their peers as professionally significant. At Jackston Grammar, learning with peers included professional, personal and spiritual dimensions, all related to school vision and ethos. Would teachers at this case study school consider learning with their peers as important, and if so, would school context again be as significant in shaping these perspectives?

At Maxvale College new and different perspectives on learning with peers emerged when compared to Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar. Working with peers towards the realisation of school ethos in the lives of students and parents was clearly of great significance, but learning with peers was not as imperative. Teachers at Maxvale College had become accustomed to collegial learning in relation to ethos and pastoral care, while learning more individually and alone in relation to pedagogy and subject content. This individual learning had grown out of the context of a small school where teachers may be the only grade teacher in the junior school, or subject teacher in the senior school. At the time of the study, teacher perceptions varied in relation to the differences between collegial learning of the 'big

picture' and predominantly individual learning about their own teaching practice. Participants in the study stated that they had not substantially reflected on the differences in their learning until participating in the face-to-face interviews.

Teachers understood and accepted their school context and the advantages and disadvantages this had on their learning. During the workshop discussion, teachers used their increased knowledge about their learning to make realistic suggestions about how to assist them when experiencing isolation. Suggestions included that the school could establish an internal mentoring program, as well as developing broader teacher networks through periodically hosting visitors from similar schools to engage in discussions about their stage and subject areas.

The impact of school vision and ethos

Implications noted in Chapter 8

How does school vision and ethos impact upon the school's planning for teacher professional development and does this effect teacher learning?

As mentioned, the school's planning for teacher professional development at the time of the study focused on the use of annually scheduled professional development days. The emphasis of professional learning on these days was closely linked to the ethos and mission of the school. Discussion was usually led by the principal and then continued amongst staff. The content of these days was usually about enriching teacher/parent relationships, case studies on how to assist particular students, modelling and teaching the school's values, personalised learning approaches and character formation programs. Teachers also received personal time to work on curriculum and the development of resources. Thus, Maxvale's ethos directly affected the choice of content for their annual teacher professional development program.

Workshop discussion allowed teachers to unpack this emphasis and suggest other professional development areas that would also link to the school's ethos, while targeting desires for greater pedagogical and leadership learning.

The My Thoughts feedback sheet comments further supported the themes which emerged from the workshop discussion. Consistently nominated areas for teacher professional development included networking with other similar schools, investigating the implementation of a whole-school mentoring program and being provided with the opportunity to regularly evaluate the professional development program.

How does school ethos impact, if at all, on teacher development of educational philosophy and identity?

Face-to-face interviews at the college revealed a highly developed awareness amongst teachers of their role as teachers and pastoral carers at the College. Their educational philosophy was directly linked to regarding students as academic and spiritual people who are members of a family, reflecting the school tenet of assisting parents to develop their children academically, personally, spiritually and in values and character formation. As a result, teacher identity was closely aligned to these precepts. A sense of empowerment and a belief in a higher mission to fulfil, similar to that which had emerged at Jackston Grammar, contributed to their sense of identity.

During the workshop, school ethos was again found to impact upon teachers' philosophy about teaching in relation to their perceived roles as teachers at this school. One group of teachers talked about completing some professional development about how to best help families from working class and ESL backgrounds. They discussed possibilities about attending a workshop by a welfare agency or a similar provider which covered the psychological, emotional and physical needs of these types of families, enabling them to gain more empathy and knowledge of how to support students and parents.

The impact of school resourcing

Implications noted in Chapter 8

How, if at all, do teachers perceive that school resourcing, including human resources in relation to the development of a professional development program, impacts on teacher learning?

During face-to-face and focus group discussions teachers expressed both an awareness and positive acceptance of the school's small size and socioeconomic position, resulting in tight budgeting and less resources available for teacher professional development. During the workshop, teachers' respect for this school community was obvious, with the discussion around the benchmarking of the school's resourcing for teacher professional development being expressed sensitively. The idea of having someone in the school with more focused attention on planning teacher professional development was raised by staff, and noted by the principal as an item worthy of future discussion in the ongoing planning phase of the action research cycle.

The impact of school leadership

Implications noted in Chapter 8

Teacher perception of school leadership was found to affect teachers' attitudes to their learning at the first two case study sites. Would this again be found at this third school?

Teacher perception of school leadership was again found to shape teachers' attitudes to their learning, but in different ways to that found at Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar. Due to often being the only grade or subject teacher at the school, teachers were already performing middle leadership functions, and were more knowledgeable about the concept of "teacher leader" than teachers at the previous case study schools. They were responsible for programming, curriculum development, scope and sequencing of outcomes and assessments, and maintaining quality, regular feedback and reporting to students and parents. These responsibilities were enjoyed by the teachers and impacted positively upon both their professional identity and their learning. In particular, teachers at the expert stage regarded the opportunity to multitask and perform leadership functions as a learning opportunity, with one saying:

> *I have learnt so much about how things really work – the process of having an idea as a teacher, implementing it in the classroom, seeing how it goes using it for an assessment or whatever, designing the whole thing and then telling students, and parents depending on the parent, why I have done this to help my students get the work and learn more themselves.*

Are there "significant others" in leadership in relation to teacher learning at this third school?

Teachers at the expert and leading teacher career stages identified the principal as a "significant other". He was regarded as a strong and capable leader, learned in his understanding of the school's ethos, authentic in his commitment and faith, and dedicated to the outworking of the community's vision and values. One teacher mentioned the significant discussions he had experienced with the principal about his learning and leadership development. At the time of the study, expert and experienced teachers expressed a desire for more time with the principal or another leader, with the responsibility for teacher professional development, with whom to discuss their learning.

The lack of time with a "significant other" in these career stages was a concern to the teachers at the time of the study. This also emerged strongly during the whole-school discussion at the feedback workshop. Teachers expressed a desire to be allocated a leader/mentor, either from within the school or from another local similar school, with whom they could have ongoing

discussions about their development. The suggestion was made that this could include setting learning goals for both pedagogical approaches and career development.

Do leaders and teachers at the school think similarly about teacher learning, and does this impact on teacher learning at the school?

Distinctive to Maxvale College was the contrast in thinking about teacher learning between the leadership and teachers. The leadership cited teachers' love of learning and the capacity to identify learning goals as absolutely imperative to being a professional, but at the time of the study the school had not translated this thinking comprehensively into the school's professional development program. The workshop was identified as an opportunity to launch a focus on supporting teachers to set learning goals, with the researcher providing the initial steps to assist in this process by developing the Teacher Learner Profile and Career continuum feedback frameworks for the whole-school workshop.

During the collection of data for the study, teachers at the school expressed the need and desire for more learning and a desire to set goals with a mentor. Thus, there was a synergy in thinking, but a divide in reality due to few resources being in place to achieve these goals. At the workshop, ideas surfaced about professionalism, a love of learning and goal setting as important to all teachers and leaders. In the My Thoughts exercise at the conclusion of the workshop, two teachers noted that they considered the learning at the workshop would enable forward planning to unite the thinking about teacher learning in the school. One teacher commented:

> *This can help us to actually put practical ideas or programs and resources in place to make them attainable and tangible, going forward in the school.*

Does the school's ethos align with or impact upon the ways teachers learn at any particular career stage?

Similar to the situation at Jackston Grammar, the school's ethos did not align with the stated learning needs or preferences of teachers at any particular career stage at Maxvale College, in the way it had done at Brooklee College. As mentioned, data emerged that teachers at the expert and experienced career stages were very willing to adapt their learning preferences and style to the professional development provided by the school. They regarded this as an important moral contribution to supporting the small, tightly resourced school. Teachers themselves were also found to be extremely focused on what they needed to learn and do in a

busy school context, and had adopted a self-management approach to their learning within a school ethos that they personally and professionally supported.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Implications noted in Chapter 8

The first two case studies revealed that school needs in reflecting upon their teacher professional learning approaches and professional development program were different. Would this again become evident at the third school?

School needs in relation to utilising the study to best assist the school in their understanding of the ways in which their teachers learn, and improving their professional development program, were again found to be different to those of the other two case study schools.

Firstly, an enormous effort and workload had been prevalent at the school to enable its establishment and growth over a six year period. This relatively new school had focused attention on building the school from scratch, including physical layout and buildings, the recruitment of staff, establishment of teaching programs, development of resources, processes and policies, whilst nurturing a growing enrolment of boys and parents to the school. The school considered that it was now at the stage where it could begin to look more closely at the learning of its teachers and consider more strategic approaches to developing their professional development program.

The principal was enthusiastic about the opportunity to engage in the study, regarding the focus of working alongside and with the school, not just drawing data out of the school, as helpful. Initial discussion with the principal after he had read the school information kit (Appendix 3.3) revealed that he considered that the benefits to the school listed were of relevance to Maxvale College. Further, he considered that the study could assist them in their need to:

- learn more about their teachers as individual learners and use this to further enhance collegial relationships
- enable teachers to take some time, within a busy small school, to reflect on their learning with the researcher, as a professional development opportunity within itself
- highlight the topic of teacher learning in the school and provide them with access to data from a current university level study, drawn from several case study schools in their region, and

- evaluate their professional development program and move towards a more strategic approach.

The researcher was an executive leader at the first case study school and had taught previously at the second. At the last case study school the researcher was completely unknown to staff. How will this impact, if at all, on the purpose of the study to work alongside this third case study school?

Being unknown to the Maxvale College community had an impact on the data collection during the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. Although the researcher read widely about the school's ethos, mission and community before the data collection began, it was noted that developing probing questions throughout the discussions was more difficult than at the previous case study schools. Not having worked within the culture meant that some questions which may have been asked, were not. An example would be a missed opportunity to ask more about the religious retreats which some staff attended and how this impacted, if at all, on their learning as teachers. If the researcher had known about these retreats at the time of the study, further questions may have been asked about their impact, if at all, on the learning of teachers at the school.

However, a similar relationship between the researcher and teachers emerged at Maxvale College as a result of the study that was beneficial to both the school and the outcomes of the study. When the researcher returned to the school to facilitate the feedback workshop, teachers readily embraced the researcher. This familiar and trusting relationship energised the feedback session, where teachers felt relaxed to give feedback about their own learning, while evaluating the school's professional development program. This also enabled feedback that allowed triangulation of the data for the study.

What will the action research cycle look like at this third school, according to their needs and requests?

What new or modified instruments, if any, may the researcher need to develop to meet the needs of the third school within their action research cycle? Would these be helpful in assisting the school towards the planning phase of improvement to their professional development program?

As noted in Part 2 of the Maxvale College case study (Chapter 9), a number of frameworks were designed to suit the context and teacher learning needs of Maxvale College. These frameworks assisted the school towards planning for improvement in their approaches to teacher learning and the school's professional development program.

SUMMARY

This chapter has reflected on the study and action research cycle of Maxvale College in relation to themes which emerged from Brooklee College and Jackston Grammar.

The cumulative data from the studies is now considered in the Findings Chapters which follow.

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CHAPTER 11

FINDINGS: AN INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This exploratory study began as a part of my own enquiry into teacher learning and professional development while working with teachers in a school context. It was founded on "on the ground" and in-school contextualised work. Questions were posed as to how teacher learning in schools could be explored in ways that would not only provide new insights into the literature on teacher learning and professional development, but that would be of benefit to schools in their journeys to enhance the learning of teachers, and to ultimately improve student outcomes. The following tables note the final mix of participants from the case study schools, across each school and at each career stage.

Table 11.1: Total participants across the three case study schools

Across the School	Brooklee College	Jackston Grammar	Maxvale College	Totals
Junior School K-6	9	6	2	17
Senior School 7-10	18	9	3	30
Across Junior and Senior	3	3	1	7
Male	12	8	6	26
Female	18	10	0	28
Totals	30	18	6	54

Table 11.2: Total participants in each career stage

Career Stages	Brooklee College	Jackston Grammar	Maxvale College	Totals
Early Career <1-3 yrs	2	4	-	6
Experienced 4-7 yrs	3	1	2	6
Expert 8+ yrs	13	6	2	21
Leading Teacher (formal leadership role)	9	4	1	14
Executive Leaders	3	3	1	7
Totals	30	18	6	54

The fundamental research question on which the study was based was:

How do teachers learn, and how might they be supported in their learning, across the career continuum in the context of their school?

Two dimensions drawn from current literature through which the research was considered were identified:

- The horizontal dimension (teacher learning across five career stages)
- The vertical dimension (school-based professional development)

The subsidiary research questions outlined in Chapter 2 fell into four key areas which are addressed in the following chapters, as indicated below. The study's findings are noted in each of these four areas, emerging as four major themes related to teacher learning and professional development in school contexts.

1. **<u>The career continuum and teacher learning (horizontal dimension)</u>**
   (Chapters 12 - Findings 1 - 10, and Chapter 13 - Findings 11 - 16)
   Chapter 12 considers whole-school teacher learning, with a particular focus on how teachers learn in ways regarded as good practice in the literature. Eight modes of learning are discussed, with reference to how teachers experienced them in their school contexts.

   Chapter 13 focuses on findings related to career continuum learning and how teachers learn at five specific career stages. This is considered in relation to three aspects of their learning featured in the study: key areas for learning, how learning is prioritised, and how and in what ways they learn. Distinctly different teacher learning profiles, at each career stage, that emerged from the data are noted.

2. **<u>School planning for teacher learning (vertical dimension)</u>**
   (Chapter 14 - Findings 17 - 25)
   Chapter 14 considers findings in the vertical dimension, as it relates to whole-school planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's practices in relation to teacher professional learning, and the resulting internal professional development program, are explored. Descriptors of school performance are also included that may be useful additions to the theory, as well as being beneficial to schools when benchmarking their professional development practices.

3. **School context and its influence on teacher professional learning**

(Chapter 15 - Findings 26 - 43)

Having established from the findings in Chapters 12-14 that school context and ethos significantly influenced teacher learning, Chapter 15 digs deeper into the nature of the impacts on teacher learning of school context, ethos and the resulting school teacher learning culture. In addition, findings are noted in relation to how, and in what ways, school leadership impacts on teacher learning in specific schools.

4. **Facilitation of school-contextualised conversations about teacher professional learning**

(Chapter 16 - Findings 44 - 63)

Chapter 16 explores how school-contextualised conversations facilitated deep and transformational learning within schools. Learning in this study was two way. Findings are noted that relate to what was learnt by both the school staff and the researcher as schools went about their work with a view to improve their professional development programs. The chapter discusses how the study drew upon learning conversations and reflection, at both the individual teacher and whole-school organisational levels, to generate data on how teachers learn across the career continuum in school contexts.

The study's findings are included as Appendix 11.1. For ease of reference the findings are set out under the four themes above that emerged in the study.

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CHAPTER 12

FINDINGS – THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION OF TEACHER LEARNING

WHOLE-SCHOOL TEACHER LEARNING

This chapter provides findings in relation to particular modes of teacher learning drawn from the literature and how teachers engaged in these across their schools. Data on how teachers learn were drawn from questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and focus groups. Further observations were also made during the school feedback sessions, as noted in the case study and reflection chapters.

QUESTION POSED

The question posed, and addressed in Chapters 12 and 13, was:

1. How do teachers learn across the career continuum within a whole-school context?

The teacher questionnaire provided data which was intended to be holistic across each school, incorporating feedback on learning from all participants. This provided a broad snapshot of teacher learning at each case study school, as well as data which allowed a comparison between schools. Data from the questionnaire was triangulated with insights about teacher learning that also surfaced in face-to-face, focus group and school feedback discussions. For clarity, the ways of teacher learning included in the questionnaire will be referred to as "modes" of learning in this discussion.

The findings in whole-school teacher learning revealed three areas of similarity, which were:

- learning within the school context
- learning through collegial conversation
- learning through feedback from students and colleagues

and five areas of dissimilarity, which were:

- collaborative learning
- learning through reflection
- learning through observation and being taught by others
- hands-on and creative learning
- learning through directed study, reading and writing.

This led to findings 1 and 2:

Finding 1

From the eight modes of learning drawn from the literature and featured in the teacher questionnaire, three preferred modes of learning emerged with common results across the

three schools: learning within the school context, learning through collegial conversations, and learning through feedback from students and colleagues.

However, it was found that:

Finding 2

Within each of these common modes of learning, the different context of each school was seen to significantly shape the way that teachers did and did not learn in these ways.

A discussion on the data which supports these findings follows.

AREAS OF SIMILARITY: MODES OF LEARNIG WITH COMMON RESULTS ACROSS THE SCHOOLS

Learning within the school context

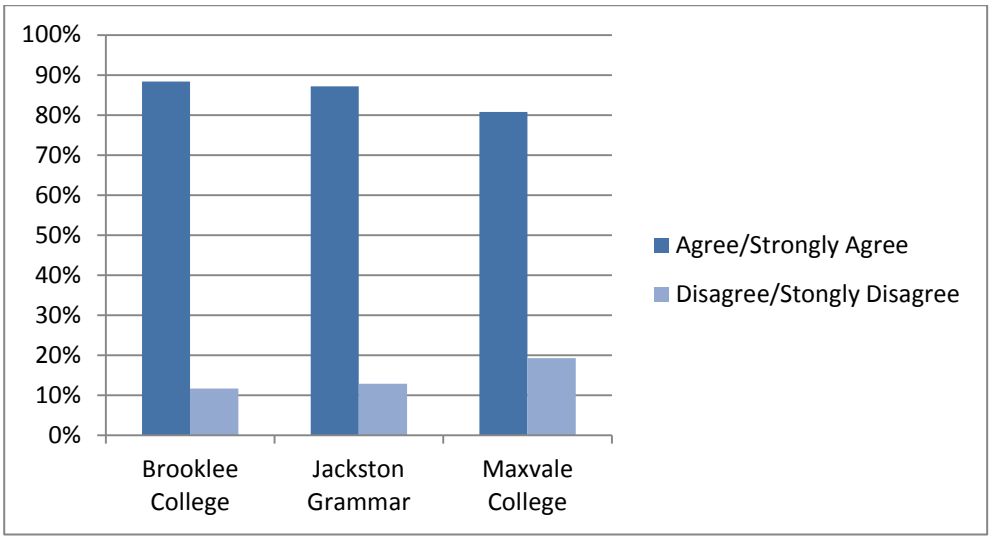


Figure 12.1: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning within the school context

Teachers across all schools identified learning within their school context as highly significant. Learning with colleagues, in, around and about their school context was a key way of learning. Most teachers also strongly agreed that working within the small groups to which they belonged in the workplace, be this stage, faculty or student pastoral care groups, was a major source of significant learning.

However, when drilling down into the question responses, there were differences in the results that could be attributed to the dissimilarities in the contexts of these three schools. Whereas teachers at Brooklee College nominated having input into the planning of the school's professional development program as important to their learning, teachers at Maxvale College did not, some commenting that they would like the opportunity to do so on a regular basis. This difference may have been due to the dissimilarity between Brooklee College and Maxvale College in how they planned and consulted staff about the school's professional development program. Brooklee College had both formal and informal processes in place to

consult staff about the school's professional development program, whereas this was less evident at Maxvale College.

Although teachers across the schools agreed that undertaking professional development activities based on school vision, goals and strategies was a significant way of learning, distinct contrasts arose. For example, the teachers of Jackston Grammar and Maxvale College cited learning activities based on school ethos and vision as powerful ways of learning, compared to those at Brooklee College who said that engaging in professional development activities that related to school educational goals was more significant for them. This contrast may be explained as being due to the different beliefs that each school held about what the focus of teacher learning should be, as it related to school ethos and goals, and how this impacted upon teacher attitudes about themselves as learners. This is further discussed in Chapter 15, which considers the aspect of school context and teacher learning more closely.

Learning through collegial conversation

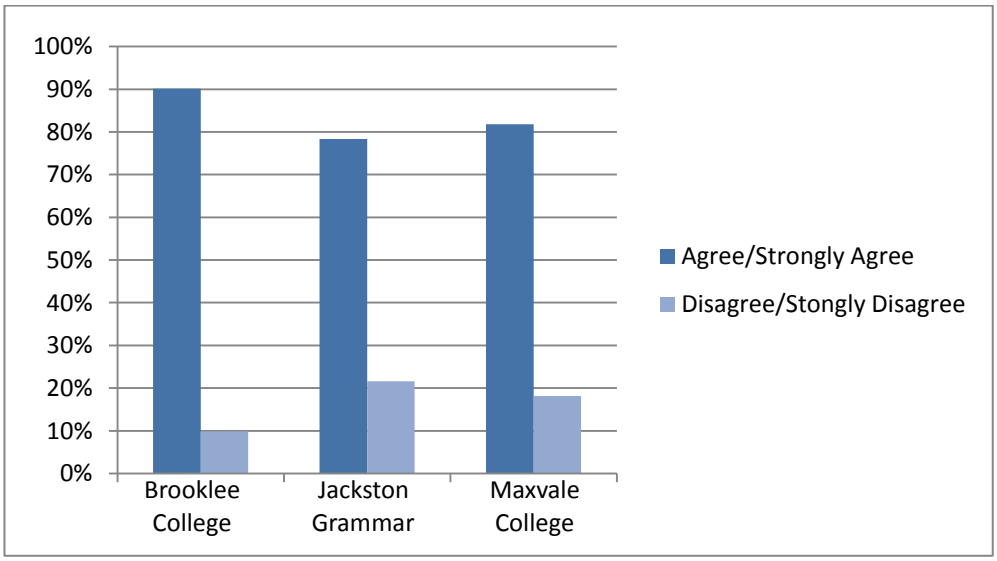


Figure 12.2: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning through collegial conversation

Teachers across the schools identified a range of school-based collegial conversations as a key way of learning. This included conversations which were planned in stage or faculty meeting times, and those which were unplanned and often had "on the run". In addition, teachers in all schools noted that opportunities were scarce to engage in conversations based on observation and feedback on the lessons of others. Comments noted indicated that this was due to little opportunity to participate in this type of learning because of restraints on time in general, and more specifically, a lack of release time from the classroom. Teachers from every school also included a desire that this situation be addressed and improved to provide the observation of others as an integrated and well-resourced practice in their schools.

However, significant differences arose in relation to teacher perspectives on collegial conversations at each school. It was clear that teachers at Brooklee College considered that more formalised and planned conversations with colleagues yielded significant learning opportunities, compared to teachers at the other schools. Further, they had an expectation not found at the other schools that such formal opportunities for collegial conversations should be planned by the school and be a part of the school's professional development program. This may have been due to their participation in a "Collegial Conversations" program which occurred on three afternoons a year at the school. This program provided a forum for teachers to present something they had learnt that had improved their teaching, and talk about it with others. It was found in this case, that if a school highlighted a way of teacher learning as important for their staff, and made time for this type of learning opportunity to occur, there were two effects on teachers. Firstly, it increased their understanding about this mode of learning, which then seemed to become a part of the learning repertoire of individual teachers. Secondly, it impacted upon their expectations of what the school should coordinate for their staff in this area for their learning. The implications of this could be significant, and are discussed more deeply in Chapter 14, which relates to school planning and coordination of school-based professional development programs.

Learning through feedback from students and colleagues

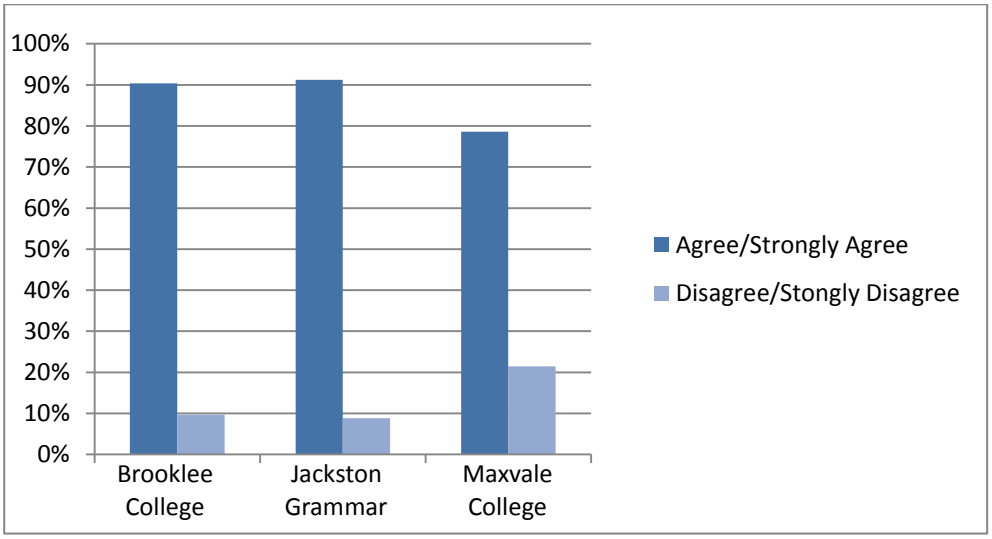


Figure 12.3: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning through feedback from students and colleagues

A majority of teachers at all schools identified feedback from students and colleagues as a key way of learning. However, significant differences emerged within each school context. For example, most teachers at Brooklee College identified that learning from leaders was significant. Teachers from Jackston Grammar noted that they would like more time allocated to examine student feedback, whereas teachers at Maxvale College nominated that learning

from student feedback was a strong area of learning. Teachers at Maxvale College stated that due to the small size of the school, with single stream classes in all years, getting to know students as individuals across the school as people and as learners was easier than in larger schools where they had previously worked. In their opinion, this enhanced the formation of close teacher/student learning relationships and as a result, they thought that students more readily gave candid feedback about their learning, including information about where they may be struggling or needing extra assistance.

AREAS OF DISSIMILARITY: MODES OF LEARNING WITH DISSIMILAR RESULTS ACROSS THE SCHOOLS

It was found that in relation to the other five areas identified as key modes of learning, that there were more differences than commonalities in the ways in which teachers learnt, and wanted to learn in each mode, across the three schools. This led to Finding 3:

Teacher learning within their schools is complex. Generalisations about how teachers learn in modes nominated in the literature as key ways of learning should be used with caution within school contexts when planning their professional development.

The main implication for this finding could be that the implementation of common or "off the shelf" professional development programs in schools may not be conducive to enhancing the best learning possible amongst teachers. The data indicated that locally developed and school-contextualised programs, taking into account the learning of teachers in specific school contexts, may be more beneficial. This is discussed further in relation to the remaining five modes of learning, taken from the literature and featured in the teacher questionnaire, as follows.

Collaborative learning

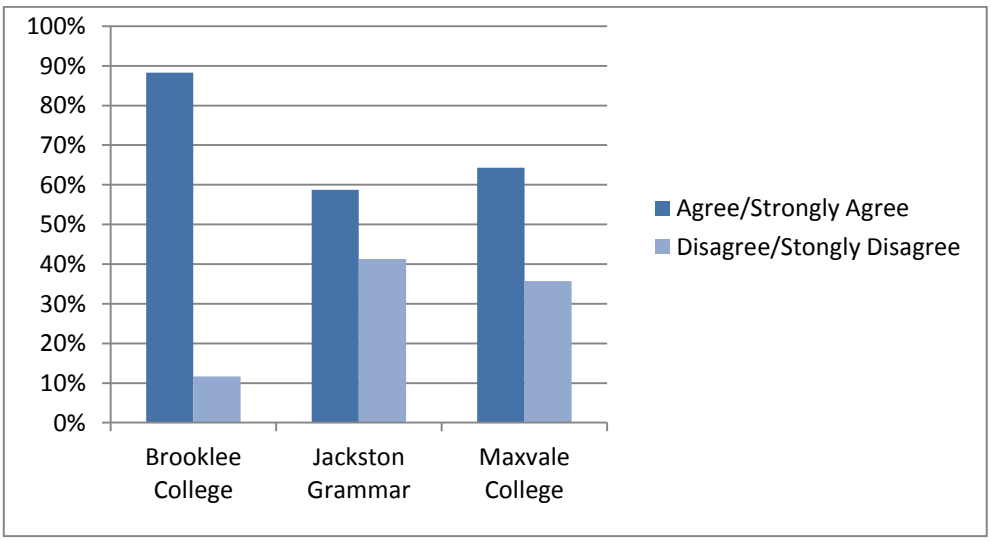


Figure 12.4: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning through collaboration

Questionnaire results revealed that collaborative learning was clearly a significant way of learning for teachers at Brooklee College. This was also consistently mentioned by teachers in their career-stage groups during the feedback session at the school. Teachers at Jackston Grammar and Maxvale College ranked collaborative learning lower than those at Brooklee College, with a significant proportion disagreeing, even though teachers at these schools consistently referred to their colleagues as highly collegial and supportive. When triangulating this data with discussion observed at the feedback sessions, and reviewing the schools' contexts in relation to how they planned their professional development programs, a main difference was found which could explain the dissimilarities that emerged. At Brooklee College, teachers were accustomed to contributing to teams involved in action learning projects, committees which focused on evaluating and providing feedback on student learning and performance in particular areas or stages, and professional development sessions based around teacher group work at the school. A range of these collaborative activities were offered by the school at the start of each year, which teachers could select to join for a semester if desired. Collaborative learning for teachers was also a well-known approach at the school, being a teacher learning methodology which had been explored in the literature and put into practice by staff as a part of the professional development program. Teacher learning approaches, including collaborative learning, and their links to the school's ethos and beliefs about teachers, were also embedded in the school's new staff induction program.

Data from Jackston Grammar and Maxvale College did not indicate that the schools were regularly talking about collaborative learning as a desirable platform for teacher learning, nor overtly planning professional development programs around using collaborative practices. It seems that collegiality, good will and support alone did not necessarily lead to collaborative teacher learning as a significant way of learning, unless the school planned and provided professional development opportunities overtly and purposefully based on collaborative practices. This information led to Finding 4:

What a school emphasises as important ways of learning, and teaches its staff in relation to a mode of learning, affects the ways in which teachers can access that mode of learning and grow in its use. Teachers will use particular ways of learning to the best of their ability, and find ways to use these modes within the school context, but can be limited by what the school does or does not do.

Learning through reflection

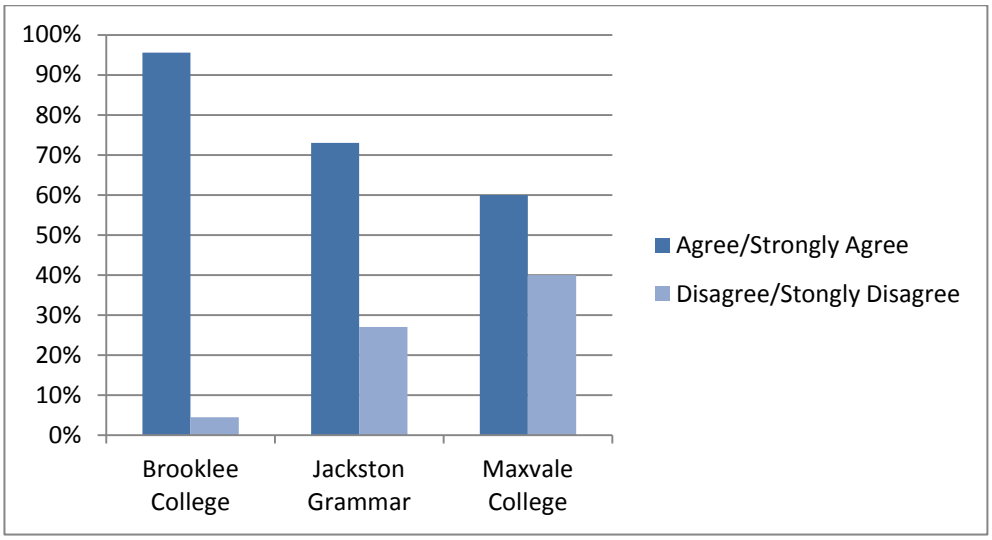


Figure 12.5: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning through reflection

The exploration of teacher ideas about the use of reflection as a way of learning highlighted that this mode of learning was experienced very differently by teachers depending on their career stage, particularly in relation to their perceptions about themselves as learners. In addition, teachers responded to this mode of learning differently to the other modes discussed. They were more emotive about the use of reflection as a way of learning and it was clearly important to them.

These emotions and perceptions varied according to the career stage of the teacher. For those in their first years of teaching, reflection appeared to be associated with feelings of doubt and regret, as explained by a group of teachers during the feedback session at Jackston Grammar, with one saying that reflection "was mainly cursing myself about what I didn't do and should have done" in a lesson. The teachers in the group agreed. This compared to a group of experienced teachers who stated that they used it with enjoyment to reflect upon their "innovations or experiments in the classroom." For expert teachers, reflection came out of a place of confidence and they regularly planned times of reflection, particularly in relation to the analysis of student feedback and results to assist them to improve their teaching. Leading teachers and executive leaders had embedded a reflective attitude into their approach as practitioners. They were relaxed about using it as a strategy, both consciously and unconsciously, to reflect upon their leadership, and the needs of staff and the school. This led to findings 5 and 6:

Finding 5

Teacher perceptions of how they learn within a particular mode of learning are quite different according to the career stage of the teacher. Therefore, making generalisations or

assumptions about the usefulness of a mode of learning across all career stages in a school, may be unhelpful.

Finding 6

Knowing, understanding and being respectful about where teachers are up to in their ways of learning, within a particular mode of learning, could be an important factor for schools to consider when planning professional development in a school. Sensitivity and empathy may be required as important approaches when implementing professional development sessions built around particular modes of learning, to ensure that teachers at all career stages are catered for appropriately.

Contrasting data also emerged that was complex at each school site in relation to the use of reflection for learning at the school. Teachers at Brooklee College indicated that there was an expectation that teachers would make time to reflect on practice, with time specifically scheduled for reflection. However, a variety of responses revealed marked differences to whether or not teachers thought this was a valuable use of time and what practical outcomes, if any, could be identified. Comments on the teacher survey from teachers at Jackston Grammar and Maxvale College, and triangulated with data from focus group discussions at these schools, again indicated a range of ideas and opinions about using reflection for learning.

In common was that teachers expressed a level of frustration that schools should provide scheduled time for teacher reflection and guide them on how to use it to reap benefits for their own learning and for student learning. They felt that their schools were not providing enough time for them to reflect with any depth or significance in ways that could lead to a change or improvement in their practices. Teachers expressed similar opinions in relation to other modes of learning. This led to Finding 7:

Teachers held their schools responsible for the quality of their learning in particular modes of teacher learning. They also made judgements about the level of authenticity that a school had about their learning, based on what they saw the school doing to facilitate and make time for particular modes of learning within the school. They tended to attribute blame to their schools if they did not have time to implement a mode of learning that they felt they were expected to engage in, or that was important to them.

This raised the question of the degree of tension and balance between the school's responsibility to support professional development and the individual's responsibility to learn.

Learning through observation and being taught by others

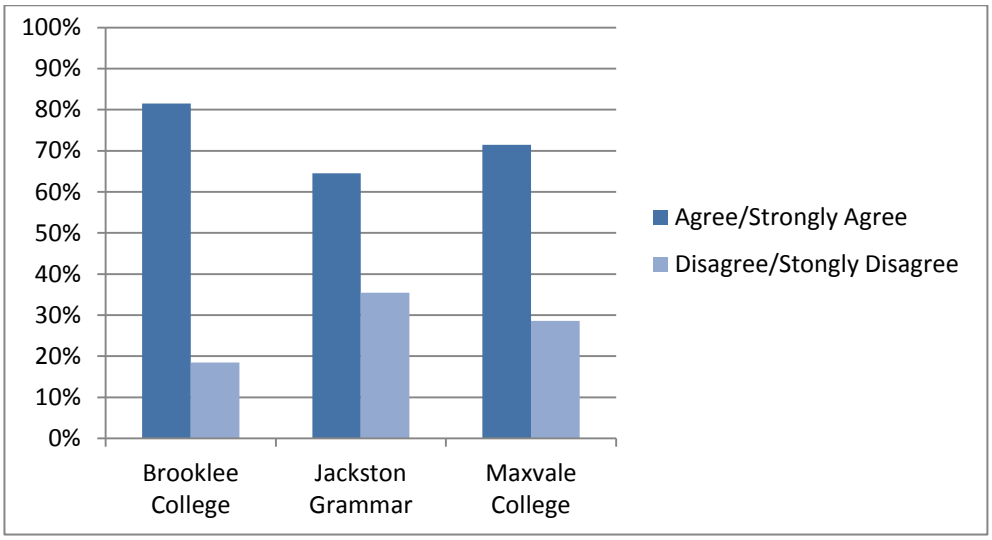


Figure 12.6: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning through observation and being taught by others

Results on learning through observation and being taught by others again revealed that there were more differences than commonalties across the schools. However, it was clear that as with the perspectives shared about the use of reflection, teachers tended to attribute the success of their learning from this mode according to whether or not the school provided them with both the time (Jackston Grammar and Maxvale College) and assistance in coordination (Brooklee College) to observe, debrief and learn from observing the lessons of other teachers. Some also held the school accountable for providing time to listen and learn from the experiences and knowledge of others.

Learning through hands-on and creative approaches and directed study, reading and writing

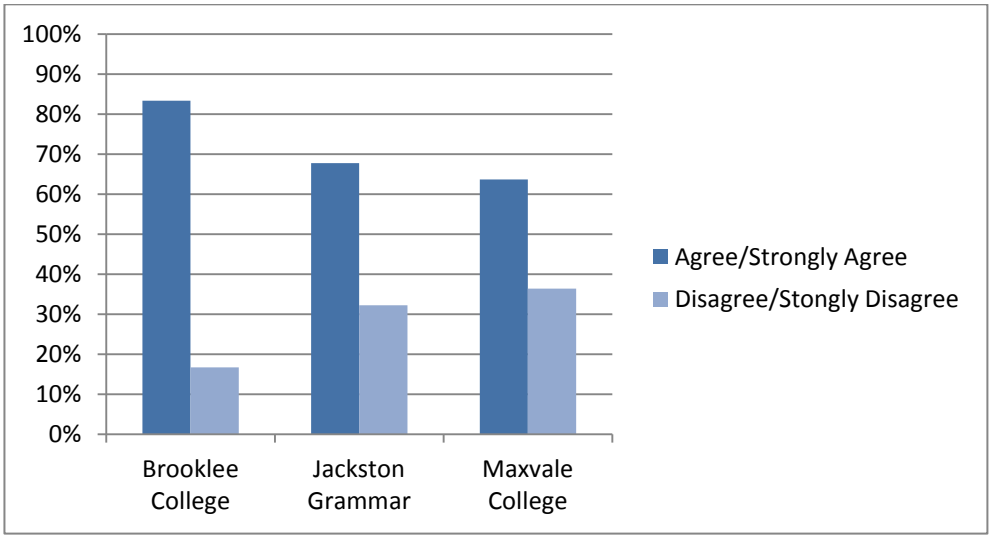


Figure 12.7: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning through hands-on and creative approaches

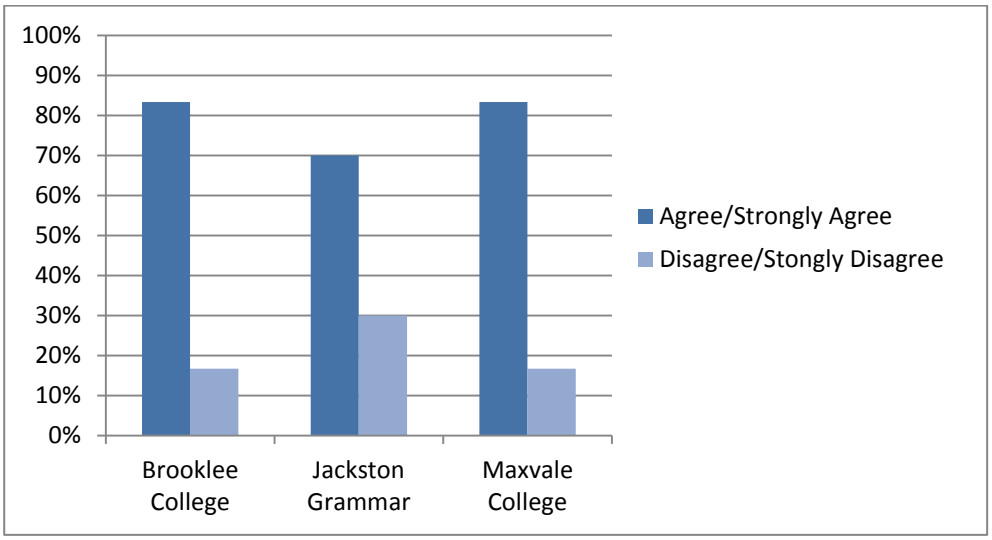


Figure 12.8: Teacher questionnaire results – teacher learning through directed study, reading and writing

Hands-on learning and learning through directed study, reading and writing emerged as ways of learning that were clearly important to many teachers at each school. They nominated these modes as being related to their personal learning styles, apart from the school context. They were regarded as preferred ways of learning that were personal and fixed, regardless of whether or not they appeared as options in the school's professional development program. This indicated that in relation to some modes of teacher learning, teachers regarded them as transcending the school context, and as transferrable to other settings. They regularly sought out learning opportunities in these modes outside of school time, and at their own expense, if little was offered within their school. This led to Finding 8:

Some modes of learning were regarded by teachers as a part of their personal learning style and transferrable to other schools.

BARRIERS TO TEACHER LEARNING

The teacher questionnaire concluded with an open question for teacher responses in relation to perceived barriers for their learning. This topic also arose frequently during face-to-face and focus group discussions. Common across the schools was the tendency for teachers to discuss barriers to teacher learning. The main barrier cited for learning was a lack of time, with the following examples being repeated by teachers across the schools:

- Actual time to participate in professional development activities, as well as the inability to effectively carry through with concepts learnt due to lack of time.
- Time to share feedback and experiences after attending external professional development activities.

- Time given directly after presentations/learning opportunities to then absorb and discuss, develop resources, implement in their teaching, debrief, reflect, and evaluate.
- The ability to come together with sufficient time to discuss concepts collegially.
- Time to observe the lessons of others.
- The actual timing of professional development activities which occur even in the busiest times on the school calendar.
- Limited time to access co-teachers and/or teacher specialists.
- Lack of time and opportunity to follow up on ideas. Teachers suggested that time for this needs to be formalised so that plans can be formulated, implemented and consolidated.
- The role of the classroom teacher hinders the provision of adequate release time.

This led to Finding 9:

Although there were a range of commonalities and differences amongst teachers across the schools in relation to modes of learning, teachers unanimously and consistently cited a lack of time as their main barrier to learning.

SCHOOL-CONTEXTUALISED INSIGHTS INTO WHOLE-SCHOOL TEACHER LEARNING

As a result of the data and findings which emerged on how teachers learn, it was possible to construct descriptions of whole-school teacher learning at each school, which follow.

Brooklee College

Teachers at Brooklee College regarded themselves as avid and committed learners, and expressed an acceptance and enjoyment in the school's belief that teachers were "leaders in learning". They regarded learning as an important part of their professional entity and as a crucial part of their professional persona. They held high expectations of the school's professional development program and annually engaged in a range of on-site activities, preferring collaborative and collegial learning within their own school context. Teachers also exhibited knowledge about teacher learning modes, attributing this to both whole-school workshops on how teachers learn provided at the school, through to their own learning from directed study, which was prevalent amongst staff.

Jackston Grammar

Teachers at Jackston Grammar considered themselves as "gifted by God" to be teachers, and that learning to be distinctively Christian teachers was an important response to God and their school community. The school's ethos to provide Christian teaching and modelling to

students, parents and each other had become an intrinsic motivation for their learning choices. Aside from the school's professional development days, their main source of learning occurred informally, with teachers using the highly collegial and collaborative culture to share, observe and assist each other with learning about teaching pedagogy and student welfare. They also used their personal beliefs about life and people as a means of learning, often using prayer and biblical study to reflect upon the learning of their students and to inform further planning and improvements to their teaching.

Maxvale College

Teachers at Maxvale College looked to the school's ethos to inspire their learning. They considered themselves as important within a family context, representing and supporting parents in their responsibility to educate their children. Learning about how to teach boys well and how to assist them to develop in character and wisdom were considered key areas for learning. Within a small school context, the teachers assumed responsibility over their own areas of expertise and had both teaching and leadership portfolios. As a result, they considered that their learning had been accelerated and intense. The school's professional development program mostly consisted of annually scheduled professional development days. As teachers were usually the only ones at the school in a particular stage or faculty, they often requested more formalised mentoring within school and networking professional development opportunities beyond the school.

These descriptions of whole-school teacher learning led to Finding 10:
It emerged in each school that school context and ethos were key determining factors in how teachers learn in the school.

SUMMARY

This chapter has noted findings related to whole-school teacher learning across eight modes of learning taken from the literature, and how teachers experienced these modes of learning in the school context. As a result, a major finding emerged that school context and ethos had significant influence on teacher learning.

While focussing on whole-school learning, teacher perspectives arose which were pertinent to career-stage learning and indicated its importance to understanding the horizontal dimension of teacher learning in the school context. We now turn to Chapter 13 to discuss findings which emerged in relation to how teachers learn across career stages in their schools.

CHAPTER 13

FINDINGS – THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION OF TEACHER LEARNING

TEACHER CAREER-STAGE LEARNING

In addition to whole-school learning across key modes of learning, data enabled a picture to emerge of career-stage learning within each school. For ease of reference, findings in this chapter are numbered sequentially from the findings outlined in the previous chapter.

At each career stage, teachers provided responses in relation to three aspects of their learning:

- Key areas for learning
- How they prioritise learning
- How and in what ways they learn

Many also mentioned the learning that they least preferred.

During face-to-face interviews, commonalities and differences were noted of how teachers learn at each career stage. These have been placed into a table, providing detailed analysis of aspects in common about teacher learning across the schools at each career stage, and aspects which arose that were dissimilar, and only found at particular schools. This is included as Appendix 13.1.

From this data, Finding 11 emerged:

> *Common teacher learner profiles at the five career stages emerged across the three case study schools.*

These are noted as follows.

TEACHER CAREER-STAGE PROFILES

Early career teachers - The "I need it now," concerned learner

Early career teachers were focused on developing classroom management strategies that helped them achieve classroom environments which were centred on purposeful learning. This included both proactive and reactive classroom management and the development of a teacher persona that enhanced their relationship with students. They were also engaged in a steep learning curve in relation to subject mastery and knowing when to use pedagogical tools most effectively.

Shared concerns amongst early career teachers included completion of their teacher accreditation requirements and feeling alone in their learning, even though amongst supportive colleagues. They exhibited concern and anxiety about not knowing what to learn, or when, and about what learning they needed to know to meet school requirements, particularly the setting of assessment tasks, marking and reporting.

Early career teachers least desired to engage in professional development sessions about school ethos, history or goals. They also did not want to attend professional development sessions if they had marking or student reports to complete, suggesting that time management was an issue.

Experienced teachers - The excited learner

The focus of learning for experienced teachers was still on the classroom, but there was a shift towards learning that would enhance their pedagogical teaching practices. These teachers responded positively, and even reported enjoying conversations with expert and leading teachers about their classroom techniques. They developed new resources based on their own experiences and through researching subject material on the internet. They were interested in experiential learning, and regularly tested out their innovative ideas to engage students and enhance their learning in their classrooms. They then used reflection, either alone or informally with others, to tease out what had been learnt and what the next step in their learning may be. Learning tended to be more random than planned, but intense when it occurred.

Experienced teachers disliked professional development that was about anything that they already knew, rather, preferring to learn new ideas and to be challenged in their thinking and practice.

Expert teachers - The confident learner

Expert teachers were flexible learners who were confident about their capacity to find solutions and adapt to change. They were particularly interested in using researched and proven pedagogies skilfully, and never superficially.

Learning opportunities needed to be rigorous and intellectually stimulating. They also used assessment for learning reflection practices, and were avid learners in relation to student pastoral care requirements. They were keenly aware of the impact of school context on their learning, and set specific priorities for their learning based on their own judgement, while trying to ensure that they aligned with what was believed to be best practice teaching at the school. They learnt through assisting colleagues and were focused on improving student learning through informed use of student assessment and feedback.

Similar to experienced teachers, expert teachers also disliked professional development that had content that was already known to them. In addition, they disliked generalisations being made about any topic, but in particular student learning, regarding these as unsubstantiated unless developed in relation to students at their particular school, and unhelpful in general.

Leading teachers - The serious learner

The focus of leading teachers in their learning was to meet the learning and practical needs of their staff. They were intent on learning how to model the effective use of pedagogies to their staff and to lead them towards innovative and confident practice. Leading teachers were interested in learning about good practice in leadership and how this impacted their staff, and ultimately, student learning. They were aware of the importance of their roles in middle management in relation to the resilience of teachers and the learning outcomes of students. Leading teachers also sought learning opportunities which would update them on changes and external expectations in relation to curriculum development and student duty of care. They were often involved in postgraduate study and keen to know about what they needed to learn to enable career development opportunities.

Leading teachers disliked professional development that involved mass presentations. They preferred niche learning which related to their level of understanding, knowledge or expertise, or their educational passions and areas of interest.

Executive leaders - The focused learner

Executive leaders were fully focused on learning whatever was needed to enhance the effectiveness of the school. The first priority was upholding, sharing and strengthening the school ethos and they were proactive in seeking out learning opportunities that would better equip them to develop and implement school goals based on ethos, that would then flow on to further developing the culture of the school. Staff and student needs were intrinsic motivators for their learning, as they remained abreast of government requirements. They engaged in short term and long term learning about leadership, read widely about educational trends and change and used their personal beliefs to guide deep reflection on their task and the needs of the school.

Executive staff had little to say about professional development that they least preferred. They considered that attending as much professional development as possible with their staff was important to supporting teachers in their learning, and had little expectations of school run professional development sessions for their own learning per se. Rather, they looked to external providers including school system associations, universities and their own leadership networks for their professional learning needs.

These emerging learner profiles across five career stages led to Finding 12:

The study revealed just how qualitatively different the learning was at each of the career stages, both in what teachers responded to, what they tended to dislike, and what they observed as being ineffectual for them at that particular career stage.

FURTHER INSIGHTS ON CAREER-STAGE LEARNING

Several common teacher perspectives in relation to career-stage learning also emerged in focus group discussions and in relation to the study participation data.

Firstly, teachers agreed that they had not given a lot of thought to career-stage learning and how it may impact upon themselves, their colleagues, or the school. Teachers spoke about how the study had assisted them to think more clearly and knowledgeably about the different needs of teachers according to their career stage. Some thought that they had made a subconscious note of the differences in the way in which others learn, and had factored this into their practices and expectations of each other along the way, but had not thought about it in any depth. One teacher said:

> *You would think it would be obvious. We differentiate endlessly for students according to their learning needs, and so we should. So why don't we start from that premise with ourselves?*

Teachers at a school also talked about the discussion about career-stage learning as an "Ah – ha" moment, and desired more information and discussion about the topic. In three focus group discussions, teachers also asked each other why the school was not planning professional development with career-stage learning differences in mind.

Discussion about learning across the career continuum at each school also included reference to the years of training at university and why teacher learning, including how and what could be expected on the job, and in particular, career-stage learning, was not a part of the course. This led to Finding 13:

It emerged that the study had provided participant teachers at all schools with a wider vocabulary and deeper understanding of teacher career-stage learning that then enabled them to reflect more comprehensively on themselves as learners, both individually and collectively, in the school setting. They also exhibited a keen interest in learning more from teachers at other career stages.

Another aspect of career-stage learning was observed in the participation data of volunteers across the schools. The lowest participation rate was that of early career teachers. This made sense when considering their learner profile in relation to not wanting to engage in professional development that was not directly connected to their classroom teaching. It also triangulated the emerging picture across the schools that teachers knew little specifically about learning across their own career stages, and that the study had motivated them to question why this was so. This led to Finding 14:

Teacher learning across career stages emerged as the hidden curriculum in all schools. Teachers knew that their learning was important to them both personally and professionally,

and to their capacity to enhance the learning of students. However, they knew very little about career-stage learning and wondered why it was not a well discussed topic within their schools, or transparently embedded into their schools' professional development programs.

When considering the three aspects of teacher learning noted at the beginning of this Chapter, significant differences at each school emerged within every career stage, as noted in Appendix 1. These variances were found to relate to the distinctive differences in the schools' contexts in relation to ethos and culture, in several areas:

- Student learning programs, including academic, wellbeing, co-curricular and spiritual domains.
- Pedagogical differences arising from the distinctively different ethos at each school.
- The different emphases and content of the schools' teacher professional development programs.
- The differences in the personal belief systems that teachers had at each school about themselves as teachers, the purpose of the school, and the nature of student learning.

The study, while limited to the three schools, did point to some significant commonalities in teacher learning in each of the career stages, but also some differences that could be attributed to school ethos and culture. With this said, there was sufficient emerging in the data to support the notion of how qualitatively different learning was at each of the career stages. This could have significant implications for school leadership, both within schools and across schools and led to Finding 15, which is noted here, but further discussed in Chapter 15 in relation to school context and leadership.

Finding 15

Significant differences in teacher learning profiles at each career stage were also identified that could be directly attributed to the impact of the school context on teachers as learners.

A final finding in relation to career-stage learning was:

Finding 16

Within the overall literature, while attention has been paid to the career path trajectory of teachers, less attention has been paid to the nature of, and the differentiations between, the learning of each of the career stages of that trajectory.

REFLECTION ON THE HORIZONTAL FINDINGS FROM CHAPTERS 12 AND 13

Data on career continuum and teacher learning led to the emergence of findings in relation to two distinct areas: whole-school learning across eight modes of teacher learning taken from the literature, and specific career-stage learning in school contexts.

It was found that teacher learning in schools is complex. Generalisations about how teachers learn across key learning modes are *generally* helpful, but there are more complex factors to be found and considered that could have an impact on the quality of teacher learning, as well as teachers' personal and professional perspectives on their learning. Many of these factors were attributable to the specific school context in which they worked.

In addition, clear, common characteristics of how teachers learn at each career stage across the three schools emerged from the data. Again, while these general career stage learner profiles may be useful as summaries to reveal how commonly teachers learn at each career stage on school sites, important differences also emerged. These differences could also be attributed to the school context in which they worked and learnt, and could have implications for their ongoing learning.

Out of teachers' experiences of their learning within each school, a snapshot of teacher learning within specific school contexts emerged, which revealed that teachers experienced learning differently at each school according to ethos and culture. It was found that what the school said and did in relation to the learning of teachers, significantly shaped their learning.

Reflection upon the findings in relation to key modes of learning revealed how big picture, holistic data on schools and teacher learning can be useful to a point, but that unless the micro level of career-stage learning is considered, much of what we need to know about teacher learning in their schools could be missed and may be significant to the quality of their learning and ultimately, to the learning of their students. It was thought that it could also impact upon the ways in which schools plan for effective teacher learning.

SUMMARY

Clearly, school contexts were found to significantly influence teacher learning in both their learning across the school in particular modes of learning, and in their learning at every career stage. The data and these findings revealed that the vertical dimension of school-based planning and coordination of teacher professional development had an impact on teacher learning at all case study schools. We now turn to discuss the study's findings related to this vertical dimension in Chapter 14.

CHAPTER 14

FINDINGS – THE VERTICAL DIMENSION OF SCHOOL PLANNING FOR TEACHER LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

Findings have been noted in relation to the horizontal dimension of teacher learning in school contexts. It was found that school contexts impacted significantly, and in a number of ways, on teachers and their learning at all career stages. Findings about the vertical dimension, which relates to school planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's goals and practices in relation to teacher professional learning, and the resulting internal professional development program, now follows.

QUESTIONS POSED

In relation to school planning for teacher learning, three questions arose at the commencement of the study:

- How is teacher professional development across the career continuum planned for, implemented and evaluated in the context of a specific school?
- How, and in what ways, does the planning for and coordination of professional development impact on teacher learning in the context of a specific school?
- What implications arise that might assist schools to plan professional development for teachers in ways that provide a more substantial alignment with good practice, as defined by the literature?

Findings in relation to each of these questions follow. For ease of reference, the findings in this chapter are numbered sequentially to findings noted in the previous chapters.

How is teacher professional development across the career continuum planned for, implemented and evaluated in the context of a specific school?

Schools which volunteered to be a part of the study did so because they were interested in gaining information on how their teachers learn at the school and how to evaluate and improve their current professional development program. The school principals were keen to align their professional development programs with good practice in the literature, but were unsure how to go about this within busy workplaces. They also said that they lacked the resources to facilitate such a process of enquiry, both in terms of theoretical knowledge about teacher learning and human resources. They considered that being involved in the study would assist them to begin a process of evaluation and planning for improvement in their schools. This led to Finding 17:

Each case study school was unsure about how to better evaluate their existing professional development program and plan for improvement. They were keen to engage with the study as a possible means of starting this process.

Data from the face-to-face interviews with teachers and executive staff, information from school-based artefacts and completion of the School Benchmarking Framework, enabled a picture of how teacher professional development across the career continuum was planned, implemented and evaluated in the context of each school, as follows.

Brooklee College

Planning

Planning for the school's annual professional development program began in June of the previous year. Strategic goals for the learning of teachers were developed by the principal and executive team, which included the director of staff development, who is the staff member responsible for the coordination of the program. These teacher learning goals were derived from the school's whole-school development goals, staff goals, and teaching and learning goals related to the school's core programs.

Running parallel to this executive planning, and feeding into the decisions made, was a school-wide consultation process with all teachers. This included a survey in the October of the previous year aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the current professional development program, and requesting feedback from staff about their learning needs and desires for the following year's program. Executive staff also held a number of meetings with middle leaders to discuss staff ideas for projects and collaborative work for the next year, as well as discussing where internal staff scholarships for group learning initiatives should be allocated. Face-to-face meetings also occurred between the director of staff development and teachers about their contribution as presenters in the next year's program, and the opportunities therein to be leaders of professional development at the school.

This top-down and bottom-up approach to a cycle of evaluation, consultation and strategic planning was pulled together by the executive staff member with the responsibility to develop and coordinate the program. Initial drafts of the program were formulated and advertised to all staff via email for further feedback, before finalisation of the internal program in the December of the previous year. Sessions were scheduled according to other events on the school calendar, with times avoided that were known to be traditionally high workload for teachers, such as marking and reporting cycles.

Implementation

Teachers received the schedule for school-based professional development derived from the planning process described, at the start of each year. During a staff development day the program was presented and time was allocated for teachers to read through information on the professional development sessions, courses and team project work available to them. This was then discussed by teachers with their leaders and colleagues to enable both individual and stage/faculty learning needs to be addressed. Teachers then made their individual selections via a survey on the intranet. The director of staff development was then responsible to coordinate the program throughout the year.

This program contained the initial professional development that had been strategically and collegially planned. Other professional development activities were added to the program throughout the year in response to emerging needs or changes which required further teacher learning.

As the school was an endorsed provider of courses through the State's Institute of Teachers, implementation also included reference to the national teaching standards and the accreditation needs of teachers.

Evaluation

Throughout the year teachers completed feedback forms after each professional development session or course, and these were used to improve the sessions for future delivery.

Overall evaluation was a part of the planning phase, within a cycle of evaluation, planning and implementation, which occurred over an 18 month time frame. The director of staff development summarised the data from the feedback survey completed by staff each October and provided this information to the executive and middle leader's teams. This information was then used for a variety of purposes in relation to professional development at the school, in addition to planning for the next year's professional development program. The feedback was considered helpful to further inform the school about the effectiveness of the teacher induction program, teacher accreditation processes, the mentoring of staff, the use of professional learning plans and the allocation of teacher learning scholarships. The evaluation process also yielded information about student learning, and in what areas teachers perceived they needed to learn to enhance the learning outcomes of their students.

Jackston Grammar

Planning

At the time of the study a new deputy principal had started at the school, with a part of their role for the first time in the school, dedicated to teacher professional learning. The details of this part of their role were being discussed and a draft professional development policy was being written. This deputy was also in the process of evaluating the school's approach to teacher accreditation processes and practices, which up to this point had tended to be adhoc, and was not well understood by teachers or leaders. The annual professional development program was based around ten dedicated days, the focus of which were developed as the year progressed, according to emerging school needs. Some days were used for professional development, while others were dedicated to meetings and a range of school events. The program was planned by the principal and two deputies, being finalised by the deputy with teacher professional learning as a part of their role. The school was in the process of developing a school development plan, and was planning to eventually link teacher learning goals into this plan. Consultation with staff about the program occurred in discussion with middle leaders during a meeting time, and with the whole staff at a staff meeting at the start of each year.

Implementation

The deputy was responsible for the implementation of the staff days. Teachers received information about the days, either on the day, or at the beginning of the week prior to the day. Staff in leadership positions or specialist positions at the school gave presentations on these days, with meetings and individual preparation time also occurring.

Evaluation

There was no formal evaluation process used at the time of the study to evaluate the professional development program. Informal evaluation occurred through discussions with staff at meetings and in the shared staff room and lunch room. The relatively new executive staff put their energy into thinking about what professional development may be needed at the time, or later in the year, rather than looking back to what had been done previously.

Maxvale College

Planning

Maxvale College was a relatively new school and a small school, both affecting the way in which the teacher professional development program was planned, implemented and evaluated. At the time of the study, the school was formulating a school development plan. The principal intended to include teacher professional development planning in the school's

development plan, and was keen to increase his learning on what was possible by participating in the study. There were eight professional development days annually, and the principal and his executive team planned these days. This planning usually occurred during holiday periods in between terms, with staff informed of the program on their return to school.

Implementation

The coordinator of the school's pastoral programs, who was a member of the executive, had the responsibility of coordinating the professional development days.

Evaluation

At the time of the study, the school did not have any formal evaluation processes in place in relation to their professional development program. However, due to the small number on staff, it was thought by the principal that informal conversations during lunch time enabled helpful feedback about the professional development days to be expressed.

These descriptions of school-based planning, implementation and evaluation of their professional development program led to two findings:

Finding 18

Teacher professional development planning, implementation and evaluation was found to be significantly different in each school.

Finding 19

Each school's needs around the planning, implementation and evaluation of their program was different as a result of their unique school contexts.

How, and in what ways does the planning and coordination of professional development impact on teacher learning in each school?

Teacher responses during the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions, and on the teacher questionnaire and the SBF, enabled a picture to emerge of how the planning and coordination of professional development impacted upon teacher learning at each school, as follows.

Brooklee College

Planning

The impact of being involved in the planning, evaluation and delivery of professional development sessions was that teachers had become accustomed to being referred to as "leaders in learning" throughout the planning stages, and had high expectations in relation to what the school would plan and provide for them in relation to the professional development

program. School-wide consultation, coupled with transparent strategic planning, had become the norm. Teachers were extremely positive about their learning, and engaged regularly in a wide range of activities. They regarded the completion of evaluation forms at the conclusion of each session as an integral part of the planning process, going forward.

According to the school executive, an impact of this planning cycle was that teachers were becoming more passive in relation to their learning, happy to "receive" what had been discussed and provided. As a result, the school executive were endeavouring to engage staff more dynamically as providers of professional development sessions to each other, and increase teacher engagement in team-based action research learning opportunities across the school. Personalised professional learning plans were also introduced to encourage teachers to be more proactive in planning their own learning goals and seeking out their own learning opportunities, in addition to what the school was providing.

Coordination

As noted in the case study of Brooklee College (Chapter 4), an executive team member on staff had the responsibility to support staff in their learning and coordinate the school's strategic and contextualised professional development program. This was constantly referred to by teachers who participated in the study as an asset to their own learning and as directly related to improving the learning outcomes of their students. According to teachers, the impact of this style of coordination was positive, with particular advantages noted by them as:

- having direct communication with the principal and the executive about their learning needs and desires
- knowing that the professional development program would be strategically aligned and would enhance the development of whole-school pedagogy, in which they were invested and interested
- having a voice about what they perceived their learning should be to enhance the learning of their students, and then seeing their opinions acted upon
- having access to a staff member who they regarded as well informed about teacher learning available for personalised meetings about their own learning
- knowing that their accreditation needs would be addressed and embedded in the school's professional development program, and
- contributing to the evaluation process of each year's professional development program which was regularly administered, with their feedback used to inform the program for the following year.

Jackston Grammar

Planning

Teachers at Jackston Grammar expressed enthusiasm about teacher learning being a part of the new deputy's portfolio, but as this was a new school initiative, were not sure at the time of the study what this would involve. In general, teachers did not have any expectations of the school as to what could or should be planned for their learning, and had become accustomed to this being decided by their leaders. The major impact was that teachers had become proactive about sourcing their own learning, particularly unplanned learning, by asking colleagues for insights or assistance as needs emerged. This in turn may have been a factor in the development of a highly collegial teaching body at the school, as noted in Chapter 7.

Coordination

Teachers were unsure about how professional development would be coordinated by the new deputy, but positive about this process being explained to them, and unfolding over time. They were hopeful that the professional development program would improve as a result of the leadership of the new deputy. They empathetically referred to the high workload of the executive staff, and regularly spoke of "understanding" why a teacher professional program may be difficult to plan or coordinate due to time restraints.

Maxvale College

Planning

Teachers were aware that the principal and a teacher on the executive planned the professional development days' program. Their input was informally sought sometimes through discussions at lunch time or at meetings. Most teachers expressed a desire for more input into the planning of the program, but were relatively content to source professional development related to their perceived learning needs themselves. The main impact was that teachers proactively planned much of their own learning, often by themselves, and had become confident in their capacity to do so.

Coordination

Teachers mentioned that the principal and executive staff coordinated the professional development days' program and indicated that this was the way it had always been at the school. During the focus group, teachers said that they had little idea as to how professional development could or should be coordinated in a school environment and declared an interest in finding out more about this aspect of school-based teacher learning.

These school-based snapshots of the impact that the planning and coordination of the school's professional development programs had on the learning of teachers led to findings 20 and 21:

Finding 20

The different ways in which the schools in the study planned and coordinated their teacher professional development programs impacted upon teacher learning differently in each school.

Finding 21

Teachers became accustomed to what the school planned, coordinated and provided in relation to the school's professional development program. They accepted what was offered and adjusted their expectations as learners accordingly to align with, and fit into, the school culture in which they worked.

At Brooklee College teachers perceived that there were advantages to their learning in having a member of the executive team, with a role dedicated to staff development, as the teacher in the school who led the planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's professional development program. At Jackston Grammar and Maxvale College, teachers seemed to have a keen interest in discussing this aspect of school-based professional development, but less understanding or awareness of what possibilities may exist that could benefit their learning. Rather, they tended to align their expectations with current school practice. This led to Finding 22:

In particular, the ways in which schools coordinated their professional development programs emerged as a topic of great interest to teachers and was also found to significantly impact on teacher expectations of their learning.

What implications arise that might assist schools to plan professional development for teachers in ways that provide a more substantial alignment with good practice, as defined by the literature?

Two implications arose in relation to assisting schools to plan professional development for their teachers in ways which aligned with good practice in the literature.

First, schools needed assistance in interpreting good practice as described in the literature in a way that they could apply to their school context. As noted in the literature review, there were few studies about how schools have attempted to plan and coordinate school-contextualised professional development programs within the context of a school, in ways which also explored the impact of context on teacher learning in the school. The literature provides theory, research and suggestions about teacher learning, but not readily on how to implement it "on the ground" at school level. It was found that the case study schools lacked resources,

both in relation to usable frameworks to assist them to explore teacher learning, and human resources to facilitate such investigation. Nor did they have the time to translate what they could from the literature to their context.

Secondly, schools needed assistance with finding out how their teachers learn at their school. The literature provides information on how teachers learn, both in relation to key modes of learning, and how they learn at various career stages, but again, the schools in the study had found this difficult to translate into their contexts. Much of the career-stage learning literature has been drawn from a variety of contexts, falling short of the specific information that they needed about career-stage learning at their school. Participating in this study, where frameworks were developed to determine the characteristics of how their teachers learn, and where support was provided by the researcher, the schools were able to access comprehensive data on how their teachers learn at each career stage. This was then used towards each school's improvement in both an understanding of how their teachers learn and their professional development program.

These implications led to a key finding of the study:

Finding 23

A significant nexus emerged between the horizontal dimension of career-stage learning and the vertical dimension of whole-school planning, coordination and evaluation of teacher professional development and learning. Understanding this nexus, and using it to inform the professional development program for teachers, could be the core to improving the learning of teachers in the school context.

Schools considered it advantageous to engage in conversations where data on how their teachers learn at career stages could be used to better tailor their program to the learning needs of their teachers. This led to Finding 24:

To optimise the planning of professional development in schools, the school needs to first learn how its teachers learn at each career stage within the school, and from this, draw out implications for the professional development program.

Career-stage learning was found to differ from school to school, which led to Finding 25:

Generalisations about career-stage learning, similar to what had been found in relation to generalisations about modes of teacher learning, cannot easily be made and then be expected to be transferrable to another school.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN THE HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER LEARNING IN SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Diagram 14.1 draws upon findings 23, 24 and 25 to illustrate how schools could utilise this information to improve practice. A strong interrelationship between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning in school contexts, and the way these impacted on teacher learning emerged in all case study schools. This nexus and how it could be used to improve school planning for improvement is illustrated in Diagram 14.1. Noted is how teachers learn differently at each career stage within their schools and how this information could be used to determine possible implications for improvement to each school's professional development program.

Diagram 14.1: Matrix showing the nexus between horizontal and vertical dimensions and using knowledge of career-stage learning to inform school professional development planning

MATRIX SHOWING THE NEXUS BETWEEN HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DIMENSIONS, AND USING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CAREER-STAGE LEARNING TO ASSIST WITH SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

HOW TEACHERS LEARN IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

HORIZONTAL DIMENSION — Teacher Learning Across all Career Stages

VERTICAL DIMENSION — Whole School Planning, Coordination And Evaluation Of Teacher Learning and The School's Professional Development Program

		EARLY CAREER	EXPERIENCED	EXPERT	LEADING	EXECUTIVE
Brooklee College	• Teacher Learning • Key Themes	• Consolidation of classroom teaching • Classroom management • Mentoring nominated as important • A need to learn from specialists • Learning to meet school expectations	• Focused on classroom innovation and creativity • Exploration of new pedagogies • Differentiation and ICT use to enhance learning • Planning of learning pro-active, done in advance of known needs	• Wide variety of learning preferences and interests • Learning was a part of their sense of professionalism • Focus on student learning and welfare • Postgraduate study was common	• Clear and definite about learning goals • Prioritised learning according to school or stage/faculty goals • Focus on learning about leadership • Focus on supporting and extending the teaching practises of their staff	• Learning was specifically aligned to school priorities • Believed that their learning should be rigorous and in line with school ethos • Paid sabbaticals, HDR, research leave
	• Implications for school PD program	• Review of mentor program • Provide PD from specialists • Assistance to prioritise learning • Learning opportunities to improve resilience • Provide information about school expectations and work deadlines	• Provide hands on PD experiences • Time to experiment and evaluate alone and with peers • Provide PD which is challenging and open ended	• Provide opportunities to discuss pedagogies and teaching goals • Enable forums where they can show, share, innovate and experiment	• Provide leadership mentoring • PD desires including HDR and sabbaticals which could be expensive and disruptive to classes	• High expectations for the school to fulfil in relation to desired learning and costly to resources
Jackston Grammar	• Teacher learning • Key Themes	• Classroom management • Mentoring nominated as important • Improve subject content • How to form better relationships with students • Learning about literacy strategies • How to be better organised	• Drew heavily on prior knowledge and experience to improve own learning • Apprenticeship style of learning desired	• Enthusiastic and energetic about their learning • Evaluated their learning • Prioritised learning confidently • Enjoyed sharing their learning • Learning was restricted due to workload in extra positions	• Enjoyed discussing their learning • Uncertain about how teachers supervised by them, learnt • Approaches to teacher learning aligned with school ethos	• New leaders on steep learning curve • Learning was based on immediate school needs • Engaged in short term learning to assist others
	• Implications for school PD program	• Provide lesson observations and feedback • Provide a structured mentoring program • Introduce professional learning plans for longer term pro-active rather than re-active learning	• Harness the energy and enthusiasm to share with colleagues to improve the PD program • Provide enriching PD to further extend capacities	• Harness energy and enthusiasm to share to improve PD program • Consider PD in leadership practices	• Provide information on how teachers learn at various career stages to improve the leadership of these teachers • Provide mentoring and personalised professional development plans • Continue with PD that is ethos based • Formalise collegial learning opportunities in the PD program	• Provide mentoring from external experienced leaders • Monitor learning program to ensure longer term learning is planned • PD on resilience and signs of leadership burnout • PD on setting strategic goals in their areas of responsibility
Maxvale College	• Teacher learning • Key Themes	• Improving and consolidating their teaching • A focus on classroom management • Completion of teacher accreditation requirements • Networking with other teachers outside the school • Learning content of syllabi • Developing resources for students requiring enrichment • Managing co-curricular and sport content and disciplining students in these different settings	• Enthusiasm to learn about school ethos • How to respond well to internal and external pressures • PD for effective leadership desired learning to meet the pastoral and wellbeing needs of students • Strong enjoyment expressed in the opportunity to talk about their learning	• Focus on school tasks rather than PD • Enthusiastic about PD completed outside of school hours • Isolated learning was common • Learning was mostly school community and ethos based	• Learning was personal, not just professional • School ethos and goals guided learning priorities • Learning was often done alone • Modelling school ethos was an ongoing learning journey	• Drew upon personal values and faith to shape learning • Considered reflection and prayer as learning • Their learning was crucial to uphold the school's ethos and mission and to serve other colleagues • Learning was about pedagogies and pastoral care relevant to their school and students • Learning needs and workload was high
	• Implications for school PD program	• Mastering subject content and pedagogical approaches • Using tools for learning, including ICT • Diversifying subject knowledge • Starting to use and analyse assessments to plan further student learning • Developing more effective resources • Learning more about Australian Curriculum • Developing purposeful and engaging lessons	• PD which enabled collegial conversation about their learning • Mentoring which facilitates professional learning planning • PD about effective leadership at middle management level	• Consider PD more closely for this group • Provide external networking opportunities • Utilise enthusiasm for pedagogy in the PD program	• Provide mentoring and networking • Stimulate teachers with learning opportunities with other external leaders	• PD on resilience and burnout • Mentoring to assist reflection and setting learning goals • Sourcing leadership resources from larger schools with similar ethos

SCHOOL BENCHMARKING DESCRIPTORS

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, Brooklee College expressed a desire to evaluate their existing professional development program. As a result, the researcher developed a theoretical framework (SBF) which enabled a focus on ten aspects of school community culture that related to teacher professional development and learning. Out of this it emerged that context and ethos were absolutely integral to the ways that schools were operating in relation to teacher professional development and learning.

The data from the SBF enabled the researcher to develop general descriptors of school performance related to the benchmarks drawn from the literature. These descriptors were not linked to any one school in the study, but rather, were formulated from the range of contextual circumstances that arose across the schools.

It was thought that formulating such descriptors, which follow, could be helpful as practical insights into the broader discussion on teacher learning in school contexts. They could also provide other schools with a ready reference to use when initially evaluating their existing approaches to teacher professional development programs and learning.

Level 1 school

The school's approach to the professional learning of teachers is strategic, school-contextualised, well-coordinated, adequately resourced, comprehensive and sustainable. It is formally evaluated by all teachers to enable further planning and improvement and to assist the school to use teacher evaluation in a range of ways that enhance teacher learning. Implementation of the professional development program is strategically distributed and consistent, being the delegated responsibility of a school leader or leaders who have direct access and input into the principal and the executive, where strategic decision making occurs. There is a teacher professional learning plan in the school, which is linked to school goals, and directly informs the professional development program. A wide range of teacher professional development opportunities are provided, using a variety of teacher learning modes or methodologies which meet the learning, developmental and accreditation needs of teachers along the career continuum. Teacher accreditation is embraced as a useful professional learning opportunity and is a significant feature of the school's internal professional development program, well-resourced and effectively staffed. Evaluation of the professional development program is strategic, regular and comprehensive, using a variety of processes and includes all stakeholders. Results from the evaluation are used to inform the teacher learning plan and professional development program. There are regular learning conversations about how teachers learn in the school which include discussions about the

impact of school context and ethos on teacher learning at the school. Teacher professional learning is embedded as an important tenet of the school's learning culture and enriches, enhances and improves teaching practice, the school and student learning outcomes. Teachers are considered to be leaders in learning and are supported as professionals through the internal professional development program. The principal is regarded as the leader of learning, responsible for the professional development of teachers and the major driver of teacher professional learning in the school.

Level 2 school

The school's approach to the professional learning of teachers is somewhat planned and may be linked to some strategic goals, but is not clearly articulated as a major priority in the school. Desired outcomes for a professional development program are either non-existent or lack detail and are not broadcasted in the school community. Delegation of responsibility for planning and implementation is not strategically distributed, and the possibility for those involved in the professional development program to have access to the engine room of decision making including the principal and executive, is not deliberate. Ongoing adequate resourcing and sustainability are not nominated as strategic goals and fluctuate from year to year, as does planning and implementation. The specific developmental and learning needs of teachers across the career continuum is not deeply considered, nor is the value of accreditation opportunities as potentially worthwhile professional learning possibilities taken into account. Evaluation of the professional development program and teacher learning is carried out sometimes, but is not strategic in nature and does not involve all stakeholders. The professional learning of teachers is not widely held as a priority amongst the staff and is not usually articulated as an important element of the school's culture. The principal may or may not be regarded as a leader of learning, and is not seen as having prime responsibility for the teacher learning plan or professional development program, or for the professional learning of teachers in general.

Level 3 school

The school approach to the professional learning of teachers is not developed. There is little or no reference to teacher learning in the school's documentation or rhetoric relating to strategic goals or future directions. Responsibility for the planning and implementation of the professional development program at the school is not effectively delegated or distributed, and if assigned, is given to staff with no access to the strategic decision making in the school and with inadequate resources and time allocation. Teacher learning occurs in an adhoc basis, and mostly off site, with no planned or implemented internal, school-contextualised

professional development program. The career stages of teachers and related developmental and learning needs are not acknowledged or discussed, nor are teachers consulted about their professional learning or to evaluate the school's professional development program. Teacher accreditation is only completed when required to meet government compliance requirements and is not particularly regarded as a potential professional learning opportunity. The professional learning of teachers is not a recognisable feature of the school's culture. The principal is regarded more as an administrator rather than a leader of learning, and teacher learning is not regarded by leadership or teachers as a possible agent for change or improvement in school effectiveness or student learning outcomes.

SUMMARY

This study has found that each school was at its own stage in it's planning of teacher professional development, and that an individualised approach, not forthcoming in the literature, needs to be explored.

The School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) provided details of these differences in ten areas relating to the literature and allowed the researcher to make some judgements on where each school was at in the vertical dimension of its planning and coordination of teacher professional development. As shown in Diagram 14.1, it was possible to summarise the horizontal dimension about how teachers learn at each stage along the career continuum in each case study school, and identify likely implications for the school's professional development program. This revealed the critical nexus which exists between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning in school contexts.

The implication is that there may be no best practice example of school-based professional development programs that can be aspired to, and probably no 'model' of professional development program provided in the literature that schools could easily adapt to their own context. Further, the question needs to be asked if schools *should* aim to copy or follow a model of school-based professional development, if superior outcomes in meeting the learning needs of teachers can be achieved through a different approach - developing a school-contextualised program from within. As a consequence, schools may need to be provided with appropriate resources to develop their own customised program for their teachers, differentiating it across the key career stages, and contextualised to their school. The key is to empower the school, whether comprised of 16 teachers as was the case at Maxvale College, through to schools like Brooklee College with over 110 staff, to be able to plan for and coordinate their own programs, with a view to continuous self-improvement.

In addition, it was found in the case study schools that the vertical dimension of planning and coordination of teacher professional development impacted upon the expectation of teachers about their learning, and about themselves as learners. The question arose as to whether well planned, coordinated and regularly evaluated, customised professional development programs at school level, taking into account the specific learning needs of teachers at each career stage within the school, may lead to a rise in the aspirations of teachers in relation to their learning, and result in more effective professional learning. It was also found to be important that teachers take ownership and be proactive in their own learning.

School context was identified as being a significant influence in relation to the horizontal dimension of teacher learning and again surfaced as significant in the findings related to the vertical dimension of school-based planning and coordination of professional development. Further, findings in the horizontal and vertical dimensions have revealed the close interrelationship of these two elements, which has further exposed the emerging theme of the critical place that *school context* has on the learning of teachers. We now turn to identify findings in relation to the impact of school context on teacher learning more deeply in Chapter 15.

CHAPTER 15

FINDINGS - SCHOOL CONTEXT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

From the case studies the researcher noted some issues emerging in relation to school context and questions were raised about context and ethos and its relationship to both the focus of, and the nature of, teacher professional learning.

Two further findings are related to school context, as follows. These arise from earlier findings noted for both the horizontal dimension of teacher learning and the vertical dimension of planning for teacher learning in school contexts. For ease of reference, the findings in this chapter are numbered sequentially to findings noted in the previous chapters.

Finding 26

School context emerged as a significant factor in the findings for both the horizontal and vertical dimensions.

Finding 27

There was a clear connection between the way in which the horizontal and vertical dimensions acted together in school contexts to impact upon teacher learning.

As noted in Chapter 2, for the purposes of this study, context was defined as the unique features of a school as it is shaped by socioeconomic, cultural, historical and geographical circumstances. School contexts were regarded as complex and considered holistically in this study. Other working definitions used for the purposes of the study related to context included:

- School ethos, which is regarded as the values and beliefs of the school and the way that these permeate and impact upon school culture; and
- School culture, which is created as a result of the school's context and ethos.

In this study, school ethos and culture were examined through the lens of teacher professional development and learning.

QUESTIONS POSED

In relation to school context, two questions were posed:

1. How and in what ways does school context and ethos influence teacher professional learning?
2. How and in what ways does school leadership impact on teacher learning in a specific school?

Findings in relation to each of these questions follow.

How and in what ways does school context and ethos influence teacher professional learning?

School context has emerged as a factor relating to the learning of teachers in case study and reflection chapters, and in the study's findings. The teacher questionnaire revealed that learning within the school context was the most significant factor reported by teachers in relation to their learning, nominated as such by almost 90% of teachers at all schools.

As the case studies unfolded, and reflection chapters were completed, the data continued to reveal the impact of school context and ethos on the learning of teachers. This could be seen in some of the questions which arose, and that were carried forward, from reflection chapters to the following case studies. Examples of questions included:

Such data about the impact of school ethos on teacher learning is scarce in the literature. Does the school vision and ethos impact on teacher learning at the next school?

Is the ethos of the school found to influence or drive the teacher professional development program?

How is teacher learning discussed and recognised, if at all, at the next school? Does this impact on the learning of its teachers?

The data collected during the case studies, and discussed in the reflection chapters, led to Finding 28

School context and ethos impact significantly on teacher learning.

It was clear at the case study schools that each school's ethos was distinctively different and that this resulted in different ways of thinking and talking about teachers and their learning. Perusal of school artefacts and websites provided an initial indication of what the case study schools articulated, both internally to their own community, and externally to the broader community, about teachers and their learning. Further details about these messages are included as Appendices 4.6, 7.2 and 9.2. A summary of each school's ethos, and how it appeared to impact on teacher learning, follows.

Brooklee College

Brooklee College's vision of "leader in learning" represented the aspirations of a school community which was founded on secular and humanist values and dedicated to educating the whole child. Within this ethos, teachers were regarded as leaders in learning and this was articulated clearly through policy documents, on the intranet and internet. Teacher learning

was declared as a top priority in the school, essential to enhance student learning. As a result, and as reported in Brooklee's case study and reflection chapters, teachers consistently referred to teacher learning as crucial to their identity as professionals and essential to their ongoing growth as practitioners. They described themselves as "thinkers", "innovators", "creative," and as "researchers of learning"; terms which were also found in the school's staff goals and professional development policy. Having seemingly adopted the school's beliefs about teachers as diligent and creative learners, Brooklee's teachers expressed confidence and passion about their learning, and an expectation that the school would coordinate a rigorous and strategically planned professional development program.

During the focus group discussion, several teachers commented on their different experiences of learning at Brooklee College to that of previous schools at which they had taught. They identified with the beliefs the school espoused about teachers as learners and considered that the extensive and varied professional development opportunities provided were a unique aspect of the school. The group then went on to discuss how this atmosphere had enabled them opportunities to fast-track their learning, and for some, their leadership aspirations. Several also mentioned that they had the opportunity to present at conferences, contribute to undergraduate university teacher programs as mentors, and to be assisted financially and to study at higher levels than they first thought possible. It appeared that they had adopted what the school thought about them as learners into their own professional identities. This also impacted upon what they thought about their colleagues and their learning, including the expectation that their peers would want to learn with them, and would also have the opportunity to set both individual and collective goals for their learning.

At Brooklee College, teacher learning was identified by teachers as a vibrant and important part of the school's culture, essential to their professional growth, personal resilience and wellbeing. Teachers also made reference to learning about "teaching methodologies" at this school for the first time in their careers. In particular, expert and lead teachers were knowledgeable about the ways that teachers learn, and referred to "action learning", "reflection on learning" and "learning walks". They also mentioned that the school had high expectations for their learning, and followed through by providing them with what they regarded as high quality learning experiences, such as access to academics and researchers from local and international universities.

The school's ethos at Brooklee College also impacted upon the resourcing that the school attributed to teacher learning. This included human resources in relation to the position of director of staff development, whose role it was to forward the school's ethos in relation to

teachers as leaders in learning, by facilitating teacher learning opportunities as a part of the school culture. In addition, physical resources in relation to the provision of teacher learning spaces were made available in the school, including a teacher professional learning library and meeting room which was reserved for teacher mentoring and accreditation discussions. Funding was also allocated to buying in consultants and researchers who were utilised in the school's professional development program.

Jackston Grammar

At the time of the study Jackston Grammar's artefacts, including policies, intranet and public website, did not explicitly refer to the learning of teachers. As mentioned, teachers and leaders noted that a part of the new deputy's role was to develop a policy on teacher professional development. Teachers also expressed their hope that teacher learning would be discussed more at the school, led by this deputy.

The school's Christian ethos saw the school referring to teachers as "servants" and "leaders in discipling". During face-to-face and focus group discussions, teachers clearly articulated these descriptions when speaking about the main purpose of their teaching and learning in the school. They had adopted the school's ethos and applied it to their professional identity, stating that they strove to be the best teacher possible in academic, personal and spiritual domains, as an expression of their faith commitment to the school. Many teachers mentioned that they applied to work at the school because of the ethos, which had also become their inspiration for further learning. Their belief that as Christian teachers they had the opportunity to "lead students to Christ" and to contribute to the spiritual development of children from Christian homes, appeared to have shaped what they expected of themselves and their colleagues in relation to their learning and leadership in the school. The ethos also impacted upon how they saw themselves in community, expecting to help, assist, teach and learn beside their colleagues as "brothers and sisters in Christ". This appeared to have led to a highly collegial teaching body, and one used to informal teacher learning, as they learnt together while "on the run".

Teachers also believed that they were "servants" to each other, the students and parents, and tended to think of their learning needs last, as a way of serving others first. Teachers had fewer expectations than those at Brooklee College about what the school articulated about their learning, or coordinated in relation to the school's professional development program.

Maxvale College

From the outset of the study the principal stated that due to the school being relatively new, time and energy had been directed to getting the school up and running, putting policies in

place for the teaching and welfare of students, and establishing effective communication with parents and the broader community. The school was now looking to formulate a teacher development policy and program, part of which would include a more strategic approach to teacher professional development. At the time of the study here was little which referred to the learning of teachers in school artefacts or the school's website.

The ethos of the school emphasised the importance of parents in directing the education of their sons and embraced teachers as key individuals, within a partnership between home and school, in the education of the child. The religious ethos of the school espoused the importance of enhancing the formation of character in their students, considered as crucial to their educational mission. This led to the employment of staff that were supportive of the school's ethos, considered to be committed to their faith, spiritually wise, and personally and professionally ethical.

Teachers at Maxvale College expressed a deep commitment to the school's ethos and were serious about their personal and professional impact on their students. They revealed a high respect for what they regarded as their calling, and similarly respected their colleagues and leadership team.

In the absence of any strongly identifiable messages about teachers as learners in this young school, and in the presence of an ethos that declared the central importance of teachers in the academic and spiritual education of their students, teachers had become extremely collegial learners.

Being in a small school, they were a tight-knit staff who shared resources, ideas and their own learning freely. As noted in Chapter 9, they also juggled multi-roles, and had become "self-starters" in relation to completing their workload, and mentoring each other. When required, they set goals for what they perceived they needed to learn to achieve in relation to this workload and to enhance the learning of their students. Teachers who volunteered for the study clearly articulated their desire to have time with the researcher "just to talk about teacher learning" and when the researcher returned to the school to provide feedback on the data collected, they again enthusiastically engaged in talking about teacher learning.

Teachers also expressed their desire for more opportunities to learn, be mentored more formally and be able to network externally with other teachers. Although it was evident that the school's ethos led to them being respected as professionals, they said that they missed having school-wide discussions about teacher learning, and some wondered what could be possible for them as learners.

HORIZONTAL DIMENSION FINDINGS

As a result of considering the context and ethos of each school and the resulting impact that this had on teacher learning, findings emerged within the horizontal dimension that related to teacher perceptions of themselves and their colleagues as learners. These findings have been grouped together below, as they form a natural progression, showing the cause and effect of school context and ethos as it unfolded for teachers at the case study schools, as follows.

Finding 29

The ethos of each school set the tone and substance of what was thought and articulated about teachers as learners, and how this was then practically expressed and acted upon within the school culture.



Finding 30

These messages became a part of the culture in relation to teachers as learners and shaped what teachers thought about themselves as learners, including the vocabulary they used to describe their learning. The ethos and culture then influenced what they regarded to be the purpose of their learning, the place of learning in their daily practice, what they aspired to learn, and expected to learn.



Finding 31

What teachers believed about themselves as learners, continued to shape their experience as learners. This appeared to be self-perpetuating and seemed to influence who the teacher became as a learner.



Finding 32

Teachers also made assumptions about each other in relation to how they learn, their expectations of learning and aspirations about learning, which were based on the school's beliefs about teachers and their learning. They passed on these assumptions to teachers in other career stages, as well as their own. This affected in turn, the teacher learning culture of the school.

In Chapter 14, findings related to the vertical dimension of planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's professional development program were noted. In this section, the effect of school context and ethos on the actual *content* of the professional development program is considered at each school, as follows.

Brooklee College

At Brooklee College the context and ethos of teachers as leaders in learning significantly influenced the content of the annual professional development program. Teacher learning had become strategically embedded into the school's strategic plan and goals for teacher learning were aligned with this plan and adjusted over three year timelines. The resulting professional development goals informed the content of the professional development program. Resources were allocated for staff induction, professional development days and a comprehensive annual professional development and teacher accreditation program. As documented elsewhere, this led to a program which contained a wide range of learning sessions and projects across the school, using a range of teacher learning modes and methodologies.

As noted, teachers were referred to in documentation, the school website and by the leaders of the school as creative and innovative, capable of changing and improving the school, and ultimately improving the learning outcomes of students. This appeared to be reflected in the school's professional development program which included a variety of professional development opportunities that encouraged further creativity and innovation, including action research projects and inquiry learning approaches. Teachers also developed and provided professional development sessions for others. In the focus group it was mentioned by teachers that this was a practical example of them being "leaders of learning" in the school.

Feedback from teachers throughout the study indicated their support for the content of their current program, which they considered was based on school goals and reflected their needs due to the inbuilt planning and evaluation processes, which they considered were collegial in nature. During a focus group discussion, teachers mentioned that the completion of evaluation forms after each session or project, and an annual survey administered to gain their ideas and requests for both the content and style of learning in the following year, had provided a:

> *Collegial and grass-roots approach to working out what the program would contain and how it would be done, which we all know happens every year now.*

Jackston Grammar

At Jackston Grammar, school context and ethos was again found to impact significantly on the content of the school's professional development program. Teachers were considered as

spiritual leaders in the school, able to support and lead students and colleagues in a Christian understanding of the world. The school had provided resources for a program that mainly consisted of staff induction and annual professional development days. They reported that most of the program on professional development days was used to enhance their learning about Christian education and teaching from a biblical perspective. As documented, teachers regarded this as valuable professional development which related directly to their classroom practice. Teachers in the focus group also mentioned the importance of the school's comprehensive induction program for new staff, designed to:

> *Immerse the teacher in the ethos, vision and mission of the school and teach them how to teach from a biblical perspective and encourage them in their witness as a Christian in the school community.*

However, in the focus group discussion, teachers at the experienced and expert career stages commented on their need and desire for more professional development related to pedagogy and curriculum. Early career stage teachers desired more development in relation to effective classroom management strategies and teacher accreditation requirements. During the feedback session at the school, leading teachers strongly requested more professional development in the theory of leadership and practical mentoring in effective leadership strategies.

Maxvale College

At Maxvale College the school's context and ethos was also found to significantly influence the content of the school's professional development program. The new and small nature of the school, and being positioned in a low socio-economic area, had meant that resources were stretched and the program mostly consisted of staff induction and professional development days. Sessions on these days were usually presented by the principal and the head of student pastoral care, and reflected the school's belief that teachers played a crucial role in strengthening and promoting the school's ethos. Topics included enhancing an understanding of the school's ethos, vision and mission, improving communication with parents, developing character in boys and utilising pedagogies which were thought to improve the learning of boys. Time was also allocated to discuss student pastoral care and particular student case studies, and to reflect upon the school's beliefs about the importance of teachers in the pastoral and spiritual care of students. Teachers were also given time to work on curriculum programming and individual preparation.

During the focus group discussion teachers expressed the value of these ethos-based sessions to assist them to align themselves to school priorities and:

> *Be on the same page as each other, which is good for the boys and their parents.*

However, they also mentioned that, due to the small school context, they desired input from other teachers from similar schools, both in relation to their subject area content and the use of stage appropriate pedagogical strategies. During the feedback session at the school, teachers across all career stages engaged in a conversation about their desire for a more formalised and regular program of networking with external schools. They also spoke of their need, in their opinion, for a more explicit mentoring program within the school, and the opportunity to regularly meet with a mentor or leader to set goals for their learning.

VERTICAL DIMENSION FINDINGS

As a result of a consideration of how school context and ethos impacted upon the content of the schools' professional development program, the following finding related to the vertical dimension emerged:

Finding 33

The school's mindset about teacher learning, formed as a result of the context and ethos of each school, significantly influenced the focus, scope and content of the teacher professional development program. This then directly influenced what teachers learnt in some areas of practice, compared to others.

This finding could have significant ramifications for teacher learning and development, and the "shaping" of teachers as learners, and therefore, practitioners. This is further explored in Chapter 17.

It should be noted that at the time of the study, none of the case study schools had considered using the career stages of teachers as a starting point for determining the content of their professional development program. Nor were they tailoring the content to particularly suit the learning needs or desires of teachers across the career stages at the school. As has been noted elsewhere, at the time of the study, teachers at all schools said that they knew very little about teacher career-stage learning, and expressed great interest in discussing this aspect of teacher learning during all phases of the study. It was thought that this lack of knowledge about career-stage learning at school level meant that schools were unaware of how, if at all, they could or should attempt to address teacher learning across the career continuum in the context of their schools. This led to the finding:

Finding 34

No case study school at the time of the study was attempting to provide content in their professional development program that would meet the particular learning needs or preferences of teachers at each career stage at the school. Also, none of the schools were attempting to use career-stage learning holistically in the professional development program

to harness the capability of teachers at various career stages to provide content that may support the learning of those in other career stages.

Having considered the data emerging in all aspects of the vertical dimension of school planning of teacher professional development and learning, a summative finding was developed, as follows:

Finding 35

The context and ethos of the school was found to impact upon all areas of the vertical dimension as it related to whole-school planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's goals and practices in relation to teacher professional learning, and the resulting focus, scope and content of the internal professional development program. This influenced teacher learning across all career stages.

THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER LEARNING

The second question posed in relation to school context and its influence on teacher learning was:

How and in what ways does school leadership impact on teacher learning in a specific school?

It emerged in the data that three levels of leadership impacted on teacher learning in the school context of the case study schools: principals, executive staff and middle management leaders.

Principals

The principals at each case study school were highly invested and thoroughly committed to leading their school communities. Each had significantly adjusted their personal and professional lives to enable them to focus their full attention on all stakeholders in the school - students, teachers and parents.

For the principals, the connection to their school was all about context. They spoke about, understood, and valued the historical and cultural aspects of their school. The socio-economic and geographical circumstances of the school were clearly in their sights and they took account of these in their thinking. At one school, the principal drove the researcher around local streets from which many of their students came, pointing out the homes and suburban circumstances of their students in the low socioeconomic area. Their clear empathy and deep understanding of their task in relation to the context and ethos of the school was palpable.

Comments during face-to-face interviews not only attested to the relentless workload of the principalship at all case study schools, but revealed their motivation for leading the school.

These inspirations included:

> *The opportunity to build on what the founders of the school started, to embed the values of the school into school life and practices.*
>
> *There are grandchildren here of the original parents who actually bought the land and drove the nails into the buildings. This is inspiring and as principal, I want to uphold and extend their vision.*
>
> *Standing with, representing and acting on behalf of parents in the education of their children is why we are here. Assisting them in the character formation of their children is of utmost and significant importance.*
>
> *I believe in what I am doing. I believe the school has it right in relation to educating students from a Christian perspective. What I do, what we do, will matter spiritually, not just academically.*
>
> *The inclusive ethos of the school as set by the founders, and the emphasis on educating the whole child was, and still is, a great vision and one that I enjoy leading.*

These conversations led to the finding:

Finding 36

Principals believed in the ethos of their school on both personal and professional levels. They committed themselves to deeply understanding, strengthening and promoting this ethos throughout the school.

The principals also emphasised the need to be considered as authentic leaders in relation to teacher learning. The essential ingredients of this authenticity were common across the schools, and included:

- being a learner, not just an administrator
- modelling learning and talking about learning
- being true to the ethos of the school by tailoring their own learning to enhance the school's educational mission and effectiveness
- supporting their executive teams so they could function optimally to support teachers as learners and practitioners, and
- being approachable and available to teachers to talk about their learning.

An additional perspective mentioned at Brooklee College was:

- promoting how the values of the school informed teacher learning practices and that this was seen to be authentic, not just rhetoric, by embedding them into the school's professional development program.

As a result of the interviews with principals, it emerged that they considered their role to uphold and extend the ethos of the school as essential to the school meeting its educational goals. This led to two findings:

Finding 37

The school principal believed their role to be to uphold and extend the ethos of the school. What they believed affected the culture which developed in relation to teachers as learners.

Finding 38

The principals believed that the stronger the understanding and commitment of teachers to the school ethos, and the more that teachers aligned their learning with the school's educational goals stemming from this ethos, the more effective their school would be.

Findings in the vertical dimension above have noted the influence that school context and ethos had on the content of the school's professional development program. Interviews with principals revealed that it was the principal who had the most influence in determining how school ethos would express itself, and impact upon the cultural aspect of teacher professional learning and the resulting professional development program.

Conversations with teachers confirmed the significant role that principals had in relation to their learning. What seemed to be apparent from the case study data was that of the factors affecting the school context, it was the beliefs and values of the school leader that were instrumental in shaping the directions of the professional developing program.

In summary, in relation to school context and ethos, principals impacted upon the learning of teachers through:

- what they believed to be the purpose of the teacher, which differed according to the context and ethos of the school
- how messages about teachers and their learning were communicated in the school community. This then effected what teachers thought about themselves as learners
- the culture which developed in both horizontal and vertical dimensions around teacher learning in the school, and
- the resulting goals, focus, planning, content, coordination and evaluation of the school's professional development program.

These observations led to Finding 39

It was the principal that determined the school's mindset about teacher learning, as noted in Findings 33 and 37, which formed as a result of the context and ethos of each school, and was found to significantly influence teacher learning and the school's professional development program. Principals could be regarded as the first layer of leadership ethos influence on teacher learning in the school context.

Executive Leaders

As reported in the school case study chapters, data emerged from executive staff on teacher learning in school contexts which related to both the horizontal and vertical dimensions. This data revealed executive team perspectives on the nature of teacher learning, and what they regarded as impacts upon this learning within the school context. The following graphs summarise this data, revealing that in relation to both horizontal and vertical dimensions, similarities and differences emerged in what executive staff thought at each school, as follows.

Table 15.1: Horizontal Dimension: What executive leaders thought about the nature of teacher learning at their school

ASPECTS OF LEARNING	BROOKLEE COLLEGE	JACKSTON GRAMMAR	MAXVALE COLLEGE
Teachers as professionals	✓	✓	✓
Teacher learning and teacher welfare	✓	✓	
Transformative learning	✓		✓
Differentiated teacher learning	✓		
Teacher accreditation	✓		
Teacher learning is essential to student learning	✓	✓	
Effective teacher learning		✓	✓
Teacher love of learning			✓
Learning is personal and devotional			✓

Both context and ethos, in different measures, were found to influence what executive staff believed about teacher learning in each school.

As shown above, executive staff at Brooklee College expressed beliefs about teacher learning that aligned with the school's ethos about teachers being creative and innovative learners, and professionals who led learning on site. They were well informed about some ways in which teachers learn, including action and inquiry learning, and considered that the teacher accreditation programs at the school enhanced teacher learning.

At Jackston Grammar, executive beliefs about teacher learning tended to reflect contemporary ideas rather than those specifically connected to the school's ethos. These included that teachers were professionals and that professional learning was essential to improve teacher practice, and enhance student learning. The expression of less distinctive beliefs about teacher learning aligned specifically to school ethos, may be attributed to the context of recent

changes in the executive, and that teacher professional development had only just been assigned to one new deputy as a part of their portfolio. The new executive was in the process of thinking through together, how the school ethos may be expressed in the school in relation to teacher learning.

School ethos surfaced strongly at Maxvale College as the basis for executive staff beliefs about teacher learning. The emphasis was on teachers as being involved in transformational learning, both for themselves, and in relation to building moral character in their students. Teachers were regarded as deep thinkers, and personal and spiritual learners, who actively sought out learning that would build their capacity to be authentic spiritual leaders in the community.

Table 15.2: Vertical Dimension: What leaders thought impacted upon teacher learning in relation to the professional learning program

ASPECTS OF LEARNING	BROOKLEE COLLEGE	JACKSTON GRAMMAR	MAXVALE COLLEGE
Strategic teacher learning	✓	✓	✓
Coordination of PD	✓	✓	✓
Barriers to learning	✓		
Leadership impacts on teacher learning	✓		
School contextualised learning was preferred		✓	
Induction process important		✓	
School resourcing		✓	
Teacher character and learning			✓
Spiritual context		✓	✓
The impact of a small school context			✓

The similarities and differences in the perspectives which emerged at each school in relation to the vertical dimension were consistent with what could be expected of executive staff working in the particular contexts and ethos of each case study school, and further triangulated the data reported in the findings to this point.

In addition to the above data, face-to-face interviews with executive staff revealed their detailed knowledge and consideration of the context of their schools, and the commitment to the ethos of their schools. They were aware that:

- part of their role was to model the school's ethos in their leadership approaches within the community, amongst middle management leaders, teachers, students, the school board and parents
- they had a different strategic function to the principal in relation to school ethos. Their focus was to ensure that strategic approaches and practical programs based on school ethos were being developed and put into place throughout the school, thereby increasing opportunities for school beliefs and values to permeate and continue to create a distinctive school culture
- an important aspect of their leadership role amongst middle managers was to assist them to engage in learning and thinking more deeply about the school's ethos, so that their leadership also reflected school values and beliefs, and
- it was important to ensure, through middle managers, that school beliefs and values were increasingly understood and adopted by teachers, and embedded into their programming and classroom approaches.

This led to the Finding 40:

Executive staff were found to be instrumental in ensuring that the school's ethos, as espoused by the principal, and supported by the executive, was further forwarded in the school's cultural practices in relation to teacher learning. They could be regarded as a second layer of leadership ethos influence on teacher learning.

Middle leaders (referred to as leading teachers in this study)

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the literature has identified the critical importance of middle leaders in the learning outcomes of students, much of which has been attributed to how they assist teachers to improve their practices on a daily basis. At the case study schools it was found that leading teachers, who held middle management leadership positions in the school, assisted teachers to learn how to deal with everyday issues of student management, curriculum development and parental relationships in ways which reflected and strengthened the school's ethos. In this way, the school's ethos was found to be the impetus behind, and that which influenced the nature of very practical day to day aspects of school culture. This led to the findings:

Finding 41

The effect of school ethos on teacher learning was further enhanced by leading teachers (middle managers) who had an impact on teachers as they learned to draw upon the school's ethos to both inspire and inform everyday practices in the school context. Middle leaders

could be regarded as a third layer of leadership ethos influence on the teacher and their learning.

Finding 42

Three levels of school leadership: principal, executive and middle leaders, were found to have impacted on teacher learning in specific school contexts. This was done through promoting the permeation of school ethos into the cultural practices of the school, including teacher professional development and learning.

SUMMARY

In the case study schools, school context and ethos, and the resulting culture in respect to the professional learning of teachers and the school's professional development program, were found to impact significantly on teachers as learners, and on their learning. The analysis suggested who, what, how, when and where categories of teacher learning, as follows.

Who – The school context and ethos, reinforced by three layers of leadership, influenced the teacher's perception of self as a learner, and helped shape who they become as a learner.

What – The content of the school's professional development program encouraged some learning over other learning.

How – The modes of learning that the school preferred for their teachers to use, and made available to them, significantly influenced how they could learn.

When – School coordination of the program influenced when, and how regularly teachers would learn, and whether this learning was mandatory or voluntary. This enhanced or detracted from teacher learning; and reduced or accelerated teacher learning.

Where – Each school determined, whether purposefully or not, where teachers would learn most. Examples included randomly and "on the run" around the campus, during informal discussions in the lunch room, more formal professional development sessions in teacher learning rooms, through to learning with specific action learning teams in classrooms.

A final finding for the way that school context and ethos influenced teacher learning, including the impact of school leadership, follows:

Finding 43

The founders of the school community in the schools studied set the ethos and values of the school, within its unique context, which whether consciously or unconsciously, purposefully or not, included values and ideas about teachers as learners, and teacher learning practices.

Principals who were passionate about the school's ethos were employed to lead the school and ensure that the beliefs and values of the school, including those about teacher learning, permeated the school's culture. This influenced all horizontal and vertical aspects of teacher learning, and the school's professional development program in the school, which in turn impacted upon teacher learning at all career stages.

Further, this cycle of principal influence permeated the distributed leadership of the school, as principals encouraged, motivated and expected their executive and leading teachers to personally assist and professionally contribute towards making the school's ethos "live" through practical out workings in the school's culture, including those which related to the learning of teachers. Within this context and culture, and because teachers also believed in the ethos of the school, teachers tended to align themselves with the school's beliefs about teachers as learners and adjusted their expectations about their learning, both individually and collectively, to enable and accommodate a synergy at school level.

A number of questions arose as a result of this finding, which will be considered further in Chapter 17.

We now turn to consider the study's findings in relation to the facilitation of school-based conversations about teacher professional learning in the case study schools, as follows in Chapter 16.

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CHAPTER 16

FINDINGS – FACILITATION OF SCHOOL-CONTEXTUALISED CONVERSATIONS ABOUT TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

The study posed the question as to how teacher learning and organisational learning could be facilitated simultaneously, with a view to improvement of teacher learning in the school context. It explored how teachers at all career stages within a school do, and might, learn from each other in a planned approach with the assistance of the researcher as participant observer, facilitating learning conversations. For ease of reference, the findings in this chapter are numbered sequentially to findings noted in the previous chapter.

QUESTIONS POSED

Two questions were posed at the commencement of the study in relation to the facilitation of school-contextualised conversations:

1. How can conversations about teacher learning be facilitated with a view to ongoing improvement of school-based professional development programs?
2. What can be learnt from schools as they go about their work with a view to the continuing improvement of their professional development programs?

Findings in relation to each of these questions follow.

How can conversations about teacher learning be facilitated with a view to ongoing improvement of school-based professional development programs?

Collaborative Approach

The nature of the collegial research required a trusting co-operative relationship with the researcher. The question arose as to what kind of methodologies would enable this researcher to work as a co-researcher alongside and with teachers in their schools, and work collaboratively with teachers and school executive in those schools, as they considered their individual professional development needs and learning and how to further improve these practices. The literature provided examples of researching good practice in schools, which was useful to building theory, but there was less available about the way in which researchers could assist reflective practice to facilitate ongoing improvement against good practice benchmarks for teacher professional learning. This led to Finding 44:

As indicated at the start of the study, knowing how to initiate conversations about teacher professional learning is complex, with very little in the literature which addressed this need.

In this study the researcher acted as a participant observer and co-researcher on the ground, facilitating reflection, planning and further action. This collaborative approach used to investigate how teachers learn in their school context and how professional development may be improved at the school level, started at the very onset of the study. The voluntary nature of the study meant that schools which participated did so out of an interest in exploring teacher learning at the school, with a view to improvement of their approaches and professional development programs.

An important starting point for this voluntary participation was the principal of each school, who first needed to indicate that they wanted the researcher to meet with staff to determine their interest in participation.

Once participation in the study had been approved in principle, teachers were then able to declare their interest as voluntary participants. As a result, all teachers along the career continuum, from early career through to executive who participated in the study, did so because they wanted to explore how they learn and contribute to a study which may lead to improvement to the school-based professional development program.

Data which emerged from the use of tools which were designed or selected as they promoted discussion and reflection (face-to-face interviews, focus groups and surveys), indicated that teachers participated in the study with enthusiasm and interest. Out of these voluntary, collegial conversations with the researcher, data emerged from all teachers along the career continuum which was useful to improving school-based professional development programs in the case study schools. Adopting a position as co- researcher, using school-contextualised frameworks also enabled the researcher to learn from participants. Four findings are noted as follows:

Finding 45

Using frameworks to facilitate learning conversations appeared to benefit teachers in assisting them to reflect upon the nature of their learning. It also enabled them to learn more about how teachers learn at each career stage, and how their colleagues learn within their school context.

Finding 46

The voluntary and confidential nature of the study, and the co-researcher approach adopted to facilitate learning conversations, appeared to have supported teachers as learners to evaluate and make comment upon the school's approaches to supporting them as learners, and the school's existing professional development program.

Finding 47

Reflective practice was found to be a powerful means for improving teacher professional development at the schools. It allowed data to emerge that could be used for school improvement in both a greater understanding of career-stage learning and to the school's professional development program.

Finding 48

Adopting a participant observer and co-researcher approach enhanced the researcher's capacity to understand where schools were up to on their teacher learning journeys. It was found that the researcher as facilitator of reflection, planning and further action was beneficial to supporting teachers and schools as they endeavoured to improve their professional development programs.

Holistic study approach

The study's methodology was designed to facilitate helpful conversations about teacher professional development and learning in schools. The use of case studies enabled a holistic approach to working with schools and promoted respect for the starting point of each school in their professional development journey. This regard for the context of each school, and the point at which they found themselves in relation to teacher learning and their professional development program, was an important premise of the study and underpinned the interactions across the whole-school. Schools would not be ranked against good practice statements in the literature, but rather enabled to explore their own journeys and evaluate their existing approaches to teachers as learners and their professional development program. Using the approach of co-researcher, enquiring into whole-school and across career continuum teacher learning, alongside, and with teachers at all career stages, provided depth and scope to the study that resulted in school improvements that could facilitate the next stage of school improvement to teacher professional development and learning.

This led to two findings in relation to the holistic approach and its impact on generating school improvement, as follows.

Finding 49

A holistic approach which included an understanding and respect for the context and ethos of the school was crucial to facilitating helpful and useful conversations about teacher learning. It enabled whole-school discussions to ensue, which facilitated planning that had the potential to change and improve the teacher learning culture at the school.

Finding 50

A holistic approach modelled by the researcher in the school facilitated learning conversations and assisted schools to better understand how their individual context and

ethos impacted upon the learning of their teachers. This assisted schools to not only identify, but also understand the reasons for the current strengths and weaknesses in their planning, coordination, content and evaluation of the school's professional development program.

Development of school-contextualised frameworks

The study's purpose suggested that it may be helpful to develop frameworks from the literature to enable conversations based on good practice. Within a holistic approach, it was important that these frameworks be customised to the context and the stated needs of each school.

School-contextualised frameworks based on good practice in the literature were developed throughout the study in relation to both the horizontal (teacher learning) and vertical (school-based professional development programs) dimensions. It was found that such frameworks were useful to schools because they were developed as a result of conversations at school level, and within the unique context, ethos and teacher learning culture of each school. In addition, they were used in different ways in each school, according to the learning needs of teachers and the organisation. It was thought that as a result, the data which emerged was deeper and richer for each school, than that which may have been generated by using generic frameworks. This led to the finding:

Finding 51

School-contextualised and generated frameworks based on good practice in the literature can assist schools to reflect more deeply on their practices in relation to teacher learning and their professional development programs.

The frameworks also provided the researcher with insights into:

- how schools might evaluate their professional development programs against good practice in the literature
- the nature of career-stage learning in school contexts
- individual teacher learning and goal setting, and
- how schools may improve in their understanding of teacher learning and their professional development programs.

Several examples follow of frameworks which were developed by the researcher in collaboration with schools, and how these facilitated learning conversations within schools. Where applicable, perceived benefits to the study are also noted.

1. School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) – (modified for use in all case study schools)

As detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, the SBF was first developed as a result of Brooklee College's request to evaluate their existing professional development program. The researcher then developed the framework, with reference to good practice in the literature, that enabled the school to benchmark their current practice.

At Brooklee College the SBF was completed by teachers (Appendix 4.9) and executive staff (Appendix 4.10), with the results discussed in Chapter 4. As a result of school-wide discussion, the data from the SBF directly fed into the planning decisions that were made at the school to improve their professional development program. These were noted in the school's action research cycle in Chapter 4 and Appendix 4.11.

The SBF was modified for use at Jackston Grammar as a result of their request to investigate what teachers thought about their existing professional development program, particularly in relation to what they considered important to include in the program. The modified SBF, included as Appendix 7.4b, enabled data to be generated by teachers at the school on their evaluation of the existing program, compared to their ideal for school-based professional learning. This data was then used by the school executive to gain a better understanding of both their teachers, in relation to their learning needs, as well as an evaluation from their perspective of the current professional development program and what they would like to see improved in the future.

A further modification of the SBF was developed for Maxvale Grammar, using the focus areas from the SBF to create a framework suitable to this school community, included as Appendix 9.4b. The modifications made were to enable the framework to suit the context of the school which, as noted, was in the early stages of thinking about the professional development of their teachers. This called for the tool to be a basic summary of good practice categories based on the literature, to facilitate factual and uncomplicated feedback from the staff. The results were then used by the school to determine a few major findings in relation to their program, which could then become the points of gradual, ongoing improvement that was manageable and achievable in their small school context.

Benefit to the study

As noted in Chapter 15, the SBF also enabled holistic descriptions of school practice. These may be a useful addition to the literature in relation to the discussion about approaches that could be used to investigate school-based teacher learning and professional development programs in ways which facilitate improvement in school practices. The resulting descriptions of schools at work may also be useful to other schools to benchmark their practices.

2. School-contextualised workshop frameworks: Career-stage learning group worksheets (developed with Jackston Grammar)

At Jackston Grammar the principal requested that the feedback workshop enable the facilitation of learning conversations that would provide the school with both horizontal data on how their teachers learn at career stages, and vertical data on what teachers desired in the professional development program. The group worksheets developed, and included as Appendix 7.4a, enabled individual, collegial and whole-school learning about teacher career-stage learning at the school and what the priorities were for each career stage in relation to the school's professional development program.

Benefit to the study

As a result of facilitating discussion in career-stage groups at the feedback session, and observing what each career stage learnt from the next as groups rotated, the researcher was able to triangulate the data which had emerged in the study finding that:

- teachers want to know more about how they learn at their career stage and how their colleagues learn at different career stages
- given the opportunity, teachers are able to provide specific and important information about their learning that schools can use to improve their professional development programs, and
- teachers want to have the opportunity to evaluate existing school professional development programs and be involved in the improvement process.

This led to three findings:

Finding 52

As a result of developing frameworks based on school generated data about teacher learning, both horizontal and vertical data can be produced by a school to enable them to improve their professional development programs in contextual and culturally appropriate ways.

Finding 53

More than strategic alignment or setting strategic goals for teacher professional development is required to improve school practice. An understanding of teachers as learners, across the career continuum as they occur in a particular school context, is required.

Finding 54

Improvement to the school's programs resulted from discussions at the grass roots level of teachers, as they discussed their own learning and each other's learning in career stages.

The question was then posed as to if bottom up approaches to improvement in school-based practices for teacher learning may be as, or more effective, than the top down strategies which regularly appeared in the literature. This is further considered in Chapter 17.

3. Teacher Learner Profile (developed with Maxvale College)

Data emerged from teacher face-to-face and focus group discussion at Maxvale College which indicated that teachers desired more opportunities to learn about themselves as individual learners, and to provide feedback to the school about professional development that they regarded as effective for them. As a result, the researcher developed a framework for each of the called The Maxvale College Teacher Learner Profile, included as Appendix 9.4a.

The researcher also developed a framework for each of the five career stages, included as Appendix 9. which included study data in key areas for learning, how learning was prioritised and how and in what ways they learn. During the feedback session at the school teachers were able to use the teacher learner profile that matched their career stage, and reflect upon the study data to develop a personalised description of their learning. They then noted the professional development activities that they thought would be effective for them at that career stage, and in relation to their individual needs and learning preferences, and that which would be achievable and appropriate in the Maxvale College context.

Learning conversations were then facilitated by the researcher, as teachers within the same career stage compared and discussed their profiles and then swapped with teachers from other career stages. A whole staff discussion then followed, where teachers at all career stages shared their reflections on the profiles they had built, and contributed to pooling their ideas about desired professional development activities. This resulted in a deeper understanding of how teachers learn at Maxvale College, individually and collectively, and specific recommendations from teachers for improvement to the school's professional development program.

Using this framework, facilitated conversations enabled the bringing together of teacher career-stage learning needs and desires (Horizontal dimension) with the real school context (Vertical dimension), to generate relevant ideas for this school about teacher professional development that could assist in school planning for improvement.

Benefit to the study

The use of school customised frameworks, collaboratively designed by the researcher with the case study schools, was not found elsewhere in the literature, and led to the following finding:

Finding 55

School-contextualised frameworks developed for teachers to use to drill down into their own learning characteristics, needs and preferences, based on data about career-stage learning from school contexts, were well received by teachers at all career stages. They considered them to be relevant and useful in enabling them to engage in individual deep reflection and generated rich and meaningful whole-school discussion about teacher learning. This led to effective planning for improvement to the school's professional development program.

THE USE OF ACTION RESEARCH

Action research was regarded as appropriate to school settings and provided for systematic enquiry, with the purpose to improve practice. It was purported in the literature as an approach that facilitated collegial discussion, reflection, deeper understanding and sustained improvement in schools. The literature also provided examples of how action research could support teachers in their learning, and further enhance their learning.

Action research was found to facilitate conversations about teacher learning at key phases of the study, as noted in the case study chapters. The action research cycle of action, reflection, learning and planning resulted in an improvement in an understanding of the horizontal dimension of teacher learning across the career continuum within schools, and solid planning for improvement to the vertical dimension of school-based professional development programs. Because the action research cycle enabled school-contextualised reflection and discussion, improvements were community generated and contextualised, and therefore considered achievable by the schools in the study. A sense of ownership in the way forward to improve teacher learning was also observed across the schools. This led to the finding:

Finding 56

Action research cycles tailored to the individual context of each school were useful in generating improvement from the bottom up and top down, as all teachers from early career through to executive contributed to contextualised conversations about teacher learning and the evaluation and improvement to the school's professional development program.

It was also found that the use of action research cycles effectively harnessed the particular contexts and ethos of each school to enhance their capacity to generate improvements which were realistic and achievable. Teachers also expressed that they liked owning the process, and were invested in the resulting plans for improvement to the school's professional development program.

Brooklee College

As noted, the school's ethos and culture had led to beliefs about teachers as leaders in learning and a comprehensive professional development program. However, school-based learning conversations as a result of the study led to a number of possibilities as to how the school could move forward to further improve the professional development program, particularly in the area of career-stage learning, including:

- development of a staff scholarship fund on four levels to support teacher learning at all career stages
- development of school-contextualised professional learning plans to facilitate individualised mentoring and planning of each teacher's professional development
- planning to deliver professional development across distinct career continuum points to meet the learning needs of teachers, and
- the establishment of teacher action research projects throughout the school linking to strategic school goals.

Jackston Grammar

A fairly new executive team, including a deputy who had been assigned teacher professional development as a part of their portfolio, set the context for further planning. As a result of the feedback session, which was based on sharing insights into teacher learning from within career-stage groups, the school noted the substance of these facilitated learning conversations and decided that their next steps would include:

- completion of the draft professional development policy, drawing on what had been learnt as a result of participating in the study
- further clarification of leadership roles in relation to teacher professional development
- adoption of a more strategic approach to creating the internal professional development program
- a focus on developing a whole-school mentoring program
- development of a more comprehensive teacher accreditation policy and processes
- identification of key teacher learning areas for further development, and
- promotion of teachers as learners and professionals within the school context.

Maxvale College

The journey of a new and small school which had been developing a strategic school plan, set the context for initial conversations about teacher learning. The school's engagement in the action research cycle using school-contextualised frameworks facilitated deep reflection and

collegial conversations that led to the implementation of more personalised mentoring and individual learning plans for staff, including that:

- the school used the teacher learner profile framework as a basis to develop their own professional learning plan template for use by teachers and leaders to set individual learning goals
- a more formalised and structured mentoring program was introduced to facilitate regular meetings for teachers to discuss their professional development needs and to plan their learning goals, and
- the intention was to use the modified SBF framework annually, to benchmark the school's professional development program and facilitate ongoing discussions about setting goals for further improvement.

In summary, the action research cycles structured around facilitated conversations about teacher learning in ways which suited the context and ethos of each school, led to the planning for improvement of school-based professional development programs at the schools.

Having completed one full cycle of action, school principals stated that they would be likely to continue using action research cycles and the frameworks that had been developed during the study to continue learning conversations, with a view to further improvement, after the researcher had concluded the study. This led to the finding:

Finding 57

The action research approach proved useful in facilitating conversations which initiated processes of data gathering, reflection and further planning in the schools.

Benefit to the study

Working collaboratively with schools by giving feedback to the whole staff on the data collected, and facilitating school-based discussion as a part of the action research cycle, was instrumental for school ownership of the planning for improvement to teacher learning.

The second question posed in relation to the facilitation of school-contextualised conversations about teacher professional learning was:

What can be learnt from schools as they go about their work with a view to the continuing improvement of their professional development programs?

At the start of the study it was mentioned that the researcher thought that it was difficult to know with certainty, as one responsible for teacher learning in a school, how to best plan, coordinate and evaluate a professional development program against good practice in the

literature. It was found at each case study school that this was also their dilemma and simple solutions were not available or necessarily appropriate.

Emerging from the study was the view of schools as being both complex and unique. The researcher's experiences while working with schools to facilitate conversations about how teachers learn, with a view to improvement of the school-based professional development program, revealed that each school context and ethos was different enough to warrant the development of contextualised frameworks to enable deep reflection and planning, as opposed to trying to make an external approach or resource fit the needs of each school community.

As schools went about their work with a view to improvement of teacher learning, perspectives about teacher learning in schools emerged in relation to teachers, schools and research.

Teachers

It was found that deep knowledge about teacher learning varied significantly from one school context to the next, as noted in the case study chapters, and the horizontal dimension findings in Chapters 12 and 13. Of significance, it was found that teachers who participated in the study knew very little about teacher career-stage learning, either in relation to their own learning, or that of their colleagues across the school. It could be thought that this lack of knowledge limited teachers in what may be possible for their own learning, and impacted upon their effectiveness to assist teachers at other career stages to learn as well as possible.

It was also found that as teachers went about their work in the case study schools, they rarely spoke about their own learning. Teachers who volunteered to participate in the study expressed their enthusiasm at having the opportunity to discuss their learning with the researcher. Some mentioned that it had been the first time in their career that they had participated in discussions where their learning was the specific focus. This led to the finding:

Finding 58

Teacher learning about themselves can be improved by engaging in collaborative and non-judgemental conversations about their learning in their workplace. These conversations were regarded as supportive and edifying by teachers, who said that they enabled them to reflect upon their own learning, understand themselves more deeply and learn more about how teachers learn across career stages.

Schools

All case study schools stated that they needed assistance to improve their practices in relation to teacher learning. Even though highly motivated to understand how their teachers learn, and improve existing professional development programs, staff thought that they lacked the expertise, time and the resources to do so. They regarded the study as offering them the opportunity to work collaboratively with a researcher who had a knowledge of good practice in the literature, would engage with them in a non-judgemental fashion, and who would share the research data collected with them to facilitate achievable and sustainable planning for improvement. Principals and executive staff in particular wanted whole staff buy in, and therefore appreciated the holistic approach to the study, and its capacity for facilitating whole-school discussions. This led to three findings:

Finding 59

Initiating individual and whole-school learning conversations with staff across the breadth of career stages in a school, not only helped teachers to articulate their needs, but also enabled those who were responsible for the strategic direction of the school to lead improvement in teacher learning based on whole-school collegial discussion.

Finding 60

The schools in the study regarded the process of facilitation of learning conversations as having a positive impact on staff collegiality, and ultimately on the teacher learning culture of the school, as all contributed towards the common purpose of school-based improvement to teacher learning at the school.

Finding 61

The nature of the conversations that school leaders promote within schools about professional learning is vital to establishing the priorities, structure and culture in which learning takes place.

A number of things were learnt from schools as they went about their work with a view to continual improvement of their professional development programs.

Research about teacher learning in schools

It was found that schools were able to facilitate such a study relatively easily around their daily routines. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in a spare office space or classroom. Being less than an hour in duration, they were able to be scheduled around classes and did not interrupt the teaching and learning of students. Similarly, focus groups which met over lunch or directly after school in a spare classroom were not disruptive to school routines, nor did they compromise the responsibilities of staff. The introductory and feedback sessions

occurred during whole staff meeting times or within the schedule of a professional development day, revealing that the time needed to set up the study, or deliver feedback was not onerous to schools.

Benefits to school and teachers

Significant benefits for teachers and schools emerged from a study that had minimal impact on the daily work of the schools that participated. Planning for improvement occurred in all schools as a result of the facilitation of contextualised learning conversations. Feedback from schools was that that they would continue a cycle of action research that would aim to achieve sustained improvements, which in essence marked a change in the schools' cultures in relation to professional learning. Individual and organisational learning, and a deeper understanding about teacher learning occurred in each school. Whole-school reflection and collaboration was enhanced.

Secondly, it was learnt that schools desire input from researchers who are knowledgeable about teacher learning *and* used to schools as workplaces. They sought the academic rigour available in the literature, with a practical approach from a researcher who understood schools "on the ground".

These observations led to two findings:

Finding 62

Being able to use the literature as a good basis for contextualised conversations about professional learning was more effective for encouraging school improvement than using it to say to schools what they should or should not do, without regard to their capacity to comprehend or respond.

Finding 63

Out of this study emerged a gap in the theory about how research can forward school improvement of teacher professional learning. Feedback from the case study schools indicated that there was a definable step forward in their thinking and planning for improvement to teacher professional development and learning as a result of the study, which would be ongoing and could be culture changing. Therefore, research of this nature is to be encouraged.

SUMMARY

Learning conversations and reflection, at individual, group and whole-school levels, were at the heart of this study. Working collaboratively and alongside schools as a co- researcher, facilitating school-contextualised conversations and reflective practice, with respect for

school context and ethos, resulted in significant findings about how such an approach enabled schools to increase their understanding about teacher learning, and specifically career-stage learning, and plan together to further improve their professional development program. These conversations also enabled the researcher to learn, and gain further insights into the complex nature of schools at work and what research approaches may best benefit them.

In Chapter 17 which follows, we turn to discuss these findings in relation to the literature, and consider implications for the further development of theory, policy and school practice.

CHAPTER 17

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The study has centred on six dimensions of teacher professional learning, five drawn initially from DeCourcy (2012) and another from reading the general literature. These dimensions were:

1. Teacher learning
2. Teacher learning and its relationship to student learning
3. Collegial teacher learning
4. School leadership and teacher learning
5. Leadership learning

To this was added a sixth dimension:

6. The contemporary context of school-based teacher professional development.

These dimensions provide the framework for the discussion of findings.

When this study was established it was done so according to the most current, seminal works in the area of teacher professional development and learning, as noted in Chapter 1. More recent work in the course of this study has confirmed the central importance of these dimensions when considering how teachers learn across their career continuum in school contexts.

Each dimension of this framework is now considered, noting:

- what had been originally observed from the literature
- findings that emerged from the study, specifically data that either confirmed the literature or could be considered as new contributions, and
- implications for the further development of theory, policy and/or school practice.

DIMENSION 1: TEACHER LEARNING

How teachers learn across all career stages in the context of their schools was the focus of this study. Within the first dimension of teacher learning, a number of ways in which teachers learn that were prevalent in the literature were noted. In all, over fifty ways that the literature highlighted as effective learning for teachers were mentioned, as noted by key researchers including Hargreaves (2001), Marzano (2003), Rowe (2003), Fullan (2004), Borko (2004), Ingvarson et al. (2005), Darling Hammond (2006), Timperley (2007, 2011), Robinson (2008),

and Dinham (2008). Data emerged at all case study schools that teachers and leaders tended to find this amount of research about effective modes of learning and professional development options somewhat overwhelming, and perhaps even daunting, making it difficult to know how to proceed with the planning and coordination of professional development at the school level (Findings 17, 50 & 51).

Reconciling regulatory requirements with school ethos and culture

Even though well intentioned, it was found that the schools in the study felt that they were not delving deeply into understanding how their teachers learn, except when required to do so in relation to mandatory governmental teacher accreditation requirements, which in any case, focused on teacher demonstration of pre-specified outcomes, rather than on learning (Finding 17).

In two schools in particular, key beliefs, values and assumptions about teacher learning were not being made explicit within the school communities. What was apparent was that the regulatory requirements of accreditation were taking precedence over exploration and discussion about their core beliefs and values around teacher learning and career path development. Of significance the study also showed that such values and beliefs are also integral to the implementation of school ethos, and the formation of effective learning cultures in the school (Finding 28).

Finding ways of reconciling these two dimensions would seem to be of utmost importance. One way of doing this would be to further develop teacher standards frameworks to include standards which explicitly acknowledge school ethos and context in the development of teachers as learners. In this way, the standards could support teacher development within the local variations that emerge for teachers in their learning contexts – schools. This may also assist in broadening the thinking at school level about teacher learning, removing the focus solely on regulatory requirements that could inhibit school communities from deeply exploring local values and context, and validating school context and ethos as important and significant attributes of the fabric of professional development in the school.

Articulating beliefs and understandings about teacher learning

Although the literature was focusing on teacher professional development and learning, and schools in the study were aware of the need to act decisively in relation to the planning and coordination of teacher professional development, it was found in the three case study schools that one had substantial statements about teacher learning, but the other two did not. It is significant that of the three case study schools, the school that included such material did so

as an outcome of the study. Exploring this further, the researcher also found that on the websites of a sample of schools selected at random there were significant statements about student learning, as one would expect on school websites, but either nothing, or very little was said about teacher learning, teacher professionalism, or teacher growth.

Discussions around policy development currently coalesce around the development and implementation of teacher performance and development schemes and what part of professional development should be funded. However, the study indicated that the starting point at policy level could be to encourage schools to articulate their beliefs about teacher learning, according to the ethos that they were trying to encourage in the schools in which teachers work. The findings in the study (29, 30 & 31) indicated that school beliefs around teacher learning, and the resulting teacher learning culture that emerged, significantly shaped what teachers regarded as the purpose of their learning, the place of learning in their daily practice, what they aspired to learn and expected to learn. As noted in Chapter 1, the articulation of policies and practices about teacher learning have been found to be integral to teachers' feelings of professionalism, wellbeing and resilience (Day & Gu, 2009).

Teacher awareness of career-stage professional learning

As noted in the study, in an era where teacher learning continually appears in government reports and recommendations to improve schools, teachers at the case study schools knew very little, apart from their intuition and experiences, about the nature of teacher career-stage learning and how it differs at different career stages (Findings 13 & 14). It was also noted that this was an area that was sporadic in the literature. For instance, there is much more available on early career development and principal preparation and induction, than on the other stages of career development.

In addition, it was found that teachers did not have a working knowledge of teacher learning methodologies or modes of learning that may be preferred by teachers at various career stages, in the way that they had of approaches to student learning and teaching pedagogies regarded as appropriate to specific stages of student development. Also, on speaking informally to over thirty practicum students in their school about how teachers learn, the researcher noted that they too had little idea about the ways in which teachers learn, and had never heard about teacher career-stage learning. Many also asked why teacher learning, career-stage learning and career-stage development were not taught as a focus unit in their teacher education programs.

The study revealed that:

- teachers, from graduate through to executive, knew little about career-stage learning (Finding 14), and that they were keen to learn more (Finding 13), and
- career-stage learning was not being considered at school level in the case study schools when planning for teacher professional development (Finding 34).

Research on career-stage learning over forty years reveals ongoing work in attempting to define career stages and teacher development phases. Most of the literature however, draws upon studies of teachers at specific career stages, across schools and districts, sometimes spanning over several years. This study however, makes a contribution to the literature by enabling a holistic focus across all career stages, at the same time, in each case study school. It has also highlighted the importance of teacher learning at each stage to their personal and professional growth, resilience and wellbeing. Importantly, it revealed that teachers know far less about their own learning than they do about that of their students, in an era where teacher learning is professed to be key in relation to school improvement and student learning.

Clearly, the implication for theory is that greater levels of research are needed to expand on our knowledge of the nature of teacher learning at all career stages. As noted in Dimension 1, this knowledge could be useful in contributing to policy direction, such as how information about career-stage learning might be incorporated into teacher standards frameworks, with a view to further supporting the development of teachers.

At school level, more comprehensive theory on how teachers learn at all career stages within school settings could assist schools to intentionally set out to harness the unique characteristics of development and learning preferences at each career stage to enrich teacher learning. Professional development programs could have learning opportunities embedded which provide for deep learning and collaboration of teachers at each career stage, with targeted learning according to their needs and growth potentials. Across-stage sharing of expertise and perspectives to explicitly enhance the learning of others could also be utilised as an effective platform for teacher learning in school-based professional development programs.

Profiling career-stage learning

The study revealed that common teacher learner profiles emerged at the three case study schools for each of the five career stages identified at the commencement of the study (Findings 11 & 15). An interesting characteristic which occurred at every career stage was that teachers tended to describe their learning primarily from an emotional perspective,

revealing a deep personal connection to their learning. An attempt was made to capture these in the descriptions developed by the researcher, as follows:

- Early Career – The "I need it now, concerned" learner
- Experienced Teachers – The "excited" learner
- Expert Teachers – The "confident" learner
- Leading Teachers – The "serious" learner
- Executive Leaders – The "focused" learner.

The varying emotional connection that teachers seem to have in relation to their learning at different career stages has implications for theory, policy and practice. Further research about teachers' emotional connection to their learning may assist policy makers in their ongoing development of teaching standards frameworks. They could consider including standards which look to harness the emotional energy and different focus at each career stage in relation to teacher learning. At school level, this understanding may also assist in the development of professional learning opportunities, based on career-stage accreditation frameworks, which are more personalised to the emotional mindset and focus of each teacher.

Also, for those leaders seeking to be authentic in their leadership of teacher learning, acknowledging the close emotional connection that teachers have to their learning, and using this to approach teachers with empathy and understanding, could be beneficial in building stronger relationships with their staff. In turn, this could result in teachers developing a deeper trust of their leaders in relation to sharing their developmental needs, and providing feedback about their learning, with view to improving the professional development program in the school. It is noted that trust is being recognised as an increasingly important component of strong school cultures (Fink, 2013), which is further discussed in Chapter 18.

Teacher learning in schools is complex

As noted in Chapter 1, many modes of learning were cited in the literature as potentially effective ways of learning for teachers. The study found that teacher learning at each case study school was complex and that descriptions of successful professional learning identified as a result of research did not necessarily translate to specific school settings (Findings 2, 3 & 25). Further, teacher perceptions about how they learn in particular ways varied considerably from school to school, and within career stages (Finding 5 and Appendix 13.1).

Implications at school level would be to avoid making generalisations about how their teachers best learn. This could be achieved by schools conducting their own investigations, as

modelled in this study, to determine themselves how their teachers learn in their particular school context. This is discussed further in Dimension 3.

School context as the most influential factor on teacher learning

Hattie (2009) refers to teacher impact as the greatest in-school influence on student learning. This study revealed that in-school influences are not restricted to the learning of students. School context and ethos, and the resulting culture which emerges around teacher learning (Findings 29 & 30), was found to be the greatest influence on *teachers* and *their* learning, both individually and collectively in the case study schools (Findings 28, 31 & 32).

As documented, eight modes of teacher learning which had consistently emerged as effective ways of learning in the literature were selected for further exploration in the study. The study confirmed the literature that collegial conversations and gaining feedback from students and colleagues were significant modes of learning (Finding 1). However, what emerged was that learning within a school context seemed to be the pre-eminent way of learning for most teachers across all schools in the study. Teachers tended to refer to learning that was embedded in, related to, and was reflected in the school ethos, as powerful and influential to their learning and development as teachers (Findings 30, 31 & 32).

An implication for the theory may be to concentrate research attention on school-contextualised learning as the focus of investigation, rather than other modes of learning, such as collegial conversation and learning through feedback, where there are already substantial amounts of good practice literature available. Also, researchers may be in a better position to learn more deeply about the ways teachers learn if they positioned their studies at school sites, and ensured that they understood the context and ethos of the school to assist them to more deeply understand teacher perspectives and responses.

At policy level, more could be done to inform schools more comprehensively and consistently that localised, school-based learning is formational to teacher growth and development. Improvement could also be made to the provision of resources to assist schools to develop what the literature refers to as effective teacher learning - strategic, continuous and comprehensive, as noted in Chapter 1.

Much was also learnt from the study about how teachers regard their schools in relation to their learning. It was found that they were willing to change their expectations as learners to accommodate school context and ethos (Finding 4). Also, although teachers were willing to tailor their learning to that provided in, and appropriate to the school's ethos and development goals, they held their schools accountable for the effects on them as learners that these

limitations or opportunities presented (Finding 7). They also made professional judgements as to whether or not the school was authentic in relation to being committed to their learning in terms of the provision of enough time for their learning to occur (Findings 7 & 9). For over forty years the literature has shown that teachers consistently cite a lack of time as a main impact on teacher learning, and this was again confirmed by teachers at the case study schools (Finding 9).

Further, it was found that teachers made assumptions about the ways in which colleagues may best learn which were grounded in the school's ethos and resulting teacher learning culture (Finding 32). These assumptions further affirmed and consolidated the teacher learning culture, and were passed on from one career stage to the next, and to new teachers as they settled into the case study schools.

In addition, the existing teacher learning culture, based on school ethos and beliefs, was found to significantly influence the focus, scope and content of the teacher professional development program (Findings 33 & 35). The inseparable and complex nature of the relationship between teacher learning and school context and ethos, which emerged in the study, is represented diagrammatically as follows.

Diagram 17.1: The relationship between teacher learning, school context and school ethos

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER LEARNING, SCHOOL CONTEXT AND SCHOOL ETHOS

SCHOOL CONTEXT AND ETHOS

Finding 28: School context and ethos impact significantly on teacher learning.

Creates the school's teacher learning culture which includes beliefs about teachers as learners and teacher learning

Finding 29: The ethos of each school set the tone and substance of what was thought and articulated about teachers as learners, and how this was then practically expressed and acted upon within the school culture.

Effects the Development of Both

TEACHERS

Finding 10: It emerged in each school that school context and ethos were key determining factors in how teachers learn in the school.

Horizontal Dimension: School Based Teacher Learning

Including:

1. <u>Individually</u>
   What teachers think about their learning

   Finding 30: These messages became a part of the culture in relation to teachers as learners and shaped what teachers thought about themselves as learners, including the vocabulary they used to describe their learning. The ethos and culture then influenced what they regarded to be the purpose of their learning, the place of learning in their daily practice, what they aspired to learn, and expected to learn.

   Finding 31: What teachers believed about themselves as learners, continued to shape their experience as learners. This appeared to be self perpetuating and seemed to influence who the teacher became as a learner.

2. <u>Collectively</u>
   What they assume about the learning of their colleagues

   Finding 32: Teachers also made assumptions about each other in relation to how they learn, their expectations of learning and aspirations about learning, which were based on the school's beliefs about teachers and their learning. They passed on these assumptions to teachers in other career stages, as well as their own. This affected in turn, the teacher learning culture of the school.

3. <u>School</u>
   What they think about their school and their learning

   Finding 4: What a school emphasises as important ways of learning, and teaches its staff in relation to a mode of learning, affects the ways in which teachers can access that mode of learning and grow in its use. Teachers will use particular ways of learning to the best of their ability, and find ways to use these modes within the school context, but can be limited by what the school does or does not do.

   Finding 7: Teachers held their schools responsible for the quality of their learning in particular modes of teacher learning. They also made judgements about the level of authenticity that a school had about their learning, based on what they saw the school doing to facilitate and make time for particular modes of learning within the school. They tended to attribute blame to their schools if they did not have time to implement a mode of learning that they felt they were expected to engage in, or that was important to them.

THE SCHOOL'S PD PROGRAM

Finding 19: Each school's needs around the planning, implementation and evaluation of their program was different as a result of their unique school contexts.

Vertical Dimension: School Based Professional Development

Including:

1. **Planning, coordination and evaluation**

   Finding 35: The context and ethos of the school was found to impact upon all areas of the vertical dimension as it related to whole school planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's goals and practices in relation to teacher professional learning, and the resulting focus, scope and content of the internal professional development program. This influenced teacher learning across all career stages.

2. **Focus, scope and content**

   Finding 33: The school's mindset about teacher learning, formed as a result of the context and ethos of each school, significantly influenced the focus, scope and content of the teacher professional development program. This then directly influenced what teachers learnt in some areas of practice, compared to others.

3. **How career-stage learning is addressed, if at all**

   Finding 34: No case study school at the time of the study was attempting to provide content in their professional development program that would meet the particular learning needs or preferences of teachers at each career stage at the school. Also, none of the schools were attempting to use career-stage learning holistically in the professional development program to harness the capability of teachers at various career stages to provide content that may support the learning of those in other career stages.

4. **Use of teacher learning modes**

   Finding 2: Within each of these common modes of learning, the different context of each school was seen to significantly shape the way that teachers did and did not learn in these ways.

School context, ethos and teacher learning culture is perpetrated through both teachers and the professional development program at the school

Teacher learning, action research and developing whole-school professional development plans

Engaging in learning as a result of action research cycles was noted in Dimension 1, Chapter 1, as an effective mode of learning for teachers. Further, in Chapter 2, the benefits of action research purported in the literature as assisting both teachers and schools to reflect upon their practice, with a view to improvement, were noted. The study confirmed, as discussed in the case study chapters and the findings, that action research, facilitated by a co–researcher, was indeed effective in enabling schools to move forward in their planning of teacher professional development (Finding 48), as well as facilitate planning that had the potential to improve the teacher learning culture at the school (Finding 49).

The study showed how, with the use of action research and some investigative frameworks, voices from teachers at all career stages in the school community could be heard in relation to teacher learning and the school's professional development approaches and programs. This groundswell of data from early career through to principal was then successfully used as the basis for school exploration and planning of their teacher learning approaches and professional development program (Findings 50, 52, 54, 56, 57 & 59).

In addition it was found that teachers were supported by the facilitation of collegial learning conversations generated as a result of the action research used in the study in a variety of ways (Findings 45, 46, 47, 56, 58, & 59). The study enabled teachers to have an individual and collective voice in relation to articulating their perceptions, needs and desires as learners, and what the school could do to improve their learning.

One implication for contemporary research about teacher leaning arising from this study was that it may be useful for researchers to use action research cycles with teachers in schools, beginning with a respect of, and reference to, the unique school culture in which they are working. From this, the purpose would be to ensure that schools benefitted from the data collected in ways that may lead to improved practice, rather than the main focus being on the collection of data to take away for further analysis outside the school.

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER LEARNING AND ITS REALATIONSHIP TO STUDENT LEARNING

Defining teacher quality

As a result of the focus on teacher learning in this study, new insights emerged from the data as to how schools and teachers defined a "good" or "quality" teacher. It was found that school context and ethos in each case study school significantly impacted upon teacher perspectives.

It was not to the literature that teachers turned, but from within their own school context, ethos and the resulting teacher learning culture within the school, that these descriptions emerged and developed. Once determined, these ideas were found to influence many aspects of teachers as learners, as well as the teacher professional development program within the school (Findings 4, 10, 15, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33 & 35).

Not only attaining, but also maintaining teacher quality is a regular call of educational researchers and jurisdictions. However, studies are scarce that consider how schools can plan and implement professional development programs over time for their particular teachers in ways that might assist them to maintain and further improve their quality teaching practices. This study provided an example in the literature of the purposeful use of action research as a means of enabling schools to establish and continue cycles of school learning and planning in relation to teacher professional development, indefinitely after the research was concluded (Finding 63).

The literature over the past decade has declared the centrality of quality teaching in enhancing the learning outcomes of students. The definition of quality teaching has been both broad and deep, with most literature defining "quality teaching" in terms of both the personal and professional attributes of teachers and their teaching, as well as the way these impact on student outcomes. Determining the extent to which this "quality teaching" enhances student outcomes has been problematic, with most of the literature making general assertions, but finding it difficult to document specific teacher action that would enhance particular student outcomes in the short and longer terms.

The literature has also been resoundingly clear that effective professional development significantly impacts on quality teaching, offering a range of ideas on what "effective" professional development looks like and exploring these in a variety of contexts. Further, the literature calls upon systems and schools to provide professional development for teachers that will "transform" their teaching practices in ways that result in improved student learning. The connections appear simple on the surface, able to be summarised as following:

Diagram 17.2: Flowchart showing the relationship between teacher professional development and student learning



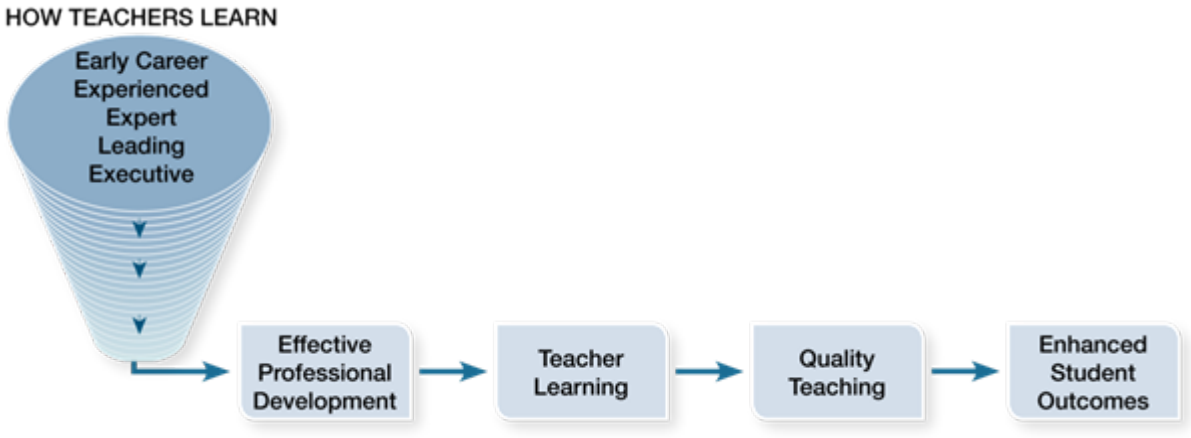
However, as the literature attests, defining “quality” teaching, “effective” professional development, “transformation” of practice and what constitutes teacher “learning” is not a simple task.

This study did not attempt to focus on the nature of effective professional development which leads to teacher learning, which then results in “quality teaching” that enhances student outcomes. Rather, it took one step back to explore how teachers learn across every career stage in the school contexts in which they practice daily, and what could be learnt from this that may inform how schools could best plan and coordinate professional development programs that meet the learning differences and needs of teachers.

Emerging from the study is the notion that the first step to planning effective professional development is to understand how teachers learn at all career stages in their schools, which was not occurring in the case study schools. The study confirmed that there were significant benefits for the case study schools in first determining how their particular teachers learn, and in using this data to inform their planning towards coordinating an effective professional development program for their teachers (Findings 48, 50 & 57).

Thus the study would assert that firstly determining how teachers learn across their career continuum within the school context, and using this as the basis of designing appropriate professional development activities, is crucial to the planning of effective professional development, as illustrated below:

Diagram 17.3: Knowing how teachers learn as the first step in the relationship between teacher professional development and student learning



Further research is suggested to determine if knowing how teachers learn in their schools actually leads to the development of school-based professional development programs which are deemed “effective” in enhancing teacher learning. Policy direction could then include the

provision of resources, both in relation to human resources and exploratory frameworks, which could assist individual schools to explore for themselves how their teachers learn, and then use this information as an underpinning factor when developing their professional development programs.

Reconciling the vocational and the professional in teacher professional learning

The researcher was surprised to find that teachers tended to focus on the vocational level of the profession, as it related to both the moral purposes of being a teacher, as well as the necessity of meeting day to day regulatory requirements relating to the duty of care and wellbeing of students. This was at the expense of more contemporary views of professionalism espoused in the literature. Their sense of personal and professional belonging to their school also surfaced as qualities which they regarded as characteristic of a "good" teacher. Whereas the literature may define a quality teacher as one who knows about pedagogical approaches, assessment for learning, the capacity to differentiate, and the like, teachers in the case study schools described a good teacher as one who:

- understood, supported and strengthened the school's ethos
- integrated faith with practice
- was committed to their school community
- loved learning
- helped other teachers through their own example
- shared practice and resources with others
- was collaborative and reflected on their practice
- knew their students well as people
- was interested in developing the whole person
- knew how their subject was worthwhile to students
- helped students grow as people, throughout their struggles
- was trusted and respected by students, parents and colleagues
- could manage a class well because of a good relationship with students, and
- was humble about their abilities as a teacher.

It was mainly from *within* schools, rather than from external influences, ideas, the literature or government reports that teachers in the case study schools formed ideas about what a quality teacher looks like, and aspires to be. The question could be posed as to how relevant the girth of literature on quality teaching is to teachers "on the ground". If it is at school level that teachers form their ideas, then is it within schools, rather than in theory or policy, that

teachers' ideas about quality teaching can be best influenced? Further research on school context and ethos, and how these elements could be harnessed to further develop the perspectives of teachers about teacher quality, may be warranted.

Schools may benefit from thinking consciously and transparently about how their context and ethos could impact upon what teachers regard as a "quality" teacher. Identifying the messages that flow from their context and ethos about teachers as learners, and the place of teacher professional development in the school, may assist to expose the impact of ethos on teacher development and help when planning professional development programs. If schools wish to change or improve their teachers' views of the "quality" teacher, then they may first need to identify what their teachers think in the first place, and find ways to discuss this meaningfully at whole-school level. This could then enable a renewed strategic alignment of teacher learning to be developed at ethos level, which could then flow through to the teacher learning culture within the school. In turn, this could impact upon improvements to the professional development program, which would ultimately benefit teacher and student learning.

DIMENSION 3: COLLEGIAL TEACHER LEARNING

In this dimension, the notions of career continuum learning and career long learning were discussed in relation to collegial learning and the provision of effective professional development for teachers. National and international reports on teacher learning were considered, which collectively called for professional development to be strategic, continued and sustained. Literature which reported on the successful learning of teachers who were provided with professional development relevant to their career stage was also noted. However, at the time of writing, literature that explored the provision of professional development to teachers from every career stage, simultaneously and holistically within school contexts, appeared to be less available.

Planning and coordination of professional development programs based on the career continuum of teachers

In addition to providing data on career-stage learning, the study, it was thought, could provide information about the use of career-stage learning as the *basis* for designing school-based professional development programs. At the time of writing, no research could be found on the planning, implementation and evaluation of a career continuum approach to coordinating professional development for teachers at the school level (Finding 34). The study found that even though teachers learn differently at each career stage, and were highly motivated to learn together, both within each stage and with other stages, this was not being used as momentum

within the schools' professional development programs or harnessed as an agent for change and development in teachers. New insights also emerged in this study (Findings 13 & 45), that can be added to the theory about the benefits of career-stage learning in relation to collaborative teacher learning, which has been consistently identified in the literature as an effective mode of learning for teachers.

The study found that not a lot of attention has been paid in the literature to the nature of, and differentiations between, the learning of each of the career stages and how this could be harnessed to improve teacher learning in school contexts (Finding 16). In addition, the study has shown that there could be benefits to using career continuum based professional development programs which incorporate career stage appropriate content and learning preferences. Intensive professional development could target specific career stages to enable teachers to learn from their existing level upwards, reaching for the next career stage in terms of knowledge and expertise. Such an approach may also have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of teacher learning within teacher accreditation frameworks, which imply career-stage development and are already in use in schools. Also, the professional development program could purposely target the cross learning potentials from one career stage to the next, harnessing the various attributes of teachers at each career stage to enhance teacher learning within another, as illustrated at the Jackston Grammar feedback workshop documented in Chapter 7. Such a program could also draw upon what we know about both career-stage learning, and what we know to be effective modes of learning for teachers, as found in the literature and confirmed in this study. These could include collaboration, reflection, collegial learning conversations, observation of practice and the giving and receiving of feedback. The following diagram and discussion captures the concepts of such an approach.

Diagram 17.4: Teacher career-stage learning cycle



This model illustrates the three ways in which career-stage learning could be used to benefit and enrich teacher learning within their school contexts. It utilises what we know about career-stage learning and development, with the benefits of collaboration and team work.

1. Career-stage learning within each stage, shown through the circular arrows around the perimeter of each career stage, relates to our knowledge about career-stage learning. First, that common learner profiles occur at each stage (Finding 11) and secondly, that learning at each stage is substantially different from that at other career stages (Finding 12). Both these factors need to be taken into account if the learning needs of teachers are to be met. It was also found that there was a benefit to teachers in relation to their reflection on, and planning for their learning, when they understood more about their own career-stage learning as a result of participation in the study (Finding 13). The implication of these considerations is that schools could plan to coordinate some of their professional development activities to target teachers as groups at each career stage. This would assist them to meet and learn with other teachers who are at a similar point in expertise and who share similar preferences in ways of learning. It would also assist schools to avoid providing professional development for teachers at particular career stages that they clearly regard as ineffectual for their learning (Finding 12) or that is inappropriately presented for that career stage (Findings 5 & 6).

2. Career-stage learning between stages, as shown by the arrows from one stage to the next, illustrates the desire of teachers to understand more about career-stage learning by learning alongside teachers from the next career stage up (Finding 13). Benefits in relation to reaching for the next level of expertise and practice would be inherent within professional development activities designed around placing teachers from two close career stages together. Mentoring, or professional companionship (Degenhardt, 2013) could be utilised in such professional development activities, which has been shown to be beneficial to both teacher learning and career path progression.
3. The arrows from each career stage to the centre represent the benefits that could also be drawn from career stages meeting to engage in collaborative learning across the career continuum with teachers from all career stages. This could include career planning opportunities, and the sharing of different journeys and experiences at each stage (e.g. early career with executive) to improve understanding and collegiality and build robust professional relationships that could enhance the school's teacher learning culture. In addition, the provision of professional development activities that ensure that teachers from all career stages across the school mix and collaborate on whole-school initiatives, would also be seen as useful professional development for teachers in the school context.

Using career-stage learning to improve teacher standards frameworks

Changes in accreditation processes during the course of the study, in the jurisdiction in which the study was set, moved to more delineated career path progressions which overlapped with the various career stages that the study explored. This reaffirmed the timeliness of the study.

It was found that schools were struggling to use such accreditation frameworks based on career-stage development as the basis for developing significant learning opportunities for their teachers. The "missing links" in these frameworks was information on how teachers learn at each stage, and advice based on good practice in the literature on what professional development could be provided to assist them to grow into the next stage of expertise.

The implication is that standards are simply based on what teachers seem to be doing at each of the levels at a particular point in time, but there is no indication of how they learn at each of the levels, particularly with a view of progressing between levels. This is where the study makes a contribution. The implication at a national level is that a greater focus needs to be placed on the nature of career-stage professional learning within those frameworks. More detailed research is needed to further develop this study's findings across a number of school

sites. This could also be valuable to teachers, as it taps into their desire to develop over their career stages, assisting them with what to learn to enable them to progress.

By way of example, Appendix 17.1 shows how the provision of information on teacher learning along with professional teaching standards, and suggestions on appropriate professional development to move from one developmental level to the next, could be achieved. In this instance, an extract from the current *Australian National Professional Standards for Teachers Framework* (2011), included as Appendix 17.2, has been used to illustrate these points in three ways, as follows.

Appendix 17.1a demonstrates how suggestions of teacher professional development, based on good practice in the literature, and knowledge of how teachers learn at each career stage, could be inserted into the professional teaching standards document against each descriptor, for each career stage. This would provide easy access to advice about relevant professional development activities that could be completed by teachers to assist them to improve, or further develop in each descriptor.

Appendix 17.1b demonstrates how a support document for teachers to use along with the improved professional teaching standards document mentioned above, could provide additional information on resources, research and literature related to each descriptor. This would enable teachers to learn more deeply about good practice in relation to the descriptors of their choice. Potentially, this could provide the basis of formulating a professional learning plan, either alone or with a mentor, related to the descriptors selected by teachers as their focus for learning.

Appendix 17.1c demonstrates how career-stage learning could enhance teacher development when using teacher standards frameworks by providing explicit information about what professional development could be used to assist teachers to progress from one developmental stage to the next. The example provided is teacher movement from *Proficient Teacher* to *Highly Accomplished* teacher. This process could also be linked to a professional learning plan which could be developed collegially with a mentor.

School-based exploration on how their own teachers learn – the need for schools to "write their own book"

Prior to the study, the case study schools were not explicitly planning teacher professional development programs which referred to, or planned, for how teachers learn differently across their career stages. Nor were schools considering how teachers may learn differently at each career stage, as a result of their unique school contexts.

A major finding of the study was that there were multiple benefits demonstrated in the case study schools in enquiring about, and exploring, how their own teachers learn. These included the use of both bottom-up and top-down approaches to generating conversations which assisted schools to evaluate their current practices in relation to teacher learning, as well as plan for further improvement. In addition, teachers were assisted to articulate their learning needs, and leaders were seen to lead improvement based on collaboratively collected, whole-school suggestions. Further, feedback from schools in the study was that such exploration had a positive impact on staff collegiality and the teacher learning culture in the school (Findings 56, 59 & 60).

The implication at policy level could be to acknowledge the reality of career-stage learning "on the ground" and move to support schools to better understand their teachers' developmental stages and to plan school-contextualised professional development programs accordingly. This planning, and resulting professional development program, would take into account the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the school, as described in this study, thereby meeting the learning needs of teachers realistically within, and respectful of, the school's context, ethos, teacher learning culture and existing professional development program.

Ultimately, the study found that schools need "to write their own book" in relation to investigating how their teachers learn and how to plan for improvement in the ways that they approach teacher professional development and learning in the school. Degenhardt's journey of school-based research to bring about change and transformation in her own school, illustrated the key importance of school context and ethos as firstly the basis, and then the focal point, of such exploration (Degenhardt and Duignan, 2010). It further confirms the outcomes of this study which emphasise the key position that school context and ethos has as the foundation for exploring the learning of teachers in schools. Further, Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) document the importance of including all voices as contributors to the eventual plan forward, again found to be a central component in this study of successfully facilitating school improvement in the professional development programs at the case study schools.

Because school context and ethos are unique to each school, transferring an approach and a process from one school, such as that found in Degenhardt and Duignan (2010), to another school is problematic. Schools need to engage in their own investigations about how their teachers learn within their context, and how this learning might be improved.

How then might schools engage in this contextualised research in relation to planning to improve their professional development program?

The use of a holistic approach, action research, learning conversations and frameworks developed for use within the specific school context, were approaches found to be of some use in this study. In addition, adopting horizontal and vertical dimensions as lenses through which to explore teacher learning in school contexts, resulted in comprehensive and deep learning about teacher learning in the case study schools.

The following diagram utilises the main findings in the study to capture a process through which schools could “write their own book” in relation to investigating how their teachers learn, and then use this information to improve the teacher development program at the school.

Diagram 17.5: Suggested approach for school exploration of how teachers learn and how to evaluate the professional development program

SCHOOL EXPLORATION OF TEACHER LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1. WHOLE SCHOOL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SCHOOL:

Context and ethos

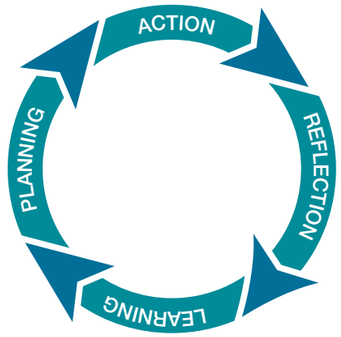
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Which creates the teacher learning culture at the school

AND

School strategic goals, including development goals for improving teacher professional development and learning

2. USING ACTION RESEARCH:



The school conducts an enquiry using horizontal and vertical dimensions

HORIZONTAL DIMENSION
Exploring teacher learning in five career stages

VERTICAL DIMENSION
Evaluating the school's approach to teacher professional learning and the resulting internal professional development program

Early Career
Experienced
Expert
Leading
Executive

TEACHER LEARNING

Strategic alignment
Resource allocation
Professional Development content
Implementation
Learning across the teacher career continuum
Teacher accreditation
Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment
School leadership
School culture
Evaluation procedures

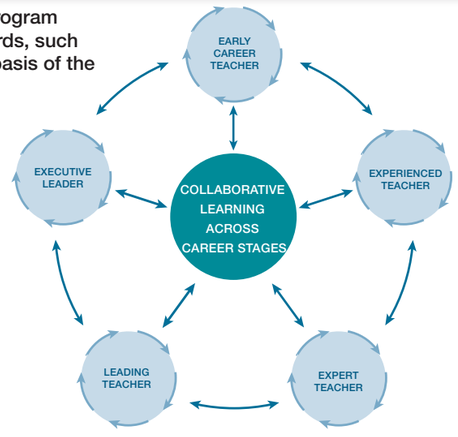
Enquiry Tools: Face-to-face interviews, focus groups and questionnaires

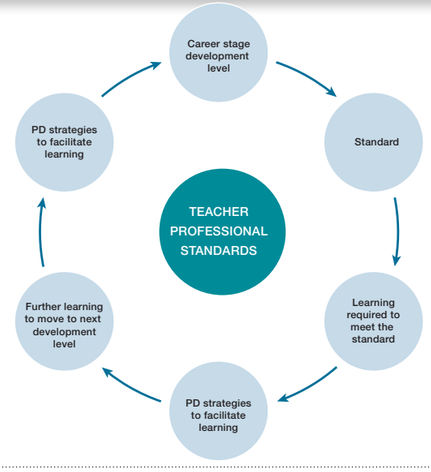
Enquiry Tools: The School Benchmarking Framework

3. WHOLE SCHOOL REFLECTION, LEARNING AND PLANNING

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Coordination of a school based professional development program using career-stage learning and teacher professional standards, such as the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, as the basis of the program.





This cycle continues to enable incremental steps towards the continual improvement of school-based professional development programs and teacher learning within the school

DIMENSION 4: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER LEARNING - DEVELOPING LEARNING COMMUNITY CULTURE

School leadership and leading conversations about teacher learning

This study has contributed to the literature in conducting holistic, school-based research which confirmed the importance of facilitating learning conversations and reflection in developing learning community culture (Findings 44, 45, 46, 47, 54, 58, 59, 60 & 61). It also confirms the literature that refers to school leadership as having a vital role in leading conversations about teacher professional development and learning in their schools (Findings 39, 40 & 42). The study indicated that, where leadership was positioned to initiate such conversations in the action research cycle, there were ongoing benefits to teachers, as well as those responsible for the school's professional development program.

At school level the implication is that through using such a process of enquiry that encourages and supports leadership to engage in whole-school conversations about teacher learning, both the reputation of leaders, and the capacity for teacher buy-in to the planning for improvement of school-based professional development programs were enhanced.

Leaders benefit from researchers working alongside and with the school community holistically

This study explored the impact of the researcher in working with and alongside schools as unique communities of learners to help them utilise a process that led to an improvement in the planning of professional development for their teachers. The study found that a researcher working as a critical friend with school leadership assisted leaders to facilitate conversations about teacher learning in their communities which were well informed and useful to future planning of their professional development programs (Findings 17 & 59). Benefits were also experienced by teachers (Findings 45, 46, 58, 59 & 60).

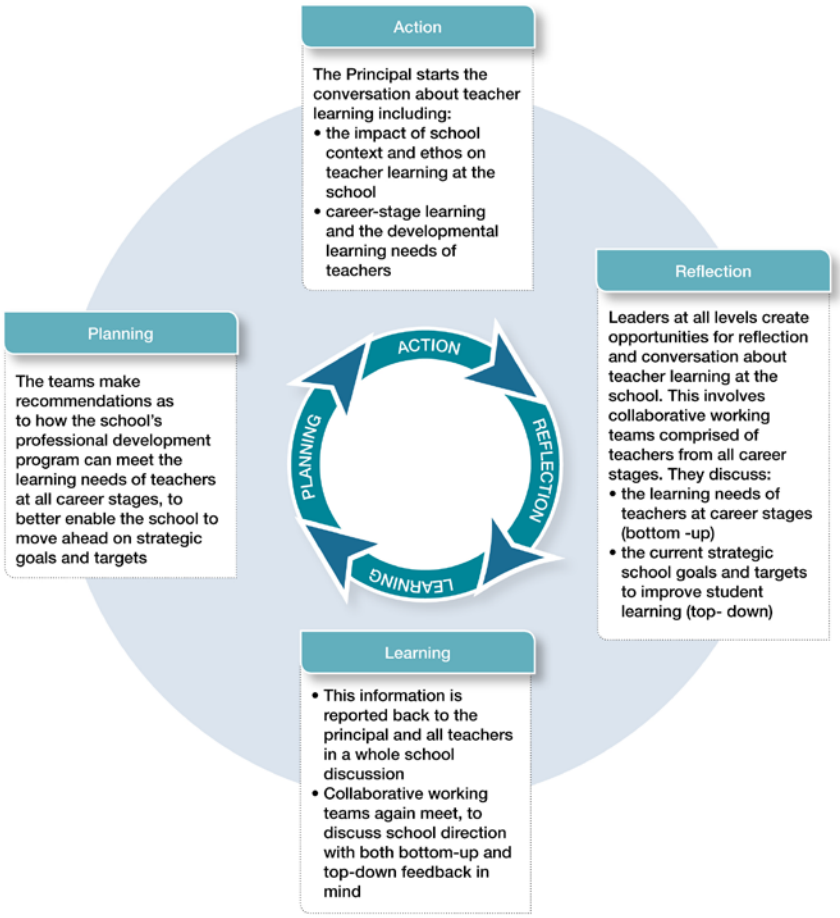
The use of an action research framework to work with, rather than on schools, contributes to the literature in the area of identifying the benefits of conducting holistic research in school settings that is responsive to the needs and requests of staff. A contribution to the literature was also made in relation to the effectiveness of a researcher adopting a facilitator role in equipping and supporting schools to develop sustainable approaches for ongoing reflection and planning of their school-based professional development programs (Finding 57 & 63).

The study's findings, emerging from the exploration of horizontal and vertical dimensions of school-based teacher learning, indicate that a practical, holistic process to improving professional development and teacher learning could be used by schools, which supports

leaders and teachers and secures community ownership of both the process and final professional development program. It draws upon bottom-up and top-down approaches to ensure a holistic development of the professional development program.

Using the study's action research cycle as proposed in Chapter 2, and utilising the aspects of the study found to be beneficial to leaders, teachers across the school engaged in a process of action, reflection, learning and planning, as illustrated in the following diagram.

Diagram 17.6: School leaders and teachers using action research to improve the school's professional development program

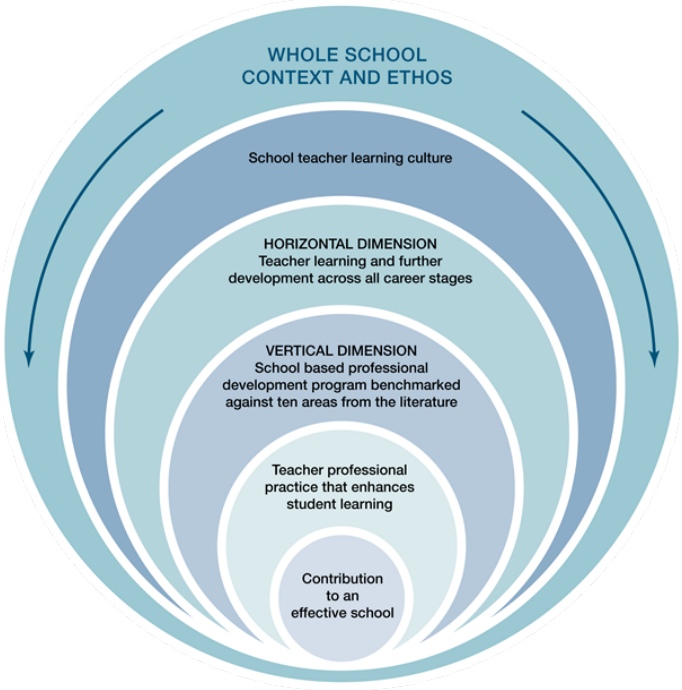


Effective schools literature

The effective school's literature, which clearly links school leadership, teacher learning and school effectiveness, was also discussed in Dimension 4. Data emerging from the study led to a contribution to the most recent literature on effective schools, which points to the centrality of school contexts which support and enhance teacher learning.

With reference to the study, the following diagram illustrates the centrality of teacher professional learning to effective schools, as asserted in the literature, but also emphasises the role of school context and ethos, and both horizontal and vertical dimensions, in this equation.

Diagram 17.7: Awareness of the influence of school context, ethos, horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning to the building of effective schools



DIMENSION 5: LEADERSHIP LEARNING

The impact of school ethos on teacher learning through three levels of leadership

As described in Chapter 1, the literature notes the impact of the principalship and middle management on teacher learning. What was less explored in the literature and emerged strongly in the study was the impact of executive staff on teacher learning. In addition, the significant place of school context and ethos, caught up in the ways in which leadership impacts upon teacher learning in school contexts, emerged in this study. It was found that:

- the principal, as main driver of the professional development program, was primarily influenced by the school's context and ethos, not by the literature, national or

international reports on teacher learning (Findings 36 & 39). They also believed that encouraging teachers to be aligned with the school ethos, and the resulting school development goals, would enhance the effectiveness of the school (Finding 38)

- school context and ethos impacted on teacher learning repeatedly, through three layers of leadership - principal, executive, and middle managers (Findings 40, 41, & 42). The literature tends to focus upon the impact of the principal and middle managers on teacher learning, but there was little found on the impact of executive staff on teacher learning. Also, the literature does not speak widely on the way that ethos impacts upon the ways in which these three layers of leadership together, found in most school contexts, influence teacher learning
- decisions made primarily by the principal on how and in what ways the teacher professional development program would be coordinated, directly linked to the ethos of the school and the beliefs held about teachers as learners (Finding 39), and
- all of the above significantly influenced the shaping of teachers at all career stages in relation to their perspectives, expectations and aspirations about their learning, their experiences of learning, and ultimately their development as teachers (Findings 42 & 43).

This resulted in Finding 43, which is noted as a new contribution to the literature on the impact of school context, ethos and leadership on teacher learning:

The founders of the school community in the schools studied set the ethos and values of the school, within its unique context, which whether consciously or unconsciously, purposefully or not, included values and ideas about teachers as learners, and teacher learning practices.

Principals who were passionate about the school's ethos were employed to lead the school and ensure that the beliefs and values of the school, including those about teacher learning, permeated the school's culture. This influenced all horizontal and vertical aspects of teacher learning, and the school's professional development program in the school, which in turn impacted upon teacher learning at all career stages.

Further, this cycle of principal influence permeated the distributed leadership of the school, as principals encouraged, motivated and expected their executive and leading teachers to personally assist and professionally contribute towards making the school's ethos "live" through practical out workings in the school's culture, including those which related to the learning of teachers. Within this context and culture, and because teachers also believed in the ethos of the school, teachers tended to align themselves with the school's beliefs about

teachers as learners and adjusted their expectations about their learning, both individually and collectively, to enable and accommodate a synergy at school level.

The implications of this are significant. In relation to theory, more research could be conducted on the ways in which school ethos permeates the beliefs and actions of all leaders within a school context, and how these effect, both positively and negatively, the learning community culture and the learning of teachers across the career stages on site. Policy makers involved with the development of leadership learning could then use this theory to inform their program development and to assist leaders in schools at all levels to acknowledge and consider the ways in which their beliefs, based on school context and ethos, impact upon teacher learning, and further, how to harness this to benefit teacher learning at the school.

While the study has been conducted in independent schools, it will also be an issue as government, Catholic and independent schools are perhaps delegated more responsibilities for local management in Australian context, and elsewhere.

DIMENSION 6: THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Schools still "making it up as they go"

Data emerging from the study revealed that each of the case study schools, regardless of socioeconomic circumstances, size or ethos were in fact "making it up as they went," as best they could, in relation to teacher professional development and learning. They drew gradually upon what they knew, their interpretation of school context and ethos, a measure of instinct and common sense, and according to the previous experiences of their leaders, to inform their planning of teacher professional development in their schools. In this sense, schools' work was focused more on continuous, incremental improvement rather than substantiative, large scale change (Robinson, 2013).

As noted in relation to this dimension, the literature of the past decade states that schools have a clear mandate to provide professional development that will contribute to the development of quality teachers, with the inference that schools know how to respond. The introduction of government-driven teacher accreditation requirements and teacher professional standards internationally, with little practical or supportive advice available in the literature or policy as to how schools could implement these in ways which support teachers as learners, was also observed. There is an implicit understanding in these frameworks that teachers will be supported in their career path progression. The researcher noted a vast difference in the amount of research, recommendations and exhortations about the urgency of school

development and teacher learning compared to what was actually occurring in the three case study schools. It was also observed that the internal and external pressures on schools which affected their capacity to plan and coordinate effective professional development mentioned in Chapter 1, had not changed during the course of the study.

Further research is suggested to focus more on school-contextualised studies, reporting on a variety of schools in a range of different contexts to enable stories to be told of journey and practice in relation to the development of effective professional development programs for teachers. Policy makers may do well to recognise, as did the data emerging from this study, that each school is so unique and wedded to its context and ethos, that it may be best to provide support and expertise locally to each individual school, to enable appropriate teacher professional development programs that are achievable and "owned" at school level to be established.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS IN REFERENCE TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) released a number of papers while the final draft of the thesis was being finalised. Some observations can be made in relation to what the study both validates in this literature, as well as what it contributes to the ongoing discussion about teacher professional development and learning.

First, the papers validate the timeliness and approaches of the study. AITSL's paper *Designing Professional Learning* (2014a) seeks to bring together the latest attributes of effective teacher professional learning that are likely to be most beneficial to teacher growth and development. The paper states that "research into the design of professional learning for educators is in its infancy" (p. 3), reaffirming the initial purpose of the study which was to explore teacher learning in an area that was scarce in the literature: holistically within school contexts, alongside school staff, across all career stages. In addition, AITSL's *Essential Guides to Professional Learning: Innovation* (2014b), *Leading Culture* (2014c) and *Evaluation* (2013a) encourage the use of collaborative learning conversations within educational bodies and schools that aim to lead to improvement in the professional development for teachers. The emphasis on facilitation of collegial discussion, reflection, learning and planning validates the study's use of an action research approach to gather data on teacher learning in ways that supported school planning for continual improvement to their teacher learning approaches and programs.

In *Designing Professional Learning* (2014a) global trends in teacher professional development programs are discussed which validate the similar attributes identified in Chapters 1 and 18 of the study. In addition, the data from the case study schools confirms the paper's recommendations that teacher learning should be strategically and collegially planned, suitable to the environment in which teachers learn and delivered in ways that might enhance their learning. The study's findings also provided further insights into how multifaceted this process actually was at the school level. The study described this as the horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning in schools, and revealed the complex interrelationship of these dimensions "on the ground," as illustrated in Diagrams 14.1 and 18.2.

Reference to tools that may assist educators to plan effective teacher professional development is also made in several papers (2014a, 2014d and 2013b). The study found that the case study schools, while finding these exhortations and externally generated tools well meaning, also found them difficult to transfer to their contexts and into their teacher learning culture. Rather, the development of tools in the study based on good practice in the literature, which took into account the context and needs of each school community, was deemed more helpful at these schools. These are included as Appendices 4.8, 7.4 & 9.4. The study used this data to propose an action learning process that could be used in context by school staff to conduct their own enquiry into teacher learning, as illustrated in Diagram 17.5. The study also developed a school benchmarking framework for teachers and leaders, to assist whole staffs to evaluate their professional development practices in ten areas of good practice in the literature, included as Appendices 4.9 and 4.10.

As found in the study, several of AITSL's papers (2014a, 2014c, 2014e) reiterate the importance of the principal in relation to establishing a culture which supports and enhances teacher learning. According to AITSL, (2014a) "successful leaders create and sustain a culture of learning" (p.1) that supports both teacher and student learning. The study contributed some new thinking on the positioning of the principal within school contexts, suggesting that there could be benefit in principals adopting a more central position as mentor and leader in learning, and using a career-stage distributed leadership approach to support teacher learning within schools. This is discussed in Chapter 18 and summarised in Diagram 18.1. Further, the study also found that three layers of leadership- the principal, executive and middle leaders - acted together to promote and permeate the school's ethos in the independent schools studied, and that this had a considerable influence on the teacher learning culture in

the school (Findings 39-42). As yet, the impact of leadership commitment to school ethos on teacher learning has not been well explored in the literature.

The paper *Global trends in professional learning and performance and development: Some implications and ideas for the Australian education system* (2014d), and its predecessors, *The Australian Charter for the professional learning of teachers and school leaders* (2012a) and *Six case studies of innovation in professional learning and performance and development* (2013b) include reference to linking teacher development to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, APST* (2011a). AITSL (2012b) also states that "teachers, leaders and their communities need to determine what good teaching is in their school context, informed by the standards." However, the study found that teachers at the case study schools based their ideas about quality teaching largely upon their experiences at school level, and in connection to the context and ethos of their schools, not from external research or policies. In addition, the case study schools struggled with how to link teacher development to the APST (2013). In particular, school staff thought that the APST document did not clearly link teacher career-stage development with the characteristics of career-stage learning and did not provide recommendations for appropriate professional development that would assist teachers to learn well at each stage, as well as progress to the next. The study has made suggestions as to how teacher career-stage learning could be utilised to enrich teacher learning at each stage, between each stage and across stages (Diagram 17.4). The study has also provided examples of how the characteristics of teacher learning at different career stages, and professional development strategies based on good practice in the literature, could be incorporated into APST documentation, as shown in Appendices 17.1a, 17.1b and 17.1c. Further, the study suggests how career-stage learning and the APST could be used together, as a basis for professional development programs in schools, in ways which could lead to continual cycles of improvement, as summarised in Diagram 17.5.

School context as a factor in the professional learning of teachers is mentioned in some of the AITSL documents discussed. AITSL (2012b) states that "all schools are different and need to respond to their unique contexts and histories" when considering their professional development programs, but not how this could be done at school level. A key observation in the study, as captured in Diagram 17.1, was the relationship between teacher learning, school context and school ethos. The horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning in the case study schools were highly influenced by school ethos, from which beliefs about teachers as learners, and teacher learning developed. This then influenced the teacher learning culture

in the case study schools, which significantly impacted upon numerous facets of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of teacher learning, as illustrated in Diagram 14.1. With reference to the study, Diagram 17.7 illustrates the centrality of teacher professional learning to effective schools, as asserted in the literature, but emphasises the role of school context and ethos, and both horizontal and vertical dimensions, in this equation. The study would indicate that more research and acknowledgement in policy into the impact of school ethos and context on teacher learning is warranted.

A recent article on leadership for learning (Marsh, Waniganayake and Gibson, 2014), confirmed the study's findings about the central importance of the principal in providing school climates where learning for both teachers and students are enhanced. The paper refers to effective leadership for learning as having a moral imperative, fostering successful, collaborative learning relationships in teams to cultivate community capacity. Effective leadership for learning should be a school wide activity, holistic and comprehensive. Marsh et al. (2014) identify the use of distributed leadership in ways that would build school capacity as important, but still problematic. The study has gone further, suggesting processes that principals and leaders could implement that ensure school wide, holistic and comprehensive involvement in improvement to teacher learning. This includes reference to both the role of principal and the use of distributed leadership based on career-stage learning and career-stage teams, as outlined in Diagram 18.1. The study has also provided a suggested action research scaffold to support principal and career-stage teams to produce whole school collaborate improvement to teacher professional development and learning (Diagram 17.6).

Marsh et al. (2014) also refer to the difficulty of establishing a coherent framework for use in schools in relation to leadership for learning, while identifying holistic, community-wide responsibility for learning as essential to success. The study took this further, by establishing an approach for research that was holistic at the centre, collaboratively facilitating whole school learning through action research scaffolds (Diagrams 3.1, 4.1, 7.2, 9.1). Schools were assisted to enquire and reflect upon teacher learning within two dimensions –the horizontal dimension as it related to teacher professional development and learning across a continuum of key career stages, and the vertical dimension as it related to whole-school planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's goals and practices in relation to teacher professional learning, and the resulting internal professional development program.

The study was always about continuous improvement of teacher learning at school level, not sudden change, starting at where the schools were at and moving forward with them in ways that would bridge the divide between theory and practice. It was thought that bringing the two together in ways that could gradually improve school practice, based on good practice in the literature, could be a useful approach, from which much could be learned, and one not readily found in the literature. It is hoped that other schools – principals, leaders and teachers together, could utilise these scaffolds, as well as the processes noted in Diagrams 17.6 and 18.1, as a framework of enquiry to lead to gradual and continual improvement in teacher learning, where the literature indicates that teachers learn best – in their schools.

SUMMARY

The six dimensions of teacher professional learning identified in Chapter 1 have been discussed in light of the study's findings, and an update of these findings in relation to the latest literature in the Australian context has been provided. The diagrams in this chapter have illustrated some of the ways that the study's findings can lead to new ways of thinking about and exploring teacher professional development and learning in school contexts. We now turn to reflect on the study's findings in relation to the current literature in Chapter 18.

CHAPTER 18

REFLECTION ON FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the findings of the study are summarised and commented upon in relation to the most recent literature that has emerged since the onset of the study.

The study focused on exploring how teachers learn, and how they might be supported in their learning, while going about their daily work in their schools. To do this, a consideration of how teachers learn across all career stages which normally cohabitate in school communities, and the ways in which, if at all, the school context impacted upon this learning, became the key areas of enquiry.

Four focus areas emerged from a review of the literature:

1. The career continuum and teacher learning, referred to in the study as the horizontal dimension.
2. School planning for teacher learning, referred to in the study as the vertical dimension.
3. School context and ethos.
4. The facilitation of school-contextualised conversations about teacher professional learning, with the intention of exploring how the researcher might learn from schools at work, while enabling an improvement in school-based professional development programs at the same time.

As noted in the findings in Chapters 12-16, the study found that both school context and teacher career-stage learning each significantly impacted upon teacher learning and development at the case study schools. Further, it was found that these elements are interconnected (Findings 4, 7, 20, 21, 22, 23 & 27 and Diagram 17.1), and therefore need to be considered in light of each other, as well as holistically. This reflection will therefore focus on these two elements, commenting on the findings particularly in relation to some of the key literature that emerged during the course of the study.

For clarity, the following subheadings are used throughout the discussion:

- Key study finding
- Comments in relation to the literature

SCHOOL CONTEXT AND ETHOS AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Key study finding

The study found that in each school the school context and ethos were key determining factors on how teachers learn at every career stage. School context and ethos, and the resulting school culture that was seen in the study to develop around career-stage teacher learning at each school, began to emerge as a factor from the first face-to-face interview, and as noted, then consistently surfaced through all phases of the study.

Comments in relation to the literature

The recent literature also identifies school context as important to teacher learning and school improvement. However there has been less attention paid to exploring the impact of school ethos on teacher learning.

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), when exploring school effectiveness and improvement, attention needs to be on the schools in which teachers teach, not on teachers individually. They state that a focus on the "quality" of the individual teacher is simplistic within complex school systems across the world and that teaching "is profoundly affected by the environment – by the culture of the workplace where the job is carried out" (p. 20).

According to Groves and Ronnerman, (2012) teacher professional learning in real contexts has the capacity to shape other practices, including leading and teaching. They speak of an ecology of practices that are "mutually sustaining", and exist in a "dynamic ecological balance" (p. 1). They refer to their observations at local school sites where practices, including teacher learning are "dependent upon the existence of the arrangements that make them possible" (p. 125). This affirms the study's findings in relation to the complex nature of teacher learning in school contexts, and the impact that context, including school ethos, leadership and the school's teacher learning culture, has on teacher learning.

In her research over the past decade, Drago-Severson's (2004a, 2007, 2012a, 2012b) attention has focused on the development and growth of educators within school contexts. Her work has explored the nature of school climates, adult learning, principal learning, and leader and teacher professional development. Most recently her research paper "New Opportunities for Principal Leadership: Shaping School Climates for Enhanced Teacher Development" (2012a) reported findings on how principals from across a number of public and independent schools built school climates which supported and promoted teacher learning and development. This paper confirmed the patterns that emerged when reflecting upon the findings of this study

which included school climate, school leadership, teacher professional development programs in schools and adult learning. Each of these is now discussed.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Key study finding

The study's findings in relation to school climate clearly indicated the significant effect of what the school was saying and doing about teacher learning on teachers, as both learners and practitioners (Findings 4, 6, 7, 20, 30 & 33). The school's ethos, including its beliefs about teachers as learners, and the ways these were articulated by layers of leadership into the school's learning culture, was found to impact upon teacher learning perceptions, expectations and aspirations, as well as the content and coordination of the school's professional development program (Findings 6, 10, 21, 22, 28, 40, 41 & 42).

Comments in relation to the literature

The recent literature confirms the study's findings, indicating that school climate is instrumental in determining the substance and effectiveness of teacher learning in school contexts, and furthermore, that this then impacts upon student achievement and school effectiveness. Drago-Severson (2012a) notes that research has consistently linked school climates that support adult learning to increases in student achievement. Cohen et al. (2009) also attest to the importance of school climate, stating that there is a "glaring gap between school climate research findings on the one hand and policy, school improvement practice and teacher educator efforts on another" (p. 1). *The School Climate Research Summary* (Thapa et al., 2012) also highlighted this area as warranting further research.

The influence of school leadership in creating school climates which supported teacher learning was clear in the study, echoing the current literature. Stoll, Harris & Handscomb (2012) emphasise the important role of leadership in providing a climate for teachers where "professional development is great" (p. 8) and where the school supports ongoing learning and the application of new learning to teaching practice. Robinson (2012), when speaking about the effectiveness of American schools to support the learning of students, stated that "the real role of leadership in education…is not, and should not be, 'command and control'; the real role of leadership is 'climate control'".

The study provided new insights to the literature on the considerable influence of school ethos in the case study schools to teacher learning, and the development of teacher learning climate in the case study schools.

When reflecting upon the findings of this study in light of the current literature, four aspects of school climates that support teacher learning emerged:

Climates of:

- Trust
- Collaboration
- School change/transformation
- Teacher valuing

Trust

Key study finding

The study confirmed the importance of high trust environments for teacher learning from the perspective of the teacher. As discussed, teachers were found to be trusting of what their schools were doing in relation to their professional development and what was possible to support them in their learning (Finding 21). On the whole, they trusted the school's choice of the modes of learning to which they could have access, and the opportunities available to them to complete mandatory accreditation requirements (Findings 4 & 7). They were also accepting of their school's beliefs about them as learners and tended to adjust their expectations and aspirations for learning to align with the school's practice (Findings 30, 31 & 32).

Comments in relation to the literature

Current literature confirms the study's findings, highlighting the importance of trust environments in relation to teacher learning and development. Fink (2013) points to the centrality of trust in building adult learning cultures of sharing, growing and learning. He cites the fundamental concepts of "honesty, reliability and caring" (p. 3) found in the literature as imperative to a learning community. He warns against top heavy government or district mandates, built on little collaboration with schools as "low trust strategies" and not helpful for school improvement (p. 7). Rather, relational trust, which "best encompasses the complex web of social exchanges that condition the basic operations of schools" (p. 9), is required. Fink concludes with the observation that "high trust school jurisdictions and schools relate positively to improved student achievement" (p. 17). Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) also brought into focus the importance of trust within schools, to and between individuals.

The study's finding that teachers trust their leaders and schools with their learning and development has considerable implications for school leaders, as they were found to be in a position to shape teachers' ideas about their learning and substantially influence the ways in

which they learn. This pivotal aspect of leadership in the case study schools is mirrored in recommendations made by Drago-Severson (2012b), as she broaches the important topic of leaders building trust within learning communities. She makes the point that no matter what level of leadership, "It is tough to be *both* an evaluator and a critical friend who offers support for improving instruction and practice" (p. 82). Her practical advice to leaders includes the development of norms with teachers, the establishment of confidentiality agreements, and the collaborative development of protocols when engaging in lesson observations and feedback. Making it clear to teachers when leaders are acting in their capacity as evaluators, compared to collegial, collaborative co-learners is also important to maintain a robust trust environment.

Sahlberg's (2011) work tracing the evolution of a high performing education system in Finland, provides a broader context for the findings in this study related to the importance of trust environments in schools to teacher learning. He taps into the notion of an inter-trust environment at all levels in Finland, describing a culture of respect for teachers and schools, both across the nation and within individual school environments. He cites the success of aspects of professional development in schools which are trust-relational, including mentoring, coaching and tutoring, as important platforms for teacher learning. Further, he also describes the collective trust for teachers at social and political levels, providing practical examples such as teacher autonomy to develop localised and relevant curriculum for students, without constant governmental input or inspections.

Collaboration

Key study finding

In the study, teachers identified collaboration as an important aspect of effective teacher learning. What was of interest, was that researcher facilitation of collaborative inquiry and reflection was also found to be a powerful tool in promoting effective whole-school planning for improvement in teacher professional development (Findings 47, 48, 49 & 50).

Comments in relation to the literature

As found in the study, the literature points to collaborative environments as essential to teacher learning in school contexts. Using trust as a basis, authentic collaborative cultures can emerge. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), when teachers push and support each other as a part of a high performing team, and where individual and collective inquiry and collaboration are the norm, a climate where teachers can "teach like a *pro*" (p. 22) is produced. As a result of collaboration, improvement as an individual, raising the performance of the team, and increasing quality across the whole profession is possible. Stoll et al. (2012)

observe that collaborative learning strongly enhances the effectiveness of professional development within supportive school climates because it improves teacher "self- confidence and belief in their ability to make a difference to pupil's learning" (p.7).

The literature is detailed in providing recommendations for how to strengthen collaborative cultures. For example, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) speak about "re-culturing" professional relationships within a school in order to bring about improvement. They discuss six kinds of professional cultures observed in schools and note the importance of collaborative cultures within schools to teacher learning and development. They warn against "many examples of imposed collegiality that sail under the convenient flag of collaboration" (p. 119), yet where expertise is lacking. These include peer coaching, peer pressure and the use of planning time. They call upon schools to be aware of contrived collegiality, while looking to build truly collaborative communities and to reach out beyond the school to the professional community.

However, although the literature affirms the study's findings in relation to the usefulness of collaboration to teacher learning and the school climates that support it, less is found in the current literature which relates to key study findings specifically on how the role of a collaborative researcher may be used to improve teacher learning on school sites.

School change/transformation

Key study finding

What was of interest, and unanticipated at the outset of the study, was the considerable desire by the case study schools to both further understand and improve their teacher learning. It was important to the schools that the researcher respected the point at which they were at in relation to the planning and coordination of their professional development programs, and understand their apprehension about what to do next.

Findings in this study confirmed the value of utilising customised frameworks based on the literature (Findings 51& 52), whole-school, collaborative action research (Findings 56 & 57) and learning conversations to facilitate school improvement (Findings 45, 46, 47 & 50).

The study also found that the schools did not have mechanisms in place to listen to the perspectives of teachers about their learning at every career stage. This meant that such feedback was not being utilised by schools when looking to evaluate, change and improve their professional development programs. The facilitative approach adopted by the researcher was able to rectify this.

Comments in relation to the literature

The study provided concrete examples for the literature of schools at work endeavouring to improve their approaches and practices to teachers learning at the school level. Examples of the customisation of action research cycles and frameworks to the needs of individual schools were not found elsewhere in the literature. However, the literature does confirm the study in observing that schools continue to experience the processes of change and transformation as complex and difficult. Drago-Severson (2012a) observes that schools are in a global climate of increased accountability and complex change, which are "situations in which both the problem and the solution are unclear" (p. 1). According to Degenhardt and Duignan (2010), a key challenge in school change and reinvention is that of understanding the dynamics of culture and cultural change. They cite Stoll (1998) who states that "school culture is one of the most complex and important concepts in education, yet one of the most neglected in relation to school reform" (p. 34). The authors refer to the need for students to "grow a personal life-story" within schools (p. 37) and that mutuality and interdependency are a part of school cultures. This study showed that teachers also have important professional life stories as learners which can be considered as valuable contributions to the transformation of school teacher learning culture.

The most recent literature not only acknowledges the difficulty experienced by schools, but provides theoretical knowledge to enlighten and assist them. Caldwell & Spinks (2013) emphasise the importance of strengthening schools from within as unique communities of learning. They note that schools are at different stages of self-transformation. Important is the capacity for schools to self-manage so they can "make decisions on the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards and accountabilities" (p. 4). Ongoing professional development for teachers and high quality leadership which supports teachers within a collaborative environment, are also noted as essential elements to self-transformation.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) provide an alternative path for "change-in-action" which consists of five pillars of purpose and partnership, three principles of professionalism and four catalysts of coherence (p. 11). Degenhardt's study, (Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010) which documented the process of change in a school, revealed that each school is unique in context and ethos, and transformation towards improvement is an individual journey for each school community.

The problem remains however, as to how individual schools can take this information from the literature and apply it to their own contexts.

Valuing teachers as learners across the career continuum

Key study finding

The study confirmed how teachers want to be acknowledged and valued, individually and collectively, as learners (Finding 58). Data that emerged highlighted that teachers have central roles in building learning communities. By placing teacher learning as the focus, the study enabled information to surface on teacher learning across the career continuum. Teachers at all career stages were equally valued and this enabled the facilitation of learning conversations which were regarded by schools as significant to both teacher learning and the enhancement of the teacher learning culture at the school (Findings 46, 47 & 60).

Teachers consistently and unanimously cited a lack of time for learning as the most significant barrier to their learning (Finding 9), and that this impacted upon their sense of wellbeing, value and professionalism. They also held their schools accountable for the ways in which they sought to provide real time for learning (Finding 7).

Comments in relation to the literature

Recent research and developments in the literature have confirmed the study's findings that teachers in the case study schools desired to be valued as learners, with Drago-Severson (2012a) asserting that schools must become places just as much about teacher learning as student learning.

However the current literature goes further, emphasising the need to value teachers not only within schools, but in education systems and nations. Caldwell and Spinks (2013) refer to the re-emergence of the concept of "social capital" in the literature and its importance to the self-managed, transforming school. They mention four forms of capital, these being intellectual, social, spiritual and financial. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) consider 'professional capital' to be a form of social capital, particularly when referring to the knowledge and skills of teachers.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) emphasise the inter-relationships of change in the world, and in education, stating, "It's not just the world that's changing education now. An orchestrated shake-up of every aspect of education is starting to change the world" (p. 1). Within the vision for managing this change, they emphasise the valuing of teachers as trusted professionals as key to school cultures which improve practice. They provide the example of enabling teachers to engage in developing curriculum within their own schools, "rather than just delivering the curriculum on behalf of others" (p. 36). Leadership is also considered as a "collective

responsibility", with school learning communities "valuing the input of teachers and working collaboratively towards shared goals for improvement, rather than only using vertical accountability" (p. 9).

The current literature directly refers to the time made available to teachers for professional development by schools as crucial to improving teacher learning. Jensen, Hunter, Sonnemann and Cooper's (2014) research in six schools resulted in an exhortation for Australian schools to value teacher learning by building in real time for teachers to be "mentored, research best practice, have their classes observed, and receive constructive feedback on their performance" (p. 1). They state that "A major stumbling block (to teacher learning) is finding the resources and the time in the school week" (p. 3). Their Grattan Institute (2014) report provides practical proposals for how the structure of the school day can accommodate what they regard as crucial – teacher learning in their school contexts.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The study's findings clearly revealed the importance of the principal in determining what is both believed and articulated about teachers as learners in the learning community (Findings 37 & 38), how their leaders reinforce these messages in word and action (Findings 40 &41), and the ways in which the school's professional development program is planned and coordinated (Finding 39). However, two aspects in particular emerged in the study in relation to school leadership:

- The ongoing dilemma of principals in knowing what is best to do, and where to start in relation to the learning of teachers at their school, and
- The importance of the moral and relational aspects of principals' interaction with teachers about their learning.

Leaders knowing what to do

Key study finding

The study confirmed that principals are unsure, amidst a range of exhortations and recommendations in the literature, as to how to proceed to improve teacher learning in their schools (Findings 17 & 59). This in itself is a critical finding, as both the study and the literature reveal the instrumental importance of the principal to the teacher learning culture and the resulting teacher learning within the school. In light of the study's findings about school context, ethos, career-stage learning and the use of action research and learning conversations to facilitate improvement in teacher professional learning, a way ahead for principals was proposed in Chapter 17 and illustrated in Diagram 17.6.

Comments in relation to the literature

The dilemma which surfaced in the study of principals knowing where to start and what to do in relation to teacher learning in their schools is confirmed in the current literature which emphasises the difficulty of the task. In the school reinvention process documented by Degenhardt and Duignan (2010), reference was made to the numerous roles and responsibilities of the principal when leading school change and influencing learning culture. She reflects that the principal "was – all at the same time – leader of her school community; change agent and leader of the reinventing processes; an insider researcher studying the reinventing; and human being" (p. 165).

Drago-Severson's (2012a) research sought to identify leadership strategies that were conducive to building school climates that encouraged teacher learning, observing that "to improve teaching and learning, principals are being asked to adapt from a management role to that of primary teacher developer and architect of collaborative learning organisations" (p. 2). Further, she observes that although research has clearly shown that the principal is instrumental to school development and that leadership which is supportive of adult learning and development enhances schools as places for learning for both teachers and students, "the question of how specific leadership practices can build school climates that support teacher growth in today's complex educational environment is only beginning to be explored" (2012a, p. 4). Her ongoing research has continued to confirm what was found in this study; that principals "struggle with the challenge of how to build school climates that improve practice" (2012a, p. 1).

Hardy and Ronnerman's (2011) work confirms the value of the study's use of action research to assist principals and teachers to engage in learning conversations that lead to change and improvement of school practices. Further, they purport that action research which is used in context and is "explicitly focused on situated, specific, local sites" (p. 461) is most desirable. This confirms the use of action research cycles and frameworks which were customised specifically to the different context and ethos of each school in the study, as a useful means to explore and improve teacher professional development programs and learning.

The importance of moral leadership and the building of relationship with teachers about their learning

Key study finding

In the study a different picture emerged related to the moral dimension of principals as authentic leaders of learning. First, a considering of some of the latest literature on moral leadership will allow a deeper explanation of the proposed suggestions that follow.

Comments in relation to the literature

Duignan (2012) describes leadership as an influence relationship with moral and ethical responsibilities. He discusses the need for a clear moral purpose in leadership, and that leaders need to renew their moral purpose and passion. According to Duignan (2012), "educational leaders need to have clear insights into their own and others' value sets in order to develop their moral compass as a guide for their actions" (p. 11). He implores educational leaders to "transform students each day into something special, something that enables their human spirit to soar" (p. 13). This researcher proposes below that it is principals who are morally responsible for doing the same with teachers in relation to their learning.

Authentic leaders to Duignan (2012) build a collective ethic of responsibility throughout the leadership of the school, who all work towards influencing the quality of teaching and learning. They also help create "innovative, deep, rich learning environments" (p. 164). He points out that influencing this culture for leaders is both a linear and non-linear journey, treating schools like "complex and dynamic learning communities" (p. 166). He proposes a paradigm related to purposes, people and processes that could enable positive changes and development of "deep learning environments in schools" with an emphasis on leaders "promoting clear moral purpose and explicit goals, respect for the dignity of others, the presence of quality relationships, promotion of self-efficacy for teachers as well as students and quality support for teachers' professional learning" (p. 187).

In relation to teacher learning and principal leadership, Degenhardt and Duignan (2012) note that "Principals, by nature of their expanding role, are unlikely to be able to intervene directly in the teacher-learning process; their impact on student outcomes happens through more indirect influences, such as establishing strong learning cultures and setting direction" (p. 156). Distributed leadership models place the principal in a similar position, and devolve responsibility for grass roots teacher learning to other leaders throughout the school.

Similarly, other literature continues to draws upon a number of ideas about leadership. Hargraves and Shirley (2012) talk about collective responsibility and moral purpose in

relation to the learning culture, at all levels of leadership. According to Hattie (2012), transformational leaders are "attuned to inspiring teachers to new levels of energy and commitment towards a common mission", with instructional leaders more focused on attending to "the quality and impact of all in the school on student learning." He proposed that instructional leaders have a greater effect on teacher and student learning (p. 175).

Huber (2011) states that "school leaders need to have a profound knowledge of (adult) learning", so they can improve in their schools "the teaching of teachers for the learning of pupils" (p. 635). As discussed in the key finding below, and in Chapter 17 of this thesis, teachers at the case study schools wanted their leaders to be similar to Huber's "leaders for learning" (p. 635), in relation to their own professional learning. Teachers regularly expressed their wish to have one-to-one time with the principal to discuss their learning, and to learn directly from the principal. They assumed that the principal would be well versed in how teachers learn, and capable of directing their learning deeply and meaningfully.

It is thus noted that during the course of the study the debate in the literature about what style of principal leadership might best enhance teacher and student learning, continued.

Key study finding

In this study it was found that teachers at all career stages, except early career teachers whose focus was squarely on their classroom, expressed a desire to speak more regularly with the principal about their learning. At one school, leading teachers and executive leaders stated that speaking to the principal about their professional development and learning was instrumental to their ongoing motivation, enthusiasm and direction of their learning. Some teachers in the study also expressed a desire for time with the principal to talk about and plan their learning.

This researcher proposes that one of the prime functions of the principal, amongst a busy portfolio, would include having a direct involvement with the mentoring of all teachers about their learning. As shown in Diagram 18.1 below, the distributed leadership in the school, rather than consisting of layers of executive and middle leaders, could be embedded in the career stages of teachers at the school. The principal as prime mentor, assisted by the teacher leaders in the upper career stages, could harness career-stage development and learning to "distribute" the strategic nature of teacher learning throughout the school. The distributive leadership would not be achieved through linear, traditional leadership positions, which inevitably leaves out layers of career stages, but rather through every career stage, which are equally valued. All teachers at all career stages would be responsible, according to their

capacity and experience, for teacher learning in the school context. Career-stage mentoring and professional companioning (Degenhardt, 2013) could be used to enrich teacher learning across career stages in the school. The principal would also be considered as a learner, and at an important career stage in relation to their own learning, as reported in the literature. The principal would continually learn from teachers, as they would from him/her.

This approach draws the ongoing debate about leadership styles in the literature into focus in relation to the principal, other school leaders and teacher learning at career stages. It also supplements what the literature proposes about the role of the principal in developing robust learning climates, placing them in the central position of authentic, personal, moral and instructional leader, in relation to teacher learning and development in school contexts.

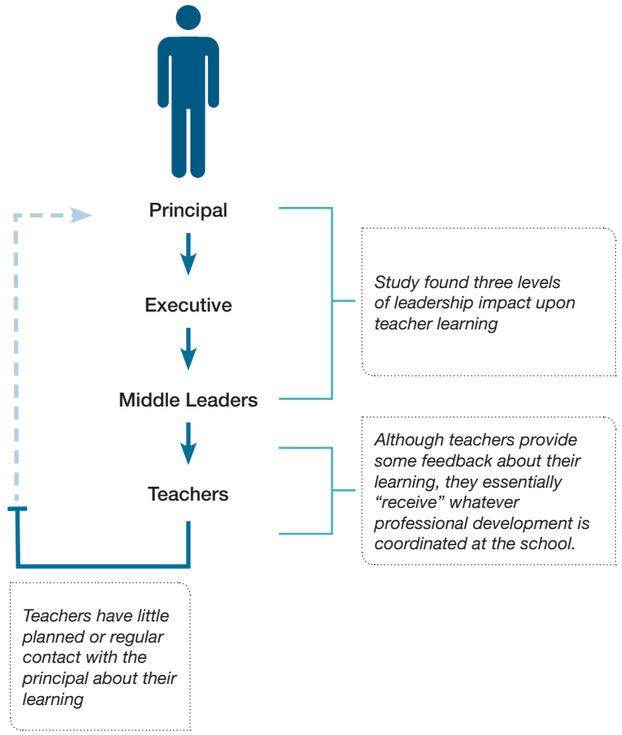
Diagram 18.1 which follows, proposes that schools place their principal at the centre as leader of teacher learning at the school, with teacher learning supported by distributed leadership based on teacher career stages.

Diagram 18.1: The principal as leader of learning, using career-stage distributed leadership at the school to further enhance teacher learning

PRINCIPAL AS LEADER OF LEARNING USING CAREER STAGE DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN RELATION TO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

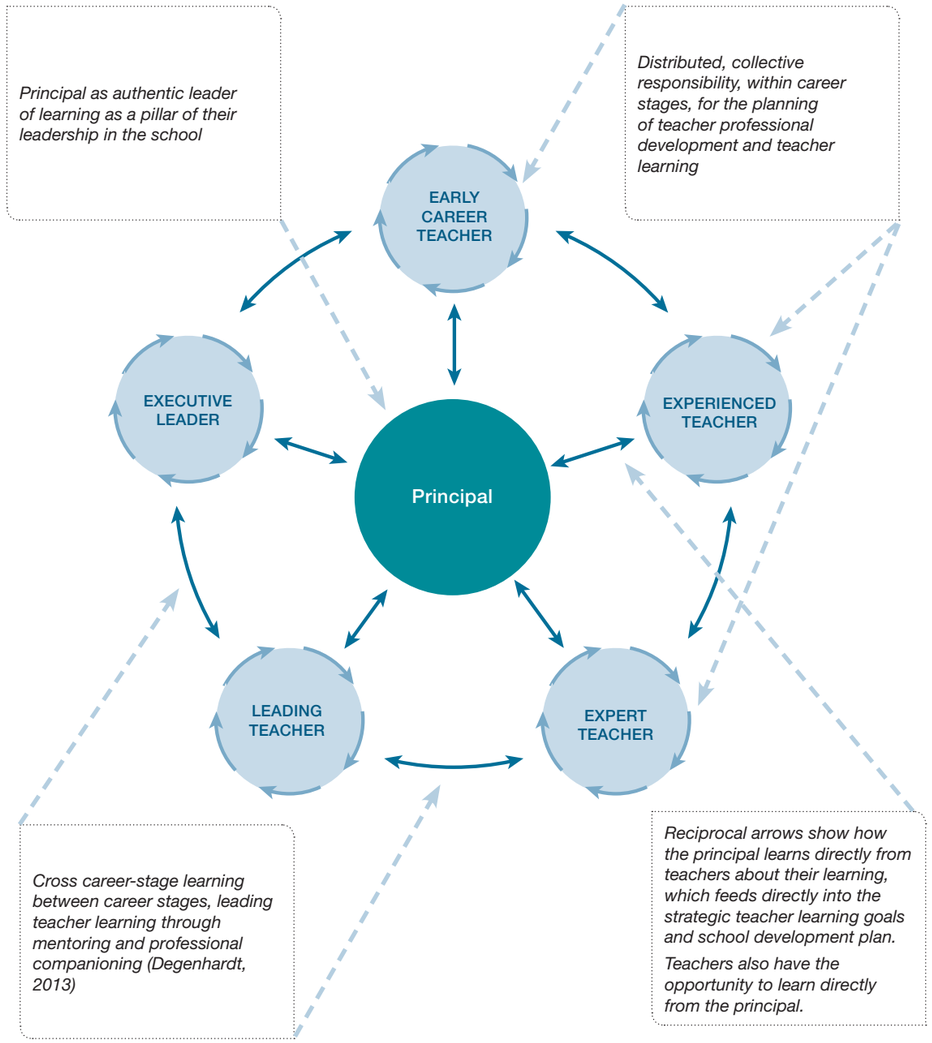
Principal position and distributed leadership found in case study schools

Principal sets the climate in which teachers learn and uses linear distributed leadership to plan and coordinate teacher professional development



STUDY PROPOSES

Study proposes positioning the principal as authenitc leader of learning using career stages of teachers to distribute leadership of teacher learning in the school



TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

The findings in this study related to the planning and coordination of professional development programs could be regarded as helpful to the ongoing discussion in the literature about effective professional development for teachers. These include a number of key study findings that could be regarded as new insights to the literature, as follows.

Schools need assistance to translate good practice in the literature to their contexts

As noted in the findings of this study, and discussed in Chapter 17, the case study schools were finding it difficult to both translate and transfer good practice in the literature in relation to teacher professional learning, to practical out-workings in their schools (Findings 17 & 25). This observation is confirmed in the current literature, with Drago-Severson (2012a) stating that "Scholars lament the fact that many models of professional learning are translated differently from what is intended in practice" (p.4).

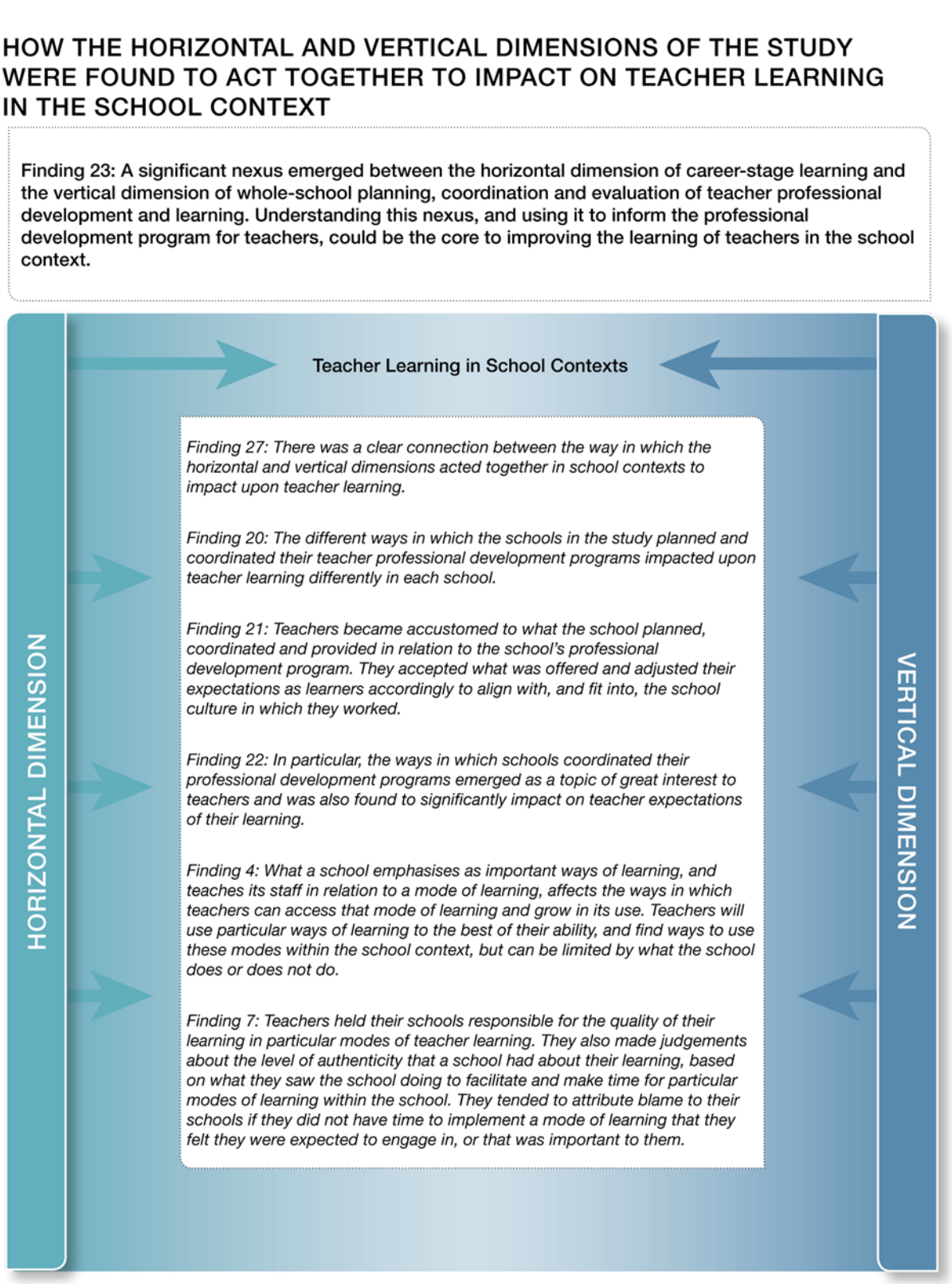
Further, the findings in this study confirm that school contexts are complex (Findings 3, 12, 18, 19 & 20). This indicates that a "one size fits all" model of professional development is not relevant at school level. Whereas creating professional development "models" for schools may not be helpful, an emphasis on school-contextualised discussion and planning may be the key to success, as discussed in Chapter 17 and illustrated in Diagram 17.5.

The study also found that the case study schools required assistance with developing resources that were useful to investigating how their teachers learn and to evaluate their current professional development programs (Findings 51 & 52). Frameworks developed in this study, based on the literature and the needs of schools as voluntary participants, contributed to our knowledge about how and why schools make decisions about their professional development programs, how they are developed and coordinated, and the impact that this has on teacher learning in school contexts.

Horizontal and vertical dimension impact on professional development programs

The study identified how, and in what ways, the horizontal dimension of teacher learning across career stages and the vertical dimension of school-based planning, coordination and evaluation of professional development both undergird, and work together, to create the unique climate in each school in which teachers learn (Finding 27). The study also found that there was a clear nexus between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of school career-stage learning and the school's context (Finding 23). Further findings indicated the ways in which this nexus significantly impacted upon teacher learning in the case study schools (Findings 4, 7, 20, 21, 22, &27). This is illustrated in Diagram 18.2.

Diagram 18.2: The impact of horizontal and vertical dimensions on teacher learning as found in the case study schools



The coordination of professional development programs matters, including how leadership of the program is distributed

The study findings revealed three very different strategies to the planning and coordination of the professional development program in each case study school. At one school, teachers consistently referred to the benefits of having an executive staff member with the responsibility to strategically plan, coordinate, and evaluate the program, as well as mentor and support teachers in their individual and collective learning.

It would seem that the study's findings in relation to the coordination of professional development programs in schools could be regarded as new insights in the literature. Studies that focus on the mode of planning and coordination of professional development in school settings and how, if at all, this impacts upon teacher learning were found to be scarce. In particular, little research could be found which investigated the use of a designated coordinator of professional learning on specific school sites to strategically plan, coordinate and evaluate a professional development program, compared to the more commonly used distributed, and often adhoc leadership approach to this coordination.

Career-stage learning as an integral part of professional development programs

This study proposes that career-stage learning is a powerful tool that could be used as the basis of, and to significantly inform professional development programs. It also provided insights to the literature on what this may look like in school contexts (Chapter 17 and Diagram 17.4).

During the course of the study the literature continued to explore the nature and features of effective teacher professional development with Drago-Severson (2012a) observing that "clarity and consensus" is still lacking in relation to "what constitutes teacher development and how it can be supported" (p. 4). In addition, consensus in the literature has not yet been found in relation to the various models of teacher growth and career-stage development, as reviewed in Chapter 1. According to Drago-Severson (2012a), these models "Operate on divergent assumptions, expectations and beliefs about how teacher growth can be supported in schools" (p. 4). The current literature is not proposing that career-stage learning and development be used as the basis of professional development programs in schools.

ADULT LEARNING

The study clearly showed that case study schools wanted to focus more directly on adult learning in their communities, but had little theoretical knowledge about adult learning or teacher career-stage learning. Four aspects related to adult learning emerged in the study that both confirm the current literature and add to the theory:

- The importance of schools as places for adult learners
- Differentiation of professional development according to teacher career stages is advisable
- Teachers knowing themselves as adult learners impacts upon their development
- Reflection is important for adult learning.

Schools as places for adult learners

Key study findings

It was observed during the study that the case study schools were not particularly knowledgeable about adult learning per se and had only begun to consider the need to differentiate teacher professional development to suit the career-stage learning needs and preferences of their teachers as a result of this study (Finding 34).

Comments in relation to the literature

This finding is concerning in light of recent literature which has highlighted the importance of building school climates that support adult learning (Drago-Severson, 2012a, 2012b; Cohen et al., 2009). Drago-Severson (2012a) states that "Schools must become places where the adults as well as the children can grow to best support enhanced learning and achievement for all in today's complex world" (p. 4). Cohen et al. (2009) emphasise that in addition to collaboration between teachers, positive adult-to-adult relationships amongst teachers need to be present (p. 194). It seems less likely that schools can become such places if leaders and teachers know little about the dynamics of adult learning, as found in the study.

Differentiation and career-stage learning

Key study finding

The study found that whereas differentiation of learning for students has been widely accepted as good practice for some time, planning for the differentiation of teacher learning was not comprehensively practiced in the case study schools.

Comments in relation to the literature

The need to differentiate teacher learning to enhance teacher development is confirmed in the recent literature. According to Drago-Severson (2012a), the learning-orientated framework

needed to be in place for teachers as adult learners in schools "emphasises creating opportunities based on the principle that learning is a developmental process" (p. 4). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) reinforce the notion of adult learning as developmental and complex. According to the authors, amongst other things, "good teaching requires high levels of education, long periods of training, and continuous improvement" (p.14).

Career-stage development and learning theory would seem to be a good place to start when considering how learning can be differentiated to meet the developmental and growth needs of teachers in schools.

Teachers knowing themselves as adult learners

Key study finding

At the case study schools, teachers often commented that they had not had time to think deeply about themselves as learners and knew very little about adult learning in general, or teacher career-stage learning specifically. As noted, they actively engaged in talking about their learning during the study and expressed a desire to continue such conversations (Findings 45 & 55).

Comments in relation to the literature

This finding that teachers knew very little about themselves as learners, is concerning, as the literature also indicates that an awareness amongst teachers of themselves as learners influences the quality of their learning, and as a consequence, their practice. Drago-Severson (2009) provides insights into the importance of acknowledging the different "ways of knowing" that teachers experience as learners. Further, she notes the supports achievable at school level that could help facilitate the growth of adults, as well as what she refers to as the "Growing Edge" (2004b, p. 63) that could encourage learning and further development for these teachers.

What is of interest when considering the findings in the study in relation to the literature, is that it would seem that using a career-stage learning approach within schools, as discussed in Chapter 17, could further enhance teachers' knowledge and understanding of themselves as learners.

Reflection is important for adult learners

Key study finding

This study showed that within modes of learning, and particularly in relation to reflection, that teacher approaches, experiences and expectations varied according to their career stage and that it was unhelpful for schools to assume that "one size fits all" reflection activities would

be beneficial to all participants (Finding 5). In addition, schools should not assume that teachers at all career stages are equipped to engage in specific professional development activities, especially those requiring emotional and cognitive depth such as reflection (Finding 6).

Comments in relation to the literature

Of interest is that out of the eight modes of teacher learning explored in the study, reflection in particular was found to be the most complex, both professionally and personally for teachers. This finding is a useful example to the emerging literature which acknowledges the complexity of teacher learning, requiring "increased cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal capacities" (Drago-Severson, 2012a, p. 12).

SUMMARY

Reflecting upon the study's findings in relation to the latest literature on teacher professional development and learning has further illuminated the approach and timeliness of this study, which was conducted *alongside teachers, in schools*. We now turn to consider recommendations for practice, policy and research in Chapter 19.

CHAPTER 19

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE, POLICY AND RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the main implications for school practice, policy development and research arising out of the findings of this study. As the study was grounded in school practice, it is logical to proceed with this as the first focus, and then consider the implications for broader educational policy, further research and the theoretical literature.

SCHOOL PRACTICE

This study pointed to the absolute centrality of school context in the ways that teachers approach their professional development and learning. What then arose was the significance of ethos to context. The three schools that were studied were independent schools in NSW, but that being said, they varied from non-denominational to faith-based schools. In each of these schools, ethos, particularly the values espoused by the principal, was found to be greatly influential in forming the teacher learning culture within the school. The findings confirm the broader literature on the impact that school leaders have on teacher development.

A difficulty arises with the fact that schools can become insular, and can inhibit teacher growth. The study found that facilitating learning conversations amongst staff grounded in the literature on the nature of professional development and learning at the school, can serve to broaden horizons and lead to a more dynamic and continuous improvement to the professional development program. The general literature discussed earlier in this thesis often suggests major changes might be brought about to professional development programs, whereas this study pointed to the value of incremental steps, involving the whole-school, as leading to ongoing improvement.

The study also pointed to the complexities associated with attempting a holistic approach to teacher professional development and learning, and gave insight into some of the reasons why that complexity exists. It underscored the problematic nature for people who find themselves in roles charged with the responsibility for whole-school coordination of teacher professional development programs.

The literature at the start of the study highlighted the need for strategic, comprehensive and sustained teacher learning, and provided broad guidelines for school practice. Things that seem of value in this study, were found from within schools, and emerged as important aspects of teacher learning that need to be considered by schools at work. These included the complex nature of career-stage learning, the way in which leadership and responsibility for

teacher leaning in the school is distributed, and the need for ongoing evaluation of professional development programs by schools themselves.

For those who have responsibility for whole-school teacher professional learning in schools, therefore, the following is recommended.

Whole-school learning and improvement

Schools are advised to conduct their own localised and contextually relevant enquiries into how their teachers learn at every career stage. Benefits of doing so would include enhancing the ways in which teachers reflect upon and understand themselves as career-stage learners, positively building the teacher learning culture within the school and gathering data that would assist them to improve their school-based professional development program. This approach could also further build relationships and provide a useful structure for mentoring teachers across career stages in the school.

Schools should also evaluate the ways in which their context and ethos influence the current teacher learning culture and professional development program in the school, with a view to avoiding insularity and parochialism.

In addition, schools are advised to benchmark their current performance in relation to teacher learning using frameworks such as those trialled in this study, engaging teachers at every career stage in the ongoing evaluation and improvement of school-based teacher professional development programs.

The school-based professional development program

Schools are advised to embed teacher career-stage learning at the heart of their professional development programs, as documented in Chapter 17 and illustrated in Diagram 17.5. Teacher accreditation programs using standards frameworks should be considered as valuable professional learning opportunities by schools and teachers, rather than predominantly about compliance. A professional development program which utilises both career-stage learning and teaching standards frameworks could work together to enhance the developmental potential of teachers at all career stages, as well as succession planning, as illustrated in Diagram 17.5.

The Principal and teacher learning

Schools should evaluate the way in which the principal is regarded in terms of being a leader of teacher learning, and reposition this persona if deemed appropriate. An example of possibilities is provided in Diagram 18.1, but being prescriptive is not the solution. Rather, schools are encouraged to survey the literature, and ensure that the positioning of the principal

in the teacher learning equation is contextually relevant, and maximises the effectiveness of teacher learning at the school level.

Distributive leadership

Schools should evaluate the distributive leadership paradigm currently in place at the school in relation to teacher learning and consider using a career-stage approach, as detailed in Diagram 18.1. This could increase responsibility, ownership and motivation for the planning and coordination of the program, and ultimately increase teacher engagement.

Access to the literature

As discussed, the case study schools experienced difficulty in transferring information about career-stage learning and good practice in professional development found in the literature into school practice. The study revealed that facilitation of teacher discussions was aided by the adoption of an approach which was centred on action research and had the capacity to link that discussion with resources and insights from the literature, relevant to the point of need at each school.

POLICY

It is acknowledged that education sectors vary, for instance, in the independent sector in which this study is set schools retain their independence, with the Association of Independent Schools NSW being a coordinating group. In other sectors such as the NSW Government sector, and the systemic Catholic and Anglican sectors, there are more centralised, policy-focused initiatives.

Regardless of the sector, the implications of the study for policy is that greater support needs to be provided at the school level to assist schools to develop professional development programs that are relevant to their context and ethos. The overriding implication is that a one-size-fits-all policy would seem to continue to face problems in implementation at the local school-based level, the recognition of which was one of the factors in initiating this study. The study confirmed the difficulties associated with translating broad generalised policy in relation to teacher professional development and learning into school practice.

Nevertheless, even though the recommendation is for individual schools to receive support to explore and develop their own professional development programs that are sensitive to context and ethos, there are implications for broader education policy in the Australian context.

Characteristic of current trends in educational policy in Australia is a move towards more centralisation at the national level, through the articulation of curriculum and teaching

standards, and within the States and Territories, regulatory authorities falling underneath that umbrella. In NSW for instance, at the beginning of 2014, the previous Board of Studies (curriculum) and the NSW Institute of Teachers (responsible for teaching standards) were amalgamated to form the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES). Policies emanating from these bodies impact on all schools, Government and non-Government. Therefore some implications for policy development at the National and State level would include the following.

First, it is recommended that the following be acknowledged and/or incorporated into existing policies related to teacher professional development and learning in schools:

- The influence of school context and ethos on professional development programs and teacher learning in schools to assist schools to identify the impact of their context and ethos on the learning of their teachers, and consider ways in which they could maximise their learning.
- The critical interrelationship between the horizontal dimension of teacher career-stage learning and the vertical dimension of school-based planning, coordination and evaluation of teacher professional development programs, with a view to equip schools to benchmark their performance against the literature in ways that are relevant to their context.
- The benefits of basing school-contextualised professional development programs on knowledge of how teachers learn at all career stages at the school. Policy makers could provide resources that assist schools to use career-stage learning to enrich and differentiate their professional development programs. Guidelines could also be issued that require schools to appropriately target and cater for the learning of teachers at every career stage.
- The benefits of distributing leadership using a career stage approach, in relation to the planning and coordination of school-based professional development programs.

In addition, further development of policies in three areas is recommended:

- Policies such as accreditation frameworks could be re-formatted to take on board the recommendations in this study, as detailed in Chapter 17 and Appendices 17a, 17b and 17c. This could include inserting information on how teachers learn, and prefer to learn, at each developmental stage and providing recommendations on professional development activities, resources and research that have been found in the literature to assist teachers to improve their practice and progress from one developmental level to the next.

- The study found that teachers tended to form their ideas about the attributes of quality teaching from their experiences within schools, not from external sources. Policies could be developed that encourage professional development within schools that assists teachers to reflect upon the attributes of quality teaching in ways that align with what the literature recommends as good practice.
- Develop policy which better enables teachers to know more about themselves as learners across the career continuum, and acknowledges that this is of key importance to their professional and personal development. Ensure that this learning is explicitly embedded in university teacher preparation courses, continues into the early career years as a part of teacher accreditation frameworks, and throughout the working life of the teacher.
- Provide policy direction which assists schools to make explicit time available for professional development and learning across all career stages. This could include mentoring, lesson observation and debriefing, and researching good practice for teaching and learning.

RESEARCH

This study was grounded in a wide range of the literature that in some way or another has shaped our current understandings of teacher professional development and learning. This included literature from the areas of effective schools, educational leadership, human resource management, professional learning communities and teacher career-stage learning.

In confirming the importance of school-based contexts in influencing the way teachers develop and learn, the study brought to light a number of interrelated factors that in their way, all impact on the outcomes of teacher learning. This study suggests that more research could be undertaken at the school-based level, particularly in the following areas. This would enable researchers to further explore the dynamics of teachers working together within broader policy frameworks, to enhance their own professional learning.

Teacher career-stage learning

This study brought to light the range of issues that need to be considered at the various career stages of teachers' career path trajectories. In so doing it could be noted that, within the broader literature, a number of these stages are less developed than others, or more developed than others. For instance, our understanding of new teacher development is far more pronounced than that of middle career, executive, and perhaps even principal development. The implication is that we need to have a better understanding of teachers' lives and growth at all career stages, as a foundation to addressing the question of how teachers learn in their

career stages, and how it might actually enable and foster that learning within each career stage. It is also recommended that more research be undertaken on career-stage growth, and how teachers can be supported in progressing to the next career stage through engaging in appropriate and effective professional learning, and particularly how this might be integrated at the school-based level.

School context and ethos

The impact of school context and ethos in the case study schools on the resulting teacher learning culture, approaches to teachers as learners and professional development practices, was found to be critical and significant to teacher learning in the case study schools. More research on how school context and ethos impact upon teachers as learners, at every career stage, is warranted. In addition, research on how context and ethos could be harnessed by school communities to enrich teacher learning may lead to improvements in the way that teacher professional development is planned and coordinated in schools.

Facilitating professional development in schools

This study was predicated on action research and learning within the school, facilitated by the researcher acting as a participant observer working alongside school staff. What was not anticipated was the extent to which schools found this to be a helpful process in thinking through the nature of the professional learning within their own school contexts. Therefore, while recognising the extent of the time commitments that approaches of this nature require of a researcher, the recommendation is that those responsible for school-based professional learning consider more the facilitation role, as well as the design role for which they are often required to do. These teachers could draw upon some of the insights from the study to help them in the facilitation of individual and whole-school discussions about school-based professional learning. Utilising the instruments that were developed within the study could also assist them in their ongoing evaluation and improvement of the school-based professional development program.

Quality teaching and effective schools research

Data emerged in the study that indicated that teachers predominantly based their ideas about the attributes of a quality teacher on their experiences and observations at school level, and that much of what they described was different to what the literature and policy makers are saying globally. More research on why, and in what ways, teachers think differently to that proposed by external sources could assist in moving the debate and agenda about quality teaching forward.

The study also confirmed the important contribution of teacher professional learning to building effective schools, as asserted in the literature. However, the contributing factors of school context and ethos, and the horizontal and vertical dimensions as defined in the study, have not been well represented in the literature in relation to effective schools research. More research within schools on these coalescing elements could contribute valuable data to further inform the effective school debate.

SUMMARY

The study's focus on conducting research on how teachers learn, while enabling and supporting whole school improvement to teacher learning and professional development approaches, gave rise to a number of recommendations for school practice, policy and research. The key component linking these recommendations is an emphasis on gradual and continual improvement to teacher professional development and learning within school communities that is supportive of the school's context, ethos and teacher learning culture, rather than trying to apply a one-size-fits-all approach or sudden change within schools**.**

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CHAPTER 20

CONCLUDING REMARKS

THE BEGINNING

This study was initially motivated by a teacher who does their work "on the ground" with teachers, on a daily basis. The researcher set out to investigate their own school's performance in both the approach to teachers as learners, and the provision of a well-coordinated professional development program informed by the research literature that would be a key contributor to teacher development and student learning at the school. It was noted at this time that the literature tended to provide a number of principles derived from studies of good practice, but little in the way of how these might be incorporated into the context of a particular school.

Thus the researcher was already experiencing the complex nature of teacher learning "on the ground", had the responsibility of bringing many disparate elements into a cohesive and workable plan for teacher professional learning in the school, and was endeavouring to learn from examples of good practice in the literature.

From a small initial study conducted on how teachers learn at their own school (Furner, 2010), and engaging in directed reading of the literature on teacher learning, the researcher found that although there were many expectations on schools as to what they should or might be doing in relation to teacher professional development, there were few studies about how schools were coping with these issues on a daily basis. It appeared to be a reason why, in the researcher's experience, good practice in coordinating whole-school teacher professional development appeared to be inconsistent and why teachers expressed levels of dissatisfaction with their programs.

This led to the exploratory study described in this thesis that was holistic in nature, took into account the unique context of each school, and used customised action research cycles and frameworks to ensure that the research began at the point at which each school was at in their planning for the professional development for their teachers. In addition, embedded in the design of the study, was a commitment to work with and alongside each school staff to enable them to explore how their own teachers were learning across all career stages, and to facilitate conversations which enabled whole-school communities to evaluate their practices against the literature and make plans for further improvement of whole-school professional development programs over time, according to individual contexts and needs.

THE JOURNEY

In reality, schools which participated in the study were found to be continually changing and emerging communities. The researcher found that teacher learning was really about continually growing and changing and learning, within the ecology of complex school communities where context and ethos influenced the culture of teacher learning within each.

The study found a way to facilitate those kind of on the ground conversations that allowed each community of teachers to discuss and reflect upon their learning. As a result of getting beside schools on this research journey, these conversations exposed much about what was important to teachers and school leaders, and to schools, in relation to teacher professional development and learning.

It was found that teachers at all career stages were keen to talk about their learning, with some at pains to do so. They expressed appreciation at having the opportunity to think about themselves as learners, and reflect upon their learning needs across all career stages. Unexpectedly, it emerged that many wanted the opportunity to talk to their principal on an individual basis about their professional learning, and to learn directly from the principal.

School leaders were also appreciative of conversations with a researcher who was both working at school level, on their own journey to improve practice at their school, and importantly to them, was also immersed in the literature and research about how teachers learn in school contexts. They expressed a desire to be assisted in facilitating a process that would take into account their school context and ethos, could lead to gradual improvement of their professional development programs and teacher learning, and which could be sustained after the study had been completed.

Important things about schools in relation to teacher learning also emerged from such conversations. Within these learning communities, the connectedness between school context and teacher learning was palpable. Teacher commitment to their school's ethos and vision for student learning appeared to be instrumental in shaping their perceptions of themselves and their colleagues as learners, as well as their aspirations for learning. Teachers also held their schools accountable, to a considerable degree, for their learning. On the other side of the equation, schools were found to have a significant impact on teachers as they went about their work in deciding what sort of opportunities would be available for learning at every career stage, how the principal was positioned in regard to leading teacher learning, and how other leaders were distributing responsibility for teacher learning. How schools went about planning, coordinating and evaluating their professional development program also influenced teacher learning in the case study schools. This led to a better understanding of how teachers

learn at each career stage within the complexity of school life, and the impact that school planning and delivery of professional development has on the learning of teachers along the career continuum. Essentially, the study found that school context and ethos were the most significant impacts on teacher learning for teachers at all career stages.

THE CONTRIBUTION

It was hoped for from the outset that, this being a study which focused squarely on teacher learning in schools, a contribution might be made which might be of benefit to teachers and schools. This study was designed to investigate how teachers learn and articulate beliefs about teacher learning within their school context, ethos and teacher learning culture, and the implication this has for teacher professional development to support their learning.

Teachers

A number of aspects relating to teacher learning emerged, including how the career stage of teachers impacts on their learning preferences, priorities and aspirations. The study also contributed to a better understanding of how teachers at all career stages learn, both individually and collectively within these schools, and of how these two dynamics of learning co-exist within both the micro level of career stages and the macro of school settings, and the implications of this in relation to the planning of professional development programs at school level.

Links have also been made between the modes of professional development that the literature has identified as effective for teacher learning, what we know about teacher career stages and career-stage learning, and the potential for improving teacher standards frameworks so they can be better used to enhance teacher learning and development from one career stage to the next.

The study has also contributed to our understanding of the impact of the principal and other layers of leadership on teacher learning, generating two new insights. First, many teachers at the case study schools expressed a desire to have individual time with their principals to both discuss their learning, and learn from the principal. Whereas it is acknowledged that this could be difficult in the context of a large school, it suggests that principals need to consider their role and degree of presence in relation to the mentoring of teachers about their learning. Further, the executive at school level, not just middle leaders, had a significant impact on teacher learning. More research in these areas is warranted because they affect teachers and their learning at the ground level on a daily basis.

Schools

The approaches and instruments used in this study may be useful to assist other schools as they endeavour to contextualise their professional development programs to enhance the learning of their particular teachers. If so, it would enable them to ground the planning of their school-based professional development programs on how their own teachers learn at all career stages, along with good practice in the literature, thereby assisting them to develop relevant, sustainable and quality learning for their staff. Suggestions have also been made as to how schools may overcome their difficulties in evaluating their professional development programs and benchmarking them against good practice in the literature, as well as how to go about planning and coordinating the professional development program to enable gradual and continuous improvement.

Research and the literature

Some of the recommendations show how research, policy and school practice can work together powerfully to assist teacher learning in school contexts. This intimate relationship is somewhat lost in the mire of research and exhortations, for schools at least, and it is recommended that it be re-established as a powerful nexus to assist schools to improve teacher learning at the school level.

In relation to theory, at systems level, policies could include reference to career-stage learning to encourage both learning within each career stage and across stages. This could be supported by teacher standards frameworks that include reference to how teachers learn, and the sort of professional development that could assist them to progress in their learning and development.

The study found that both school context and teacher career-stage learning each significantly impacted upon teacher learning and development. Further research to expand our understanding of the impact of school context and ethos on teacher learning to design a different type of professional development for teachers could also be pursued. A more comprehensive theoretical base could enable professional development to be devised in-house by schools, which includes a realistic approach in regard to school context and ethos, captures government requirements in relation to the use of teaching standards frameworks, and targets each career stage with relevant professional development options.

Ultimately, it is to be hoped that the study has contributed new understandings about designing sustainable and relevant professional development programs for teachers by implementing an approach that incorporates whole-school discussion, reflection, learning and planning. This in turn enabled the case study schools to plan and improve their professional

development program within, and in respect to, their unique context and ethos. In this way, the study makes a practical contribution to the literature on how schools might reflect upon and plan teacher professional development which is both strategic in nature, while also taking into account teacher learning across all career stages.

THE END

At the submission of this thesis I will continue to work with teachers in my school, grateful that engaging in this research has been the best professional development that I have experienced in my 25 years of working in schools. It is pleasing to note that over five years, the research has profoundly impacted upon improving teacher professional development programs and teacher learning at my own school. It has led to a much deeper understanding of the way in which the school's context and ethos impacts upon teacher learning and in doing so, the professional development program and teacher learning culture has been enriched. To this end alone, the study has been successful. It is also gratifying that other schools in NSW are keen to take up some of the approaches and recommendations of this study in their quest to improve teacher learning in their own contexts.

The journey has been long and rich, and it is hoped that a useful contribution to understanding teacher professional development and leading whole-school continuous improvement from a school-based perspective has been made.

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HOW TEACHERS LEARN ACROSS THE CAREER CONTINUUM

IN SCHOOL CONTEXTS

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APPENDIX 3.1

Teacher Questionnaire

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

TEACHER LEARNING AT (insert school name)

Date – (insert date)

This questionnaire is based on good practice in teacher professional learning as identified in the literature. It seeks to identify the factors that were of particular value in relation to the professional learning environment at (insert school name) over the past year.

Years Teaching: 1-3 ☐ 4-7 ☐ 8-20 ☐ 21 + ☐

Junior School / Senior School: ☐

Male / Female: ☐

Age: 22-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51+ ☐

Directions

Please indicate how you learnt at (insert name) school over the past year by selecting a description along the continuum provided and placing the corresponding number in the text box. If you are unable to select a description, please place an *X* in the box and explain your decision in the comment box at the end of the section. This comment box can also be used to elaborate on any aspect of the survey if desired.

Collaborative learning

Productive professional learning occurred when:

1. I planned my professional learning with other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

2. When suitable, I engaged in the learning with other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

3. I was given the opportunity to teach or mentor other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

4. I was given the opportunity to talk about and support the professional growth of other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

Learning through reflection

Productive professional learning occurred when:

5. I privately reflected on my learning

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

6. I reflected on my learning experiences collaboratively with other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

7. I was given time by the school to specifically reflect on my learning

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

Hands-on and creative learning

Productive professional learning occurred when:

8. I was encouraged to be creative (e.g. exploration, inquiry, innovation)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

9. I used an inquiry approach, (e.g. where I worked with other teachers to understand how students learn)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

10. I engaged in action learning, (e.g. where I observed, acted, reflected, modified, implemented)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

Learning through feedback from students and colleagues

Productive professional learning occurred when I learnt from:

11. Other teachers/colleagues

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

12. Supervisors or other leaders in the school community

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

13. My students

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

Learning through collegial conversation

Productive professional learning occurred where I learnt through:

14. Collegial conversations which were planned (e.g. stage/faculty meetings)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

15. Collegial conversations which were unplanned – often happening in small bites of time, randomly throughout the day/week

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

16. Collegial conversations which occurred as a result of viewing lessons and debriefing, comparing strategies and/or teaching style

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

<u>Learning from within the context of my school</u> (that is, within the school's culture, ethos, values, goals, community etc.)

<u>Productive professional learning occurred when:</u>

17. I worked within the context of my stage/faculty

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

18. I worked with other teachers in my school

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

19. I worked within my classroom

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

20. I undertook professional development activities based on needs identified by the school

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

21. I undertook professional development activities based on school vision, goals and strategy

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

<u>Learning from within the context of my school</u> (that is, within the school's culture, ethos, values, goals, community etc.) continued

<u>Productive professional learning occurred when:</u>

22. I had input into the planning and development of professional development at the school

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

23. I attended in-service courses outside the school setting

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

<u>Please comment as necessary to elaborate</u>

Creating time for learning

Productive professional learning occurred when:

24. I was given time to spend in the learning experience, including time to think, discuss, reflect, plan and implement

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

25. I was given time to observe the lessons of other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

26. I was given time to team teach with other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

Learning by directed study, reading & writing

Productive professional learning occurred when:

27. I was able to privately read relevant books, resources or research (by any medium – electronic or hard copy)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

28. I was able to read and then discuss relevant books, resources or research with other teachers

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

29. I wrote material myself – teaching resources and/or books and/or articles and/or research

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

Learning through observation and being taught by others

Productive professional learning occurred when:

30. I was taught by specialists in an educational area coming into the school

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

31. I was taught by teachers from my own school

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

32. I was taught by teachers outside my own school

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Type number in text box ☐

Please comment as necessary to elaborate

Barriers to your learning

What do you perceive as barriers at your school which affected your learning as a teacher? Please list in order of priority:

Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

Thank you for participating in this survey

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APPENDIX 3.2

Executive Questionnaire

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

SCHOOL EXECUTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Date (insert date)

School _____

Name _____

Current leadership position _____

Years Teaching: **1-3** ☐ **4-7** ☐ **8-20** ☐ **21 +** ☐

Years in leadership positions _____

Leadership positions held

_____

_____

_____

_____

Male/Female: ☐

Age: **22-30** ☐ **31-40** ☐ **41-50** ☐ **51+** ☐

Section 1: The way teachers learn at this school

Using a scale of *Very Frequently* through to *Very Rarely*, indicate to what degree you consider teachers learn at the school in the ways listed by ticking the box corresponding to your chosen comment. Your selection may be based on your work directly or indirectly with teachers and/or your own observations over time. If you are completely unable to comment on an item listed, please tick the box *Don't know*.

At this School, teachers learn through:

Collaboration with each other

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Reflecting on their practice individually

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Reflecting on their practice together

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Being creative and/or innovative

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Feedback from peers

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Feedback from leaders

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Engaging in lesson observations and debriefs with each other

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Planned collegial conversations (meetings etc.)

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Incidental collegial conversations

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Teacher accreditation processes

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

The context of the school (learn within the school's culture, ethos, values, goals etc.)

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Reading and writing

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

Engaging in postgraduate study

☐Very Frequently ☐Frequently ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Very Rarely ☐Don't Know

<u>Other</u>

Please make a note of other ways that teachers learn in this school, if not already listed.

Please comment on the following:

1. This school provides enough time for teachers to learn:

☐Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

2. What do you perceive as the barriers to teacher learning at this school?

3. Teachers learn differently according to their career level and experience

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

If you selected *Yes*, please provide one example:

Section 2: Good Practice Framework for school-based teacher learning

Listed below are eight aspects of school community culture that relate to the planning, programming and implementation of school-based professional learning. Please circle a number which corresponds to your chosen comment.

Thinking about the way in which your school plans for and implements professional development opportunities for teachers, rank how well you think your school does the following, if at all, over a one year period:

1. Strategic alignment (Teacher PD is explicitly aligned with school goals)

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

2. Allocating sufficient resources

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

3. Consideration of annual professional development content

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

4. Implementation of PD throughout the school

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

5. Explicit delivery of PD which provides learning to teachers across their career continuum

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

6. Teacher accreditation programs

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

7. PD which encourages teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

8. Evaluation of the school's PD program

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

How important on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 lowest – 5 highest) do you think the following four aspects are in relation to their impact on teacher learning:

1. School Leadership (principal)

   1 2 3 4 5

2. School Leadership (deputy principal/executive)

   1 2 3 4 5

3. School Leadership (middle managers)

   1 2 3 4 5

4. School culture (What the school community thinks about teacher learning)

   1 2 3 4 5

Thank you for completing this survey

Chris Furner

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APPENDIX 3.3

School Research Kit

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

SCHOOL RESEARCH KIT

Contents

- Letter to the principal, issued following an initial discussion about the study
- Templates provided for principal consideration:

  Participant Information and Consent Form (Appendix 4.1)

  Principal Information and Consent Form (Appendix 3.4)



Date (inserted)

Dear Principal (name is inserted),

Thank you for your interest in the study on how teachers learn across their career continuum in the context of their schools.

As discussed, I have provided some information about the study below, along with example copies of the participant information and consent form and the principal consent form, which include a summary of the research approaches to be used, for your perusal and consideration.

I will contact you again by phone in two weeks to talk about whether or not you would like to have the researcher make a presentation about the study to your staff, and to invite voluntary participation of your teachers.

Research significance and benefits to participating schools

Macquarie University considers that research on how teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools is ground breaking in the areas of school effectiveness and improvement. It is potentially beneficial in a number of ways to the teaching profession, schools and educational systems and the schools which participate in the research.

Why conduct research on how teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?

1. There is value in learning more about how teachers learn

The empirical evidence establishes that teacher professional learning is required to increase teacher effectiveness and in turn enhance student learning outcomes, ultimately leading to more effective schools. Salient features of effective professional learning are emerging, including the benefits of continual professional learning and school-based delivered programs, but as yet these have not been comprehensively explored, either as independent concepts or the way in which they could potentially act together to create effective professional learning experiences for teachers. Although some literature is recognising the stages of teacher development and the types of professional learning that may enhance teacher performance,

the most recent information on the positive impact of professional learning on teacher effectiveness is largely drawn from research which focuses on other variables and their impact on creating effective schools; namely the notions of leadership, particularly distributive leadership, and the building of school cultures as learning communities. This proposed research however, seeks to make the professional learning of teachers the focus of investigation so that data on this can be collected as the centre of enquiry rather than as a by – product of other research. Specific research on how and in what ways teachers learn may have wide ranging benefits both to teachers and schools, including contributing to more deeply understanding and appreciating the role that learning has in the development of teachers as practitioners and professionals and the way in which a comprehensive understanding of their learning may impact on the development and provision of effective professional learning opportunities within individual schools.

2. There is value in focusing on both career continuum learning and on conducting case study research in schools

In addition, an interest in the career continuum of teachers is emerging world-wide, including the establishment of accreditation processes based on the career development of teachers, but a consideration of a continuum approach to the delivery of professional learning to teachers has not been well explored. Available literature indicates that there is a need for research that specifically focuses on the delivery of well-coordinated, strategic, effective, quality, comprehensive and sustained professional learning opportunities to teachers across their whole career continuum from early career through to principal within the unique contexts of their schools, yet case studies on how teachers learn within their schools are relatively scarce in the literature. There is even less available on how teachers learn according to their development as their career progresses. The data generated in the initial pilot case study conducted in 2010 demonstrated that such research is viable and can contribute to current enquiry investigating the nexus between effective schools, teacher professional learning and maximising student learning outcomes.

The need to further investigate models of delivery of professional learning at school level is also compelling, particularly in relation to the literature which indicates that effective educational leadership is an imperative to the quality of teacher professional learning, resulting in improved practice and enhanced student outcomes.

3. There are benefits to teachers and schools participating in the research

Completing the proposed research will contribute to the literature and the emerging interest in teacher career continuums, leadership for learning and building schools as learning communities. It will also enable further exploration of the delivery of effective teacher professional learning through facilitating whole school conversations about teacher career-stage learning and professional development at school level. Indeed, by implication, there is a strong synergy between the concepts of continual professional learning and a career continuum approach to the delivery of teacher professional learning that suggests that research focusing on these dynamics could be beneficial.

Other factors worth investigating in such a model would be the capacity to provide and facilitate a continual, comprehensive and flexible approach to the delivery of professional learning including tailored programs for individual teachers, strategic intervention and remediation if required at particular points and programs targeted at the learning needs of specific groups. In addition, consideration of how across the continuum experiences could be provided as teachers are encouraged and supported to lead, mentor and teach each other in a distributed leadership approach within a collegial learning community, is also worth investigating. This research could also provide the scaffold for using a case study methodology to trial the implementation of a career continuum approach to the professional learning of teachers at school level, thereby contributing to a better understanding of the impact of leadership models and learning community culture on teacher professional learning and student outcomes.

Also of interest is the potential use of a career continuum approach to evaluating professional development programs in schools. Facilitating a practical and comprehensive method of evaluating the professional learning within a school community, drawing upon feedback from beginning teachers through to principal, could also be useful to school improvement.

A summary of practical benefits includes:-

Teachers:-

- A boost in morale and collegiality as teachers engage in interviews, focus groups and surveys on how they learn
- An increased awareness amongst teachers of the benefits to improving their teaching, and therefore the learning outcomes of their students, as a result of reflecting on their own learning

- The opportunity to explore the teacher learning methodology of reflection more rigorously and consider how they could plan their professional learning more effectively into the future.

School leadership:-

- An acknowledgement amongst teachers that the school principal and leadership are interested in their learning, and in the school contributing to cutting edge research in this area
- Due to the research discussions, a further building of learning community culture within the school, noted in the literature as important to the learning outcomes of students
- Access to well-designed benchmarking tools, grounded in literature, to enable schools to self-evaluate and monitor their performance in relation to the provision of professional learning and the rate of teacher engagement
- Access to the final research report, conclusions and recommendations which may assist in the ongoing strategic planning of teacher professional learning into the future
- Follow up sessions if desired, designed to boost teacher awareness of their learning and how to engage in ways that build and improve the school.

The Independent sector

In conclusion, it is significant that this unique and potentially significant research will be conducted in Independent Schools in NSW. Even though schools will not be identifiable in the final study, it will be clearly stated that the research has been conducted in the Independent Sector. This is beneficial to our corporate reputation as being on the cutting edge of educational research and excellence in schooling, including in relation to teacher learning, school effectiveness and the enhancement of student learning.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Furner

APPENDIX 3.4

Participant Information and Consent Form for Principals of Participating Schools

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Name of Project:

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools

Thank you for participating in the recruitment process related to this research. To this point you have participated in the following, as outlined in the Ethics Application submitted to Macquarie University in relation to this research:-

1. You have been invited to speak to the principal of Brooklee College, if desired, about the research.
2. You were invited to offer an informal expression of interest, and you did so.
3. This was then followed by a visit to the school to speak to you by the co-investigator, Christine Furner, who outlined the importance and relevance of the study according to the literature on the learning of teachers and students and to the development of school-based policies and programs in the area. The benefits of the research to the staff, the school and the teaching profession were also discussed.
4. At this meeting you were given a copy of the *Participant Information and Consent Form* that would be used with teachers at your school, should they volunteer to participate. This form contained specific information about:-
    - The purpose of the study
    - The name and contact details of the Chief Investigator, Dr Norman McCulla a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Human Sciences, Department of Education at Macquarie University (Phone –98508650, email – Norman.McCulla@mq.edu.au)
    - The voluntary nature of participation for both the school and teachers as an important part of the recruiting process
    - The guaranteed anonymity of the teachers and the school participating in the study

- The capacity for teachers to withdraw from the study at any time without reason or consequence
- Details about what teacher participants would be asked to participate in, contribute and complete
- Details about who would have access to the data, and the assurance of confidentiality
- The ways in which the conclusions of the study would be shared with staff and the school.

5. You were also informed about the research processes and practicalities in relation to meeting times with possible volunteers and the nomination of a liaison person at your school to be used by the co-investigator when contacting the school in relation to conducting the research.

As a result of participating in the above process and then giving an informal undertaking that you would consent to use your school as a case study site in the research, and to approach your teachers at a staff meeting, please now formalise this consent by completing the section below:-

Consent for school participation in the research on how teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools

I…… (Your name)

Principal of …….. (School name)

Have participated in the recruitment process as outlined above and have read and understood the information above and the Participant Information and Consent Form that will be given to any teachers at the school who voluntarily decide to participate in the research. I have also been able to ask questions, which have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to my school participating in this research, and through my nominated liaison staff member, allowing Christine Furner, the co-investigator, access to the teachers at the school at a staff meeting. I know that any teachers who volunteer can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time, without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Principal's Name:

(block letters)

Principal's Signature:_____Date:

Investigator's Name:

(block letters)

Investigator's Signature_____ Date:

Please Note

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Human Research Ethics Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 4.1

Participant Information and Consent Form

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Name of Project:

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools

You are invited to participate in research about how teachers learn across their career continuum which is being conducted at three to four K-12 Independent schools in the Sydney region.

The purpose of the study is to:-

1. ascertain how and in what ways teachers at the case study school sites learn in their contexts across their career continuum from early career, through to executive leaders, and

2. explore what teachers experience as learning in these schools compared and contrasted to the literature on how teachers learn.

The research is a research project being conducted by the co-investigator Christine Furner, to meet the requirements of a PhD under the supervision of Dr Norman McCulla who is the Chief Investigator of the study. Dr Norman McCulla is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Human Sciences, Department of Education at Macquarie University (Phone –98508650, email – Norman.McCulla@mq.edu.au). Dr Greg Robertson, who is a lecturer in research methods at Macquarie University, will also contribute to the study as a supervisor of the research and as co-investigator.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to:

1. participate in a face-to-face interview with the researcher for 45 minutes where you will be asked open-ended questions about how, and in what ways, if at all, you learn at the school
2. contribute to a focus group discussion with several other teachers for 40 minutes talking about teacher learning at the school, and
3. complete a questionnaire for 20 minutes on how teachers learn in relation to the literature on teacher learning.

The interviews and focus group discussions may be recorded on a Sony recorder for use by the researcher only to assist in note taking. If you do not wish to be recorded, you can indicate this at the beginning of the interview.

There are no perceived risks or discomforts as all research will be conducted in a private, comfortable meeting room within your school at a time which suites you. This research is not funded by any organisation and there is no payment of any kind for your contribution. Thank you for your valuable time and contribution to this research.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except if required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the Chief Investigator, Dr Norman McCulla and the researcher, Christine Furner, and the co-investigator Dr Greg Robertson will have access to the data. It will not be passed on to any other researchers in the future.

After the completion of the thesis, the conclusions will be shared with the staff of the participant schools during a whole-school meeting at each school site. A copy of the thesis will be given to each participant school for their use in considering further improvements in the provision of professional development opportunities for their teachers, within the unique context of their school. Each participant will be given an executive summary, including reading recommendations for their information and further learning at a collegial luncheon held to thank the participants. The participants will have the opportunity to ask questions about the research and be updated on what the literature is saying about teacher professional learning.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

If you would like to participate in the study, please complete the form attached and submit to the investigator.

School (school name will be inserted)

I, have read and understood the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:
(block letters)
Participant's Signature: _____Date:

Investigator's Name:
(block letters)
Investigator's Signature: _____ Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Human Research Ethics Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 4.2

Question Schedule for Face-to-Face Interviews with Teachers

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

QUESTION SCHEDULE FOR FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

How do teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?

Open questions to be used to guide discussion with indicative probes

(Not for distribution).

Face-to-face interviews:-

1. Would you like to begin by telling me how the professional development program is organised in the school?

2. Thinking back over the past year, was there anything in particular that you felt was a key area or priority for your own professional learning?

   Probes:

   - Was this need met? If so, how and in what ways?
   - If not, how and in what ways might it have been met?
   - Did you go about prioritising your professional learning over the last year in any particular ways?
   - If 'yes', can you share how and in what ways it unfolded?

3. Can you take one area of recent learning that you have identified and explain how and in what ways you learnt in this area?

   Probes:

   - What conditions facilitated your learning?
   - What factors, if any, inhibited your learning?
   - How did you go about accessing learning in the area?
   - Were any of these access points (e.g. your own reading, an in-service, working with colleagues) useful, and in what ways?
   - What do you remember about *what* you learnt?
   - What do you remember about *how* you learnt?

- How were you able, if at all, to use what you learnt?
- What impact, if any, did the learning have on you as a teacher, colleague, leader, personally and professionally?

4. (This could be repeated for a second identified area).

5. Do you think that the way in which this learning opportunity was delivered/made available assisted you in your learning?

- If 'yes', explain in what ways (e.g. 'I learn through reading and considering research with others and this was done at the in-service').
- If 'no' explain why, noting the differences in the ways that learning opportunities were delivered/made available compared to how you would have preferred (e.g. 'I prefer to learn with colleagues over time and this opportunity was not available in this instance').

6. Thinking about your learning experiences in these two cases that we have discussed, can you draw any conclusions about yourself as a learner at this stage of your professional career in relation to how and in what ways you think you best learn?

7. In general, according to your experiences and observations as a practitioner, how and in what ways do you think teachers best learn at this school?

Probes:

- From your observations, are there particular ways of learning that teachers as a group tend to prefer?
- In what ways do teachers share their learning?
- Are there enough opportunities to do this?
- What comment, if any, would you make about the part that school culture plays in professional learning?
- What comment, if any, would you make about the part that the specific context in which the school is set plays in professional learning? (Parent/community relationships and support; links to other schools and support services).

8. From your experience and observations, do you think teachers learn in different ways as they progress along the career continuum as they develop as teachers?

- If "yes," could you outline some of the differences you see?

- If “no,” could you outline some of the points that you see as being in common?

9. Here is a list of a number of the ways in which teachers learn. Could you spend 5 minutes looking through the list and reflecting, at this stage of your career, on which are the most important to you as well as the extent to which you feel you have opportunities in the school to learn in that way? (List will contain questions on mentoring, reflection, collegial discussion, group workshops and directed reading).

10. Having reflected on your own position with regard to professional learning, what observations or comment would you make about how other teachers in the school at a similar career stage view:

- professional development; that is, an activity, experience or process that provides an opportunity for professional learning (the input)
- professional learning; that is, the growth of expertise as a teacher as demonstrated through professional practice (the outcome)

11. Upon reflection, is there any final comment you would like to make on professional learning in the school?

Probe:

- Is there any question that you would have liked me to ask, that I didn’t?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

APPENDIX 4.3

Question Schedule for Focus Groups

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QUESTION SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUPS

1. Would you like to begin by telling me how the professional development program is organised in the school?

2. In general, according to your experiences and observations as practitioners, how and in what ways do you think teachers best learn at this school?

Probes:

- From your observations, are there particular ways of learning that teachers as a group tend to prefer?
- In what ways do teachers share their learning?
- Are there enough opportunities to do this?
- What comment, if any, would you make about the part that school culture plays in professional learning?
- What comment, if any, would you make about the part that the specific context in which the school is set plays in professional learning? (Parent/community relationships and support; links to other schools and support service).

3. From your experience and observations, do you think teachers learn in different ways as they progress along the career continuum as they develop as teachers?

- If "yes," could you outline some of the differences you see?
- If "no," could you outline some of the points that you see as being in common?

4. What conditions facilitate the learning of teachers at the school? What factors, if any, inhibit their learning?

5. What do you think the school believes about how teachers learn and why?

- Probes include: Are there any policies for professional learning that you know of? Are goals set for teacher learning? Are you encouraged or assisted to set professional

learning goals as individuals and if so, when and how? Would you like to discuss your learning in informal or formal ways more at the school? Who has responsibility for planning and/or coordinating professional learning opportunities at the school? Who speaks about teacher learning in staff meetings and how often?

6. How would you describe the school learning community culture at the school?

- Probes include: Do you think teacher learning is a school priority? Why/Why not? What would you like to see happen in relation to teacher learning at your school?

7. Tell me about teacher accreditation at the school?

- Probes include: - Are teacher accreditation processes used at the school to assist teachers to learn? How and in what ways? or Why/Why not?

Thank you for participating in this focus group discussion.

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APPENDIX 4.4

Question Schedule for Face-to-Face Interviews with Executive Leaders

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

QUESTION SCHEDULE FOR FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH

EXECUTIVE LEADERS

1. What are your thoughts on teacher learning?

Probes:

- Do you think teacher learning impacts on student learning? Why/why not?
- Can you give any examples of what you regard to be effective learning for teachers?
- What sort, if any, professional development have you had about teacher learning over the past year?

2. How important do you think teacher learning is at the school?

Probes:

- Is it regarded as a strategic element of the school?
- Are there any policies for professional learning?
- What do you think about them?
- Are goals set for teacher learning?
- If so, how often?
- Are they evaluated in some way?
- How are teachers encouraged or assisted to set professional learning goals as individuals and if so, when and how?
- Who, if at all, has responsibility for the planning/coordination of teacher learning at the school?
- How are resources, including a budget, allocated to teacher professional development?

3. What do you believe the teachers at the school think about their own learning?

Probes:

- Do you think teacher learning is a priority amongst teachers? Why/Why not?

- What would you like to see happen in relation to teacher learning at your school?

4. How would you describe the school learning community culture at the school?

Probes:

- What does leadership do to build a culture of learning?

5. How do you think teachers learn at the school?

Probes:

- Do you think teachers in your school learn differently according to their career stage?
- What process do teachers use to access external professional development opportunities?
- What sort of internal professional development occurs at the school?
- Tell me about teacher accreditation at the school. Is teacher accreditation regarded as a learning opportunity?

6. What conditions do you think facilitate the learning of teachers at the school? What factors, if any, inhibit their learning?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

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APPENDIX 4.5

Brooklee College Teacher Questionnaire Data Results

BROOKLEE COLLEGE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE DATA RESULTS

Collaborative learning

Q1: I planned my professional learning with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20			1	3				1		1			
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7							1			1			
8-20		1		3				2		1			**A/SA =16**
21 +		1	2	3				1		1			**D/SD = 8**

Q2: When suitable, I engaged in the learning with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20				3	1					1	1		
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7									2				
8-20				3	1					2	1		**A/SA=25**
21 +				3	3						2		**D/SD = 0**

Q3: I was given the opportunity to teach or mentor other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7				1									
8-20		1		3						2			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7										2			
8-20			1	1	2					3			**A/SA=24**
21 +				3	3					1	1		**D/SD = 1**

Q4: I was given the opportunity to talk about and support the professional growth of other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7				1									
8-20		1	1	1	1			1		1			
21 +			1										
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7										2			
8-20			2	1	1				1	2			**A/SA=18**
21 +			2	3	1					2			**D/SD =2**

Learning through reflection

Q5: I privately reflect on my learning													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7			1										
8-20		1			3					1	1		
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7									1	1			
8-20				3	1					1	2		**A/SA=23**
21 +				1	5				1		1		**D/SD =1**

Q6: I reflect on my learning experiences collaboratively with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20			1	1	2				1	1			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7									1	1			
8-20		1		3						2	1		**A/SA=23**
21 +				6						2			**D/SD =1**

Q7: I was given time by the school to specifically reflect on my learning													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7			1										
8-20			2	1					2				
21 +	1												
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7							1				1		
8-20		1	2		1			2	1				**A/SA =5**
21 +		3	3							2			**D/SD =9**

Hands-on and creative learning

Q8: I was encouraged to be creative													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7				1									
8-20		1	2		1					2			
21 +			1										
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7										1	1		
8-20	1		1	2				1	1	1			**A/SA=17**
21 +				4	1	1		1			1		**D/SD =4**

Q9: I used an enquiry approach, (where I worked with other teachers to understand how students learn)													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20				2	2			1		1			
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7								1		1			
8-20			2	1	1			1	1	1			**A/SA=18**
21 +			2	3	1					2			**D/SD =4**

Q10: I engaged in action learning, (where I observed, acted, reflected, modified, implemented)													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20		1		1	2				1	1			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1	1			
8-20				3	1			1	1	1			**A/SA=20**
21 +		1		4	1					1	1		**D/SD =3**

Learning through feedback from students and colleagues

Q11: Other teachers / colleagues													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20				1	3					1	1		
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7									1	1			
8-20				2	2				2		1		**A/SA=23**
21 +			1	3	2						2		**D/SD = 0**

Q12: Supervisors or other leaders in the School community													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7				1									
8-20	1	1	1		1				1	1			
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7							1			1			
8-20		1	3						2	1			**A/SA=14**
21 +			1	4	1						2		**D/SD =5**

Q13: From my students													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7				1									
8-20			1	1	2				1		1		
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7								1		1			
8-20				4						3			**A/SA =19**
21 +			3	2		1					2		**D/SD =1**

Learning through collegial conversation

Q14: Collegial conversations which were planned eg: Stage/Faculty meetings													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7			1										
8-20		1	1	2						1	1		
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7									2				
8-20				3	1					3			**A/SA=21**
21 +				4	2					1	1		**D/SD =2**

Q15: Collegial conversations which were unplanned – often happening in small bites of time, randomly throughout the day/week													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7				1									
8-20				3	1					2			
21 +				1									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7										2			
8-20				1	3				1	1	1		**A/SA=26**
21 +				4	2					1	1		**D/SD =0**

Q16: Collegial conversations which occurred as a result of viewing lessons and debriefing, comparing strategies and/or teaching styles													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20		1	1	1	1			1	1				
21 +		1											
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7								1		1			
8-20				2	2					2		1	**A/SA=17**
21 +		1	1	3	1					1	1		**D/SD =5**

Learning from within the context of my school

Q17: I worked within the context of my Stage/Faculty													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20		1	1	1	1					1	1		
21 +			1										
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7										1	1		
8-20			1	2	1					1	2		**A/SA=23**
21 +				3	3					1	1		**D/SD =1**

Q18: I worked with other teachers in my school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20		1	1	2						2			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7								1		1			
8-20				2	2				1	2			**A/SA=20**
21 +			2	3						2			**D/SD =2**

Q19: I worked within my classroom													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20		2		1	1					1	1		
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7									1	1			
8-20				2	2			1		2			**A/SA=20**
21 +			2	2	2					1	1		**D/SD =4**

Q20: I undertook professional development activities based on needs identified by the school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20			2	2				1		1			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7							1			1			
8-20			3	1					2	1			**A/SA=17**
21 +		1		1	4					1	1		**D/SD =3**

Q21: I undertook professional development activities based on school vision, goals and strategy													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20				3	1				1	1			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7							1			1			
8-20			2	2				1	1	1			**A/SA =18**
21 +			1	4	1				1	1			**D/SD =2**

Q22: When I had input into the planning and development of my professional development at the school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20			1	1	2				2				
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7							1		1				
8-20			1	1	2				2		1		**A/SA=13**
21 +		1	3	2						2			**D/SD =3**

Q23: When I attended in-service courses outside the school setting													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7					1								
8-20			1	2	1				1	1			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7							1		1		1		
8-20			2		2			1		1	1		**A/SA=18**
21 +			2	3	1					2			**D/SD =2**

Creating time for learning

Q24: I was given time to spend in the learning experience, including time to think, discuss, reflect, plan and implement													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7				1									
8-20	1		1	2				1			1		
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7							1				1		
8-20	1			1	2			1	1	1			**A/SA=17**
21 +	1	1	1		3					1	1		**D/SD =7**

Q25: I was given time to observe the lessons of other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7					1								
8-20	1		1	2				1	1				
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7								1			1		
8-20	1			2	1					2		1	**A/SA =13**
21 +		2	3		1					2			**D/SD =7**

Q26: I was given time to team teach with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7						1							
8-20			2	2						2			
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7								1			1		
8-20	1			2	1			1			1	1	**A/SA=14**
21 +		3	1	1	1				1	1			**D/SD =7**

Learning by directed study, reading & writing

Q27: I was able to privately read relevant books, resources or research													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7				1									
8-20			1	1	2					2			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7									1	1			
8-20			2	2							3		**A/SA =21**
21 +			1	4	1					2			**D/SD =0**

Q28: I was able to read and then discuss relevant books, resources or research with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7				1									
8-20			2	2					2				
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7								1	1				
8-20		1		3					1	1	1		**A/SA =13**
21 +		1	1	3	1				1		1		**D/SD = 4**

Q29: I wrote material myself – teaching resources and/or articles and/or research													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1										
4-7				1									
8-20			2	1	1			1	1				
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7									1	1			
8-20			3		1				1	2			**A/SA =13**
21 +	1	1		3	1				1	1			**D/SD = 4**

Learning through observation and being taught by others

Q30: I was taught by specialists in an educational area coming into the school													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20		1	1	1	1					1	1		
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7								1		1			
8-20			3	1			1			2			**A/SA =19**
21 +	1			1	4					2			**D/SD =4**

Q31: I was taught by teachers from my own school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					1								
4-7					1								
8-20		1	1	2						2			
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7								1		1			
8-20			2	1	1				3				**A/SA =18**
21 +		1		3	2					2			**D/SD =3**

Q32: I was taught by teachers outside my own school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1									
4-7					1								
8-20				3	1				2				
21 +		1											
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		1											
4-7								1		1			
8-20			2	2			1		1	1			**A/SA = 16**
21 +	1			2	2					2			**D/SD = 5**

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APPENDIX 4.6

Brooklee College Website and Documentation Review

BROOKLEE COLLEGE SCHOOL WEBSITE AND DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

An extract from the first newspaper advertisement about the school reveals that from commencement the school has aimed to attract and retain "quality" teachers and has emphasized their strategic role in ensuring the successful learning of students. It reads:

> *The teaching staff will be amongst the finest and most highly qualified in Australia, the school attracting teachers who wish to teach in a distraction –free environment where the quality of education offered is paramount.*

The school continues to publically attest to the importance of teachers in the learning of students, as exemplified in the Principal's address on the school's website:-

> *In addition to our students who possess a wide range of talents and abilities, our dedicated and highly qualified teachers are our greatest resource. They are wholeheartedly committed to the advancement of their students. Teaching at the school is regarded as an exciting and demanding vocation. The environment which the teachers aim to create is one of intellectual curiosity through shared endeavour and collaboration with students.*

The employment section on the website further articulates strong messages about teachers and their learning, including information on an induction for new teachers where the school "prides itself on providing teachers with the professional learning support and collegiality so important when commencing in a new school." Teachers are referred to as "leaders in learning" who will be provided with "vital resources for lesson preparation, research and communications" and that teachers have "reduced teaching loads to allow them time to develop and differentiate the curriculum." The professional development of teachers is also mentioned in the Employment Section, including comments such as:-

> *Ongoing strategic professional development is a crucial component of achieving high quality teaching and learning. At the school, all teachers share in managed and meaningful professional learning opportunities, which are personalised and aligned with the standards of the NSW Institute of Teachers, the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority and the school's own strategic goals.*

Also included are what the school regards as advantageous for teachers, including a "what we offer teachers" section that relates to a collegial learning environment and accreditation opportunities:-

> *What We Offer*
> - *Teaching at the school offers teachers the opportunity to:-*
> - *Work with highly qualified, experienced and skilled colleagues*
> - *Focus on the art of teaching and to facilitate the learning of co-operative students in small classes*
> - *Enjoy the challenges of innovative curriculum development and work in well-resourced learning environments*

- *Seek accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers through a well-managed and clearly articulated process*

The school's strategic plan notes five key areas for school development, one of these being "staff". Specific staff goals are listed which include:-

- *Build staff capacity to respond to growing needs and expectations of students and parents*
- *Develop and value staff capability and nurture their skills, resourcefulness and creativity to change and improve the school.*
- *Engender a spirit of research and enquiry in order to develop staff capacity to leader, innovate and improve*
- *Recruit and retain the highest quality staff*
- *Challenge staff to undertake professional learning which provides access to world best practice in teaching and enables them to be recognised as educational leaders*

Following these goals is a detailed plan including key performance indicators, delegated responsibilities and key projects designed to achieve these goals for staff. A range of other documents aligned to these staff goals were available including a Staff Professional Development Policy, a Professional Development Strategic Plan and a Staff Accreditation Strategic Plan. Further documents demonstrated the use of these plans in the design and implementation of professional development programs in the school including:

- a yearly professional development program brochure and "Courses and Presenters" booklet which were developed according to school strategic goals and staff professional development evaluation surveys conducted in the previous year. The brochure and booklet is issued to teaching staff at the beginning of the school year which they discuss at Stage/Faculty Level and then individually select sessions on moodle. Some attempt at mentioning career continuum learning of teachers was present
- various programs that teachers could select to engage in including a mentoring program, practicum supervisor program, job shadowing, project design and research, accreditation program at three levels, collegial discussion program and a collegial lesson observation program
- a statement of Professional Learning at Brooklee College, providing detailed information on the strategic nature of professional development at the school, policy documents and opportunities for teacher learning, and
- tailored induction programs are available for new teachers, new leaders, new executive staff, new support staff, new scheme teachers and practicum students. Each program contains a section on the importance of staff learning to student learning and

the building of a learning community, including the opportunities for learning appropriate to the inductee.

Access to external professional development is encouraged. The application form used by teachers lists classroom cover requirements and a second page which requires them to provide a rationale for wanting to attend the external program according to their own professional learning goals, their Stage/Faculty and school goals. Teachers are also required to note which professional teaching standards will be addressed at the in-service/conference, causing them to further reflect on what they are applying to learn.

Another application form for post-graduate study reveals a process of mentoring and discussion with colleagues, including senior managers and/or executive staff before the application is submitted. Similarly, a rationale for course/study selection is required, according to school goals and personal professional learning goals.

The school's annual report contains a section on teacher professional development, including a celebration of achievements and a statement about the importance of teacher professional learning to the effectiveness of the school. However the professional learning of teachers is not mentioned in enrolment prospectus material, infants, primary or stage 4, 5 and 6 handbooks.

The newsletters from the school, which are available both within the school community and the public domain via the website, have a section each fortnight on staff development. This section provides descriptions of teacher involvement in learning including attendance and/or presentations at conferences, in-services, school based professional development, completion of accreditation and post graduate study and secondments to government and educational committees.

The school has a brochure entitled "Professional Learning at Blooklee College" which it issues to teachers who enquire about working at the school, practicum students and at employment expos. The following text on professional learning appears:-

> *The School is a learning community dedicated to continuous improvement and innovation. The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued as the school attempts to develop, maintain and nurture a community of learners amongst its staff. All members of the School staff, including Teaching and Non-Teaching personnel are called to consider their professional development seriously as a part of their own professional responsibility and embrace the ethos of striving for excellence while engaging in lifelong learning. The School provides a supportive learning environment where each member of staff is enabled to enhance and enrich*

their professional practice, scholarship, personal mastery and leadership qualities. Teachers at the school can engage in a wide variety of professional learning activities which are targeted at achieving the school's mission and development goals

Professional Development Opportunities are listed as:

- *Practitioner Development – School based development, self-development, induction, mentoring, observation, job shadowing, team teaching.*
- *Professional Education – Award bearing courses managed and taught at higher education institutions, focusing on the relationship between educational theory and practices and leading to higher education accreditation and professional qualifications. Staff are invited to apply to the School scholarship fund to assist them with the costs of engaging in these courses.*
- *Professional Training – Conferences, courses and workshops that emphasise practical information and skills, managed and delivered by local education authorities, school external consultants or trainers from higher education institutions, such courses may lead to accreditation towards a national standards or academic awards.*
- *Professional Support – Staff can access a three tiered mentoring program according to their needs. Support is also offered through the provision of clear role statements, an ongoing appraisal system based on reflective and collegial practices, career development and appropriate promotion opportunities. School based professional development activities enable a focus on team building and shared ownership of the learning community.*
- *Professional Teacher Accreditation – Ongoing assistance with accreditation is offered to teachers through the Head of Professional Learning and includes access to accreditation levels through the NSW Institute of Teachers (NSWIT) and the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority.*

Activities programs and schemes

- *Induction Programs*
- *Internal in-service Education and Training including seminars and Staff Development Days*
- *Internal Appraisal Schemes*
- *Teacher Accreditation Activities*
- *External in-service courses and Conference delivered through accredited providers*
- *Staff meetings, including opportunities to present to staff*
- *Mentor Relationships and Training*
- *Supervising Practicum Teachers*
- *Observation of Teachers and Classes through a Collegial Visitation Program*
- *Post Graduate Study and Research*
- *SC and HSC marking*
- *Presenting at Conferences*
- *Self-Development/Leadership*
- *Job exchange*
- *Job shadowing*
- *Participating in Task Force and School Committees*
- *Serving on Committees, Boards and Professional Associations*
- *Appraisal Schemes*
- *Career Planning*

The school considers involvement in these activities as mutually beneficial for both teachers and the School, being integral to the sustainability of quality teaching and

learning practices and contributing to the personal and professional satisfaction of staff members. It also enables access to the broader educational contexts in which teachers and schools are expected to exist.

Overall, teacher learning and professional development is featured in a variety of documents and on the school's website.

APPENDIX 4.7

Feedback to Brooklee College

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context
Research feedback

Brooklee College
2011

Effective Schools literature

- Dinham and Rowe (Aust.)
- Hattie and Timperley (N.Z.)

Some key aspects of effective schools-

- Leadership which builds learning community culture
- Provide effective teacher professional learning
- Teachers manage their classes well to maximise time for learning

How do teachers learn?

- Australian Government Mapping of Teacher Learning Report (2008) states that there is no agreement about an overarching definition for professional learning practices, nor for what constitutes successful teacher learning in the current literature.

Examples of teacher learning

- Collaboratively, through feedback, collegial conversation, action learning style projects, lesson observations, reflection, reading and writing
- Better through planned, well organised, sustained experiences

Qualitative data collection

- Face-to-face interviews with individual teachers across the career continuum
- Focus group discussions with participants from mixed career stages
- Questionnaires- teacher and leadership questionnaires

Less information on:-

- Learning in the school context
- Less on specific learning across the career continuum

Research question

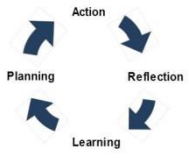
How do teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?

Two dimensions:

- Horizontal: teacher learning and professional development across a continuum of key career stages
- Vertical: whole school planning, coordination and evaluation of teacher learning and the school's professional development program

Action Research Cycle

This workshop places Brooklee College at the *Reflection* and *Learning* phases



Research at Brooklee College

27 teachers across all career stages:

- Early Career (<1-3 years)
- Experienced (4-7 years)
- Expert (8+ years)
- Leading (in formal leadership roles)
- Executive Leaders (principal and deputies)

Using:

- Face-to-face interviews
- Focus groups
- Questionnaires
- The study's school benchmarking framework

Participants

Junior School	9
Senior School	18
Years Teaching	
1-3	2
4-7	3
8-20	13
21+	9
Male	9
Female	18
Ages: from 22-51+ were present	
22-30	2
31-40	8
41-50	14
51+	3

Results

Distinct differences in:-

- how and in what ways teachers learn across the career continuum
- how they prefer to learn
- how they prioritise their learning

Early Career Teachers
Key areas for learning

- Improving and consolidating their teaching
- Focusing on classroom management
- Completing accreditation requirements
- Networking with other teachers outside the school

Early Career Teachers
How and in what ways?

- Learning related to the "now' need
- Mentoring from within stage/faculty
- Teaching provided by specialists on the school site
- Through being delegated responsibilities in stage/faculty/student wellbeing system

Early Career Teachers
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- according to immediate school requirements (how to conduct a parent interview, how to write student reports)
- according to direct requests from head teachers (how to write programs)

Experienced Teachers
Key areas of learning

Focus still on the classroom but a shift towards:-

- mastering pedagogical approaches
- using tools for learning, including ICT
- diversifying subject knowledge
- using and analysing assessments to plan further student learning

Experienced Teachers
How and what ways?

- Prioritised their own learning more consciously and over time
- Aware of the need to learn to enable growth in expertise
- Engaged in more self reflection
- Had "deep" discussions with colleagues
- Had a growing confidence in teaching themselves
- Liked using experimentation and innovation; were creative in their approach

Experienced Teachers
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- with some planning –within a known ebb and flow of school expectations
- by using reflection on their teaching
- as a result of informal discussions/consultation with direct leaders (middle managers)

Expert Teachers
Key areas of learning

Through:-

- enhancing student learning by closely evaluating student results
- initiating or substantially contributing to stage/faculty programming
- engaging in accreditation at high levels

Expert Teachers
How and what ways?

Engage in:-

- specific goal setting to improve practices that directly enhance student learning
- directed reading
- postgraduate study

They enjoy assisting others, including practicum students and colleagues, to improve their teaching and learning

Expert Teachers
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- through reflection *"It is a priority to regularly sit down, reflect and evaluate with the intention of assessing self and then moving to plan and implement my learning"*
- around setting specific goals and then trying to find professional development to assist them to meet these goals

They have a low tolerance for professional development that did not relate to their priorities:

"I can't stand being talked at about things that I already know or can't use. It is a waste of time doing professional development which is too general. I would rather a couple of hours by myself to improve my own work and practices"

Leading Teachers
Key areas of learning

- What makes an effective leader
- Researching best practice in ICT integration
- Best practice in leadership
- Changes to national curriculum

Leading Teachers
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- to meet school goals for middle management set by the principal
- according to what they perceived their staff needed to learn in relation to pedagogy, ICT integration, student learning
- according to external expectations – NSW Board of Studies syllabi

Leading Teachers
How and in what ways?

Learn through:

- any way that would assist them to "deliver" on the school's strategic goals
- conferences for leaders
- higher level study
- listening and working with executive staff
- individual directed reading

Executive Leaders
Key areas for learning

- According to school goals and priorities
- Research for school projects/initiatives
- Effective leadership literature

Executive Leaders
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- according to school ethos, priorities, needs, effectiveness and strategic goals
- to improve their individual performance:
- *"We are in the job to become specialists in our leadership area so we can lead and teach others"*
- according to their own learning plan, which had been presented and discussed at executive level
- as a result of reflection:
- *"I think deeply, read, write, look for connections and develop my learning over time"*
- according to school council requests

Executive Leaders
How and in what ways?

Learn through:

- directed reading
- postgraduate study
- professional association membership
- deep thinking and reflection
- autonomous, experiential and collegial experiences
- mentoring others

This group expressed a sense of excitement about their learning

Summary for Brooklee College

Teachers learn best:-

- in the context of their job, with their colleagues in their school
- when in strategic alignment with the school. They want and prefer clear goals "from the top", including principals, executive leaders and leading teachers
- through collegial feedback and mutual observation
- through self -reflection
- hands-on workshops
- feedback from colleagues and students
- directed reading, writing and postgraduate study

Staff feedback/discussion session

- Action – feedback of study data to all staff
- Reflection – form groups and discuss the questions, providing feedback for the school on teacher learning in this school context to assist with improving professional learning and development at the school

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APPENDIX 4.8

Brooklee College Whole-School Discussion Reflection Questions

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BROOKLEE COLLEGE WHOLE-SCHOOL DISCUSSION REFLECTION

QUESTIONS

How teachers learn in the context of the school

Teacher learning

Draw lines on the paper to create three columns, labelling them "Question 1, 2 and 3". Make dot points from your discussion around each of the following three questions:

1. Discuss the feedback on how teachers learn across the career continuum.
2. Were there any surprises in the data presented?
3. What did you notice that may have been new or different?

School context

Turn the paper over and make dot points from your discussion around the following questions:

1. Did anything arise out of the data on teacher learning at Brooklee College that threw light on the impact of school context on teacher learning?
2. Note any other ideas the group may have about the impact of this particular school on teacher learning.
3. Have you found it useful to have a school leader complete such research in the school?

Group feedback

We will now hear back from all the groups on what they have discussed today and then consider a final question together.

Whole staff discussion:

Possibilities for improving the professional development program

How could the data from the study, and whole staff ideas generated during staff discussion today, be used to improve the professional development program at the school?

Thank you for this feedback. As mentioned, your ideas will be discussed at an executive meeting to assist the school to further evaluate and improve the professional development program.

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APPENDIX 4.9

School Benchmarking Framework (SBF): Teacher Version

Please Note:

This Appendix item appears in the thesis in portrait layout for your convenience. However, the original document was produced in landscape layout, to make it easier for study participants to complete.

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Research question: How do teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?

School Benchmarking Framework (SBF)

Date -

Teacher Survey

This survey includes ten aspects of school community culture that relate to the planning, programming and implementation of school-based teacher professional development and learning.

Instructions

For each aspect there is a number of components listed, with three descriptors provided against each component.

- Please tick the box for each component that you regard best describes the approaches or practices in your school. There are no right or wrong answers. Your response should be based on your perspectives, observations, experiences and opinions.
- If you are unable to tick an option, please write "Not sure" on the component. This is a valid response.
- Please write any comments about any of the ten aspects in this survey, and/or about the professional development provided at the school on the final page of this document.

Please complete the following before starting:

Years Teaching: **1-3** ☐ **4-7** ☐ **8-20** ☐ **21 +** ☐

Junior School / Senior School: ☐

Male / Female: ☐

Age: **22-30** ☐ **31-40** ☐ **41-50** ☐ **51+** ☐

Leadership position **Yes/No (Circle the one that applies to you)**

Note

When using the terms "professional development" and "professional learning" in this document, the following definitions apply*:-

Professional development is an activity, experience or process that provides an opportunity for professional learning.

Professional learning is the growth of expertise as a teacher and is demonstrated through professional practice.

* NSW Institute of Teachers *Maintaining of Accreditation at Professional Competence: Information for Teachers.* (2009). Retrieved from www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/accreditation

School Levels

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1. Strategic alignment	1.1. The school has a documented and timetabled strategic plan for future development and improvement which is comprehensive, including major priorities and target outcomes. ☐	The school has some documented material about goals and development over a set timeframe. ☐	The school has no documented strategic plan, or a variety of disparate documents without targets or timeframes. ☐
	1.2. Within this plan, the professional learning of teachers is included as a strategic goal and includes outcomes to be evaluated. ☐	Within this plan, the professional learning of teachers is mentioned. ☐	There is no reference to the professional learning of teachers in school goals or planning documents. ☐
	1.3. The school has a list of professional learning goals, targets or outcomes for its teachers which is widely discussed and referred to regularly ☐	The school mentions professional learning goals at times, for example at staff meetings or school PD days. ☐	The school may mention professional learning on PD days but does not articulate any goals for teachers in this area. ☐
	1.4. Professional learning strategies are detailed. ☐	There is some planning of strategies to use in relation to the delivery of professional development, but not in relation to specific strategies to bring about effective professional learning. ☐	There are no stated or implemented strategies to facilitate teacher professional learning. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Strategic alignment (cont.)	1.5. School goals and expectations in relation to their professional learning is a core feature of the induction of new teachers. Induction includes how professional learning is embedded in the strategic development of the school, staff goals in this area, information about the internal professional development program, teacher accreditation and school initiatives developed to highlight and facilitate the learning of teachers. ☐	Teacher induction processes exist and there is some mention of a teacher professional development program in the school, but no or little mention of the school's strategic intent in relation to teacher professional learning. ☐	There is either no teacher induction process or if so, no mention of teacher professional learning or a teacher professional development program in the school. ☐
	1.6. Human resources in relation to the professional learning of teachers has been strategically planned e.g. A member/s of the school executive, who has direct input into the decisions made in relation to the strategic direction of the school, is accountable for and has responsibility to strategically plan, deliver, evaluate and sustain teacher professional learning across the school, aligned with the school priorities, goals and outcomes. They distribute this leadership through the school and seek teacher ownership and evaluation of the program. ☐	Coordination or planning of the professional development of teachers across the school is assigned to a teacher/s in the school leadership team and a time allocation is provided. They may or may not have access to the decision makers in the school – e.g. principal and executive staff. ☐	There is no-one delegated with responsibility to plan or deliver professional development activities across the school and/or a teacher with no leadership role is delegated the responsibility, but with no time allowance and no regular access to leadership staff. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
2. Resource allocation	2.1. Resources for professional learning are strategically budgeted and allocated according to school goals or development areas. ☐	Resources for professional learning are budgeted/provided but not strategically linked to school goals or outcomes. ☐	Resources for professional learning are the "left overs" after other needs are met. ☐
	2.2. A considerable portion of school funds is allocated for a variety of teacher professional learning initiatives. Allocation of funds is through collaborative decision-making and directly linked to school goals. ☐	Allocation of funds is to professional development activities, not to a variety of professional learning strategies. The use of funds is adhoc and dictated more by individual teacher requests, rather than whole-school needs. ☐	Allocation of funds is confused and/or dysfunctional and set guidelines are lacking. This results in teachers only making requests seldomly to attend professional development activities. ☐
	2.3. Adequate human resources are allocated to plan, develop, implement and assess professional learning opportunities provided for staff. ☐	Some staffing is allocated but not enough to optimise the effectiveness of planning and implementation. ☐	Little or no staffing is provided to plan or implement teacher professional learning plans or professional development activities. ☐
	2.4. There are room/s, office/s dedicated to teacher professional learning. ☐	Some space is available, but it is also used for other reasons/needs. ☐	No space is available or identified as having teacher professional learning as a use or priority. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
3. Professional Develop-ment content	3.1. Professional learning content is planned to include effective teaching strategies based on current research. ☐	Professional learning content sometimes includes current research. ☐	Professional learning content may or may not include current research as this is not planned for in particular. ☐
	3.2. Professional learning content is specifically planned over time to address the professional and personal needs of the teacher, enabling growth, resilience and retention. ☐	Professional learning content sometimes addresses these aspects but it is not considered at the planning stages. ☐	Teacher professional and/or personal needs are not considered to be important when planning or delivering professional development activities. ☐
	3.3. The content of the strategically planned internal professional development program purposefully targets teachers at career continuum levels including early career, experienced, expert and leading teacher on a yearly basis. ☐	The content of the professional development provided on a yearly basis is not strategically planned to meet the learning needs of teachers at particular career stages, but is fairly successful in doing so anyway. ☐	There is no planning in relation to providing teachers with tailored professional development according to their career stage and the varying learning needs of teachers are not considered or met. ☐
	3.4. Professional development is predominately school-based and is both built in to the day to day work of teachers and also available after school and in non-term breaks. ☐	Professional development occurs predominately during PD days, staff and stage/faculty meetings and offsite at external providers/sessions. ☐	Professional development is mainly held off site at sessions that teachers request to attend. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Professional Development content (cont.)	3.5. Teachers are exposed to world's best practice in learning and teaching on their school site through access to national and/or internationally recognised educational speakers. Access may include professional development lectures, workshops, stage/faculty consultation, professional development for the leadership team on leadership practices, the mentoring of individual teachers and leaders across the career stages. They also have access to a selection of the latest educational publications and research on teaching and learning. ☐	The school does not usually arrange for staff to have access to national or international speakers at school. Access to the latest literature is not planned, but some may be informally shared between teachers. ☐	Teachers never have access to national or international educational speakers and educational literature is not available. ☐
	3.6. Teacher access to external professional development is regarded as a part of the internal professional development plan. It involves a collegial conversation between teacher and supervisor about their goals and reasons for attending. An application is completed on how the activity relates to whole-school strategic goals, stage /faculty goals and the teacher's personal professional learning goals. ☐	External professional development opportunities are not regarded as a part of the internal strategic professional development plan. Teachers apply to attend to ensure release time is allocated and staffing is covered, but discussion about how attendance may link to and enhance school, stage/faculty or personal professional development goals is adhoc and not expected. ☐	Application processes for teachers to access external professional development are not clear and/or there is no expectation or invitation to discuss their learning goals in relation to the school, stage/faculty or personal learning goals. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Professional Development content (cont.)	3.7. Teachers have access to a wide range of external professional development opportunities including national and international conferences, professional development providers and teacher associations. ☐	Teachers have some access to a more limited range of external professional development opportunities. ☐	Teachers have little or no access to external professional development opportunities. ☐
	3.8. Teachers have access to postgraduate study opportunities and are encouraged to engage in courses which are aligned with the strategic goals of the school. They are assisted to compare courses and to apply, are given funding and/or time release and/or assistance with the work. They are invited to discuss their learning with a school leader as they progress. They are encouraged to adopt a leader in learning approach and are assisted to provide professional development sessions for teachers based on their learning. Teachers have opportunities to apply their learning directly to improving the school, and are assisted to develop and implement school-based and contextualised research to improve student learning. ☐	Teachers are encouraged to engage in postgraduate study but there is limited assistance provided. They are not formally mentored throughout their engagement. They are not encouraged to share their learning formally, or across the school, but it is assumed that they may share their learning with colleagues as they go about their daily practice. ☐	Teachers are not encouraged and/or are discouraged from engaging in postgraduate study. They are not encouraged to share their learning from such courses. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4. Implementa-tion	4.1. The school has a professional learning policy which guides the implementation of the professional development ethos and program. ☐	Teacher professional learning and/or development is mentioned in some documents but there is no policy as such. ☐	There is no mention of teacher learning or development program in documents and no policy available. ☐
	4.2. There is a wide range of professional learning strategies utilised by the school to address individual, team and whole-school needs in accordance with the school strategic plan and desired outcomes. The school intentionally applies a rigorous approach to planning teacher learning and regularly experiments with a range of teacher learning methodologies. ☐	There is some variety in professional learning strategies. Not all are directly linked to the school plan. Teacher learning methodologies per se are not considered. ☐	There is a limited range of professional learning strategies used in the school to attempt to generate an internal professional development plan. ☐
	4.3. Mandated teacher professional development days are provided. The content is well-planned and strategic, based on community known school strategic goals and in response to staff professional development needs surveys. ☐	Mandated teacher professional development days are provided and well delivered but the content does not necessarily relate to school strategic goals or staff needs. ☐	Mandated teacher professional development days are either not provided at all, or if so, are not planned or delivered well. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Implementation (cont.)	4.4. There is a wide range of internal professional development opportunities provided in addition to mandated professional development days which are:- • Planned for in advance ☐ • Advertised to staff ☐ • Recorded on the teacher's PD record ☐ • Registered with the NSW Institute of Teachers ☐ • A variety of professional learning strategies and activities is used to address individual, team and whole-school needs in accordance with the school strategic plan and professional learning goals. ☐	There are some internal professional development opportunities provided in addition to mandated PD days which are:- • Planned for in advance ☐ • Advertised to staff • Recorded on the teacher's PD record ☐ • Registered with the NSW Institute of Teachers ☐ • Strategies and activities address individual, team and whole-school needs in accordance with the school strategic plan and professional learning goals. ☐	There are little or no professional development opportunities provided in addition to mandated PD days. There are little or no professional learning strategies used in the school to attempt to generate an internal professional development program. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
5. Learning across the career continuum	5.1. The school's professional learning plan makes reference to the career stages of teachers and recognises that teachers have different learning needs as they develop. An internal professional development program that explicitly targets each career stage and uses a variety of learning strategies and appropriate content to each level (early career, experienced, expert, leading teacher) is planned and delivered. ☐	The school's professional learning plan and program does not explicitly attempt to meet the needs of teachers at specific career stages, but it is usually effective in helping most, or all teachers learn. ☐	There is no recognition of teacher career stages and the varied learning needs of teachers are not met due to minimal professional development choices being provided at school level. ☐
6. Teacher accredita-tion	6.1. Teacher accreditation is part of the strategic professional learning plan. Accreditation processes are a feature of the yearly professional development program. The school regards teacher accreditation opportunities as a rich source of potential professional learning and has assigned a member of staff, with access to the executive, to distribute leadership and coordinate the learning of teachers across the career continuum as they engage in accreditation processes. ☐	Teacher accreditation is not necessarily regarded at a strategic level in relation to teacher learning. There is a program of sorts for some levels of teacher accreditation, but responsibility for delivery varies and accreditation is not considered as a potential source of ongoing learning for teachers. ☐	Teacher accreditation is not considered as being of benefit to teachers or the school. Teachers need to source their own information about accreditation. Mandatory requirements may not be met. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher accreditation (cont.)	6.2. The school has a well-developed teacher accreditation program which provides mentoring, teacher learning opportunities and assistance with accreditation requirements across the career continuum of teachers. This includes all accreditation levels available through the NSW Institute of Teachers and if applicable to the school, levels accessed through the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority. There is a teacher accreditation policy in the school. ☐	The school provides information and some assistance to teachers at some teacher accreditation levels, but a comprehensive program is not implemented. ☐	The school does not provide a program of assistance to teachers in relation to teacher accreditation and information is not readily available. ☐
	6.3. The school regularly plans for and provides high quality professional development sessions on site to teachers which can be used for maintaining accreditation with teacher registration government bodies. It also facilitates the use of the Professional Teaching Standards for learning and development at specific career stages. ☐	The school provides some quality professional development on site through endorsed providers in the yearly professional development program. ☐	The school does not provide teachers with professional development opportunities which are endorsed by the NSW Institute of Teachers on site. Teachers have access to endorsed sessions offsite. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher accreditation (cont.)	6.4. There is evidence that teachers use the Professional Teaching Standards, which are listed on a scaffold based on the career continuum of teachers, to assist them to further develop, reflect, evaluate and plan for improvement in their teaching. ☐	There is little or no evidence that teachers use the Professional Teaching Standards in this way. The school does not usually mention career-stage learning or provide time to use and reflect upon the Professional Learning Standards as a professional learning opportunity. . ☐	There is no evidence that the school considers career-stage learning or the Professional Teaching Standards as possible opportunities for teacher development. ☐
	6.5. The school surveys teachers from each career stage on what they perceive to be barriers to their learning and then uses this information to improve the professional development program. ☐	The school asks teachers from time to time about what may be having negative effects on their learning but does not ensure that teachers at each career stage are surveyed and does not seek to use this data to improve the professional development program. ☐	The school does not formally or informally survey staff on what they perceive to be barriers to their learning. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher accreditation (cont.)	6.6. The school uses a career continuum approach to develop and implement specific programs which provide professional learning opportunities for teachers at their particular career stage. Examples may include:- • Personalised professional learning plans tailored to the career stage of the teacher. ☐ • A school-wide teacher support scholarship program which provides opportunities at all levels of career stages of teachers. ☐ • Opportunities for teachers to speak at conferences, professional bodies, teaching associations etc. about their experiences at their career stage. ☐	The school does not use a career continuum approach to develop, design and coordinate professional learning opportunities in the areas of professional learning plans, internal scholarships or speaking opportunities, but does have some of these initiatives available to staff and/or other programs that may appeal to teachers at various stages of their career. ☐	The school does not usually develop internal professional learning opportunities and if so, does not consider the career continuum of teachers when organising these sessions. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
7. Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment	7.1. There is a strong sense of involvement by teachers at the school and they nominate the strategic and comprehensive professional learning plan and resulting professional development program as one of the benefits or highlights of working at the school. ☐	Teachers engage in professional development activities in the school, but it is not a high priority in their thinking. ☐	Most teachers are reluctant to engage in professional development when it is offered at the school. ☐
	7.2. Teachers recognise each other as significant providers of professional learning opportunities and are encouraged by the school to look to their colleagues across the career continuum for the different and unique professional learning that they can provide. ☐	Teachers are collegial and learn from each other along the way, but do not expect to learn from each other to any great extent. The school has not encouraged them to acknowledge the benefits of learning from those at different career stages. ☐	Teachers do not regularly share their expertise and the school does not provide professional learning opportunities or a school learning culture that encourages them to do so. ☐
	7.3. There is evidence that teachers apply and use their learning in their school context. This is then collegially evaluated on a regular basis during Stage/Faculty meetings or other times provided, and then used for further planning of student learning. ☐	Teachers seem to apply and use what they have learnt but there is little time provided for collegial discussion, evaluation or further planning. ☐	Teachers are not given time and/or encouragement to use or apply what they have learnt and do not usually engage in collaborative practices which enable development and improvement in pedagogical practices. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment	7.4. Teams of teachers are engaged in a variety of professional learning activities. Examples may include: problem solving activities, collaborative action research planning, developing materials, organising workshops, mentoring, coaching, supporting other staff in the classroom, using information and communication technologies for learning, supporting student learning, liaising with consultants and presenters, designing and adapting courses, prioritising needs and reporting back to staff. There are regular team meetings and extended times for planning and development as required. ☐	There are some collaborative activities but they involve a small number of teachers. There are no specific teams of teachers working on particular projects which regularly meet, evaluate, plan etc. ☐	There is no evidence of collaborative activities or teams of teachers being established to engage in stated projects. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
8. School leadership	8.1. The principal is regarded as the leader of learning within a learning community school culture. The principal strategically and effectively distributes leadership throughout the school in relation to the professional learning of teachers. ☐	The principal is regarded as the educational and administrative leader of the school, but not necessarily as the leader of learning. The principal attempts to distribute leadership in general, but not specifically in relation to the professional learning of teachers. ☐	The principal is regarded as the person in authority, but not as a leader of learning. The principal does not appear to plan or enable distributed leadership practices in the school. ☐
	8.2. As a result of a strong distributed leadership model which is purposefully implemented in relation to the professional learning of teachers, school executive, senior managers and teachers lead the annual and ongoing planning, delivery and evaluation of the strategic professional learning plan, and resulting professional development program. ☐	As a result of weaker distributed leadership practices in relation to the professional learning of teachers, senior managers are occasionally consulted and have limited input into some aspects of the professional learning plan and development program. Teachers are not regularly consulted at any stage and formal evaluation processes are not comprehensively implemented. ☐	Distributed leadership does not occur. Senior managers and teachers are not involved, or have little to do with the limited professional development program. ☐
	8.3. Teachers are encouraged to be leaders in learning and the professional development program contains elements to assist them in this role and reinforces this focus within the school's learning community culture. ☐	Teachers are encouraged to be learners, but not necessarily considered to be, or referred to, as leaders in learning. The professional development plan does not plan for, or contains little content which assists teachers to develop as leaders in learning. ☐	The notion of teachers as leaders in learning is not articulated formally or informally in the school community and is not a part of the school culture. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
School leadership (cont.)	8.4. School leadership is involved in the individual mentoring of teachers to assist them to develop personalised professional learning plans. ☐	There is some mentoring and discussion about professional learning goals but this only occurs if a teacher requests it. ☐	The concept of personalised professional learning plans is not discussed within the school. ☐
	8.5. A strategic and comprehensive professional development program for leaders in the school is planned and delivered. This includes access to internal and external providers, attendance at conferences, networking opportunities, postgraduate study etc. It is recognised that international literature indicates that effective leadership impacts teacher learning and practice and hence, the learning outcomes of students. ☐	Leaders are valued and encouraged within the school and have some access to professional development activities through targeting this career stage through external providers. However their learning is not regarded as strategically important to student learning. ☐	The benefits of providing learning opportunities for leaders are not acknowledged and there are little or no opportunities for them to access professional development appropriate to their needs on or off the school site. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
9. School culture	9.1. Teachers readily identify the school as a supportive learning community where they and their professional learning are valued and encouraged. The school values and develops staff capability and nurtures their skills, resourcefulness and creativity to improve the school and student learning. ☐	Teachers have some awareness of the importance of participating in professional development opportunities and sharing innovative practices. The school provides some encouragement to attend and occasionally articulates the benefits. ☐	Most teachers do not consider participation in professional development as an important opportunity to develop expertise and the school does not articulate the benefits. The school does not encourage teachers to share innovative practices. ☐
	9.2. The school overtly and strategically aims to engender a spirit of research and enquiry amongst teachers through the professional development program to develop staff capability to lead, innovate and improve the school. ☐	The school provides occasional professional development opportunities that may assist teachers to be innovative but does not strategically plan opportunities to develop their academic rigour, creativity, innovation or leadership capacities. ☐	The school does not plan to develop professional development activities which appeal to the academic or creative nature of teachers or to equip them to lead, innovate or improve the school. ☐
	9.3. The school recognises that improvements can always be made to enhance student learning. It considers that comprehensive strategic planning of teacher professional learning through both day by day occurrences and in planned activities, will build staff capacity to meet the learning needs of students. ☐	The school realises that there is a need for improvement in student learning and there is some planning to use professional development opportunities to improve this in the school. ☐	The school does not regularly state that improvement in student learning is needed and the professional learning of teachers is not regarded as important to achieve any improvements. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
10. Evaluation procedures	10.1. Evaluation of professional learning is strategically planned and regularly implemented through a distributed leadership approach. All stakeholders are included in the process including teachers, parents and students. ☐	Evaluation usually occurs but may not be strategic and not all stakeholders are included. ☐	Evaluation either does not occur, or is very limited in nature.
	10.2. Evaluation is based on multiple sources of information including teacher learning portfolios, accreditation materials, professional learning journals, observations of teachers, peer evaluations, student surveys, student learning journals and external examination and test results. Data is collected through a variety of sources including surveys, collegial dialogue, stage/faculty discussion and feedback, executive planning days and student and parent forums. ☐	A variety of methods of evaluation and data collection may be used, but this is adhoc rather than comprehensive in nature. ☐	
	10.3. Comprehensive results are reported which are used for further development of the professional learning plan and from this, the professional development program. ☐	The results are not comprehensive enough to reliably steer future planning. ☐	☐

Teacher comment

Please write any comments that come to mind about any of the ten aspects in this survey, and/or about the professional development provided at the school. You may include what you perceive to be done well and/or what you consider needs improvement at your school.

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APPENDIX 4.10

School Benchmarking Framework (SBF): Executive Version

Please Note:

This Appendix item appears in the thesis in portrait layout for your convenience. However, the original document was produced in landscape layout, to make it easier for study participants to complete.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

Research question: How do teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?

School Benchmarking Framework (SBF)

Date -

Principal and Deputy Principal Survey

This survey is completed by the school Principal and Deputy Principal/s as a part of the preliminary report phase. The survey includes ten aspects of school community culture that relate to the planning, programming and implementation of school based professional learning which are:-

1. Strategic alignment
2. Resource allocation
3. Professional Development content
4. Implementation
5. Learning across the teacher career continuum
6. Teacher accreditation
7. Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment
8. School leadership
9. School culture
10. Evaluation procedures

Instructions

For each aspect there are a number of components listed, with three descriptors provided against each component.

- Please tick the box for each component that you regard best describes the approaches or practices in your school.
- If you are unable to tick an option, please write "Not sure" on the component. This is a valid response.
- Please write any comments about any of the ten aspects in this survey, and/or about the professional development provided at the school on the final page of this document.

Note

When using the terms "professional development" and "professional learning" in this document, the following definitions apply*:-

Professional development is an activity, experience or process that provides an opportunity for professional learning.

Professional learning is the growth of expertise as a teacher and is demonstrated through professional practice.

* NSW Institute of Teachers *Maintaining of Accreditation at Professional Competence: Information for Teachers.* (2009). Retrieved from www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/accreditation

School Levels

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1. Strategic alignment	1.1. The school has a documented and timetabled strategic plan for future development and improvement which is comprehensive, including major priorities and target outcomes. ☐	The school has some documented material about goals and development over a set timeframe. ☐	The school has no documented strategic plan, or a variety of disparate documents without targets or timeframes. ☐
	1.2. Within this plan, the professional learning of teachers is included as a strategic goal and includes outcomes to be evaluated. ☐	Within this plan, the professional learning of teachers is mentioned. ☐	There is no reference to the professional learning of teachers in school goals or planning documents. ☐
	1.3. The school has a list of professional learning goals, targets or outcomes for its teachers which is widely discussed and referred to regularly ☐	The school mentions professional learning goals at times, for example at staff meetings or school PD days. ☐	The school may mention professional learning on PD days but does not articulate any goals for teachers in this area. ☐
	1.4. Professional learning strategies are detailed. ☐	There is some planning of strategies to use in relation to the delivery of professional development, but not in relation to specific strategies to bring about effective professional learning. ☐	There are no stated or implemented strategies to facilitate teacher professional learning. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Strategic alignment (cont.)	1.5. School goals and expectations in relation to their professional learning is a core feature of the induction of new teachers. Induction includes how professional learning is embedded in the strategic development of the school, staff goals in this area, information about the internal professional development program, teacher accreditation and school initiatives developed to highlight and facilitate the learning of teachers. ☐	Teacher induction processes exist and there is some mention of a teacher professional development program in the school, but no or little mention of the school's strategic intent in relation to teacher professional learning. ☐	There is either no teacher induction process or if so, no mention of teacher professional learning or a teacher professional development program in the school. ☐
	1.6. Human resources in relation to the professional learning of teachers has been strategically planned e.g. A member/s of the school executive, who has direct input into the decisions made in relation to the strategic direction of the school, is accountable for and has responsibility to strategically plan, deliver, evaluate and sustain teacher professional learning across the school, aligned with the school priorities, goals and outcomes. They distribute this leadership through the school and seek teacher ownership and evaluation of the program. ☐	Coordination or planning of the professional development of teachers across the school is assigned to a teacher/s in the school leadership team and a time allocation is provided. They may or may not have access to the decision makers in the school – e.g. principal and executive staff. ☐	There is no-one delegated with responsibility to plan or deliver professional development activities across the school and/or a teacher with no leadership role is delegated the responsibility, but with no time allowance and no regular access to leadership staff. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
2. Resource allocation	2.1. Resources for professional learning are strategically budgeted and allocated according to school goals or development areas. ☐	Resources for professional learning are budgeted/provided but not strategically linked to school goals or outcomes. ☐	Resources for professional learning are the "left overs" after other needs are met. ☐
	2.2. A considerable portion of school funds is allocated for a variety of teacher professional learning initiatives. Allocation of funds is through collaborative decision-making and directly linked to school goals. ☐	Allocation of funds is to professional development activities, not to a variety of professional learning strategies. The use of funds is adhoc and dictated more by individual teacher requests, rather than whole-school needs. ☐	Allocation of funds is confused and/or dysfunctional and set guidelines are lacking. This results in teachers only making requests seldomly to attend professional development activities. ☐
	2.3. Adequate human resources are allocated to plan, develop, implement and assess professional learning opportunities provided for staff. ☐	Some staffing is allocated but not enough to optimise the effectiveness of planning and implementation. ☐	Little or no staffing is provided to plan or implement teacher professional learning plans or professional development activities. ☐
	2.4. There are room/s, office/s dedicated to teacher professional learning. ☐	Some space is available, but it is also used for other reasons/needs. ☐	No space is available or identified as having teacher professional learning as a use or priority. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
3. Professional Development content	3.1. Professional learning content is planned to include effective teaching strategies based on current research. ☐	Professional learning content sometimes includes current research. ☐	Professional learning content may or may not include current research as this is not planned for in particular. ☐
	3.2. Professional learning content is specifically planned over time to address the professional and personal needs of the teacher, enabling growth, resilience and retention. ☐	Professional learning content sometimes addresses these aspects but it is not considered at the planning stages. ☐	Teacher professional and/or personal needs are not considered to be important when planning or delivering professional development activities. ☐
	3.3. The content of the strategically planned internal professional development program purposefully targets teachers at career continuum levels including early career, experienced, expert and leading teacher on a yearly basis. ☐	The content of the professional development provided on a yearly basis is not strategically planned to meet the learning needs of teachers at particular career stages, but is fairly successful in doing so anyway. ☐	There is no planning in relation to providing teachers with tailored professional development according to their career stage and the varying learning needs of teachers are not considered or met. ☐
	3.4. Professional development is predominately school-based and is both built in to the day to day work of teachers and also available after school and in non-term breaks. ☐	Professional development occurs predominately during PD days, staff and stage/faculty meetings and offsite at external providers/sessions. ☐	Professional development is mainly held off site at sessions that teachers request to attend. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Professional Development content (cont.)	3.5. Teachers are exposed to world's best practice in learning and teaching on their school site through access to national and/or internationally recognised educational speakers. Access may include professional development lectures, workshops, stage/faculty consultation, professional development for the leadership team on leadership practices, the mentoring of individual teachers and leaders across the career stages. They also have access to a selection of the latest educational publications and research on teaching and learning. ☐	The school does not usually arrange for staff to have access to national or international speakers at school. Access to the latest literature is not planned, but some may be informally shared between teachers. ☐	Teachers never have access to national or international educational speakers and educational literature is not available. ☐
	3.6. Teacher access to external professional development is regarded as a part of the internal professional development plan. It involves a collegial conversation between teacher and supervisor about their goals and reasons for attending. An application is completed on how the activity relates to whole-school strategic goals, stage /faculty goals and the teacher's personal professional learning goals. ☐	External professional development opportunities are not regarded as a part of the internal strategic professional development plan. Teachers apply to attend to ensure release time is allocated and staffing is covered, but discussion about how attendance may link to and enhance school, stage/faculty or personal professional development goals is adhoc and not expected. ☐	Application processes for teachers to access external professional development are not clear and/or there is no expectation or invitation to discuss their learning goals in relation to the school, stage/faculty or personal learning goals. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Professional Development content (cont.)	3.7. Teachers have access to a wide range of external professional development opportunities including national and international conferences, professional development providers and teacher associations ☐	Teachers have some access to a more limited range of external professional development opportunities. ☐	Teachers have little or no access to external professional development opportunities. ☐
	3.8. Teachers have access to postgraduate study opportunities and are encouraged to engage in courses which are aligned with the strategic goals of the school. They are assisted to compare courses and to apply, are given funding and/or time release and/or assistance with the work. They are invited to discuss their learning with a school leader as they progress. They are encouraged to adopt a leader in learning approach and are assisted to provide professional development sessions for teachers based on their learning. Teachers have opportunities to apply their learning directly to improving the school, and are assisted to develop and implement school-based and contextualised research to improve student learning. ☐	Teachers are encouraged to engage in postgraduate study but there is limited assistance provided. They are not formally mentored throughout their engagement. They are not encouraged to share their learning formally, or across the school, but it is assumed that they may share their learning with colleagues as they go about their daily practice. ☐	Teachers are not encouraged and/or are discouraged from engaging in postgraduate study. They are not encouraged to share their learning from such courses. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
4. Implement ation	4.1. The school has a professional learning policy which guides the implementation of the professional development ethos and program. ☐	Teacher professional learning and/or development is mentioned in some documents but there is no policy as such. ☐	There is no mention of teacher learning or development program in documents and no policy available. ☐
	4.2. There is a wide range of professional learning strategies utilised by the school to address individual, team and whole-school needs in accordance with the school strategic plan and desired outcomes. The school intentionally applies a rigorous approach to planning teacher learning and regularly experiments with a range of teacher learning methodologies. ☐	There is some variety in professional learning strategies. Not all are directly linked to the school plan. Teacher learning methodologies per se are not considered. ☐	There is a limited range of professional learning strategies used in the school to attempt to generate an internal professional development plan. ☐
	4.3. Mandated teacher professional development days are provided. The content is well-planned and strategic, based on community known school strategic goals and in response to staff professional development needs surveys. ☐	Mandated teacher professional development days are provided and well delivered but the content does not necessarily relate to school strategic goals or staff needs. ☐	Mandated teacher professional development days are either not provided at all, or if so, are not planned or delivered well. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Implementation (cont.)	4.4. There is a wide range of internal professional development opportunities provided in addition to mandated professional development days which are:- • Planned for in advance ☐ • Advertised to staff ☐ • Recorded on the teacher's PD record ☐ • Registered with the NSW Institute of Teachers ☐ • A variety of professional learning strategies and activities is used to address individual, team and whole-school needs in accordance with the school strategic plan and professional learning goals. ☐	There are some internal professional development opportunities provided in addition to mandated PD days which are:- • Planned for in advance ☐ • Advertised to staff • Recorded on the teacher's PD record ☐ • Registered with the NSW Institute of Teachers ☐ • Strategies and activities address individual, team and whole-school needs in accordance with the school strategic plan and professional learning goals. ☐	There are little or no professional development opportunities provided in addition to mandated PD days. There are little or no professional learning strategies used in the school to attempt to generate an internal professional development program. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
5. Learning across the career continuum	5.1. The school's professional learning plan makes reference to the career stages of teachers and recognises that teachers have different learning needs as they develop. An internal professional development program that explicitly targets each career stage and uses a variety of learning strategies and appropriate content to each level (early career, experienced, expert, leading teacher) is planned and delivered. ☐	The school's professional learning plan and program does not explicitly attempt to meet the needs of teachers at specific career stages, but it is usually effective in helping most, or all teachers learn. ☐	There is no recognition of teacher career stages and the varied learning needs of teachers are not met due to minimal professional development choices being provided at school level. ☐
6. Teacher accredita-tion	6.1. Teacher accreditation is part of the strategic professional learning plan. Accreditation processes are a feature of the yearly professional development program. The school regards teacher accreditation opportunities as a rich source of potential professional learning and has assigned a member of staff, with access to the executive, to distribute leadership and coordinate the learning of teachers across the career continuum as they engage in accreditation processes. ☐	Teacher accreditation is not necessarily regarded at a strategic level in relation to teacher learning. There is a program of sorts for some levels of teacher accreditation, but responsibility for delivery varies and accreditation is not considered as a potential source of ongoing learning for teachers. ☐	Teacher accreditation is not considered as being of benefit to teachers or the school. Teachers need to source their own information about accreditation. Mandatory requirements may not be met. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher accreditation (cont.)	6.2. The school has a well-developed teacher accreditation program which provides mentoring, teacher learning opportunities and assistance with accreditation requirements across the career continuum of teachers. This includes all accreditation levels available through the NSW Institute of Teachers and if applicable to the school, levels accessed through the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority. There is a teacher accreditation policy in the school. ☐	The school provides information and some assistance to teachers at some teacher accreditation levels, but a comprehensive program is not implemented. ☐	The school does not provide a program of assistance to teachers in relation to teacher accreditation and information is not readily available. ☐
	6.3. The school regularly plans for and provides high quality professional development sessions on site to teachers which can be used for maintaining accreditation with teacher registration government bodies. It also facilitates the use of the Professional Teaching Standards for learning and development at specific career stages ☐	The school provides some quality professional development on site through endorsed providers in the yearly professional development program. ☐	The school does not provide teachers with professional development opportunities which are endorsed by the NSW Institute of Teachers on site. Teachers have access to endorsed sessions offsite. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher accreditation (cont.)	6.4. There is evidence that teachers use the Professional Teaching Standards, which are listed on a scaffold based on the career continuum of teachers, to assist them to further develop, reflect, evaluate and plan for improvement in their teaching. ☐	There is little or no evidence that teachers use the Professional Teaching Standards in this way. The school does not usually mention career-stage learning or provide time to use and reflect upon the Professional Learning Standards as a professional learning opportunity. . ☐	There is no evidence that the school considers career-stage learning or the Professional Teaching Standards as possible opportunities for teacher development. ☐
	6.5. The school surveys teachers from each career stage on what they perceive to be barriers to their learning and then uses this information to improve the professional development program. ☐	The school asks teachers from time to time about what may be having negative effects on their learning but does not ensure that teachers at each career stage are surveyed and does not seek to use this data to improve the professional development program. ☐	The school does not formally or informally survey staff on what they perceive to be barriers to their learning. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher accreditation (cont.)	6.6. The school uses a career continuum approach to develop and implement specific programs which provide professional learning opportunities for teachers at their particular career stage. Examples may include:- • Personalised professional learning plans tailored to the career stage of the teacher. ☐ • A school-wide teacher support scholarship program which provides opportunities at all levels of career stages of teachers. ☐ • Opportunities for teachers to speak at conferences, professional bodies, teaching associations etc. about their experiences at their career stage. ☐	The school does not use a career continuum approach to develop, design and coordinate professional learning opportunities in the areas of professional learning plans, internal scholarships or speaking opportunities, but does have some of these initiatives available to staff and/or other programs that may appeal to teachers at various stages of their career. ☐	The school does not usually develop internal professional learning opportunities and if so, does not consider the career continuum of teachers when organising these sessions. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
7. Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment	7.1. There is a strong sense of involvement by teachers at the school and they nominate the strategic and comprehensive professional learning plan and resulting professional development program as one of the benefits or highlights of working at the school. ☐	Teachers engage in professional development activities in the school, but it is not a high priority in their thinking. ☐	Most teachers are reluctant to engage in professional development when it is offered at the school. ☐
	7.2. Teachers recognise each other as significant providers of professional learning opportunities and are encouraged by the school to look to their colleagues across the career continuum for the different and unique professional learning that they can provide. ☐	Teachers are collegial and learn from each other along the way, but do not expect to learn from each other to any great extent. The school has not encouraged them to acknowledge the benefits of learning from those at different career stages. ☐	Teachers do not regularly share their expertise and the school does not provide professional learning opportunities or a school learning culture that encourages them to do so. ☐
	7.3. There is evidence that teachers apply and use their learning in their school context. This is then collegially evaluated on a regular basis during Stage/Faculty meetings or other times provided, and then used for further planning of student learning. ☐	Teachers seem to apply and use what they have learnt but there is little time provided for collegial discussion, evaluation or further planning. ☐	Teachers are not given time and/or encouragement to use or apply what they have learnt and do not usually engage in collaborative practices which enable development and improvement in pedagogical practices. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment	7.4. Teams of teachers are engaged in a variety of professional learning activities. Examples may include: problem solving activities, collaborative action research planning, developing materials, organising workshops, mentoring, coaching, supporting other staff in the classroom, using information and communication technologies for learning, supporting student learning, liaising with consultants and presenters, designing and adapting courses, prioritising needs and reporting back to staff. There are regular team meetings and extended times for planning and development as required. ☐	There are some collaborative activities but they involve a small number of teachers. There are no specific teams of teachers working on particular projects which regularly meet, evaluate, plan etc. ☐	There is no evidence of collaborative activities or teams of teachers being established to engage in stated projects. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
8. School leadership	8.1. The principal is regarded as the leader of learning within a learning community school culture. The principal strategically and effectively distributes leadership throughout the school in relation to the professional learning of teachers. ☐	The principal is regarded as the educational and administrative leader of the school, but not necessarily as the leader of learning. The principal attempts to distribute leadership in general, but not specifically in relation to the professional learning of teachers. ☐	The principal is regarded as the person in authority, but not as a leader of learning. The principal does not appear to plan or enable distributed leadership practices in the school. ☐
	8.2. As a result of a strong distributed leadership model which is purposefully implemented in relation to the professional learning of teachers, school executive, senior managers and teachers lead the annual and ongoing planning, delivery and evaluation of the strategic professional learning plan, and resulting professional development program. ☐	As a result of weaker distributed leadership practices in relation to the professional learning of teachers, senior managers are occasionally consulted and have limited input into some aspects of the professional learning plan and development program. Teachers are not regularly consulted at any stage and formal evaluation processes are not comprehensively implemented. ☐	Distributed leadership does not occur. Senior managers and teachers are not involved, or have little to do with the limited professional development program. ☐
	8.3. Teachers are encouraged to be leaders in learning and the professional development program contains elements to assist them in this role and reinforces this focus within the school's learning community culture. ☐	Teachers are encouraged to be learners, but not necessarily considered to be, or referred to, as leaders in learning. The professional development plan does not plan for, or contains little content which assists teachers to develop as leaders in learning. ☐	The notion of teachers as leaders in learning is not articulated formally or informally in the school community and is not a part of the school culture. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
School leadership (cont.)	8.4. School leadership is involved in the individual mentoring of teachers to assist them to develop personalised professional learning plans. ☐	There is some mentoring and discussion about professional learning goals but this only occurs if a teacher requests it. ☐	The concept of personalised professional learning plans is not discussed within the school. ☐
	8.5. A strategic and comprehensive professional development program for leaders in the school is planned and delivered. This includes access to internal and external providers, attendance at conferences, networking opportunities, postgraduate study etc. It is recognised that international literature indicates that effective leadership impacts teacher learning and practice and hence, the learning outcomes of students. ☐	Leaders are valued and encouraged within the school and have some access to professional development activities through targeting this career stage through external providers. However their learning is not regarded as strategically important to student learning. ☐	The benefits of providing learning opportunities for leaders are not acknowledged and there are little or no opportunities for them to access professional development appropriate to their needs on or off the school site. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
9. School culture	9.1. Teachers readily identify the school as a supportive learning community where they and their professional learning are valued and encouraged. The school values and develops staff capability and nurtures their skills, resourcefulness and creativity to improve the school and student learning. ☐	Teachers have some awareness of the importance of participating in professional development opportunities and sharing innovative practices. The school provides some encouragement to attend and occasionally articulates the benefits. ☐	Most teachers do not consider participation in professional development as an important opportunity to develop expertise and the school does not articulate the benefits. The school does not encourage teachers to share innovative practices. ☐
	9.2. The school overtly and strategically aims to engender a spirit of research and enquiry amongst teachers through the professional development program to develop staff capability to lead, innovate and improve the school. ☐	The school provides occasional professional development opportunities that may assist teachers to be innovative but does not strategically plan opportunities to develop their academic rigour, creativity, innovation or leadership capacities. ☐	The school does not plan to develop professional development activities which appeal to the academic or creative nature of teachers or to equip them to lead, innovate or improve the school. ☐
	9.3. The school recognises that improvements can always be made to enhance student learning. It considers that comprehensive strategic planning of teacher professional learning through both day by day occurrences and in planned activities, will build staff capacity to meet the learning needs of students. ☐	The school realises that there is a need for improvement in student learning and there is some planning to use professional development opportunities to improve this in the school. ☐	The school does not regularly state that improvement in student learning is needed and the professional learning of teachers is not regarded as important to achieve any improvements. ☐

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
10. Evaluation procedures	10.1. Evaluation of professional learning is strategically planned and regularly implemented through a distributed leadership approach. All stakeholders are included in the process including teachers, parents and students. ☐	Evaluation usually occurs but may not be strategic and not all stakeholders are included. ☐	Evaluation either does not occur, or is very limited in nature.
	10.2. Evaluation is based on multiple sources of information including teacher learning portfolios, accreditation materials, professional learning journals, observations of teachers, peer evaluations, student surveys, student learning journals and external examination and test results. Data is collected through a variety of sources including surveys, collegial dialogue, stage/faculty discussion and feedback, executive planning days and student and parent forums. ☐	A variety of methods of evaluation and data collection may be used, but this is adhoc rather than comprehensive in nature. ☐	
	10.3. Comprehensive results are reported which are used for further development of the professional learning plan and from this, the professional development program. ☐	The results are not comprehensive enough to reliably steer future planning. ☐	☐

Principal/Deputy Principal comments

Please write any comments that come to mind about any of the ten aspects in this survey, and/or about the professional development provided at the school. You may include:-

- what you perceive to be done well and/or what you consider needs improvement at the school, and/or
- difficulties the school may experience in relation to any of the aspects, and/or
- aspects that you consider do not apply to your school, and /or
- aspects in approach and practice of teacher professional development and/or learning that you think are important at the school, but were not listed on the survey

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APPENDIX 4.11

Information on the Planning Phase of the Action Research Cycle at Brooklee College

INFORMATION ON THE PLANNING PHASE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE AT BROOKLEE COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

This appendix includes information about the planning phase of the next action research cycle at Brooklee College, the implementation of which is outside the scope of the study. A summary of the recommendations and actions taken by the school which occurred after the action, reflection and learning stages of the action research cycle is as follows.

Recommendation 1

That the school engage in a reflection exercise to assess their performance in the planning, coordination and evaluation of professional development programs and teacher learning across the career continuum at the school, using the data collected from the teacher and executive School Benchmarking Framework (SBF).

Action

Reflection, learning and planning of professional development was placed as an ongoing standing agenda item for executive meetings. The data from the School Benchmarking Framework (SBF) was gradually evaluated over two years, informing the strategic planning of teacher professional development in the school.

Recommendation 2

That the school move towards increasing their knowledge base and appreciation of career-stage learning, to better refine the professional development program in this area and work towards meeting the learning needs and preferences of teachers at each career stage.

Action

The researcher was requested to present more specific information on career-stage learning to teachers at a whole staff meeting. This included facilitation of a discussion forum on what the research on how teachers learn across the career continuum may mean to the learning of teachers, the learning of students, and the building of a learning community and the professional development program of the school. The principal then proposed that the staff development committee, convened by the researcher, continue to explore this issue. Improvements arising from this action included:

- That the annual professional development program brochure refer more explicitly to the career-stage learning of teachers and that the program be developed more closely to this learning paradigm over the next three years. In the next year the front of the annual internal professional development program brochure clearly displayed this concept.

- That the process for staff applications for external professional development sessions and the whole staff evaluation of school-based professional development programs include reference to teacher career-stage learning as appropriate, to begin highlighting this feature of teacher learning in the thinking of teachers at the school. Over a year the application for attendance at external teacher professional development was adjusted to include an accreditation section for teachers which referred to career stages and the professional teaching standards.
- All courses advertised to staff were adjusted to include an indication of the career stage focus and accreditation details against the appropriate professional teaching standards.
- The professional development evaluation surveys regularly used in the school were improved by providing a section where teachers could evaluate, provide feedback and make requests according to their career stage and learning needs.
- It was agreed that the director of staff development (researcher) should move the school along in relation to developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of teacher career-stage learning and needs amongst the school leadership and teaching staff.
- The director of staff development introduced teacher learning methodology courses to the school-based professional development program to highlight the topic of teacher learning. This included explicit sessions on exploring the concept of career-stage learning and how this may be harnessed to build collegiality, the use of personalised professional learning plans and teacher learning methodologies including action learning (Aubusson et al., 2009), collegial visitations and learning walks (Doig, 2006) and dimensions of teacher learning (Timperley, 2010).

Recommendation 3

That new programs be developed that use the knowledge of how teachers learn across career stages at Brooklee College as a component of the planning and delivery of the program.

Action

The principal nominated a new professional development program to be developed that included a teacher career continuum approach in the form of a staff scholarship program. Strategic goal setting in relation to this program was developed and a draft framework provided for discussion presented at executive level. Career-stage learning concepts which emerged in the study were built into the program, including opportunities for:

- directed reading, high level research and leading projects across the school, thereby tapping into the learning preferences stated by expert and leading teachers

- teachers without formal leadership positions in the school to initiate and run projects across stages or faculties, junior, senior or whole-school, tapping into the desire for experienced and expert teachers to innovate and create
- teachers at each level on the career continuum to engage in postgraduate study, and
- teachers to be able to engage in a mentoring program which included ongoing discussions about career continuum learning needs, teaching and learning pedagogies and teacher accreditation levels. This tapped into the comments made during executive leadership interviews that teachers were requesting more formal mentoring from middle managers and executive staff.

Recommendation 4

The need to respond to teachers' articulated requests for more personalised professional learning opportunities, and assistance to set learning goals.

Action

The principal requested that the director of staff development formulate a proposal for the executive to consider equipping senior managers and executive staff with coaching and higher level mentoring skills to use with teachers when discussing their learning. A consultation process followed which included teachers in all stages and faculties across the school and was completed over a semester. The researcher, in their capacity of director of staff development, lead discussions which enabled teachers to collaboratively design a school contextualised professional learning plan process and template that could be used by all staff when discussing and setting professional learning goals.

APPENDIX 7.1

Jackston Grammar Teacher Questionnaire Data Results

JACKSTON GRAMMAR TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE DATA RESULTS

Collaborative learning

Q1: I planned my professional learning with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +					2								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	1		2				1			1			
4-7											1		
8-20				1						1			**A/SA =9**
21 +				2			1						**D/SD = 3**

Q2: When suitable, I engaged in the learning with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +					2								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		1	1	1				1		1			
4-7									1				
8-20				1						1			**A/SA=9**
21 +				2				1					**D/SD=3**

Q3: I was given the opportunity to teach or mentor other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20		1											
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	2		1				1			1			
4-7							1						
8-20			1					1					**A/SA=5**
21 +			1	1	1					1			**D/SD=6**

Q4: I was given the opportunity to talk about and support the professional growth of other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20		1											
21 +					1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	2	1					1						
4-7								1					
8-20		1								1			**A/SA=4**
21 +			1	1						1			**D/SD=7**

Learning through reflection

Q5: I privately reflect on my learning													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20					1								
21 +				2									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1	2					2			
4-7										1			
8-20				1							1		**A/SA=14**
21 +				2						1			**D/SD=0**

Q6: I reflect on my learning experiences collaboratively with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				1	1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				2	1			1		1			
4-7								1					
8-20		1								1			**A/SA=9**
21 +			1	1						1			**D/SD=3**

Q7: I was given time by the school to specifically reflect on my learning													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20		1											
21 +				1									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	2				1		1		1				
4-7								1					
8-20		1						1					**A/SA=4**
21 +			1	1							1		**D/SD=7**

Hands-on and creative learning

Q8: I was encouraged to be creative													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				2									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	1	2							1	1			
4-7									1				
8-20			1						1				**A/SA=5**
21 +		1		1						1			**D/SD=4**

Q9: I used an enquiry approach, (where I worked with other teachers to understand how students learn)													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				1	1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		2			1		1		1				
4-7							1						
8-20										1			**A/SA=6**
21 +	1			1						1			**D/SD=4**

Q10: I engaged in action learning, (where I observed, acted, reflected, modified, implemented)													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +					2								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		1	1	1			1				1		
4-7									1				
8-20				1						1			**A/SA=10**
21 +				2						1			**D/SD=2**

Learning through feedback from students and colleagues

Q11: Other teachers / colleagues													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +					2								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1	1	1					2			
4-7										1			
8-20			1								1		**A/SA=12**
21 +				1	1						1		**D/SD=0**

Q12: Supervisors or other leaders in the School community													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +				2									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			2		1			1		1			
4-7										1			
8-20											1		**A/SA=10**
21 +				1	1						1		**D/SD =1**

Q13: From my students													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +			1		1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1	2						2			
4-7								1					**A/SA =9**
8-20			1							1			
21 +		1		1						1			**D/SD =2**

Learning through collegial conversation

Q14: Collegial conversations which were planned eg: Stage/Faculty meetings													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +					2								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	1		2					1		1			
4-7								1					
8-20				1						1			**A/SA=9**
21 +				2							1		**D/SD=3**

Q15: Collegial conversations which were unplanned – often happening in small bites of time, randomly throughout the day/week													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +				1	1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3					3				1	1			
4-7										1			
8-20				1							1		**A/SA=13**
21 +				2						1			**D/SD =0**

Q16: Collegial conversations which occurred as a result of viewing lessons and debriefing, comparing strategies and/or teaching styles													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20		1											
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	1				2		1		1				
4-7											1		**A/SA=7**
8-20		1									1		
21 +	1			1						1			**D/SD=5**

Learning from within the context of my school

Q17: I worked within the context of my Stage/Faculty													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +				1	1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		1	1		1				1	1			
4-7										1			
8-20				1							1		**A/SA=11**
21 +				2						1			**D/SD=1**

Q18: I worked with other teachers in my school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +				1	1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1		2					2			
4-7									1				
8-20				1						1			**A/SA=11**
21 +	1			1						1			**D/SD=1**

Q19: I worked within my classroom													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +			1	1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1	2					2			
4-7										1			
8-20			1						1				**A/SA=10**
21 +				2					1				**D/SD=0**

Q20: I undertook professional development activities based on needs identified by the school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +		1	1										
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			2		1			1		1			
4-7									1				
8-20					1			1					**A/SA=4**
21 +			1	1					1				**D/SD =3**

Q21: I undertook professional development activities based on school vision, goals and strategy													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +		1		1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		1			2		1		1				
4-7									1				
8-20			1								1		**A/SA =8**
21 +				2						1			**D/SD =3**

Q22: When I had input into the planning and development of my professional development at the school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		1	2				1			1			
4-7											1		
8-20									1				**A/SA=4**
21 +			2							1			**D/SD =2**

Q23: When I attended in-service courses outside the school setting													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20				1									
21 +				2									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1		2					1	1		
4-7										1			
8-20				1						1			**A/SA=13**
21 +				1	1					1			**D/SD =0**

Creating time for learning

Q24: I was given time to spend in the learning experience, including time to think, discuss, reflect, plan and implement													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20					1								
21 +				2									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	3						1				1		
4-7										1			
8-20											1		**A/SA=8**
21 +		1			1						1		**D/SD =2**

Q25: I was given time to observe the lessons of other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				1	1								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	2				1			1					
4-7											1		
8-20											1		**A/SA =7**
21 +	1			1						1			**D/SD =4**

Q26: I was given time to team teach with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +			1	1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	1		1	1				1					
4-7								1					
8-20		1								1			**A/SA=5**
21 +	1			1						1			**D/SD =5**

Learning by directed study, reading & writing

Q27: I was able to privately read relevant books, resources or research													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20					1								
21 +			1	1									
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1	2					1			
4-7									1				**A/SA =8**
8-20				1							1		
21 +	1	1						1					**D/SD =3**

Q28: I was able to read and then discuss relevant books, resources or research with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +					2								
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3	1	1	1					1					
4-7									1				
8-20				1							1		**A/SA =4**
21 +	1	1							1				**D/SD = 5**

Q29: I wrote material myself – teaching resources and/or articles and/or research													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20					1								
21 +			1		1								
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3			1		2						1		
4-7											1		
8-20				1						1			**A/SA =9**
21 +	1		1							1			**D/SD =1**

Learning through observation and being taught by others

Q30: I was taught by specialists in an educational area coming into the school													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				2									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3		1	1	1			1			1			
4-7										1			
8-20			1							1			**A/SA =9**
21 +				1	1					1			**D/SD =2**

Q31: I was taught by teachers from my own school													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				2									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1	2			1		1			
4-7									1				
8-20			1								1		**A/SA =10**
21 +				2						1			**D/SD =1**

Q32: I was taught by teachers outside my own school													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7													
8-20			1										
21 +				1									
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3				1	2			1					
4-7									1				
8-20			1								1		**A/SA=8**
21 +				2						1			**D/SD=1**

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APPENDIX 7.2

Jackston Grammar Website and Documentation Review

JACKSTON GRAMMAR WEBSITE AND DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

The Principal's address on the school's website referred to teachers in relation to their spiritual beliefs and robust capacity to:

> *Live and teach a gospel inspired way of life on a daily basis*

Teacher learning mentioned on the website related to this school's priority of equipping teachers to use the Bible in the classroom and to educate the whole child, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically. In the staff section of the website, the staff induction program was highlighted as:

> *Ensuring that the school's Christian distinctives are understood and incorporated into teaching*

The following was listed in relation to staff, who:

> *Are involved in a two year induction program so the school's Christian distinctives are understood and incorporated into teaching*
> *Are committed to teaching from a Biblical perspective that places all of life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ*
> *Are conscious that each student has special gifts that need to be developed*
> *Recognise that they are in partnership with parents in the nurturing of their children.*

In the employment section, forms were provided to complete but there was no narrative about teaching at the school or professional development program/opportunities.

As the school was in a stage of leadership and development transition, no strategic plan, staff goals or professional learning policy was available. The school did not have articulated staff goals at the time of the study. However, as indicated in the interviews with the school's executive, a restructure in executive positions had led to one of the deputy principal's being assigned teacher professional development as a part of their role. This executive member was in the process of drafting a professional development policy for the school. This draft included reference to the importance of teacher learning and appraisal procedures.

The school's annual report provided a detailed list of professional development sessions attended by staff. However, this was not accompanied by any reference to the goals, nature, purpose or benefits of teacher professional development or learning. In student handbooks the pivotal place of teachers in providing a Christian worldview was expressed, but teacher learning as such, was not mentioned.

In the staff handbook a paragraph on teaching in the school mentioned the need to be:

> *Committed to each other, seeking the other's welfare at all times and being prepared to be a servant*

It also included a section on professional learning and the professionalism of teachers, stating that:

> *The need to be constantly learning is intrinsic to teaching and teachers must be learners*

Professional development structures listed as available included:

> *Ongoing professional development is imperative. Structures to facilitate this include:*
> *Curriculum weeks (beginning of Term 1 and Term 3)*
> *Christian Education National State Conferences*
> *Curriculum days as decided upon by teachers, Deputy and Principal.*
> *Staff Meetings.*
> *FYAT/SYAT programs*
> *Financial support for study through NICE (National Institute for Christian Education)*
> *In-service programs are available through KLA coordinators and Deputy Principal. In-service forms are located in Staffshare. In-services run by the AIS, CEN, Board of Studies or Faculty Association groups*
> *Bible study – whether through a structured course or in relation to teaching particular units.*
> *Teachers are encouraged to dream dreams, to challenge colleagues and to be daring in their professional development.*

In the annual report (2012) the professionalism of teachers was noted as closely connected to their commitment to further strengthen the vision of the school, provide quality of teaching performance and:

> *Efficient, effective and realistic delivery of service appropriate to the child's needs*

The emphasis for teachers was on equipping students by:

> *Consolidating the principle that reading, writing and counting are tools to be used in learning about God, people and creation*

The weekly community newsletter did not have a section on teacher professional development or learning at the time of the study. Other documents including professional development application forms did not make reference to learning goals, career stages or professional teaching standards.

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APPENDIX 7.3

Feedback to Jackston Grammar

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context
Research feedback

Jackston Grammar
July 2013

Research question and career stages

Question posed:
How do teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?

Career stages in the study:

- Early Career (<1-3 years)
- Experienced (4-7 years)
- Expert (8+ years)
- Leading (in formal leadership roles)
- Executive Leaders (principal and deputies)

Research structure and methodology

- Holistic case studies of schools at work
- Action research approach that enables teacher reflection and learning and supports whole-school planning
- Researcher as participant observer, working alongside and with schools towards improving their practice

Horizontal and Vertical Dimensions of teacher learning in schools

- Horizontal: teacher learning and professional development across a continuum of key career stages
- Vertical: whole school planning, coordination and evaluation of teacher learning and the school's professional development program

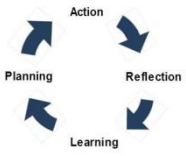
Qualitative data collection

- Face-to-face interviews with individual teachers across the career continuum
- Focus group discussions with participants from mixed career stages
- Questionnaires- teacher and leadership questionnaires

Framework design in response to school needs

- Frameworks are developed according to the school context as a result of participation in an initial school based action research cycle
- Frameworks are unique to each school and designed to meet the school at their level of development and need. Their purpose is to enable schools to continue planning to further develop and continuously improve their approaches to teacher learning and their professional development program.

Action Research Cycle
This workshop places Jackston Grammar at the *Reflection* and *Learning* phases



Action

- The study begins and data is collected
- Mutual feedback occurs between researcher and school in two areas:
  1. Teacher learning and
  2. Existing school based approaches to teacher learning and the professional development program

Reflection

School-based discussion facilitated by the researcher:

- involving all teachers and the leadership
- discussion about the findings of the data collected to enable reflection on teacher learning and professional development in the context of the school

Learning

School community insights into teacher learning and professional development practices at the school occur.

Researcher triangulation of the data to:

- enrich the data on how teachers learn at each school
- facilitate school planning to improve practices, based on the and whole-school reflection and the specific school context

Planning

Further school planning of school contextualised teacher professional development based on the study findings, and the school's own decisions as to the best way forward.

This is outside of the scope of the study.

Horizontal dimension – career stage participants so far in the study

Career level	School 1	Jackston Grammar	Totals
Early Career <1-3 yrs	2	4	6
Experienced 4-7 yrs	3	1	4
Expert 8+ yrs	13	6	19
Leading Teachers (formal leadership role)	9	4	13
Executive Leaders	3	3	6
Totals	30	18	48

Participants across the school context

Across the School	School 1	Jackston Grammar	Totals
Junior School K-6	9	6	15
Senior School 7-10	18	9	27
Across Junior and Senior	3	3	6
Male	12	8	20
Female	18	10	28
Totals	30	18	48

How teachers learn: Early Career Teachers Key areas for learning

- Improving and consolidating their teaching
- A focus on classroom management
- Completion of teacher accreditation requirements
- Networking with other teachers outside the school
- Learning content of syllabi
- Developing resources for students requiring enrichment
- Managing co – curricular and sport content and disciplining students in these different settings

How teachers learn: Early Career How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- mainly alone
- randomly
- according to immediate school requirements (how to conduct a parent interview, how to write student reports)
- according to direct requests from head teachers (how to write programs)

Quotes in relation to prioritising learning:

- *"Thrown in the deep end"*
- *"Would like to be guided on how to prioritise"*
- *"Tyranny of the urgent sets your priorities for you"*

Early Career Quotes (cont.)

- *"You are never bored. There is always something new to learn"*
- *"Steep learning curve whether you are ready for it or not"*
- *"My prioritising is reactive rather than pro-active"*
- *"Rather than plan it I like to dive in, experience it and give it a go"*

How teachers learn: Early Career
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- meeting the "now' need/request
- assigned mentors from within stage/faculty
- teaching provided by specialists on the school site
- being delegated responsibilities in stage/faculty/pastoral system
- copying other teachers in the way they learn
- finding mentors to learn from in the everyday school context
- spiritual learning outside school
- learning styles emerging – hands on, visual, reading/writing
- reading the literature as previously had done at university, but little time to do so

How teachers learn: Experienced
Key areas for learning

The focus was still on the classroom but there was a shift towards learning that would enhance their teaching practice including:

- mastering subject content and pedagogical approaches
- using tools for learning, including ICT
- diversifying subject knowledge
- starting to use and analyse assessments to plan further student learning
- developing more effective resources

How teachers learn: Experienced
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- with some planning –within a known ebb and flow of school expectations
- over a longer time frame than the immediate
- by using reflection on their teaching
- as a result of informal discussions/consultation with direct leaders (middle managers)
- according to the needs of other staff with whom they work, so they can assist the team

How teachers learn: Experienced
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- being aware of the need to learn to enable growth in expertise
- deep self reflection
- "deep" discussions with colleagues
- a growing confidence in teaching themselves
- using experimentation and innovation; were creative in their approach
- attending subject based PD sessions outside the school – expert knowledge and networking
- listening to academic lectures in their subject area and/or pedagogical approaches

Some wanted:

- specific targets for learning provided by the school
- follow-up, appraisal and feedback about their learning and performance

How teachers learn: Expert
Key areas for learning

Teachers at this career stage listed many areas including:

- enhancing student learning by closely evaluating student results
- initiating or substantially contributing to stage/faculty programming
- engaging in teacher accreditation at the higher levels
- improving literacy and numeracy strategies
- ICT use and integration
- ICT use for updating assessment tasks
- assessing the pastoral needs of students
- extending differentiation strategies
- being abreast of Australian Curriculum changes and assisting others to incorporate these into their programs and teaching

How teachers learn: Expert
How they prioritise their learning

Learning is prioritised:

- to ensure that they meet school deadlines and model this to less experienced staff
- directly around how to improve practices and enhance student learning
- through reflection "*It is a priority to regularly sit down, reflect and evaluate with the intention of assessing self and then moving to plan and implement my learning*"
- around setting specific goals and then trying to find professional development to assist them to meet these goals
- with a focus on the classroom and their students to enable the building of collegiality, which was a priority

How teachers learn: Expert
How they prioritise their learning (cont.)

Teachers at this career stage were eager to mention perceived barriers to their capacity to prioritise including:

- overloading of work and duties sometimes meant that priorities for learning were not set
- a low tolerance for professional development that did not relate to their priorities:

"I can't stand being talked at about things that I already know or can't use. It is a waste of time doing professional development which is too general. I would rather a couple of hours by myself to improve my own work and practices"

How teachers learn: Expert
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- autonomous and confident planning
- their own experiences
- specific goal setting to improve practices that directly enhance student learning
- directed reading
- postgraduate study
- collegiality - assisting others, which they enjoy, including practicum students and colleagues, to improve their teaching and learning
- working with colleagues on particular tasks or projects
- attending conferences

How teachers learn: Leading teachers
Key areas for learning

- Whatever they needed to learn to assist their staff
- How to assist their staff to set teaching/classroom goals
- Teaching effectively from a Christian perspective
- What makes an effective leader
- Researching best practice in ICT integration
- Australian Curriculum rationale for changes
- Understanding the school's ethos more deeply so this could be taught to other teachers and students

How teachers learn: Leading teachers
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- to meet school goals for middle management set by the principal
- according to what they perceived their staff needed to learn in relation to pedagogy, ICT integration, student learning
- based on the needs of others *"I regularly ask teachers in my team 'What do you need to know?' and then endeavour to supply this"*
- according to external expectations – BOS syllabi
- proactively; setting their learning goals to meet the needs of others, but not in relation to assisting others to set their own learning goals
- would like dedicated mentoring to assist with prioritising their own learning

How teachers learn: Leading teachers
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- any way that would assist them to "deliver" on the school's strategic goals
- conferences for leaders
- higher level study
- private bible study and prayer and using this to reflect upon their role as leading teachers in the community, and to inspire improvement in performance
- listening and working with executive staff
- discussions with fellow middle leaders
- a mix of both individual and collegial learning around the same topic
- individual directed reading

How teachers learn: Executive leaders
Key areas for learning

- According to school goals and priorities
- Research for school projects/initiatives
- Personal faith and the impact on leadership and service
- Effective leadership literature
- External requirements impacting on the school including curriculum, student duty of care, work and safety, local council, teacher accreditation bodies

How teachers learn: Executive leaders
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- according to school ethos, priorities, needs, effectiveness and strategic goals
- to improve their individual performance *"we are in the job to become specialists in our leadership area so we can lead and teach others"*
- according to prayer and meditation
- according to their own learning plan which had been presented and discussed at executive level
- as a result of reflection *"think deeply, read, write, look for connections and develop my learning over time"*
- so roles can be fulfilled over the short term
- in relation to the needs of others
- according to statutory and legal requirements
- according to school council requests

How teachers learn: Executive leaders
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- directed reading
- postgraduate study
- professional association membership
- service *"learn more to give more, and in giving, learn"*
- deep thinking and reflection
- reading the bible, devotions and church sermons
- explicit planning
- autonomous, experiential and collegial
- hands on workshops
- mentoring others

This group expressed a sense of excitement about their learning

Horizontal: Career Continuum Learning

- Form into groups:
- Early Career (<1-3 years)
- Experienced (4-7 years)
- Expert (8+ years)
- Leading teacher (formal leadership role)
- Executive

Workshop

Horizontal and vertical research /learning/ feedback generated by the school, for the school…..

Reflection and Learning

- Round 1 – Discussion at career level
- Round 2 – Groups rotate to reflect on the responses of the next career stage
- Round 3 – Feedback to whole group

Group rotation



Vertical: The school based professional development program

Individual completion of the teacher survey comparing the "ideal" with the "real" in relation to teacher perceptions of professional development at Jackston Grammar

Final reflection: triangulation of data

Completion of My Thoughts reflection

APPENDIX 7.4

School Contextualised Workshop Frameworks

7.4a Career stage group worksheets

7.4b Teacher survey: vertical dimension

Appendix 7.4a

JACKSTON GRAMMAR WORKSHOP

CAREER STAGE GROUP WORKSHEETS

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context

Group 1 - Early Career Teachers

To do

Discuss the data below about teacher learning at this continuum level and complete answers to the questions which follow

Key areas for learning

- improving and consolidating their teaching
- a focus on classroom management
- completion of teacher accreditation requirements
- networking with other teachers outside the school
- learning content of syllabi
- developing resources for students requiring enrichment
- managing co-curricular and sport content and disciplining students in these different settings

How learning is prioritised

- mainly alone
- randomly
- according to immediate school requirements (how to conduct a parent interview, how to write student reports)
- according to direct requests from head teachers (how to write programs)

How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- meeting the "now' need/request
- assigned mentors from within stage/faculty
- teaching provided by specialists on the school site
- being delegated responsibilities in stage/faculty/pastoral system
- copying other teachers in the way they learn
- finding mentors to learn from in the everyday school context
- spiritual learning outside school
- learning styles emerging: hands-on, visual, reading/writing
- reading the literature as previously had done at university, but little time to do so

Questions

- What are your impressions of the results? Are you surprised in any way or do they seem fairly accurate in relation to Jackston Grammar? Is there anything missing that you think should be there in relation to your school ethos/culture?
- What does the school currently provide in its professional development program for teachers at this career stage?
- From the data above, highlight two points in each of the three sections that you think relate most to teachers at Jackston Grammar at this career stage.
- Considering what you have highlighted, and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

Rotate now to the next group (experienced teachers)

……

Next Group Rotation:

To do

Read and discuss the information above provided by the early career teachers.

Considering their responses and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context

Group 2 - Experienced Teachers

To do

Discuss the data below about teacher learning at this continuum level and complete answers to the questions which follow

Key areas for learning

The focus was still on the classroom but there was a shift towards learning that would enhance their teaching practice including:

- mastering subject content and pedagogical approaches
- using tools for learning, including ICT
- diversifying subject knowledge
- starting to use and analyse assessments to plan further student learning
- developing more effective resources

How learning is prioritised

- with some planning –within a known ebb and flow of school expectations
- over a longer time frame than the immediate
- by using reflection on their teaching
- as a result of informal discussions/consultation with direct leaders (middle managers)
- according to the needs of other staff with whom they work, so they can assist the team

How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- being aware of the need to learn to enable growth in expertise
- deep self-reflection
- "deep" discussions with colleagues
- a growing confidence in teaching themselves
- using experimentation and innovation; were creative in their approach

- attending subject based PD sessions outside the school to access expert knowledge and networking
- listening to academic lectures in their subject area and/or pedagogical approaches

Some wanted:

- specific targets for learning provided by the school
- follow-up, appraisal and feedback about their learning and performance

Questions

- What are your impressions of the results? Are you surprised in any way or do they seem fairly accurate in relation to Jackston Grammar? Is there anything missing that you think should be there in relation to your school ethos/culture?
- What does the school currently provide in its professional development program for teachers at this level?
- From the data above, highlight two points in each of the three sections that you think relate most to teachers at Jackston Grammar at this career stage.
- Considering what you have highlighted, and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

Rotate now to the next group (expert teachers)

……

Next Group Rotation:

To do

Read and discuss the information above provided by the experienced teachers.

Considering their responses and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

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How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context

Group 3 - Expert Teachers

To do

Discuss the data below about teacher learning at this continuum career stage and complete answers to the questions which follow

Key areas for learning

- enhancing student learning by closely evaluating student results
- initiating or substantially contributing to stage/faculty programming
- engaging in teacher accreditation at the higher career stages
- improving literacy and numeracy strategies
- ICT use and integration
- ICT use for updating assessment tasks
- assessing the pastoral needs of students
- extending differentiation strategies
- being abreast of Australian Curriculum changes and assisting others to incorporate these into their programs and teaching

How learning is prioritised

- to ensure that they meet school deadlines and model this to less experienced staff
- directly around how to improve practices and enhance student learning
- through reflection:

  > *It is a priority to regularly sit down, reflect and evaluate with the intention of assessing self and then moving to plan and implement my learning*

- around setting specific goals and then trying to find professional development to assist them to meet these goals

- with a focus on the classroom and their students to enable the building of collegiality, which was a priority

Teachers at this career stage were eager to mention perceived barriers to their capacity to prioritise including:

- overloading of work and duties sometimes meant that priorities for learning were not set
- a low tolerance for professional development that did not relate to their priorities:

> *I can't stand being talked at about things that I already know or can't use. It is a waste of time doing professional development which is too general. I would rather a couple of hours by myself to improve my own work and practices*

How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- autonomous and confident planning
- their own experiences
- specific goal setting to improve practices that directly enhance student learning
- directed reading
- postgraduate study
- collegially - assisting others, which they enjoy, including practicum students and colleagues, to improve their teaching and learning
- working with colleagues on particular tasks or projects
- attending conferences

Questions

- What are your impressions of the results? Are you surprised in any way or do they seem fairly accurate in relation to Jackston Grammar? Is there anything missing that you think should be there in relation to your school ethos/culture?
- What does the school currently provide in its professional development program for teachers at this career stage?
- From the data above, highlight two points in each of the three sections that you think relate most to teachers at Jackston Grammar at this career stage.
- Considering what you have highlighted, and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

Rotate now to the next group (leading teachers)

……

Next Group Rotation:

To do

Read and discuss the information above provided by the expert teachers.

Considering their responses and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context

Group 4 - Leading Teachers

To do

Discuss the data below about teacher learning at this continuum career stage and complete answers to the questions which follow

Key areas for learning

- whatever they needed to learn to assist their staff
- how to assist their staff to set teaching/classroom goals
- teaching effectively from a Christian perspective
- what makes an effective leader
- researching best practice in ICT integration
- Australian Curriculum rationale for changes
- understanding the school's ethos more deeply so this could be taught to other teachers and students

How learning is prioritised

- to meet school goals for middle management set by the principal
- according to what they perceived their staff needed to learn in relation to pedagogy, ICT integration, student learning
- based on the needs of others *"I regularly ask teachers in my team 'What do you need to know?' and then endeavour to supply this"*
- according to external expectations – BOS syllabi
- proactively-setting their learning goals to meet the needs of others, but not in relation to assisting others to set their own learning goals
- would like dedicated mentoring to assist with prioritising their own learning

How and in what ways they learn Learn through:

- any way that would assist them to "deliver" on the school's strategic goals

- conferences for leaders
- higher career stage study
- private bible study and prayer and using this to reflect upon their role as leading teachers in the community, and to inspire improvement in performance
- listening and working with executive staff
- discussions with fellow middle leaders
- a mix of both individual and collegial learning around the same topic
- individual directed reading

Questions

- What are your impressions of the results? Are you surprised in any way or do they seem fairly accurate in relation to Jackston Grammar? Is there anything missing that you think should be there in relation to your school ethos/culture?
- What does the school currently provide in its professional development program for teachers at this career stage?
- From the data above, highlight two points in each of the three sections that you think relate most to teachers at Jackston Grammar at this career stage.
- Considering what you have highlighted, and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at the this career stage?

Rotate now to the next group (executive leaders)

……

Next Group Rotation:

To do

Read and discuss the information above provided by the leading teachers.

Considering their responses and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context

Group 5 – Executive Leaders

To do

Discuss the data below about teacher learning at this continuum career stage and complete answers to the questions which follow

Key areas for learning

- according to school goals and priorities
- research for school projects/initiatives
- personal faith and the impact on leadership and service
- effective leadership literature
- external requirements impacting on the school including curriculum, student duty of care, work and safety, local council, teacher accreditation bodies

How learning is prioritised

- according to school ethos, priorities, needs, effectiveness and strategic goals
- to improve their individual performance *"we are in the job to become specialists in our leadership area so we can lead and teach others"*
- according to prayer and meditation
- according to their own learning plan which had been presented and discussed at executive career stage
- as a result of reflection *"think deeply, read, write, look for connections and develop my learning over time"*
- so roles can be fulfilled over the short term
- in relation to the needs of others
- according to statutory and legal requirements
- according to school council requests

How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- directed reading
- postgraduate study
- professional association membership
- service *"learn more to give more, and in giving, learn"*
- deep thinking and reflection
- reading the bible, devotions and church sermons
- explicit planning
- autonomous, experiential and collegial
- hands on workshops
- mentoring others

This group expressed a sense of excitement about their learning

Questions

- What are your impressions of the results? Are you surprised in any way or do they seem fairly accurate in relation to Jackston Grammar? Is there anything missing that you think should be there in relation to your school ethos/culture?
- What does the school currently provide in its professional development program for teachers at this career stage?
- From the data above, highlight two points in each of the three sections that you think relate most to teachers at Jackston Grammar at this career stage.
- Considering what you have highlighted, and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?

Rotate now to the next group (early career teachers)

……

Next Group Rotation:

To do

Read and discuss the information above provided by the executive leaders.

Considering their responses and the school's ethos and culture, what do you think the school could plan in terms of professional development to meet the learning preferences and needs of teachers at this career stage?



Appendix 7.4b

JACKSTON GRAMMAR WORKSHOP

TEACHER SURVEY: VERTICAL DIMENSION

Listed below are ten aspects of school community practice that relate to the planning, content, implementation and evaluation of school-based professional learning. These survey results will provide feedback to your school to assist in the planning of the professional development program.

Instructions

Completion of the survey should take no more than 10 minutes.

- Please read each statement and circle the appropriate response on the left to express *how important you think the item should be in the school.*
- For the same item, circle the appropriate response on the right to register *how closely you feel the item describes the current situation in the school.*

The responses on the left represent your views on what would be ideal and the responses on the right provide some idea of what at the moment you perceive to be real.

My current position

Please tick which career stage applies to you:

☐Early Career

☐Experienced

☐Expert

☐Leading Teacher

☐Executive Leader

Legend

Importance

1 = Very important

2 = Important

3 = Fairly important

4 = Not very important

5 = Not important at all

Describes your school

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Uncertain

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly disagree

IMPORTANCE **'THE IDEAL'**		**CURRENT SITUATION** **'THE REAL'**
1 2 3 4 5	**1.**The teacher should be explicitly aligned with school goals and targets	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**2.** Teacher PD needs to have sufficient financial resources allocated to be effective	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**3.** The content of professional development programs in the school needs to be planned well in advance	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**4.** The coordination of PD throughout the school should be effective	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**5.** Explicit delivery of PD which provides learning to teachers at their various career stages would be good for teacher learning	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**6.** Teacher accreditation programs are effective in providing professional development for teachers	**1 2 3 4 5**

1 2 3 4 5	**7.** PD which encourages teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment occurs regularly	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**8.** Provision of PD for leaders to build knowledge about effective leadership is important	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**9.** The school's culture is supportive of, and promotes teacher learning	**1 2 3 4 5**
1 2 3 4 5	**10.** There should be regular evaluation of the school's PD program	**1 2 3 4 5**

Thank you for completing this survey

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APPENDIX 7.5

Jackston Grammar My Thoughts Feedback Sheet

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JACKSTON GRAMMAR WORKSHOP

MY THOUGHTS FEEDBACK SHEET

1. Have there been any surprises today, either in the raw data presented about teacher learning or as a result of the group work participants?

2. What have you learnt that is new or different, about yourself and/or your colleagues?

3. What does what you have learnt mean for further planning of the whole-school professional development program?

APPENDIX 9.1

Maxvale College Teacher Questionnaire Data Results

MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE DATA RESULTS

Collaborative learning

Q1: I planned my professional learning with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							1						
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20								1	1				**A/SA =1**
21 +													**D/SD =2**

Q2: When suitable, I engaged in the learning with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20								1					
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20									1	1			**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD =0**

Q3: I was given the opportunity to teach or mentor other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7								1					
8-20								1					
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										2			**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD =2**

Q4: I was given the opportunity to talk about and support the professional growth of other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20								1					
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20									1	1			**A/SA=2**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Learning through reflection

Q5: I privately reflect on my learning													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										1	1		**A/SA=5**
21 +													**D/SD =0**

Q6: I reflect on my learning experiences collaboratively with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7								1					
8-20								1					
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20								1	1				**A/SA=1**
21 +													**D/SD =3**

Q7: I was given time by the school to specifically reflect on my learning													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							1						
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20								2					**A/SA =3**
21 +													**D/SD =0**

Hands-on and creative learning

Q8: I was encouraged to be creative													Results
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20									2				**A/SA=2**
21 +													**D/SD =3**

Q9: I used an enquiry approach, (where I worked with other teachers to understand how students learn)													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7								1					
8-20								1					
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20								1		1			**A/SA=1**
21 +													**D/SD =3**

Q10: I engaged in action learning, (where I observed, acted, reflected, modified, implemented)													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20								1		1			**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Learning through feedback from students and colleagues

Q11: Other teachers / colleagues													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							1						
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										2			**A/SA=4**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Q12: Supervisors or other leaders in the School community													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							1						**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD =1**
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20									1	1			
21 +													

Q13: From my students													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20							1			1			**A/SA =4**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Learning through collegial conversation

Q14: Collegial conversations which were planned eg: Stage/Faculty meetings													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20								1					**A/SA=2**
21 +													**D/SD =1**
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20									1	1			
21 +													

Q15: Collegial conversations which were unplanned – often happening in small bites of time, randomly throughout the day/week													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										2			**A/SA=5**
21 +													**D/SD =0**

Q16: Collegial conversations which occurred as a result of viewing lessons and debriefing, comparing strategies and/or teaching styles													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20							1						
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20									2				**A/SA=2**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Learning from within the context of my school

Q17: I worked within the context of my Stage/Faculty													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			**A/SA=4**
8-20							1			1			**D/SD =1**
21 +													

Q18: I worked with other teachers in my school													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20								1					
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20									1	1			**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD=1**

Q19: I worked within my classroom													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										2			**A/SA=5**
21 +													**D/SD =0**

Q20: I undertook professional development activities based on needs identified by the school													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20								1					
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20									1	1			**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Q21: I undertook professional development activities based on school vision, goals and strategy													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20									1				
21 +													**A/SA =1** **D/SD =0**
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20									2				
21 +													

Q22: When I had input into the planning and development of my professional development at the school													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20								1		1			**A/SA=2**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Q23: When I attended in-service courses outside the school setting													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20											1		
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7								1					
8-20									1	1			**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Creating time for learning

Q24: I was given time to spend in the learning experience, including time to think, discuss, reflect, plan and implement													**Results**
Junior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
	Female						Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20								1	1				**A/SA=3**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Q25: I was given time to observe the lessons of other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							1						
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20									1	1			**A/SA =3**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Q26: I was given time to team teach with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20									1				
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							2						**A/SA=1**
21 +													**D/SD =2**

Learning by directed study, reading & writing

Q27: I was able to privately read relevant books, resources or research													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20											1		
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										1	1		**A/SA =5**
21 +													**D/SD =0**

Q28: I was able to read and then discuss relevant books, resources or research with other teachers													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7									1				
8-20									1	1			**A/SA =2**
21 +													**D/SD =0**

Q29: I wrote material myself – teaching resources and/or articles and/or research													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7							1						
8-20							1			1			**A/SA =3**
21 +													**D/SD =2**

Learning through observation and being taught by others

Q30: I was taught by specialists in an educational area coming into the school													Results
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							1		1				**A/SA =3**
21 +													**D/SD =1**

Q31: I was taught by teachers from my own school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20							1						
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7											1		
8-20								2					**A/SA =2**
21 +													**D/SD =3**

Q32: I was taught by teachers outside my own school													**Results**
Junior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7										1			
8-20										1			
21 +													
Senior													
Female							Male						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	SD	D	N	A	SA	O	
1-3													
4-7								1					
8-20								2					**A/SA =2**
21 +													**D/SD =3**

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APPENDIX 9.2

Maxvale College Website and Documentation Review

MAXVALE COLLEGE WEBSITE AND DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

Teacher professional development and learning is not referred to explicitly on the school's website. Teachers are described as having integral importance to the development of student learning in the area of character formation and faith, as follows:

> *Maxvale College aims to provide an education which is personal by providing a personal mentor, or tutor, selected from the teaching staff of the College. The aim of that tutor is to provide a constant source of support for the student through his attention, friendship, example and advice. The tutor meets regularly with the student during the term, and meets with his parents at least once each term, reviewing the progress of that student, and helping with goal setting. It is the intension of Maxvale College that the tutor takes a personal interest in the progress of the boys whom he tutors, acting on the parents' behalf, and coordinating the services of the College for the family.*

The website also refers to the importance of staff providing a good example to students:

> *There is also a more informal emphasis by staff on the development of character and virtues in its students, by encouraging staff to provide a good example and by emphasising and encouraging character development amongst the students, as well as encouraging staff and student peers to be fully positive and supportive of parents. Maxvale College aims to focus on character development and nurturing good habits in areas such as "sound judgement, self-control, courage and responsibility towards others, students are better able to use their freedom to make the right choices in life".*

The school's internal newsletter refers to what students have learnt, under the guidance and good teaching of their teachers. However, teacher professional development or learning does not appear as a regular section of the newsletter.

Documentation about teaching virtues to the students stresses the importance of teachers and parents working together to enhance the character development of students, and refers to students, teachers and parents learning together in a faith community to meet this goal.

The College's Annual Report (2012) lists the amount of external professional development sessions that staff have attended throughout the year and refers to being compliant with government accreditation guidelines for teachers. The Annual Report also provides brief explanations of all school policies. In relation to staff, Code of Conduct policies are noted, but there is no reference to professional development or learning policies.

At the time of the study, the school executive were developing a draft School Strategic Plan and this was to include teacher professional development goals.

The schedule for the professional development days revealed an emphasis on teacher discussion and learning about student character formation and how to teach these to the students. The schedule also listed time to discuss school vision and mission, and preparation of curriculum materials.

APPENDIX 9.3

Feedback to Maxvale College

How teachers learn across the career continuum in the school context Research feedback

Maxvale College
July 2013

Research question

How do teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?
Two dimensions:

- Horizontal: teacher learning and professional development across a continuum of key career stages
- Vertical: whole school planning, coordination and evaluation of teacher learning and the school's professional development program

Research structure and methodology

- Holistic case studies of schools at work
- Action research approach that enables teacher reflection and learning and supports whole school planning
- Researcher as participant observer, working alongside and with schools towards improving their practice

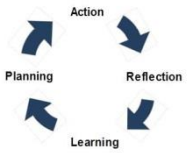
Qualitative data collection

- Face-to-face interviews with individual teachers across the career continuum
- Focus group discussions with participants from mixed career stages
- Questionnaires- teacher and leadership questionnaire

Framework design in response to school needs

- Frameworks are developed according to school context as a result of participation in an initial school based action research cycle
- Frameworks are unique to each school and designed to meet the school at their level of development and need. Their purpose is to enable schools to continue planning to further develop and improve their approaches to teacher learning and their professional development program.

Action Research Cycle
This workshop places Maxvale College at the *Reflection* and *Learning* phases



Action

- The study begins and data is collected
- Mutual feedback occurs between researcher and school in two areas:

1. teacher learning and
2. existing school based approaches to teacher learning and their professional development program

Reflection

School based discussion facilitated by the researcher involving all teachers and the leadership on the findings of the data collection, to enable reflection on teacher learning and professional development in the school context

Learning

School community insights into teacher learning and professional development practices at the school occur.

Researcher triangulation of the data to:

- enrich the data on how teachers learn at each school
- facilitate school planning to improve practices, based on the and their reflection statements and the specific school context

Planning

Further school planning of school contextualised teacher professional development based on the study findings and the school's own decisions as to the best way forward.

This is outside of the scope of the study.

Horizontal dimension – career stage participants in the study

Career level	School 1	School 2	School 3	Totals
Early Career <1–3 yrs	2	4	–	6
Experienced 4–7 yrs	3	1	2	6
Expert 8+ yrs	13	6	2	21
Leading Teachers (formal leadership role)	9	4	1	14
Executive Leaders	3	3	1	7
Totals	30	18	6	54

Participants across the school contexts

Across the School	School 1	School 2	School 3	Totals
Junior School K–6	9	6	2	17
Senior School 7–10	18	9	3	30
Across Junior and Senior	3	3	1	7
Male	12	8	6	26
Female	18	10	0	28
Totals	30	18	12	54

How teachers learn: Early Career Key areas for learning

- improving and consolidating their teaching
- a focus on classroom management
- completion of teacher accreditation requirements
- networking with other teachers outside the school
- learning content of syllabi
- developing resources for students requiring enrichment
- managing co – curricular and sport content and disciplining students in these different settings

How teachers learn: Early Career How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- mainly alone
- randomly
- according to immediate school requirements (how to conduct a parent interview, how to write student reports)
- according to direct requests from head teachers (how to write programs)

Quotes in relation to prioritising learning:

- *"Thrown in the deep end"*
- *"Would like to be guided on how to prioritise"*
- *"Tyranny of the urgent sets your priorities for you"*

Early Career Quotes (cont.)

- *"You are never bored. There is always something new to learn"*
- *"Steep learning curve whether you are ready for it or not"*
- *"My prioritising is reactive rather than pro-active"*
- *"Rather than plan it I like to dive in, experience it and give it a go"*

How teachers learn: Early Career How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- meeting the "now' need/request
- assigned mentors from within stage/faculty
- teaching provided by specialists on the school site
- being delegated responsibilities in stage/faculty/pastoral system
- copying other teachers in the way they learn
- finding mentors to learn from in the everyday school context

How teachers learn: Early Career
How and in what ways they learn (cont.)

- spiritual learning outside school
- learning styles emerging – hands on, visual, reading/writing
- reading the literature as previously had done at university *"but no time to do so"*

How teachers learn: Experienced teachers
Key areas for learning

The focus was still on the classroom but there was a shift towards learning that would enhance their teaching practice including:

- mastering subject content and pedagogical approaches
- using tools for learning, including ICT
- diversifying subject knowledge
- starting to use and analyse assessments to plan further student learning
- developing more effective resources
- learning more about Australian Curriculum
- developing purposeful and engaging lessons

How teachers learn: Experienced teachers
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- with some planning –within a known ebb and flow of school expectations
- over a longer time frame than the immediate
- by using reflection on their teaching
- as a result of informal discussions/consultation with direct leaders (middle managers)
- according to the needs of other staff with whom they work, so they can assist the team
- in relation to responding to external pressures

How teachers learn: Experienced Teachers
How they prioritise learning (cont.)

- according to school needs
- according to the ethos of the school
- to enhance student personal development
- quickly, due to lack of time

How teachers learn: Experienced Teachers
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- being aware of the need to learn to enable growth in expertise
- deep self reflection
- "deep" discussions with colleagues
- a growing confidence in teaching themselves
- using experimentation and innovation; were creative in their approach
- attending subject based PD sessions outside the school – expert knowledge and networking

How teachers learn: Experienced Teachers
How and in what ways they learn (cont.)

- listening to academic lectures in their subject area and/or pedagogical approaches
- visual and hands on workshops
- reading, particularly university material

Some wanted:

- specific targets for learning provided by the school
- follow-up, appraisal and feedback about their learning and performance
- more structured mentoring program
- more networking opportunities

How teachers learn: Expert teachers
Key areas for learning

- enhancing student learning by closely evaluating student results
- initiating or substantially contributing to stage/faculty programming
- engaging in teacher accreditation at the higher levels
- investigating pedagogies
- how to relate well to parents
- how families can support student learning
- improving literacy and numeracy strategies

How teachers learn: Expert
Key areas for learning (cont.)

- ICT use and integration
- ICT use for updating assessment tasks
- assessing the pastoral needs of students
- extending differentiation strategies
- being abreast of Australian Curriculum changes and assisting others to incorporate these into their programs and teaching
- enriching subject knowledge

How teachers learn: Expert
How they prioritise their learning

Learning is prioritised:

- to ensure that they meet school deadlines and model this to less experienced staff
- directly around how to improve practices and enhance student learning
- through reflection "*It is a priority to regularly sit down, reflect and evaluate with the intention of assessing self and then moving to plan and implement my learning*"

How teachers learn: Expert
How they prioritise their learning (cont.)

- around setting specific goals and then trying to find professional development to assist them to meet these goals
- with a focus on the classroom and their students to enable the building of collegiality, which was a priority

Teachers at this career level were eager to mention perceived barriers to their capacity to prioritise including:

- primarily alone, through personal reflection
- with school mission in mind
- overloading of work and duties sometimes meant that priorities for learning were not set

How teachers learn: Expert
How they prioritise their learning (cont.)

- a low tolerance for professional development that did not relate to their priorities:
- overloading of work and duties sometimes meant that priorities for learning were not set
- a low tolerance for professional development that did not relate to their priorities:

"I can't stand being talked at about things that I already know or can't use. It is a waste of time doing professional development which is too general. I would rather a couple of hours by myself to improve my own work and practices"

How teachers learn: Expert
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- autonomous and confident planning
- their own experiences
- specific goal setting to improve practices that directly enhance student learning
- directed reading
- postgraduate study
- whatever mode is available at the school
- completing courses during school breaks
- browsing the internet

How teachers learn: Expert
How and in what ways they learn (cont.)

- strategic school discussions
- collegiality - assisting others, which they enjoy, including practicum students and colleagues, to improve their teaching and learning
- working with colleagues on particular tasks or projects
- attending conferences

How teachers learn: Leading
Key areas for learning

- whatever they needed to learn to assist their staff
- how to assist their staff to set teaching/classroom goals
- teaching effectively from a Christian perspective
- what makes an effective leader
- exploring pedagogical approaches related to subject area
- refining pastoral care approaches at school level
- researching best practice in ICT integration
- Australian Curriculum rationale for changes
- understanding the school's ethos more deeply so this could be taught to other teachers and students

How teachers learn: Leading
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- to meet school goals for middle management set by the principal
- according to what they perceived their staff needed to learn in relation to pedagogy, ICT integration, student learning
- according to the needs of others in the school as a first priority
- in relation to how they can model valued teacher behaviours within the school community
- as a result of considering school strategic goals

How teachers learn: Leading
How they prioritise learning (cont.)

- based on the needs of others *"I regularly ask teachers in my team 'What do you need to know?' and then endeavour to supply this"*
- according to external expectations – BOS syllabi
- proactively; setting their learning goals to meet the needs of others, but not in relation to assisting others to set their own learning goals
- would like dedicated mentoring to assist with prioritising their own learning

How teachers learn: Leading
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- any way that would assist them to "deliver" on the school's strategic goals
- conferences for leaders
- higher level study
- private bible study and prayer and using this to reflect upon their role as leading teachers in the community, and to inspire improvement in performance
- regular personal reflection
- discussions with the principal

How teachers learn: Leading
How and in what ways they learn (cont.)

- networking with leaders at similar schools
- considering the school's values and aligning thinking to these
- listening and working with executive staff
- discussions with fellow middle leaders
- a mix of both individual and collegial learning around the same topic
- individual directed reading

How teachers learn: Executive
Key areas for learning

- according to school goals and priorities
- research for school projects/initiatives
- personal faith and the impact on leadership and service
- assigned by the principal on a regular basis
- personal faith and how to embed this into school ethos
- effective leadership literature
- external requirements impacting on the school including curriculum, student duty of care, work and safety, local council, teacher accreditation bodies

How teachers learn: Executive
How they prioritise learning

Learning is prioritised:

- according to school ethos, priorities, needs, effectiveness and strategic goals
- to improve their individual performance *"we are in the job to become specialists in our leadership area so we can lead and teach others"*
- according to prayer and meditation
- according to their own learning plan which had been presented and discussed at executive level
- according to the needs of others, including the parent body

How teachers learn: Executive
How they prioritise learning (cont.)

- with staff requests and needs in mind
- as a result of reflection *"think deeply, read, write, look for connections and develop my learning over time"*
- so roles can be fulfilled over the short term
- in relation to the needs of others
- according to statutory and legal requirements
- according to school council requests

How teachers learn: Executive
How and in what ways they learn

Learn through:

- directed reading
- postgraduate study
- professional association membership
- service *"learn more to give more, and in giving, learn"*
- faith retreats
- attending Chapel
- reading about the school movement and broader ethos

How teachers learn: Executive
How and in what ways they learn (cont.)

- deep thinking and reflection
- reading the bible, devotions and church sermons
- explicit planning
- autonomous, experiential and collegial
- hands on workshops
- mentoring others
- in any way that will assist others in the school community

This group expressed a sense of excitement about their learning

Workshop: Horizontal and vertical research feedback generated by the school, for the school

Horizontal – Teacher learning across the career continuum

- Maxvale College teacher learner profile

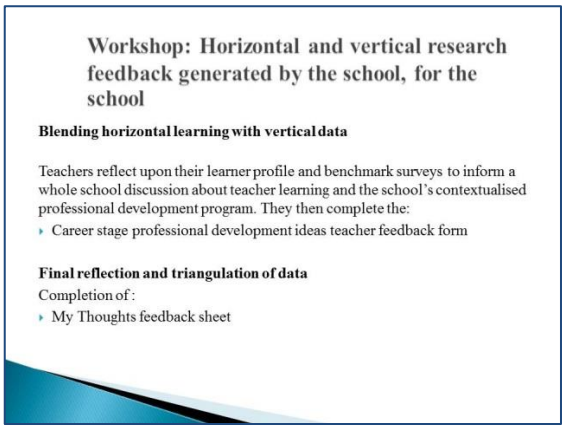
Teachers reflect upon themselves as learners

Vertical – School based professional development program

- Teachers complete the Teacher survey – professional development program teacher feedback

Program Teacher Feedback

Teachers complete the survey on their perceptions of the professional development program at Wollemi against the literature benchmarks


Workshop: Horizontal and vertical research feedback generated by the school, for the school
Blending horizontal learning with vertical data
Teachers reflect upon their learner profile and benchmark surveys to inform a whole school discussion about teacher learning and the school's contextualised professional development program. They then complete the:
Career stage professional development ideas teacher feedback form
Final reflection and triangulation of data
Completion of :
My Thoughts feedback sheet

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APPENDIX 9.4

School Contextualised Workshop Frameworks

9.4a Maxvale College teacher learner profile

9.4b Teacher survey: professional development program teacher feedback

9.4c Career stage professional development ideas teacher feedback

Please Note:

Appendix 9.4a appears in the thesis in portrait layout for your convenience. However, the original document was produced in landscape layout, to make it easier for study participants to complete.

Appendix 9.4a

MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Early Career Teacher

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to allow teachers to individually reflect upon themselves as learners, using the data generated by the study about how teachers learn at each career stage in their school contexts. From this data, teachers at Maxvale College can select which criteria applies most to them, and add other information if desired, enabling them to generate a personalised learner profile.

The learner profile can then be considered in relation to the unique school context of Maxvale College to assist teachers to generate information on what style of professional development they would like to see occur at the school for each career stage, within a school-based professional development program. In this way, both horizontal and vertical data is generated for the school which can be used in the school's future planning.

Instructions

Individual Work

On the Learner Profile sheet for your continuum level:

1. Highlight any points, if at all, listed in each column (key areas for learning, how learning is prioritised and how and in what ways they learn) that resonate as correct for you.

2. Underneath the data in each column add more points, if at all, that you consider reflects your ways of learning as a teacher.

3. Reflect upon your school context and list tentative suggestions as to the type of professional development activities you consider would be effective learning for you and other teachers at your career stage.

Group Work

Join with teachers from your career stage and discuss:

1. Your learner profile

2. The activities you have listed and how they may relate to the school's culture

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MAXVALE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Early Career Teacher

Key areas for learning	How learning is prioritised	How and in what ways they learn	Desired professional development activities
• improving and consolidating their teaching • a focus on classroom management • completion of teacher accreditation requirements • networking with other teachers outside the school • learning content of syllabi • developing resources for students requiring enrichment • managing co – curricular and sport content and disciplining students in these different settings	Learning is prioritised: • mainly alone • randomly • according to immediate school requirements (how to conduct a parent interview, how to write student reports) • according to direct requests from head teachers (how to write programs)	Learn through: • meeting the "now' need/request • assigned mentors from within stage/faculty • teaching provided by specialists on the school site • being delegated responsibilities in stage/faculty/pastoral system • copying other teachers in the way they learn • finding mentors to learn from in the everyday school context • spiritual learning outside school • learning styles emerging – hands-on, visual, reading/writing • reading the literature as previously had done at university	
Add more information relevant to you if desired		Group thoughts	

MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Experienced Teacher

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to allow teachers to individually reflect upon themselves as learners, using the data generated by the study about how teachers learn at each career stage in their school contexts. From this data, teachers at Maxvale College can select which criteria applies most to them, and add other information if desired, enabling them to generate a personalised learner profile.

The learner profile can then be considered in relation to the unique school context of Maxvale College to assist teachers to generate information on what style of professional development they would like to see occur at the school for each career stage, within a school-based professional development program. In this way, both horizontal and vertical data is generated for the school which can be used in the school's future planning.

Instructions

Individual Work

On the Learner Profile sheet for your continuum level:

1. Highlight any points, if at all, listed in each column (key areas for learning, how learning is prioritised and how and in what ways they learn) that resonate as correct for you.

2. Underneath the data in each column add more points, if at all, that you consider reflects your ways of learning as a teacher.

3. Reflect upon your school context and list tentative suggestions as to the type of professional development activities you consider would be effective learning for you and other teachers at your career stage.

Group Work

Join with teachers from your career stage and discuss:

1. Your learner profile

2. The activities you have listed and how they may relate to the school's culture

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MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Experienced Teacher

Key areas for learning	How learning is prioritised	How and in what ways they learn	Desired professional development activities
The focus was still on the classroom but there was a shift towards learning that would enhance their teaching practice including: • mastering subject content and pedagogical approaches • using tools for learning, including ICT • diversifying subject knowledge • starting to use and analyse assessments to plan further student learning • developing more effective resources • learning more about Australian Curriculum • developing purposeful and engaging lessons	Learning is prioritised: • with some planning – within a known ebb and flow of school expectations • over a longer time frame than the immediate • by using reflection on their teaching • as a result of informal discussions and consultation with direct leaders (middle managers) • according to the needs of other staff with whom they work, so they can assist the team • in relation to responding to external pressures • according to school needs • according to the ethos of the school • to enhance student personal development • quickly, due to lack of time	Learn through: • being aware of the need to learn to enable growth in expertise • deep self-reflection • "deep" discussions with colleagues • a growing confidence in teaching themselves • using experimentation and innovation; were creative in their approach • attending subject based PD sessions outside the school – expert knowledge and networking • listening to academic lectures in their subject area and/or pedagogical approaches • visual and hands-on workshops • reading, particularly university material Some wanted: • specific targets for learning provided by the school • follow-up, appraisal and feedback about their learning and performance • more structured mentoring program • more networking opportunities	
Add more information relevant to you if desired		Group thoughts	

MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Expert Teacher

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to allow teachers to individually reflect upon themselves as learners, using the data generated by the study about how teachers learn at each career stage in their school contexts. From this data, teachers at Maxvale College can select which criteria applies most to them, and add other information if desired, enabling them to generate a personalised learner profile.

The learner profile can then be considered in relation to the unique school context of Maxvale College to assist teachers to generate information on what style of professional development they would like to see occur at the school for each career stage, within a school-based professional development program. In this way, both horizontal and vertical data is generated for the school which can be used in the school's future planning.

Instructions

Individual Work

On the Learner Profile sheet for your continuum level:

1. Highlight any points, if at all, listed in each column (key areas for learning, how learning is prioritised and how and in what ways they learn) that resonate as correct for you.

2. Underneath the data in each column add more points, if at all, that you consider reflects your ways of learning as a teacher.

3. Reflect upon your school context and list tentative suggestions as to the type of professional development activities you consider would be effective learning for you and other teachers at your career stage.

Group Work

Join with teachers from your career stage and discuss:

1. Your learner profile

2. The activities you have listed and how they may relate to the school's culture

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Expert Teacher

Key areas for learning	How learning is prioritised	How and in what ways they learn	Desired professional development activities
• enhancing student learning by closely evaluating student results • initiating or substantially contributing to stage/faculty programming • engaging in teacher accreditation at the higher levels • investigating pedagogies • how to relate well to parents • how families can support student learning • improving literacy and numeracy strategies • ICT use and integration • ICT use for updating assessment tasks • assessing the pastoral needs of students • extending differentiation strategies • being abreast of Australian Curriculum changes and assisting others to incorporate these into their programs and teaching • enriching subject knowledge	Learning is prioritised: • to ensure that they meet school deadlines and model this to less experienced staff • directly around how to improve practices and enhance student learning • through reflection • around setting specific goals and then trying to find professional development to assist them to meet these goals • with a focus on the classroom and their students to enable the building of collegiality, which was a priority Teachers at this career level mentioned perceived barriers to their capacity to prioritise which included external and internal school factors	Learn through: • autonomous and confident planning • their own experiences • specific goal setting to improve practices that directly enhance student learning • directed reading • postgraduate study • whatever mode is available at the school • completing courses during school breaks • browsing the internet • strategic school discussions • collegiality - assisting others, which they enjoy, including practicum students and colleagues, to improve their teaching and learning • working with colleagues on particular tasks or projects • attending conferences	
Add more information relevant to you if desired		Group thoughts	

MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Leading Teacher

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to allow teachers to individually reflect upon themselves as learners, using the data generated by the study about how teachers learn at each career stage in their school contexts. From this data, teachers at Maxvale College can select which criteria applies most to them, and add other information if desired, enabling them to generate a personalised learner profile.

The learner profile can then be considered in relation to the unique school context of Maxvale College to assist teachers to generate information on what style of professional development they would like to see occur at the school for each career stage, within a school-based professional development program. In this way, both horizontal and vertical data is generated for the school which can be used in the school's future planning.

Instructions

Individual Work

On the Learner Profile sheet for your continuum level:

1. Highlight any points, if at all, listed in each column (key areas for learning, how learning is prioritised and how and in what ways they learn) that resonate as correct for you.

2. Underneath the data in each column add more points, if at all, that you consider reflects your ways of learning as a teacher.

3. Reflect upon your school context and list tentative suggestions as to the type of professional development activities you consider would be effective learning for you and other teachers at your career stage.

Group Work

Join with teachers from your career stage and discuss:

1. Your learner profile

2. The activities you have listed and how they may relate to the school's culture

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MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Leading Teacher

Key areas for learning	How learning is prioritised	How and in what ways they learn	Desired professional development activities
• whatever they needed to learn to assist their staff • how to assist their staff to set teaching/classroom goals • teaching effectively from a Christian perspective • what makes an effective leader • exploring pedagogical approaches related to subject area • refining pastoral care approaches at school level • researching best practice in ICT integration • Australian Curriculum rationale for changes • understanding the school's ethos more deeply so this could be taught to other teachers and students	Learning is prioritised: • to meet school goals for middle management set by the principal • according to what they perceived their staff needed to learn in relation to pedagogy, ICT integration, student learning • according to the needs of others in the school as a first priority • in relation to how they can model valued teacher behaviours within the school community • as a result of considering school strategic goals • based on the needs of others • according to external expectations – NSW Board of Studies syllabi • proactively; setting their learning goals to meet the needs of others, but not in relation to assisting others to set their own learning goals • would like dedicated mentoring to assist with prioritising their own learning	Learn through: • any way that would assist them to "deliver" on the school's strategic goals • conferences for leaders • higher level study • private bible study and prayer and using this to reflect upon their role as leading teachers in the community, and to inspire improvement in performance • regular personal reflection • discussions with the principal • networking with leaders at similar schools • considering the school's values and aligning thinking to these • listening and working with executive staff • discussions with fellow middle leaders • a mix of both individual and collegial learning around the same topic • individual directed reading	
Add more information relevant to you if desired		Group thoughts	

MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Executive Leader

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to allow teachers to individually reflect upon themselves as learners, using the data generated by the study about how teachers learn at each career stage in their school contexts. From this data, teachers at Maxvale College can select which criteria applies most to them, and add other information if desired, enabling them to generate a personalised learner profile.

The learner profile can then be considered in relation to the unique school context of Maxvale College to assist teachers to generate information on what style of professional development they would like to see occur at the school for each career stage, within a school-based professional development program. In this way, both horizontal and vertical data is generated for the school which can be used in the school's future planning.

Instructions

Individual Work

On the Learner Profile sheet for your continuum level:

1. Highlight any points, if at all, listed in each column (key areas for learning, how learning is prioritised and how and in what ways they learn) that resonate as correct for you.

2. Underneath the data in each column add more points, if at all, that you consider reflects your ways of learning as a teacher.

3. Reflect upon your school context and list tentative suggestions as to the type of professional development activities you consider would be effective learning for you and other teachers at your career stage.

Group Work

Join with teachers from your career stage and discuss:

1. Your learner profile

2. The activities you have listed and how they may relate to the school's culture

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MAXVALE COLLEGE TEACHER LEARNER PROFILE

Executive Leader

Key areas for learning	How learning is prioritised	How and in what ways they learn	Desired professional development activities
• according to school goals and priorities • research for school projects/initiatives • personal faith and the impact on leadership and service • assigned by the principal on a regular basis • personal faith and how to embed this into school ethos • effective leadership literature • external requirements impacting on the school including curriculum, student duty of care, work and safety, local council, teacher accreditation bodies	Learning is prioritised: • according to school ethos, priorities, needs, effectiveness and strategic goals • to improve their individual performance *"we are in the job to become specialists in our leadership area so we can lead and teach others"* • according to prayer and meditation • according to their own learning plan which had been presented and discussed at executive level • according to the needs of others, including the parent body • with staff requests and needs in mind • as a result of reflection • so roles can be fulfilled over the short term • in relation to the needs of others • according to statutory and legal requirements • according to school council requests	Learn through: • directed reading • postgraduate study • professional association membership • service *"learn more to give more, and in giving, learn"* • faith retreats • attending Chapel • reading about the school movement and broader ethos • deep thinking and reflection • reading the Bible, devotions and church sermons • explicit planning • autonomous, experiential and collegial • hands-on workshops • mentoring others • in any way that will assist others in the school community	
Add more information relevant to you if desired		Group thoughts	

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Appendix 9.4b

MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

TEACHER SURVEY: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

TEACHER FEEDBACK

Listed below are ten aspects of school community culture that relate to the planning, content, implementation and evaluation of school based professional learning. Please circle a number which corresponds to your chosen comment.

Thinking about the way in which your school plans for, implements, coordinates and evaluates professional development opportunities for teachers, rank how well you think your school does the following, if at all, over a one year period.

1. Strategic alignment (Teacher PD is explicitly aligned with school goals)

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

2. Allocates sufficient resources

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

3. Consideration of annual professional development content is well planned in advance

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

4. Implementation of PD throughout the school is effective

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

5. There is explicit delivery of PD which provides learning to teachers across their career continuum

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

6. Teacher accreditation programs are strong

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

7. Provision of PD which encourages teacher collaboration, collegiality and commitment occurs regularly

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

8. Provision of PD for leaders to build their knowledge about effective leadership

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

9. The school's culture is supportive of, and promotes teacher learning

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

10. Evaluation of the school's PD program is regular

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

Appendix 9.4c

MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

CAREER STAGE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

TEACHER FEEDBACK

Instructions

1. **Tick which career stage applies to your group**

This feedback is from teachers at the following career stage:

☐Early Career teacher

☐Experienced teacher

☐Expert teacher

☐Leading teacher

☐Executive leader

2. **List professional development activities that you consider will assist teachers at this career stage to learn in the Maxvale College context. Note how the activities listed are suitable and beneficial to the culture at Maxvale College in the second column.**

Suits our learner profile	How this suits the school context

APPENDIX 9.5

Maxvale College My Thoughts Feedback Sheet

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MAXVALE COLLEGE WORKSHOP

MY THOUGHTS FEEDBACK SHEET

4. Have there been any surprises today in the data presented about teacher learning across the career continuum in the school context?
    a. About teacher learning?

    b. About school context?

5. What have you learnt that is new or different about yourself as a learner and/or your colleagues as learners?

6. What does what you have learnt mean for further planning of the whole-school professional development program at Maxvale College?

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APPENDIX 11.1

Study Findings

STUDY FINDINGS

1. FINDINGS - THE CAREER CONTINUUM AND TEACHER LEARNING

The horizontal dimension of teacher learning - whole school learning

Chapter 12 (Findings 1 - 10)

Finding 1

From the eight modes of learning drawn from the literature and featured in the teacher questionnaire, three preferred modes of learning emerged with common results across the three schools: learning within the school context, learning through collegial conversations, and learning through feedback from students and colleagues.

Finding 2

Within each of these common modes of learning, the different context of each school was seen to significantly shape the way that teachers did and did not learn in these ways.

Finding 3

Teacher learning within their schools is complex. Generalisations about how teachers learn in modes nominated in the literature as key ways of learning should be used with caution within school contexts when planning their professional development.

Finding 4

What a school emphasises as important ways of learning, and teaches its staff in relation to a mode of learning, affects the ways in which teachers can access that mode of learning and grow in its use. Teachers will use particular ways of learning to the best of their ability, and find ways to use these modes within the school context, but can be limited by what the school does or does not do.

Finding 5

Teacher perceptions of how they learn within a particular mode of learning are quite different according to the career stage of the teacher. Therefore, making generalisations or assumptions about the usefulness of a mode of learning across all career stages in a school, may be unhelpful.

Finding 6

Knowing, understanding and being respectful about where teachers are up to in their ways of learning, within a particular mode of learning, could be an important factor for schools to consider when planning professional development in a school. Sensitivity and empathy may be required as important approaches when implementing professional development sessions built around particular modes of learning, to ensure that teachers at all career stages are catered for appropriately.

Finding 7

Teachers held their schools responsible for the quality of their learning in particular modes of teacher learning. They also made judgements about the level of authenticity that a school had about their learning, based on what they saw the school doing to facilitate and make time for particular modes of learning within the school. They tended to attribute blame to their schools if they did not have time to implement a mode of learning that they felt they were expected to engage in, or that was important to them.

Finding 8

Some modes of learning were regarded by teachers as a part of their personal learning style and transferrable to other schools.

Finding 9

Although there were a range of commonalities and differences amongst teachers across the schools in relation to modes of learning, teachers unanimously and consistently cited a lack of time as their main barrier to learning.

Finding 10

It emerged in each school that school context and ethos were key determining factors in how teachers learn in the school.

The horizontal dimension of teacher learning - teacher career-stage learning

Chapter 13 (Findings 11 – 16)

Finding 11

Common teacher learner profiles at the five career stages emerged across the three case study schools.

Finding 12

The study revealed just how qualitatively different the learning was at each of the career stages, both in what teachers responded to, what they tended to dislike, and what they observed as being ineffectual for them at that particular career stage.

Finding 13

It emerged that the study had provided participant teachers at all schools with a wider vocabulary and deeper understanding of teacher career-stage learning that then enabled them to reflect more comprehensively on themselves as learners, both individually and collectively, in the school setting. They also exhibited a keen interest in learning more from teachers at other career stages.

Finding 14

Teacher learning across career stages emerged as the hidden curriculum in all schools. Teachers knew that their learning was important to them both personally and professionally, and to their capacity to enhance the learning of students. However, they knew very little about career-stage learning and wondered why it was not a well discussed topic within their schools, or transparently embedded into their schools' professional development programs.

Finding 15

Significant differences in teacher learning profiles at each career stage were also identified that could be directly attributed to the impact of the school context on teachers as learners.

Finding 16

Within the overall literature, while attention has been paid to the career path trajectory of teachers, less attention has been paid to the nature of, and the differentiations between, the learning of each of the career stages of that trajectory.

2. FINDINGS - SCHOOL PLANNING FOR TEACHER LEARNING

The vertical dimension of school planning for teacher learning

Chapter 14 (Findings 17 – 25)

Finding 17:

Each case study school was unsure about how to better evaluate their existing professional development program and plan for improvement. They were keen to engage with the study as a possible means of starting this process.

Finding 18

Teacher professional development planning, implementation and evaluation were found to be significantly different in each school.

Finding 19

Each school's needs around the planning, implementation and evaluation of their program was different as a result of their unique school contexts.

Finding 20

The different ways in which the schools in the study planned and coordinated their teacher professional development programs impacted upon teacher learning differently in each school.

Finding 21

Teachers became accustomed to what the school planned, coordinated and provided in relation to the school's professional development program. They accepted what was offered

and adjusted their expectations as learners accordingly to align with, and fit into, the school culture in which they worked.

Finding 22

In particular, the ways in which schools coordinated their professional development programs emerged as a topic of great interest to teachers and was also found to significantly impact on teacher expectations of their learning.

Finding 23

A significant nexus emerged between the horizontal dimension of career-stage learning and the vertical dimension of whole-school planning, coordination and evaluation of teacher professional development and learning. Understanding this nexus, and using it to inform the professional development program for teachers, could be the core to improving the learning of teachers in the school context.

Finding 24

To optimise the planning of professional development in schools, the school needs to first learn how its teachers learn at each career stage within the school, and from this, draw out implications for the professional development program.

Finding 25

Generalisations about career-stage learning, similar to what had been found in relation to generalisations about modes of teacher learning, cannot easily be made and then be expected to be transferrable to another school.

3. FINDINGS - SCHOOL CONTEXT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Chapter **15 (Findings 26 – 43)**

Finding 26

School context emerged as a significant factor in the findings for both the horizontal and vertical dimensions.

Finding 27

There was a clear connection between the way in which the horizontal and vertical dimensions acted together in school contexts to impact upon teacher learning.

Finding 28

School context and ethos impact significantly on teacher learning.

Finding 29

The ethos of each school set the tone and substance of what was thought and articulated about teachers as learners, and how this was then practically expressed and acted upon within the school culture.

Finding 30

These messages became a part of the culture in relation to teachers as learners and shaped what teachers thought about themselves as learners, including the vocabulary they used to describe their learning. The ethos and culture then influenced what they regarded to be the purpose of their learning, the place of learning in their daily practice, what they aspired to learn, and expected to learn.

Finding 31

What teachers believed about themselves as learners, continued to shape their experience as learners. This appeared to be self-perpetuating and seemed to influence who the teacher became as a learner.

Finding 32

Teachers also made assumptions about each other in relation to how they learn, their expectations of learning and aspirations about learning, which were based on the school's beliefs about teachers and their learning. They passed on these assumptions to teachers in other career stages, as well as their own. This affected in turn, the teacher learning culture of the school.

Finding 33

The school's mindset about teacher learning, formed as a result of the context and ethos of each school, significantly influenced the focus, scope and content of the teacher professional development program. This then directly influenced what teachers learnt in some areas of practice, compared to others.

Finding 34

No case study school at the time of the study was attempting to provide content in their professional development program that would meet the particular learning needs or preferences of teachers at each career stage at the school. Also, none of the schools were attempting to use career-stage learning holistically in the professional development program to harness the capability of teachers at various career stages to provide content that may support the learning of those in other career stages.

Finding 35

The context and ethos of the school was found to impact upon all areas of the vertical dimension as it related to whole-school planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's goals and practices in relation to teacher professional learning, and the resulting focus, scope and content of the internal professional development program. This influenced teacher learning across all career stages.

Finding 36

Principals believed in the ethos of their school on both personal and professional levels. They committed themselves to deeply understanding, strengthening and promoting this ethos throughout the school.

Finding 37

The school principal believed their role to be to uphold and extend the ethos of the school. What they believed affected the culture which developed in relation to teachers as learners.

Finding 38

The principals believed that the stronger the understanding and commitment of teachers to the school ethos, and the more that teachers aligned their learning with the school's educational goals stemming from this ethos, the more effective their school would be.

Finding 39

It was the principal that determined the school's mindset about teacher learning, as noted in Findings 33 and 37, which formed as a result of the context and ethos of each school, and was found to significantly influence teacher learning and the school's professional development program. Principals could be regarded as the first layer of leadership ethos influence on teacher learning in the school context.

Finding 40

Executive staff were found to be instrumental in ensuring that the school's ethos, as espoused by the principal, and supported by the executive, was further forwarded in the school's cultural practices in relation to teacher learning. They could be regarded as a second layer of leadership ethos influence on teacher learning.

Finding 41

The effect of school ethos on teacher learning was further enhanced by leading teachers (middle managers) who had an impact on teachers as they learned to draw upon the school's ethos to both inspire and inform everyday practices in the school context. Middle leaders could be regarded as a third layer of leadership ethos influence on the teacher and their learning.

Finding 42

Three levels of school leadership: principal, executive and middle leaders, were found to have impacted on teacher learning in specific school contexts. This was done through promoting the permeation of school ethos into the cultural practices of the school, including teacher professional development and learning.

Finding 43

The founders of the school community in the schools studied set the ethos and values of the school, within its unique context, which whether consciously or unconsciously, purposefully or not, included values and ideas about teachers as learners, and teacher learning practices.

Principals who were passionate about the school's ethos were employed to lead the school and ensure that the beliefs and values of the school, including those about teacher learning, permeated the school's culture. This influenced all horizontal and vertical aspects of teacher learning, and the school's professional development program in the school, which in turn impacted upon teacher learning at all career stages.

Further, this cycle of principal influence permeated the distributed leadership of the school, as principals encouraged, motivated and expected their executive and leading teachers to personally assist and professionally contribute towards making the school's ethos "live" through practical out workings in the school's culture, including those which related to the learning of teachers. Within this context and culture, and because teachers also believed in the ethos of the school, teachers tended to align themselves with the school's beliefs about teachers as learners and adjusted their expectations about their learning, both individually and collectively, to enable and accommodate a synergy at school level.

4. FINDINGS – FACILITATION OF SCHOOL-CONTEXTUALISED CONVERSATIONS ABOUT TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Chapter 16 (Findings 44 – 63)

Finding 44

As indicated at the start of the study, knowing how to initiate conversations about teacher professional learning is complex, with very little in the literature which addressed this need.

Finding 45

Using frameworks to facilitate learning conversations appeared to benefit teachers in assisting them to reflect upon the nature of their learning. It also enabled them to learn more about how teachers learn at each career stage, and how their colleagues learn within their school context.

Finding 46

The voluntary and confidential nature of the study, and the co-researcher approach adopted to facilitate learning conversations, appeared to have supported teachers as learners to evaluate and make comment upon the school's approaches to supporting them as learners, and the school's existing professional development program.

Finding 47

Reflective practice was found to be a powerful means for improving teacher professional development at the schools. It allowed data to emerge that could be used for school improvement in both a greater understanding of career-stage learning and to the school's professional development program.

Finding 48

Adopting a participant observer and co-researcher approach enhanced the researcher's capacity to understand where schools were up to on their teacher learning journeys. It was found that the researcher as facilitator of reflection, planning and further action was beneficial to supporting teachers and schools as they endeavoured to improve their professional development programs.

Finding 49

A holistic approach which included an understanding and respect for the context and ethos of the school was crucial to facilitating helpful and useful conversations about teacher learning. It enabled whole-school discussions to ensue, which facilitated planning that had the potential to change and improve the teacher learning culture at the school.

Finding 50

A holistic approach modelled by the researcher in the school facilitated learning conversations and assisted schools to better understand how their individual context and ethos impacted upon the learning of their teachers. This assisted schools to not only identify, but also understand the reasons for the current strengths and weaknesses in their planning, coordination, content and evaluation of the school's professional development program.

Finding 51

School-contextualised and generated frameworks based on good practice in the literature can assist schools to reflect more deeply on their practices in relation to teacher learning and their professional development programs.

Finding 52

As a result of developing frameworks based on school generated data about teacher learning, both horizontal and vertical data can be produced by a school to enable them to improve their professional development programs in contextual and culturally appropriate ways.

Finding 53

More than strategic alignment or setting strategic goals for teacher professional development is required to improve school practice. An understanding of teachers as learners, across the career continuum as they occur in a particular school context, is required.

Finding 54

Improvement to the school's programs resulted from discussions at the grass roots level of teachers, as they discussed their own learning and each other's learning in career stages.

Finding 55

School-contextualised frameworks developed for teachers to use to drill down into their own learning characteristics, needs and preferences, based on data about career-stage learning from school contexts, were well received by teachers at all career stages. They considered them to be relevant and useful in enabling them to engage in individual deep reflection and generated rich and meaningful whole-school discussion about teacher learning. This led to effective planning for improvement to the school's professional development program.

Finding 56

Action research cycles tailored to the individual context of each school were useful in generating improvement from the bottom up and top down, as all teachers from early career through to executive contributed to contextualised conversations about teacher learning and the evaluation and improvement to the school's professional development program

Finding 57

The action research approach proved useful in facilitating conversations which initiated processes of data gathering, reflection and further planning in the schools.

Finding 58

Teacher learning about themselves can be improved by engaging in collaborative and non-judgemental conversations about their learning in their workplace. These conversations were regarded as supportive and edifying by teachers, who said that they enabled them to reflect upon their own learning, understand themselves more deeply and learn more about how teachers learn across career stages.

Finding 59

Initiating individual and whole-school learning conversations with staff across the breadth of career stages in a school, not only helped teachers to articulate their needs, but also enabled those who were responsible for the strategic direction of the school to lead improvement in teacher learning based on whole-school collegial discussion.

Finding 60

The schools in the study regarded the process of facilitation of learning conversations as having a positive impact on staff collegiality, and ultimately on the teacher learning culture of the school, as all contributed towards the common purpose of school-based improvement to teacher learning at the school.

Finding 61

The nature of the conversations that school leaders promote within schools about professional learning is vital to establishing the priorities, structure and culture in which learning takes place.

Finding 62

Being able to use the literature as a good basis for contextualised conversations about professional learning was more effective to encouraging school improvement than using it to say to schools what they should or should not do, without regard to their capacity to comprehend or respond.

Finding 63

Out of this study emerged a gap in the theory about how research can forward school improvement of teacher professional learning. Feedback from the case study schools indicated that there was a definable step forward in their thinking and planning for improvement to teacher professional development and learning as a result of the study, which would be ongoing and could be culture changing. Therefore, research of this nature is to be encouraged.

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APPENDIX 13.1

Comparison of How Teachers Learn Across Career Stages at the Case Study Schools

COMPARISON OF HOW TEACHERS LEARN ACROSS THE CAREER STAGES AT THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

Legend: BC – Brooklee College; JG – Jackston Grammar; MC – Maxvale College.

Early Career Teachers		
Aspect of learning	**Commonalities Across Schools**	**Differences Across Schools**
Key areas for learning	• improving and consolidating their teaching • a focus on classroom management • completion of teacher accreditation requirements • networking with other teachers outside the school • learning content of syllabi	• developing resources for students requiring enrichment (JG) • managing co – curricular and sport content and disciplining students in these different settings (BC)
How learning is prioritised	Learning is prioritised: • mainly alone • randomly • according to immediate school requirements (how to conduct a parent interview, how to write student reports) • according to direct requests from head teachers (how to write programs)	• through accreditation processes and lesson observation feedback (BC)
How and in what ways they learn	Learn through: • meeting the "now' need/request • copying other teachers in the way they learn • finding mentors to learn from in the everyday school context • learning styles emerging – hands-on, visual, reading/writing	• assigned mentors from within stage/faculty (BC) • teaching provided by specialists on the school site (BC) • being delegated responsibilities in stage/faculty/pastoral system (BC) • spiritual learning outside school (JG) • reading the literature as previously had done at university but little time to do so (JG)
Least preferred learning	• long sessions about school ethos, history or goals • any PD when they have a lot of marking or reporting to do	

Experienced Teachers		
Aspect of learning	**Commonalities Across Schools**	**Differences Across Schools**
Key areas for learning	The focus was still on the classroom but there was a shift towards learning that would enhance their teaching practice including: • mastering subject content and pedagogical approaches • using tools for learning, including ICT • diversifying subject knowledge • developing more effective resources • learning more about Australian Curriculum • developing purposeful and engaging lessons	• starting to use and analyse assessments to plan further student learning (BC)
How learning is prioritised	Learning is prioritised: • with some planning –within a known ebb and flow of school expectations • over a longer time frame than the immediate • by using reflection on their teaching • according to school needs	• as a result of informal discussions/consultation with direct leaders (middle managers) (BC) • according to the needs of other staff with whom they work, so they can assist the team (JG) • in relation to responding to external pressures (MC) • according to the ethos of the school • to enhance student personal development (MC) • quickly, due to lack of time (MC)
How and in what ways they learn	Learn through: • being aware of the need to learn to enable growth in expertise • deep self reflection • a growing confidence in teaching themselves • attending subject based PD sessions outside the school – expert knowledge and networking • visual and hands-on workshops • reading, particularly university material Some wanted: • specific targets for learning provided by the school • follow-up, appraisal and feedback about their learning and performance	• using experimentation and innovation; were creative in their approach (BC) • "deep" discussions with colleagues (JG) • listening to academic lectures in their subject area and/or pedagogical approaches • more structured mentoring program (JG and MC) • more networking opportunities (MC)
Least preferred learning	• anything already known; preferred new ideas, challenge and experimentation	

Expert Teachers		
Aspect of learning	**Commonalities Across Schools**	**Differences Across Schools**
Key areas for learning	• enhancing student learning by closely evaluating student results • initiating or substantially contributing to stage/faculty programming • investigating pedagogies • ICT use and integration • ICT use for student assessment tasks • assessing the pastoral needs of students • extending differentiation strategies • being abreast of Australian Curriculum changes and assisting others to incorporate these into their programs and teaching • enriching subject knowledge	• engaging in teacher accreditation at the higher levels (BC) • improving literacy and numeracy strategies (JG) • how families can support student learning (MC) • how to relate well to parents (MC)
How learning is prioritised	• with a focus on the classroom and their students to enable the building of collegiality, which was a priority • teachers at this career level were eager to mention perceived barriers to their capacity to prioritise • overloading of work and duties sometimes meant that priorities for learning were not set • a low tolerance for professional development that did not relate to their priorities • a low tolerance for professional development that did not relate to their priorities:	• around setting specific goals and then trying to find professional development to assist them to meet these goals (BC) • primarily alone, through personal reflection (MC) • with school mission in mind • overloading of work and duties sometimes meant that priorities for learning were not set (MC)
How and in what ways they learn	• autonomous and confident planning • their own experiences • specific goal setting to improve practices that directly enhance student learning • directed reading • postgraduate study • browsing the internet • strategic school discussions • working with colleagues on particular tasks or projects • attending conferences	• collegiality - assisting others, which they enjoy, including practicum students and colleagues, to improve their teaching and learning (BC) • whatever mode is available at the school (MC) • completing courses during school breaks (MC)
Least preferred learning	• anything already known or generalised professional development sessions	

Leading Teachers		
Aspect of learning	**Commonalities Across Schools**	**Differences Across Schools**
Key areas for learning	• whatever they needed to learn to assist their staff • how to assist their staff to set teaching/classroom goals • what makes an effective leader • exploring pedagogical approaches related to subject area • Australian Curriculum rationale for changes	• researching best practice in ICT integration (BC) • teaching effectively from a Christian perspective (JG) • refining pastoral care approaches at school level (MC) • understanding the school's ethos more deeply so this could be taught to other teachers and students (MC)
How learning is prioritised	• according to what they perceived their staff needed to learn in relation to pedagogy, ICT integration, student learning • based on the needs of others *"I regularly ask teachers in my team 'What do you need to know?' and then endeavour to supply this"* • according to external expectations – Board of Studies NSW syllabi • would like dedicated mentoring to assist with prioritising their own learning	• to meet school goals for middle management set by the principal (BC) • as a result of considering school strategic goals (BC) • proactively; setting their learning goals to meet the needs of others, but not in relation to assisting others to set their own learning goals (JG) • according to the needs of others in the school as a first priority(MC) • in relation to how they can model valued teacher behaviours within the school community (MC) •
How and in what ways they learn	• any way that would assist them to "deliver" on the school's strategic goals • conferences for leaders • higher level study • regular personal reflection • discussions with fellow middle leaders • a mix of both individual and collegial learning around the same topic • individual directed reading	• listening and working with executive staff (BC) • private bible study and prayer and using this to reflect upon their role as leading teachers in the community, and to inspire improvement in performance (JG) • considering the school's values and aligning thinking to these (JG) • discussions with the principal (MC) • networking with leaders at similar schools (MC)
Least preferred learning	• mass presentations to large groups of staff about information they have already been told or have learnt about in private study	

Executive Leaders		
Aspect of learning	**Commonalities Across Schools**	**Differences Across schools**
Key areas for learning	• according to school goals and priorities • research for school projects/initiatives • effective leadership literature • external requirements impacting on the school including curriculum, student duty of care, work and safety, local council, teacher accreditation bodies	• personal faith and the impact on leadership and service (JG) • assigned by the principal on a regular basis (MC) • personal faith and how to embed this into school ethos (MC)
How learning is prioritised	• according to school ethos, priorities, needs, effectiveness and strategic goals • to improve their individual performance *"We are in the job to become specialists in our leadership area so we can lead and teach others"* • with staff requests and needs in mind • as a result of reflection *"Think deeply, read, write, look for connections and develop my learning over time"* • according to statutory and legal requirements • according to school council requests	• according to their own learning plan which had been presented and discussed at executive level (BC) • so roles can be fulfilled over the short term (JG) • according to prayer and meditation (JG and MC) • according to the needs of others, including the parent body • in relation to the needs of others (MC)
How and in what ways they learn	• directed reading • postgraduate study • professional association membership • deep thinking and reflection • explicit planning • autonomous, experiential and collegial • hands-on workshops • mentoring others • in any way that will assist others in the school community • This group expressed a sense of excitement about their learning	• service *"Learn more to give more, and in giving, learn"* (JG) • reading the bible, devotions and church sermons (JG) • faith retreats (MC) • attending Chapel (MC) • reading about the school movement and broader ethos (MC)
Least preferred learning	• none were noted. Executive staff considered that they needed to attend or run professional development sessions as models of learners and supporters of teacher learning	

APPENDIX 17.1

Using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers for Professional Development and Learning

17.1a The provision of good practice examples of professional development to enhance teacher learning for each Descriptor

17.1b Resources, research and literature recommendations for each Descriptor to facilitate teacher learning

17.1c Using career-stage learning and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to enhance development at each career stage and progression to the next

Please Note:

These Appendix items appear in the thesis in portrait layout for your convenience. However, the original document was produced in landscape layout, to make it easier for study participants to complete.

Appendix 17.1a: The provision of good practice examples of professional development to enhance teacher learning for each Descriptor

"Teacher PD for Learning" inserted into the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Standard 1 : Know students and how they learn								
Focus	Graduate		Proficient		Highly Accomplished		Lead	
	Descriptor	Teacher PD for Learning	Descriptor	Teacher PD for Learning	Descriptor	Teacher PD for Learning	Descriptor	Teacher PD for Learning
Physical and social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	1.1.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning		1.1.2 Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students' physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning		1.1.3 Select from a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to suit the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students		1.1.4 Lead colleagues to select and develop teaching strategies to improve student learning using knowledge of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	
Understand how students learn	1.2.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching		1.2.2 Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn		1.2.3 Expand understanding of how students learn using research and workplace knowledge		1.2.4 Lead processes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programs using research and workplace knowledge about how students learn	
Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	1.3.1 Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds		1.3.2 Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds		1.3.3 Support colleagues to develop effective teaching strategies that address the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds		1.3.4 Evaluate and revise school learning and teaching programs, using expert and community knowledge and experience, to meet the needs for students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	

- **Continue for each Descriptor in the Australian Professional Standards for Teacher**

Appendix 17.1b: Resources, research and literature recommendations for each Descriptor to facilitate teacher learning

"Recommendations for Teacher Learning" inserted into the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Standard 1 : Know students and how they learn		
Proficient		
Focus	Descriptor	Recommendations for Teacher Learning (Resources, Research and Literature)
Physical and social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	1.1.2 Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students' physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning	
	1.2.2 Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn	
	1.3.2 Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	

- **Continue for each Descriptor in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**

Appendix 17.1c: Using career-stage learning and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to enhance development at each career stage and progression to the next

Example: Teacher Learning Progression from Proficient Teacher to Highly Accomplished Teacher

Standard 1 – Know Students and how they learn		
Proficient Teacher		
Descriptor	PD Suggestions to Master Descriptors	Teacher Reflection on Learning in Relation to the Descriptors
1.1.2 - Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students' physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning.		
1.2.2 - Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn		
1.3.2 – etc.		



Transition from Proficient Teacher to Highly Accomplished Teacher	
School Identified PD Suggestions	Teacher Identified PD Suggestions



Standard 1 – Know Students and how they learn		
Highly Accomplished Teacher		
Descriptor	PD Suggestions to Master Descriptors	Teacher Reflection on Learning in Relation to the Descriptors
1.1.3 - Select from a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to suit the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students		
1.2.3 - Expand understanding of how students learn using research and workplace knowledge		
1.3.3 etc.		

- **Continue for each Descriptor, and for each career stage to the next, using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**

APPENDIX 17.2

Australian National Professional Standards for Teachers

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AITSL is funded by the Australian Government

aitsl Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

February 2011

Formerly the National Professional Standards for Teachers

Work on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) commenced under the auspices of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in 2009. Significant work was undertaken by the National Standards Sub-group of the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC) during 2009-10. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) assumed responsibility for validating and finalising the Standards in July 2010.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers were endorsed by MCEECDYA in December 2010. AITSL appreciates Ministers' commitment to quality teaching and to the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality, and looks forward to continuing work with them on these important national reforms.

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MCEECDYA Secretariat, PO Box 202, Carlton South, VIC 3053, Australia.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership was formed to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership with funding provided by the Australian Government.

Preamble

The crucial role of the teacher

Teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and productive lives. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards)* reflect and build on national and international evidence that a teacher's effectiveness has a powerful impact on students,[1] with broad consensus that teacher quality is the single most important in-school factor influencing student achievement.[2] Effective teachers can be a source of inspiration and, equally importantly, provide a dependable and consistent influence on young people as they make choices about further education, work and life.

As stated in the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality[3] and the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,[4] improving teacher quality is considered an essential reform as part of Australia's efforts to improve student attainment and ensure it has a world class system of education. 'The greatest resource in Australian schools is our teachers. They account for the vast majority of expenditure in school education and have the greatest impact on student learning, far outweighing the impact of any other education program or policy'.[5]

Internationally[6] and locally, education systems are developing professional standards for teachers to attract, develop, recognise and retain quality teachers. 'High performing school systems, though strikingly different in construct and context, [maintain] a strong focus on improving instruction because of its direct impact upon student achievement'.[7]

Professional standards for teachers

Developing professional standards for teachers that can guide professional learning, practice and engagement facilitates the improvement of teacher quality and contributes positively to the public standing of the profession. The key elements of quality teaching are described in the Standards. They articulate what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

The Standards and their descriptors represent an analysis of effective, contemporary practice by teachers throughout Australia. Their development included a synthesis of the descriptions of teachers' knowledge, practice and professional engagement used by teacher accreditation and registration authorities, employers and professional associations. Each descriptor has been informed by teachers' understanding of what is required at different stages of their careers. An extensive validation process involving almost 6,000 teachers ensured that each descriptor was shaped by the profession.

> ***"The greatest resource in Australian schools is our teachers. They account for the vast majority of expenditure in school education and have the greatest impact on student learning, far outweighing the impact of any other education program or policy."***

The Standards support the Melbourne Declaration,[8] which describes aspirations for all young Australians for the next decade. This commits Australian Education Ministers to the specific educational goals that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence and that all young Australians will become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.[9] 'All Australian governments, universities, school sectors and individual schools have a responsibility to work together to support high-quality teaching and school leadership, including by enhancing pre-service[10] teacher education'.[11]

* Prior to December 2012, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers were known as the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Purpose of the Standards

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students. The Standards do this by providing a framework which makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public.

Teacher standards also inform the development of professional learning goals, provide a framework by which teachers can judge the success of their learning and assist self-reflection and self-assessment.[12] Teachers can use the Standards to recognise their current and developing capabilities, professional aspirations and achievements.

Standards contribute to the professionalisation of teaching and raise the status of the profession. They could also be used as the basis for a professional accountability model,[13] helping to ensure that teachers can demonstrate appropriate levels of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are organised into four career stages and guide the preparation, support and development of teachers. The stages reflect the continuum of a teacher's developing professional expertise from undergraduate preparation through to being an exemplary classroom practitioner and a leader in the profession.

The Graduate Standards will underpin the accreditation of initial teacher education programs. Graduates from accredited programs qualify for registration[14] in each state and territory.

The Proficient Standards will be used to underpin processes for full registration as a teacher and to support the requirements of nationally consistent teacher registration.

The Standards at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead will inform voluntary certification.[15]

Organisation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers comprise seven Standards which outline what teachers should know and be able to do. The Standards are interconnected, interdependent and overlapping.

The Standards are grouped into three domains of teaching; Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement. In practice, teaching draws on aspects of all three domains.

Within each Standard focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. These are then separated into Descriptors at four professional career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

Domains of teaching	Standards	Focus areas and descriptors
Professional Knowledge	1. Know students and how they learn 2. Know the content and how to teach it	Refer to the Standard at each career stage
Professional Practice	3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning 4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments 5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning	
Professional Engagement	6. Engage in professional learning 7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community	

Organisation of the Standards

Domains of teaching

Professional Knowledge

Teachers draw on a body of professional knowledge and research to respond to the needs of their students within their educational contexts.

Teachers know their students well, including their diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds. They know how the experiences that students bring to their classroom affect their continued learning. They know how to structure their lessons to meet the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of their students.

Teachers know the content of their subjects and curriculum. They know and understand the fundamental concepts, structure and enquiry processes relevant to programs they teach. Teachers understand what constitutes effective, developmentally appropriate strategies in their learning and teaching programs and use this knowledge to make the content meaningful to students.

Through their teaching practice, teachers develop students' literacy and numeracy within their subject areas. They are also able to use Information and Communication Technology to contextualise and expand their students' modes and breadth of learning.

Professional Practice

Teachers are able to make learning engaging and valued. They are able to create and maintain safe, inclusive and challenging learning environments and implement fair and equitable behaviour management plans. They use sophisticated communication techniques.

Teachers have a repertoire of effective teaching strategies and use them to implement well-designed teaching programs and lessons. They regularly evaluate all aspects of their teaching practice to ensure they are meeting the learning needs of their students. They interpret and use student assessment data to diagnose barriers to learning and to challenge students to improve their performance.

They operate effectively at all stages of the teaching and learning cycle, including planning for learning and assessment, developing learning programs, teaching, assessing, providing feedback on student learning and reporting to parents/carers.

Professional Engagement

Teachers model effective learning. They identify their own learning needs and analyse, evaluate and expand their professional learning both collegially and individually.

Teachers demonstrate respect and professionalism in all their interactions with students, colleagues, parents/carers and the community. They are sensitive to the needs of parents/carers and can communicate effectively with them about their children's learning.

Teachers value opportunities to engage with their school communities within and beyond the classroom to enrich the educational context for students. They understand the links between school, home and community in the social and intellectual development of their students.

The Australian Professional Standards For Teachers

The seven Standards identify what is expected of teachers within three domains of teaching. Teachers' demonstration of the Standards will occur within their specific teaching context at their stage of expertise and reflect the learning requirements of the students they teach.

Domains of teaching	Standards
Standard 1:	1. Know students and how they learn
Standard 2:	2. Know the content and how to teach it
Standard 3:	3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
Standard 4:	4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
Standard 5:	5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Standard 6:	6. Engage in professional learning
Standard 7:	7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Focus areas and descriptors

The focus areas and descriptors identify the components of quality teaching at each career stage. They constitute agreed characteristics of the complex process of teaching. An effective teacher is able to integrate and apply knowledge, practice and professional engagement as outlined in the descriptors to create teaching environments in which learning is valued.

Professional capability at four career stages

The four career stages in the Standards provide benchmarks to recognise the professional growth of teachers throughout their careers. The descriptors across the four career stages represent increasing levels of knowledge, practice and professional engagement for teachers. Progression through the stages describes a growing understanding, applied with increasing sophistication across a broader and more complex range of situations.

Graduate teachers

Graduate teachers have completed a qualification that meets the requirements of a nationally accredited program of initial teacher education. The award of this qualification means that they have met the Graduate Standards.

On successful completion of their initial teacher education, graduate teachers possess the requisite knowledge and skills to plan for and manage learning programs for students. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the implications for learning of students' physical, cultural, social, linguistic and intellectual characteristics. They understand principles of inclusion and strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

Graduate teachers have an understanding of their subject/s, curriculum content and teaching strategies. They are able to design lessons that meet the requirements of curriculum, assessment and reporting. They demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice. They know how to select and apply timely and appropriate types of feedback to improve students' learning.

Graduate teachers demonstrate knowledge of practical strategies to create rapport with students and manage student behaviour. They know how to support students' wellbeing and safety, working within school and system curriculum and legislative requirements.

They understand the importance of working ethically, collaborating with colleagues, external professional and community representatives, and contributing to the life of the school. Teachers understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers and recognise their role in their children's education.

Proficient teachers

Proficient teachers meet the requirements for full registration through demonstrating achievement of the seven Standards at this level.

These teachers create effective teaching and learning experiences for their students. They know the unique backgrounds of their students and adjust their teaching to meet their individual needs and diverse cultural, social and linguistic characteristics. They develop safe, positive and productive learning environments where all students are encouraged to participate.

They design and implement engaging teaching programs that meet curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements. They use feedback and assessment to analyse and support their students' knowledge and understanding. Proficient teachers use a range of sources, including student results, to evaluate their teaching and to adjust their programs to better meet student needs.

Proficient teachers are active participants in their profession and with advice from colleagues identify, plan and evaluate their own professional learning needs.

Proficient teachers are team members. They work collaboratively with colleagues; they seek out and are responsive to advice about educational issues affecting their teaching practice. They communicate effectively with their students, colleagues, parents/carers and community members. They behave professionally and ethically in all forums.

Highly Accomplished teachers

Highly Accomplished teachers are recognised as highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners and routinely work independently and collaboratively to improve their own practice and the practice of colleagues. They are knowledgeable and active members of the school.

Highly Accomplished teachers contribute to their colleagues' learning. They may also take on roles that guide, advise or lead others. They regularly initiate and engage in discussions about effective teaching to improve the educational outcomes for their students.

They maximise learning opportunities for their students by understanding their backgrounds and individual characteristics and the impact of those factors on their learning. They provide colleagues, including pre-service teachers, with support and strategies to create positive and productive learning environments.

Highly Accomplished teachers have in-depth knowledge of subjects and curriculum content within their sphere of responsibility. They model sound teaching practices in their teaching areas. They work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning. They keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialist content area or across a range of content areas for generalist teachers.

Highly Accomplished teachers are skilled in analysing student assessment data and use it to improve teaching and learning.

They are active in establishing an environment which maximises professional learning and practice opportunities for colleagues. They monitor their own professional learning needs and align them to the learning needs of students.

They behave ethically at all times. Their interpersonal and presentation skills are highly developed. They communicate effectively and respectfully with students, colleagues, parents/carers and community members.

Lead teachers

Lead teachers are recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and the community as exemplary teachers. They have demonstrated consistent and innovative teaching practice over time. Inside and outside the school they initiate and lead activities that focus on improving educational opportunities for all students. They establish inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of students from different linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They seek to improve their own practice and to share their experience with colleagues.

They are skilled in mentoring teachers and pre-service teachers, using activities that develop knowledge, practice and professional engagement in others. They promote creative, innovative thinking among colleagues.They apply skills and in-depth knowledge and understanding to deliver effective lessons and learning opportunities and share this information with colleagues and pre-service teachers. They describe the relationship between highly effective teaching and learning in ways that inspire colleagues to improve their own professional practice.

They lead processes to improve student performance by evaluating and revising programs, analysing student assessment data and taking account of feedback from parents/carers. This is combined with a synthesis of current research on effective teaching and learning.

They represent the school and the teaching profession in the community. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school.

Conclusion

The development of the Australian Professional Standards for the teaching profession is an integral part of ensuring quality learning and teaching in Australian schools. With their development and implementation, Australian education systems are well placed to be among the best in the world.

These Standards build upon the significant work undertaken previously in Australia. They are a fundamental component of the reforms agreed to in the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and will help to realise the goals and commitments set out in the Melbourne Declaration.

Professional Knowledge

Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn				
Focus area	**Graduate**	**Proficient**	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.	Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students' physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning.	Select from a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to suit the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.	Lead colleagues to select and develop teaching strategies to improve student learning using knowledge of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.
1.2 Understand how students learn	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.	Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn.	Expand understanding of how students learn using research and workplace knowledge.	Lead processes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programs using research and workplace knowledge about how students learn.
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Support colleagues to develop effective teaching strategies that address the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Evaluate and revise school learning and teaching programs, using expert and community knowledge and experience, to meet the needs of students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.	Design and implement effective teaching strategies that are responsive to the local community and cultural setting, linguistic background and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Provide advice and support colleagues in the implementation of effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students using knowledge of and support from community representatives.	Develop teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by engaging in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/carers.
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Develop teaching activities that incorporate differentiated strategies to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Evaluate learning and teaching programs, using student assessment data, that are differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Lead colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching programs differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.	Design and implement teaching activities that support the participation and learning of students with disability and address relevant policy and legislative requirements.	Work with colleagues to access specialist knowledge, and relevant policy and legislation, to develop teaching programs that support the participation and learning of students with disability.	Initiate and lead the review of school policies to support the engagement and full participation of students with disability and ensure compliance with legislative and/or system policies.

Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.	Apply knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area to develop engaging teaching activities.	Support colleagues using current and comprehensive knowledge of content and teaching strategies to develop and implement engaging learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives within the school to evaluate and improve knowledge of content and teaching strategies and demonstrate exemplary teaching of subjects using effective, research-based learning and teaching programs.
2.2 Content selection and organisation	Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.	Organise content into coherent, well-sequenced learning and teaching programs.	Exhibit innovative practice in the selection and organisation of content and delivery of learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives that utilise comprehensive content knowledge to improve the selection and sequencing of content into coherently organised learning and teaching programs.
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting	Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.	Design and implement learning and teaching programs using knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.	Support colleagues to plan and implement learning and teaching programs using contemporary knowledge and understanding of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.	Lead colleagues to develop learning and teaching programs using comprehensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.

Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it				
Focus area	**Graduate**	**Proficient**	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Provide opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Support colleagues with providing opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Lead initiatives to assist colleagues with opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies	Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.	Apply knowledge and understanding of effective teaching strategies to support students' literacy and numeracy achievement.	Support colleagues to implement effective teaching strategies to improve students' literacy and numeracy achievement.	Monitor and evaluate the implementation of teaching strategies within the school to improve students' achievement in literacy and numeracy using research-based knowledge and student data.
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.	Use effective teaching strategies to integrate ICT into learning and teaching programs to make selected content relevant and meaningful.	Model high-level teaching knowledge and skills and work with colleagues to use current ICT to improve their teaching practice and make content relevant and meaningful.	Lead and support colleagues within the school to select and use ICT with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities and content knowledge for all students.

Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
3.1 Establish challenging learning goals	Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.	Set explicit, challenging and achievable learning goals for all students.	Develop a culture of high expectations for all students by modelling and setting challenging learning goals.	Demonstrate exemplary practice and high expectations and lead colleagues to encourage students to pursue challenging goals in all aspects of their education.
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.	Plan and implement well-structured learning and teaching programs or lesson sequences that engage students and promote learning.	Work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify learning and teaching programs to create productive learning environments that engage all students.	Exhibit exemplary practice and lead colleagues to plan, implement and review the effectiveness of their learning and teaching programs to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills.
3.3 Use teaching strategies	Include a range of teaching strategies.	Select and use relevant teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.	Support colleagues to select and apply effective teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.	Work with colleagues to review, modify and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies to enable students to use knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.
3.4 Select and use resources	Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.	Select and/or create and use a range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.	Assist colleagues to create, select and use a wide range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.	Model exemplary skills and lead colleagues in selecting, creating and evaluating resources, including ICT, for application by teachers within or beyond the school.

Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning				
Focus area	**Graduate**	**Proficient**	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
3.5 Use effective classroom communication	Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.	Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student understanding, participation, engagement and achievement.	Assist colleagues to select a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.	Demonstrate and lead by example inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication using collaborative strategies and contextual knowledge to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs	Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.	Evaluate personal teaching and learning programs using evidence, including feedback from students and student assessment data, to inform planning.	Work with colleagues to review current teaching and learning programs using student feedback, student assessment data, knowledge of curriculum and workplace practices.	Conduct regular reviews of teaching and learning programs using multiple sources of evidence including: student assessment data, curriculum documents, teaching practices and feedback from parents/carers, students and colleagues.
3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process	Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.	Plan for appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.	Work with colleagues to provide appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.	Initiate contextually relevant processes to establish programs that involve parents/carers in the education of their children and broader school priorities and activities.

Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
4.1 Support student participation	Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.	Establish and implement inclusive and positive interactions to engage and support all students in classroom activities.	Model effective practice and support colleagues to implement inclusive strategies that engage and support all students.	Demonstrate and lead by example the development of productive and inclusive learning environments across the school by reviewing inclusive strategies and exploring new approaches to engage and support all students.
4.2 Manage classroom activities	Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.	Establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks.	Model and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management to ensure all students are engaged in purposeful activities.	Initiate strategies and lead colleagues to implement effective classroom management and promote student responsibility for learning.
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour	Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.	Manage challenging behaviour by establishing and negotiating clear expectations with students and address discipline issues promptly, fairly and respectfully.	Develop and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of behaviour management strategies using expert knowledge and workplace experience.	Lead and implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues to broaden their range of strategies.

Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments				
Focus area	**Graduate**	**Proficient**	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
4.4 Maintain student safety	Describe strategies that support students' well-being and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.	Ensure students' well-being and safety within school by implementing school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.	Initiate and take responsibility for implementing current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements to ensure student well-being and safety.	Evaluate the effectiveness of student well-being policies and safe working practices using current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements and assist colleagues to update their practices.
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Incorporate strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Model, and support colleagues to develop, strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Review or implement new policies and strategies to ensure the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
5.1 Assess student learning	Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.	Develop, select and use informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies to assess student learning.	Develop and apply a comprehensive range of assessment strategies to diagnose learning needs, comply with curriculum requirements and support colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches to assessment.	Evaluate school assessment policies and strategies to support colleagues with: using assessment data to diagnose learning needs, complying with curriculum, system and/or school assessment requirements and using a range of assessment strategies.
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.	Provide timely, effective and appropriate feedback to students about their achievement relative to their learning goals.	Select from an effective range of strategies to provide targeted feedback based on informed and timely judgements of each student's current needs in order to progress learning.	Model exemplary practice and initiate programs to support colleagues in applying a range of timely, effective and appropriate feedback strategies.
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements	Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Understand and participate in assessment moderation activities to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Organise assessment moderation activities that support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Lead and evaluate moderation activities that ensure consistent and comparable judgements of student learning to meet curriculum and school or system requirements.

Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning				
Focus area	**Graduate**	**Proficient**	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
5.4 Interpret student data	Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.	Use student assessment data to analyse and evaluate student understanding of subject/content, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.	Work with colleagues to use data from internal and external student assessments for evaluating learning and teaching, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.	Co-ordinate student performance and program evaluation using internal and external student assessment data to improve teaching practice.
5.5 Report on student achievement	Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.	Report clearly, accurately and respectfully to students and parents/carers about student achievement, making use of accurate and reliable records.	Work with colleagues to construct accurate, informative and timely reports to students and parents/carers about student learning and achievement.	Evaluate and revise reporting and accountability mechanisms in the school to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and colleagues.

Professional Engagement

Standard 6 – Engage in professional learning				
Focus area	**Graduate**	**Proficient**	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.	Use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and advice from colleagues to identify and plan professional learning needs.	Analyse the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan personal professional development goals, support colleagues to identify and achieve personal development goals and pre-service teachers to improve classroom practice.	Use comprehensive knowledge of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan and lead the development of professional learning policies and programs that address the professional learning needs of colleagues and pre-service teachers.
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.	Participate in learning to update knowledge and practice, targeted to professional needs and school and/or system priorities.	Plan for professional learning by accessing and critiquing relevant research, engage in high quality targeted opportunities to improve practice and offer quality placements for pre-service teachers where applicable.	Initiate collaborative relationships to expand professional learning opportunities, engage in research, and provide quality opportunities and placements for pre-service teachers.
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.	Contribute to collegial discussions and apply constructive feedback from colleagues to improve professional knowledge and practice.	Initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate practice directed at improving professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of students.	Implement professional dialogue within the school or professional learning network(s) that is informed by feedback, analysis of current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of students.
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.	Undertake professional learning programs designed to address identified student learning needs.	Engage with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities to address student learning needs.	Advocate, participate in and lead strategies to support high-quality professional learning opportunities for colleagues that focus on improved student learning.

Standard 7 – Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.	Meet codes of ethics and conduct established by regulatory authorities, systems and schools.	Maintain high ethical standards and support colleagues to interpret codes of ethics and exercise sound judgement in all school and community contexts.	Model exemplary ethical behaviour and exercise informed judgements in all professional dealings with students, colleagues and the community.
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements	Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.	Understand the implications of and comply with relevant legislative, administrative, organisational and professional requirements, policies and processes.	Support colleagues to review and interpret legislative, administrative, and organisational requirements, policies and processes.	Initiate, develop and implement relevant policies and processes to support colleagues' compliance with and understanding of existing and new legislative, administrative, organisational and professional responsibilities.
7.3 Engage with the parents/ carers	Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.	Establish and maintain respectful collaborative relationships with parents/ carers regarding their children's learning and well-being.	Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/carers about their children's learning and well-being.	Identify, initiate and build on opportunities that engage parents/ carers in both the progress of their children's learning and in the educational priorities of the school.
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities	Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.	Participate in professional and community networks and forums to broaden knowledge and improve practice.	Contribute to professional networks and associations and build productive links with the wider community to improve teaching and learning.	Take a leadership role in professional and community networks and support the involvement of colleagues in external learning opportunities.

Glossary

A

Accreditation
Endorsement that a program meets approved standards.

Advocate
Promote a view or position or provide support to others.

Assessment – formal
Evaluating student performance through a structured (often written) assessment.

Assessment – formative
Evaluating student learning to provide feedback to students and devise/change teaching and learning programs.

Assessment – informal
Evaluating student performance through techniques such as observation and anecdotal records.

Assessment – summative
Evaluating student achievement of learning goals at a point in time.

B

Broad
Ensuring variety, not narrow or limited; i.e. comprehensive in content, knowledge, experience, ability, or application.

C

Career stage
Benchmarks which recognise the professional growth of teachers throughout their careers, represented by increasing levels of knowledge, practice and professional engagement.

Certification
Credential attained by teachers who have met specified requirements.

Collaboration
Working with one or more colleagues to achieve a common goal.

Colleague
Other professionals and paraprofessionals (inside and outside the school) including but not limited to, teachers, principals, specialist teachers, pre-service teachers, industry partners, education assistants, teachers' aides.

Context
The set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation or environment.

Curriculum content
What teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. Curriculum content includes knowledge, skills and understanding that students are expected to learn and is usually described for a particular learning area at a particular year level.

D

Demonstrate
To show or make evident knowledge and/or understanding.

E

Effective teaching strategies
Strategies which research and workplace knowledge suggests contribute to successful learning outcomes for students.

Evidence
Data that is considered reliable and valid which can be used to support a particular idea, conclusion or decision.

Exemplary
A high standard of practice, serving as a model or example for students, colleagues and the community.

I

ICT

Information and Communication Technology; the generation and application of knowledge and processes to develop devices, methods and systems.

L

Learning and teaching program

An organised and sequenced program of teaching activities and strategies; assessment strategies and resources.

Learning goals

The specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-targeted (SMART) objectives set with, by and for students.

M

Mentor

A more experienced person who supports and assists another person to grow and learn in their role.

N

Non-verbal communication

The use of unspoken cues generated by both the teacher and their environment that have potential message value to students. This could include but is not limited to eye contact, gestures, proximity and visual aids.

P

Pre-service teachers

Students in initial teacher education programs provided by higher education institutions.

R

Range

The set of available strategies or tools that can be used in different situations.

Registration

Regulatory processes for entry and continued employment in the teaching profession.

S

Stages of learning

Levels of learning aligned to the age or development of students.

Subject

Specific, recognised body of learning that is described in a curriculum document or is the focus of undergraduate studies.

T

Teaching area

The curriculum and learning area/s in which the teacher provides instruction.

W

Workplace knowledge

Knowledge of learning and teaching developed by practitioners within the context of their work environment.

Notes

1. J Hattie, 'Teachers make a difference: what is the research evidence?' paper presented to Australian Council for Educational Research Annual Conference, Melbourne, 19 – 21 October 2003.

2. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers, 6th edn, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2005.

3. Council of Australian Governments (COAG), National partnership on improving teacher quality, Canberra, 2008, viewed 31 January 2011, http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/docs/national_partnership/national_partnership_on_improving_teacher_quality.pdf

4. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians, Melbourne, 2008, viewed 31 January 2011, http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

5. B Jensen, What teachers want: Better teacher management, Melbourne, Grattan Institute, 2010, p. 5.

6. OECD, 'Teacher evaluation: a conceptual framework and examples of country practice', paper presented at the OECD-Mexico workshop, Towards a teacher evaluation framework in Mexico: international practices, criteria and mechanisms, Mexico City, 1-2 December 2009.

7. M Barber & M Mourshed, How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top, London, McKinsey & Company, 2007, p. 13.

8. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians, Melbourne, 2008, viewed 24 November 2010, http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

9 Although Australian education systems perform strongly against other OECD countries, low equity is still a significant issue. In response to this,the Melbourne Declaration commits to specific actions such as improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and students with disability.

10. The terminology 'initial teacher education' has replaced the term pre-service teacher education.

11. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians, Melbourne, 2008, viewed 31 January 2011, p. 11. http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

12. RJ Yinger & MS Hendricks-Lee, The language of standards and teacher education reform, Educational Policy, 14(1), 2000, 94–106, viewed 18 January 2011, http://epx.sagepub.com/content/14/1/94

13. ibid.

14. In New South Wales (NSW) "accreditation" is the equivalent of "registration".

15. "Accreditation" in NSW.

Acknowledgements

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are endorsed by all Australian Education Ministers:

Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Minister for Education and Training
(Australian Capital Territory)

The Hon. Peter Garrett AM MP
Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth (Australian Government)

The Hon. Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education and Training
(New South Wales)

The Hon. Dr Christopher Burns MLA
Minister for Education and Training
(Northern Territory)

The Hon. Geoff Wilson MP
Minister for Education and Training
(Queensland)

The Hon. Jay Weatherill MP
Minister for Education
Minister for Early Childhood Development
(South Australia)

The Hon. Lin Thorp MLC
Minister for Education and Skills
Minister for Children
(Tasmania)

The Hon. Peter Hall MLC
Minister for Higher Education and Skills
Minister responsible for the Teaching Profession
(Victoria)

The Hon. Martin Dixon MP
Minister for Education
(Victoria)
Chair, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs

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Minister for Education
(Western Australia)

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Australian Government - Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

National Standards Subgroup – Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC)

Chair: Professor Peter Dawkins, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria)

Ms Margaret Banks, Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (Australian Government)

Mr Michael Bateman, Department of Education and Training (Australian Capital Territory)

Mr Patrick Bryan, Department of Education and Training (Queensland)

Ms Lesley Foster, MCEECDYA Secretariat

Ms Susan Halliday, Victorian Institute of Teaching

Mr Mark Hogan, National Catholic Education Commission

Ms Jayne Johnston, Department of Education and Training (Australian Capital Territory)

Dr Kerry Kavanagh, Department of Education and Children's Services (South Australia)

Ms Chris Keightley, Department of Education and Training (Northern Territory)

Mr Patrick Lee, NSW Institute of Teachers

Ms Estelle Lewis, Independent Schools Council of Australia

Ms Kerrie Moss, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania

Ms Chris Porter, Department of Education (Western Australia)

Mr John Ryan, Queensland College of Teachers

Professor Sue Willis, Monash University

National Standards Subgroup Expert Writing Group

Chair: Ms Chris Porter, Department of Education (Western Australia)

Writer: Ms Judith Page, NSW Institute of Teachers

Ms Bici Byrnes, Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (Australian Government)

Ms Deborah Kember, Department of Education and Training (Queensland)

Ms Melissa Bennett, Department of Education and Training (Queensland)

Professor Rob Gilbert, University of Queensland

Ms Fran Cosgrove, Victorian Institute of Teachers

Ms Estelle Lewis, Independent Schools of New South Wales

Ms Robyn Mamouney, NSW Institute of Teachers

Ms Madeleine Scully, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

National Standards Validation Steering Group

Mr Scott Bulfin, Australian Association for the Teaching of English

Ms Fran Cosgrove, Victorian Institute of Teaching

Mr Rob Durbridge, Australian Education Union

Ms Sandra Harvey, Australian Primary Principals Association

Mr Will Morony, Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers

Mr Kim Tsolakis, Australian Professional Teachers' Association

Ms Sheree Vertigan, Australian Secondary Principals' Association

Mr Chris Watt, Independent Education Union of Australia

University of New England

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Chair: Dr Gregor Ramsay AM

CEO: Ms Fran Hinton

CEO: Ms Helen Tracey

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Further information
Telephone: +61 3 9944 1200
Email: teacherstandards@aitsl.edu.au

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APPENDIX 18

Final Ethics Approval Email from Macquarie University

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From: Ethics Secretariat <ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au>
Sent: Thursday, 19 May 2011 11:37 AM
To: Dr Norman John Mcculla
Cc: Dr Gregory Robertson; Christine Furner
Subject: HS Final Approval

Dear Dr Mcculla,

Re: "How do teachers learn across the career continuum in the context of their schools?"

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Gregory Robertson: Chief Investigator Dr Norman John Mcculla: Co-Investigator Miss Christine Furner: Co-Investigator

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports. Your first progress report is due on 1 May 2012.

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University.

This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Katey De Gioia
Acting Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee Human Research Ethics Committee

****
Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

Ethics Secretariat

Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 6848
Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email:
For Enquiries: ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/

Please Note – Throughout the study Dr Norman McCulla was the Supervisor and Dr Greg Robertson the Associate Supervisor.