Teacher-Centred Professional Development:

Exploring Teacher Cognition and Autonomy in Australian English Language Centres

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Abstract

This thesis explores professional development (PD) for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Australia. Through a sociocultural perspective and ideas of learner autonomy, it positions teachers as learners in their own development. Relevant literature and frameworks by professional bodies recommend greater autonomy, collaboration and flexibility in PD programs, but little is known about their impact on practice. The study focusses on the perspectives of teachers, their experiences and their ideal programs for the future.

A constructivist perspective of negotiation and co-creation of meaning is employed throughout, with the main data source being interviews with teachers. A survey, co-created mind maps and reflexive journals give a thick description of the area of study.

A key finding was that participants mostly experienced traditional PD of seminars or workshops with little chance to be involved in planning, delivery or evaluation of their programs. Teachers who were the most satisfied with their programs experienced collaborative and individualised PD embedded into their workplace culture. Most teachers wanted more input into PD and the chance to undertake activities that were meaningful and relevant for them in order to develop both personally and professionally.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Teacher-centred professional development: Teacher cognition and autonomy in Australian English language centres” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has been submitted as part of requirements for a degree at any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

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I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research, and that all sources are appropriately acknowledged.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee on 28th February, 2019, reference number 5201949887430 (Appendix A).

Melissa Reed

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1 Introduction

I come from a family of educators, and despite an initial reticence to follow the same path myself, I have been involved in education for twenty years, with the last ten as a teacher and manager in TESOL. I have always felt that education was important, not just as a vehicle to arrive at a destination but as an ongoing practice of development, so right from the beginning of my career as a TESOL teacher, I went to every professional development (PD) session that I could. As I gained experience, I began to deliver PD sessions as well.

It was when I became the academic manager of my English language centre that PD took on a different perspective. I now not only had to facilitate a PD program that worked for 30 teachers on three timetables with a variety of different career stages, preferences and needs, I had to make sure that it aligned with expectations from accrediting bodies and upper management. Simply organising one seminar a month was a logistical feat in itself amongst my large portfolio of responsibilities.

However, I became increasingly concerned that the program was not meeting teachers' needs or helping them to develop in their practice. A needs analysis was the first step to find out teachers' opinions on PD. I also spent more time in the staffroom and noticed the informal PD that was occurring: the teachers loved sharing ideas with their colleagues.

A few months later, in 2016, English Australia, the peak organisation for Australian TESOL centres which teach overseas students, released their Continuing Professional Development Framework (English Australia, 2019b). We discovered that it aligned with the PD goals we had for the centre: more choice and autonomy for teachers, individual goal-setting and enough flexibility to integrate into our

existing PD program. We set annual PD expectations for teachers in line with the recommendations, but they could achieve their goal however they wished.

We held a meeting with the teachers to discuss the framework and two sessions to get the teachers started on their own goals. In the meantime, sessions continued to run every month, but there were more teacher sharing sessions and active workshops instead of seminars run by senior teachers or management. Groups of teachers worked together on some PD afternoons so even newer teachers were sharing ideas. There were some great successes from the early workshops: we had more teacher buy-in than we ever had before, particularly from casuals and evening teachers, two groups which we had struggled to connect with previously. The formal PD had also led to more informal PD and a great collegial buzz in the staffroom.

However, despite these successes, there were also difficulties. Small reflective groups of teachers created so they could work on their individual goals seemed to be unproductive. Some teachers mentioned that they needed more structure rather than free choice to work on goals. Groups did not always work on their goals but talked instead about what was happening in their classes, a valuable activity in itself, but there were teachers who found this frustrating and a waste of time. Some teachers preferred seminars by experts because they did not have to prepare as much in advance or participate actively, particularly at the end of a long day.

There was also a conflict between my personal commitment to PD and what I could offer teachers from a business perspective. I felt then and still do that teachers should be paid for PD and given adequate time and resources to participate in it. The reality is that I did not have a budget to deliver PD and I could not afford to reduce their workload to help them to participate. As I was offering PD outside of work

hours, the only way to offer PD to teachers on all three schedules at the same time, I could not, and did not want to, make it compulsory. So I bought snacks myself and allowed the full-time teachers to have flexi-time another day.

One and a half years after beginning to change the program, I can see that it was in its early stages and with the opportunity to continue, it would have undoubtedly settled and developed further. However, when I reflected with the teachers, I realised that I had made some early mistakes: not bringing teachers in on planning committees, not providing enough scaffolding for development of autonomy, and not fully understanding how teachers felt about PD. Implementing a new PD program was complex and required layers of change and new ways of thinking for everyone involved.

The challenges I was having meeting everyone's needs in the PD program made me curious about how other centres were faring. This study is a quest to find answers about teachers' relationship with PD, their current programs and what they would like to see in the future. My hope is that this research will be useful for managers, teachers and other stakeholders to begin a conversation about PD programs which really meet teachers' needs.

The thesis is organised in the following way. First a literature review demonstrates a common theme in literature on professional development over the last twenty years and a sociocultural perspective is established. A large research gap is explored, showing that not enough is known about teachers' opinions on whole-centre PD programs, and the translation of theory to practice. The methodology section looks at the constructivist nature of this research, the wider context of the participants, how the research was conducted, and introduces the research questions. Findings

combine data from a survey, interviews, mind maps and reflective journals to illuminate teachers' voices. The discussion analyses these findings to answer the three research questions, focussing on the data from this study with reference to relevant literature. Due to the research gap in this area, it is not possible to directly compare findings. Implications and practical recommendations are also introduced in this chapter. The conclusion considers this study and its contribution to relevant fields of literature, limitations and final remarks.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Autonomy has become an increasingly important concept in TESOL and, in fact, education on a wider scale. However, while many teachers have been working to introduce student autonomy into their classrooms, their position as independent adult learners in professional development is often not considered. The principles of learner-centred classrooms can be applied to PD, leading to more teacher autonomy and meaningful, relevant PD activities. There is support in the literature for promoting greater teacher autonomy in PD, and professional TESOL organisations in Australia and worldwide have given practical ideas for adopting teacher-centred approaches. These programs would give teachers more control over their own professional development and allow for individual differences in terms of career stage, learning style and interests. Despite the fact that teachers are front and centre of recommendations for professional development, there has been little research investigating teachers' perspectives on this topic. It is important to find out how much of the research and recommendations are filtering down to Australian English language teachers and what their attitudes are towards professional development in general and teacher-centred programs in particular.

The chapter begins with definitions of some key terms used in this study, particularly *teacher-centred professional development*. Elements of teacher-centred PD are explored through the lense of a sociocultural perspective; relevant literature and professional frameworks for PD are considered in this light. Finally, an argument for the importance of this study within a large research and practice gap is presented.

2.2 Professional development

It is necessary to consider some key terms used in this study, beginning with *professional development*. Researchers in TESOL commonly use this term to describe activities conducted to improve in-service teaching over others such as teacher learning, professional learning or workplace learning, as evidenced by Avalos (2011) in her survey of 10 years of research on PD in TESOL. It is also widely used in practice, as can be seen in its prevalence in literature by English Australia (2019a) and Cambridge English Language Assessment (2019). Richards and Farrell (2005) divide professional development into three main areas: teacher learning, teacher training and teacher development. For Richards and Farrell, *teacher learning* encompasses how teachers acquire knowledge in a broad way, looking at the cognitive processes and personal construction of theories of teaching and learning. Professional development activities are only one way that teachers may acquire knowledge, which may also be acquired through other day-to-day activities of teachers. They define *teacher training* as top-down in-service activities required by management or for industry or national compliance for a current job. It might include learning the basic skills of teaching, or the application of a new curriculum or technique (Richards & Farrell, 2005). On the other hand, *teacher development* is defined as a more bottom-up, reflective, long-term approach to a teacher's career (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

From a sociocultural perspective, the word *development* is crucial to an understanding of teaching and learning. Learning and development are connected from the beginning of a child's life and continue life-long (Vygotsky, 2017). While teachers may *learn* a new teaching strategy or understand a pedagogical theory, *development* is a deeper process which leads to "sustained changes in the way they

participate and contribute to their other professional practices” across the institution (Grimmett, 2014, p. 10).

Professional development also includes the idea of *professionalism*. Professionalism, according to the Professional Standards Council (n.d.) is the act of conducting oneself according to the requirements of a profession, a group of individuals who have specialist knowledge in a particular area and are informed by research, education and training. Clearly, continuing professional development is an important part of being a recognised as a professional by the community. The concept of professionalism has become increasingly important in TESOL, partly because of an adverse historical perception of the lack of professionalism of teachers in the sector (Stanley, 2016). There are various factors which have led to this perception, including the employment of unqualified English teachers in some countries simply because they were native speakers (Stanley, 2016). In response to this, there has been an interest in improving the standards and reputation of the sector by teachers, managers, students (Grimmett, 2014) and professional bodies such as English Australia (English Australia, 2019a). One recognised way to increase professionalism in TESOL is by improving teacher training and professional development.

For the purposes of this study, professional development constitutes the activities that a teacher may do, internal or external to their place of work, provided by their centre or self-initiated, to help them to improve their teaching practice in a sustained way. These may include seminars, workshops, action research, peer observation, reading research or any other activity that a teacher defines as professional development.

2.3 Teacher-centred professional development

Traditional professional development often follows one-shot or short courses delivered by management or experts, based on a model of teacher deficiency (Burns, 2017; Diaz Maggioli, 2004). Burns terms this “thing-based” PD (2017, p. 188) because it is content-based and focuses on the idea of human capital. It is strongly connected with external accountability measures (Burns, 2017). This kind of PD is often used because it is efficient and cost-effective (Hoban, 2002). However, there has been growing understanding that one-size-fits-all PD which does not take into account teachers’ career stage or classroom context does not develop teachers for their long-term career and leads to demotivation (Diaz Maggioli, 2004). In addition, the lack of variety in delivery does not inspire or engage teachers, and ignores the fundamental importance of the way teachers learn, or that they are learners at all (Diaz Maggioli, 2004).

A different kind of model which is emerging in the literature encourages teachers to reflect on their own practice and drive their own professional development through a long-term lense (Diaz Maggioli, 2004; Grimmett, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Wright, 2010). Given its prevalence in the literature, it is surprising that there is no accepted label for this kind of professional development. Burns (2017, p. 189) has termed it “being-based” professional development, where the focus is on long-term teacher transformation through empowering teachers to drive their own learning and collaborate together. Diaz Maggioli (2004) uses the term *teacher-cent(e)red professional development* in his book of the same name, where he calls for more teacher involvement at all stages of PD, planning, delivery and evaluation to increase its relevance and effectiveness for teachers. This term has not

been taken up, possibly due to the negative connotations of teacher-centredness in the autonomy literature.

Despite some negative associations, there are strong reasons to use the term *teacher-centred professional development* to describe PD which preferences teacher autonomy, empowerment and collaboration. The principles of teacher-centred professional development are similar to those of learner-centred teaching. One of the main goals of this approach is learner autonomy, including focussing on engagement, collaboration and empowerment (Vieira, 2017). Other aspects are the importance of building on the existing knowledge of learners and creating relevant, meaningful learning experiences for each student (Cloud, Lakin, & Leininger, 2011). All of these principles can be applied to professional development because teachers are learners when they are engaged in PD activities. Using similar terms can both reinforce the importance of teachers as learners and put teachers at the centre of all aspects of professional development.

Throughout the literature and frameworks explored through the following sections, themes of autonomy, collaboration and flexibility are prominent. These themes are used throughout the project to determine teacher-centredness in PD programs.

2.4 Sociocultural Perspective

The sociocultural perspective provides a model for teachers as learners which can help frame teacher-centred professional development. Having its roots in Vygotsky's theories on learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978, 2017) it emphasises the importance of socially-mediated contextualised activity to develop cognition (Johnson, 2009). Earlier translations of Vygotsky (1978 and others) focussed on individualistic and cognitive aspects of development, but there is now a recognition

of the importance of “collaboratively mediated development” (Grimmett, 2014, p. 8). The process of development is a process of internalisation: beginning with external collaborative activity leading to internal transformation as a teacher experiments with new ideas or concepts, contextualises them and internalises them (Johnson, 2009). The process is unique to each individual, dependent on personal experience, learning history, preferences and the environment in which the teacher works (Diaz Maggioli, 2012; Johnson, 2009). An important part of development from a sociocultural perspective is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 2017) which is the space between what someone is capable of achieving alone and with assistance. Collective PD which is designed to scaffold learning and work within this space can assist teachers’ development (Diaz Maggioli, 2012).

A major issue with a traditional PD model is that, because of its de-contextualised nature and lack of collaboration, it does not scaffold learning for teachers (Diaz Maggioli, 2004). Therefore, more inquiry-based models of PD which require reflection and collaboration may lead to greater development for teachers (Diaz Maggioli, 2012; Johnson, 2009). Inquiry-based PD is driven by teachers themselves, where they can explore areas and answer questions of importance to them leading to improving practice and developing their identity as teachers (Tasker, Johnson, & Davis, 2010). Action research, particularly when it is collaborative, is an excellent example of inquiry-based PD, with its emphasis on teacher-generated knowledge, collaboration and transformation of the self and others (Burns, 2015). Action research has been shown to bring about long-term sustainable benefits to teachers, even years after completing a project (Edwards & Burns, 2016), demonstrating its transformative potential.

2.5 Autonomy

Autonomy is defined as “the capacity to take control of one’s own learning” (Benson, 2011, p. 58). How this occurs is specific to the individual and their situation, but three examples of autonomy are initiating learning, directing personal goals and controlling the psychological aspects of learning such as preferences (Benson, 2011). Developing autonomy is an important aspect of motivation for learning and developing strategies and higher cognitive processes that are appropriate for each learner (Benson, 2011). Autonomy does not mean that all supports are removed or that the learner is working alone. In fact, the learner autonomy literature has become increasingly focussed on the social situation which may develop autonomy (Benson, 2011). This is very similar to the sociocultural perspective of becoming an expert through socially-mediated activity that is scaffolded to assist in learning (Johnson, 2009). Benson (2011, p. 123) encourages teachers to consider these aspects when considering how effectively activities foster autonomy:

1. What *opportunities* do the modes of learning implied with the practice offer for learner control?
2. How does the implementation of the practice *enable* learners to take advantage of these opportunities?

These questions can also be applied to teacher PD, with the importance of analysing both the PD activities themselves and the institutional practice of PD.

Building greater teacher autonomy into PD can have many benefits. These include increased motivation (Finsterwald, Wagner, Schober, Luftenegger, & Spiel, 2013), higher teacher confidence, and development of leadership and decision-making skills (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Teachers may be expected to foster autonomy in learners without experiencing autonomy in their teacher training (Vieira, 2017). For

all of these reasons, developing teacher autonomy should be a key element of teacher training programs (Benson, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2012) and continue throughout a teacher's working life.

A sociocultural perspective of learning also recognises that it is individual, affected by prior learning, individual context and needs (Johnson, 2009). This idea can be seen in teacher cognition research, an influence on the sociocultural movement, where the unique experience of each teacher needs to be taken into account as it will influence how they learn and how knowledge is applied to teaching (Borg, 2015). Closely connected to this research is reflective practice, an active process of teachers analysing experiences, attitudes and values to build their own theories of teaching and learning (Farrell, 2016). Reflective practice contrasts with traditional transmission models of PD and is one way that PD can be flipped to develop teachers to think critically (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Further, teachers know their own classrooms and students, and are the best placed to make context-based decisions about teaching and learning in their classrooms (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). One example of the application of these principles was a PD program based on the individual teacher's goals supported by their manager (Chappell & Benson, 2013). In this program, teachers engaged in reflective practice to monitor and evaluate their own development over time, a process that the teachers found rewarding and beneficial for their teaching. Given the individuality of each teacher and each class, it follows that professional development should provide some autonomy so that teachers can address their own learning needs.

2.6 Collaboration

Collaboration is considered to be central to learning from a sociocultural perspective. Collaboration between peers is an important part of teacher-centred professional

development and has been widely reported to have excellent benefits for teachers. Collaboration can counter the negative effects of isolation felt by some teachers (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016) and improve teacher motivation and a feeling of community (Vo & Nguyen, 2010). Collaborative practices can also have positive effects on teachers' inspiration and student outcomes (Abbasi, 2015; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016). There are also lasting benefits of collaborative PD for both teacher empowerment and wider ripple-effects on the whole school community (Burns, 2013). Examples of collaborative PD which have shown demonstrable benefits to teachers include Professional Learning Communities, where teachers learn by reflecting with peers (Vescio et al., 2008), peer coaching (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016), Critical Friends Groups where colleagues meet to problem solve and receive honest critical feedback through peer observation (Vo & Nguyen, 2010) and collaborative action research (Burns, 2017).

Communities of practice, which have their roots in sociocultural theory, have also been influential in TESOL as a way for teachers to collaborate and develop through learning. Communities of practice are groups with shared knowledge, where new members learn from more experienced members and gradually become part of the community through a kind of apprenticeship (Lave & Wenger, 1991). They are built on a foundation of bottom-up PD in which teachers are able to follow their own interests and needs (Mercieca, 2017). The community constructs and reconstructs knowledge as the members interact in a practice of "meaningful collective teaching and learning" (Diaz Maggioli, 2012). It is through this process that development into the ZPD can occur.

2.7 Professional frameworks

PD Frameworks by Australian and international professional bodies can be seen to promote similar ideas of teacher autonomy, collaboration and meaningful learning. English Australia is the peak body for English language teaching in international education in Australia, and one of their key missions is “championing continuing professional development” (English Australia, 2019d). English Australia introduced the English Australia Continuing Professional Development Framework in 2016, which encourages teacher autonomy (English Australia, 2019). This framework guides teachers to develop their own PD program individually or with the support of a manager, by identifying their own needs and interests through a needs analysis, matching these needs with PD activities and reflecting and sharing the outcomes (English Australia, 2019b). Most recently, they have added the English Language Teachers of Australia Register (ELTAR), an online portal where teachers can record their PD and reflections (English Australia, 2019c). This framework is clearly teacher-centred, allowing for teacher autonomy and encouraging workplace flexibility to accommodate individual PD goals.

The English Australia Framework can be seen as part of an international movement towards teacher-centred PD. In the self-assessment stage of the English Australia CPD Framework, teachers are encouraged to use the European Profiling Grid (EPG, 2013), designed for teachers of all languages. In the EPG, teachers can self-assess their skills against descriptors in a variety of areas, similar to the “can do” statements in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The EPG recommends that teachers initiate PD activities to meet their own needs and managers act as facilitators (EPG, 2013). The English Australia CPD Framework also drew on the Cambridge English Teaching Framework (Cambridge Assessment

English, 2018; English Australia, 2019a), which is teacher-centred in its philosophy. In fact, it explicitly states that the framework was heavily influenced by research on reflective practice, action research, collaboration and the value of teacher knowledge (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2015). In its self-assessment tool, it has a professional development category, where teachers can evaluate their level from foundation to expert (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019). At an expert level, teachers are reflective and have developed their own theories of teaching and learning, are able to understand their own PD needs and plan a program to meet them, and actively support other teachers in their PD. The principles of autonomy and collaboration in a teacher-centred program can clearly be seen in both of these frameworks.

The element of flexibility becomes important in the Cambridge English Teaching Framework and the English Australia CPD. While the EPG is an assessment tool, providing some general recommendations, the other two frameworks give specific examples of activities teachers may incorporate into their PD programs. Key to these is the variety of activities that teachers can undertake: reading teaching blogs, taking webinars, completing further education and reflective journaling are recommended by Cambridge (2019). English Australia also recommends some activities but encourages teachers to undertake any activity internal or external to their centre, with a points system weighted towards more active participation or leadership roles (English Australia, 2019c). The fact that teachers can meet their PD needs in a variety of ways and choose how and when to undertake PD demonstrates the importance of flexibility as a recommendation for programs.

There are some possible limitations to these frameworks. While they all allow for jagged profiles (differing expertise across different areas of teaching and learning),

they suggest that learning is linear (Grimmett, 2014). Also, once an end point is reached, for example an expert level, it is unclear where a teacher would progress to next (Grimmett, 2014). Despite explicit support for collaborative practice and the benefits of sharing findings with colleagues, very few collaborative activities are recommended by English Australia or Cambridge. Neither framework introduces guidelines for staff involvement in the centre's PD program. In contrast, an alternative model such as the Teacher's Choice Framework (Diaz Maggioli, 2004) recommends collaborating as a whole-school community in order to assess collective needs. It also emphasises the importance of collaboration to support the development of new and experienced teachers in a community of practice.

Although the EA, Cambridge and EPG frameworks are a useful tool for teachers as well as managers, they do not give enough recommendations for managers about integrating the framework into a PD program and the structures and culture that would be required for success. English Australia's guide for managers on PD (English Australia, 2015) follows the same basic principles of the CPD framework, but pre-dates it, meaning it cannot incorporate the most recent recommendations. Nonetheless, the frameworks are a positive step forward for the sector in engaging teachers in more meaningful PD activities.

2.8 Obstacles to teacher-centred PD

Despite the positive evidence in the literature for teacher-centred programs, there are obstacles. One main issue for overworked teachers is fitting personalised PD into an already busy schedule (Abbasi, 2015; Adie, 2017; Li & Chan, 2007). Additionally, collaborative approaches with peers requires good collegial relationships, which do not always exist (Abbasi, 2015; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016). There may be disagreements in learning communities,

personality clashes and difficulties deciding on group aims, which may disrupt learning (Adie, 2017; Diaz Maggioli, 2004). Also, when teachers only look inward towards their own practice or those of colleagues in similar positions without considering external information, there is a danger of them reinforcing their own particular beliefs rather than expanding their understanding (Vescio et al., 2008).

There are both attitudinal and logistical barriers to teachers conducting research. Time constraints were major obstacles to teacher research in an international study by Borg (2009). Other results of the study found teachers were concerned about their lack of research skills and their teacher identity being at odds with that of a researcher. On the whole, teachers also valued empirical large-scale studies more than teacher research, which they sometimes did not classify as research at all (Borg, 2009). Some wonder if teacher research places extra burdens on teachers' already demanding working lives, and do not need "the onus of moonlighting as amateur researchers" (Medgyes, 2017, p. 497). It is clear that despite its benefits, teacher research is a significant undertaking which requires buy-in from teachers and managers as part of a holistic PD program.

It is also important to consider the wider environment in which PD takes place. Teachers are part of institutions which exist within larger political and economic climates, influenced by local and global events (Johnson, 2009). These forces further impact teachers' needs for locally-sensitive, contextualised PD that recognises their unique position both personally and professionally (Burns, 2017; Johnson, 2009). The heavy and detailed regulation of PD and teaching practices in Australian mainstream schools (Grimmett, 2014) are not seen to the same extent in centres of English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), the subject of this study. However, they are influenced by moves towards greater

standardisation and accountability (Burns, 2017). In addition, job security is a major issue for teachers, with high levels of casualisation and low salaries leading to attrition and demotivation (Stanley, 2016). The ‘step system’, which is widely used across private English language centres, makes more qualified experienced teachers more expensive and therefore less likely to be employed, creating a disincentive to build and develop a career in ELICOS (Stanley, 2016). This may have flow-on effects to PD.

2.9 The gap

Most studies on teacher-centred PD examine the effects of one initiative or one method rather than an entire institutional approach to PD. Frequently, a method is introduced by the researcher and has not organically grown from the workplace culture. Some examples are the introduction of a Community of Practice (Abbott, Lee, & Rossiter, 2018; Adie, 2017), peer coaching (Li & Chan, 2007) or a Critical Friends group (Andreu et al., 2003). Farrell’s comprehensive article on 116 pieces of reflective practice research shows methods that were used for reflection over the 116 studies include journaling, discussion groups or action research (Farrell, 2016). However, it does not look at how reflective practice integrates into a whole-centre PD program, possibly because it was not a priority in the analysed articles. While one initiative can have positive ripple effects across a centre (Edwards & Burns, 2016; Vescio et al., 2008), it can be difficult to form a picture of a holistic PD program and the practicalities involved in implementing and sustaining it. It is also essential to consider the “institutional practice” of PD rather than simply the results of it, as the relationships between people, the environment and the situation in which it occurs will be at the core of learning and development (Grimmett, 2014, p. 40).

Frameworks such as that by English Australia, are helpful for managers and teachers to reconceptualise professional development. However, there is currently no research into whether this has had an impact on practice in English language centres in Australia. There seems to have been a seismic shift in attitudes to professional development over the last twenty years, and a general acceptance that teacher-centred professional development is beneficial for teachers. What is missing is research examining barriers and opportunities that teachers face around professional development and whether their attitudes have also changed.

Finally, despite both key research and frameworks recommending that teachers take control over their own learning, there is an absence of teacher voices. If more than lip service is to be paid to empowering teachers, they must be part of every stage of the development of PD programs, including their evaluation (Diaz Maggioli, 2004). It is vital to illuminate teachers' voices, valuing their lived experiences of PD in their unique contexts and discovering how they view PD in a changing educational climate.

3 Methodology and Research Design

In response to the gap outlined in the previous section, this study aims to discover the answers to the following research questions:

1. What are English language teachers' experiences of professional development in their centres?
2. What enables or constrains teachers' autonomy in their own professional development?
3. What perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and values do English language teachers have towards teacher-centred professional development?

3.1 Methodological approach

The above research questions demand deep, complex answers which are best suited to a qualitative study. Qualitative research works well when a variety of sources can be combined to create a "thick description" of the participants' experiences (Croker, 2009, p. 9). Because of its exploratory, flexible nature, qualitative research is particularly effective when little is known about a phenomenon (Dörnyei, 2007). As previously identified, scant research has been done on the area which is the subject of this study; therefore, in order to gain personal experiences and begin to understand this topic, a qualitative approach is appropriate.

The concept of trustworthiness is an important part of qualitative methodology, used instead of validity and reliability which are generally associated with quantitative research (Shenton, 2004). Transparency is key to this, including a detailed description of methods and a critical analysis of the researcher's own position in the study (Holliday, 2015). Methods are described in detail in this chapter and reflexive journals document my own position as a researcher, becoming a part of the data set.

Another way of achieving trustworthiness is through the triangulation of several data sources in order to build a complex multi-faceted picture of the phenomenon of study (Hastings, 2012). Data sources for this project are a survey, semi-structured interviews, mind maps, reflective and reflexive journals, which each add to the understanding of the research questions. Additionally, including a diverse group of participants can also be a form of triangulation, where participants' experiences can verify each other and support claims made by the researcher (Shenton, 2004). The sampling used for the interviews, explained during the method section, gives more information about how this aspect of triangulation was prioritised. A further benefit of the triangulation of multiple viewpoints is to "amplify the perspectives of participants who have been ignored or overlooked" (Hastings, 2012, p. 1539). This study aims to illuminate the viewpoints of a variety of teachers, whose voices are currently lacking in the discourse around professional development.

A constructivist epistemology permeates this study. Constructivism is a belief that there is no absolute reality, and that reality is particular to each person, context and time (Croker, 2009). Part of constructivism is the understanding that the researcher also has their own subjective reality and that the researcher and participants co-create understanding and shed light on the research areas together (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The constructivist perspective of this study is apparent in its research design, interviewing style, reflective journals, methods of analysis and concepts of learning throughout this study.

While a large part of the data in this research is of a textual nature, a small portion of data is numerical. A rudimentary classification of quantitative versus qualitative research may include text-based data versus numerical data, but there is support in the literature that statistics can be included in qualitative research (Croker, 2009;

Maxwell, 2010; Perry, 2005). Numerical and textual data can be combined to broaden understanding within a constructivist epistemological perspective stance (Mirhosseini, 2018, p. 475). A large study of qualitative research in language learning and teaching concluded that qualitative research methods were eclectic and that numerical data could be included (Benson, Chik, Gao, Huang, & Wang, 2009). In addition, the main difference between qualitative and quantitative research is not the methods used but the epistemological position (Maxwell, 2010). When denoting research as qualitative, the perspective is more important than the methods employed (Benson et al., 2009).

In this study, the qualitative perspective is maintained throughout. The purpose is exploratory: to discover a range of perspectives about the areas discussed and to give deep, contextualised data from the participants. While numerical values may help to support claims made within this study about the prevalence of opinions within this group of participants, there is no attempt made to generalise this data across any population. The use of numerical data will be further explained in the methods and analysis sections of this chapter.

3.2 Context

The teachers' context for this study is Australian English language centres which offer English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS). To be accredited to teach students on student visas, centres which offer ELICOS must be registered with the federal government and meet national standards (English Australia, 2019e). ELICOS centres may include University English Language Centres, private English Language Centres, Technical and Further Education colleges (TAFEs) and Intensive English Centres attached to high schools. Some examples of ELICOS courses offered are General English, English for Academic

Purposes, High School Preparation and English for Special Purposes such as Business English (English Australia, 2019e). 177, 697 international students studied in Australia at ELICOS centres in 2017 (English Australia, 2019e).

The intention of this study was to focus on English language teachers in ELICOS centres specifically, as there may have been some impact of the English Australia Continuing Professional Development Framework (English Australia, 2019b) on practice. The framework was aimed at teachers of ELICOS courses, and not those in other areas of English language teaching, such as those in the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) (English Australia, 2019a). Even though participants in the study came from diverse contexts, the commonality of ELICOS requirements and the influence of English Australia as its peak body has made it easier to compare responses and set boundaries around the scope of the study.

3.3 Participants

In the first stage of the study, a survey, respondents were recruited using voluntary sampling. Managers of 125 ELICOS centres were initially emailed to explain the purpose of the study (Appendix B) and then posters were sent out to display in staffrooms (Appendix C). Social media, specifically #AusELT (https://www.facebook.com/groups/AusELT/), a Facebook group for Australian English language teachers with approximately 1,800 members, was also used to recruit participants.

There were two major criteria for participation in the study: that participants were English language teachers and that they were currently employed. Of the 158 respondents, 117 were teachers and 109 were currently employed. Out of those, 92 participants completed the survey. Most respondents were female (78%) and the

largest age group was 35-44. Most commonly, respondents had achieved a post-graduate teaching certificate, and 25% of respondents had a Master's degree. Interestingly, the experience level of the teachers was very high, with 44% having over 10 years' experience. A variety of types of centres and employment contracts (casual to full-time) were represented. Unsurprisingly, the largest number of respondents came from the most highly-populated cities: Sydney and Melbourne. Detailed demographic information of respondents in graphs and tables is available in Appendix D. At the end of the survey, participants could self-select to show interest in being interviewed (stage 2 of the study), and more than half of the survey recipients provided contact details for this purpose.

Ten interviewees were selected from four cities: three each from Sydney and Melbourne and two each from Brisbane and Canberra. Because an aim of the study was to give an initial picture of the diversity of teachers' voices, a variety of teachers were chosen. Factors considered to select a diverse group were gender, age, years of teaching experience, qualifications, type and size of centre, employment situation (casual, full-time etc.) and the professional development opportunities offered at their centre. Less men than women are represented (three out of ten) as it was more difficult to find males to participate. Teaching experience ranged from one to more than twenty years. Some interviewees possessed the minimum accepted ELICOS qualifications (a degree plus an English language teaching certificate such as the CELTA) while others possessed Master's degrees and beyond.

The table below gives further information about the interviewees. To protect their identities, pseudonyms have been given, and only a selection of the above categories has been included.

Pseudonym	Employment type	College size	College type
Amy	Permanent part-time	Medium	University English Language Centre (ELC)
Greg	Casual	Large	Private ELICOS centre
Jesse	Fixed-term contract	Small	TAFE
Millie	Permanent part-time	Small	University ELC
Mona	Permanent full-time	Large	University ELC
Sean	Permanent full-time	Large	University ELC
Stella	Permanent full-time	Small	Intensive English Centre attached to a high school
Tia	Casual	Medium	Private ELICOS centre
Vivian	Fixed-term contract	Medium	Private ELICOS centre
Wendy	Permanent part-time	Small	TAFE

Table 1- Interviewee information

3.4 Ethical issues

This study was approved by the Human Sciences Ethics Subcommittee, Macquarie University in February 2019 (Appendix A). All care has been taken to respect participants and protect their privacy according to ethical research guidelines (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Universities Australia, 2007 (Updated 2018)). This study can be considered low risk due to the likelihood that it will not impact participants beyond a possible feeling of discomfort at discussing details of their working lives (National Health and Medical Research Council et al., 2007 (Updated 2018), p. 12). Survey participants agreed to a statement of consent before beginning the survey and could remain anonymous if they wished. At the interview, the interviewer explained the process and consent

forms, and the participants had time to ask questions before signing the forms, which had also been emailed in advance (Appendix E). The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and all identifying data has been anonymised.

3.5 Data collection

There are several data sources collected as part of this study: a survey, semi-structured interviews, mind maps and reflexive journals. The multitude of sources can assist with the credibility of the study through triangulation: each data source can reveal part of a thick, layered complex picture of the data in question (Shenton, 2004).

3.5.1 Survey

The first stage of the study was an online nationwide survey on professional development for ELICOS teachers, designed in Qualtrics (Appendix F). There was an initial pilot in February with six English language teachers, who were given "characters" so that simulations using different kinds of respondents could be conducted. The feedback from the pilot was generally positive, with some small changes in language and labelling being implemented to aid clarity (Appendix G). The survey was open for a month and received 158 responses.

The survey includes Likert-scale, multiple choice and open-ended questions in a simple user-friendly format. It was designed to be easy and quick to complete on any device, with most respondents finishing the survey within ten minutes. The term *teacher-centred professional development* is not used because it is unlikely to be recognisable to all teachers. In addition, the researcher was aiming to avoid a "response set" where conscious or unconscious bias might be invoked (Cox, 2008, p. 15) and respondents may answer in ways that may be perceived positively by the

researcher. Instead, respondents were asked questions which align with the features of a teacher-centred program: autonomy, flexibility and collaboration. This can reveal information about teachers' experiences, preferences, beliefs and attitudes about teacher-centred professional development.

The survey was in three main parts: PD experiences, opinions about teacher-centred PD, and demographic questions. The first section on PD experiences closely aligned with research question one. It included questions about time spent on PD, activities undertaken and how respondents felt about their current PD programs. These were explored through Likert-style questions, using statements such as "I have choices about what professional development I complete" with five options from strongly disagree to strongly agree, as well as two open-ended questions. The second part aligned with research question three about the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and values of respondents about teacher-centred PD. Participants were asked to use the five-point scale again to rate statements such as "Teachers should have their own individual professional development programs." Respondents were also asked to give some general demographic information about themselves, their teaching experience and qualifications and the centre they work for. These questions were placed at the end of the survey to prevent self-categorisation from affecting the respondents' answers (Cox, 2008). As previously mentioned, the demographic information along with the survey answers were key in selecting interview participants.

3.5.2 Interviews

3.5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they "encourage the person to speak 'in their own words'" (Packer, 2010, p. 43) while following a similar structure,

allowing for a comparative analysis of interviews. This is an advantage in a project such as this one with a tight time frame, where unstructured interviews or a grounded theory approach are not practical. In addition, unlike structured interviews, the researcher can use conversational tools such as asking for clarification, rephrasing and probing for expansion (Packer, 2010). In line with a constructivist ideology, the interviewer and interviewee co-construct meaning and negotiate understanding together (Mann, 2016).

The interview protocol (Appendix H) was designed as a guide, which gave ample scope for interviewees to talk about what was important to them. It was refined after an initial pilot and revision, where it became apparent that some of the questions were too narrow and did not fit with the constructivist ideology, allowing enough scope for the interviewee to define their own terms (Appendix I). Interviews were conducted in cafes chosen by the interviewees, with the aim of increasing comfort and rapport. They began with small talk, the ordering of drinks and an introductory question about participants' backgrounds to help ease participants into the interview process. After this, they were asked "What does professional development mean to you?" This definition can give some insights into interviewees' attitudes towards PD.

The rest of the questions, like the survey, were divided into two sections: experiences of PD and desired PD. In the first part, teachers were asked to describe the PD program at their centre and how they felt about it, rewarding and unrewarding PD experiences, the impacts of PD on their teaching and working lives, and workplace culture. In the second part, a mind map was co-constructed showing the interviewee's desired PD program (see the section on mind maps in this chapter). The questions were very broad and open, allowing for a discussion which, as much as possible, followed the interviewees own words. Probes such as: "Can you tell me

more about that?" or "What do you mean by ___?" allowed the interviewees to expand or clarify their own ideas.

3.5.2.2 Reflexive interviewing

The concept of reflexive interviewing is that the researcher analyses their own part in the interview and the co-construction of data with the interviewee (Roulston, 2010). Researchers consider their own position in relation to the research and the participants and consider how factors such as age, gender, status may affect all stages of the research (Roulston, 2010). Thoughts, beliefs and ideas can become part of reflexive journals which can also be included in the data set, increasing the rigour and quality of the research (Mann, 2016). Using a passive voice and absenting myself from the discussion of this technique is contrary to the spirit of reflexivity, so I will use a personal pronoun for this section.

During this process, I have employed reflexivity to analyse my own position in the research. My pre- and post-interview journals allowed me to consider how I felt in the interview and how my actions may have affected the process. Further reflexive journals on transcription and analysis have given insights which will be discussed as part of the data. I was aware of my attempt to position myself as an insider with the interviewees. I went to considerable effort to make them feel comfortable in the interview, emphasising my own teaching experience but de-emphasising my experience as a manager. I noted in my pre- and post-interview notes that the closer the interviewee was to me in gender, age, experience and personality, the easier I found it to create rapport. Undoubtedly, this affected the way that the interview progressed and had an impact on the data. Examples of reflexivity and how it affected the data and my own development as a researcher are explored in the findings section.

3.5.3 Mind maps

Mind maps were used in this study to help teachers to create their ideal PD program. Mind maps are visual diagrams where ideas or concepts are arranged around a central theme (Wheeldon, 2011). The design is flexible and depends on how the creator sees the connection between ideas. They were used because they have the potential to create “more detailed, and in-depth reflections of experience” (Wheeldon, 2011, p. 510). Participants in this project could see a visual representation of their desired PD program and build layer on layer of detail. This was a late addition to the interview protocol because it became apparent during piloting that imagining an ideal PD program could be difficult for participants and that having a visual aid may assist in this task.

In line with the constructivist methodology, we co-constructed the mind map together through a negotiation of meaning. The interviewees talked while I drew the mind map, continually clarifying, asking questions about how ideas were linked and looking at the mind map together with the interviewee. The mind maps can also be seen as an on-the-spot “member check” (Shenton, 2004, p. 68). Although this term is generally related to interviewees checking transcription, it is applicable to the mind map activity as interviewees can see an emerging visual representation of their ideas. Interviewees could refer to the mind map and modify it as necessary throughout the process, ensuring that it was a true representation of their perspective and thereby increasing the trustworthiness of this data source.

3.6 Transcription

I transcribed the interviews manually using a basic transcription software, Transcribe (transcribe.wreally.com). Transcribe allowed for the slowing down of the data, pausing and time stamps which assisted in the process but did not diminish the

painstaking activity of listening, transcribing and checking. Each interview was listened to multiple times, and most of the data was able to be documented, including some important non-verbal moments such as the drawing of the mind maps or interruptions. However, the decision to record the interviews in cafes, while creating a warm atmosphere for the interviews, made some transcription difficult due to ambient noise.

The advantage of self-transcription was that I could listen to the interviews at close range, noting minute details. The intensive listening required during transcription can also help the researcher to begin the process of analysis (Mann, 2016). From a reflexive point of view, it was only through close listening during transcription that I noticed elements of the interviews such as the tone of my questions or responses to answers may have shaped the course of the interview.

3.7 Data analysis

3.7.1 Qualtrics

Qualtrics, a survey software, was used for the design of the surveys and the subsequent analysis of the statistical data. Statistical data were available concerning PD activities undertaken by teachers, Likert-style questions about current PD programs and attitudes towards teacher-centred PD and demographic questions. Qualtrics allows for the creation of various kinds of visual data to represent results.

3.7.2 NVivo

NVivo was used for the coding and analysis of open-ended survey questions, interview transcripts, mind maps and reflexive journals. During the analysis process, memos were created about each code to document the process of creating the code and the boundaries around inclusion. Additions to the memos over time show the

development of ideas throughout the project. NVivo allows both close analysis and distance from the project (Bazeley, 2013); while observing larger patterns and connections across the whole project, it was possible to keep referring back to the original data source.

Data was coded from large ideas to small, partially due to the time constraints of this research project, and the importance that all data coded was relevant to the aims of this study. Therefore, the three large codes (called nodes in NVivo) created for the first sweep of the data were the research questions. During subsequent sweeps of the data, smaller sub-nodes and the revising and merging of sub-nodes refined the analysis. The original data sources were referred to continually to ensure that excerpts had not been de-contextualised and that, while recognising the subjectivity of coding and analysis, the greatest rigour had been maintained.

4 Findings

In this chapter, the cumulated data is explored in two main parts: PD Experiences and Desired PD Program. PD Experiences focus on the current situation for participants in their centres, incorporating the activities that they undertake, the logistics of their PD programs and how their workplace cultures influence PD. Desired PD Program explores what participants would like to see in their centres. It is prefaced by shorter sections on meaning and values given to PD. There is a final section on reflexivity and how it influenced the creation and analysis of data.

The survey and interview data are presented together, with each informing the other. Grouping is by theme, with preference given to the voices and words used by the participants in the study, with some reference to statistical data which supports the participants' words. Both interviewees and survey respondents have been given pseudonyms, with the aim being to protect their anonymity and also humanise participants as they give personal accounts of their experiences. This is contrary to the common practice of numbering survey participants which may have the opposite effect. Data from reflexive journals are discussed in final section on reflexivity.

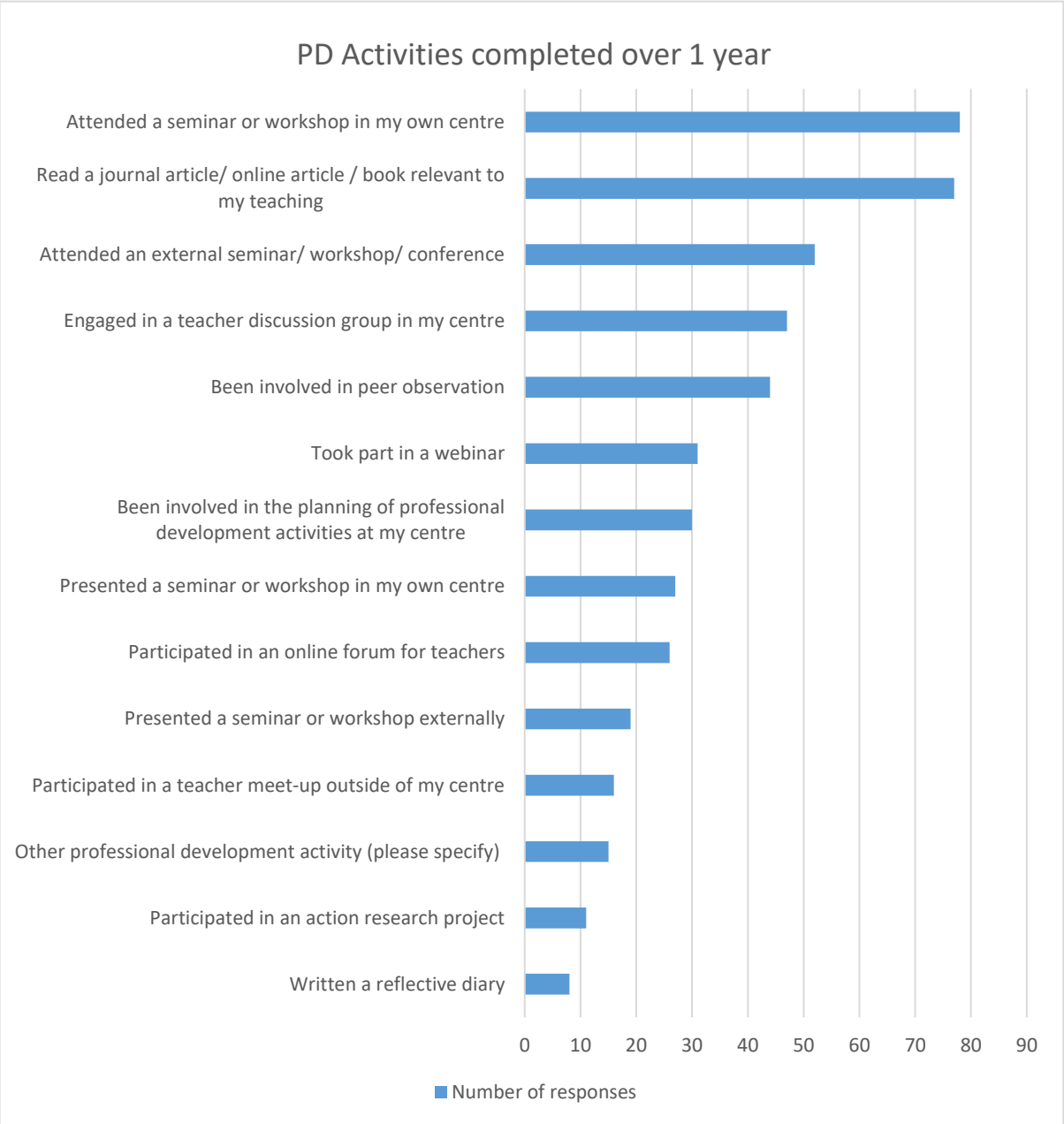
4.1 PD Experiences

4.1.1 PD Activities

Both interviewees and survey respondents participated in a wide variety of PD activities: some offered by their centres and some self-initiated. By far the most common PD activity for both groups was internal seminars or workshops. The PD activities for survey respondents can be seen in the graph below, where activities related to internal seminars or workshops were attended by the vast majority of participants and external seminars or workshops were also prevalent. Reading

teaching literature was also a popular activity. Collaborative activities, such as teacher discussion groups were undertaken by roughly half of recipients and peer observation was just slightly lower.

Figure 1- PD Activities graph



There were a range of programs offered at the interviewee's centres. Jesse and Millie both came from centres with few PD opportunities. Jesse said about his centre

“the only PD we really have is being observed by our manager every so often” which he found “annoying” as he had previously enjoyed PD at his centre. Millie’s only PD in the last six months had been attendance at an external workshop. Both were encouraged to find their own PD activities, but there was no formal process to work on PD goals with managers and significant barriers such as pay and time, which will be explored in later sections. Some participants had regular seminars or workshops, with other occasional offerings. Experiences of these were mixed depending on the personal relevance and delivery method of the sessions. Vivian found the content quite repetitive: “It's an awful lot of sort-of lolly sticks and pieces of paper on the floor and things like that.” Other centres offered a range of activities including action research, peer observations, mentoring, collaborative projects and support for further education and courses. Sean said about his large centre, “You name it, it's there... as a big teaching centre, you've got to have PD available.” Several of the interviewees negotiated an individual PD program with their manager based on their own goals, sometimes through the performance review process. Many of the teachers participated in additional PD activities in their own time such as reading articles, watching webinars and attending events for teachers.

During the interviews, there were several instances of confusion over the classification of PD activities, which were self-defined by participants. Two areas in this category are further education and observations. Some of the teachers had completed (or were completing) higher degrees related to TESOL or Applied Linguistics. All of the teachers ultimately classified these courses as PD and felt they had been valuable in giving a theoretical understanding of teaching and learning which supported their teaching practice. One contentious issue was that of observations, peer or otherwise. Negative feelings about observation seemed to

relate to previous experiences of teachers being evaluated on PD, and job security being threatened. Some said peer observation could be classified as PD if the teacher could choose who they worked with and the criteria upon which the observation took place.

4.1.2 Time

Time was a key area of concern for teachers around PD in this study. Almost all interviewees found this to be a barrier. Most participants spent one to five hours per month on PD in the survey, with a significant number spending less than one hour on PD per month as seen below in the graph.

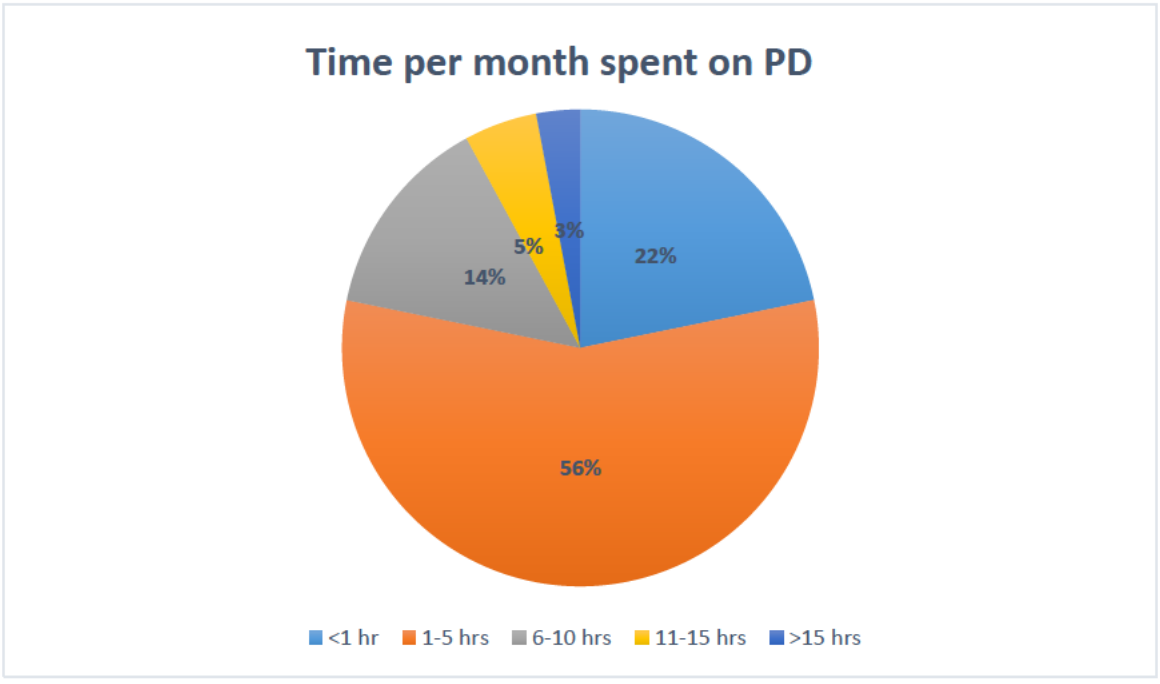


Figure 2- Time spent per month on PD graph

For many of the teachers interviewed, time was a significant barrier to completing PD. Millie was passionate about PD and would do it every week if she could, but she found it difficult to fit PD into a busy schedule which included teaching, marking, planning and a significant administrative load. The only time she had to complete it was outside of work hours, but family responsibilities made this difficult. She felt that "the institution should allocate time for teachers to actually do it" at the centre. Mona also felt the pressure of the responsibilities involved in her job. Changes to the yearly academic schedule had meant that there was no space "to catch your breath and really think about the professional development" and that the constant nature of teaching and marking made her feel as though she was sometimes "in that sort of factory mode."

Despite universally positive praise for action research by those teachers who had completed it, time was a barrier for teachers undertaking it again. Two teachers said that they would need to wait for their children to grow up before they could conduct further research because the time it had taken outside of work hours was not feasible with school-aged children.

4.1.3 Pay

Whether PD was funded was important for many of the participants in this study. Although in the survey, there were no direct questions about pay, comments regarding it appeared in the open-ended questions- "What is the best thing about your centre's professional development program?" and "What would you like to change about your centre's professional program?" For both groups, pay was associated with access to PD options.

For those who were paid for PD and had access to funding for external PD opportunities, this contributed to positive feelings about their centre's program. For example, Daniela said in the survey: "we have 4 full paid days per year for pd... with yummy food and wine! We also have conference and study support." Interviewees who had access to funding had used it to attend or present at conferences, complete further education and register for professional memberships. Teachers in this group felt that pay was an "encouragement" or an "incentive" for PD and that it reflected well on the organisation because they were "generous" with funding.

Teachers who did not have access to pay or funding found that their PD options were limited. In the survey, Renee said, "due to a lack of funding some of the in house PD options are not overly useful. This also means that there is no funding for study leave or to pay to attend outside PD." Some teachers had found themselves out of pocket by hundreds of dollars because they had paid for their own PD. In Amy's previous workplace, PD was unpaid and occurred on her day off, so attending would have meant paying for childcare for the day, leading to a significant financial loss. For these teachers, PD opportunities were missed due to a lack of funding. Both Tia and Millie made the point that businesses benefit from PD, and therefore should fund it. Tia said, "It's professional development. It's not like personal skill development… They want their teachers to get better so their school is better, so it's in their interests to pay them."

4.1.4 Choice

Choice in PD can mean whether PD events are compulsory and also whether teachers have options about the PD that they complete. For some teachers in the survey, attendance at particular PD events was compulsory. Amy felt that this affected her motivation: "I don't think it should be compulsory because then it

becomes… whenever you're forced to do something then maybe your interest also decreases." Sometimes PD was theoretically optional, but there were serious consequences for not attending. Amy remembers at her last workplace that some teachers had lost work because they did not attend unpaid PD on their day off. At Vivian's centre, all sessions are compulsory and she expressed frustration at having to attend sessions that were not relevant to her, for example an introduction to teaching exam courses, when she was a specialist exams teacher. The issue of relevance often emerged as a twin theme with that of compulsory PD, with several teachers echoing Vivian's desire to select only the PD events that were relevant for them.

Teachers were expected to complete PD at the vast majority of survey respondents' and interviewees' centres, but some centres offered more choice than others. The greatest amount of choice was at Sean's centre because teachers' PD was not reliant on existing activities. Each teacher worked on their own PD goals with their manager, based on "our own assessment of ourselves." The goals were decided at the performance review meeting, where teachers would set their own individual and collaborative goal, which might include mentoring, curriculum development, classroom research or any other activity which they and their manager agreed would help the teacher to develop.

4.1.5 Workplace culture

The workplace culture was a key ingredient in professional development for interviewees. Academic managers featured strongly in conversations around PD opportunities, with many of them being responsible for a large proportion of the PD program in the interviewees' centres if not the whole PD program itself. Managers were seen as gatekeepers to professional development, providing opportunities,

facilitating information and creating the structure around which the PD program took place. Interestingly, colleagues were rarely mentioned when interviewees were asked about their workplace culture; therefore this section focusses on the role of management and PD.

“Supportive” was the most commonly-used word to describe managers in the survey and interviews. Managers were seen to be supportive of professional development when they included teachers in the decision-making process. In the survey, Thalia wrote that the best thing about her PD program was that the “DoS (Director of Studies) is supportive of any idea.” Interviewees appreciated it when teachers were asked for input into PD activities or given the opportunity to present. Three of the interviewees credited their managers for encouraging them to push their boundaries and take on an action research project, which they all found invaluable. Others saw their managers as important conduits for information about external PD. Greg said that his manager “keeps a good watch on what’s happening,” allowing teachers to stay informed about events. Some managers played the role of facilitator and co-creator of an individualised PD program with the teacher, negotiating PD goals based on the teacher’s needs and interests. The majority of interviewees and survey respondents felt that their manager was supportive of their professional development, with 83% of survey respondents agreeing with this statement.

Management could also limit access to PD. In addition, other workplace structures, such as bureaucracy and workplace change could also have an impact. Some survey respondents felt that their manager did not have their best interests at heart when creating a PD program. One example came from Bea who said, “What passes for PD is mostly trying to keep up with compliance and auditors' requests” and Avery wished her managers would “take it more seriously.” Some showed sympathy that

their managers were overworked and did not have time to prioritise PD, but the result was a lacklustre or restricted PD program.

Workplace change could severely impact PD. The responsibility for PD in Mona's centre had shifted from bottom-up PD designed by a diverse teachers' committee to a top-down program managed by one person. However, confusion around roles and other workplace issues had meant a reduction in activities offered. Interestingly, this vacuum encouraged teachers to collaborate and initiate some PD. In another example of workplace change, new management in Amy's centre had led to job losses and changing roles and responsibilities. The focus shifted away from PD because the teachers were "rattled and unsettled and weren't sure what the future would be in terms of work security." Both Mona and Amy's examples show how workplace change can shift a strong PD culture and impact teachers.

Bureaucratic red tape could be a deterrent to teachers undertaking PD. In both Stella and Jesse's centres, applying for external PD required a lengthy process in which the application was sent to administrative staff outside of their teams. Jesse said that this process made him feel that "it's almost like they don't want you to go" and that recent comments by management about a shortage of funding and a tightening of the administrative process would be a further disincentive to apply for PD. Stella was frustrated by "the hoops you have to jump through" by upper management, which contrasted with her team leader's strong support of PD.

4.2 Meaning of PD

Asking teachers what PD meant to them was designed to uncover the most important aspects for each teacher. There were a range of answers given in the interviews, sometimes multifaceted, which included the content of PD, the way it was

delivered, and its purpose. Interestingly, Sean and Mona, whose centres offered individualised choice-based PD, had very broad definitions which were quite different from those given by teachers at centres with less choice. Mona said that PD is “part of my professional practice as a teacher.” Sean saw PD as part of the fabric of being a teacher and that it is continuous and ongoing. He added that PD should be “meaningful” for teachers, which he further explained as being personally relevant for each teacher’s needs and interests.

Other definitions were more concrete. Jesse and Tia thought PD was about learning practical ideas which were directly applicable to their classrooms while others thought the main function of PD was to stay current with research or technology. The ideas given by interviewees are summarised below:

“What does PD mean to you?”	**No. of interviewees**
Improving teaching generally	4
Building practical skills (applicable to the classroom)	4
Keeping current or up-to-date especially with technology or research	3
Based on individual needs	3
Developing your career e.g. higher duties	2
Sharing information with colleagues	2
Learning something new	1
Developing a deeper understanding of theory and practice	1
Going to courses/ further education	1
Personal growth	1

Table 2- Meaning of PD

Some survey respondents and interviewees expressed frustration that they were undertaking activities which were classified by their managers as PD, but which did not meet their definitions. Stella and Tia focussed on practical applications in their definitions: Stella thought that PD was about “improving my practice” Tia, that “it should be making me a better teacher.” When they attended PD days which involved large-scale seminars on big-picture thinking by upper management, they did not see that it was PD by their definitions.

Another theme was the idea of managers ticking boxes, and organising PD because it is an industry requirement. Avery said, “It seems to be more about keeping up the appearance of monthly professional development, than actually providing useful PD opportunities for teachers.” Rory thought her managers were using the PD program to help with their workload: “I’m not really learning anything new. Often PD is just curriculum development because this is lumped on the DoS & ADoS so they need help. It’s not really PD for teachers.” Therefore, negative experiences of PD were more likely to be classified as “not PD” by survey respondents and interviewees.

4.3 Value of PD

PD was important to all of the survey respondents and interviewees, even if they were not positive about their current program. In the survey, 74% of respondents said that PD was “very important” for them, and 26% felt that it was “moderately important”. The interviewees, a mix of new and very experienced teachers, all thought that PD could provide benefits to them at their career stage and many saw it as a life-long process of learning.

Confidence was one benefit that interviewees had gained from PD. Amy said that, as a non-native speaker teacher, she had initially felt like a “fraudster” while teaching,

but that further education she had undertaken part-time while employed at her centre had given her “greater confidence and a greater belief in myself, in my profession.” Jesse felt that he was “thrown into” a new course in a “sink or swim sort-of situation” and that further education had made him feel that he could credibly teach his students with a greater understanding of pedagogy. Mona’s action research had also given her a real understanding of teaching strategies that would assist her students to learn effectively, giving her greater confidence when advising them.

Positive impacts on students were seen as another advantage of PD. Several teachers who had completed action research projects could see direct benefits to students of implementing the findings of their project. Because action research involves making students co-collaborators in the project, Mona had found that this had altered her teaching approach, leading her to work together with students to identify their needs and goals “rather than just imposing everything top-down on them.” Wendy’s PD experiences also changed her teaching approach: becoming a learner herself had given her greater compassion for her students, particularly the way she managed assessment.

Recognition by peers and managers could be another benefit of PD, with some participants reporting this was a benefit of action research for them. Three of the interviewees were able to use ideas gained through their research more broadly in their centres, either through directly implementing findings with their own students, more widely through the centre’s curriculum or becoming an “expert” in their centre. Presentations internally and externally led to recognition in their centres and more broadly in the TESOL community. In one case, it had led to the opportunity to take on higher duties in the centre.

4.4 Desired PD program

Interviewees and survey respondents were asked about the most important aspects of a PD program for them. In the survey, this involved Likert-style questions examining attitudes to teacher-centred PD with statements about autonomy, flexibility, collaboration, action research, reflection and teacher-initiated activities. Interviewees explored an ideal PD program through creating a mind map. Key themes emerging from the mind maps are explored below, but first one mind map will be examined as a whole to gain a perspective on one ideal PD program and the process of mind mapping.

4.4.1 Mind mapping

The co-creation of a mind map in this project allows for a negotiation of understanding about an abstract imaginary PD program. First, I asked “What are the most important aspects for you in an ideal PD program and Millie identified that they were: relevant, practical, accessible, modern and paid. I then asked more about each aspect. Ideas about logistics or those that Millie saw as extra and not part of a main bubble were placed on the right hand side. There was a continual process of clarifying, understanding and uncovering more detail about the aspects of the PD program that were important to Millie. The mind map and an excerpt of the interview are shown on the following page. Millie can be seen using the mind map as a reference point for her own ideas. She also clarifies what I have drawn in this excerpt, demonstrating member checking aspect of the mind map and the co-creation and negotiation of meaning using a visual aid.

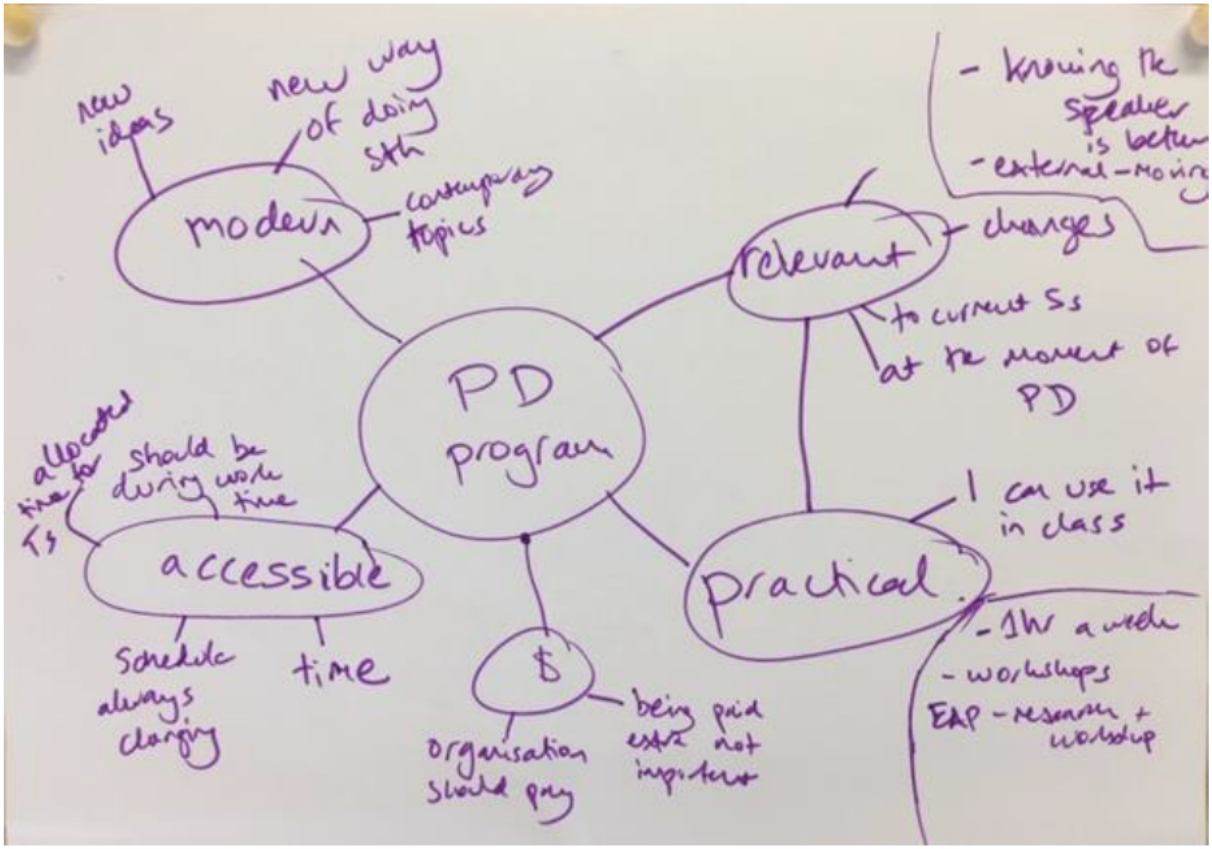


Figure 3- Millie's mind map

Excerpt from interview with Millie

Millie is identified as I (interviewee) and I am M. We are finishing a long discussion on what she means by "accessible", which she has identified is about time.

> *I: The institution should allocate time for teachers to actually do it online or at least not expect you to finish whatever you have to finish if they want you to do a course online.*
>
> *M: (Has drawn lines from 'accessibility', 'should be during work time' and 'allocated time for Ts') Ok and we talked a little bit about modern, so new ideas new way of doing something.*
>
> *I: That's right.*
>
> *M: Is there anything that you want to add there?*

I: Yeah I think contemporary topics? You know, it's the same as maybe… (looking at the 'modern' bubble she changes her mind) That's a little bit different.

M: (Adds 'contemporary topics' to 'modern') Is there anything else you want to add to this? (Showing her the mind map)

I: What did I say here please? (Gestures to '$' bubble)

M: Oh, you were talking about money so I just wrote a dollar sign.

Some of the ideas in Millie's mind map also became main themes in other interviewees' ideal PD programs. These ideas are explored below with additional references to further survey data.

4.4.2 Relevance

Relevance was one of the most important things to teachers interviewed for this project. Wendy prioritised relevance in her mind map and divided this area into two parts: day-to-day and big-picture relevance. Day-to-day relevance would be applicable to her current students while big picture relevance brought a new perspective to her work. For Millie, direct relevance to her current cohort of students was the primary goal of her ideal PD program. She also made the point (seen in the mind map) that relevance for her was continuously changing as the students and classes that she taught changed, an idea echoed by other teachers as well. Jesse thought that "a main principle or pillar of this PD program would be contextualisation, so that… you're going to actually use what's in this PD, what's going to be relevant to you."

Teachers also discussed relevance in relation to their career stage, future aspirations and personal relevance. Naima identified in the survey that she had unique needs as a beginning teacher. She thought her centre's PD program should

“cater more towards my needs as a teacher who is still new to the field.” Several participants mentioned the absence of any PD available in their centres relating to career development in the direction of management, teacher training or curriculum development, and observed that the focus of the PD program seemed to be the teachers’ current jobs. Renee made the following point in the survey, “I think that it is too centred on developing skills for the classroom and that there is no real focus on developing skills that may help teachers find further career opportunities outside the classroom.” Ultimately, there was a recognition by several participants that each teachers’ PD needs were unique to them. In the survey, Morgan said it was important to “manage what we do according to our interests” and Anna wanted “more time and flexibility to do the PD that is important to me.” Sean’s idea of “meaningful” PD is about personal relevance, which continually changes based on students, courses, colleagues and individual factors.

4.4.3 Access

Lack of time was a key issue that emerged for teachers in terms of their current PD programs. It is therefore unsurprising that access to PD, in terms of time, location and available activities, was an important part of ideal PD programs. Four interviewees used the word “access” or “accessible” as part of their mind maps. Stella’s mind map is an interesting example showing different kinds of access that she viewed as vital so that she could attend PD. The mind map covers time, location, flexibility of delivery, with the ability to take part in a webinar as an alternative to traditional modes of delivery. Due to logistics, Stella often had to take part of PD alone rather than with her team, and she thought that sharing ideas on sessions that the team attended together would be very useful for her professional development.

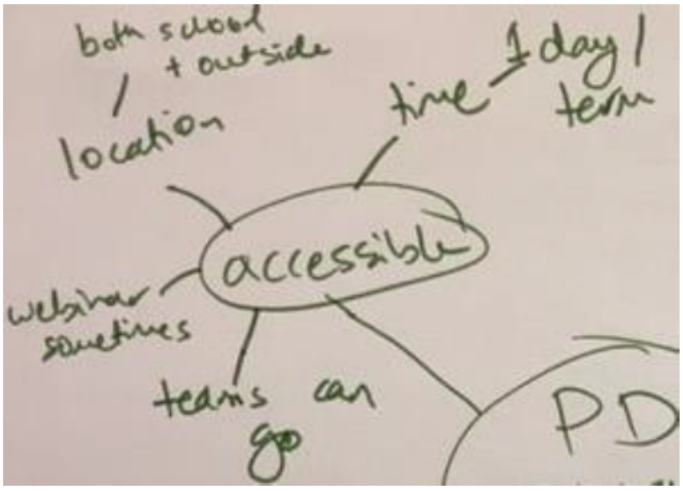


Figure 4- Stella's mind map section

For those without regular PD activities in their centres or a haphazard PD program, the desire for a structured, consistent PD program emerged as a priority. Jesse's main focus for access was regular PD sessions in his centre, and this comment also appeared in the survey, combined with a desire for a predetermined program or framework for PD. Access also meant allocated time during work hours to undertake PD activities, a common theme in the survey. Some comments were that teachers wanted to engage in PD "not just in my own time but organized by centre" and had "more time release to work on PD goals."

Participants expressed a desire for greater flexibility in terms of delivery and scheduling. Because many of the participants' centres had fixed-time seminars, this was not something that they currently experienced. There was an interest in more online options or a variety of sessions to meet teacher timetables and needs. Sean was positive about the flexibility and simplicity of his centre's PD program, which met teachers at their current level and could accommodate different timetables and preferences because it was tailored to each teacher.

4.4.4 Teacher involvement

Greater teacher involvement in the PD program was largely viewed as positive in this study. Participants discussed the importance of teacher inclusion at all stages of the PD program: from planning to delivery and evaluation. Many teachers mentioned a desire to contribute to the planning of the PD program in their centres. The highest level of involvement would be a teacher-led planning committee, which Mona felt was the best way to run PD. More commonly, participants wanted their voices to be considered by managers when planning PD. Jesse thought that the PD program should constantly evolve and be “reflective and responsive to the teachers' needs and the teachers' feedback.” He imagined a cyclical PD program which was flexible enough to meet changing needs and each PD activity “shaped future PD as teachers tried out ideas.” This cycle can be seen to include both a planning and evaluation purpose for teachers. Tia also felt that teacher evaluation was critical in deciding how successful a PD program was.

Teacher involvement in delivering PD was also a popular idea. Vivian thought that managers often led sessions that teachers could have delivered in areas of their expertise. She suggested running shorter sessions where teachers would feel less intimidated to present and the opportunity for teachers to collaborate leading sessions and sharing classroom practice or recent experiences at conferences. Her suggestions are shown below in a section from her mind map.

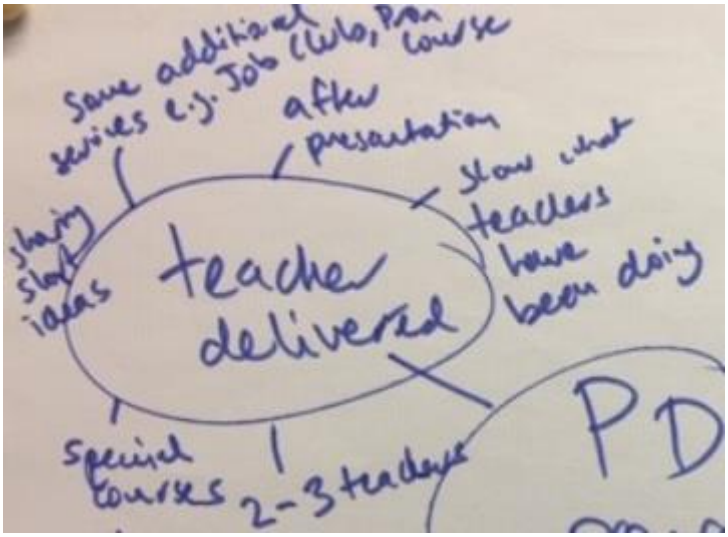


Figure 5- Vivian's mind map section

Teacher involvement in PD could also involve more active sessions where teachers had the chance to participate, rather than a traditional seminar. In the survey, Eilis wrote that the sessions at her centre "are very teacher-centred, like mini-lectures. I'd like them to better mirror the student-centred approach we take in our classrooms." Wishing to be actively involved in PD, to have a chance to practice skills and share ideas from other teachers were all areas of interest mentioned by participants. On the other hand, Greg felt that communicative workshops were inefficient. In addition, Juna, a survey respondent, found the management's hands-off approach to PD had led to issues with their PD program: "the sessions are delivered by the teachers themselves but not monitored by management and sometimes it is just messy and not fruitful."

4.4.5 Collaboration and sharing

The interest in including more teacher participation in PD programs also flows to the value of sharing and collaboration, a common theme in surveys and interviews. In fact, for some participants, the ability to share knowledge with their colleagues was

the most important aspect of PD. For Amy, collaboration with a colleague in a previous action research project had been an excellent opportunity to “bounce ideas off each other” which made it “particularly rewarding.” In her ideal PD program, she was interested in further collaborative projects. Mona also valued collaborative research with other teachers; for her it was the best way to work. Sean’s curriculum development project had been rewarding for him and the other teachers involved. He felt that collaboration helped him to develop his ideas and he thought that this was a key aspect of future PD for him. Formal areas of collaboration mentioned by participants included action research, curriculum development, peer observation and lesson planning. Sharing ideas with teachers from other institutions “opens up your horizons” (Millie) and helped Jesse to understand the scope of the wider sector. Also, teachers who attended external events could share new ideas with their colleagues when they returned.

Informal sharing was also mentioned as a valuable form of PD. Millie felt that a five-minute chat with a colleague could be just as valuable as a two-hour lecture. Priya wrote this extended answer in the survey, suggesting how centres could help facilitate this informal sharing:

> *I think all centres need to recognise that REAL development often happens in an informal sense - through reflection or simply through chatting/ socialising with colleagues who are of a generous and open nature, rather than bitter and jaded. I think that more opportunities for socialising, or perhaps inspirational speakers that are not necessarily directly relevant, may very well be far more beneficial at the individual and organisational level.*

4.4.6 Choice

The idea of choice was important in desired PD programs. The majority of participants did not want individual PD activities to be compulsory, although they acknowledged the importance of a minimum PD expectation. The exceptions were Greg and Jesse, who both felt that compulsory regular PD was important. For Jesse, compulsory PD was as much about the organisation's obligation to provide PD as it was about the teachers' requirement to attend. The idea of relevance is strongly linked with choice, as participants discussed the desire to select PD that was relevant to them. Choice was also linked to teacher involvement and having a greater say over their own PD program. Tia would like to negotiate PD goals with her manager and wanted PD that was flexible, allowing her to "pick and choose" options that would "fit what you're doing."

4.5 Reflexivity

My own journal entries pre- and post-interview and while I was transcribing, give an interesting perspective to the interviews and the data. Even though Roulston (2010) stated that interviewers using a constructivist approach do not necessarily need special skills or training, I found that my lack of experience interviewing affected the process and data collected. During my earlier interviews, I avoided silences, paraphrased participants' language into my own and asked sometimes confusing, multi-barrelled questions. I found asking follow-up questions to be a complex process of listening and untangling what I wanted to hear and what they wanted to say. I also used evaluative responses which may have encouraged interviewees to give expected answers. Through a self-analysis and consultation with my supervisor, we considered ways to allow the interviewees to follow their own agendas and give

breathing room in the interview. The result is a significant difference in the development of my interview technique as the interviews progressed.

Below is an excerpt from my interview with Tia. Examples of evaluative comments can be seen: “That’s interesting!” as well as giving my own ideas, “it sounds like you were making them and sharing them.” The amount of interjections possibly hindered Tia’s ability to completely finish her thoughts and the direction of her speech may have been influenced by my frequent comments.

> *T: Our old school, at the end of every PD session, for whatever the topic was, we would have a sharing session.*
>
> *M: Oh, okay! That's interesting!*
>
> *T: It wasn't like a rule, but every teacher who did a PD session ended up asking everyone the week before: "Please bring anything that you feel is useful." So it ended up being that at the end of every hour of the monthly session you would share.*
>
> *M: Is that related to the topic?*
>
> *T: That would always be related, too. So, for example, that one was warmers and fillers and he gave us some of his ideas and some things he's found in books and websites and we then shared our own. So I had brought like my favourite pronunciation game that I did.*
>
> *M: Yeah, right.*
>
> *T: So that was very good 'cause it was like practical and useful for our jobs and, yeah, very flexible.*
>
> *M: Yeah, ok. And it sounds like you were making them and sharing them.*
>
> *T: Yeah.*
>
> *M: And getting lots of ideas.*

As a comparison, my last interview with Mona shows a significant difference in the way that the interview flowed. My subsequent experience interviewing and reflexive journals had allowed me to consider my own influence on the interview. The transcript looks significantly different, with 10-12 lines of Mona speaking without interruption for every question. Because of the length of each utterance and the identifying information present in each one, I cannot publish a complete excerpt. However, this section gives some idea of the change in interviewing technique. Mona is I for interviewee.

> *M: Ok, so what does professional development mean to you?*
>
> *I: For me, professional development is... it's a... it's a must. It's a part of my professional practice as a teacher. It's something that I've always sought out. I've always looked for opportunities to do PD… (12 more lines, explains some specifics, finishing with a comment about the importance of action research for her)*
>
> *M: (silence and taking notes) Yeah.*
>
> *I: Yeah.*
>
> *M: Okay. Talk to me more about action research.*

The notes taken pre- and post-interview and during transcription were significant in allowing me to see my influence on the data and help develop my skills as an interviewer.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, the findings are analysed in relation to the three research questions posed in the methodology section. The lack of research which addresses similar questions means that findings cannot be directly compared; however, literature which relates from individual findings is included. This section concludes with implications and practical recommendations from the research. The contribution of this study in relation to existing literature as well as directions for future research are addressed in the conclusion.

5.1 RQ 1- What are English language teachers' experiences of professional development in their centres?

Teacher participants in this study had a variety of experiences in their centres, but there are some commonalities. Firstly, the prominence of seminars or workshops as the main or in some cases the only source of professional development is apparent. This programming seems to have influenced teachers' definitions of PD and ideal PD programs, which often focussed on seminars and workshops and excluded other forms of PD. It is unclear whether this occurred because of teacher preference or experience, but the comment by several interviewees that they only knew what they had been involved in suggests that this was likely to have had a strong effect. In addition, those who experienced a more expansive PD program also had broader definitions of PD. This suggests that teachers' current programs influenced their understanding of PD.

Evaluating a PD program on its teacher-centredness is a sliding scale. Teachers may have choice in some areas but not others. Certain aspects of their program may

be individualised, but there also may be a compulsory, traditional component. The scale is represented below:

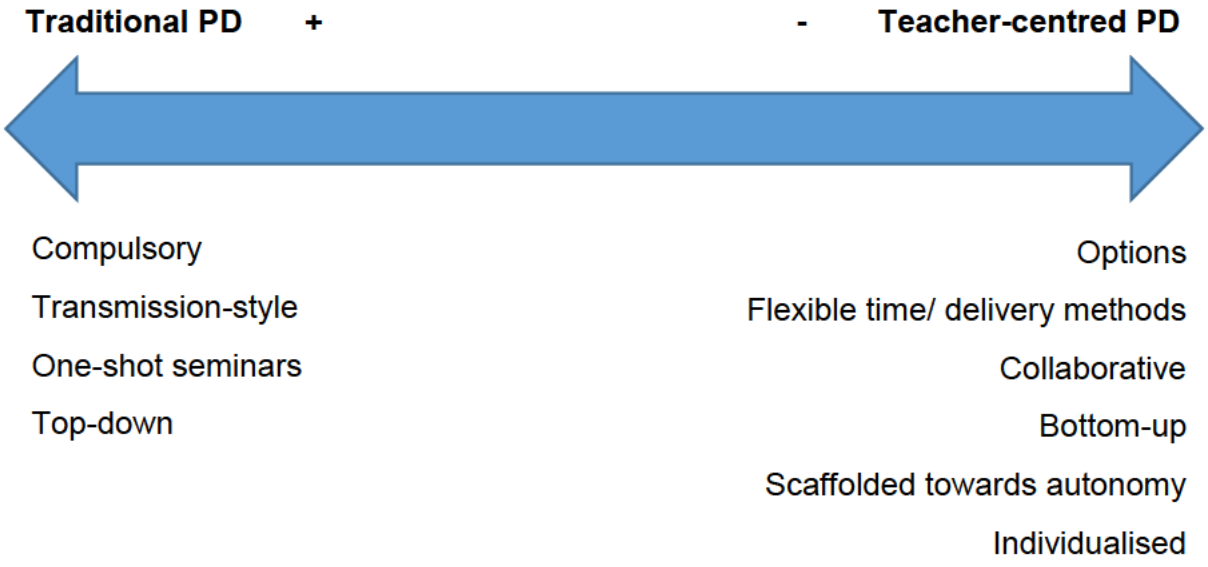


Figure 6- Sliding scale of PD

5.1.1 Traditional PD+

The most common experience in this study was a program of *traditional PD+*. This PD program is top-down, management controlled, one-size-fits-all PD with regular sessions, which could be compulsory or optional. This supports researchers' observations that professional development still mostly follows a traditional delivery method (Burns, 2017; Diaz Maggioli, 2012).The plus aspect is that most centres had some teacher involvement, usually in the form of practical, interactive workshops instead of lectures, and teachers could deliver sessions. Most centres informally asked for teacher feedback into the program, although it was still the decision of management whether or not to incorporate these. It was also a common experience for teachers to be able to complete some other forms of PD on an occasional basis,

but these were not usually integrated into the PD program. As seen in the findings, attending external seminars or workshops were typical activities, which again brings to light the ubiquitous nature of this delivery method. Observations were also common, although, as previously seen, these were not always welcomed by teachers or considered to be professional development.

5.1.2 Scarce PD

Teachers who had few PD opportunities experienced *scarce PD.* This applied to a small number of participants only, and was characterised by few opportunities to engage in PD in their centre or externally and little managerial support to follow PD goals. Unsurprisingly, the main focus of these participants was obtaining some opportunities to undertake PD. These participants had theoretical choices about completing PD and were encouraged to find their own PD opportunities through the English Australia website. In the development of autonomy, it is not enough to simply remove instruction or support; autonomy needs to be fostered over time (Benson, 2011). Similarly, the absence of financial, emotional and logistical support for teachers who experienced scarce PD in this study put a burden on teachers to overcome significant obstacles they encountered and did not foster real autonomy.

5.1.3 Teacher-centred PD

Three participants can be seen to experience *teacher-centred PD.* They had an abundance of opportunities to undertake PD in their centres, including many options which allowed for collaboration and individualisation. Two of the participants in this group came from large university centres which had strong research cultures and a support for teacher knowledge and collaborative practice. Both centres were well-funded, with time, money and energy being allocated to the PD program. In a smaller centre, it may not be possible to offer the large number of choices available in these

centres; however, a program can still be teacher-centred. Wendy's program offers an example of TCPD with its flexible, individualised PD program negotiated with a manager, and regular collaborative groups where teachers come together to develop curriculum and work on classroom problems.

The programs in this category are teacher-centred because they offer autonomy, collaboration and flexibility. Professional development activities which promote communities of practice, collaboration and inquiry can help teachers to fulfil their potential and develop into their ZPD (Diaz Maggioli, 2012; Johnson, 2009). The sustainability of the programs can be seen in the description of the participants, who could see their own development over time and felt confident that the PD program would continue to meet their changing needs. As an example of development, Mona had initially been encouraged to undertake an action research program by her manager, and the completion of this had seen her gradually become more confident and take on more responsibilities. Now she mentors others in their own research projects. This mirrors the communities of practice model of novice to expert achieved through collaborative practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and others' experience of becoming leaders in their centres after completing an action research project (Edwards & Burns, 2016).

5.1.4 Mixed PD

Some programs included a mix of traditional and teacher-centred elements. Stella and Amy fit into this category, as they had compulsory PD days, a mix of workshops and seminars, which could be relevant or irrelevant depending on their current development needs. They also had a degree of choice and individualisation in other areas of their program. They both expressed frustration at the compulsory nature of their PD days, even though they could sometimes be useful depending on the topic

and presenter. They were able to fulfil individual PD goals which were not met by the PD days by choosing their own activities. This aspect of individualisation can be seen to mitigate some of the difficulties of participants who experienced traditional PD+ and had fewer options.

5.1.5 PD activities and long-term effects

In terms of activities, action research seemed to have the most profound long-term effect on the teachers who had completed it. When participants spoke of workshops they had enjoyed, they mentioned benefits in discrete areas such as understanding a grammar point or learning a new way to teach pronunciation. However, action research was discussed differently: changing teacher identity, changing relationships with students and colleagues, and personal as well as professional development, all of which had a positive impact on their teaching. These findings are consistent with other research on the long-term effects of teacher involvement in action research (Edwards & Burns, 2016). It also suggests a difference in the effects of one-shot PD versus sustained transformative development where a teacher changes across all institutional practices and relationships (Grimmett, 2014).

5.1.6 Theory into practice

One of the focuses of this research question and the project was to see if research and professional frameworks (particularly the English Australia CPD Framework) were having any effect on practice. For most of the interviewees, it had had a small effect. Several of them specifically mentioned the online resources or the ELTAR (the online portal English Australia created to log PD). However, none of these was integrated into their centres' PD programs to create a more teacher-centred program. In two cases, Jesse's and Millie's, the EA resources were used as a substitute for a PD program in their centres. The majority of the participants'

programs did not include any of the recommended EA CPD stages: individual needs analyses, a variety of options to match needs to activities, reflection and sharing. Equally, they did not incorporate the values of collaboration, flexibility and autonomy which are inherent in the framework. As discussed, traditional PD+ was common, with managers still by and large the gatekeepers, organisers and evaluators of PD. It was only in three centres that a holistic teacher-centred PD program had been implemented. It is difficult to determine what factors influenced the introduction of the teacher-centred PD programs without further investigation. However, considering the strong research culture in the two university centres and the similarity of the program stages to literature on PD and practical frameworks, it is likely that there was at least a consultation of relevant literature on best practice.

5.2 RQ2- What enables or constrains teachers' autonomy in their own professional development?

There are two ways to examine autonomy in the participants' centres: the expression of autonomy or lack of it in the PD program itself and institutional factors which could enable or constrain autonomy in practice. Considering these two aspects of autonomy can also help answer Benson's (2011, p. 123) questions which were discussed in the literature review. These relate to opportunities for learner control within the program and how implementation enables learners to access opportunities.

5.2.1 How PD programs promote or inhibit autonomy

The most obvious indicator of teacher autonomy in PD is considering the program itself. Most of the interviewees' programs did not support teacher autonomy. There was frequently a compulsory element of the PD program such as attendance at particular sessions or days. There was also, in some cases, the ability to access

funding to attend external events which the teacher chose, thereby individualising the programs somewhat. However, it was still the managers who were making the bulk of the decisions around PD programs and setting the agenda for them.

Flexibility of delivery methods and options for PD increased autonomy. Teachers who could engage with more flexible PD options could make choices that suited their needs, interests and schedules. Even though it was still difficult for these teachers to find time for PD in their busy working weeks, having choices removed some of the stress felt by teachers who were limited by their centre's PD scheduling. For teachers without choice, set activities which clashed with work or personal responsibilities could cause frustration and resentment.

The way that managers determined PD and the level to which consultation occurred significantly affected participants' feelings about how relevant the program was to them and how closely it resembled their definition of PD. Programs that did not match teachers' definitions and did not take teachers' input into account sometimes led participants to question their purpose. This finding is comparable to other reports on top-down decontextualised PD leading to teacher demotivation (Burns, 2017; Diaz Maggioli, 2004).

5.2.2 Institutional practice of autonomy

The implementation of the program and contextual factors can also influence autonomy. In this study, the importance of pay, time and workplace culture were significant factors in how autonomy was realised in the participants' centres. These areas could severely curtail or even completely restrict teachers' autonomy in PD, even if the PD program itself outwardly promoted it.

As reported in the findings section, the funding of PD was related to access to a wider variety of options. Participants in centres who were paid for PD and had funding to attend external events reported how it had allowed them to undertake activities that they would otherwise not have had access to. The variety of opportunities available increased the likelihood of the participants being able to make choices about their own learning and individualise a program that worked for them. In comparison, a lack of funding led to participants' reliance on existing programs. If their centre's program was lacking, they faced difficult choices about whether to fund their own PD or to accept the scarcity and focus on other aspects of their work. In addition, there was sometimes external pressure to attend PD days which were theoretically "optional" in order to secure work. Stanley (2016) described similar difficulties for low-paid teachers who were often expected to fund their own PD, adding extra financial pressures to low-paid teachers.

Time was a concern for many of the participants in this study, affecting both access to and feelings about PD. Almost all participants expressed the difficulty of fitting PD into their schedules, with very few having dedicated time for professional development. The considerable demands placed on teachers in their working lives could affect teachers' feelings about PD as an extra burden or responsibility. This could become even more onerous if it involved an extensive bureaucratic process to apply for PD. Participants in the survey and interview said that they would complete more PD if they had more time. This suggests that teachers were sometimes unable to undertake PD that would benefit them because of time constraints. This was particularly noticeable for more sustained PD activities such as action research. All teachers who had undertaken this had discussed the considerable time requirement outside of work hours which had impacted them and in some cases their families as

well. It is possible, therefore, that time constraints are a disincentive for involvement in time-heavy teacher-centred PD activities from which they could derive the greatest benefits. This finding is consistent with other studies identifying time as a major barrier to teachers conducting research (Borg, 2009; Edwards & Burns, 2016).

Workplace culture, particularly the role of the manager in PD, influenced the autonomy of teachers. In simple terms, managers most often had the power to determine how much choice and flexibility teachers had in their PD programs, and controlled logistical factors such as scheduling, funding and the process of undertaking PD. Teachers' autonomy could be increased or curtailed by how much the manager chose to move the locus of control of PD towards the teachers. In a select few cases, a teachers' committee decided on PD activities of the centre in consultation with teachers, thereby giving the community of teachers more autonomy. Individualised programs, where managers worked collaboratively with teachers on PD goals, place the manager in a facilitator role where they are able to scaffold learning for teachers and assist them to gain control over their own development. However, in the vast majority of cases studied, the teachers could exercise very little autonomy, and this was not expected to change significantly as the teacher became more experienced. In some centres, becoming more experienced may mean the possibility of leading some PD sessions if they volunteered to do so. However, as a whole, the transition that would be expected in a learning and development cycle with scaffolding leading to greater independence and leadership was not part of the workplace culture.

The workplace is also affected by broader issues in the sector such as casualisation and lack of job security (Stanley, 2016). An example of workplace change in this study demonstrates how PD can be affected by job losses, with managers and

teachers losing focus on PD and looking inward in survival mode. Sustained development requires an environment of collaboration and support (Edwards & Burns, 2016; Grimmett, 2014), which may be difficult to sustain during periods of dramatic change. There may also be broader PD implications for many ELICOS centres where teaching is increasingly casualised and job insecurity is a constant.

In most centres, there was no formal mechanism for teacher evaluation of the PD program. While some teachers said their managers had informally encouraged teacher suggestions or feedback, it is worth considering how much status and power relationships allow for this kind of feedback, whether it is in actual fact welcomed by managers and how representative this is of the teacher population in a centre. Few teachers in this study had made suggestions to their manager without a formal feedback process. In contrast, a committee of teachers, as had previously existed in Mona's centre, was able to create bottom-up PD and represent teacher interests more closely. Teachers' input into planning and evaluation is vital to create a teacher-centred program which meets their needs (Diaz Maggioli, 2004).

5.3 RQ3- What perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and values do English language teachers have towards teacher-centred professional development?

All participants in this study felt that professional development was important, regardless of how they felt about their current programs. Interviewees were able to discuss a range of benefits that PD had offered them in their careers thus far, including confidence, effect on relationships with students and colleagues, inspiring teaching practice and recognition. Participants were willing to invest resources into PD such as time, money and energy to meet their own PD goals. In order to ascertain perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and values of teachers towards teacher-

centred PD, it is necessary to analyse these in relation to autonomy, collaboration and flexibility.

5.3.1 Autonomy

Developing autonomy was significant for teachers in this study. Whether or not their programs were traditional, teacher-centred, or mixed, most teachers expressed a desire for greater autonomy, input and personalisation in PD programs. Those whose programs were teacher-centred valued the autonomy they already had and felt that they could continue to grow within their centre's PD framework.

Choice was an important theme for teachers in the survey and interviews, expressing a desire for more control over how, when and what PD activities teachers undertook. Many teachers expressed a desire for choice at a step beyond their current PD program. For example, those with compulsory regular workshops or seminars wished for optional regular workshops or seminars. Those with a mixed PD wanted a greater say over the compulsory activities or the addition of choice for all PD. This again highlights the importance of past or current experiences in shaping teachers' beliefs about possible future programs, consistent with other research on the importance of past learning experiences (Borg, 2015; Johnson, 2009). Experiences of TCPD vastly broadened teachers' definitions and attitudes towards possible future development, and increased their expectations about what both they and the centre could achieve.

There was considerable support in the study for teacher knowledge and a desire for greater input by teachers into their PD programs. Teachers wanted to have more of a voice in the planning, delivery and evaluation of activities and programs. Several teachers wanted more concrete ways to be involved, instead of a manager's casual

comment that they could volunteer to run a session or give suggestions on future activities. There was an interest in sharing classroom experiences with colleagues, and an appreciation of teacher knowledge through lived experience or action research. This is contrary to Borg's (2009) findings about the reticence of teachers to accept teacher research as legitimate.

Relevance was one of the most popular descriptors of good PD in this study. Participants discussed the relevance of PD in order to evaluate whether the activity met their individual needs in relation to their career stage, learning needs, interests and current classes. The discussion of relevance can be seen to be a desire for both personal input into and individualisation of the PD program. Unsurprisingly, teachers who experienced teacher-centred PD and were able to individually negotiate goals with a manager were able to most closely meet their own developmental needs. In these centres, learning was collaborative but personalised, leading to uniquely individual transformation in line with a sociocultural perspective (Johnson, 2009).

Overall, autonomy was strongly valued in professional development programs. Teachers linked it to motivation and improved teaching practice, and wanted more control over their own learning. The gap between current and ideal programs demonstrates that for the most part, participants are not receiving the kind of PD that they believe best suits their needs.

5.3.2 Collaboration

As seen in the findings, both formal and informal collaboration were key themes in this project. This flows on from the respect teachers had for the sharing of genuine classroom experiences and the desire to hear more about how their colleagues managed day-to-day challenges in the classroom. Those who had had a chance to

work on collaborative projects such as curriculum development and action research thought that the experience of working with others and being able to learn from them had been beneficial, even though it sometimes presented difficulties. Teachers' discussion of the process of collaboration through negotiation and sharing leading to development is in line with the sociocultural perspective of socially-mediated development (Johnson, 2009). Again, teachers' experiences were a strong influence on their desired PD programs. Teachers who had worked collaboratively on projects allocated more time to work in this way in their ideal PD programs, and those with a more traditional program requested more sharing time during sessions.

Collaboration was not only seen in a desire to work together on projects. Those who had experienced teacher participation in PD planning, either with a teacher committee or individually with a manager, wanted to continue or increase teacher involvement in this way. Collaboration with a manager on individual PD goals, where the manager acted as a facilitator for learning, gradually led to greater autonomy over time. This mirrors the ideal teacher-student relationship to foster autonomy (Benson, 2011). Experienced teachers in strong teacher-centred programs had gained a great deal of autonomy over their own learning, and were able to view their managers as co-collaborators in their PD.

5.3.3 Flexibility

Teachers expressed a strong desire for future programs which flexibly met the demands of their busy lives. They wanted to have access to PD at times and in ways that were convenient for them, and envisaged programs which could incorporate a variety of delivery methods, including online programs, to meet their changing needs. It was apparent time constraints in current programs limited teachers' engagement with PD, and so this was an area that was important to reconsider for teachers,

particularly the aspect of allocated time during the working week. Some participants thought that flexible delivery methods might help them to manage PD at more convenient times rather than the time decided by their managers.

Teachers who experienced flexible PD programs which met their needs had different attitudes to PD. These teachers could integrate PD into other activities during their week, for example, applying the findings of action research in class, reflecting with colleagues after class and noting changes for future teaching while creating their lesson plan. Therefore, PD became part of the ecosystem of the organisation, inseparable from other teaching and learning activities. Teachers who experienced this kind of program found PD to be integral to practice, rather than a separate entity or responsibility. Every experience was PD and PD was in every experience.

5.3.4 Perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and values towards teacher-centred PD

To summarise the findings for research question three, it is clear that teachers value autonomy, collaboration and flexibility, the key tenets of teacher-centred PD. In almost every case, participants hoped to increase these aspects in future PD. They wanted more control over their own learning, more sharing and a greater ability to access PD which was personally and contextually relevant. However, the extent to which they were able to envisage future programs was limited by their PD experiences

5.4 Implications and recommendations

When current and ideal PD programs of participants are compared, there is a significant gap. While participants valued the ideals of teacher-centred PD, very few of them experienced this kind of program in their centres. It was the space between their actual and ideal programs that caused some participants to feel resentment or

dissatisfaction. Interestingly, teacher requests for future programs were modest, and may be feasible for their centres to adopt: more official channels to provide feedback on programs, the ability to discuss PD goals with their managers and the chance to complete online PD were some suggestions given by participants. Even small changes in programs would meet the needs of the participants in this study.

Ultimately, of the teachers included in this study, those that were most positive about PD in their centres experienced a teacher-centred program. Working on individual goals with a manager was perceived to be an incredibly effective way of developing as a teacher, as the PD created through this process is by nature relevant and individualised. Compulsory PD activities seemed to have an adverse effect on participants' motivation and they were only sometimes able to meet the needs of participants. It is recommended that centres replace compulsory sessions with flexible options for PD. An overall expectation for PD can be jointly negotiated between the manager and teachers. The EA CPD Framework (English Australia, 2019b) can be a useful starting point for a teacher-centred program because it is flexible enough to be adapted by a variety of centres. However, it is recommended that more collaboration during all stages of the program, in line with the Teacher's Choice Framework (Diaz Maggioli, 2004) is included.

There is no attempt to generalise these findings. This is a small study which is not representative of ELICOS teachers in Australia. Teachers in different centres will have a variety of experiences and needs. What is recommended is that managers work with teachers to evaluate their current program, and then gradually increase teacher input into the program moving forward. Both collectively and individually, teacher voices must be included in all stages of PD in order to meet their needs.

Teachers can also be agents of change in their own PD. They can give feedback on sessions or volunteer to initiate a new PD activity based on collaboration, such as a peer observation program or an action research project, perhaps for the EA Action Research in ELICOS Program. Some teachers in this project presented the ideas of their mind map to their managers in order to begin a conversation about personally-relevant PD. However, it is naïve to believe that teachers, unsupported by managers and institutional practice, will be able to effect change alone. What is needed is a complete rethink of the way that PD frequently functions. Burns (2017) found that managerial support was absolutely crucial in the success of action research. Equally, the power of managers to enable or constrain teachers' autonomy is seen clearly in this project. Therefore, managers need to be aware of the significant benefits of adopting a teacher-centred approach to professional development and how it will benefit not only the teachers, but the organisation as a whole.

5.4.1 Summary of recommendations

- Involve teachers in PD planning, especially through teacher-led committees
- Provide mechanisms for regular teacher feedback on the PD program
- Initiate individual PD programs negotiated between teacher and manager, where the manager facilitates the developing autonomy of the teacher
- Set a PD expectation with teachers, with flexible options on how to meet goals
- Support teacher access to PD through funding, time and energy
- Preference PD options that are collaborative and teacher-led, including action research and communities of practice
- Embed ongoing PD into all aspects of practice throughout the institution
- Value and promote teacher leadership through mentoring

6 Conclusion

6.1 Contributions

In the literature review, the research gap and the need for this study was identified. In the sections below, each aspect of the gap is addressed, and this study is positioned within wider bodies of literature.

6.1.1 PD programs as a whole

As previously mentioned, the vast number of studies on PD only consider one initiative and not the whole centre's program or other contextual factors. The sociocultural perspective is grounded in the understanding of learning within its larger context (Johnson, 2009), so it is important to analyse the practice of the entire institution around PD (Grimmett, 2014). This study focussed on the whole centre, the way that the PD program functions, as well as other contextual factors such as workplace culture and the roles of managers and teachers. Analysis of findings have uncovered how these factors function together as part of PD from the teacher's perspective. For example, a manager's role as facilitator or gatekeeper to PD was found to be a significant factor in teacher autonomy in this study. In addition, the PD experiences afforded to teachers through their centres were found to have a strong effect on their ideas of future PD and how much autonomy they could imagine in ideal PD.

6.1.2 Theory and practice in PD

There was also a missing link in discovering how theory and practice were connected. Although TESOL literature has been recommending more teacher-centred approaches to PD for at least twenty years, it is unclear how much of this has been introduced into centres. Particularly in view of the fairly recent introduction

of the EA CPD Framework in 2016, there has been as yet no research into its impact on ELICOS centres in Australia. This research gives a snapshot of practice at a small number of centres, highlighting some ways that ELICOS PD programs function from teachers' perspectives. It demonstrates the possible transformative effects on workplace culture when teacher-centred PD programs are introduced. It also demonstrates the risks of removing institutional support and using a framework as a substitute for investment into PD opportunities for staff.

6.1.3 Teacher voices

Teachers' voices are unfortunately lacking from much of the literature around the development of their programs. Frequently, top-down programs exclude teachers from input into their own PD (Burns, 2017; Diaz Maggioli, 2004). This means that the sociocultural process of developing both independently and as a community leader as the teacher progresses through their career cannot occur (Diaz Maggioli, 2012; Johnson, 2009). Many participants in this study experienced very little autonomy in their PD programs, and had only minimal opportunities to be actively involved in them through delivery. There were very few chances for teacher input to be included in the planning or evaluation of programs, leading to programs that often did not fit the needs of the teachers they were designed for. Considering the power of PD to transform teachers and the communities in which they work (Burns, 2017) and the long-standing call to involve teachers in PD (Richards & Farrell, 2005), this is surprising. While not aiming to comment on the sector as a whole, managers and teachers may reflect on their own programs and consider how inclusive they are of teachers' perspectives and what opportunities they provide for real teacher development.

6.1.4 Teachers as learners

This research draws on ideas from sociocultural theory and autonomy to place teacher development within its broader context. It contributes to a broader call to consider teachers as learners (Benson, 2011; Diaz Maggioli, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Vieira, 2017) and apply the principles of learner-centred teaching and socially-mediated development to teachers in their professional development. By focussing on teacher voices and applying constructivist principles of allowing the words of the participants to be heard, it is hoped that this will bring greater focus to including teachers as part of professional development programming.

6.1.5 Mind mapping

This project highlighted the value of mind mapping as part of a constructivist interview practice. In line with Wheeldon's (2011) findings that mind maps were a useful tool for participants when dealing with complex descriptions, using mind maps in this study helped the participants to develop an ideal PD program and show the relationships between their ideas. In addition, it supported the constructivist approach to the co-construction of data and negotiation of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017), and allowed for on-the-spot member-checks to increase the trustworthiness of the data (Shenton, 2004).

6.1.6 Reflexive interviewing

This study also contributes to the body of research on reflexive interviewing. Reflexivity supports the constructivist viewpoint by bringing the invisible (the interviewer) to light and considering the role of the researcher in the co-construction of data (Mann, 2016). Not only was it important to acknowledge my role in the process of data creation, particularly apparent in mind-mapping, but it helped in my

development as a researcher. Examples in the findings section show how reflexive journals throughout the interviewing and subsequent transcription process made me more aware of how my interviewing technique affected the data created. They also assisted in the rigorous analysis process and the development of my ideas as the project progressed. This technique may be useful to other novice researchers to assist in their own professional development.

6.2 Limitations

This is a small study; neither the survey nor interviews are designed to represent the population of ELICOS teachers. Findings from this study illuminate a variety of teacher voices and it is hoped that these will cause discussion and interest in the wider TESOL community. However, each centre and teacher is different, and it is important to consider the specific context of each centre and bring to light the teacher voices within those communities before making centre-based decisions about professional development.

This study considers teachers within their wider contexts and how other factors may influence PD. However, due to the time constraints and the main focus on teachers as the missing voices in PD, perspectives from other stakeholders have not been considered. It is not known, for example, how the managers of the participants view their own role in PD and how that aligns with or diverges from teachers' views. The accounts of teachers represent their own individual experiences of PD and do not necessarily reflect PD program documentation or the realities of other teachers in their centres.

6.3 Further research

This study points to many gaps in the literature around PD and there is space for a great deal more research in many areas. Firstly, a refocussing of the discussion of PD from individual activities to whole PD programs provides ample scope for a different focus of research on PD in Australia and abroad. A large quantitative study on the effects of the EA CPD, and broad PD programs across Australia would be a useful starting point for teachers, managers and the broader ELICOS sector to understand common practice. While it is not possible to delve into the complex nature of PD from this kind of study, it may give some information on how broadly teacher-centred PD has been adopted across ELICOS and provide feedback to continue to develop the framework.

There is also scope for more understanding of teachers and how they learn within their PD programs. Longitudinal, ethnographic research on teacher development, particularly within the contexts of different kinds of centres and programs, would give more information about the complexity and individual nature of teacher development and learning.

In an expansion on this study, I plan to complete a PhD project which looks at whole centres and how professional development occurs within them. It will include teachers' and managers' voices as well as document analysis and observation of the PD program in action in a case study approach. It is hoped that viewing a PD program from all angles will provide further information to teachers, managers and professional bodies about the complex practice of professional development and how it is enacted across institutions.

6.4 Concluding remarks

There is still a great deal that is not understood about professional development in TESOL and the forces that act on it. However, it is clear that professional development programs do not always do what they aim to: develop teachers. To ensure that PD is engaging and inspiring for teachers, consideration needs to be given to multiple factors: an understanding of how adults learn, opportunities to foster teacher autonomy and access to meaningful PD. Above all, teachers' perspectives need to be included at every stage of program development and part of an ongoing process of consultation. When PD is deeply embedded into everyday activities, it becomes part of the fabric of being a teacher. It is then possible to create a learning community which includes teachers and managers working towards a program of true teacher-centred professional development.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Ethics approval

Human Sciences Ethics Subcommittee
Macquarie University, North Ryde
NSW 2109, Australia

MACQUARIE University

28/02/2019

Dear Dr Chappell,

Reference No: 5201949887430
Project ID: 4988
Title: Teacher-Centred Professional Development: Exploring Teacher Cognition and Autonomy in Australian ELICOS Centres

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical review. The Human Sciences Subcommittee has considered your application.

I am pleased to advise that ethical approval has been granted for this project to be conducted by Dr Philip Chappell, and other personnel: Ms Melissa Reed.

This research meets the requirements set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, (updated July 2018).

Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the National Statement, available from the following website: https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018.
2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports. Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol. You will be sent an automatic reminder email one week from the due date to remind you of your reporting responsibilities.
3. All adverse events, including unforeseen events, which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project, must be reported to the subcommittee within 72 hours.
4. All proposed changes to the project and associated documents must be submitted to the subcommittee for review and approval before implementation. Changes can be made via the Human Research Ethics Management System.

The HREC Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Services website: https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Faculty Ethics Officer.

The Human Sciences Subcommittee wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Naomi Sweller

Chair, Human Sciences Ethics Subcommittee

The Faculty Ethics Subcommittees at Macquarie University operate in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, (updated July 2018), [Section 5.2.22].

Appendix B- Email to managers

Dear Director of Studies,

My name is Melissa Reed and I am conducting research into professional development for teachers in English Language Centres across Australia. I come from a teaching and academic management background myself, and I'm very interested in finding out what teachers want from professional development.

This study is important because professional development is heading towards a more teacher-centred model, and there is not very much research in our sector on how teachers feel about professional development in general and, more specifically, how much control and flexibility they would like. More research about this will help you to plan your new PD programs and guide industry bodies.

During the study, I will be surveying teachers nation-wide about professional development, and then interviewing a selection of teachers to give more detailed and in-depth opinions. I will not be collecting the names of schools as part of my research and all personal details will be confidential.

I am completing this research as a part of my Master of Research thesis with my supervisor, Dr Philip Chappell of the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University. I also hope to publish the results in academic journals.
Soon you will receive a letter including a poster for your staffroom inviting teachers to participate in the study. I hope that you will consider putting this up and, if possible, mentioning it at your staff meeting. The link to complete the study is www.tinyurl.com/ELICOSsurvey .
If you have any questions about this study, please contact:

- Dr Philip Chappell (Philip.Chappell@mq.edu.au (02)9850 9603) if you have any questions about the study
- Ms Melissa Reed (Melissa.reed1@hdr.mq.edu.au) if you would like to get the results of the study
- The Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (ethics@mq.edu.au Ph (02) 9850 7854) if you are not sure about any ethical aspect of this study

Kind regards,

Melissa Reed
Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Appendix C- Staffroom posters

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

Do you have opinions about **professional development**?

You can participate in a national survey on teachers' views and win a gift card!

- Your opinions and experiences are valued and confidential
- The survey takes less than 15 minutes of your time
- Go into the draw for 1 of 5 $50 gift cards
- You can answer anonymously
- To begin and find out more information, go to:

https://tinyurl.com/ELICOSsurvey

- To ask a question, email the researcher: Melissa.reed1@hdr.mq.edu.au

Appendix D- Demographic information of survey respondents

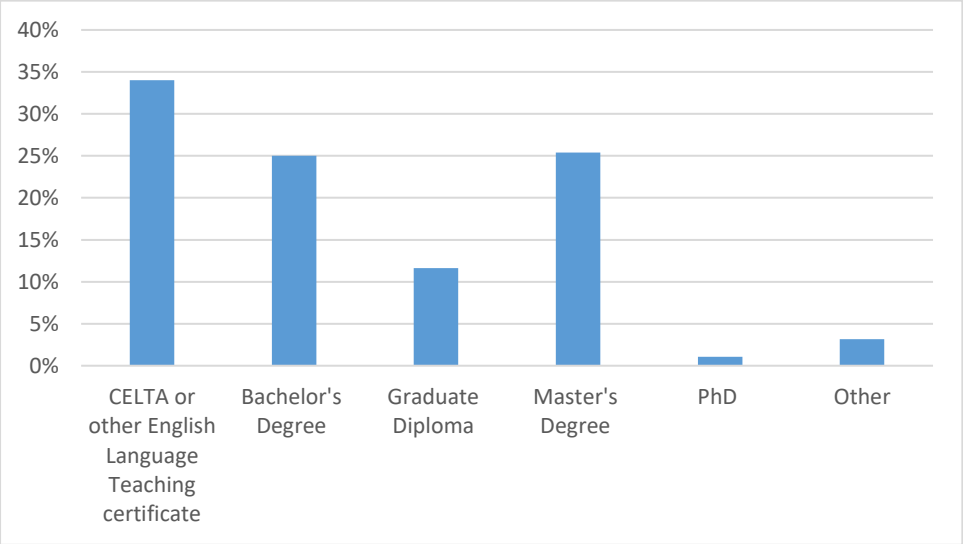
Gender

Female	78%
Male	20%
Other	0%
Prefer not to say	2%

Age range

24 or under	1%
25 - 34	25%
35 - 44	36%
45 - 54	23%
55 - 64	14%
65 or older	1%

Teaching-related qualifications



Q13

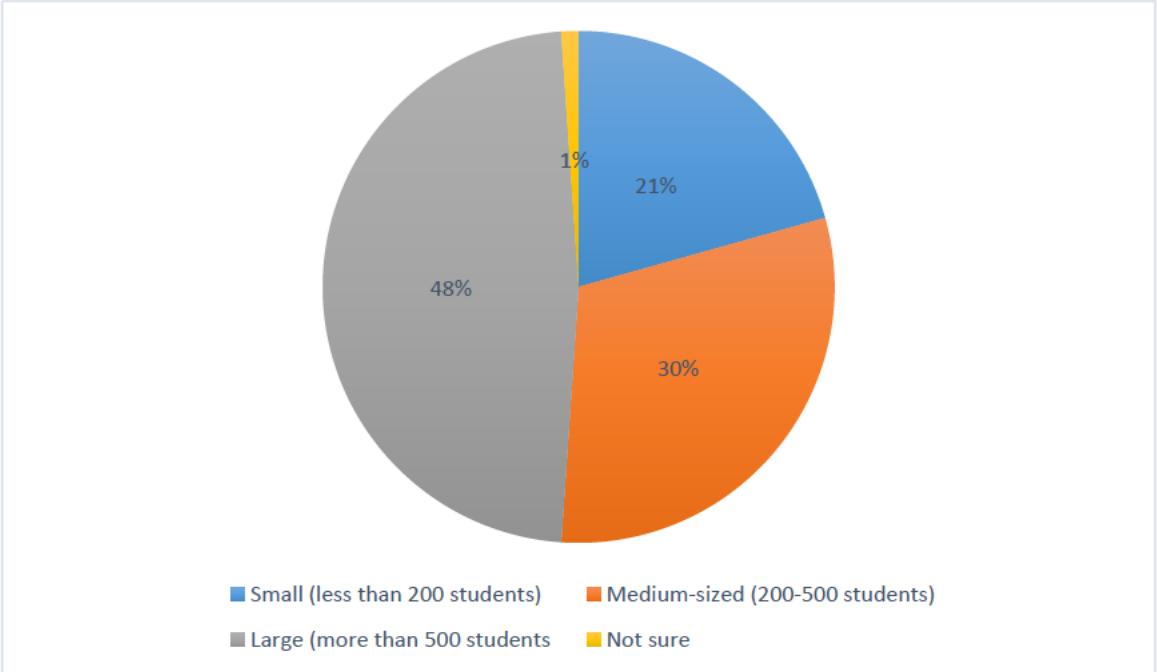
Overall teaching experience

Less than 1 year	1%
1-3 years	9%
4-6 years	18%
7-10 years	24%
More than 10 years	48%

Teaching experience in an English language centre

Less than 1 year	5%
1-3 years	27%
4-6 years	17%
7-10 years	14%
More than 10 years	36%

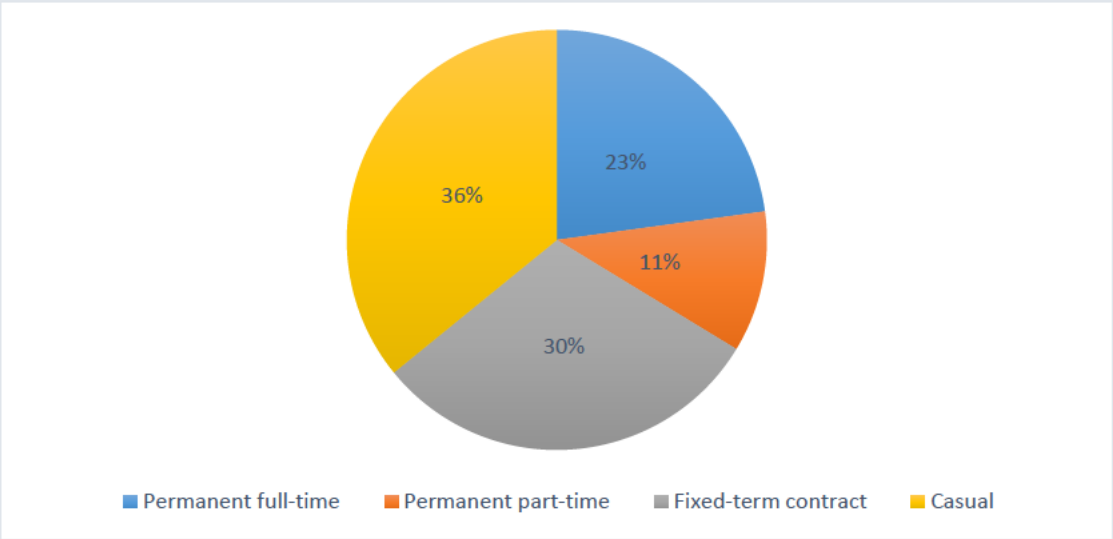
Centre size



English language centre type

A private English Language Centre	37%
A university English Language Centre	50%
A TAFE English Language Centre	12%
An Intensive English Centre(IEC) attached to a secondary school	1%

Employment status



English centre location

Adelaide	7%
Brisbane	8%
Canberra	7%
Melbourne	38%
Perth	0%
Sydney	36%
Other	5%

Appendix E- Interviewee consent form

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Phone: +61 (02) 9850 9603
Email: Melissa.reed1@ hdr.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr Philip Chappell

Participant Information and Consent Form (Interview)

Name of Project: Teacher-Centred Professional Development: Exploring Teacher Cognition and Autonomy in Australian ELICOS Centres

Thank you for coming to an interview about professional development for teachers. You have been selected from those who responded to the survey about professional development.

Today you will be asked more questions about professional development, how it works in your college and your feelings about professional development in general. There will be time for you to give more detail and talk about what aspects of professional development interest you.

The interview will last about 1 hour and be audio recorded. We may use some quotes from your answers, but you and your college will not be able to be identified. You may wish to leave out the names of your college and colleagues during your interview. Your participation is voluntary and you can leave at any time. At the end of the interview, you will receive a $50 Coles/Myer gift card, even if you choose to leave early.

The interviewer is Melissa Reed, a Master of Research (Linguistics) student at Macquarie University, and my supervisor is Dr Philip Chappell, of the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University.

You can contact:

- Dr Philip Chappell (Philip.Chappell@mq.edu.au Ph+61 (2)9850 9603) if you have any questions about the survey
- Ms Melissa Reed (Melissa.reed1@hdr.mq.edu.au) if you would like to get the results of the study
- The Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (ethics@mq.edu.au Ph+61 (2) 9850 7854) if you are not sure about any ethical aspect of this study

I, _____*(participant's name)*
have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can leave the interview at any time without consequences. 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 Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 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.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix F- Final survey

Consent

Dear survey participant

This survey is part of a study about professional development for teachers in English Language Centres. We are interested in finding out how teachers feel about professional development and how much control and choice they have over professional development in their workplaces.

The study is a Master of Research project by Melissa Reed, supervised by Dr Philip Chappell of the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University.

The survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete and your responses will be private. At the end of the survey, you can go into the draw to win a $50 gift card, if you choose.

Thank you for your time in completing the survey. We hope that its results will highlight teachers' voices in professional development. If you would like a summary of the research project on its completion, please email melissa.reed1@hdr.mq.edu.au .

I have read and understood the information above and I would like to continue to the survey.

Yes

No

Introductory questions

What is your main occupation?

Teacher of English

Academic Manager

Other

Are you currently employed in an English Language Centre in Australia which offers intensive courses to overseas students and/or migrants?

Yes, I am employed in 1 English Language Centre

Yes, I am employed in 2 or more English Language Centres

No, I am not employed in an English Language Centre

Importance of PD

How important is ongoing professional development for you?

Very important

Moderately important

Not important

Professional development activities

Roughly how much time per month do you spend on professional development activities?

Less than 1 hour per month

1-5 hours per month

6-10 hours per month

11-15 hours per month

More than 15 hours per month

Over the last year, have you participated in the following professional development activities?
Please select each activity you have participated in.

Attended a seminar or workshop in my own centre

Attended an external seminar/ workshop/ conference

Took part in a webinar

Presented a seminar or workshop in my own centre

Presented a seminar or workshop externally

Participated in an action research project

Read a journal article/ online article / book relevant to my teaching

Participated in an online forum for teachers

Written a reflective diary

Engaged in a teacher discussion group in my centre

Participated in a teacher meet-up outside of my centre

Been involved in peer observation

Been involved in the planning of professional development activities at my centre

Other professional development activity (please specify)

Your English Language Centre

These questions are about <u>what currently happens</u> in your centre. If you are working at more than one centre, please answer about the centre where you spend the most time.
Please rate the following statements about the professional development activities at your centre from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Participating in professional development activities is expected at my centre	○	○	○	○	○
I have adequate time to complete professional development at my centre	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The management of the centre is supportive of my professional development	○	○	○	○	○
I have choices about what professional development I complete	○	○	○	○	○
Professional development activities offered at my centre are relevant to my teaching needs	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers and managers work together on professional development goals	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers support each other in their professional development	○	○	○	○	○
I create professional development opportunities myself	○	○	○	○	○

What is the best thing about your centre's professional development program?

What would you like to change about your centre's professional development program?

Opinions about professional development

The following are statements about how you feel about professional development and what you would like in your professional development program.
Please select the answer which most closely fits your feelings from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Managers should decide on the professional development activities of teachers	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers should have their own individual professional development programs	○	○	○	○	○
Teacher discussion groups are a valuable way to share information	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers can improve by reflecting on their own practice	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer a structured professional development program in place at work	○	○	○	○	○
I value research conducted by teachers in their classrooms (action research)	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers can run effective professional development themselves	○	○	○	○	○
It is important to have flexibility and choice about professional development	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers need to create their own networks (online or in real life)	○	○	○	○	○

Demographics

What is your gender?

Female

Male

Other

Prefer not to say

What is your age range?

24 or under

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 or older

Select the qualifications that you have attained relating to English language teaching (for example in education, linguistics, TESOL or another related qualification). You can select more than one answer.

CELTA or other English Language Teaching certificate

Bachelor's Degree

Graduate Diploma

Master's Degree

PhD

Other

How long have you been teaching for (including teaching children or other subjects)?

Less than 1 year

1-3 years

4-6 years

7-10 years

More than 10 years

How long have you been teaching in an English Language Centre?

Less than 1 year

1-3 years

4-6 years

7-10 years

More than 10 years

How big is your centre most of the year?

Small (less than 200 students)
Medium-sized (200-500 students)
Large (more than 500 students
Not sure

What kind of centre do you work for?

A private English Language Centre
A university English Language Centre
A TAFE English Language Centre
An Intensive English Centre(IEC) attached to a secondary school
Other

What is your current employment status?
If you work at more than one centre, please answer about the centre where you spend the most time.

Permanent full-time
Permanent part-time
Fixed-term contract
Casual

Where is your main English Language Centre?

Adelaide
Brisbane
Canberra
Darwin
Hobart
Melbourne
Perth
Sydney
Other

End of survey

This part is optional.
If you would like to be entered into a draw to win 1 of 5 $50 Coles/Myer gift cards, please write your first name and a contact email below.

This part is optional.

Would you be interested in being interviewed over the next few months to talk more about professional development?

I would like to talk to a mix of teachers from new to experienced in several Australian cities.

Interviews will take 1 hour, and all interviewees will be given a $50 Coles/Myer gift card for their time.

Yes, I would be interested in finding out more about the interviews (please provide first name and email if not given above).

No, I'm not interested in being interviewed

Appendix G- Changes to survey made after piloting

Survey feedback

I have completed a pilot for my survey and received some feedback on the survey questions. I have made some minor adjustments to the language of the survey to increase clarity. Below are the changes. Note that the PDF of the survey has been updated.

- Use the word select not tick due to how the survey displays
  Fixed
- Be consistent with ELICOS centres (not colleges)
  Fixed
- Be clearer in instructions about which questions are about how things are vs how things should be

Original:

Please rate the following statements about the professional development activities at your centre from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

If you are working at more than one centre, please answer about the centre where you spend the most time.

Changed to:

*These questions are about what **currently happens** in your centre. If you are working at more than one centre, answer about the centre where you spend the most time.*

Please rate the following statements about the professional development activities at your centre from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Original:

The following are statements about how you feel about professional development.

Please select the answer which most closely fits your feelings from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Changed to:

*The following are statements about **how you feel** about professional development and **what you would like** in your professional development program.*

Please select the answer which most closely fits your feelings from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Original:

I like to have a structured professional development program in place at work

Changed to:

I prefer a structured professional development program in place at work

- Intensive Language Centre (ILC) should be changed to Intensive English Centre (IEC)
  Changed

- Add webinar to PD activities
  Added
- "Teachers can run professional development activities themselves".
  Yes they can, but trying to find out if they would do this effectively.
  Changed to:
  Teachers can run effective professional development activities

Appendix H- Final interview protocol

Interview Guide- Teacher-Centred Professional Development

Briefing

- Explain purpose of the interview- find out teachers' views on PD. What their experiences are and what they would like in a PD program.
- Remind them about audio recording
- Tell interviewee that the interview will be confidential, they do not need to mention the name of their school and any identifying information will not be used in publication
- Provide with consent form and give time to read and sign
- Remind them that they do not have to answer any question and they can stop at any time

Introductory

- Could you tell me a bit about yourself? How did you become an English language teacher?
- What does professional development mean to you?

PD activities

- Can you tell me a bit more about your centre's PD program? (Flexibility? Autonomy? Collaboration? Time? Reward?)
- How do you feel about this program?
- Do you do any other PD activities aside from this program? (details)

Experiences of PD

- Can you tell me about the most rewarding professional development experience you have had?

  And the least rewarding?
- Has doing professional development had any impact on your teaching/ any other aspects of your working life?
- How does the workplace culture at your centre affect your professional development?

Desired PD program

Now we're going to brainstorm a bit about what you would like to see in a professional development program for you- your ideal PD program. We're going to work on a mind map together. I'll draw the mind map with your ideas.
So first:

- What are the most important aspects of a PD program for you?
    - draw big bubble with PD program, draw smaller bubbles around it with keywords
    - draw down on keywords- what does this mean? Who would you do this with?
    - Become more specific. Activities? Time? Collaboration? Autonomy? Flexibility?
- What else would be important in your ideal PD program?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about PD that we haven't already talked about?

Thank you for your time.
Give gift card and sign.

Appendix I- Original interview questions before changes and piloting

Could you tell me a bit about yourself? How did you become an English language teacher?

What does professional development mean to you?

In your survey, you said that you spend _____(time) doing professional development a month.

- Does that happen in/ outside your working hours?
- Are you given time for PD?
- How much would time would you like to be spending?

Can you tell me a bit more about your centre's PD program?

- What happens during the year?
- Who decides on the activities?
- How much flexibility is there about what you do?
- How are teachers rewarded for undertaking PD? (Pay/ time off?)
- Can you talk to me about opportunities you have to collaborate with others? --
- Reflect on your own practice? Pursue an individual project?

Can you tell me about how this professional development program has contributed to…

- your teaching?
- your feelings about yourself as a teacher?

In your survey, you said that _____ was the best thing about your centre's program. Can you tell me a bit more about this?

You thought one area to improve was _____. Can you expand on this?

You said in the survey that you thought your PD program was _____(relevant) to your teaching. In what ways is your program relevant/ not relevant?

How does the workplace culture at your centre affect your PD program?

If you could create your own professional development program that would be exactly right for you, what would it look like?