

Facilitating teacher leadership in Kazakhstan

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Doctor of Philosophy*

Declaration of authorship

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration, except as specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted or is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit of 80,000 words excluding figures and references.

Abstract

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This is an action-based study that was conducted in four schools in Kazakhstan with the purpose to facilitate teacher leadership for sustainable improvement of practice and enhancing the teacher's role in education reform in Kazakhstan. By drawing on a non-positional approach to teacher leadership, this study sought bottom-up approaches to educational reform, school leadership and professional development in schools in Kazakhstan. The nine-month intervention programme, which was called the Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration, introduced strategies and created conditions for teachers to lead educational improvement at classroom, school and system level. This has implications for a wider societal development. With the dissolution of Soviet Union, Kazakhstan has been undergoing transition for the last few decades. In the new era, the country is seeking the revival of its national identity, inclusion of its citizens and economic competitiveness, wherein educational improvement has become the country's top priority. The outcomes of this study indicate that educational improvement requires building local capacity by empowering teachers to lead learning and innovation within and outside their schools. Such a grassroots movement requires systemic and systematic facilitation in schools in Kazakhstan. Ongoing practice-oriented critical reflection, focused action, horizontal communication and school networking can enable teachers and school leadership team members to develop their understanding and foster participatory practices within schools. The study employed a critical participatory action research approach that enabled the building of context-sensitive knowledge and included the voices and reflections of the participants involved in this research. Data were collected through multiple research tools, analysed both during and after the intervention process and presented in the form of a critical narrative to depict the nuances of local reality. The outcomes of this study suggest that teachers can innovate, engage in creative pedagogical practice and lead educational improvement, which requires developing strategies and involving all stakeholders in facilitating teacher leadership.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CoE	Centre of Excellence
School Director	School principal in Kazakhstan
GoK	Government of Kazakhstan
Gorono	City education department
ITL	International Teacher Leadership initiative
LED	Local education department
LfL	Leadership for learning
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPTL	Non-positional teacher leadership
NIS	Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools
Oblono	Regional education department
Pedsovet	Pedagogical council
SPED	State Programme of Education Development 2011-2020
TLDW	Teacher-led development work
TLLC	Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration
TL	Teacher leadership

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Introduction

There is an old Kazakh saying: ‘a teacher is the craftsman of the future’ (*ustaz keleshektiñ ustasy*). Before I explain how teachers can craft the future, I would like to reflect on how the profession of teaching has had a profound influence on my own background. My mother has been teaching in schools in Kazakhstan for the last 36 years. Growing up observing her teaching, I developed a fascination for the profession and a deep respect for the people in it. My mother has had a great deal of resilience throughout the social, political and economic transitions that have been taking place in my country since independence. My mother’s experience prompted me to take a different path. Having obtained my undergraduate degree in teaching, I continued pursuing knowledge on how to empower teachers, so that they are no longer undervalued technicians of the system but full participants in the educational processes in my country.

Through my own teaching experience, I understood that pre-school training and other ad-hoc professional development opportunities were insufficient for me to provide quality education for my students. Therefore, I pursued a graduate degree at the University of Warwick (UK), where I began my study on professional development in the educational institutes in Kazakhstan. The findings of my study echoed the problems in the system, such as increased workload and accountability, lack of resources, incentives and support for ongoing professional development.

Since graduating from the University of Warwick in 2011, I have been able to witness striking changes in the school system in Kazakhstan. These changes were triggered by the government's initiative to join the 30 developed economies in the world by 2050 (OECD, 2014a). In order to ensure sustainable economic growth, the government has initiated rapid educational reform with the purpose of improving the quality of education and increasing pupils' attainment across all schools in Kazakhstan, whereby the main target was to raise teacher quality. Due to the government's unprecedented investment in teacher training, more than 52,000 classroom teachers (as of 2015), middle and senior school leaders have undergone in-service training within the last few years (Wilson, 2017). This nationwide intervention in schools had an impact on facilitating teachers' agency, transfer of knowledge, collaboration among colleagues and school-based learning (Wilson, 2016). However, the challenge that remained was to sustain and apply

this change in classrooms and schools (Wilson, 2017), so that it could make a real difference and have system-wide impact. It was important to think about how to enable teachers to sustain and lead change locally, or to put it another way, how to make the top-down reform initiative sustainable by bottom-up support.

In order to learn more about bottom-up reform and professional development, I started a doctoral study at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education. Having reviewed literature on school reform and teachers' professional development, I became interested in teacher leadership as a means to catalyse change and continuously improve the quality of schools (Wehling, 2007; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). I had an opportunity to draw on the firsthand experience of my principal supervisor, Dr David Frost, who had an extensive expertise in providing support to teacher leadership development within the UK-based HertsCam Network. The collaboration with the practitioners within the HertsCam Network helped me to understand teacher leadership as something that could be exercised by all teachers as a dimension of their professionalism. Frost (2011) refers to such leadership as *a non-positional teacher leadership* (NPTL): leadership is perceived as a moral act, wherein teachers clarify their professional *values* through systematic reflection on their own practice, set out a *vision* in relation to their own concerns or schools' needs and *act* to bring about the change into their practices, schools and communities (Frost, 2000; Frost and Durrant, 2003a; Frost, 2008).

Facilitating such leadership had a potential for increasing the teachers' ownership of reform and provided an opportunity for elevating the teachers' voices at the system level in Kazakhstan. This required the development of infrastructures and processes to enable teachers to make meaning of and lead change (Fullan, 2007; Frost, 2011), as teachers in Kazakhstan had to learn how to lead their initiatives and be supported in their endeavours (Yakavets et al., 2017a).

Therefore, I exploited the experience of the HertsCam Network and International Teacher Leadership (ITL) initiative to facilitate teacher leadership in Kazakhstan. Within the HertsCam Network and the ITL initiative the support for teacher leadership has been provided in 17 countries and involved more 1000 teachers around the world. Their experience suggested a number of positive impacts of facilitating teacher leadership, such as promoting democratic values, speeding up the modernisation of the educational

system, increasing school effectiveness and enabling innovation at the local level (Frost, 2011; 2017). This all had potential for enhancing teachers' roles in the rapid educational reform in Kazakhstan. Therefore, my research concern was as follows:

How can I facilitate teacher leadership using an approach that enables teachers to exercise leadership for the purposes of enabling the sustainable improvement of practice and enhancing the teacher's role in educational reform in Kazakhstan?

In order to address my research concern, I intervened in four Kazakh-speaking schools and conducted the programme to facilitate teacher leadership. I saw this as an emancipatory study that aimed to generate experiential knowledge grounded in the teachers' contexts, cultures and beliefs (Somekh, 1995).

This dissertation consists of nine chapters in total. Chapter 1 situates my study within the educational context in Kazakhstan. Chapter 2 conceptualises teacher leadership as a means to educational reform. Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology and the design of this study. Chapter 4 opens up the critical narrative about laying the conditions for the intervention programme. Chapter 5 explores the challenges that I faced in re-orientating practitioners towards professional learning and leadership. Chapter 6 examines how participants in my programme enacted their leadership initiatives. Chapter 7 includes reflections on the programme and its sustainability in the future. Chapter 8 discusses the role of facilitation in developing teacher leadership. Chapter 9 explains the implications, recommendations and contributions of this study. That is followed by brief reflections on my research and future plans for action.

I now explain the educational context in Kazakhstan.

Chapter 1

The educational context in Kazakhstan: a critical perspective

In this chapter, I situate my study within the larger historical, social and structural context in order to identify the major factors that have shaped the teaching profession in Kazakhstan and argue for the importance of elevating the teachers' roles in education reform. Over the last few decades Kazakhstan has undergone transition from a socialist republic to a market-oriented state. First, I explore this in order to build a better understanding about the current educational practices (Alexander, 2000). Second, given the country's heightened attention on changing its educational practices, I identify major obstacles to the reform initiatives. Third, in order to ensure the success of those reform initiatives, I argue for the urgency of building teachers' leadership capacity. The chapter consists of the following sections: geography, demography and educational system; the Soviet legacy; the government's strategy; school reforms; school leadership and governance; teacher education and work conditions; building leadership capacity as an imperative. I now begin with the geography, demography and educational system.

Geography, demography and educational system

Kazakhstan is located in Central Asia. It is the ninth largest country in the world, neighbouring Russia in the north, China in the east, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan in the south, Turkmenistan and other Caspian Sea countries in the west. The geographical location of the country is remarkable for its extreme temperatures that range from +30°C in the summer to -30°C in the winter (see Photo 1). Kazakhstan has a low-density population (16,909,800 as of 2014) of multiple ethnicities. The major ethnicities include Kazakhs (73%), Russians (14%), Uzbeks (4%), Uighurs (1.5%), Ukrainians (1.3%) and Germans (1.0%) (IAC, 2014; OECD, 2014a). As a result, schools vary depending on the language of instruction: Kazakh-medium, Russian-medium and mixed language of instruction (IAC, 2014).



Photo 1. The geographical location of Kazakhstan. (Source: researchgate.net)

The educational system in Kazakhstan guarantees free-of-charge comprehensive primary and secondary education (OECD, 2014a). The structure of the system consists of pre-school, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational and higher education (see Table 1 below).

Stages	Age	Type/ Funding
Pre-school education	3-6	Comprehensive/free of charge
Primary schools	6-9	Comprehensive/free of charge
Lower - secondary schools	9-12	Comprehensive/free of charge
Upper-secondary schools	12-18	Comprehensive/free of charge
Vocational education	16-19	Self-funded/state funded scholarships
Higher education	18-21	Self-funded/state funded scholarships
Total number of schools	7,648	
Total number of students	2,571,989	
Total number of teachers	286, 370	

Table 1. The educational system in Kazakhstan (IAC, 2014; OECD, 2014a).

Schools are classified into *comprehensive* schools which are all-through, mainstream and gymnasium, constituting the largest proportion across the country; *selective schools* which are lyceums and schools for gifted children; *autonomous schools with special status*, which are the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS); *ungraded schools* which are schools in rural places with small numbers of students and combined classes; and

specialised schools which are schools for students with special needs (Bridges and Sagyntayeva, 2014; OECD, 2014a). The bulk of the schools (95.5%) are overseen by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MoES) and funded by the government (OECD, 2014a). In general, the current education system's structure can be traced back to the Soviet past.

The Soviet legacy: friend or foe?

Kazakhstan obtained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The collapse of the Soviet system left behind its structures, practices and values in the education system (Silova, 2004). Therefore, in this section I discuss the major historical factors related to the Soviet past that influenced the teachers' work conditions and the educational practices in Kazakhstan.

Prior to the Russian intervention, education in Kazakhstan was provided in Arabic at the Islamic schools called *medrese*, where the learning was based on memorisation and recitation. Formal schooling was introduced as a part of the Russian expansion. As a result, the Russian language and culture has become deeply ingrained in the society (DeYoung and Nadyrbekyzy, 1997; Johnson, 2004).

The universal and compulsory approach in the Soviet schooling system ensured 100% literacy in Kazakhstan's population by the 1980s (De Young and Suzhikova, 1997). The comprehensive and free of charge approach to education is still the case in the present education system. The UNESCO Education for All index noted a high level of accessibility to primary (99%) and lower secondary (86%) education (OECD, 2014a). Moreover, the Soviet system was praised for its theory-dense education, focusing on the students' upbringing (*tárbiye*) and the special status of teachers in the society (Zajda, 1980; Alexander, 2000; Fimyar, 2014a). During the Soviet period, teachers had a special moral and political role in the society, as Zajda (1980) put it:

Soviet teachers as professionals command admiration and respect from all levels of the society. They belong, of course, to the ranks of the intelligentsia or the elite upper stratum of Soviet society (p. 228).

The majority of teachers in Kazakhstan still refer to Soviet education as being of high quality in contrast to the current educational practices (Fimyar, 2014a; Fimyar and Kurakbayev, 2016). Teachers' nostalgia about the past could be related to the deterioration of the quality of education and status of the teaching profession after the collapse of the Soviet system. The majority of the currently serving teachers have experienced the transition period in the early 1990s.

The period of the 1990s was associated with economic dislocation and the deprivation of social services in many post-Soviet countries. It became hard to teach ethics and good behaviour in a society that preached quick material gains without hard work and accountability for the outcomes of one's actions. Living ethically and morally in the post-Soviet country meant failing in life. Loss of power and respect for the profession, as well as hardships in personal and professional lives, resulted in the decline of teachers' self-esteem (Niyozov, 2004; Heyneman, 2010). In addition, teachers had to struggle with the lack of basic resources in schools, such as heating, materials and low salaries with long periods in which teachers were not paid (up to 6 months). In 1995 the teacher's salary in Kazakhstan constituted 41 USD, the average monthly food cost (DeYoung and Nadyrbekyzy, 1997). This pushed many talented teachers out of the profession to seek better payment opportunities (Silova, 2005).

Poor economic conditions and the push towards individual survival in the 90s resulted in the increase of corruption in the education system. This permeated the Soviet period and was called the 'blat' system which meant the 'use of personal networks and informal contacts to obtain goods and services in short supply and to find a way around formal procedures' (Ledneva, 1998:1). After the Soviet Union dissolved, as Ledneva goes on to say (1998), blat transformed into a system of informal networks, which is also called the 'people of the circle'. In such networks people are loyal to their connections and put 'unwritten codes and social conventions' above the law (Ledneva, 2000: 204). The spread of corruption, which included payment for grades and bribery in accreditation and licensing, has had an immense influence on the quality of the education in Kazakhstan (Heyneman, 2010).

Furthermore, the cultural heritage of the Soviet past can also be seen in the system of governance. During the Soviet Union, the system was highly centralised in decision-

making with a prevailing focus on ideological and scientific training (DeYoung and Nadyrbekyzy, 1997). This approach is present in the current educational governance. The Executive Office of the President is a key entity in defining education strategies, developing educational initiatives of national importance and monitoring its progress. The aims and objectives of the educational system are announced during the annual address of the President, which is further implemented by the MoES (OECD, 2014a). The MoES transmits regulations to regional, city and district educational departments. The educational departments, in turn, control the implementation of educational policies locally (Frost et al., 2014).

This approach to the governance proved its effectiveness during the transition period by ensuring that 'schools are open and teachers receive their salaries' (OECD, 2014a:67). However, the heritage of the Soviet approach to governance, which Castells (2000) refers as 'statism', may become a barrier to the facilitation of innovation at the local level and the reconstruction of national identity. The latter was suppressed during the Soviet period, as the Marxists-Leninist ideologies dominated the education system for more than seven decades (Mynbayeva and Pogosian, 2014). Modern Kazakhstan seeks educational reform and the revival of its national identity but the bureaucratic approaches to governance leave little space for the teachers' participation in vision setting processes. Empirical studies conducted in schools in Kazakhstan reported the instances when teachers lacked autonomy and behaved subserviently to their school principals (McLaughlin et al., 2014; McLaughlin and Ayubayeva, 2015). This has impact on the sustainable development of practice, as in such context teachers are believed to be less engaged with the ownership of their professional development and school improvement, which is essential for the country's reform initiatives (Bridges et al., 2014; Fimyar and Kurakbayev, 2016).

This section provided an overview of the historical factors that influenced the current educational practices in Kazakhstan. Whilst the Soviet past was praised for its accessibility, teachers' status and theory-dense curriculum, it left behind social norms and system practices that Kazakhstan still has to overcome to reconstruct its identity and catch up with global changes. Below, I further discuss the government's major initiatives in transforming the educational system in Kazakhstan.

The government's strategy

Within the last few decades Kazakhstan has been able to transit from a low to an upper-middle income economy. The government has identified the major trajectories of the country's political reform and the modernisation of its economy for the next three decades with heightened attention on internationalisation and decrease level of involvement in the economy. Moreover, the grassroots changes focus on the renewal of the national identity and engagement of its citizens (OECD, 2014a; World Bank, 2017; Nazarbayev, 2017).

The nation building strategy of the country has been set out in the document called the 'Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy'. In accordance with the strategy, Kazakhstan aims to join the 30 developed countries in the world by 2050 (OECD, 2014a). The document identifies seven main areas of development, which include innovative industrialisation, agricultural modernisation, knowledge-based economy, infrastructure, business development, improving public institutions and most importantly unleashing the potential of its citizens by ensuring a high-quality education system (www.strategy2050.kz/en).

In his recent Address to the Nation, the President of Kazakhstan emphasises the reciprocity of the change process. First, it requires the effectiveness of governmental organisations in meeting the needs of the citizens of Kazakhstan, whereby the major focus is on fighting the corruption and decreasing bureaucracy; second, the system modernisation necessitates support and cohesion of the citizens of Kazakhstan. The latter led to the emergence of a social movement called 'Spiritual Renewal' (*Rukhani jangyru* in Kazakh). The major aims of the movement are competitiveness, pragmatism, preserving national identity, a cult of knowledge, an open attitude and the evolutionary development of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev, 2017). This all, in turn, has fostered rapid educational reform in schools in Kazakhstan.

School reforms

The education system in Kazakhstan has undergone different kinds of reforms within the last few decades, which includes the system's self-formulation period (1991-2000) and the beginning of its internationalisation (2001-2011) (Yakavets, 2014; Yakavets and

Dzhadrina, 2014). The current educational reform is closely aligned to the political course of the country, which is indicated in the State Programme for Education Development for 2011-2020 (SPED) (MoES, 2010; OECD, 2014a).

The SPED focuses on transforming the school system in terms of ‘education content, system structure, infrastructure and education technologies, establishment and management of educational institutions, financing and financial management [...]’ (MoES, 2010; OECD, 2014a:36). At the time of writing, schools are being asked to introduce trilingual education (Kazakh, Russian and English), a new assessment system and a new curriculum. In order to foster these initiatives, the government has set up Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS). In collaboration with the international partners including University of Cambridge (FoE), John Hopkins University (Centre of Talented Youth) and the assessment centre in Netherlands (CITO), NIS became a focal point for testing new approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as well as translating them across all schools in Kazakhstan (Shamshidinova et al., 2014; Turner et al., 2014; Wilson, 2017). In order to translate reforms to the comprehensive schools, NIS has been providing extensive in-service teacher training programmes since 2011 (OECD, 2014a). Under the auspices of NIS, the Centre of Excellence (CoE) was created with the purpose of providing professional development for the teachers in the comprehensive schools in Kazakhstan. The CoE provided the multi-levelled in-service teacher training programmes. The lowest one - Level III programme - focused on the teachers' classroom management skills; Level II went beyond the classroom and targeted the teachers' coaching and mentoring skills; and Level I - advanced programmes - involved senior teachers and deputy headteachers to enable them to develop school planning and create networking with other schools, thereby enhancing their leadership skills. The CoE programmes adopted a cascade approach for teacher training. As a result, the international experts trained and accredited more than 300 coaches, who then conducted in-service training in 16 regions of Kazakhstan. The coaches in CoE have trained more than 52,000 teachers (as of 2015) across Kazakhstan including classroom teachers, middle leaders, senior leaders and school principals (Wilson, 2016a; 2017).

There were many challenges however entailed in this educational intervention. First, it was the accessibility of development programmes in rural schools. Extreme weather conditions and low-density population were obstacles to providing educational

opportunities and transmitting knowledge from cities to rural places (Bridges et al., 2014; OECD, 2014a). Second, there was a challenge of the transferability of new knowledge and skills, as schools needed to ensure that these were shared and sustained within schools. Therefore, international experts highlight the importance of enabling teachers to become independent learners, as teachers have to be responsible for their own learning after the completion of the programme (Turner et al., 2014). Most importantly sustaining new initiatives in schools in Kazakhstan calls for strong school leadership and governance (OECD, 2014a).

School leadership and governance

Given the pace of the reforms taking place in schools in Kazakhstan, the role of the school principal as a leader of change has never been so important (OECD, 2014a). However, school principals' work in Kazakhstan is closely linked to local educational departments. Therefore, in this section, I explore the roles of local educational departments and school principals in enacting school reforms.

Local educational departments

The education system in Kazakhstan is centralised and hierarchical. Educational policies are developed by the government, which is then communicated at the aymaq (region in Kazakh), qala (city in Kazakh), audan (district in Kazakh) and auyl (village in Kazakh) levels (Education Law, 2007). The MoES develops educational standards and coordinates the implementation of policies at the Oblono level, which is the highest-ranking regional education department. Although the MoES sets the requirements, the heads of education departments are selected and appointed on a competitive basis in consultation with local mayors (GoK decree N1111, 2004; MoES, 2018a). As such, the mayor of aymaq is in charge of the Oblono (regional education department), whereas the mayor of qala is responsible for Gorono (city educational department) and so on. From this point I will refer to these bodies as Local Educational Departments (see Figure 1).

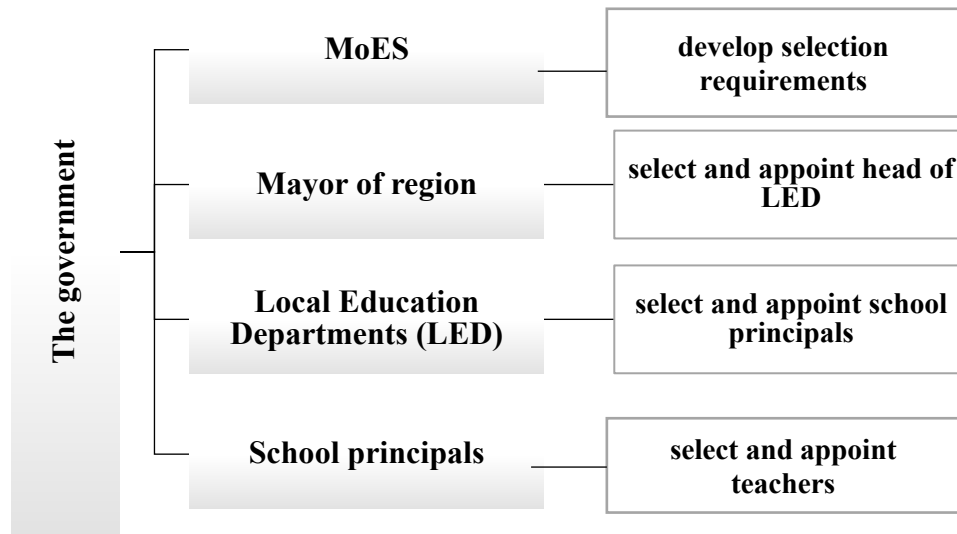


Figure 1. The governance of education and the selection system

Figure 1 indicates that MoES has little power over the translation of reforms at the school level since major control resides with the local authorities. The government has started decentralising the education system since 90s. The decentralisation of the educational system was part of the NGOs ‘reform packages’, which most of the post-Soviet countries relied on heavily after the collapse of the system (Silova and Steiner-Khamsi, 2008). As a result, local educational departments have direct influence on school practices. They select and appoint directors, ensure that schools comply with various requirements, conduct school inspections, administer teacher attestation and manage other events related to school performance (Yakavets et al., 2017a). Granting such powers to the local authorities, however, proved to be ineffective in most Central Asian countries. First, creating conditions and supervising quality in schools requires robust preparation and a system for monitoring, which remain inadequate at the local authority level. Second, dependence on central government funding as well as low remuneration at the local level led to corruption and inefficiency (Chapman, 2000; Chapman et al., 2005; Bhuiyan, 2010; Teleshaliyev, 2015). Such factors have had direct impact on the school principals’ roles and practices in schools in Kazakhstan.

School principals' roles

The success of the government's reform initiatives depends on school principals' ability and capacity to lead change in schools in Kazakhstan (OECD, 2014a). However, given the level of hierarchy and bureaucracy together with inadequate leadership preparation, school principals are left without the skills and power to lead change within schools. School principals in Kazakhstan are called *directors* and hence, I adopt this term throughout the text.

School directors are selected on a competitive basis in consultation with the head of local educational department. The prospective candidates have to have a degree in pedagogy; 5 years of teaching and 1 year of leadership experience; the 1st or the highest teaching category. They are then tested for the knowledge of legal frameworks and the basics of pedagogy and psychology (MoES, 2018a). After being appointed, liaison with the local educational departments shape directors' roles in schools.

School directors' roles in relation to reforms remain limited. Their roles involve enacting the plans developed by the local educational departments and constantly communicating new changes to school staff members. As the school budget is also set centrally, directors need to report to the local educational departments about expenditure (MoES decree N338, 2009). In such a system of the top-down communication and the micro-management, the directors remain passive recipients of change initiatives (Frost et al., 2014).

Above that, there is a lack of formal leadership and management training provided for school directors, which further confines their roles to school maintenance issues rather than the leadership of change. Therefore, building schools' leadership capacity is believed to be essential for the success of reform initiatives (Yakavets et al., 2017a). The leadership training has been instigated by the CoE leadership programmes, which involved 1,500 directors (as of 2015) across all schools in Kazakhstan. During the nine-months programme, school directors were introduced such concepts as distributed leadership, teacher accountability and networking beyond schools (Wilson, 2017). However, more systematic leadership training is required since the government aims to extend the school director's autonomy by introducing per capita funding starting from 2020 (Mukhametkaliyev, 2018).

As such, school leadership in Kazakhstan operates within a tight system of central control and hierarchical relations with the local authorities. School directors' roles continue to be limited to school maintenance issues and there are calls for more autonomy and support for leadership development within schools. This all, in turn, have an immense influence on teachers' practices.

Teacher education and work conditions

Teachers in Kazakhstan are operating within drastic educational reform conditions obliging them to revisit their pedagogy and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the new assessment system and the new curriculum, which were developed by NIS in collaboration with the international partners. Meanwhile, teachers' pre-service training, workload, performance management and remuneration remain stumbling blocks that have yet to be addressed by the government.

Teaching in Kazakhstan is a female-dominated profession, where women outnumber men in both urban (88%) and rural (76%) schools (as of 2012-13) (IAC, 2014). Every fifth secondary school teacher in Kazakhstan is over 50 years old (Bridges and Sagintayeva, 2014). This is confirmed by the proportion of teacher work experience, where 34.4% (over a third) of teachers have worked for over 20 years with only 12.38% having less than 3 years of work experience (IAC, 2014:125). The decrease in the level of attractiveness of the teaching profession could be related to number of factors of which pre-service training is just one.

Teachers' pre-service education in Kazakhstan is provided by Pedagogic Institutes and entails four years full time study. The content of pre-service education still echoes the Soviet model with a particular focus on *tárbiye* (moral upbringing in Kazakh) and theory-based knowledge (Shneidman, 1973; McLaughlin and Ayubayeva, 2015). Theories of pedagogy, psychology and subjects are prioritised without any clear link to school practices. Although school-based practicum is a part of the pre-service training, it is believed to be insufficient in applying knowledge to practice (Yakavets et al., 2017b). This approach to pre-service training, however, is being challenged by the in-service

training programmes. Those programmes include collaborative action research, which was introduced within NIS schools, as well as the CoE programmes, which involved 52,000 teachers in comprehensive schools (Yakavets et al., 2017b; McLaughlin and Ayubayeva, 2015; Wilson, 2017). Whilst the pre-service teacher training places the theory above the practice, the in-service training places the practice above the theory and hence, altering the idea of learning from instruction to construction. Such a shift, however, requires ongoing reflection and collaboration within schools, which seem to be challenging given the teachers' work conditions in Kazakhstan which are dominated by factors such as appraisal, workload and remuneration (Yakavets et al., 2017b).

The teacher appraisal system in Kazakhstan is called *attestation*. Attestation takes place every 5 years. In order to undergo attestation, teachers are required to provide a portfolio, which they refer to as '*shigarmashylyq joba*' (creativity project in Kazakh). The portfolio has to include information about the teachers' professional training, pedagogical activities and students' achievements at local and international Olympiads (OECD, 2014a). Teachers who pass the attestation successfully are able to obtain a *2nd, 1st and the highest teaching category*, which would boost their salary (IAC, 2014). Such an approach to teacher performance management was criticised for being insufficient in assessing teacher qualification and failing to set clear requirements for the competencies and skills teachers are expected to have (OECD, 2014a). Therefore, at the time of writing, the government has launched new attestation mechanism, which was developed by NIS and international partners. The model includes four categories instead of three, such as: '*teacher-moderator*', '*teacher-expert*', '*teacher-researcher*' and '*teacher-master*' (MoES, 2018b). The new approach to teacher attestation may become a stimulus for promoting teacher reflection and inquiry in schools in Kazakhstan. This however requires ongoing facilitation and support within schools. Although the MoES highlight the importance of teachers' self-learning, it does not clarify the mechanism of how to support it:

The course of actions on strengthening the requirements to teacher performance is being considered. Self-learning and development will become an inalienable part of the teaching profession, where the teacher's portfolio will serve as an evidence of such activities (MoES, 2016).

The lack of support may transform the new attestation system so that it becomes another tool for punishment potentially open to corruption. Most importantly, it may instigate a

distortion of teachers' attitudes towards self-guided learning and improvement.

Further challenge to educational reform is the extent of teachers' workload and issues related to the compensation system. Teacher compensation in Kazakhstan is based on the *stavka* system (in Russian). The amount of teachers' salary depends on their workload. The standard workload constitutes 18 hours per week. However, the government set a cap for maximum teaching workload up to 27 hours per week or 1.5 *stavka*. As a result, teachers are paid unequally and have uneven workloads. Whilst some teachers are juggling their teaching with extra assignments and therefore have no time for reflection on teaching quality, others, mainly novice teachers, are left without extra compensation and the incentive to continue their teaching careers (OECD, 2014a). In 2014 the maximum teacher's salary in Kazakhstan constituted 5,520 USD, which was almost ten times less than the OECD maximum (49,721 USD) (OECD, 2014a). Based on the empirical study conducted in secondary schools in Kazakhstan, Mynbayeva et al. (2012) highlight that the pressure to perform, low salary and the low status of the teaching profession have resulted in the deterioration of the teachers' professional identities. Teachers have had to adjust such that: 'functioning under stressful conditions [...] became the norm' (p.1292).

In order to address these challenges, the government initiated a gradual increase of teachers' salaries up to 30% and decrease of their teaching workload down to 18 hours per week by 2020 (IAC, 2017). Moreover, in his recent Address, the President highlighted that the 'Law on the Teacher's status' will be accepted in Kazakhstan in 2019, which is expected to protect teachers from extra workload and clarify their legal rights (Nazarbayev, 2018). However, much more is required to improve the teacher's status in schools in Kazakhstan; it requires extending teachers' professional discretion and enabling them to participate in decision-making (OECD, 2014a).

The importance of building leadership capacity

The aforementioned indicates the criticality of extending and developing leadership capacity at all levels in the school system in Kazakhstan. Despite being at the bottom of the hierarchy, this study focuses on enhancing teachers' leadership capacity. This is

because teachers' input and engagement are incremental to the successful implementation of the educational policies in Kazakhstan (OECD, 2014a). First, they are at the heart of translating new reforms into classrooms and schools, as teachers' practices have the highest impact on students' learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000; OECD, 2009; 2010; 2014b; Fullan, 2016). Second, teachers' participation in policy development and decision-making is pivotal for the re-professionalisation of teachers and the increased status of the teaching profession in Kazakhstan (OECD, 2014a). This, in turn, requires extending teachers' professionalism and agency (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Fullan, 2016).

The CoE professional development programme has become a vehicle for extending teachers' professionalism since 2011. The programme enabled teachers to learn new instructional practices, translate them into their own context and transmit them to other teachers (Bridges et al., 2014). The challenges that remain, however, are to sustain new practices and enabling teachers to make the transition from the instruction-based approach to the self-guided construction of knowledge. The urgency of introducing this mode of learning is increasing day-by-day with the introduction of the new assessment system and the new curriculum in schools in Kazakhstan.

In the light of Kazakhstan's aim to build its national identity and increase its global competitiveness, enabling teachers to actively participate in developing and implementing educational policies is pivotal for the success of the government's initiatives (OECD, 2014a). This is because teachers can act as key mediators in social change (OECD, 2005). There is therefore a need to re-consider the system's approach to educational reform. The current approach emphasises the role of the 'centre', which is criticised for being weakly coordinated and lacking communication with the periphery (Bridges et al., 2014: 276). As a result, there is little power or autonomy at the school level, where school directors still exist in the system whilst 'all the important decisions are taken elsewhere' (Frost and Kambatyrova, 2018). In such conditions, there is a little space for local initiatives and creative practices leading to the teachers' voicelessness and exclusion. In order to address this, teachers in Kazakhstan need to learn how to lead initiatives and be supported in their endeavours (Yakavets et al., 2017a). This calls for extending teachers' leadership capacity through providing support for their ongoing professional learning and creating conditions for their agency and voice. This is

particularly important, as teachers in Kazakhstan are being proactive in translating new policies into their classrooms despite the bureaucracy, top-down reform and the lack of communication with the centre (Bridges et al., 2014). The critical question is how to mobilise teachers' leadership capacity to facilitate educational reform in Kazakhstan.

Summary

Kazakhstan has undergone drastic historical and social change since its independence. These changes have massively affected the educational system and teachers' practices. The country's ambitious aim resulted in rapid educational reform. The main objective of this is to increase the country's economic competitiveness through high quality education. As a result, the government has been actively investing in teacher quality within the last few years. Although self-learning has become a priority in teacher development, the system does not provide a clear mechanism of support for ongoing learning. Above that, teachers exist in the system of low compensation and lack of status, where educational reform remains centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic in nature. These all imply the need to develop local capacity and elevate the teachers' roles in educational reform in Kazakhstan through enhancing their leadership capacity.

In the following chapter I discuss how this could be achieved.

Chapter 2

Conceptualising teacher leadership for educational improvement

In the previous chapter, I discussed the rapid educational reform context in Kazakhstan and the importance of enhancing teachers' roles in initiatives. To achieve this, I drew on the idea of teacher leadership (TL) as a means to sustainable educational improvement. The rationale behind this was of two-fold. First, teachers' involvement in educational reform is of paramount importance because they are at the core of translating change into practice and influencing student attainment (OECD, 2009; 2010; 2014b). Second, the development of leadership, which enables professional learning, collaboration and networking, is indispensable for sustainable educational improvement (OECD, 2013; 2014). Thus, central to this study is the development of TL as a means for enhancing the teachers' roles in education and enabling sustainable educational improvement.

In this chapter I explain the conceptual framework of my study, as I understood it before I undertook the intervention. First, given the increasing focus on internationalisation in the education system in Kazakhstan, I explain the importance of developing internal capacity and argue the case for TL. Second, I specify the main conditions necessary for the development of TL. Third, I explicate the facilitation of TL through the teacher-led development work strategy. As a result, I draw on literature from different areas including educational reform, leadership, TL, leadership development, school culture and structure.

Education reform for improvement

Education reform is a process of change that entails large-scale system transformation (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2016). The ultimate purpose of such change is educational improvement that seeks to enhance human capacity (Hopkins et al., 1994; Elmore, 2004). However, educational reform in different contexts has been driven by the logic of global competition leading to a lack of coherence between the reform initiatives and local needs (Fullan, 2016). The need to improve global standing in terms of economic development has been especially important for developing contexts such as Kazakhstan. In this section, I discuss the external drivers of educational reform and explain their influence on teachers' work.

External drivers of reform

Education has been closely tied to the nations' economic growth since the early 60s (Schultz, 1961). After more than half a century, this logic is still guiding many educational systems across the world. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010) put it, '... educational values are no longer considered in their own terms but become derivative of neoliberal economic thinking' (p.196). This logic led to the advent of transnational organisations such as OECD and UNESCO and international assessment systems such as PISA and TIMSS. These organisations develop educational policies and measure student performance across the world as a means to enhancing economic competitiveness of nation-states. As such, they have an influence on forming and re-forming the local educational practices (Grek, 2009; Baird et al., 2016; Martens et al., 2016; Niemann et al., 2017). Although the response to the global educational policies varies from country to country (Wiseman, 2013), the global education movement has become a major concern for many governments across the world.

This is especially relevant to developing countries. The lack of strong internal measurement systems as well as the need to increase human and economic standing in global arena (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Ball, 2012; Hopfenbeck and Gorgen, 2017), makes the developing world more prone to global educational initiatives such as PISA-D. In order to join the 'elite club', these countries are offered an opportunity to 'learn' from the world's best practices. This has had a particular effect on the post-Soviet bloc, where the educational policy borrowing has been intensive since the collapse of the system (Silova, 2009). With its ambitious aim to join the 30 developed countries by 2050, the education system of Kazakhstan has also become subject to the global educational movement. Although such an initiative is seen as an impetus for change, the implementation of global educational practices requires strong internal capacity to enact it locally. As such, it has created new challenges for teachers' work, which has always been subject to a wider political agenda (Day, 2012).

Impact on teachers' work condition

Teachers remain passive recipients of reform initiatives, as the flow of the large-scale educational reform is mainly centrally driven and top-down oriented (Scott, 2017). In many cases, such reforms result in superficial outcomes, diminish teachers' professional

credibility, decrease job satisfaction and increase alienation (Hargreaves and Evans, 1997; Fullan, 2016). The reason behind this is multifaceted. The major one is believed to be the upsurge of external accountability policies (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2016). To ensure that students and teachers meet externally imposed standards, governments rely on test-based assessment and punitive performance accountability as key reform strategies (Elmore, 2004; Bangs and Frost, 2011; Fullan, 2016). Interestingly, such an approach has an immense influence on teachers' practices in both developed and developing countries.

In the developed market systems, this approach to education is believed to be based on the principle of efficiency that aims at producing maximum output with a minimum input, an approach that tends to be known as performativity (Lyotard, 1984). Ball (2003:216) defines this as 'a culture and mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions. The major implication of this is the deflection of teachers' attention from the moral aspect of education towards more measurable result-oriented outcomes (Ball, 2012; Biesta, 2004). The empirical data indicate that performativity pressures decrease 'teachers' control, flexibility and creativity over their work' pushing them towards 'impression management' and hence, altering their pedagogical practices (Lunneblad and Dance, 2014:309). As such, pedagogical creativity is no longer of value in the settings where teachers are held to account for their students' exam results (Nicholl and McLellan, 2008; Troman, 2008). Although there is some resistance among veteran teachers, novice teachers seem to adapt to such working environment (Ball, 2000; MacRuairc and Harford, 2008; Wilkins, 2011).

Despite the difference in social, economic and political background, a similar trend in educational change can be traced in the post-socialist countries, which has been facilitated by the transition to the market economy and decentralisation of education after the collapse of the Soviet system (Silova, 2009). The outcome-oriented approach to education seems to perfectly fit the local context of long-lasting bureaucracy and autocratic leadership, where the main priority is to meet the performance targets set by the central authority (Puffer, 1996; Ardichvili and Gasparishvili, 2001). Within the current decentralised structural hierarchy in schools in Kazakhstan, teachers are evaluated according to their students' final test results, wherein their schools are ranked at the

district level. As such, teachers are subject to punishment for not delivering the desired results even though they receive insufficient support for it (Ayubayeva, 2018). Within the context of rapid educational reform directed towards meeting the global standards, teachers in Kazakhstan are striving to ‘be seen as the best performers’ facilitating the culture of competition and the lack of knowledge-sharing (McLaughlin et al., 2014:250). As a result, teachers are functioning within the context of increased accountability, decreased authority and low status.

Studies on educational change indicate that externally-driven and punitive accountability approaches to reform suffocate its very process and fail to bring about sustainable improvement (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Fullan, 2016). My own study attempts to reimagine the approach to educational reform in Kazakhstan, where the flow of accountability is not imposed solely by external forces and enacted from the top, rather it is to some extent owned by practitioners and advocated within schools for the sustainable development of practice.

School improvement and capacity building

The re-imagining of approaches to educational reform in Kazakhstan requires the building of capacity within schools. Over the last three decades, studies on educational change have been arguing about the centrality of the teachers' roles to the success of any reform (Fullan, 1982, Hargreaves and Evans, 1997; Schleicher, 2016). It has been argued that the success of educational reform depends on teachers' practice (Hargreaves and Evans, 1997; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2016). The quality of teachers' practice has been described as the single most important variable for student attainment and system advancement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; OECD, 2009; 2010; 2014b). The studies indicate that teachers' practice can be subject to a school's organisational conditions, which can either enhance or stifle educational improvement (Hopkins, 2001; MacBeath and Mortimer, 2001; Elmore, 2004). Therefore, ensuring successful educational reform may require a different view of the school as an organisation. In this section, I explain the importance of the school as a learning organisation and argue for mobilising TL as a means to capacity building.

Notions such as school effectiveness and school improvement have been widely discussed in western educational contexts, where schools are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development (Hopkins, 2001). MacBeath and Mortimer (2001) relate school effectiveness to how the school as an organisation improves the skills of its members. Following Gray et al. (1999), they describe three different approaches to school improvement: first, tactical approach – when teachers’ attention is diverted towards ensuring students’ performance; second, strategic approach – when schools set long-term goals and focus on students’ learning; third, capacity-building approach – when schools revisit their structural conditions and promote collegiality and self-evaluation. They go on to say that:

[...] a vital indicator of school’s capacity for improvement is its increased learning ability, because as we move towards the learning organisation, the culture of the school becomes the knowledge carrier, spanning generations of staff (MacBeath and Mortimore, 2001:18).

Enhanced opportunities for learning within schools are considered to be the key indicator of a schools’ capacity to improve (Gray et al., 1999). Capacity building, according to Day and Sammons (2013), necessitates different leadership approaches. One such approach is transformational leadership, which I elaborate on in the following section. Such an approach to leadership requires school directors to be able to create a vision, set the direction, build organisational structures and develop people. Capacity building is seen as a complex process that takes time and requires supportive communities of empowered individuals and groups (Hadfield, 2003).

It is important to note a caveat: when applying such a capacity building model in centralised and large power distance contexts (Ho and Lee, 2016) of which Kazakhstan is one (Frost et al., 2014; McLaughlin et al., 2014). Yakavets et al. (2015) highlight the challenges of enabling school directors to develop their schools’ organisational capacity in Kazakhstan. Given the well-established system of bureaucracy and centralised decision-making, school directors may not have enough autonomy to lead change or sufficient awareness of the centrality of their roles in promoting a professional learning culture (Frost et al., 2014). The government’s recent move towards internationalisation has increased the demand for different standards and approaches to secondary education (Fimyar, 2014b). For example, the forthcoming policies such as that concerned with per-

capita funding are increasing responsibility at the school level (see Chapter 1). This calls for a more extended view of the school as an organisation and the role of a teacher in school.

Over the last 20 years, Hargreaves and Fullan (1992; 2012) have been consistently arguing that teacher quality needs to be invested in and mobilised for educational system improvement. They believe that investment in professional capital: teachers' professional learning, interaction with colleagues and decision-making pays off much more than short-sighted reform approaches (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012). This is of particular importance in the Kazakhstani school context, where building teachers' professional discretion may require holistic approaches that would enable teachers to enact their professionalism.

Studies highlight the need to clarify notions of professionalism, as incorporated by the managerial and bureaucratic systems for moving teachers through a career ladder, and the concept of professionalism, when teachers enact moral purpose through their day-to-day practices (Hoyle and Wallace, 2009; Bangs and Frost, 2016). The latter views teachers as professionals, who can lead learning regardless of their professional position by generating knowledge (Durrant and Holden, 2006; Frost, 2011). Through engaging in the deep questioning of their practice and sustainable learning, teachers can facilitate school improvement (Fullan, 2007). Elmore (2004) indicates that such capacity both 'inheres in and comes to' teachers (p. 222). This may indicate the importance of creating conditions for teachers' professional activism.

Enhancing teachers' professional activism is of particular importance in post-Soviet contexts. Teleshaliyev (2013) highlights the need for enabling teachers to 'exercise and enact their professionalism' as the key to 'reprofessionalisation of teaching' (p.69). Teachers in these contexts are actively translating government-initiated reforms at the classroom and school level to improve students' learning (Teleshaliyev, 2013; Bridges et al., 2014). However, given the long-lasting tradition of a top-down approach to educational change, teachers' agency and voice must be supported to restore the status and authority of the profession. In other educational contexts, such a pursuit led to the emergence of a TL movement.

The movement for enhancing the teachers' role in educational reform through TL began in the late 80s. The proposition was that teachers cannot remain merely the technicians of the system as governments pursue educational improvement. Whilst some researchers viewed TL as a means to extend professionalism through creating certain leadership roles (Lieberman et al., 1988; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009), others called for enabling all teachers to enact professionalism by actively participating in educational improvement (Durrant and Holden, 2006; Frost, 2014; MacBeath et al., 2018).

More recent large-scale studies indicate the positive impact of TL on teachers' self-efficacy (Frost, 2013; Schleicher, 2015; Berry et al., 2016). More specifically, teachers' confidence over their classroom practice is reported to be magnified when they are involved in school improvement (Bangs and Frost, 2012, Frost and Roberts, 2013). The international evidence confirms that in strong school systems teachers can participate and influence the decision-making. As a result, teaching as a profession, brings satisfaction to its practitioners and is valued by the society (Schleicher, 2015).

In general, the example of high performing systems indicates that they mobilise leadership at all levels through decentralising power and simultaneously providing centralised support to educational improvement (Mourshed et al., 2010; Harris and Muijs, 2004; Schleicher, 2012). However, this is believed to require longer commitment and planned actions in systems where the hierarchical cultures and structures are still strong (Durrant and Holden, 2006). In order to enable such a shift, there is a need for strategies that would enhance teachers' capacity to influence the policy and practice (Elmore, 2004; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Bangs and Frost, 2012). Introducing such strategies in schools in Kazakhstan could generate knowledge on how to mobilise and create conditions for TL to emerge.

Thus, following Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) claim for mobilising teachers' capacity, I argue for a mediating layer that would foster current educational reform in Kazakhstan. This leads me to identify TL as a means to the school capacity building within which teachers engage in ongoing professional learning, promote collaborative cultures and mobilise school structures for sustainable educational improvement (see Figure 2).

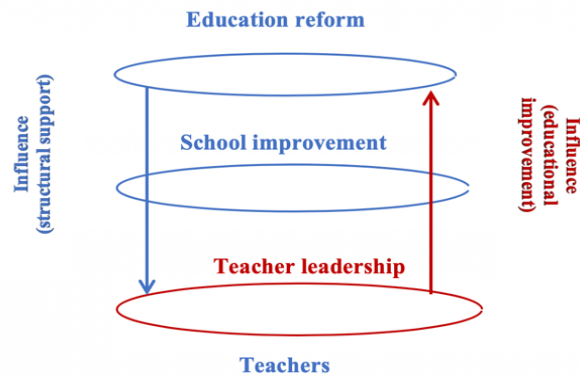


Figure 2. Education reform and teacher leadership

I now explain the notions of leadership and teacher leadership in more detail.

Educational leadership

Studies from the field of business indicate the centrality of leadership to the change process (Kotter, 2011). Leadership is defined as *the act of influence* directed towards enabling individuals and groups to achieve common goals (Yukl et al., 2012). Within the realm of education, leadership is interpreted as a *practice* of establishing direction and influencing people to move towards that direction for whole-school improvement (Leithwood et al., 2006). Such definition allows for the idea that leadership that can be exercised by all teachers rather than just a selected few.

Currently there is broad consensus in the literature on educational leadership that the heroic leader paradigm is outmoded (Spillane, 2006) and a distributed perspective is more realistic. Consequently, attention is drawn to the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership (Day & Sammons, 2013). Whilst transactional leadership aims at ensuring the effectiveness of organisational processes with a particular focus on maintenance issues, transformational leadership places the people at the heart of those processes and hence, seeks to create cultures and structures for improvement (Huber, 2004: 672). Further, it is argued from a number of perspectives that what is needed is a post-transformational leadership with a particular focus on enabling learning and leadership at all levels of the school (West et al., 2000; MacBeath et al., 2018).

This shift towards teams rather than roles led to the emergence of the distributed approach

to leadership (CISL, 2017). Studies define distributed leadership as a practice of interaction between leaders and followers within a particular context (Gronn, 2000; Spillane et al., 2004; Spillane, 2012). The proposition is that leadership practices can be understood intuitively through relations in the workplace and hence, can be shared among all members of the organisation. Thereby, leadership is viewed as a common enterprise of all members of the organisation, which they can enact through taking responsibility for, initiating and responding to change (Gronn, 2002). Studies on the best-performing systems indicate the positive impact of distributed leadership on levels of whole-system improvement. The claim is that teachers are at the core of teaching and learning practices and hence, can be better informed about the implementation of policies in classrooms than the school authority (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Schleicher, 2015). The view of leadership as a shared practice led to the emergence of the TL concept.

Teacher leadership

The concept of TL has expanded over a period of time and undergone several stages of development. The first stage identifies teachers as managers who exercise influence through formal positions. The second stage highlights teachers' pedagogical leadership roles. The third stage transforms the concept from formal leadership roles into informal activities of teachers at all levels based on their 'professionalism and collegiality' (Silva et al., 2000; Pounder, 2006: 533-34). The fourth stage indicates that all teachers can enact leadership through incubating and executing new ideas (Berry et al., 2016). These stages suggest a continuum from formal to informal TL.

However, it is argued that a more helpful distinction is between *positional* and *non-positional* TL. This is because the word 'informal' neglects the belief that teachers can take deliberate, designed and planned initiatives. It may also suggest that the leadership activities of those who do not hold official positions lack 'legitimacy and authority' (Frost, 2014:3). For the purposes of my study, I use these categories to distinguish between the leadership of teachers who hold official roles and those who are self-willed to take purposeful actions at individual, school and community level regardless of their position, which I explicate further.

Positional approach to TL

The idea of TL as a role-based practice predominates the literature. In the US, for

example, a document called Teacher Leaders Model Standards set by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (2011) identifies TL as a specialised position created to develop schools and communities. As such, teachers can enact leadership as expert peers, researchers, scholars and mentors (Lieberman and Miller, 2007; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Fink and Markholt, 2011). In a similar vein, studies from the Australian context highlight teachers' abilities to hold parallel positions of formal leadership and teaching (Crowther et al., 2009).

However, the centrality of roles limits the practice of leadership to the selected ones. This may result in further *leader-follower* relationships and hence be seen as an extra burden which can lead to resistance. The empirical data suggests teachers' reluctance to hold administrative positions. Teachers are believed to feel more comfortable in their classrooms, where they are free to do meaningful work and have higher integrity (Donaldson, 2007a). Moreover, the shift to formal leadership positions may challenge the egalitarian nature of relations between colleagues and hence distance appointed teacher-leaders from their peers (York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

A more holistic approach is offered by research conducted in the UK context, which is called Leadership for Learning (LfL) framework. The LfL framework considers leadership as a practice that can be exercised by every member of the school through ongoing learning, creating conditions for learning, engaging in dialogue, sharing leadership and taking responsibility at the personal, school and society level (MacBeath and Dempster, 2008). The LfL framework views TL as both an individual and a collective agency, which includes 'influencing and serving others, taking the initiative and making decisions for the greater good, whilst modelling learning and being sensitive to context' (Swaffield and MacBeath, 2009: 38). This approach puts democratic values and moral purpose at the core of leadership. Leadership is perceived as a 'right and responsibility rather than [...] a gift or burden' and hence, can be exercised by all stakeholders including headteachers, teachers, students and parents (p. 44). This definition allows me to view leadership as a practice that can be used as a tool for releasing teacher's leadership potential (Dempster and MacBeath, 2009). This is particularly important in my context, where the knowledge of leadership is limited to the system of official roles and positions.

A non-positional approach to teacher leadership (NPTL)

Central to my study is the conceptualisation of TL through a non-positional perspective (NPTL). In contrast to the positional TL, the NPTL approach views leadership as an entitlement of all practitioners regardless of their roles or positions to become active participants of educational improvement at classroom, school and system level (Frost and Harris, 2003; Bangs and Frost, 2016).

Central to NPTL is the idea that teachers can take strategic actions, initiate and lead change regardless of their positions or roles, when the right conditions are created (Frost and Durrant, 2003a; Durrant and Holden, 2006; Ramahi, 2018; Bangs and Frost, 2016). Therefore, the focal point of the NPTL is developing capability and building capacity to enable teachers to exercise leadership. As such, it is not mere wishful thinking but a strategy directed towards system-wide educational improvement. One of the principal advocates of the NPTL, Frost (2012) defines it as:

[...] the process whereby a teacher can clarify their values, develop a personal vision of improved practice and then act strategically to set in motion a process where colleagues are drawn into activities such as self-evaluation and innovation. This is truly about the enhancing of human agency and the development of a culture of shared responsibility for reform and the outcomes for all students (p. 211).

This view of leadership as a practice rather than a position may fit the Kazakhstani school context. Given limited autonomy and increased accountability to external entities, releasing teachers' leadership potential may restore status and authority to the teaching profession. This is because the NPTL approach supports the idea that leadership can be developed and learned, which requires deliberate and well-planned interventions (Gronn, 2010; Hanuscin et al., 2012). First, it draws on teachers' agency and moral purpose to take the initiative and improve practices in classrooms, schools and communities (Frost and Durrant, 2000; Frost, 2017). Central to it is teacher's agency, which is fundamental to human nature. By constructing and reconstructing existing reality, teachers can apprehend and fulfill their moral purpose (Frost, 2006). Second, NPTL does not simply happen to an individual teacher, rather it is nurtured and facilitated through ongoing professional learning, collaboration and networking (Frost and Durrant, 2002). Third, NPTL can only thrive in school cultures and structures that activate teachers' potential to lead educational improvement (Frost, 2011; 2017).

Creating school conditions for TL

Mobilising TL for sustainable educational improvement is contingent on school conditions as teachers' actions are shaped by the institutional practices (Elmore, 2004; Hoyle and Wallace, 2009; Dimmock, 2011). Schools can either elevate teachers' roles by enabling them to take the initiative and lead improvement or diminish their capacity by weighing them down with bureaucracy, transforming them into technicians of the system. It is difficult to expect system-wide improvement when there is no space for nurturing and growing teachers' capacity at the school level. Empowering teachers, however, requires a different way of thinking about the school as an organisation (Mitchell and Sackney, 2011). Particularly, school directors' attitudes, school structures and cultures are the main drivers of TL within schools, as it cannot succeed unless the school leadership teams provide structural and cultural support as well as create the conditions for networking (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2012).

School director

The role of school director is central to advocating the TL (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Muijs and Harris, 2007). It is the school director who can foster shared leadership, promote professional learning and create collaborative school cultures (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Fullan, 2014). As such, the school director's attitude as well as their capability to build structures and cultures are essential to TL.

The school director remains the main source of authority in schools in many educational contexts across the world. Given the centrality of the school director to school improvement (Frost and Durrant, 2004; Spillane, 2006; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009), they can advocate, reject or interpret the purpose of TL in their schools (Little, 1988; Rallis, 1990 in Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers, 1992). The school director's actions, however, are mainly defined by government agendas, which may elevate managerial and punitive accountability over more participatory and democratic leadership styles (Hatcher, 2005). It is, therefore, not a surprise that hierarchical relations may prevail in many organisational structures (Gronn, 2000; Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011), which is especially relevant to the post-Soviet context of Kazakhstan (see Chapter 1).

Although the wider political context is influential in shaping the school director's

attitudes towards TL (Frost and Harris, 2003), the need to keep up with external change forces can place the school director in a slightly different situation where they have to be more innovative to meet global challenges, which is the case in the Kazakhstani school context (see Chapter 1). Reform initiatives may place a high value on the school director's ability to promote learning and create a shared culture within schools (Fullan, 2007; Elmore, 2004).

Therefore, the school director's capability in creating a non-judgmental and transparent culture is essential for TL. In such school cultures teachers can engage in deep learning and exercise leadership (Fullan, 2014; Frost, 2012). By establishing positive relations, providing support and facilitating teachers' involvement in school improvement, the school director can transform teachers' beliefs, raise their status and enhance their capacity to lead (Fink, 2000; Crowther et al., 2009). In a similar vein, providing support for TL may facilitate the school director's involvement in teaching and learning. This is particularly important in systems where the school director is locked into managerial and school maintenance roles, which is the case in Kazakhstan (see Chapter 1). An action-based study conducted in the highly hierarchical context of Turkey indicates that the school director's involvement facilitated teachers' motivation to exercise leadership and enabled them to reach out to other colleagues (Bolat, 2013). However, it is important that such practices are based on encouragement, open discussions and shared values (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Apart from mobilising the school culture, the school director's roles are essential to creating structural support for TL.

School structure

TL is contingent on school structures, where the school leadership team plays a key role in providing resources including time, facilities, recognition and partnership with the external entities to promote TL (Frost et al., 2000).

Time is essential to TL. It is important that school leadership team allocates time for teachers, as they need to meet regularly to collaborate with colleagues and learn how to lead the change (Raywid, 1993; Harris and Muijs, 2004). It is equally crucial that the time designated for teachers' learning does not affect their teaching time, as it may lead to resistance (Cambone, 1995). This is because teachers perceive teaching as central to what they do, whereas other school activities are viewed as supplementary to it (Hargreaves,

1990). A study conducted in Palestine indicates that the time constraint was one of the main challenges to promoting TL in school (Ramahi, 2016).

Another factor that affects the success of the TL is the school facilities. It is important that the school leadership team arranges the space and creates the environment for teachers' regular meetings and joint planning, which is essential for building leadership capacity in schools (Muijs and Harris, 2006). Schneider (2003) highlights that school facilities have an influence on teaching and learning, whereas Galland's (2008) study identifies that the facility for collaboration has more impact on teacher leaders than physical design of the school. As a result, ensuring the space, where teachers can reflect and collaborate, is essential for TL (Frost et al., 2000).

TL also entails recognising and rewarding teachers' initiatives. This is because TL requires input and strong intrinsic motivation from teachers and hence, it needs to be supported and promoted. This support can come from the school leadership team as well as external entities. The role of school leadership team is key in providing internal reward and recognition (Muijs and Harris, 2006), whereas external certification may also facilitate the sustainability of TL in schools (Frost and Durrant, 2003). External support might be important in my context, as teachers are more accustomed to external rewards in the form of certificates that they usually receive after completing professional development programmes (OECD, 2014a).

It is also essential that teachers have opportunities for networking with colleagues outside their schools, which is important to the consistency, coherence and sustainability of TL (Frost and Durrant, 2003). Such networking can extend teachers' professional knowledge, enable the exchange of experience between schools and promote teachers' collective voice and efficacy (Frost et al., 2000; Bangs and Frost, 2012). As a result, by reaching out to the wider professional community, teachers can contribute to the national debate and policy formation as well as promote the culture of learning and knowledge-sharing (Frost and Durrant, 2003).

School professional culture

Educational leadership is framed by organisational cultures (Dimmock, 2011; Bridges et al., 2014). Culture is a collective way of thinking that distinguishes one school from the

other (Sergiovanni, 1987). The school culture can be observed everywhere around the school in teachers' informal relations through gestures, talks, celebrations, discussions. It is powerful in that it establishes norms of thinking and shapes teachers' practices (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Whilst school culture can define the success of TL development, TL development has a potential for altering existing school cultures (Durrant and Holden, 2006).

TL development is subject to collaborative school cultures (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). Genuine collaborative school cultures are those that encourage trust and respect at all levels, which affects the success of TL in many ways. First, positive relations between teachers based on trust and respect are important for promoting TL (Copland, 2003; York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Mitchell and Sackney, 2011), as teachers need to accept the leadership and influence of other colleagues as a legitimate activity (Frost and Harris, 2003). Second, it is equally important that school cultures support positive relations between teachers and school leadership team, as teachers need to feel secure in a 'no-blame culture' to exercise leadership (Harris and Muijs, 2005: 127). This is in contrast to cultures where teachers are formally required to collaborate and subdivided into groups, which can be a barrier to educational improvement and hence, TL development.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the educational context in Kazakhstan might not be conducive to promoting collaboration within schools. McLaughlin et al. (2014) describe teachers' professional cultures in schools in Kazakhstan as rather individualistic and competitive due to rapid educational reform. This study however envisions that TL development may have a positive impact on fostering school cultures. Empirical studies confirm that teachers can influence other colleagues, thereby shift the way they think and act (Little, 1988; Frost, 2008). TL can challenge individualistic cultures by facilitating collegiality, fostering professional learning communities and trust-based relationships in schools (Hargreaves, 1992). This all however requires the right kind of support and facilitation.

Facilitating TL

Facilitation is a process of unlocking the leadership capacities of all teachers through the employment of certain strategies. Central to such strategies is learning of some sort

(York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Hanuscin et al., 2011; Hunzicker, 2012). The need to keep up with the fast-paced change has shifted the focus of organisations from leader-development towards the leadership-development perspective (Hoyle, 2007; Day et al., 2014). Investment in building leadership capacity at all levels is reported to have a positive impact on the adaptability of organisations (Goleman et al., 2002; Hoyle, 2007; Kotter, 2011). There is, however, a scarcity in the empirical research that would explain the concept of TL as it evolves (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). There is also a lack of research that would demonstrate what the facilitation of TL involves (Wenner and Campbell, 2017). This is important as TL, as envisioned by this study, is unique in a sense that the direction of influence is not top-down and vertical in nature rather bottom-up and horizontal. Therefore, in this section, I engage with the kind of professional learning that may facilitate the development of TL.

Learning is an indispensable part of leadership, thereby professional learning is essential to TL development (Swaffield and MacBeath, 2009; Frost, 2012). This is because, the source of teachers' authority is not a position, rather it is their credibility amongst their colleagues. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) argue that teachers' 'personal power comes from the perception of their competence by other teachers' (p. 103). Research on leadership development programmes indicate a shift of focus from training focused on leadership-skills towards more holistic learning opportunities (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Day et al., 2014; Hunzicker, 2012). For example, Allen and Hartman (2008) point out the centrality of personal-growth, experience-based learning and interaction with others to the leadership development process. This echoes constructivist, transformative and social models of learning (CISL, 2017; Allen and Hartman, 2008).

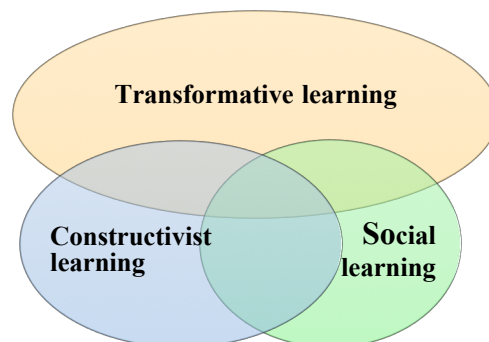


Figure 3. Leadership development and learning models

The Figure 3 above indicates that leadership development may entail critical reflection

(Mezirow, 1978), learning through a shared experience (Bandura, 1971) and the construction of knowledge based on present or past experience (Bruner et al, 1966). Given the nature of pre-service education in Kazakhstan (see Chapter 1), enabling dialogue and further professional learning about pedagogy within schools might be an integral part of TL development. However, for the purposes of developing the kind of TL that I envisage, it is important to distinguish between the concepts of professional learning and staff training. As the latter is usually driven by the external forces, it is criticised for being decontextualized and time-bounded as well as focusing on ‘fixing’ teachers’ individual skills (Mitchell and Sackney, 2011).

Governments, including Kazakhstan’s, have been investing heavily in training as a means to ensuring that the quality of teaching meets the standards (see Chapter 1). However, in many instances, such short-term programmes leave teachers unable to translate new knowledge into practice and have little or no value to the school and system improvement (Elmore, 2004). Kenny and Clarke (2010) identify such an approach as a passive way of learning, which focuses on the adapting people to the existing conditions rather than enabling them to shape their own reality. Professional learning for large-scale system improvement, however, needs to enhance the capacity for locally generated innovation, which is responsive to the school context.

Holistic and system-wide improvement is believed to require context-based ongoing professional learning, taking place within communities of practice and enabling teachers to own the development process (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Fullan, 2016). By enabling teachers to own the development of practice, schools may strengthen their internal capacity for educational improvement. Such a model of professional learning enables the recognition of teachers’ ability to build knowledge within their daily work in order to understand, articulate, thereby improve practices (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). It also requires taking into account teachers’ background knowledge, assumptions, beliefs and values. Most importantly, such school-based approaches to professional learning need to enable teachers to bring about change into their classrooms, schools and society (Elmore, 2004; Dimmock, 2014; Fullan, 2016; Frost, 2017). Therefore, professional learning cannot take place in isolation but thrives and is sustainable within a wider professional community.

The proponents of educational improvement highlight the importance of investing in and providing ongoing support for professional learning communities. The reason behind this is multifaceted. First, the call for a communicative approach is based on the assumption that teachers' professional learning can flourish within communities of practice (Stoll and Louis, 2007). Second, such learning is believed to have a positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction and professionalism (Darling-Hammond, 2015; OECD, 2016). Third, professional learning communities, which facilitate teacher collaboration and network, is believed to ensure the sustainability of educational reform (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Fullan, 2016). I now apply this awareness of teachers' professional learning and explain how the TLDW strategy could facilitate the development of TL for the sustainable educational improvement in schools in Kazakhstan.

The teacher-led development work strategy (TLDW)

The TLDW is a strategy designed to support the development of TL (Frost et al., 2000). It consists of seven steps that revolve around critical reflection, discussion, planning and consultation, which can be depicted as follows (Hill, 2014):

Step 1: teachers clarify their professional values

Step 2: teachers identify their professional concern

Step 3: teachers discuss their professional concern with colleagues to clarify the focus of their development project

Step 4: teachers develop an action plan and design the development project

Step 5: teachers negotiate their action plan with colleagues

Step 6: teachers lead development projects

Step 7: teachers engage in school networks to build professional knowledge

The above steps create a systematic strategy that aim at influencing teachers' practices, enhance their professionalism, voice and enable them to own the development process (Frost and Durrant, 2002; Frost, 2013). Central to the TLDW is the ownership of the development process. At the entry point teachers clarify their *values* by deliberately and systematically reflecting on their practice, set out a *vision* driven by their personal concerns as well as their schools' needs and, then *act* by leading a developing project

through which they collaborate with colleagues, collect evidence and solve professional problems (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Frost and Durrant, 2002; Frost, 2013).

Such ownership of the learning has a number of potentials for the developing context of Kazakhstan. First, the TLDW strategy supports teachers to instigate and lead the development process at the local level. As such, it can facilitate the pedagogical creativity and practice-based knowledge and hence, has a potential to decrease the system's dependence on the external change forces. Second, the ownership of the development process enables teachers to have a stake in making a difference to their classrooms, schools and systems. As a result, teachers become active participants in educational improvement, which can mobilise their moral purpose. This all involves critical reflection, strategic action, collaboration and networking.

Critical reflection and knowledge building

The TLDW strategy is based on problem-oriented and process-based professional learning. Teachers reflect on practices in their classrooms, schools and society to identify a professional concern. Teachers' concerns then become the focus for their development projects, which they lead to address practical problems. This approach to teacher learning has a number of positive elements. First, teacher learning and development is not imposed externally, which often neglects the contextual and cultural aspects of teachers' knowledge construction (Mitchell and Sackney, 2011). Second, such a problem-based approach to professional learning may facilitate self-guided learning by enabling teachers to raise problems and reflect on their practices (Frost, 2012). Such a systematic approach to questioning practices is especially important in altering the pedagogy and the practices in the Kazakhstani schools, which have been subject to more than seven decades of the ideology-oriented learning and the fear-based culture (Burkhalter and Shegebayev, 2012). The systematic reflection and action on practice may enhance teachers' consciousness of practice (Freire, 1970). This, however, requires teachers' commitment to gaining a better understanding about those practices. By ongoing enquiry into practice, teachers may contribute to educational knowledge (Durrant and Holden, 2006). However, the ultimate purpose of such enquiry is not research but the leadership process that enables teachers to influence and improve practices within and beyond their schools (Frost, 2000). To be more precise, teachers create knowledge by taking actions, which are informed by inquiry, and discover what can be done and how it can be done (Frost, 2013). This is,

however, not to be confused with the research-oriented approach to knowledge building. It is rather a 'Mode 2' of knowledge construction, when the knowledge is socially accountable and produced by the interaction of multiple participants (Gibbons et al., 1994). This interaction enables teachers to build knowledge with colleagues and enrich the discourse in wider community of practice (Frost, 2014). Most importantly, such enquiry seeks to improve practice at classroom, school and system level (Frost, 2006).

Strategic action

The TLDW strategy first and foremost is about teachers' strategic actions. The ultimate purpose of such action is the improvement of practice at classroom, school and system level. The leadership of improvement requires systematic planning, documenting and discussion throughout the process (Frost and Durrant, 2003). First, teachers set the direction to achieve their aims, which is incremental to the improvement process (Kotter, 2011). Setting the direction enables to make teachers' leadership actions strategic and systematic. However, the process of setting the direction can be slightly broader than planning, as it involves understanding the problem and creating strategies to solve it (Kotter, 2011). To succeed in their endeavors, however, teachers can develop an action plan in the form of a working document, which can be amended along the way. The action plan may revolve around teachers' development projects and include collaboration with colleagues, collecting evidence and exploring new classroom strategies. The action plan then can be shared with colleagues (Frost et al., 2000). Second, teachers document their actions. Keeping records of the improvement process enables teachers to reflect on and influence their own practice. Those artefacts can be shared with other colleagues and hence, influence practices in other classrooms and schools. Third, in the act of leading development project, teachers consult with their school administration and colleagues within and beyond their schools (Frost and Durrant, 2003).

Collaboration and networking

Collaboration is key to facilitating TL, which enables teachers to grow professionally and influence the growth of other colleagues. Such collaboration can improve student attainment, teaching skills, collective knowledge sharing and learning (Harris and Muijs, 2004; Creaseman and Coquit, 2016). It is, however, important that such collaboration enables genuine learning through sharing expertise and reflecting on their daily practices rather than the adoption of an externally imposed course of action (Hargreaves and Dawe,

1990).

The TLDW strategy reinforces teachers' personal and interpersonal capacity by enabling them to lead change and collaborate (Frost and Durrant, 2003). By doing so, teachers enhance their leadership capacity and develop skills in influencing colleagues and building relationships (Frost and Harris, 2003; Bangs and Frost, 2016:102). As such, professional collaboration is believed to foster mutual empowerment, whereby teachers gain confidence, feel secure among colleagues, become accountable for practices and raise professional dialogue (Durrant and Holden, 2006). Empirical studies conducted in Egypt and Palestine indicate that the TLDW strategy can enhance teachers' 'sense of collective agency' (Ramahi and Eltemamy, 2014).

The TLDW strategy enables teachers to share professional knowledge beyond their schools through networking (Frost et al., 2000). Networking provides access to a wider context, whereby teachers can present, share and gather data across partner schools, which can be an influential tool for mobilising teachers' agency (Durrant and Holden, 2006). An empirical study conducted on the impact of the TLDW strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates that networking enabled teachers to participate in a genuine discussion with colleagues; in Bulgarian schools it enhanced the engagement of parents and strengthened parent-school cooperation; the Macedonian context suggests that networking enhanced teachers' capacity for leadership (Frost, 2012). This all makes networking important for enabling teachers to exercise leadership, which, according to Hargreaves (2003), can mobilise and increase intellectual and social capital to strengthen the organisational capacity for the whole-system transformation.

As a result, the TLDW strategy offers a systematic approach to reconstructing teachers' role in educational reform through the development of TL, which is focal to my study. Particularly, such a strategy can enable teachers to become self-learners by reflecting on their own practice and generating practice-based knowledge; influencing colleagues, schools and communities. This has the potential for whole-system improvement in Kazakhstan, but it requires well-planned intervention, tools and techniques as well as the expertise to facilitate the strategy (Frost et al., 2000; Hill, 2014).

The HertsCam Network

Following the foundational work of CANTARNET (Frost, Durrant, Head and Holden, 2000), the HertsCam Network has been scaffolding TL in schools in UK for almost twenty years (Mylles, 2006; Frost, 2011; Hill, 2014). HertsCam has been promoting TL through the TLDW strategy (Mylles, 2006; Hills, 2014). The TLDW programme consists of the school-based sessions, consultations, network events and annual conference that enable teachers to collaborate and build knowledge. Throughout the academic year, teachers develop projects, collect evidence of their development work into a portfolio which is presented at the end of the programme (Frost, 2013; Hill, 2014). I now explain the process in more detail.

Group sessions

The programme consists of six or seven group sessions that last for two hours and take place within the school premises. Group sessions offer structured learning opportunities, considered to be the key element of any leadership development process (Allen and Hartman, 2008). The TLDW sessions usually consist of the following:

- Session 1*** enables participants to clarify their professional concern, consider how their project might make a difference, how they might consult colleagues, and how to keep a portfolio

- Session 2*** enables participants to draft their action plan and consider the activities that will help to take their development project forward

- Session 3*** enables participants to review progress with their development work and adjust their plans in the light of the challenges that have arisen

- Session 4*** enables participants to reflect on their experience of leading development work and how they might begin to share the story with others

Session 5 enables participants to review the impact of their development project and how this can be extended and helps them to take stock of their portfolio of evidence

Session 6 enables participants to reflect on what has been achieved through their development project and bring both their project and portfolio to fruition (the TLDW tutor handbook, 2016).

As indicated above, the group sessions enable teachers to raise problems and engage in reading, reflecting, observing, collecting evidence, analysing and collaborating with colleagues (Frost et al., 2000). During the group sessions teachers can reflect on their own practice, discuss their concerns with colleagues and develop strategies to improve classroom, school and system practices. Such sessions can become a powerful source of authority, extend teachers' moral commitment and facilitate learning communities (Frost et al., 2000).

The role of a facilitator

In its early stages, the HertsCam programme involved both internal and external facilitators to conduct the TL development programme. The facilitator can be an external expert, school leadership or teaching staff member (Frost et al., 2000; Frost and Durrant, 2003; Hill, 2014). Originally, the idea was that a university-based expert builds a partnership relation with a school representative to plan, prepare and conduct the programme (Frost et al., 2000). As the programme evolved, the responsibility for facilitation shifted from the university-based expert to the school representatives (Hill, 2014). Fullan (1993) believes that change can take place when schools seek outside collaborators as a source of information, learning and growth. Moreover, a number of studies confirm the benefits of external facilitation of the TL (Frost, 2011; Vernon-Dotson and Floyd, 2012; Nicholson et al., 2016).

One-to-one meetings

The HertsCam programme normally includes one-to-one meetings with a facilitator (Frost et al., 2000; Frost and Durrant, 2003; Hill, 2014). The one-to-one meetings play a key role in supporting TL within schools. The purpose of these meetings is to provide

extra support to teachers in identifying their goals, offering a critique to their projects, assisting in evidence collection, facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing (Frost and Durrant, 2003).

Network events and Annual Conference

The HertsCam TLDW programme ensures that teachers attend network events throughout the year and one conference. The purpose of these events is to enable teachers to compare their experiences with those in other schools, discuss their projects, make contacts and share knowledge (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Frost, 2013). The events take place after the school day and are led by teachers (Hill, 2014). The programme of events culminates in an Annual Conference. During the networking events and the Annual conference teachers are able to question their assumptions and generate professional knowledge (Frost and Durrant, 2003).

The portfolio

The HertsCam programme ensures that teachers document their leadership activities throughout the project. Teachers collect different items of evidence to build up a portfolio. The rationale behind portfolios is to foster systematic reflection on practice, provide the basis for discussions with colleagues and compile a record of achievement (Frost and Durrant, 2003). Participants need to organise and present the portfolio in a way that is comprehensible to a reader who is not familiar with events and school context. They add a commentary for each item, present their written accounts of the development project and submit the portfolio as a part of the programme completion (Hill, 2014). However, the specific design of each portfolio depends on the purpose of the project (Frost et al., 2000).

Evaluation and certification

The HertsCam Facilitator Team assess the teachers' portfolios and award certificates in recognition of the teachers' achievements. The purpose of evaluation and certification is to offer a feedback to teachers' and celebrate their accomplishments. It is important to note that the TLDW strategy has been implemented and tested beyond the context of UK through the *International Teacher Leadership initiative* in contexts with drastically different educational, social and political contexts (Hill, 2014).

International Teacher Leadership initiative (ITL)

The ITL is an initiative that has been supporting the TL development in more than 15 different educational contexts around the world. The outcome of the research conducted in 15 countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and UK) within and beyond Europe indicates that the development of TL increased teachers' instructional self-efficacy and their 'influence over the direction of their schools' (Frost, 2011:32). The empirical study suggests that the development of TL has an impact on knowledge building, teachers' professionalism and educational improvement (Frost, 2011; 2014):

[...] teachers really can lead innovation; teachers really can build professional knowledge; teachers really can develop the capacity for leadership, and teachers really can influence their colleagues and the nature of professional practice in their schools. However, what is abundantly clear is that teachers are only likely to do these things if they are provided with appropriate support (p.57).

The ITL initiative has proved the adaptability of the TLDW strategy and the HertsCam Network approach to the educational systems with diverse political, economic and social backgrounds. Particularly, research outcomes from the highly hierarchal Turkish context suggests its positive impact on teacher's classroom practices and student attainment, creating collaborative cultures and sustaining teachers' motivation (Bolat, 2013), whereas in Palestine it had a positive impact on educational reform at the professional, organisational and system levels (Ramahi, 2015; 2016). These studies suggest that such a TL model can be adapted to contexts of traditional hierarchy, of which Kazakhstan is one, and enable teachers to become active participants in the process of educational improvement.

The implications for practice, professionalism and voice

The above discussion indicates the centrality of creating conditions and introducing strategies to TL development (Frost, 2011). Whilst such an approach aims at fostering educational reform in Kazakhstan, it also challenges existing practices that are mainly centrally-driven and outward-oriented (see Chapter 1). By enabling teachers to lead

educational improvement within their classrooms and schools, this study envisages alterations in their practices, professional identity and voice.

Facilitating TL could have implications for teachers' practices. By identifying their own professional concerns and leading educational improvement, teachers may engage more with their students' learning and hence, enhance their knowledge and practice (Hoyle, 1980). Lingard (2009) points out that, in times of increased global and local accountability, it is crucial to 'pedagogise' teachers' identities (p. 91). He calls for authentic practices and extending teachers' capacities to contribute towards social justice and equity (*ibid.*). Such an endeavour however may require increased teachers' critical consciousness, which involves problematising, reflecting and acting to improve practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Critical consciousness and agency are incremental to societies that seek transition (Freire, 1974).

Human agency can be enhanced when there is a belief in the ability to produce desired results (Bandura, 1997). The empirical data suggests that the alteration in teachers' practices may enhance their self-efficacy (Watson, 2014). This is fundamental to the TLDW strategy, as it rests on the teachers' will to make a difference in their classrooms, schools, communities and challenge existing practices (Frost, 2000; Frost and Durrant, 2003). Such an ongoing job-embedded learning approach is believed to have a positive impact on teachers' agency (Day, 1999; Day et al., 2007; Bangs and Frost, 2012). Through systematic scaffolding, the strategy enables teachers to reflect on practice and act within and beyond their classrooms and schools. Moreover, teachers' development projects can enable teachers to build knowledge and share it within a wider professional community (Frost and Durrant, 2003). This, in turn, may lead to bottom-up movement for re-professionalising the profession, increased status and enhanced voice.

The facilitation of TL engages teachers in setting agenda and finding solutions to the existing educational issues (Frost, 2008; Bangs and Frost, 2016). Teachers then are encouraged to communicate their leadership stories at different events and share them with stakeholders, which may inform policy and practice. The study conducted in Palestine suggests that the planned strategy and the development of TL can enhance teachers' activism. Particularly, teachers learned how to take charge of their actions, became self-confident and willing to seek different solutions, which had implications on

the emancipation of the teaching profession (Ramahi, 2016; 2018).

In sum, by facilitating TL, this study may influence teachers' practices, foster their engagement with the profession and extend their voice, which involve raising teachers' critical consciousness, enabling them to exercise their agency and increasing their voice.

Chapter summary and research questions

In this chapter, I argued for the development of TL as a means to enhancing teachers' roles in the context of education reform in Kazakhstan, which is driven by the logic of global competition and top-down accountability. I expound the growing significance of enabling TL in high performing systems. Moreover, I explain the concept of TL from the non-positional perspective, which I narrow down to the teachers' self-directed strategic actions for classroom, school and system improvement that can be exercised by all teachers regardless of their positions and roles.

In order to exercise leadership, teachers need to learn how to lead improvement and be supported in their endeavours within their schools. This requires facilitation of ongoing professional learning, collaboration and networking. Moreover, TL requires creating conditions, which involves the engagement of school directors, collaborative school cultures and supportive school structures. This all may entail building internal capacity and enhancing teachers' roles in education reform for sustainable educational improvement (see Figure 4 below).

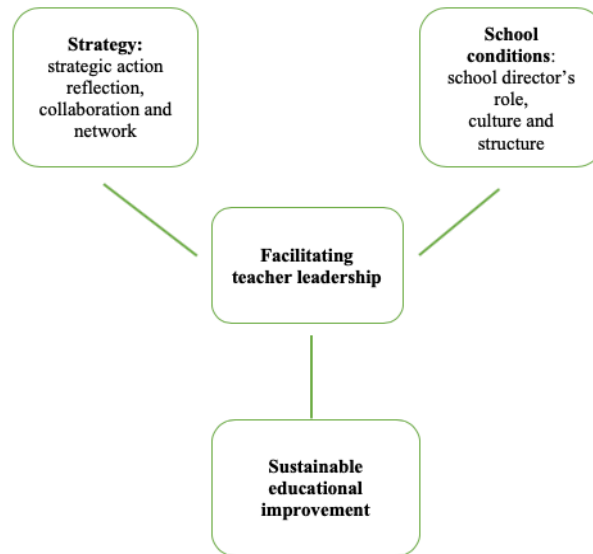


Figure 4. Facilitating TL: a conceptual framework

The concepts discussed above enabled me to identify the following research questions that guided me through the intervention programme:

- What are the enabling and inhibiting *conditions* to the facilitation of TL, especially in relation to school director's role, school culture and structure?
- What are the key features of the *strategy* designed to facilitate TL, especially in relation to reflection and strategic action as well as collaboration and networking?
- How can this strategy *enhance* teachers' roles in education reform, especially in relation to teachers' practices, professionalism and voice?

I now explain my research methodology and data-collection methods.

Chapter 3

Research methodology and design

In Chapters 1 and 2 I explained educational reform in Kazakhstan, the centrality of teachers' practices to educational improvement and how non-positional TL may enhance teachers' roles in educational reform Kazakhstan. In this chapter, I justify my research methodology and design. My choices and intentions in this regard were shaped by my own biography and stance as a researcher. I am an educational researcher, but I have also been a teacher and am the daughter of a teacher, who has devoted her life to teaching. I have become committed to the view that teachers can play a key role in educational improvement when the necessary conditions are present. Therefore, central to my research was the intention to *develop* and *evaluate* in action in schools in Kazakhstan a programme based on the non-positional TL idea. Through acting *with* teachers within the existing power system, I aimed to build *knowledge* about the possibility of enabling teachers to develop their leadership capacity, the benefits that could arise from this and the strategies, techniques and tools required to achieve this. In the light of this, my study can be regarded as a form of *critical participatory action research*. It is important to establish at the outset that in the context of this study I saw myself as a practitioner. That is to say that my practice as the instigator and key facilitator of the programme referred to above was part of the phenomenon I was researching. I also recruited allies and collaborators in a number of schools and was able to work with them to develop and enact the programme of support for TL that I envisaged. As a result, this chapter discusses the research methodology and the design of the study. It consists of three main sections. In section one, I explain my philosophical perspective and justify my research methodology. In section two, I explain the data collection methods. In the final section, I lay out the intervention programme called '*Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration*'. I now begin with the philosophical stance and theoretical perspective.

Philosophical stance and theoretical perspective

According to some writers, the ultimate purpose of education is empowerment for social justice and better future (Dewey, 1916b; Freire, 1970). Arguably, the main aim of social science is to empower individuals who live in the societies characterised by

disempowerment and injustice (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003). Dewey (1916b) points out the democratic criterion of education, which is about ‘reconstruction or reorganization of experience [...] and so to increase the capacity of individuals to act as directive guardians of this reorganization’ (p. 331). The empowerment of individuals, according to Freire (1970), requires *critical consciousness*, when the human being is *conscious of* himself and the world around him. Being conscious means to *act* and *reflect* on one's context by posing the problem. As a result, human beings can free themselves from the externally imposed conditions. This, as Freire (1970) goes on to say, necessitates *dialogue* between the participants of educational processes. Through such interaction human beings can produce and reproduce knowledge. This knowledge however can be bound by rules established within the system (Giddens, 1984). Due to the difficulty of locating themselves outside the rules and power relations, human beings are believed to adhere to existing conditions and accept them as a given. Therefore, my aim was to *question* (Freire, 1970; McNiff and Whitehead, 2002) and *act* to improve the existing practices in collaboration *with practitioners* (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Bandura, 2006).

Critical participatory action research

The study can be placed within critical social science perspective, as it advocated social justice (Cohen et al., 2011). This paradigm enabled me to approach educational research as a process of transformation that upholds the ability of human beings to think independently, reflect on their actions, beliefs and values (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Fay, 1987). Moreover, in this study I was seeking to enable practitioners to challenge existing practices and act to improve them (McTaggart, 1991; Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Therefore, I framed my study as a *critical participatory action research*, which enabled me to locate my study within a *social context*, reflect on it and generate *knowledge with* the practitioners. Kemmis (2008) defines critical participatory action research as follows:

a research undertaken collectively by participants in a social practice to achieve historical self-consciousness [...]; a process in which they reflect critically and self-critically [...]; collective reflection and self-reflection through communicative action [...]; exploratory action to investigate their shared reality in order to transform it [...]; with the practical aim of acting rightly [...]; with the emancipatory aims of eliminating, as far as possible, character, conduct or consequences that are untoward, distorted, destructive or unsustainable [...]
(p.22).

The term action research is interpreted differently depending on the role, nature and purpose of the study (Reason and Bradbury, 2006; McNiff and Whitehead, 2006; Wilson, 2009). My study encompassed the following main features of the critical participatory action research methodology:

Feature 1. It sought knowledge to improve practice. The primary aim of my research was collective action with the practitioners to build an understanding about existing conditions and to improve them (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Schön, 1983). In contrast to traditional 'high ground' research, this study focuses more on solving the every-day living problems for which it can be criticised and as research of the 'swampy lowlands' (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002: 20). However, the field of education is broad and any interaction that expands our minds can be called educational. Therefore, education needs to be located within particular social, historical and political contexts (McNiff, 2016). In this regard, this research approach enabled me to intervene in the educational context in Kazakhstan to generate knowledge on how to improve existing practices. Given the pace of educational reform in Kazakhstan (see Chapter 1), answering such questions is of paramount importance.

Feature 2. It would enable the monitoring and evaluation of my own practice. In contrast to the understanding that only practitioners can conduct such research (Wilson, 2009; Kemmis et al., 2014), I saw myself as a practitioner in a sense that I adapted, implemented and evaluated strategies to facilitate TL (Elliott, 1991; Losito et al., 1998; McTaggart, 2002). McNiff (2016) calls it 'practitioner-led research'.

[...] academics ought to see themselves as practitioners in workplaces, alongside those others whom they already call 'practitioners'. Work-based knowledge should be accepted as academic and generalisable knowledge, and practice-based theory should be accepted as equivalent to conceptual theory (p.32).

Such a constructivist approach opened up a space for the learning from experience (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). Above that, this research approach enabled me to begin with my felt need to improve practice (Elliott, 1991). In this regard, my felt need arose from my personal and professional experience. In a similar vein, the TLDW strategy enabled me to assist the participants to identify their felt needs, which led to the mutual enablement.

Feature 3. It requires self-reflection throughout the research process. Self-reflection was central to my research approach, which also had implications for the research validity and ethics (Kemmis, 1985; Herr and Anderson, 2005). Through the analysis of my own actions, thoughts and values (Kemmis, 1985; Mezirow, 1990), I was able to become a learner of my own learning (Schön, 1983). A clash between old and new practices and thinking, required constant analysis of my own thoughts and actions (Kemmis, 1985; Elliott, 1991; Greenwood and Levin, 2006). It was also an ethical requirement to reflect on the means as well as the ends of the process (Elliott, 1991). To be precise, I had to be cautious of imposing institutional theories on the participants and avoid compromising the participatory nature of research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1991).

Feature 4. Research is done 'with' rather than 'on' the practitioners. In contrast to a traditional 'fly on the wall' approach to research (Herr and Anderson, 2005), the critical participatory action research enabled me to develop *action with* participants not *on* them to improve practices (Kemmis et al. 2014:190; Eikeland, 2006). Rather than being an authority in research, I would be a facilitator to enable the practitioners to reflect on their practices through a dialogue (Winter, 1987; Eikeland, 2006; Gomez et al., 2011). Such a dialogic approach became a powerful source of knowledge, whereby the participants were able to raise their professional concerns and address them to improve practice (McDermott, 2002; McDonald, 2012).

Feature 5. It would enable me to build understanding about the broader educational context. Another feature of my methodology was that it enabled me to explore the relationship between the participants' worlds and the broader society, as one does not exist in isolation from the other (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003). Both me and the participants were able to reflect on the educational system from historical and political perspectives and identify the ideological constraints of policy (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 220). This was of particular importance in challenging that which Freire expresses as the 'reproduction of the dominant ideology' (1998:91), the external forces that shape teachers' practices.

Feature 6. It generates public knowledge and transforms it. In this study, the critical participatory action research served a dual purpose. First, it aimed to improve

practitioners' practices, thereby develop knowledge. Second, it used such knowledge to re-shape the understanding about the 'problems and issues' (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003). This was of particular importance in Kazakhstan, as knowledge generated by teachers influenced the theories and practices of other practitioners (see Chapter 7), which has a potential to become a valuable source for theory builders.

Feature 7. It prompted me to be vigilant to my researcher role. Given the participatory nature of this study, it was important that authority and power resided with the participants rather than me throughout the research process (Grundy, 1981). This required establishing collaborative relationships with the participants, wherein they could become a co-producer of knowledge (De Venney-Tiernan et al., 1994). Bearing in mind that the collaboration between practitioners and an academician could be co-opted by the latter (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993), it was important that I engaged the participants in the discussions from the beginning (see Chapter 4). This enabled me to initiate a partnership with the participants, which gradually evolved into mutual trust and respect (Herr and Anderson, 2005; McDonald, 2012). I also diminished my academician/expert role by involving school representatives to become the co-facilitators of the intervention programme. Regardless of such preventive measures, I acknowledge that my positioning varied throughout the research. Due to my 'initiator' role, the participants expected me to take full responsibility for the success of the programme. Above that, my research methodology was prone to other limitations that I explain further.

Limitations of the critical participatory action perspective

Entering the field with the critical participatory action research perspective had its limitations. First, due to the practical aims of the study, the transferability and the empirical testing of its outcomes remains open (Cohen et al., 2011). Second, it took a lot of time and effort to balance my researcher and activist roles (Healy, 2001). Being the main instigator, I had to ensure that enough time was provided for collaborating, planning and implementing the intervention programme in schools. Third, as a critical inquirer I aspired to change the existing practices, which was subject to the complexity of altering the participants' behaviour, the constraints of their power to become autonomous, the difficulties related to reconstructing long-established cultural and structural arrangements in schools as well as the limitations of my power over functioning of society and system (Cohen et al., 2011; Fay, 1987). Fourth, the applicability of critical inquiry in the post-

Soviet and the Central Asian cultures required more detailed consideration of local understandings and interpretations of criticality (Healy, 2001).

The rationale for the critical participatory action perspective

Despite the aforementioned limitations of my research methodology, I argue that such a constructivist approach to knowledge generation is valid and legitimate. First, it enabled me to declare experiential knowledge grounded in teachers' lived experiences (Argyris et al., 1985; Eikeland, 2006; Heron and Reason, 2008). Second, the deep and extended encounter with teachers' worlds allowed me to engage in and respond to multiple aspects of their contexts (Heron and Reason, 2008:370; Winter, 1987). Third, it has had normative implications, as it validated the enactment of values and generated new insights into improving the educational practices (Argyris et al., 1985; Elliott, 1991). Fourth, the participatory nature of critical social science enabled me to involve participants in exploring how to change existing conditions, thereby co-construct experiential knowledge with them (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). In contrast to positivist and interpretivist approaches that make conclusions based on the 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' criteria (Carr and Kemmis, 1986), this research methodology enabled me to build new understanding by taking actions in the real-world setting (Gray, 2009). As a result, I was able to familiarise myself with the 'syntax and semantics' of practitioners' daily practices, empower them by participating in and developing actions with them and learning from those actions by remaining critically self-reflective (Freire, 1998:106; Cohen et al., 2011; Kemmis et al., 2014).

Section overview

To sum up, I adopted a critical participatory action research methodology, as it espouses social justice and empowerment. With the purpose to empower, I acted and generated experiential knowledge grounded in the practitioners' contexts. I also positioned myself as a co-learner who aimed to co-construct new insights with the practitioners. Regardless of the limitations of this research approach, it enabled me to build knowledge *with* the practitioners on *how* to enhance their roles in educational reform in Kazakhstan for the sustainable development of practice. I now discuss the data collection methods.

The design of the study

The study was based on the intervention programme that I conducted in four schools in Kazakhstan to facilitate TL. As discussed in Chapter 2, the programme drew on the HertsCam Network model, whereby I adopted and adapted the TLDW strategy and collaborated closely with the colleagues at the ITL initiative throughout the intervention process. The intervention programme took place between October 2016 and May 2017.

I considered the programme as a single case, where focus was on the process of the facilitation of TL, rather than multiple school cases (Yin, 2017; Stake, 2013). In order to ensure systematic monitoring and evaluation of the process, I adopted an action research spiral of steps developed by Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1946). The steps included: *identifying the initial idea; reconnaissance or fact-finding; designing general plan; executing; monitoring and evaluating*. After identifying my research concern, visiting schools and conducting reconnaissance, I divided the execution of the intervention programme into three phases. Each of the three phases involved planning, acting, observing and reflecting (see Figure 5 below).

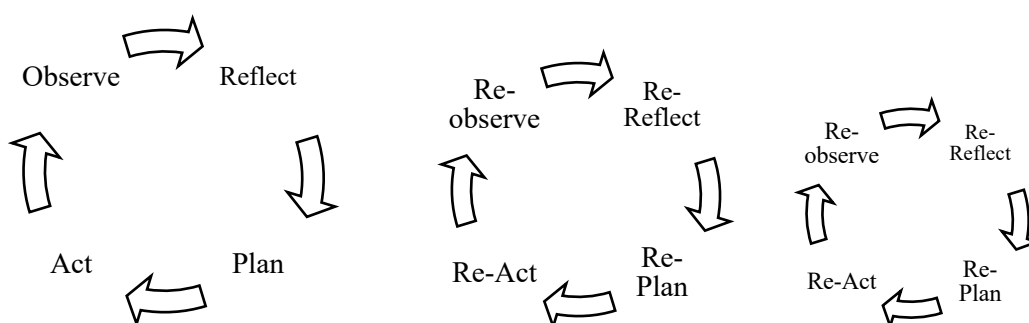


Figure 5. The action research cycles. Adapted from Kemmis et al., 2014.

I started laying the conditions for the intervention starting from March 2016. The intervention required the knowledge of the context and understanding of what needs to be done to produce the desired outcome (Fixsen et al., 2013). The reconnaissance stage, which I explain in Chapter 4, enabled me to grasp the possible impediments to the intervention and make the general plan of the programme. I visited the schools and introduced the programme's main steps to school leadership teams. During this stage, I

was also able to identify my future collaborators and discuss the intervention programme with potential participants. Below, I describe the process of participant selection in more detail.

The programme participants

The selection of participants for a qualitative study is usually influenced by the purpose of the study (Cohen et al., 2011), as it seeks meaning rather than quantity and so does not prioritise generalisation (Flick, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). As an action-based study, it entailed building partnerships rather than selecting participants. I *purposefully* selected the research site (Flick, 2011). My study took place in schools with Kazakh as the language of instruction and outside the economically developed cities of Kazakhstan (such as Astana and Almaty). The logic behind this choice was two-fold. First, I attempted to enhance the representativeness of the study by conducting it in schools with the Kazakh language of instruction, as they constitute the largest number (3819 out of 7402) in the country (IAC, 2014). Second, I aimed to reflect the educational context located at the periphery, which underscored the value of this study.

At the school level, I used a *convenience* approach to selection (Flick, 2011). Although I visited different schools in one region, I limited my choice to four schools. This was related to the willingness of the schools to participate in this study, time constraints and research manageability. This approach enabled me to look at multiple cases with the similar and contrasting conditions, thereby increasing the representativeness of the study and strengthening the findings (Cohen et al., 2011). As a result, schools differed in type, size, the level of students' attainment and the admission process (see Table 3).

The process of identifying participants was driven by the idea of *voluntary* participation. Based on the experience of the ITL colleagues, it was important to have a group size between six and fifteen people (Ramahi, 2018). As, in the initial stages of the programme, the number of applicants in some of the schools exceeded 15 people, my collaborators and I applied selection criteria (see Chapter 4).

Schools				
	<i>Alga school</i>	<i>Birlik school</i>	<i>Talap school</i>	<i>Yntymaq school</i>
Type of school	Selective	Comprehensive	Selective	Selective
Teacher-student ratio	5:1	15:1	7:1	10:1
Students age	12 -18 years old	6 -18 years old	12 -18 years old	12 -18 years old
Student admissions	Entry exam required	No special requirements	Entry exam required	Entry exam required
Participants				
Number of participants	6	9	9	7
(withdrawals)	(-2)	(-2)		(-1)
Total number of withdrawals:				5
Total number after withdrawals:				31 participants

Table 3. The programme participants

As a result, participants included teachers of various subjects and with different experience as well as school administrators (see Appendix 4). The total number of participants who completed the programme was 31. The schools and the participants were given fictitious names (see Table 3).

Based on the initial interaction with the participants, I named the programme *Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration*. The programme took place within one academic year and consisted of school-based group sessions, one-to-one meetings, School Network events and the International Teacher Leadership conference. In the following sub-sections, I explain the programme's main features and the adaptations that I made to fit the needs of the schools and participants.

The Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration (TLLC) programme

The programme drew on the TLDW strategy (see Chapter 2). The key element of the strategy was that teachers lead *development project* throughout one academic year. This included teachers: clarifying their values, identifying their professional concerns, discussing their concerns with colleagues, developing an action plan, discussing the plan with the school leadership teams and colleagues and designing their development projects, leading the development projects to improve practices, engaging their students, colleagues, senior leaders and the community and building professional knowledge (Hill, 2014). The rationale for using such strategy to facilitate TL in Kazakh schools was multifaceted. First, it had been systematically developed and refined over a period of time (Frost and Durrant, 2003). Second, its impact and adaptability had been verified in a number of educational contexts (Frost and Durrant, 2002; Frost, 2011; Frost, 2013). Third, elements of the HertsCam model had been introduced in schools in Kazakhstan through the Centres of Excellence programmes, wherein the Level 1 programmes looked at enhancing teachers' leadership capacity through setting up the school networks (Wilson, 2017) (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, by systematically implementing and reflecting on the strategy, my collaborators and I were able to adapt it throughout the intervention process to fit the needs of the context. It was also important that I explained to my collaborators the key elements of the intervention programme, which included systematic school-based professional learning, ongoing collaboration and school networking. As a result, such an approach required creating structural conditions in schools before launching the programme (see Chapter 4). Below, I discuss the key instruments of the intervention programme.

School-based group sessions

Central to the intervention programme was systematic school-based professional learning which took place during the group sessions. There was one introductory session followed by six main group sessions throughout the academic year. Each session lasted for two hours and took place within the schools' premises at a time convenient for the participants. The group sessions included activities that focused on facilitating critical reflection, group discussions and guidance on action planning (Frost et al., 2000; Hill, 2014). As a result, the group sessions generated a considerable amount of both written and visual data, which I collected systematically to evaluate the programme's

effectiveness and address my research questions. Based on the reconnaissance stage (see Chapter 4), I had to make prior arrangements to conduct the group sessions.

First, it was important that I explain the programme details, its main concepts and expectations to the participants and the school leadership teams. I had to consider the possibility that the teachers were more accustomed to externally-provided training (see Chapter 1), which contradicted the school-based and self-guided nature of the professional learning. Therefore, I conducted an introductory session to explain that, in contrast to the training approach, teachers were expected to have a sense of ownership of their professional development and initiate change in their classrooms, schools and communities (Frost et al., 2000). I also had to be explicit about the fact that teachers were going to raise problems which would be illuminated by reading, reflecting, observing, analysing, collecting evidence and engaging in dialogue throughout programme (Frost et al., 2000). Above that, I informed my colleagues about the role of the portfolio and the process of evaluation, which were essential to the completion of the programme (Frost, 2013; Hill, 2014).

Second, it was important to discuss the school-based nature of the programme with the school leadership teams. It became evident that providing professional development programmes within school premises throughout an academic year was a new practice for schools. Therefore, I held separate meetings with the school directors and my co-facilitators to ensure that time and space were provided to hold group sessions inside the schools' premises (see Chapter 4). Moreover, based on ITL colleagues' experiences, it was important to create an open learning environment during the group sessions, wherein I aimed to provide refreshments before each group session. Given that schools did not have the flexibility to cover such expenses (see Chapter 1), I had to seek external funding opportunities.

In general, the group sessions were the key instruments of the programme, which generated a considerable amount of data. In order to conduct the group sessions, it was important that I made prior preparations: explained the self-guided nature of the process and created the necessary conditions (see Chapter 4). Group sessions were then followed by one-to-one meetings.

One-to-one meetings

One-to-one meetings played an important role in engaging the participants in critical reflection individually, monitoring the programme's effectiveness and conducting in-depth interviews and conversations. The participants were provided with one-to-one meetings after each group session. Closer to the end of Phase 2 of the programme, the participants requested more of such meetings. As a result, there were more than 160 one-to-one meetings throughout the programme. In contrast to other programmes within ITL, I provided one-to-one meetings more frequently. There were number of reasons for this.

Although the programme highlighted self-guided learning, providing individual guidance to the participants was important part of the intervention process (Fixsen et al., 2009). First, the participants in my context required extra support in building their understanding of the constructivist approach to learning (see Chapter 5). Second, such meetings helped the participants to stay focused on their development projects, as daily routines were an immense distraction. Third, it was important that participants were able to ask questions outside the group sessions, as some of them could have feared public embarrassment (McLaughlin and Ayubayeva, 2015).

As a result, one-to-one meetings provided extra support to participants in identifying their professional concerns, offering a critique to their projects, assisting them in evidence collection, facilitating their collaboration and knowledge sharing with colleagues (Frost and Durrant, 2003). As discussed earlier, these meetings generated a considerable amount of qualitative data, which I was able to analyse in order to monitor the programme's effectiveness and adjust it in timely fashion.

School Network events

The programme included two School Network events, which took place in January and March 2017. The purpose of these events was multi-fold. First, it was the key instrument for facilitating collaboration between participants, engaging them in critical dialogue and enabling them to lead the professional learning of colleagues outside their school premises. During the school network events, the participants were able to contrast their experiences to those of teachers in other schools, discuss their projects, make contacts and share knowledge. Such networking events also focused on enabling the participants to re-construct their old assumptions and stimulate knowledge generation (see Chapter 5

& 6). Second, school network events provided an opportunity to conduct participant observation and obtain feedback, when the participants from all four schools came together and interacted with each other. However, in contrast to other programmes within ITL, my co-facilitators and I were able to hold only two of such events due to school schedules and restrictions on participants' time (see Chapter 5). Both of the events took place on Saturdays, when participants had less teaching and school premises were available. These two School Network events, however, culminated with the International Teacher Leadership conference, which was held close to the end of the academic year.

The International Teacher Leadership Conference (ITL conference)

The programme culminated with the ITL conference, which was held on 13th of May 2017 (see Chapter 7). The purpose of the event was to recognise the achievements of all people, who were involved in the programme. The programme brought together all four school directors, representatives of the Centre of Excellence, school administrators and teachers beyond the programme, as well as four colleagues from the HertsCam Network who travelled from the UK. This enabled us to celebrate practitioners' achievements and introduce the TLLC programme to a wider professional community and further embed it in schools in Kazakhstan.

The most important part of the event, however, was that it enabled the participants to share professional knowledge, which they generated throughout the programme, through making power point presentations, introducing their posters and portfolios to a wider professional audience. At the end of each panel session, the teachers from Kazakhstan and the UK were able to engage each other in collaborative practice-oriented activities. Such international interaction between practitioners raised awareness about common professional problems, strengthened solidarity and increased moral purpose. This was further marked by the concluding part of the event, when participants were awarded certificates of completion and HertsCam colleagues received letters of gratitude for their input and support.

Portfolio development and reflective stories

A key element of the programme was the portfolio. The rationale behind the portfolio was that it would enable participants' systematic reflection on practice, provide the basis for discussion with colleagues and compile a record of achievement (Frost and Durrant,

2003). In order to ensure the standard of quality, I worked closely with HertsCam colleagues. As a result, the participants systematically documented their leadership activities, added a commentary to each item and compiled their portfolios throughout the programme. The final component of the portfolio was the participants' reflective stories (Frost et al., 2001; Hill, 2014). It was important, however, that I explained the purpose of the portfolio development and provided the guidance on writing the reflective story (see Chapter 7).

As discussed in Chapter 1, teachers in my context had to maintain a portfolio as a part of the attestation process to be promoted to a higher qualification (McLaughlin et al., 2014; Frost et al., 2014; MoES, 2016). This could lead to confusion between two types of portfolios and potentially foster competition rather than collaboration. Therefore, during the introductory session, I explained that the purpose of the portfolio was to keep track of the development process, reflect, learn and share it with other colleagues rather than pass or fail the programme requirements. I also highlighted the importance of the reflective story that the participants were expected to produce at the end of the programme. As a result, participants' development projects generated a considerable amount of data and written artefacts, which I analysed both in situ and post hoc. Moreover, the participants' reflective stories were compiled in one handbook and shared with practitioners outside the programme. Some of the participants were able to transform their reflective stories into journal articles, which enabled us to enhance the impact of their development projects and amplify teachers' voices (see Chapter 7).

Programme certification

In order to recognise the participants' achievements, the programme concluded with the award of certificates of completion. Throughout the programme participants were able to exercise leadership in order to generate practice-based professional knowledge and improve practices (Frost, 2013). To mark such effort and achievement, participants were awarded certificates in front of colleagues and school leadership teams. The recognition that came from their peers increased participants' sense of achievement, self-esteem and moral purpose (see Chapter 7). In order to achieve this outcome, it was important to create a team of people who would provide ongoing support to the development of TL within schools.

Facilitator, co-facilitators and project teams

Facilitation can be carried out by an individual or a team with the purpose to provide support to teachers (Harvey et al., 2002). Whilst I acted as the facilitator, my co-facilitators and the school leadership teams provided ongoing support throughout the programme. Having attended the HertsCam facilitator induction programme and collaborated with the ITL colleagues, I was prepared to facilitate group sessions and design tools and techniques for the programme. The strategies focused on fostering reflection during group sessions, engaging participants in critical dialogue during the one-to-one meetings and providing guidance throughout the programme. It was, however, essential that the programme involved co-facilitators, who were based in each school. Their knowledge of the school context and the participants' professional development needs played a key role in facilitating TL. Initially, I planned that my co-facilitators would be teaching staff members. However, during the reconnaissance stage, the key people to provide such support were selected in consultation with the school directors (see Chapter 4). As a result, I had four *co-facilitators* in each school: three of them were the school vice-directors and one of them was an experienced teacher. They observed and assisted the group sessions, co-observed with me the participants' lessons, organised and led panel sessions during the School Network events and the ITL conference. In addition to identifying the co-facilitators, it was important to set up *project teams* in each school. Project teams included the school directors, the school leadership teams, my co-facilitators and myself. We were able to hold three project team meetings after each phase of the programme, which enabled us to conduct *periodic reviews* (see Chapter 4) which included discussion about participants' progress and how we could create suitable conditions.

Section overview

In sum, my study was designed around a three-phased intervention programme. The programme consisted of group sessions, one-to-one meetings, school network events, ITL conference, which culminated in the submission of portfolios and certification to recognise teachers' achievements. The programme phases were monitored, evaluated and planned, which involved co-facilitators and project team members from each school. I now explain in detail the data collection methods.

Data collection methods

Given the action-based nature of the study, I adopted purely qualitative data collection methods. Such an approach enabled me to capture the *meanings* that the participants placed on the programme and its process within specific organisational, social and system context (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). In order to ensure triangulation of the data, I applied multiple data collection methods (McDonald, 2012). The main research methods included (i) one-to-one interviews (ii) participant observations (iii) documentary analysis and (iv) research journal (see Table 2 below).

Research phases	Data collection methods
<i>Creating the conditions</i> March, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ semi-structured interviews with the school directors ➤ research journal entries ➤ group session materials
<i>Phase 1</i> October-December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ one-to-one interviews ➤ participant observation ➤ research journal entries ➤ documentary analysis (minutes of the group sessions, the participants' reflective proforma, feedback on the network event and the programme materials) ➤ the periodic review materials
<i>Phase 2</i> January-March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ one-to-one interviews ➤ participant observation ➤ research journal entries ➤ documentary analysis (minutes of the group sessions, the participants' reflective proforma, written reflections and feedback on the network event; co-facilitators' written observations; notes on lesson observations) ➤ the periodic review materials
<i>Phase 3</i> March-May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ one-to-one interviews ➤ participant observation ➤ research journal entries ➤ documentary analysis (minutes of the group sessions; the co-facilitators' observations and written reflections; the participants' written reflections, reflective stories and portfolios; the HertsCam Network colleagues' written reflections)

Table 2. Data collection methods

Interviews

Interviewing was one of the key data collection methods as well as the intervention tool that I drew on throughout the research process. The purpose of interviews in this study was multifold. First, I employed interviews as conversations to enable the participants to move forward with their projects. Second, I used interviews to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the programme. Third, I recorded our conversations in order to understand the issues related to my research questions and construct knowledge about the social phenomenon (Gilham, 2000; Kvale, 2011). The conversations took place within a one-to-one format within the school premises and lasted for 30-45 minutes each. Moreover, the interviews were conducted separately in different formats with the participants, my co-facilitators and the school leadership teams

The conversations with the programme participants took place after each group session. There were six conversations with each of the participants during the one-to-one meetings. During such meetings, creating an environment of 'open-ended thinking' was important, which helped to generate valuable insights (Rogers, 1969:105). Therefore, I approached this conversation in a dialogic manner to build better understanding about participants' concerns and identify what would help them move forward with their projects (Gómez et al., 2011). Whilst our first and the last conversations were built around semi-structured interviews (Appendix 1), the rest of our meetings revolved around themes related to participants' leadership projects (Robson and McCartan, 2016). With the participants' permissions, I made audio recordings of our conversations. However, the recording was not always appropriate as it distracted participants from the open conversation. In such cases, I took notes of conversations and used them to monitor participants' progress throughout the intervention process. Apart from the formal conversation during these one-to-one meetings, there were informal conversations in small groups, when multiple communicative interactions helped me to capture the nuances of participants' development and validate data obtained by other qualitative techniques (Agostinone-Wilson, 2012; Coleman, 2012). I systematically reflected on such informal conversations in my research journal.

I also engaged my co-facilitators and the school leadership teams in formal and informal conversations from the beginning of the intervention process. However, the more in-depth

data was obtained towards the end of the programme when we had achieved greater levels of mutual trust and respect (Coleman, 2012; Wilson and Fox, 2009) (Appendix 1). With their permission, I made audio recordings of some of our conversations. As the bulk of our conversations took place in an informal setting, I took recorded them in my research journal. As a result, the nine-month programme generated around 104 interview transcripts with programme participants, my co-facilitators, school leadership teams and other stakeholders. I transcribed all audio-recorded interviews and analysed them. This helped me to ensure data security and triangulation with other sources of data collection.

Participant observation

Participant observation enabled me to record participants' actions, behaviours, attitudes, interpersonal relations as well as verbal and non-verbal communications within their natural settings. Therefore, it provided a 'firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest' (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015:137). Having said that, I did not remain a detached observer of the process but acted as its main protagonist, which included engaging in the real-world activities, sharing my experience and developing relationships with the participants (Cohen et al., 2011; Robson and McCartan, 2016). As a result, I was able to keep track of participants' evolution over the period of nine-month programme, which generated thick data based on my living interactions with the practitioners (Cohen et al., 2011).

The observations served several purposes, which included enabling me to assist participants with their projects; monitor and evaluate the intervention process and; understand the social phenomena. Hence, participant observation was both structured and unstructured depending on its purpose. I conducted structured observations, when participants invited me to observe their lessons. In such cases, I had to enter the process with the predetermined categories in mind (see Appendix 2) to help the participants to collect evidence related to their leadership projects (Jones and Somekh, 2005). Within my own research project, however, I used unstructured observations, because I explored the development of TL over a period of time. The unstructured observations enabled me to focus on my research questions but remain open to new insights to make sense of participants' living experiences (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). As a result, such an approach led to the emergence of new categories throughout the research process.

Participant observation, however, was prone to subjectivity as the bulk of the data was produced through my personal social-cultural lens (Cohen et al., 2011; Jones and Somekh, 2005; Robson and McCartan, 2016). Therefore, it was important to be systematic and accurate in collecting data (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). After my first experience of participant observation of group sessions, I pondered about other ways of recording the data to reduce subjectivity. My initial thought was to video record each session, but it was perceived as intrusive in my context and would discourage participants from open discussion. Therefore, I invited my co-facilitators to use a structured *observation form* (see Appendix 2), which enabled me to crosscheck with them my observations periodically and increase the quality of the research process. In addition, I kept the *research journal* to systematise the data produced from observations (Cohen et al., 2011).

Research journal

In order to supplement the data obtained from interviews and observations, I kept a research journal. There were number of reasons for keeping the research journal. First, research journal enabled me to record the events that occurred throughout the research process (Koshy, 2009). Second, it was a valuable source of data, as I used the records of descriptions and evaluations of events to monitor the intervention process (Koshy, 2009). This enabled me to conduct in-situ data analysis and adjust the intervention accordingly (Holly, 1989). Fourth, it was a reflective process, whereby I reflected on my personal feelings about the social phenomenon and events (Koshy, 2009).

Although the content of my research journal was flexible, I had a particular design in mind (Wilson and Fox, 2009; Koshy, 2009). I included both descriptive information, such as space, time, participants, activities as well as the dialogic reflection on my role and how I felt about the events (Cohen et al., 2011; Holly, 1989). I had a research journal checklist (see Appendix 3), wherein I recorded the information on a daily basis and validated it through interviews (Morrison, 2012). As a result, the nine-months programme generated more than 300 pages of both electronic and hard copy research journal entries.

Documentary analysis

Another data collection method I applied throughout the intervention process was documentary analysis. By document, I mean various kinds of physical materials, which

provided more detailed information on the phenomenon under investigation and supplemented interviews, observations and journal entries (Merriam and Tisdall, 2015; Robson and McCartan, 2016).

The study generated a considerable number of documents generated by participants, facilitators and myself as the researcher. Participant-generated documents related to the programme and included participants' reflective proformas, posters, portfolios, reflective stories and written feedback. Co-facilitators generated written feedback, observations, reflections and other visual materials. Researcher-generated documents comprised the materials produced throughout the intervention process that were used to keep track of the monitoring process. These included: minutes of the group sessions and the project team meetings. I have adopted several techniques to ensure the storage and safety of these documents. It was important that they were analysed in situ and discussed with my co-facilitators and the project team members during the periodic reviews.

Periodic reviews

There were three periodic reviews in October 2016, January and March 2017, which enabled me, my collaborators and the school leadership teams to set up the project team and review programme *planning, process* and *impact*. Periodic reviews were also an essential part of the intervention, as they enabled me and my collaborators to monitor, evaluate and keep updated all stakeholders about the process. During the periodic reviews, I was able to record reasons for failures, how they were addressed and the conditions that supported the programme in action. Moreover, periodic reviews enabled us to adjust the programme and contribute to the school improvement process. I was able to keep track of the periodic reviews by taking minutes after each meeting with project team members. Given the considerable amount of data it was important to conduct the data analysis both during and after the intervention process.

Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of making meaning of the relevant data with the purpose to explain the social phenomenon (McNiff, 2016). In qualitative research, the choice of the data analysis approach depends on the purpose of the study (Cohen et al., 2011). Due to

the action-based nature of my study, data analysis took place in different layers both *in situ* and *post hoc*, which I explain below.

In situ analysis

I approached data analysis as an ongoing process to ensure that the research was critical, communicative and systematic (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Feldman et al., 2018). I entered the process with specific research questions in mind but remained open for new insights to emerge. It was important that social reality spoke for itself, as it stimulated critical questioning and reflection (Feldman et al., 2018). Therefore, I applied *deductive* and *inductive* approaches to data analysis, which enabled me to build connections between my research framework and remain open to emergent topics (Westhues et al., 2008). I introduced my framework and then engaged my collaborators in the sense-making process. My collaborators' insights played a key role in analysing, discussing, adapting and improving the intervention process. Although my initial expectation was that such discussion would take place during the *periodic reviews* (Kemmis et al., 2014), the bulk of it occurred in more informal settings. Our discussions revolved around creating structural conditions within schools, addressing teachers' learning needs and enhancing the impact of their achievements. In addition to discussions with my collaborators, I systematically gathered teachers' feedback on the programme both in oral and written forms. Such ongoing dialogue enabled me to gain new insights and systematically refine the programme (Pope et al., 2000; Herr and Anderson, 2005).

Post hoc analysis

The nine-month programme generated an extensive amount of data. As the data was based on my close interaction with the context and the participants, it was important that I provided a rich interpretation of our co-created experience as it unfolded. Therefore, I used a narrative analysis to construct the data based on the 'nature of the phenomenon, what's interesting about it, and what's worth saying' (Connelly and Clandinin, 1995; Freeman, 2011). This implied that the data analysis revolved around the key events of the programme. In order to explain those events, I applied *axial* coding that involved bringing together the sub-groups related to the event under one category (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Cohen et al, 2011). After laying out a critical narrative of the intervention process (see Chapter 4-7), I built a set of themes for discussion from the issues arising in our lived experience of the programme. Moreover, in order to ensure the quality of research, I

analysed the data in Kazakh and then translated the key data set into English (Twinn, 1997). I also used the qualitative data analysis software (NVIVO 11) and other techniques to ensure the data storage and safety.

The quality of research

The meaning of quality in action research is not as same as in positivist or interpretivist studies (Herr and Anderson, 2005). From the traditional research perspective, validity and reliability implies testing and measuring to what extent the research describes what it is meant to describe and how accurate its outcomes are, so as to generalise (Eikeland, 2006; Bush, 2012; Boughton, 2012). Although critical social inquiry seeks to generate valid and trustworthy knowledge, its aim is beyond that of knowledge generation (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Its purpose is to gain insights about the phenomenon in order to change it (Cohen et al., 2011). Nevertheless, there are quality criteria that I adhered to throughout the study, which included ongoing reflexivity, triangulating the evidence through discussions, seeking validity and ensuring that the study was of benefit to practitioners.

As the major instigator of the intervention, I was part of the phenomenon under consideration and the main instrument of the study (Feldman et al., 2018; Polkinghorne, 1995). Therefore, ensuring the trustworthiness of the study required ongoing reflexivity focusing on my personal constructs and ideologies, the participants' constructs, the data, the structural and the historical conditions that shaped the social phenomena under consideration (Anderson 1989 cited in Pillow, 2003). The key aspect of reflexivity was to remain vigilant about my role throughout the study and to build reciprocal relations with the participants (Berger, 2015).

Ongoing discussions with the participants was key to triangulating the data. In addition to participants' ongoing feedback, the multiple data collection methods enabled me to triangulate the study outcome across different sources (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). Most important, however, was to ensure that the study achieved its main purpose.

The validation of the study outcomes took place at different levels. First, it sought to ensure the *outcome validity* by improving the educational practices. Second, it aimed at

catalytic validity by building collaborative relations with the participants and enabling them to question practices. Third, it invited the participants to learn and improve practices in their classrooms, schools and communities, thereby attempted to achieve *democratic validity*. Fourth, I posed problems and solved them with the participants throughout the study to ensure *pragmatic validity*. Fifth, the study engaged participants and the schools in reviewing the intervention process to achieve *dialogic validity* (Herr and Anderson, 2005; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). Lastly, although generalisation was not an aim, it was nevertheless possible to generate a coherent, descriptive and prescriptive account (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002; Schofield, 2007). Therefore, it may be reasonable to claim naturalistic generalisation based on the idea of vicarious experience, as the insights generated through the study were replicated by the practitioners and added new experiences to their existing knowledge (Stake, 1986).

Ethical considerations

Critical participatory research is social inquiry may involve more politics than any other traditional research perspectives. This is because, it takes place within a particular community and hence, may encounter the internal policy of sub-groups. It may also bring in the researcher's intention to change practices, thereby involve external policy of influence (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Therefore, it was essential that I was truthful and respectful towards my collaborators, schools and other parties involved throughout study (Macfarlane, 2009). I also had to ensure that my actions and the values were in harmony (McNiff, 2016). In order to address such ethical issues, I followed the principles of Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research that included *respect for person*, knowledge, democratic values, quality of educational research, academic freedom, *confidentiality* and *safety* of data storage throughout the research process (BERA, 2011).

The awareness of local ethical norms was important (Wanat, 2008). In order to obtain access to the schools and the participants, I asked my sponsor organisation to provide a *letter of support*. The letter included details of the intervention. This letter of support and the one-to-one meetings with the representatives of the Local Educational Department (LED) helped me to secure official permission before visiting the schools. I had two meetings with the representatives of the LED. First, I met with the acting head of the

Department, who was supportive of the programme but asked me to have a separate meeting with the head of the Methodological unit, who was in charge of teacher professional development in the region. The head of the Methodological unit helped me to identify five schools that could be interested in collaborating with me. As a result, I was able to make a presentation about the programme to the school leadership teams in all five schools.

The school leadership teams included the school directors, the vice directors and the heads of subject departments. During the presentation to the school leadership teams, I explained the possible benefits and impediments of the intervention programme. The schools' leadership teams expressed their interest in the programme and their willingness to collaborate. Due to the reasons explained above, I had to shorten the number of schools to four. As a result, I signed *voluntary informed consent forms* with each school. There were three types of consent forms. First, I signed the informed consent form with *the school directors* to obtain permission for the intervention. The form included detailed information about the intervention process and the programme (see Appendix 5). I left one copy with each of the directors and kept one for myself. Second, I signed another informed consent form with *the participants* during the first group session, which sought permission to use the programme materials for the research purpose and informed participants that they had the right to withdraw both from the research and the programme at any point during the intervention process (see Appendix 6). Although the participants wished their details to be anonymised, they wanted their leadership stories to be published under their real names in publications beyond my research.

Furthermore, my actions throughout the intervention process were guided by the values of social justice and empowerment. This involved respecting participants' views, avoiding harm of any type and ensuring relations based on justice and the equal entitlement for self-reflection and development (Kemmis et al., 2014; Locke et al., 2013). Therefore, I encouraged participants to identify and establish their own ethics of behaviour during the intervention (see Chapter 5). I built collaborative relationship with participants to exercise equal power throughout the intervention process (McTaggart, 1991; Locke et al., 2013; Kemmis et al., 2014). By adopting a dialogic approach and building a rapport with all the stakeholders, I was able to diminish my outsider role. This included involving my collaborators and participants in the intervention process and considering them as full

partners in the process. Moreover, the intervention took place in the language of instruction used in schools, which enhanced understanding and facilitated learning and communication (Locke et al., 2013).

Section overview

In general, the study involved multiple data collection methods with the purpose to assist the participants, monitor and evaluate the programme effectiveness as well as build an understanding the research phenomena. The main research methods included interviews, participant observations, research journal entries, documentary analysis and periodic reviews. The data was analysed both during and after the intervention process, whereby the study adhered to certain quality assurance system. Moreover, multiple approaches were applied in selecting the research site, schools and participants. Ethical guidelines for researchers were respected along with local ethical norms in the research site and the values espoused by this study.

Summary

At the beginning of this chapter, I claimed that my choice of research methodology was underpinned by my personal and professional values and my concern to empower practitioners within their organisational settings by facilitating TL. I wished to pursue both experience-based knowledge and the improvement of practice with the practitioners, so my research methodology had features of critical participatory action research. The study was based on an intervention and used multiple data collection methods designed to monitor and evaluate the programme and build understanding about the facilitation of TL. The programme, *Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration*, included group sessions, one-to-one meetings, the School Network events, the ITL conference, the participants' portfolios, reflective stories, external and internal facilitators and culminated in the award of the certificates of completion. The main data collection methods included interviews, participant observations, research journal entries, documentary analysis and periodic reviews. Research data was analysed both during and after the intervention process. I ensured the quality of the research by employing multiple data collection methods, crosschecking my observations with co-facilitators and obtaining feedback

from the participants. I maintained ethical standards by respecting the professional norms of the context, following established guidelines and remaining self-reflective. This all enabled me create knowledge and facilitate TL for the sustainable improvement of practice.

I now provide the rationale for the critical narrative.

Introduction to critical narrative

In the previous three chapters, I explained the educational context, the conceptual framework and the research methodology that prompted me to intervene and conduct the nine-month programme in four schools in Kazakhstan and facilitate TL. In the following four chapters, I explain the process of the intervention in four different episodes, which I named as: *creating the conditions*, *re-orientating*, *enacting* and *reflecting*. These titles unify the main events that occurred during each phase of the intervention programme. I provide their detailed account in the form of a critical narrative (Gill, 2014). The main purpose of the critical narrative is to communicate the story of the intervention in a meaningful manner around sequential events (Ricoeur, 1981; Riessman, 2002). As the narrative has broad meaning depending on the field of study (Rankin, 2002; Riessman, 2008), I explain its main characteristics in the following sub-sections.

Chronological sequence

The critical narrative in this study was constructed around a certain time period and particular circumstances (Ricoeur, 1981; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Heikkinen et al., 2012). As with most narratives, the chronological order consists of the beginning, the middle and the end (Bruner, 1990; Elliott, 2005). There were number of reasons for critically narrating the story of the intervention. First, it enabled me to depict the intervention process as it evolved within a certain ‘historical, social, cultural, political and individual’ conditions, explain actions that were taken to achieve goals and place the lived experiences within a wider scope of factors (Gill, 2014:71). Second, I was able to portray in detail the circumstances that had a considerable influence on participants’ lives, which could have been difficult to achieve through a traditional qualitative analysis when data is clustered into groups (Flick, 2013). As Bruner (1990) puts it:

[...] even the strongest causal explanations of the human condition cannot make plausible sense without being interpreted in the light of the symbolic world that constitutes human culture (p.138).

Portraying such details was especially important given the action-based nature of my study. I offer a critical perspective on the events which includes my interpretation and sense making (Elliott, 2005).

Meaning making

Through narrating the intervention process, I attempted to express the meaning *through* as well as extract it *from* the narrative (Bruner, 1991). In order to seek meaning through the narrative account, it was important to step back and reflect on my own actions and my worldview (MacIntyre, 1984; Burnard et al., 2016). Moreover, such an approach allowed me to act as an agent, play an active role in interacting with the real world, explain its influence on my practice as well as my actions in altering it (Polkinghorne, 1995). The latter was particularly important, as it reflected the values of this study which sought social justice and empowerment (Riessman, 2008).

Voice

The narrative account enabled me not only to narrate the critical events of the intervention process but also elevate the voices of my collaborators (Rappaport, 1995). The narrative account enabled me to account for the unfolding of critical events such as the shift that the participants were able to make in relation to their socially accepted norms and professional canons (Bruner, 1990; Mertova and Webster, 2012). This may have implications for future studies that aim at raising a case for collective action and educational improvement (Riessman, 2008). In addition, the narrative account enabled me to appreciate the participants' voices and ensure that their perspectives were heard (Winter, 2002). Moreover, voicing the participants' lived experiences enabled me to bring up broader educational issues for discussion (Niemi et al., 2010). However, what remains clear is the centrality of my role as a narrator in interpreting and emplotting the real-world events (Bruner, 1990).

Reliability

The centrality of my role in this narrative account may raise the question of truthfulness in the interpretation. In contrast to conventional research analysis, this narrative account aimed at a different kind of validity. As it focused on the particular rather than the whole, it did not seek for generalisation (Heikkinen et al., 2007). As Bruner (1991) puts it:

[...] narratives, then, are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and 'narrative necessity' rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness (p.4).

As such, my claims can be assessed in terms of their verisimilitude or ‘lifelikeness’ (ibid.: 61). Beyond that, this narrative can be tested in terms of how it depicts the evolution of events, voices different viewpoints on the same events, addresses ethical dilemmas, provides a critical view of change, evokes new thoughts and emotions as well as revealing my worldview and emotions in relation to others. This all required heightened attention to reflexivity (Heikkinen et. al., 2007).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity was an integral part of this action-based study (Heiniksen et al., 2012), whereby I did not attempt to create an illusion of an objective reality but constantly acknowledged the constructivist nature of my study and explained the process of its construction (Winter, 2002). My worldview, aims and challenges became key sources of data. Therefore, as a narrator, it was important that I reflected on events from different perspectives. This included reflection on my *internal* feelings, *external* circumstances and their *temporality*, which required connecting present events with their past and future (Polkinghorne, 1995; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Gill, 2014). As such, the episodes in this narrative relate to a particular period of time, particular circumstances and my own action and thought. Although I present the narrative account in the first person, I do not appear as the main character (Etherington, 2004; Bochner, 2012). I portray myself as one of the key actors alongside with the participants and focus on process rather than personality (Van Maanen, 2011).

This critical narrative comprises four different chapters. In Chapter 4, I explain the reconnaissance stage of the study, when I first visited the schools and laid the conditions for the intervention. In Chapter 5, I provide an account of re-orientating participants’ understandings of professional learning and leadership. In Chapter 6, I discuss how the participants began enacting their development projects. In Chapter 7, I present reflections on the programme and its sustainability. I now begin the critical narrative of the intervention.

Chapter 4

Creating the conditions

As discussed in Chapter 2, facilitating TL required creating the conditions within schools. The creating the conditions stage was the key element of the intervention programme, whereby I pursued multiple purposes. First, I intended to address the teachers' professional learning needs and their response to the concept of TL. Second, I aimed to build initial understanding about the schools' cultures and structures, which represented the reconnaissance or fact-finding stage of the intervention process (Kemmis et al., 2014; Stringer, 1996). Third, I sought to create partnerships and negotiate the structural conditions with the key stakeholders before launching the programme (Frost et al., 2000).

This chapter explains my initial steps in creating the conditions for the intervention programme in four schools in Kazakhstan. The narrative spans the period between March and October 2016 when I first met with the schools' leadership teams, explored the teachers' professional learning needs, built initial understanding about the schools' structures and cultures, created partnerships and negotiated the structural conditions necessary to launch the programme (see Figure 6 below). The narrative in this chapter is informed by participant observations, semi-structured interviews and materials from the group sessions.

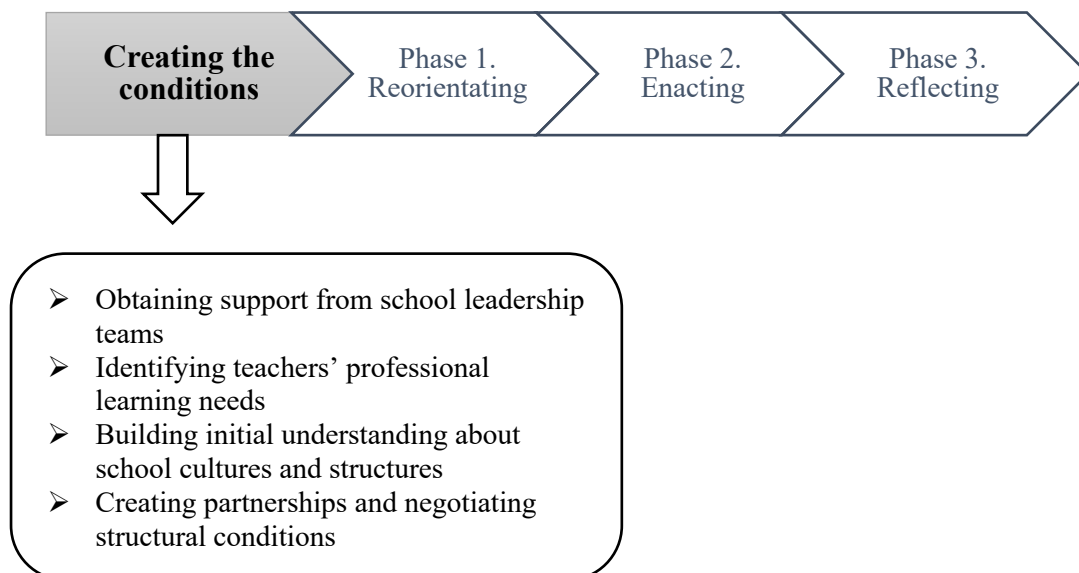


Figure 6. The main events of the creating the conditions stage

Obtaining support from the school leadership teams

As discussed in Chapter 3, I approached the schools after obtaining access at the Local Educational Department and confirming the time of the meetings with the school leadership teams. Before visiting the schools, I was still uncertain whether the programme's main principles would match the schools' priorities and the teachers' professional development needs; whether the school leadership teams would be willing to provide support throughout the programme. After the school leadership teams expressed their willingness to introduce the programme in their schools and the teachers supported the main principles of the programme, I was able to begin the preparations for launching the programme. My initial encounter with the key stakeholders prompted me to attend to the teachers' previous understandings of TL as well as look closer at the schools' structures and cultures.

Alga school and Birlik school

My first step in introducing the programme started in Alga school and Birlik school. In both schools, I was warmly greeted by the school leadership teams. During the meetings, however, I noticed a considerable difference between the selective Alga school and the comprehensive Birlik school. Moreover, some of the practitioners in Birlik school contested the concept of TL. Therefore, I doubted the feasibility of the programme in Birlik school. However, the school directors highlighted their willingness to introduce the programme in their schools and confirmed the further meetings with the teachers.

Although both schools were funded by the state, they were drastically different in terms of physical structure, student numbers and academic background of the students. Alga school catered for the academically best-performing students between 12-18 years of age, who were selected from both urban and rural areas. It was a boarding school, where the students stayed at school during weekdays and travelled home on weekends. In contrast to this, Birlik school was an all-through comprehensive school, which accommodated primary, secondary and high school students between 6-18 years of age and with varying academic and social backgrounds. Birlik school experienced scarcity in rooms and infrastructure and teachers worked in two-shifts, their teaching schedules varying from early morning until late evening from Monday to Saturday.

During these meetings it became evident that teachers in both schools attended the Centre of Excellence programmes (see Chapter 1). Most of the school leadership team members had been part of the Level 1 programme, where they learned something about the HertsCam Network. Interestingly, it became evident that not all of the practitioners had a clear idea about the concept of TL. For example, an experienced maths teacher who had attended the Level 1 programme felt sceptical about the concept of TL which I reflected on in my research journal:

The experienced teacher felt doubtful about the concept of TL. She pointed out that there were too many innovations taking place these days in schools in Kazakhstan. From our further conversation, it became evident that she contested the foreign induced programmes in general. One of her arguments was that there was no clarity in their purposes. Despite attending the Level 1 programme, she highlighted that she still did not understand the objective of TL.

(Birlik school, Research Journal, 30.03.2016, p.5)

This example indicated that not all teachers, who attended the Level 1 programme, grasped the meaning and the purpose of TL. This could have been related to the fast-paced of the implementation of reforms, wherein teachers felt bombarded by alien concepts. This implied the need to work on the translation of TL concept, so that teachers could make meaning of and localise it. Drawing on the process of educational reform in schools in Kazakhstan, Bridges et al. (2014) highlight the importance of enabling teachers to assimilate the new concept. The assimilation of the new concept could either be reshaped by the recipients, thereby change their ‘conceptual apparatus’ to some extent or be completely rejected (p.271). This case made me reflect on the importance of attending to and exploiting terms that featured in teachers’ existing knowledge.

Talap school and Yntymaq school

Just like Alga school, Talap school and Yntymaq schools were the selective schools with the best performing students and advanced infrastructure. However, unlike the previous two schools, Talap and Yntymaq schools were less dependent on the Local Educational Department and so were able to exercise more autonomy in terms of curriculum and teacher professional development. Although it was evident that both schools had up-to-date facilities and the best-performing students, they were different in many ways. For

example, the relationship between the school leadership teams and the teachers, the professional culture and the school size.

Whilst waiting for the School Director in Yntymaq school, I noticed that the school leadership team, teachers and students knew each other very well and addressed to each with a certain respect. In contrast to other schools, Yntymaq accommodated a smaller number of teachers and students and hence, reminded a family-type community.

(Yntymaq school, Research Journal, 20.10.16, p.30)

In comparison to Talap school, the atmosphere in Yntymaq school felt warm and caring. Nevertheless, it was too early to make judgements about the school cultures.

In general, the school leadership teams in all four schools reacted positively to the intervention programme and confirmed the separate meetings with the teachers. Particularly, the school directors highlighted the importance of enabling teachers to identify problems and lead projects. Although this made me confident that the key stakeholders understood the programme's main principles, I felt that my affiliation to the University of Cambridge added some value to my presentations and raised curiosity among the practitioners. As such, there were many issues to which I had to attend in order to launch the programme. The most important one was to understand whether the programme matched the teachers' professional learning needs.

Identifying the teachers' professional learning needs

The meetings with the teachers was the most important part of creating the conditions stage. First, I intended to identify to what extent the programme's strategy echoed teachers' professional learning needs. Second, I needed to build some understanding about possible obstacles to the programme implementation. Third, I wanted to gauge the teachers' reaction to the concept of TL so as to refine my intervention plan before launching the programme. Moreover, as this was my first interaction with the teachers, I used this opportunity to test the programme techniques and establish collaborative relations with the potential participants of the programme (Ali and Kelly, 2004). I met with the teachers in each school twice. In March 2016, I was able to engage a small number of teachers in discussions about their professional learning needs, professional

culture and the concept of TL. In October 2016, I introduced the programme to the wider school community in all four schools to ensure that all members of the schools could access and, if interested, voluntarily join the programme. I now explain those meetings in chronological order.

The meetings in March 2016 involved 10 to 15 teachers in each school. In order to get to know the teachers in person and engage them in open discussions, I rearranged the furniture in rooms in a U shape and allowed 15 minutes for the coffee break before starting the session. During these meetings, we discussed the professional development opportunities that were available in their schools. It became evident that the majority of professional development programmes were provided outside the schools' premises.

I started the session by introducing myself, my research concern and the aim of this session. After the short introduction, I asked teachers to make a list of the professional development programmes that they had previously attended and reflect on their impact. Teachers widely acknowledged the Centre of Excellence programmes. Some of them noted the considerable change in their practices after attending those programmes. However, it became evident that the number of teachers, who attended the Centre of Excellence programmes, varied in selective and comprehensive schools. Whilst the majority of the teachers in the selective schools attended the programme, not many benefitted the programme in the comprehensive school.

(Birlik school, Research Journal, 30.03.2016, p.5)

The above observation echoed the previous discussion about the accessibility of the Center of Excellence programmes to all teachers in Kazakhstan (see Chapter 1). Beyond the Center of Excellence programmes, teachers pointed out the short-term training sessions which were provided on a fee-paying basis outside their schools. There was, however, low motivation to attend such programmes, because of the shortage of the teachers' budgets and time. Some of the teachers noted the availability of online programmes. Those, who were over 50 years of age, noted that they find it difficult to access such programmes due to the lack of knowledge of technology.

Later, I asked the teachers to identify the main features of the professional development programme that they find important to their practice. The aim of this activity was to build an understanding about the teachers' professional development needs. The majority indicated that the programme needs to help them improve their *teaching skills* and enable

them to address the *students' learning needs*. Their professional interests varied extensively and included improving students' self-guided learning, critical thinking, functional literacy and so on. Although it was still early to make judgments, the teachers' choices signaled that they were undergoing a period of adaptation and assimilation of the new concepts which had been introduced as a part of the reform initiatives. This discussion indicated the intensity of the external drivers of change and the challenges of the internal sense-making (see Chapter 2).

In addition, I was able to gain some understanding about the possible challenges in each school. Whilst the *student overload*, the discrepancy in *students' academic backgrounds* and *the lack of technical support* was unique to the teachers in the comprehensive Birlik school, the *low salary* and *workload* were identified as a problem in all four schools. The common obstacle that was highlighted in all four schools, however, was increased *paperwork* and the lack of *time*, which indicated the bureaucratic nature of the schools' governance system. This echoed the struggles of the educational system in making the transition from the bureaucratized Soviet-style governance (Yakavets et al., 2017a), which I discussed earlier (see Chapter 1). Having said that, there were teachers, mostly experienced ones, who had a strong sense of vocation and resilience to external adverse conditions (Day and Gu, 2010; Teleshaliyev, 2015). As depicted in the following excerpt, such teachers refrained from making excuses but took responsibility for their professional learning:

One of the teachers in Alga school, who had more than 30 years of experience, noted that, even if there was ideal technical support and all facilities were provided, the most important thing was the teacher's willingness for self-development and learning.

(Alga school, Research Journal, 28.03.2016, p. 4).

This reflected the main principles of the intervention programme and prompted me to move to the introduction of the concept of TL. Before introducing it to the teachers, I reflected on my previous interaction with the experienced teacher in Birlik school who was uncertain about the purpose of TL. In order to avoid misconception, I decided to introduce TL by attending to the teachers' professional values. I asked them how as educators we could improve our students' learning. During this exercise teachers highlighted the importance of students' *tárbiye* (upbringing in Kazakh) and the quality of

their *teaching practice*. Teachers' responses helped me to introduce the main principles of TL, its purpose and the details of the programme. As a result, I was able to secure the teachers' support of the programme, which led to the next round of meetings.

During the meetings in October 2016, I made power-point presentations about the programme to all members of the school community. Such an opportunity was provided during the staff meeting, which was called as *Pedsovet* (the Pedagogical Council in Russian). During the *Pedsovet*, I explained the details of the programme and the requirements for its successful completion:

The participation in the programme entails spending extra time on:

- *searching and reading the key sources related to your development project*
- *collecting evidence*
- *submitting the portfolio of evidence for evaluation*
- *attending six group sessions, six one-to-one consultations, two School Network events and one conference*
- *making presentations and posters about your development project to colleagues outside your school.*

(Presentation slide, Introductory session, 20.10.16)

As a result, there were number of teachers who approached me after the presentation to learn more about the programme. In general, the meetings with the teachers played an important role in the intervention process. It extended my understanding about their professional learning needs and possible impediments to the programme. However, I still had to learn more about the schools' structures and cultures in order to create the necessary conditions for the programme.

Understanding the school structures and cultures

Obtaining initial understanding about the schools' directors' roles, structures and cultures was an important part of creating the conditions for the programme. As discussed in Chapter 2, these factors played a key role in ensuring the success of TL. Therefore, I held separate conversations with the school leadership teams, which revealed preliminary insights about the school directors' roles in relation to educational improvement,

teachers' professional learning, the creation of cultures and structures. This all enabled me to identify possible impediments and prompted me to look closer at creating the right structural conditions before launching the programme in schools. I now explain them in detail.

The school directors' roles

Conversations with the school directors and participant observations revealed that the school directors' roles were focused on administering the schools rather than leading educational improvement. This could be related to school directors' autonomy. Three out of four of the schools had to adhere to the standards, curricula, syllabi and funding set by the MoES and are accountable to the Local Educational Department. The lack of autonomy, however, was particularly evident in the comprehensive school, Birlik:

My role is to make school's development plan and coordinate the external and internal matters [...]. School operates according to the educational standards. We make plans based on those standards. However, we are in charge of all other internal procedures.

(Birlik school, School Director)

Despite being subject to centralised decision-making, directors noted that they had autonomy in terms of hiring staff and regulating schools' internal practices. They expressed the expectation that implementing change was the teachers' responsibility:

[...] ensuring quality education, preparing students for the Unified National Test are all teachers' responsibility [...] we are expecting many other changes due to the reform of the education content [...].

(Birlik school, School Director)

[...] problem is the discrepancy in the teachers' professional competence as well as their attitude to work: there are teachers who take responsibility and those who do not.

(Alga school, School Director)

Given the emphasis on the teachers' competence in making change possible, it was important to identify school directors' roles in relation to creating professional learning opportunities. It became evident that professional learning was mainly associated with externally provided professional development programmes. As the School Director in

Birlik school pointed out, her role was to select teachers and direct them to attend such programmes:

There are the Centre of Excellence programmes as well as training sessions, which are provided as a part of the reform initiatives [...]. We carefully select the right kind of teachers, who fit those programmes [...].

(Birlik school, School Director)

The teachers, who attended the professional development programmes, then were expected to conduct school-based coaching and seminars. The school directors did not take direct action to ensure that the new knowledge was dispersed across the school. On the contrary, there was an expectation that it was the teachers' responsibility to share such knowledge:

[...] there are technocratic teachers [...] who attend different kinds of professional development programmes and get higher salaries [...] However, they do not share knowledge with others [...].

(Alga school, School Director)

Subsequently, our conversations revealed the large power-distance dimension of the school cultures (McLaughlin et al., 2014), whereby the responsibility to address teaching and learning issues was delegated to the schools' middle management. Although the school directors participated in different kinds of staff meetings (for example, the School Director's Council, Teachers' Council and Methodological Council), the role of such meetings was mainly to report and share information rather than to facilitate collaboration (Frost et al., 2014):

[...] well the purpose of the school meetings is mainly about informing. We may sometimes express our opinion, but they are mostly about receiving information.

(Birlik school, a teacher)

The meetings with the School Director and the Vice Directors take place in an authoritative manner. We report about a particular problem. [...] However, during the meetings of the Teachers' Council, we have an opportunity to share knowledge related to the instructional practices.

(Alga school, a vice director)

Interestingly, despite exercising much more autonomy and receiving more professional learning opportunities than other schools, the school leadership team in Talap school seemed to distance themselves from the teachers. During my first encounter with the School Director, I was invited to have breakfast in a separate room in the canteen, which was dedicated for the school leadership team members only. This indicated the need to address the school leadership teams' attitudes to their roles in schools.

My first encounter with the school directors indicated that they were more concerned with the school maintenance issues rather than organisational improvement (Frost et al., 2014; Yakavets, 2016). This contradicted the notion of what Peter Senge (1990) called the 'learning organisation', wherein the formal leaders continuously create conditions to enhance the capacity of the school community. Particularly, there was limited understanding about the centrality of the school directors' roles in creating the conditions for professional learning, knowledge-sharing and collaboration. This all had implications for the schools' professional culture.

The school professional cultures

As discussed in Chapter 2, facilitating TL required no-blame school cultures, wherein teachers could work collaboratively to improve practice. My initial observations indicated that the schools provided different kinds of seminars and coaching, where teachers could exchange knowledge and engage in collaborative activities. However, not all schools had staff rooms where teachers could interact with each other on an ongoing basis.

The coaching and seminars were highlighted in the comprehensive Birlik school as opportunities for teachers to discuss their professional practices both inside and outside their schools.

There are different kinds of seminars held within our school. They are provided at city and regional levels too [...] when teachers of the city and regional schools gather together, we have an opportunity share our practice. It has a positive impact on teachers' practices, as teachers seek to implement new knowledge into their classrooms.

(Birlik school, a teacher)

The mentorship relations between the experienced and the novice teachers, as well as lesson observations, were also indicated as key tools for facilitating collaboration within schools and improving teachers' practices:

[...] More experienced teachers attend novice teachers' classes. It facilitates teachers' professional learning.

(Alga school, a vice director)

It became evident that a fully functioning staff room, where the teachers could meet each other on a daily basis, was available only in Yntymaq school. In the other three schools, teachers were able to interact with each other either within their methodological units or in small groups. This had implications for the professional cultures which could be described as 'balkanised' (Hargreaves, 1994) with limited opportunities for building social capital and facilitating knowledge-sharing within the school (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012):

[...] teachers perceive that they know enough and do not want to listen to each other. [...] those who have good relations at personal level may be open to share knowledge in small groups [...].

(Alga school, School Director)

The school structures

The major challenges that I could identify at this stage of the intervention were related to the schools' structures. As support for professional development was perceived as an external practice, the schools had no specific time or day of the week dedicated to school-based professional learning. The lack of rooms, the chronic lack of time and increased bureaucracy were particularly evident in the comprehensive school, Birlik.

Being an all-through school, Birlik operated in two shifts. This meant a scarcity of rooms available to conduct group sessions, wherein only a handful of rooms were set up with smart boards. According to the School Director, the excessive number of students, insufficiency of technical support and a lack of personnel to maintain classroom technologies, had implications for the teachers' workload:

It would have been great if all teachers could work in one shift. We also need more technical support in our classrooms, such as smart board [...] teachers cannot always take care of the technical equipment. The school does not have capacity to solve this problem yet.

(Birlik school, School Director)

The lack of time, however, was a challenge in all four schools. The major reason for that was excessive bureaucracy in schools. For example, the schools that were accountable to the Local Educational Department noted that they had to encounter numerous official written requests as well as the variety of unexpected tasks. As a result, the school leadership teams had to devote most of their time to reporting to local educational authorities having no time for concentrating on school improvement matters (Frost et al., 2014):

There are many obstacles at work. The main one is the written requests that come from the officials and the different types of assignments. Hence, beyond our main tasks, there are many additional ones. These all lead to the lack of time.

(Alga school, a vice director)

In general, this reconnaissance stage enabled me to understand the school director's roles in relation to educational improvement, teachers' professional learning and creating conditions within schools. I noted the limited opportunities for the teachers' ongoing professional collaboration. I was also able to identify the structural barriers related to the lack of time and the bureaucracy. This all prompted me to negotiate the structural conditions with key stakeholders before launching the programme in schools.

Creating partnerships and negotiating the structural conditions

Based on the discussion above, the concept and principles of the programme that I was about to introduce were new to the context. Facilitating TL in schools required the provision of time, space and ongoing support from school leadership teams, which was scarce in all four schools. Therefore, it was important to establish partnerships with key stakeholders and involve the school leadership teams from the outset. Engaging the school leadership teams in activities related to the programme legitimised the teachers' initiatives and had potential for the programme's sustainability in future. This also reflected the participatory nature of the study central to which was practitioners' ownership of the development process (Stringer, 2007). Thus, creating partnership involved: identifying my co-facilitators, setting up project teams, selecting participants and planning the programme with project team members.

Identifying the co-facilitators

As discussed in Chapter 2, the most important element of the programme was the identification of key people who could co-facilitate TL. In Chapter 3, I pointed out the importance of identifying people from the school staff, who would be able to organise and co-lead the group sessions, facilitate School Network events and provide support throughout the programme. Identifying the co-facilitators, however, was not a straightforward process. My initial plan was that my co-facilitators would be teachers, who could ensure equal relations between the participants. However, I had to rely on the school leadership teams' suggestions, as they had the knowledge of their staff. As a result, three out of four co-facilitators were suggested by the school directors, whereas one volunteered to co-lead the programme. I now introduce each of my co-facilitators.

After I introduced the programme in Alga school, *Dana* volunteered to act as a co-facilitator. Dana had a wide portfolio in her school. She was the Vice Director for Learning and had some teaching hours. She had attended Level 1 of the Centre of Excellence programme and acted as the teacher-trainer in her school. Dana's willingness meant that I could involve the school leadership teams in the programme on an ongoing basis.

In contrast to this, in Birlik school, the school director suggested that I involve *Mariya* as my co-facilitator. Mariya was an English teacher with 25 years of teaching experience, gained primarily in this school. Just like Dana, Mariya had attended the Centre of Excellence Level 1 programme. That academic year, Mariya was asked to introduce and lead Level 3 of the Centre of Excellence programme to the primary school teachers in her school. As such, Mariya had knowledge of the school structure and culture as well as having experience of conducting professional development programmes.

In Talap school, the school director suggested that *Dinara*, who was the Vice Director for Teaching Methodology, co-lead the programme. Dinara's primary role in school was to support teachers' professional development and enhance both teachers' and students' inquiry skills. In Yntymaq school, however, the school director suggested that *Balauusa*, who was the Vice Director for Gifted Students' Learning, would act as co-facilitator.

The above discussion indicates that the co-facilitators were selected by virtue of having official power, experience, role and responsibility for engaging with teachers' professional development. It was difficult, however, to judge at this stage of the intervention whether my collaborators had the right kind of values and skills to facilitate TL. This implied the need to engage them in discussions about TL on an ongoing basis. Having said that, I also had to consider my co-facilitators' time and their other responsibilities.

As in other comparable contexts, the availability of the co-facilitators' time was a challenge. As discussed above, the lack of time was particularly challenging in Birlik school. During our first meeting with Mariya, it became evident that she had many other responsibilities in school:

It was late afternoon, Mariya was waiting for me at the main entrance when I arrived. She looked tired. During our conversation, it became evident that she had 27 teaching hours per week and was conducting a teacher-training programme in her school. In order to manage her responsibilities, Mariya scheduled her classes from Monday to Friday, which left her Saturdays free for teacher training.

(Birlik school, Research journal, 11.10.16, p. 20)

Nevertheless, Mariya became actively involved in the programme from the beginning. After I explained the role of the project team, she insisted that we include the Vice Director for Teaching Methodology, who, as Mariya believed, would provide organisational support throughout the programme.

Setting up the project teams

The projects teams in each school consisted of the school directors, my co-facilitators and myself. In Birlik school, the project team also included the Vice Director for Teaching Methodology. Setting up the project teams enabled me to clarify our roles and create a communicative space within schools (Kemmis et al., 2014) whereby we could plan and discuss the teachers' progress and obstacles to facilitating TL. Our first collaborative activity commenced with the selection of the individuals who would participate in the programme.

Selecting the participants

As I explained in Chapter 3, the key to facilitating TL was the teachers' willingness to improve their practice at classroom, school and community levels. Therefore, selecting the participants was based solely on the principle of *voluntarism*. Having said that it was important that the group size was manageable. Given that the number of applicants to the programme exceeded the number we felt we could manage, we had to set selection criteria. The reason behind this was two-fold. First, we had to ensure that the group size in each school was manageable. Second, we wanted to raise awareness about the importance of the participants' commitment to the programme. We provided a few days to enable potential participants in each school to contemplate before signing up for the programme. Potential participants were then able to contact the facilitators and express their intention to join the programme. As a result, my co-facilitators had a list of the potential participants to discuss at our next meeting.

Based on the experience of colleagues at the ITL initiative (Ramahi, 2016; Eltemamy, 2017), it was important that we ensured a manageable size in each group. As the number of applicants varied from school to school, it was important that we set the selection criteria that included the following:

- *voluntary participation*
- *willingness to engage in professional learning opportunities*
- *future plans*

(Research journal, 30.10.16, p.31)

Both Dana and Mariya were instrumental in selecting the applicants. We were able to identify cases when teachers applied without giving much consideration to their future plans. For example, Dana noted that one of the applicants was about to start maternity leave, which meant she would not be able to complete the programme. This made me consider whether the applicants understood the time frame of the programme, which is unlike the short-term training they were accustomed to. Mariya highlighted the importance of including novice teachers, who lacked professional development opportunities. Moreover, in Talap school, Dinara suggested that we prioritise the less active teachers, who were not engaged in any kind of school activities. I viewed it as an opportunity to engage less privileged teachers in the programme as it corresponded with the values of the study (see Chapter 3). As a result, we were able to identify 8 teachers,

who were both willing to attend the programme and also met the selection criteria. Similarly, the number of applicants in Yntymaq school did not exceed 8 people and hence, we accepted them all.

In general, the process of selecting participants included setting the criteria, wherein my co-facilitators' knowledge of the school community was a key. As a result, we were able to select participants from diverse backgrounds, which comprised both experienced and novice teachers as well as the schools' administrative staff members (see Appendix 4). Our next aim was to plan the programme.

First planning with the project teams

The first planning with the project team was held in each school separately. The meetings enabled us to negotiate structural barriers to implementing the programme in schools. During these meetings, I was able to identify local understandings of professional development and the organisational barriers to establishing open discussions.

The first project team meetings involved all project team members. During these meetings, I had to reiterate the process-based nature of the programme to the school leadership team members and stress the importance of creating space and time for group sessions. Addressing the lack of time was a particular concern. For example, Dana insisted that we hold group sessions only during the term-breaks, which implied a two-month interval between each group session.

I explained that the programme aimed at enabling teachers to lead the development project within one academic year and hence, we ought to conduct sessions once in two or three weeks. They all agreed.

(Alga school, Research journal, 17.10.16, p.25)

Therefore, I had to explain that unlike in the case of one-off training sessions, the TLLC programme enables teachers to reflect on their practice and collaborate with colleagues to lead change in their classrooms and schools, which required teachers' time and will.

Therefore, my initial actions in implementing the programme within pre-existing structural conditions required several steps. First, we needed to agree a calendar of events, including the dates and time of group sessions and School Network events. Although it

was a tentative plan, it enabled my collaborators to have a general overview of the time they might need to release teachers to attend the programme. Second, we discussed the sequence of events that were expected to take place throughout the programme. Third, I confirmed the venues with smart boards to ensure that we could make a power point presentation during group sessions. Fourth, the school leadership teams included the programme in the schools' development plans in the upcoming academic year. Given the level of bureaucracy in schools, it was important to include the programme in schools' official documents to make it a legitimate action. Lastly, I signed the informed consent form with the school directors, where I provided a detailed information about the programme as well as the ethical issues related to the research outcome (see Appendix 5). These steps were incremental in strengthening ties with my future collaborators and ensuring that the structural support was provided throughout the intervention.

Ensuring open discussion during the first project team meeting was a challenge. Particularly in Birlik school where the School Director dominated the meeting. Although the meeting involved the Director, the Vice Director and Mariya, I had to refer all queries to the Director.

I explained the purpose of the project team meetings. I also elucidated the programme details and its key elements. They supported the plan and suggested a room, where we could hold our sessions. Unfortunately, I could not get much feedback from all project team members. Whenever I posed questions, Mariya and the Vice Director turned their heads to the Director. So, I had to address my questions to the Director throughout the meeting.

(Birlik school, Research journal,15.10.16, p. 20)

The downward nature of school leadership style in Birlik school indicated the need for instruments that would foster horizontal dialogue between the School Director and other Project team members. Therefore, I decided to conduct the next periodic review outside the Director's office.

In general, the first project team meeting enabled me and my collaborators to clarify the plan of the programme, whereby I had to explain the process-based nature of the programme. Additionally, we confirmed the key dates, the venue and included the programme into the schools' development plans. I also reflected on the format of the

project team meetings and the importance of creating conditions to engage all project team members in the discussion.

Chapter summary and emerging insights

In this chapter, I explained the process of creating the conditions for the programme, essential for the facilitation of TL within schools. First, it was vital that I met with the school leadership teams, which helped me to obtain their support for the programme. Second, I was able to conduct a group session with the teachers, which enabled me to learn about their development needs and challenges. During this session, I was able to test my strategy and gain the support of the teachers. Third, I held separate meetings with the school leadership teams to build understanding about the schools' structural and cultural conditions. Based on that, I was able to make arrangements to launch the programme.

My analysis of this episode of the narrative led to the identification of a number of insights and key features of the intervention which I grouped under the following headings:

- National reform
- School conditions
- School directors' roles
- Schools' professional culture
- Schools' structure
- Teachers' professional learning
- Teachers' attitudes to the concept of TL
- Establishing partnerships and negotiating organisational conditions

The full list (see Appendix 7) then served as a tool which I used to construct the next layer of analysis presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter 5

Phase 1: Re-orientating

In the previous chapter, I explained my initial steps in creating the conditions for the programme, which included building partnerships with key stakeholders and negotiating the structural conditions. In this Chapter, I account for Phase 1 of the programme, which took place between 3rd of November 2016 and 14th of January 2017. Phase 1 was fundamental to enable me to develop my understanding of the system and the school conditions and their influence on the participants' conceptions of learning. A particular challenge was that the main principles of the programme clashed with the local norms of being told what to do. As the programme invited participants to take ownership of their learning, they found it challenging to embrace the uncertainties of such a constructivist approach to learning (Schön, 1991; Biesta, 2014). In retrospect, I describe this phase as re-orientating, where the key element of facilitating TL was to enable the participants to reflect on their practices (Schön, 1991). This required building a rapport and initiating a level of trust (Frost and Durrant, 2002). Consequently, this Chapter revolves around planning and conducting two group sessions, two one-to-one meetings and one school network event (see Figure 7 below). In this narrative, I draw on the analysis of my research journal, minutes of group sessions, transcripts of the one-to-one meetings, participants' reflections, their feedback and the programme materials.

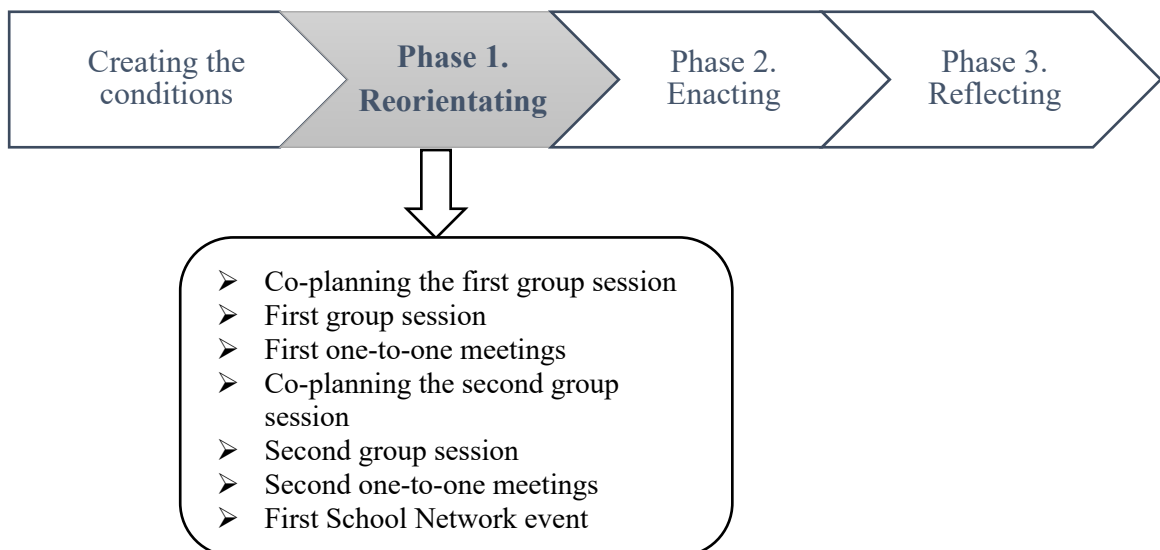


Figure 7. The main events of the Phase 1 of the programme

Co-planning the first group session

As discussed in Chapter 4, I aimed to closely involve my co-facilitators throughout the programme. My co-facilitators included one experienced teacher and three vice-directors. By inviting my co-facilitators to plan the first group session, I realised that their engagement in the programme activities can vary depending on their roles in schools. Whilst the teacher co-facilitator helped me to generate new ideas, the vice-directors provided organisational support.

The co-facilitators who were part of the schools' senior leadership teams, played an important role in organising the first group session. They released time and space, in some instances re-allocating the teachers' classes. At the same time, it was a challenge to engage them in a deeper conversation about the aims and the activities of the first group session, as they kept referring to the lack of time. In contrast to this, planning the first group session with Mariya, who was an experienced teacher and trainer, helped me to generate new ideas. She had both experience and skills to engage in conversation about the contextual nuances of how teachers learn (Brookfield, 1986). As discussed in Chapter 4, Mariya was conducting a training programme in her school and invited me to attend one of her sessions. By observing her session, I learned the importance of building trust and respect with the participants as well as managing time during the group sessions.

The discrepancy in my co-facilitators' roles at the planning stage prompted me to seek ways to engage them more closely during the group sessions. This, as I envisaged, would enable them to build better understanding about the programme and help me refine the activities (see Chapter 3). Therefore, I adopted a participant observation form to obtain their written feedback after each group session (Appendix 2). Having identified time, venue, group activities and designed the observation form, I was ready to begin the first group session.

The first series of group sessions

The first series of group sessions were held in each school separately between 3rd and 15th of November 2016. The aim was to enable participants to examine their

understandings of the leadership concept, clarify their professional values and concerns as well as build systematic approach to their professional learning. During this session, I was able to attend to the participants' pre-existing perceptions and lay the conditions for systematic reflection and learning. I started by creating an open space for learning.

Creating a space for learning

Creating an open environment for learning was an important component of the group sessions, whereby the participants could feel secure and discuss things openly (Mälkki and Green, 2016). This involved engaging them in informal conversation before the session, rearranging the room and enabling the participants to set their own group ethics.

Having conducted workshops in schools in March 2016 (see Chapter 4), I learned the positive impact of informal conversations which enhanced the teachers' engagement and the importance of the layout of the room in enabling open discussions. I organised the furniture in a way that all participants could see each other and feel equal. I also provided 15 minutes for the coffee-break before the session. It became evident that providing refreshments during the professional development programme was rather a new experience for the participants. This could have been due to the lack of school budget for such events. Moreover, given the collectivist nature of the society, teachers were more accustomed to gather around a *dastarkhan* (a space for food in Kazakh) for special occasions, such as national holidays. Nevertheless, all participants felt positive about informal networking at the beginning of the session. This enabled us to get to know each other and engage in the discussions.

Our discussions revolved around sharing attitudes on personal and school practices, which required establishing a level of trust. Therefore, I invited the participants to clarify a set of ethical principles that they would like to follow throughout the programme (see Chapter 3). I aimed to cultivate shared values, increase collective-efficacy and commitment (Bridges, 1979; Frost and Durrant, 2003; Bandura, 2000). My co-facilitators were helpful in leading this activity. They quickly scribbled the participants' responses on the flip-chart (see Photo 2 below).

The participants' responses echoed the moral principles essential to initiating group discussions (Bridges, 1979: 21), such as *respecting each other's opinion, being open to a*

critical perspective, supporting each other as well as not being late (see Appendix 8). The latter, however, was more context specific, as the majority of the participants noted that teachers tend to run late to school-based meetings. As such, this activity helped to reveal local practices and promote group regulation. We all signed and agreed to follow the group ethics as illustrated below:

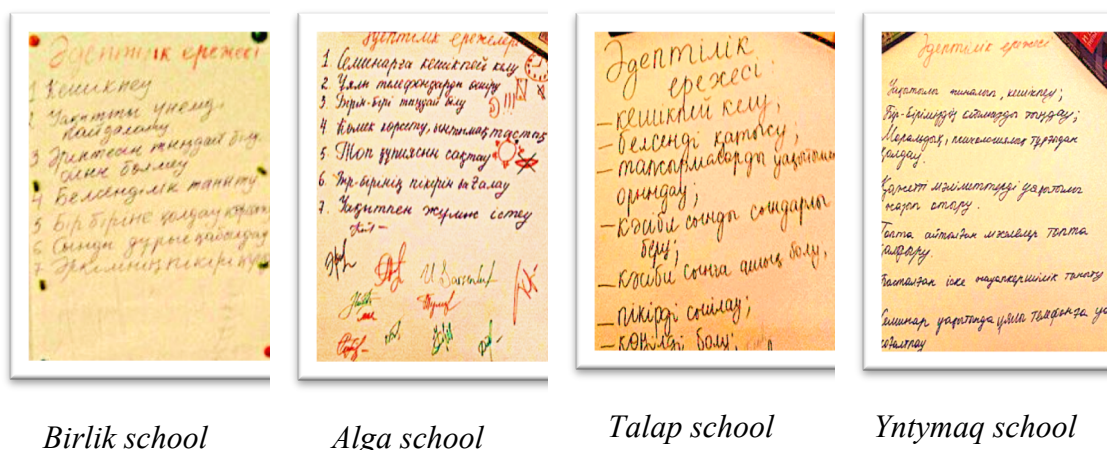


Photo 2. The group ethics set by the participants

Examining existing understandings of leadership

Next, I initiated a discussion about the concept of leadership. The aim of this activity was to introduce the concept of TL as a practice. This included attending to participants' pre-existing understandings of leadership and introducing vignettes of TL to re-navigate them towards the idea of leadership as a practice.

As discussed in Chapter 4, it was important to enable the participants to examine their pre-existing understanding to introduce the concept of TL. Therefore, I used a group reflection approach to enable the participants to make meaning and contextualise the concept of leadership. After discussing the concept in small groups, participants were invited to draw their reflections on a poster. As a result, each group presented their posters and received feedback from other colleagues.

Each group presented how they visualized the leadership concept. Group A drew a flock of birds flying in a line. Group B asked them what happens if the leading bird falls down. Group A responded that in such case the birds would continue their journey, as they have a mission to complete. Group B drew a hero standing

on the top of the stairs, whereas group C illustrated a man holding the flag of Kazakhstan and children.

(Alga school, Minutes, 11.11.16)

This discussion confirmed the importance of the context in defining leadership (Swaffield and MacBeath, 2009). In Alga school, for example, participants' understanding of leadership revolved around heroes and patriots, wherein mighty individuals predominated in the exercise of leadership (MacBeath et al., 2003; Simpson, 2016), as illustrated below.



Photo 3. Images of the pre-existing understanding of leadership (Phase 1)

This activity enabled me to raise the idea of leadership as a practice (MacBeath et al., 2018). In order to illustrate the idea, I presented vignettes with teachers' leadership stories. The vignettes, which I adapted from the ITL project, included Talgat's and Malika's initiatives in their schools. I gave the main characters Kazakh names to enable the participants to relate the vignettes to their personal contexts, which was a starting point to the facilitation of reflection and discussion of current practice (Bernabeo et al., 2014). This exercise prompted experienced teachers to recall similar stories from their own teaching backgrounds, which they had not previously perceived as leadership. The experienced teachers' stories had a powerful effect on those sitting next to them.

[...] the experienced teachers could recall similar stories from their own teaching practices. They noted, however, that they had never perceived it as a leadership.

(Research journal, 15.11.16, p.40)

Bringing in real-world examples was influential in re-orienting the participants' understanding of leadership from roles to practice. This enabled the teachers to recall and reflect on their own leadership stories, thereby facilitating an alternative perspective on

their practice (Brookfield, 1986). This led us to our next activity, which aimed at examining values and concerns.

Clarifying values and concerns

Central to the TLDW methodology was enabling participants to examine their values before identifying their professional concerns (Frost and Durrant, 2003). Tapping into teachers' values and concerns was essential to awakening their commitment to leading the improvement of practice (Frost and Durrant, 2002). Interestingly, our discussion about values and concerns brought to the surface both personal and professional identities.

I employed different kinds of tools to initiate discussion about values. First, I adopted an approach developed by the colleagues in the ITL initiative. It contained a list of questions, which the participants could discuss in small groups. Later, as the teachers noted a shortage of time to reflect on all of those questions, I had to simplify this activity by asking them '*what matters to you most; what you care about most*'. Participants' first reaction to this question indicated the centrality of their families to their personal constructs.

[...] It felt that my question was a bit confusing. The participants' instant responses included their families.

(Research journal, 15.11.2016, p. 41)

This indicated the inter-relatedness of their personal and professional selves (Day and Gu, 2010). Looking at teachers' practice in the Central Asian context of Kyrgyzstan, Teleshaliyev (2015) noted that families play a key role in sustaining teachers' resilience to the challenges in their professional lives. It was not clear, however, whether the teachers in my context prioritised their personal lives over professional matters. Therefore, I rephrased the question as: '*what matters to you as a teacher/professional*'. The majority noted the importance of providing quality education. The participants' interpretation of quality education, however, revolved around the students' exam results and school ranking.

During the discussion about the professional values the majority of the participants in all four schools highlighted a quality education, which was further

related to the school's performance indicators. (Research journal, 15.11.16, p. 42)

The language of accountability was strong in the participants' thinking (Wilkins, 2012; Biesta, 2004). In order to enable them to revisit their roles in schools and enhance their agency, I initiated a discussion about professional concerns. I placed five sentences in different parts of the room, which started with *I would like to improve; develop; create; change and; find a new way*. The exercise enabled the participants to reflect on and voice what mattered to them as professionals, wherein the majority were concerned about the students' learning.

- *I would like to develop students' creative thinking*
- *I would like to improve my skills in assessing 36 students within 45 minutes of classroom*
- *I would like to improve my students' critical thinking skills through a dialogue*
- *I would like to develop strategies that would enable me to connect my subject with students' real-life experiences and increase their involvement in my subject*
- *I would like to change students' and teachers' attitudes to self-learning*
- *I would like to develop a strategy that enables me to improve assessment practices in my school*

(Programme materials, 03.11.2016)

Envisioning their roles within the framework of students' learning reflected the Soviet background of the majority of the teachers, wherein active care for students was the key component of education (Amonashvili, 2013; Teleshaliyev, 2013; 2015). Thus, by discussing participants' professional concerns, we were able to bring to the surface the centrality of students' learning. However, it was clear that the participants needed more time and support to clarify their professional concerns, which required a more systematic approach.

Laying the conditions for a more systematic approach

Building a more systematic approach to professional learning was one of the key benefits of the TLDW methodology (Frost and Durrant, 2003). Encouraging participants to systematically collect materials related to their development project was a necessary

condition for promoting their reflection and improvements in practice (Poekert, 2011). However, it was important that I created the conditions for that.

In order to encourage participants to collect and store materials related to their development projects, I distributed folders. The folders contained the programme handbook and a proforma to aid reflection. The latter aimed at encouraging participants to keep track of each session and build gradually their reflective stories (see Chapter 3).

In general, my first experience of facilitating a group session was not straightforward. At the beginning I was uncertain about participants' reaction to the session activities. However, creating a space for informal conversation, arranging the room, inviting participants to identify their own group ethics, attending to their personal experiences, identifying what matters to them as professionals and laying the conditions for a systematic approach enabled me to re-orientate participants towards the concept of leadership as a practice and bring to the surface the centrality of their students' learning. Our next interaction took place during the first one-to-one meetings.

The first series of one-to-one meetings

The first series of one-to-one meetings were held between 4th and 18th of November 2016. The one-to-one meetings were more of a conversation format and took place in participants' classrooms. Our conversations revolved around participants' perceptions of reform, school conditions and their roles in schools. As a result, it revealed the ways the programme was challenging local norms of practice, wherein re-orientating towards reflective practice required building trust, offering critical friendship, providing emotional support and guidance. Moreover, the first one-to-one meetings enabled me to clarify my future actions, which I explain below.

Understanding the local norms of practice

My first one-to-one meeting with the participants enabled me to gain initial understanding about local norms of practice. The most important factors that influenced participants' understanding of learning included: the rapid reform taking place in schools, the

traditional organisational conditions and teachers' previous experience of projects. These presented certain challenges to implementing the TLLC programme.

In Chapter 1, I explained the educational reforms taking place in schools in Kazakhstan. My initial encounter with the practitioners revealed that those reform initiatives were often treated in a tokenistic manner, often implemented in a way which leaves little space for reciprocal dialogue and lack of material support.

In general, I am open for the new initiatives, but it would be better if those initiatives were discussed and accepted by the majority before being implemented [...]. They have introduced new curriculum, but there are no supporting materials that would fit it [...] We had to search for the study materials on the internet [...], as the new textbooks did not match the content [...].

(Assylym, Alga school)

Interestingly, the reforms were perceived not only as a top-down phenomenon but a horizontal one too. The pressure to adopt new teaching methods came also from colleagues, which was perceived as diminishing teachers' ownership of their classroom practices.

I believe that teachers must be able to choose their own teaching methods [...]. If I do not use new teaching methods, other colleagues keep asking: "Why do you not use new methods? Do you not know those methods? Can you not repeat what others are doing?" and so on. We teach different types of disciplines. The teaching methods that work in the humanities may not be applicable to the science subjects [...].

(Zauresh, Alga school)

Obliging teachers to adopt new models of teaching had implications for creativity and reflection, which could potentially lead to mere imitation of those practices (Gadotti, 1996). The pressure to perform seemed particularly intense in the Kazakh speaking schools. Zauresh, who had previously taught at the international school, pointed out the increased feeling of fear among Kazakh teachers.

I noted that international teachers are more laid-back to the external demands, whereas we are challenged for not fulfilling the requirements. The Kazakh teachers say: "I need to fill in this paper, because they are going to inspect me". [...]. They experience more fear [...] and inhibited [...].

(Zauresh, Alga school)

Looking closer at the way the reforms were implemented locally, it seems that extensive paperwork and the intensification of work were the most significant obstacles to introducing school-based professional learning opportunities (Day, 2012). This was the case in both comprehensive and selective schools, as indicated in the excerpts below.

In this school you first need to ensure that you have all necessary papers. The papers must speak before the teachers' words [...].

(Arman, Birlik school)

There are times when teachers work by 3 am in the morning [...]. It will affect their health sooner or later [...]. We are required to do the work beyond our physical capacity [...].

(Bibigul, Talap school)

Central to the school-based nature of the TLLC was the need to create time and space for professional learning and to support teachers' initiatives. The discrepancy between the comprehensive and the selective schools in terms of curricular, students' academic background, leadership teams' engagement in professional learning, as well as the availability of time and space influenced participants' incentives to learn and change. The need for professional learning was indicated as high in the selective schools as teachers had to keep up with the requirements of the curriculum as well as the learning needs of the academically best-performing students. This could be noted in the following narratives of Gulden and Assylym, who both moved from comprehensive to selective schools:

In my previous school, I had a firm belief that I taught excellently and that I learned most innovative teaching methods after attending the trainings [...] I understood that things here are completely different. You need to work hard, you need to learn and inquire to succeed [...].

(Gulden, Talap school)

Students reacted positively and were enthusiastic, when I used a snowball technique in my previous school. In this school students perform better academically [...] I thought to use the snowball technique again but decided to look for other methods, as it could have been boring to my students.

(Assylym, Alga school)

The school leadership teams in the selective schools seemed to be more active in engaging and promoting teachers' professional learning, whereas their counterparts in the comprehensive Birlik school limited their roles to observing the teachers' lessons.

Our Vice Director is being helpful in terms of explaining how to identify our professional learning aims and providing us a guidance.

(Kulziya, Talap school)

This week students are having a term-break, whereas we are attending seminars and coaching [...] they attend and evaluate our lessons. [...]. We must invite other teachers, vice-directors and the Director to our lessons.

(Adina, Birlik school)

Other barriers to introducing school-based professional learning opportunities in comprehensive schools included challenging staff-student ratios, lack of time and space. For example, conducting coaching in comprehensive schools, which was introduced as a part of the Centre of Excellence programmes, was subject to the availability of time, rooms to meet in and teachers' willingness to attend. Raigul and Assylym, who both attended the programme, highlighted the challenges in conducting coaching sessions.

As the school was overloaded, we did not have rooms and time available to conduct the coaching sessions [...]. As a result, we could not get involved in the deep conversation.

(Assylym, Alga school)

In general, all teachers get information about it, but not all of them attend it straight away. Those who are interested may attend it, but not everybody.

(Raigul, Birlik school)

The school conditions clearly had an influence on the teachers' conceptions of professional learning and their perceived roles in schools (Day and Gu, 2010; 2009). Whilst the teachers in the selective schools held rather active position in terms of professional learning and change, their colleagues in the comprehensive schools viewed their roles mainly in teaching and obtaining results.

My role as a teacher [...] everything is so changeable these days. The things that you read today becomes outdated tomorrow. Therefore, I believe that teachers

must continuously inquire and be open to change. (Bibigul, selective Talap school)

My role as a teacher [...] the most important thing for me is to provide quality education to my students. It is my main responsibility. At the school level, my other responsibilities may include obtaining achievements and moving students forward.

(Adina, comprehensive Birlik school)

This all heightened my attention on implementing and sustaining the programme in comprehensive schools as well as the norms of practice that inhibited the development of reflective practice.

Lastly, the idea of each teachers designing their own development project presented a certain challenge. Teachers' previous experience of project work had been linked to the system of attestation and school development plans. In that scenario the teachers were constrained and not free to make a judgement about what, in their view, would be of value.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the teachers in Kazakhstan were required to maintain a portfolio as a part of the attestation process. The process required that the teachers' portfolios include the evidence of good practice, which was known as *shigarmashiliq joba* (creativity project in Kazakh). Although the purpose of the creativity project was to promote teachers' self-driven professional learning (MoES, 2016), it became evident that the lack of ongoing support and facilitation transformed it into tools to impress external inspectors (Lunneblad and Dance, 2014). As such, the participants' perceptions of the creativity project clashed with the main principles of the development project. Kuzliya's narrative indicated that her views about designing a project was driven by the external requirements rather than her own professional judgement.

[...] I chose my previous project based on the principle that somebody might ask me about it. I did not aim to influence, act upon or create something out of it. We must look at our school leadership team's opinion [...].

(Kulziya, Talap school)

The tokenistic attitude to the project posed a particular challenge, as participants were more focused on identifying the title of the development project rather than reflecting on their professional practices.

[...] I need to choose a right kind of topic. [...] If you choose a right topic, it will be much easier to write about it.

(Alma, Yntymaq school)

Reflective practice was further limited at the school level, as the participants were encouraged to develop their creativity projects around the schools' development plan and the students' exam outcomes. As a result, participants were oriented towards external factors rather than reflecting on issues that stem from their own values and concerns (Sergiovanni, 1992). In order to avoid the clash between the school's priorities and their own professional concerns, they tried to combine them.

[...] I added a 'dialogic learning' into the title of my development project, as it is a part of our school's development plan.

(Ajar, Birlik school)

Members of the school leadership team were also influential in orientating teachers' creativity projects. For example, in Talap school, the participants were asked to identify their professional development aims at the beginning of the academic year. The major tool to enable participants to identify their professional aims was the students' final exam results.

We were asked to identify a professional development aim at the beginning of this academic year. We found it hard to identify it at the beginning, but we were provided support from the school leadership.

(Zhenis, Talap school)

It became evident that participants' incentives to develop such projects was closely related to the attestation process.

We are going to undergo the attestation this year [...]. They will ask for the results of my project [...].

(Kulziya, Talap school)

As a result, the ‘systems’ had a strong influence on the participants’ ‘lifeworlds’ (Kemmis et al., 2014; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2009), wherein the culture of performativity was central to their intention to develop and lead the project (Ball, 2003). Participants viewed the development project from the perspective of attestation and their schools’ development plans, which became a major obstacle to identifying professional concern and developing reflective practice. This indicated the need to reorientate the participants’ standpoint from merely completing a project to enacting a change by reflecting on their existing practices.

Reorientating towards a reflective practice

Deeply-ingrained understandings about practice as well as feelings of anxiety, fear and uncertainty meant that participants required facilitation to enable them to reflect on practice and identify their professional concerns. Facilitation included *building trust, providing a critical perspective, emotional support and guidance*.

Building trust-based relationship was key to initiating facilitation. At the initial stage, I reiterated the purpose of the programme and my role in it, in order to invite the participants to engage in a deep conversation. It was important to maintain a friendly conversation with a particular focus on ‘we’ rather than ‘I’, so that the participants could perceive me as a non-judgemental collaborator rather than an external evaluator.

During our first group session, we discussed about the leadership as a practice and the importance of enacting the leadership. We now need to look closer at your professional concern [...].

(My conversation with Adina, Birlik school)

Building trust was an entry point to initiating critical friendship. The critical friendship I envisioned focused on process and promoted horizontal relationship (Swaffield, 2004; Bambino, 2002). Through the conversational exchange, I was able to dig into what mattered to participants as professionals. Our conversation focused on the centrality of students’ learning, their subject and their commitment to what they do.

I think teachers should not feed students with a ready-made information. I believe that teachers’ role is to provide guidance and facilitate students’ inquiry. [...] teachers must be able to guide them towards a right direction.

(Raigul, Birlik school)

The most important thing for me is to ensure that students take out from my classroom knowledge that is of benefit to them.

(Assylym, Alga school)

Whilst the more experienced teachers highlighted the strong sense of vocation, their novice colleagues felt enthusiastic about their subjects and improving their teaching skills.

[...] I tried to see myself in other occupations, but I could not. There is a word in Russian 'prizvaniye' (vocation). I love what I do. I think that my students love my subject too [...].

(Estigul, Talap school)

Within this academic year, I would like to learn teaching excellently [...]. I would like to increase my students' interest in math. When I was a student, I remember my friends underestimating the maths [...]. I would like to prove them wrong. I would like my students to understand the importance of maths [...].

(Zauresh, Alga school)

Encouraging participants to revisit their beliefs about the practice enabled me to facilitate reflexivity (Bambino, 2002:1; Mette et al., 2016; King and Nomikou, 2018).

Me: *What would you like to influence through your development project?*

Raigul (Birlik school): *My main idea is to develop students' speaking skills through the dialogic learning, I would like to improve their speaking skills as well as enable them to use their knowledge in life.*

Critical friendship was particularly important in challenging the novice teachers' attitudes. Arman, who had started teaching two months ago, highlighted memorising the facts as well producing materials for the attestation purposes.

Arman, Birlik school: *I would like my students to be able to learn by heart all the information that I give them [...].*

Me: *As far as I understood, your main aim is to produce a brochure?*

Arman: *Yes, brochure [...]. I would also like to produce a material that could help students to remember the facts around this topic.*

Arman's case indicated the importance of supporting novice teachers, as they can be more susceptible to the external demands (Day and Gu, 2010).

Facilitating reflective practice, however, required reorientating the practitioners towards a move from clear-cut certainty about their existing practice to the uncertainty that could lead to a development project. This increased the participants' feeling of anxiety and the fear of failure, so I had to provide emotional support by explaining the purpose of the development project and encouraging participants to express their professional concern.

Ainur, Talap school: So, what do you think? How important is the area that I am going to look at?

Me: I believe that it is a very important initiative. First, it is important to you. Second, it may improve your students' learning.

Ainur, Talap school: I am very excited about this initiative, but the important thing is to enact it.

As the feeling of the unknown was daunting to the practitioners in the initial stage of the facilitation process, it was important that I provided step-by-step guidance to both novice and experienced teachers. Providing clear guidance was particularly important in the post-Soviet context, as the majority of the experienced practitioners noted that they were accustomed to being told what to do.

[...] During the Soviet time we were given clear instructions on what do we need to do first, second and third. We are accustomed to completing those tasks. So, could you tell me what do I need to do before the next session?

(Kulziya, Talap school)

In the same vein, the novice teachers required that I provide an example of a development project to learn a new practice.

[...] In order to develop something, I need to see the previous examples. After seeing the example, I could build on that.

(Arman, Birlik school)

In general, the first one-to-one meetings required a multifaceted approach to enabling the participants to reflect on their practice and identify their professional concerns, which

included building trust, providing critical friendship, emotional support and providing clear guidance.

Implications for further actions

The first one-to-one meetings enabled me to trace the initial impact of the programme and identify my further actions. Whilst the practitioners noted the positive impact of the one-to-one meetings on identifying their professional concern and highlighted the vignettes in facilitating their reflection, the concept of TL was still unclear to them.

There were some experienced teachers, who were able to clarify their professional concerns at the end of the first one-to-one meetings (Assylym, Erkayim, Alua, Gulden, Ainur, Zhenis, Batima, Bibigul and so on), whereas less experienced practitioners still required more time and support (Arman, Zamira, Daniya, Alma and so on).

[...] I think that we do not have a platform that would promote Kazakh language and literature in our school [...] I would like to create a club, where students will have a space to develop their creativity. For example, there are students who can write articles and poems, but they do not have additional support to develop their talents. Therefore, I would like to establish such club, but I do not have a clear plan on how to do it [...].

(Alua, Talap school)

I want to look at an issue related to my subject, but I cannot think of anything. I do not know. To tell the truth, I have no time to sit down and think about it.

(Zamira, Birlik school)

The participants noted that the vignettes with the teachers' leadership stories helped them to reflect on their practices.

[...] We sometimes fail to see the existing problems. To do so, we need someone, who could show us a right direction [...] our group session made me think [...]. He is writing about the reflexivity [...] that his students repeated what he told them earlier. Looking at his story, I thought that, indeed, we do not notice such things, which are happening in our classrooms too [...]. As I have clarified my problem, I need to take action to solve it.

(Kulziya, Talap school)

However, the participants' perception of TL concept varied extensively. The participants, who had attended the Centre of Excellence programmes related it to the teachers' ability to *take the initiative* (Estigul and Alua, Talap school), *influence* other colleagues through *sharing knowledge* (Raigul Birlik school and Bibigul, Talap school) as well as *set an action plan* (Batima, Alga school and Gulden, Talap school). Those who did not attend the Centre of Excellence programmes identified firm boundaries in leadership practice in their schools.

I learned about TL in 2013, when I attended the CoE programme [...] we were asked to make a school development plan. We did not understand it at the beginning, it was hard and there were times when we did not sleep at night to develop that plan [...] but it turned out well [...] we used to think that the leadership is about school administration, but after the CoE programme we learned that we also can enact leadership [...].

(Batima, Alga school)

TL ... I think that I am a leader in my own classroom. [...] I can lead my students within my classroom. I cannot be a leader without my students. (Who is a leader in your school?) The leader in our school is the School Director, then the vice-directors and then our ordinary teachers.

(Adina, Birlik school)

It also became evident that the first group session enabled critical reflection among teachers, as they started relating the TL concept to their practice. Critical reflection enabled Kulziya to realise that her previous actions were taken merely to meet the requirements rather than enact her professionalism. We were able to make a small step towards awakening the critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), wherein the practitioners like Kulziya showed their willingness to take further action.

[...] after our group session, I recognised that I had previously exercised the leadership [...] when I invited my colleagues to take the initiative with me [...] However, I did not share its outcome at a larger scale [...]. It feels that we got used to think that showing results is sufficient. (Kulziya, Talap school)

This, however, required support throughout the process. Therefore, at the end of our conversation, I asked about the kind of help participants needed to lead their projects. The majority noted that they needed resources in Kazakh to commence their projects.

The first help that I need is finding resources. If you could help me find resources. I know that there are many resources available in English, but it is difficult for me to access them [...].

(Kulziya, Talap school)

In general, the first one-to-one meetings enabled me to build my understanding about local practices, identify the factors that inhibit participants' reflection, reorientate them towards their professional concerns and monitor the impact of the first group session and the one-to-one meetings. This all informed my further actions in planning the second group session.

Co-planning the second group session

Unlike the planning of the first group session, engaging my co-facilitators in planning the second group session yielded more communication and enabled me to trace the mismatch between their assumptions about professional learning and the programme's main principles. However, co-planning the second group session was challenged by the lack of time and the external inspection.

All four of my co-facilitators attended the first group session and filled in the observation form (Appendix 2). I visited them separately to discuss their feedback on the first group session and plan the second one. Our discussions revealed that their perception of professional learning differed from the one espoused by the programme. Whilst Balausa noted that we need to focus on introducing the innovative teaching methods, Dinara pointed out the importance of providing clear instructions instead of letting the participants discuss their practice during the group sessions.

I asked Balausa if there was anything, I needed to consider during this second session. She noted that it would be nice if I could introduce new instructional techniques. It seemed that Balausa firmly believed that the programme was about improving the teaching skills.

(Yntymaq school, Research journal, 21.12.2018)

My co-facilitator in Talap school noted that I had spent too much time on making the teachers' talk about their practices during the first group session instead of providing clear instructions.

(Talap school, Research journal, 8.12.2016)

In contrast to this, Mariya and Dana, who both attended the Centre of Excellence programmes, noted that I could have added more interactive activities and enable the participants to voice their opinion:

Dana noted that I should talk less but enable the participants to reflect. To do so, she proposed to pose questions before introducing the vignettes and use more active ways of dividing the participants into groups. Her feedback helped me adjust the activities.

(Alga school, Research journal, 6.12.2016)

Mariya noted the importance of enabling teachers to voice their needs and enhance their self-efficacy.

(Birlik school, Research journal, 8.12.2016)

Given the participatory nature of the study, wherein the participants' 'commitment to the envisaged consequences' was one of its key elements (Levinson, 2017:24), it felt that some of my co-facilitators struggled to relate the programme to their own practice. Although I did not envisage that such a challenge would take place, these discussions enabled me to reflect on the importance of inducting the co-facilitators in the programme's main values and engaging throughout the programme (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Beyond my co-facilitators' conceptions of learning, the schools were restrained in terms of finding time for the second group session, wherein the school leadership prioritized external inspection over professional learning opportunities. As it was a term time and teaching hours were scattered from 8.30 till 18.45, it was difficult to identify the time and date of the second group session in the comprehensive Birlik school. The major obstacle to planning the second group session was the upcoming school inspection:

After having a conversation with the Director, Mariya told me that we need to postpone the second group session, as the school was expecting an inspection.

(Birlik school, Research journal, 24.11.2016)

My colleagues in Yntymaq school were also expecting school inspectors from the local educational department and hence, we had to postpone the second group session.

[...] when I came to the school all staff members were getting prepared for the inspection [...]. All teachers and the SLT looked under the pressure. One of the participants told me that it would be better to postpone the session, as they were all busy that day. So, I approached my co-facilitator who also suggested that we postpone the session by the end of December.

(Yntymaq school, Research journal, 2.12.2016)

Given that the inspections could take place throughout the academic year, the schools' organisational processes were subject to constant disruptions caused by the external entities such as the local educational department. This constrained the implementation of school-based professional learning, as the school community focused on the inspection. Being an external instigator, I could not intrude into the schools' normal practices, but I sought ways to enhance mutual communication. Therefore, I set up WhatsApp group chats for each school separately to arrange the time and the date of the second group session with my co-facilitators and the participants. Having identified the date and the time of the second group session, I was prepared to conduct it.

The second series of group sessions

The second series of group sessions took place between 2nd and 22nd of December 2016. Based on the outcome of the first group session and the one-to-one meetings, this session focused on facilitating the reflection, searching the resources, documenting the process and preparing for the first school networking event.

Facilitating reflection

After the first one-to-one meetings, it became evident that facilitating participants' reflection was the key element of developing TL in Kazakh schools (Frost and Durrant, 2003). In order to stimulate a professional dialogue and increase participants' ownership of their development projects (Durrant and Holden, 2006), I invited them to reflect on their professional concern in front of other colleagues. As a result, each participant took the floor to share their concerns and contest each other's ideas (Day, 1993b; Frost and Durrant, 2003; Bernabeo et al., 2013).

Batima talked about developing the student assessment and received a valuable feedback from her colleague. The latter had useful material on that topic, and they

agreed to share it after the session. Assylym noted that this exercise was very useful, as it enabled her to raise issues that were of interest to her.

(Alga school, Minutes, 2.12.2016)

This exercise was particularly helpful in triggering the novice teachers' reflection and enabling them to receive feedback from their more experienced colleagues.

Arman explained that he was still struggling to put his concern into written words. He explained that he was struggling to define his concern. After he gave a brief explanation of his professional concern, Raigul suggested that his project sounded more like a developing the students' critical thinking.

(Birlik school, Minutes, 10.12.2016)

Interestingly, however, despite actively engaging in the oral reflection, the participants found it hard to be reflective in writing. As discussed earlier, participants were asked to fill in the reflective pro forma at the end of each session (see Appendix 9). My initial expectation was that the oral group-based reflection could be extended by individuals' written reflection, wherein one could enrich the other (Bridges, 1979). However, the majority produced a short *summary* of the session activities rather than a reflective account.

During this session the participants made a short presentation about their concerns.

(Alua, Reflective proforma, Talap school)

Consequently, enabling the participants to produce reflective account required time and systematic facilitation (Rønsen and Smith, 2014).

Searching for resources

Facilitating written reflection required enabling participants to draw on the programme materials and the different resources (Frost and Durrant, 2003). Resources in Kazakh were scarce, which was confirmed by my visits to schools' libraries.

In Birlik school the library was rather small and contained mainly outdated literature. There were some practitioner journals, which mainly consisted of a compilation of lesson plans.

(Research journal, 19.11.2016)

Therefore, I introduced five major websites, where the participants could find the resources in Kazakh, Russian and English. One of them was Google Scholar, as it contained some evidence-based resources. Given the limited amount of resources in Kazakh, it was important that the participants could systematically collect evidence related to their projects to reflect on and build practice-based knowledge, which I discuss in Chapter 2.

Documenting the process

As discussed in Chapter 2, the purpose of the portfolio was to foster systematic reflection on practice, facilitate discussion with colleagues and keep a record of achievements (Frost and Durrant, 2003). However, after the first one-to-one meetings, it became evident that developing a portfolio had a strong performativity connotation, as it was a part of the teacher attestation process. Therefore, it was important to explain the rationale behind the portfolio, thereby deconstruct and reconstruct its meaning (Day, 1993a). To do so, I provided different samples of portfolios and highlighted their creativity aspect. I also explained its content, which included the chronological order of the evidence, the short description of each artefact and the reflective account, which I adapted from the ITL toolkit.

Preparing for the first School Network event

Closer to end of the session, I introduced the concept and the purpose of the school network event. Although some of the participants, who had attended the Centre of Excellence programmes, had a general idea about the school network event, the majority were uncertain about its purpose. Thus, in order to reduce the feeling of anxiety, I decided to show a short video of a school network event within the ITL initiative and model the poster session. To do so, I made my own poster and invited each participant to write their feedback and stick it on the poster.

We watched a short video about the School Network event in one of the ITL initiative schools. I presented my poster, where I described my research aims. The participants wrote their feedback on the sticker and stuck it on my poster.

(Alga school, Minutes, 2.12.2016)

The participants noted the preparation for the first School Network event on their reflective pro forma.

My next aim is to get prepared for the School Network event. (Dina, Reflective proforma, Birlik school)

I need to search the literature and plan the activities for the meeting with other schools.

(Estigul, Reflective proforma, Talap school)

In general, the activities introduced during the second group session were based on the first one-to-one meetings, wherein facilitating the reflection, searching the literature and building the development project systematically were indicated as important to TL development in Kazakh schools. In order to reduce the feeling of anxiety, I implemented activities to prepare participants for the 1st School Network event, which I aimed to discuss in more detail during the second one-to-one meetings.

The second series of one-to-one meetings

The second series of one-to-one meetings were scheduled for the period between 19th December 2016 and 9th January 2017. Given the participants' work commitments and lack of time, I used the WhatsApp group chat to remind them about the date and the time of the one-to-one meetings. These meetings revolved around participants' challenges, their plans, opportunities for collaboration and perceptions of the programme. Whilst the first one-to-one meetings revealed the clash between the programme and the local norms of practice, the second brought to surface the challenges related to introducing a constructivist approach to learning and social-cultural constraints. Therefore, facilitation at this stage involved encouragement and pressure to enable the participants to identify their professional concerns, plan their projects and collaborate with colleagues. Through monitoring the impact, I learned that the programme had a challenging effect on the participants.

A constructivist approach to learning

The second series of one-to-one meetings revealed the importance of understanding participants' learning and social-cultural domains to develop TL in Kazakh schools. The participants had a strong expectation that they should be directed and told what to do.

This contradicted the constructivist nature of the programme, which is based on the idea that professional knowledge can be constructed individually and socially (Dewey, 1916a; Shwartz et al., 2009).

The theory-centred nature of pre-service education in Kazakhstan, which echoed the Soviet past, had a strong influence on teachers' assumptions of learning as well as their practice (Yakavets et al., 2017b). Participants highlighted the importance of instruction and asked for external support to take charge of their projects.

[...] I think about the project only when you send me a message or come to see me in person. Most of the time I am immersed in my daily work. May be others are more diligent about their projects, but this is the way I am. I would prefer to have a clear plan of what should I do next.

(Merim, Alga school)

[...] I need someone who would constantly tell me 'do it this way'. Otherwise, I keep losing the track.

(Arman, Birlik school)

Having said that, the participants' sense of being instructed was also determined by their social-cultural backgrounds (Shwartz et al., 2009). Citing one of Kazakh's stand-up comedians, Sherim highlighted the general tendency in society to follow others' examples as well as his own willingness to be a follower rather than a leader.

As Tursunbek Qabatov says: 'Kazakhs are good at following the examples once they see it'. [...] There are teachers who are good at organising practices and there are teachers who are good at following those practices. I have no inclination to organise things, but I am good at following the instructions.

(Sherim, Talap school)

This all had implications for the challenge of enhancing participants' agency and voice.

Agency and voice

As discussed in Chapter 2, central to the programme that I was introducing in Kazakh schools was participants' self-directed learning and construction of professional knowledge individually and collectively. This required their ability to act and participate

in the life of the school. However, the lack of experience and fear of public humiliation were the major impediments at this stage of the programme.

The lack of experience was a challenge to the novice teachers to reflect on their practice and enact their development project. Zamira's case indicated the difficulty of reflecting on practice and framing it as a project.

As I have mentioned earlier, I am interested in interactive teaching methods, but I do not know how to systematise my thoughts and frame it as a development project. If I had had a clear idea about the concern, I would have started searching the literature [...]. But, my thoughts are still scattered.

(Zamira, Birlik school)

Given the subject-centred and theory-loaded knowledge that teachers receive at the pedagogical institutes in Kazakhstan (Yakavets et al., 2017b), it was not a surprise that Zamira struggled with reflective practice at the beginning of her teaching career. Interestingly, however, her colleague with similar work experience had more certainty in clarifying her professional concern. Zauresh was more confident in identifying an issue in her daily practice.

Within 45 minutes, which is one lesson, I have to explain the aim of the lesson, assess students, fill in an assessment journal and pay attention to each student [...]. I cannot manage the time well [...]. My main aim is to ensure that the development project is of benefit to me. Only then I can influence others [...]. So, my main problem is to make an action plan to improve my time-management skills.

(Zauresh, Alga school)

Zauresh's case indicated that, apart from experience, participants needed personal efficacy to self-reflect and be proactive in identifying their professional concerns. However, Zauresh was not only 'a producer but a product of her social system' (Bandura, 1997:21). When asked about the possibility to extend her project at the school level she felt less inclined to do so. She doubted that her ideas would have been supported by others.

I do not know why, but I have never initiated any ideas. Before saying something, you look around and realise that people, who surround you, will not add much to your ideas [...], as they are not much interested in the professional matters [...].

(Zauresh, Alga school)

It became evident that authority was an important issue in schools. Experienced teachers' voices tended to be stronger than their less experienced counterparts which reflected a tendency in the wider society in Kazakhstan whereby people are granted authority based on their age. Within the professional communities, however, this made the less experienced teachers more susceptible to the public humiliation:

The local educational department asked us to discuss and write our opinion about the new Unified National Test. Although we wrote our concerns, our elder colleagues noted that it was not right to write such things given the status of our school. So, we had to remove our comments.

(Assylym, Alga school)

We developed such belief that whenever someone comes to our school, we tend to think that if I make a mistake, this person might have a wrong opinion about me.

(Zamira, Birlik school)

The fear of public humiliation and the possibility of being rejected had strong implications for initiating or extending the development project outside the participants' classroom and hence, facilitating socially constructed knowledge (Dewey, 1916a). This discussion revealed the importance of considering not only the organisational but the social-cultural factors in facilitating learning (Vigotsky, 1978; 1999) and TL in Kazakh schools.

Facilitating reflection on professional concern, planning and collaboration

The aforementioned indicated the importance of enabling participants to make the transition from the certainty of being instructed to the uncertainty of self-directed experience-centred learning (Biesta, 2014). This, however, required ongoing support, which included *pushing and pulling* the participants to enable them to identify their professional concern, plan their further action and consider collaborators.

In order to facilitate the participants' development projects, it was important that I decipher their professional concern. The lack of subject knowledge was an obstacle for me, as the majority of the participants were looking at improving their classroom practices. Therefore, I kept asking the participants to explain their professional concern in more detail. By articulating their professional concern, the participants were able to reflect on and refine it (Brandt et al., 1993).

Me: *Could you please elaborate what do you mean by developing students' comparative skills.*

Gulden: *I am looking at the ways of improving students' skills in analysing and comparing historical texts [...].*

Me: *Could you please tell me more about the tools that you use in your classroom?*

Building better understanding about participants' professional concerns enabled me to probe their attitudes to education. Kulziya's reflections indicated her dilemma between focusing on students' test results as opposed to their capacity for lifelong learning.

Kulziya, Talap school: *[...] If I provided the students with the ready-made ways of solving the maths tasks, they would have achieved high results in their final exams. However, if they were able to construct their own ways of solving, they could have developed better understanding about those tasks and how best to solve them [...]. However, they keep asking me to provide ready-made ways of solving the tasks. At least, it was like that up until now.*

Me: *[...] I guess we need to develop students' self-learning?*

Kulziya: *Then I should change the focus of my project from 'improving the ways of solving the maths tasks' to 'developing students' thinking skills'.*

Kulziya's problem was quite similar to mine, as I found it difficult to embrace the uncertainty of facilitating participants without providing direct instructions, which was particularly relevant to the novice teachers. My conversation with the less experienced teachers indicated that as a facilitator I could have had better coaching skills to enable them to reflect on their practice. Lambert (2003) had suggested that: 'coaching into leadership means posing a question that will expand a teachers' focus' (p.427). The lack of experience in coaching led me ask Arman two contesting questions: '*what mattered to him as a teacher*' and '*what kind of problem he had in his classroom*'. I received two different answers. In the end he decided to explore the concern that was important to him as a teacher. The main criteria for me, however, was to avoid imposing ready-made answers on Arman, as it contradicted the self-driven nature of the programme.

Nevertheless, in order to help the participants to have some certainty in their next actions, I used two types of tools for action planning. I adopted the ITL tool for planning the project and developed my own tool to enable to participants to clarify their next steps (Appendix 10). The participants approached action-planning differently. Whilst some

modelled theirs on previous projects, others aimed at diagnosing their problems before beginning their project.

First, I need to look for other projects like mine and search the literature. Second, I need to find or develop tools that I could apply in my classroom [...].

(Merim, Alga school)

I am thinking about conducting a small questionnaire to get students' feedback on the problem to begin the project [...].

(Kulziya, Talap school)

In comparison to their counterparts in other schools, the teachers in Talap school had some understanding about inquiry. As such, they were more into reflecting on their practice, whereas their colleagues in the other three schools relied on modelling others. This posed another challenge for me, as I had to develop tools that would enable the participants to make sense of their own experience rather than copy others.

One strategy was to ensure that participants talk to their colleagues to build better understanding about their concern and collaborate to address it. The majority of the participants highlighted two main criteria for seeking advice from their colleagues: experience and expertise in subject.

My development project revolves around my subject. Therefore, I need someone who has expertise in my subject. I aim to have a conversation with a more experienced colleague G., who attended the Centre of Excellence programmes [...].

(Symbat, Alga school)

Interestingly, the participants in Talap school were open to seek help from their less experienced colleagues as well as teachers from other subjects.

[...] The majority of them obtained master's degree and hence, they are far ahead of us. They can be less experienced than me, but they are open-minded professionals. (Estigul, Talap school)

I can ask advice from any teacher. If it is necessary for my project, I can even consult with Kazakh language or history teachers.

(Kulziya, maths teacher, Talap school)

Nevertheless, the major obstacle to facilitating collaboration in schools was the lack of time.

My mentor is a very experienced history teacher. But, I could not talk to her yet. She has two jobs and has no time.

(Arman, Birlık school)

I would love to talk to her everyday, but she does not always have time. [...] she has an extensive experience [...]. She is good at providing right kind of direction.

(Assylym, Alga school)

Therefore, whenever I saw that external networking could benefit participants' projects, I would push them to seek collaboration outside their schools. For example, I introduced Alua, who was setting up a student club to promote students' creative thinking, with university-based colleagues who had an extensive experience in setting up and leading students clubs.

In general, in contrast to the first one-to-one meetings, the second one enabled me to grasp participants' professional concerns and provide more focused support to help them plan their projects and collaborate with colleagues inside and outside their schools.

Impact on the participants

After the second group session and the second one-to-one meetings, the programme had a challenging effect on the participants. Whilst some highlighted the positive side of discussing their development projects with colleagues, focusing on their own practice and being influenced by the vignettes, two participants withdrew from the programme.

The participants noted the positive side of discussing their professional concern with colleagues, which was previously limited due to the lack of time. Particularly, Assylym, who taught Kazakh, noted the importance of getting access to teachers of the same subject, as they could share teaching materials.

[...] we teach our classes and have no time to consult or seek advice from other colleagues due to the lack of time. However, during our second group session, I had an opportunity to talk to the teachers of other languages: English and

Russian. There is a potential that we exchange teaching materials, as we all teach languages.

(Assylym, Alga school)

Participants also noted the positive side of the practice-oriented nature of the programme, as it provided an opportunity to look at their daily practice.

I enjoyed the [second] session. All teachers were able to express their thoughts, explain their professional concern and the rationale behind it. We all have a problem in our classrooms. All teachers in our cohort decided to look at the problems in their subjects. I do not think that there is a need to change anything. This all seem to be good to me.

(Zauresh, Alga school)

Following the example of the teachers' leadership story which I had provided as a vignette at the first group session, Kulziya decided to take action. She invited her colleague to join the programme so they could lead the development project together, as they shared a common professional concern in teaching maths.

[...] the vignettes that you provided last time helped me to generate a lot of ideas. I went straightaway to consult with Sherim. As we are teaching the same subject, I asked him if we are not pursuing numerical outcome only. I invited him to ponder this matter together [...].

(Kulziya, Talap school)

However, not all participants were committed to continuing the programme. Two participants decided to leave the programme due to the lack of time. My own observation indicated that the problem was not only the lack of time, but a lack of commitment to leading a development project.

Aru was having a tea with her colleagues, whilst I was waiting outside to have a one-to-one meeting with her. As a non-teaching staff member, she was immersed into the routine of administrative work. When I reminded her about our meeting, she noted that she had no time to continue the programme. (Research journal, Alga school, 7.12.2016)

My further conversation with Zhiyenkul, an experienced maths teacher, revealed her disbelief in foreign programmes, which were introduced as a part of the reform initiatives.

The negative experience with the implementation of the reform initiatives in her school clearly had an impact on how she perceived the programme.

We are introducing such programmes in our country as an experiment, but it seems that they do not match our mentality [...] we are not understanding them properly. We try to implement them into our daily practices but have no proper support from the top [...]. They are introducing [...] the formative assessment, but we are still required to put the official marks in our journals. Therefore, despite initiating a development project, the problem will remain open.

(Zhiyenkul, Birlik school)

Misinterpretation of the new practices at the local level and the lack of ongoing support in making sense of those practices influenced Zhiyenkul's attitude to the programme. Her case reiterated the importance of considering teachers' assumptions about learning and leadership.

I may seem to be a pessimist. But, I believe that we need to develop programmes that match our mentality in Kazakhstan. Such programme needs to consider the ways our teachers learn [...].

(Zhiyenkul, Birlik school)

I could not persuade Aru and Zhiyenkul to continue the programme, as it was their will to leave. However, this experience made me reflect on the factors that can either enhance or diminish participants' willingness to pursue such programmes in the future.

The first School Network event

As discussed in Chapter 2, networking was one of the primary instruments that I employed to facilitate TL in schools in Kazakhstan. By bringing participants from four different schools together, the 1st School Network event aimed at facilitating knowledge-sharing and creating a professional learning community. The analysis of the first School Network materials generated the following themes: planning the event, bringing my co-facilitators together, providing guidance, networking and monitoring the impact.

Planning with my co-facilitators

This was the first time the participants from four different schools were coming together to share their professional concern and learn from each other. Creating an environment for collective learning and knowledge-sharing would not be possible without working hand-in-hand with school leadership teams and co-facilitators. Involving key stakeholders in organising the network event was essential given the prevailing role of regulation in the management culture in Kazakhstan (Muratbekova-Touron, 2002).

The planning of the School Network event started with liaison with the school leadership teams and participants about the date and the time of the event. After long discussions, it was decided that 14th January would be most convenient as it was the week right after the winter holidays. Given the discrepancy in the schools' calendars and time-tables, Saturday afternoon was the time that would suit most participants. We faced a major challenge in Birlik school however, where Arman and Zamira had classes on Saturday afternoons. Despite Mariya's and my explanations, the Vice Director for Learning, who was in charge of the time-table, did not release the teachers from their classes. This case proved once again that the power that resided with vice-directors in implementing professional learning opportunities in schools in Kazakhstan.

Most of the important conversations about organising the first School Network event took place between myself and vice-directors. For example, when I asked permission to hold the event in Talap school the Director told me that I need to discuss it with the Vice-Director, who was my co-facilitator. Holding the event in Talap school was the only option. First, as discussed in Chapter 4, schools did not have separate funding for renting venues. Second, whilst Birlik and Alga schools lacked the facilities, Yntymaq school were holding another event on that date. Therefore, my last hope was to ask help from Talap school. After a brief conversation with my co-facilitator, we included the event in the school's schedule of upcoming events which legitimised our further actions. Being in line with local regulations and involving of my co-facilitators were key to planning the event.

Being school administrators and having extensive experience in teaching, my co-facilitators played important roles in promoting the professional learning communities, which I envisaged through this network event. In order to enhance my co-facilitators' role

in planning and organising the network event, I invited them to an informal meeting outside their school premises. This meeting played a pivotal role in two ways. First, it enhanced their responsibility and engagement in the programme. Second, it enabled me to address their assumptions about professional learning by explaining the purpose of the event.

Despite meeting each other for the first time, my co-facilitators quickly established a mutual bond and openly discussed issues related to their daily practice. The collectivist nature of the society facilitated collaboration between my co-facilitators, which could be related to the community and family networks playing a dominating role in personal relationships (Muratbekova-Touron, 2002; Nezhina and Ibrayeva, 2013; McLaughlin et al., 2014; Ayubayeva, 2018). The collective opinion clearly had a powerful effect on my co-facilitators' engagement in the programme. They provided valuable feedback on the draft programme of the event, which included introductory session, poster session, group sessions and group reflections.

However, our conversation revealed a clash between the programme's principles and local practices. First, they noted the need to provide more strict requirements for programme completion. Whilst they highlighted extrinsic accountability, I aimed at extending intrinsic motivation by enhancing participants' moral purpose and commitment to improve practice (Sergiovanni, 1992). Furthermore, my collaborators commented on the participants' development projects by questioning the rationale and the lexical-grammatical mistakes in their titles. They tended to view the development project as a finite product rather than an initial stage of the process. Therefore, it was important that I explained the process-based nature of the programme and the aim of the network event.

I explained that the aim of this event was to enable participants to clarify their professional concern and hence, their development projects could change after the network event. My co-facilitators agreed. [...] I also highlighted the importance of supporting teachers and motivating them rather than evaluating and disempowering them during the network event. (Informal meeting with co-facilitators, Research journal, 7.12.2016)

In general, it was important to address co-facilitators' assumptions about professional learning in order to successfully implement the programme in schools in Kazakhstan. In order to enable my co-facilitators to build their understanding about the programme's

principles, I invited them to lead group sessions at the first School Network event, which they kindly accepted.

Providing guidance

Based on my co-facilitators feedback as well as participants' queries, it was important that I provide clear guidance about the network event. Given the collectivist nature of society in Kazakhstan, both my co-facilitators and the participants had heightened sensitivity to the opinions of others. In order to decrease the feeling of anxiety and increase perceived control over what they were going to do during the event (Bandura, 1997), I provided guidelines on poster and group sessions. Moreover, I invited my co-facilitators to be creative in leading group sessions to establish a group bond. I also suggested that they enable group reflections at the end of the session to keep track of each session. As a closing part of the event planning, I sent out the final programme to my co-facilitators and the participants.

Networking

Our meticulous preparations had a positive effect on the network event. The date, time, venue, refreshments, transportation, poster session, introductory session, group sessions and group reflections made the event a success. Identifying the purpose and ensuring affirmative atmosphere were the key elements of this event, which consisted of introductory, main and concluding parts.

At the beginning of the network event the participants were invited to display their posters in the open hall. In the same hall we placed coffee, tea and other refreshments to create an open atmosphere. Providing refreshments was useful, as the majority of the participants were teaching that morning although refreshments did not seem to facilitate interaction during the poster session.

It was a Saturday afternoon. The participants arrived at school in a bus. We hired a bus for this event, because Talap school was located outside the town. As the participants entered the school premises, they looked a bit worried. They quickly placed their posters on the boards and quietly waited for the feedback. (Research journal, 14.01.2017)

I named the introductory session 'Leadership, collaborative professionalism and knowledge building'. The aim of this session was to explain the purpose and clarify the values of a professional leaning community, such as mutual trust, support and collaboration.

During the introductory session I reiterated the concepts of TL, TLDW methodology, the purpose of professional networking and the importance of knowledge-sharing. I also shared a welcome video from David Frost and Sheila Ball - colleagues representing HertsCam and the ITL initiative, which enhanced a sense of community at a larger scale.

At the end of the introductory session, Zhenis approached me and noted that it was an honour to receive a welcome message from the colleagues in Cambridge.

(Research journal, 14.01.2017)

A sense of mutual respect and recognition was growing, as participants applauded each other and Talap school for hosting the event. Subsequently, participants divided into four different rooms for parallel sessions.

The group sessions created a sense of community with co-facilitators engaging participants and creating an affirmative atmosphere. My co-facilitators started the group sessions with a team building activity so that the participants could get to know each other well.

Dana and the participants stood in a circle and created funny pseudonym that would characterize their personality. They all laughed out loudly (1st School Network Minutes, 14.01.2017).

I used an activity called 'The stars square' to enable the participants to get to know each other. Each participant shared the reason they were there and sent their positive wishes to other group members.

(Mariya's reflection form, 1st School Network, 14.01.2017)

After getting introduced, each participant took the floor and shared their professional concern with others, which helped to emphasise their personal power and facilitated their ownership of the development project. After each presentation, the facilitators provided time for feedback.

The participants looked confident when they took the floor and started sharing their development projects.

(1st School Network, Minutes, 14.01.2017)

Each participant shared their professional concern. Afterwards, there were different kinds of questions and suggestions from the audience. They accepted the feedback as a help from a colleague to improve their projects.

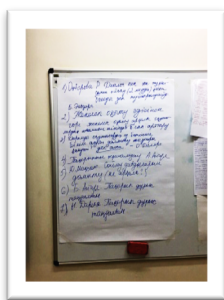
(Balausa's reflection form, 1st School Network, 14.01.2017)

The different kinds of creative activities that my co-facilitators employed at the beginning and end of group sessions had a positive impact on personal and collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

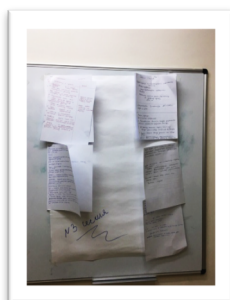
To generate reflection at the end of the session, Dana prepared a colorful paper and asked the participants to write a letter to other colleagues around the following questions: What did you learn today? What are you going to apply in your practice? What do you plan to do next? What kind of professional experience would you like to share with us next time? What did you like about this group session? Do you have any suggestions to the organizers of the event?

(1st School Network, Minutes, 14.01.2017)

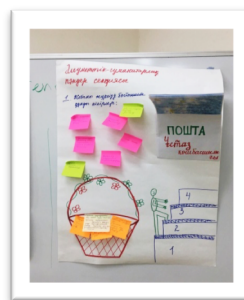
As a result, the participants looked relaxed and mingled with each other more willingly during the coffee-break following the group sessions. At the end of the networking event, we all gathered in one room to summarise the group reflections, which my co-facilitators had captured during the group sessions. I gave the floor to my co-facilitators, who presented the group reflections in the format of a poster. At the end of the wrap-up session, I distributed stickers and asked the participants to write three things that they liked and disliked about the event to generate feedback and reciprocal communication, as depicted below.



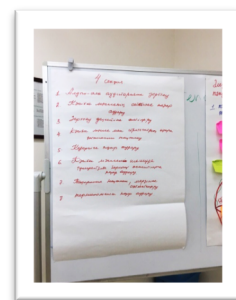
Group reflections 1



Group reflections 2



Group reflections 3



Group reflections 4

Photo 4. Group reflections and feedback after the first School Network event

Working closely with my co-facilitators, as indicated earlier, had a profound influence on creating a sense of community. Whilst I clarified the purpose of the event, my co-facilitators created an affirmative environment, which helped to decrease anxiety and facilitate open learning. I further discuss the impact of the event in detail.

Monitoring the first networking

The analysis of group and individual reflections indicated both positive and negative aspects of the 1st School Network event. Whilst the majority appreciated knowledge-sharing and the positive environment, there were concerns about the effectiveness of the poster session and the way the participants were split into groups.

The majority of the participants highlighted the affirmative atmosphere during the event, which facilitated the knowledge-sharing and the participation.

There was a very warm and friendly atmosphere in our session. As a result, everyone in the room could express their opinion without any inhibition.

(Ajar's reflection, Birlik school)

The affirmation that they received from other colleagues clearly had influence on participants' efficacy. The majority noted that the support and encouragement of colleagues motivated and inspired them for further action.

I was able to make contacts with the teachers from Yntymaq school [...]. They provided feedback, shared with new ideas and encouraged me. I left the event motivated and enthusiastic to integrate new ideas into my project.

(Gulim's reflection, Birlik school)

The support of more experienced colleagues was particularly important to novice teachers, as it helped them to generate new ideas.

[...] I was inspired by the more experienced colleagues. I enjoyed collaborating with teachers from Alga and Talap schools. They were very competent and kind.

(Kulimkoz's reflection, Yntymaq school)

By collaborating with the more experienced colleagues, I was able to reconsider my development project [...]. The event went really well. I hope that we have such events more often. (Adina's reflection, Birlik school)

The majority of group reflections included positive feedback on the organisation of the event and requests to repeat it in the future.

Today we had a very useful and productive meeting. We hope it continues in the future [...]. The event went really well.

(Group reflections, 1st School Network, 14.01.2017)

We enjoyed learning and discussing different kinds of development projects. We just want to suggest that this event happens more often.

(Group reflections, 1st School Network, 14.01.2017)

Despite the positive feedback, some participants challenged the effectiveness of the poster session. Their reflections, and my own observations, indicated that the poster session did not generate as much critical feedback as had been intended.

Discussing posters did not take place as it intended; It would be great if posters were explained; We could have talked more about our posters and so on.

(Participant's feedback on the 1st School Network event, 14.01.2017)

I handed the participants stickers, so that they could write their comments on each other's posters and generate new ideas. However, they wrote different kinds of things that were not necessarily useful in generating new ideas. For example, 'I wish you good luck'. So, I felt that commenting posters was somewhat new to them.

(Research journal, 14.01.2017)

The lack of critical feedback during the poster session could have been related to the fact that participants were not prepared to enter colleagues' domains without being invited (Mitchell and Sackney, 2011). In order to invite each other to provide critical comments, the participants needed to have got to know each other. Therefore, holding the poster session after the introductory or the group session might have been a better option in promoting critical feedback.

We also learned that splitting the participants into groups could have been improved. Participants' feedback indicated the centrality of interacting with colleagues who had a

similar professional concern rather than a subject, which contradicted the findings of the previous studies on building a social capital in schools (Spillane et al., 2017).

It would be great to set the group session based on the topics of the projects.

(Group reflections 1, 1st School Network event, 14.01.2017)

It would be more useful to split the participants based on projects and hold discussions in small groups.

(Group reflections 2, 1st School Network event, 14.01.2017)

A growing sense of self-efficacy and community

Our observations of the first School Network event were further corroborated by the post-event evaluations. The participants' noted increased self-efficacy and a sense of community during the event.

Participants highlighted their actions during the network event, such as making a power point presentation, presenting their posters and sharing experience with others, which seemed to enhance their ownership of their development projects and increase beliefs in their own capabilities (Bandura, 1997). Adina highlighted her own actions as well as the positive reaction of colleagues, which motivated her further steps.

I made a presentation, attended poster session and shared the information related to my project. I think we managed to become friends during the network event [...]. Other teachers liked my project, which helped me to identify my future actions.

(Adina, Birlik school, Post-event feedback)

The affirmation that the participants received from colleagues increased their commitment to professional learning. Kulimkoz highlighted this:

The colleagues from Talap school listened to my ideas and supported them. [...] I got a lot of new ideas related to my subject. I need to take a closer look at my project and read the resources related to it. My project became even more interesting to me.

(Kulimkoz, Yntymaq school, Post-event feedback)

Experiencing higher levels of self-efficacy whilst working with colleagues could have been related to the collectivist nature of society (Bandura, 1997). Paradoxically,

participants did not indicate such patterns of relationships within their schools. As discussed in Chapter 5, the lack of time and fear of humiliation were major impediments to facilitating collaboration within the schools. On the other hand, relationships in the networks could have higher influence on changing teachers' thinking and practice than doing things collaboratively within schools (Katz and Earl, 2010). As Gulim put it:

I was able to establish positive relationship with the teachers from Yntymaq school. [...] they helped me to generate new thinking and move forward with my project. I left the network event with a positive feeling and inspired. [...] I am planning to approach my project from a new perspective.

(Gulim, Birlik school, Post-event feedback)

This all indicated the centrality of positive relationships to school networking in Kazakhstan, as it could enhance teachers' self-efficacy and facilitate professional learning. Therefore, I looked at ways to sustain and enhance such relationships during the second network event, which required further scaffolding.

To sum up, the 1st School Network event enabled the participants to share their professional concerns and create a professional community of learning. This, however, would not be possible without planning the event in collaboration with the school leadership teams and my co-facilitators; addressing their assumptions about professional learning and such events; providing clear guidance to reduce feelings of anxiety; involving my co-facilitators in leading the group sessions; identifying the purpose of the event and creating an affirmative environment. As a result, we received positive feedback from participants as well as critique. The post-event evaluation indicated a positive impact on participants' self-efficacy and fostered a sense of community. This all enabled us to refine our further actions.

Chapter summary and emerging insights

In this chapter I explained Phase 1 of the TLLC programme, which I conducted in four schools in Kazakhstan. This consisted of working closely with my co-facilitators, conducting two group sessions, two one-to-one meetings and one school network event, leading to critical reflection on practice and the concept of TL. During Phase 1, we were

able to make our first step towards becoming a professional learning community. However, Phase 1 could be described as reorientating, in the sense that the programme's main principles clashed with local realities, such as assumptions about learning, structural and cultural barriers.

My analysis of this episode of the narrative led to the identification of a number of insights and key features of the intervention which I grouped under the following headings:

- National reforms
- School structures
- Participants' assumptions of learning
- Social-cultural factors of learning
- Co-facilitators' roles
- Reorientating towards reflective practice
- Professional collaboration and networking
- Impact on participants' practice during Phase 1

The full list (see Appendix 7) then served as a tool which I used to construct the next layer of analysis presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter 6

Phase 2: Enacting

In the previous chapter, I explained Phase 1 of the programme in which I worked with my collaborators to introduce the concept of TL, enable participants to identify their professional concerns and consult their colleagues within the wider professional community. In the first phase everyone involved experienced disorientation. Previous assumptions and norms were challenged, and we all struggled to adjust to the challenges of the programme. However, Phase 2 proceeded on more solid ground as we had been able to achieve a degree of re-orientation and could begin to enact.

In this chapter I explore Phase 2 of the programme during which the participants started to enact the leadership of their development projects. The enactment of TL took place in relation to organisational structures: the participants had to wrestle with the tension between school requirements and the aspirations of their development projects. Therefore, it was pivotal to engage the school leadership teams in the programme and provide individual support to each participant. This led to growing activism on the part of my co-facilitators, who were mainly members of school leadership teams, as well as awakening of participants' agency. This chapter looks at a crucial period of the programme when the participants slowly made the transition from the norm of merely reacting to external requirements to a more proactive stance in which they could begin to engage in reflective action to bring about improvements in practice.

The following narrative is based on data obtained through in situ analysis of the programme development and post hoc analysis of the programme materials, which includes minutes of the meetings, research journal entries, group session materials, participants' reflective proforma, co-facilitators' written observations, notes on lesson observations, participants' written reflections and feedback on the network event. The narrative was structured around key events such as first periodic review, two group sessions, two one-to-one meetings and the second School Network event (see Figure 8). These events took place between 18th of January and 11th of March 2017. I now begin the narrative with first periodic review.

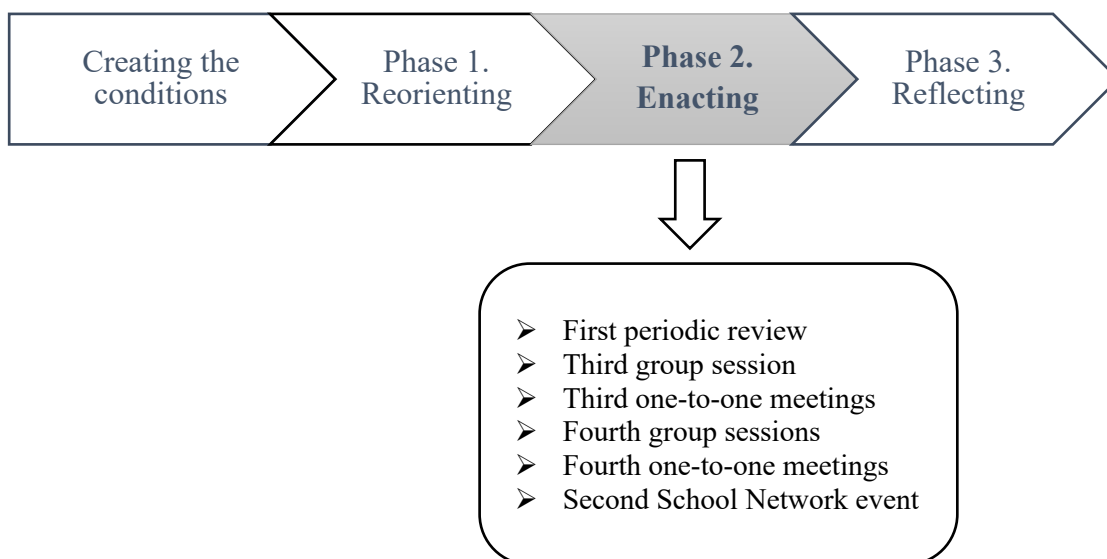


Figure 8. The main events of the Phase 2 of the programme

First periodic review with the project teams

The second project team meetings took place in four schools separately between 18th and 26th of January 2017. The purpose of these meetings was to review Phase 1 of the programme, record the barriers, adjust the programme and identify further plans in collaboration with school leadership teams. I envisaged that this would enhance their roles in the programme, contribute to organisational learning and ensure the sustainability of the programme. The meeting lasted for one hour and involved the school directors and my co-facilitators. I prepared power point presentations with the analysis of achievements and barriers to the programme during Phase 1 for each school separately. In order to ensure open conversation, I did not record the meeting, as it could have been intimidating. So, instead, I wrote minutes straight after each meeting. Discussion in these meetings featured several themes, which I discuss below.

Involving the directors

This was the second time I was meeting with the directors. The meetings took place in the directors' offices. Although, as discussed in Chapter 4, I knew that holding the meetings in the directors' offices might diminish the role of other members of the project team, my external position left me with little control over the internal procedures of the

schools. As with the first meetings, the directors were actively engaged in the discussion about structural barriers to the programme, whereas I had to have a separate meeting with the vice-directors and my co-facilitators to examine the programme details and discuss our further plans.

The directors did not engage in discussion about the programme details, but concentrated on how to address organisational barriers. The major ones included the lack of time, space and access to resources in Kazakh, which was observed in schools to a different degree. For example, the lack of time was particularly evident in Birlik school, where holding the group sessions was a challenge as the participants' time-tables spanned the period 08:00-18:45. Although Yntymaq school had the teachers' room for collaborative purposes, Birlik, Alga and Talap schools had no such space. Moreover, the libraries in all four schools had no up-to-date literature to support teachers' professional learning. These queries were addressed to a different degree too. The Director in Birlik school suggested that we hold group sessions after the working day. However, she could not provide any clear answer on creating space for teachers and providing resources. The Director in Alga school said that they were refurbishing one of the classrooms and that her teachers would have their own staff room in the next couple of months. In Yntymaq school, the Director told me that he could buy books if his teachers provided a list of the books they needed. Apart from that, neither of the directors engaged with further planning of the programme.

One of the reasons could have been the directors' perceived roles in the schools. School directors in Kazakhstan operate in a highly centralised and hierarchical system, wherein countless reporting to external entities is prioritised over internal instructional practices (see Chapter 1). Therefore, the directors' roles were confined to handling maintenance issues rather than leading innovation in the school's teaching and learning processes (Frost et al., 2014; Yakavets et al., 2017a). In such a scenario, there is limited possibility that the external facilitation could ensure innovation and change within the schools in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, I had to find ways to involve the directors more closely in the programme in order to motivate teachers and increase their self-efficacy. Otherwise, their development projects could have been perceived merely as the individual pursuit of professional development rather than a part of the school improvement process (Frost and Durrant, 2004).

Meanwhile, there was a certain expectation that it was the vice-director's role to take charge of teaching and learning within the schools. Consequently, the vice-directors played key roles in implementing the programme, as they had more detailed information about teaching and learning processes. As an external facilitator, I had to adjust to the division of roles in the schools and hence, our further conversation about the programme's details continued in my co-facilitators' offices. In a similar vein, Mariya invited the Vice-director for Research and Methodology to join our conversation in Birlik school.

Co-planning Phase 2

As I provided a sketch of the third group session, my co-facilitators noted the importance of introducing action research in their schools, which was part of the reform initiative (MoES, 2016). This prompted me to adjust our further plans to meet the schools' teaching and learning needs.

It became clear that implementing action research in schools was part of the reform (see Chapter 1). Dana showed me the annual MoES report for 2016-17 academic year, which suggested that the teachers who attended the Centre of Excellence programmes (Level II and I) should be able to conduct and promote action research in their schools (MoES, 2016). Having completed Level I of the Centre of Excellence programme, Mariya also highlighted that they were required to conduct action research in their schools (Research Journal, 17.01.2017). Despite having limited experience with action research, school leadership teams and the participants had to demonstrate evidence that they are conducting it. Thus, my co-facilitators expected that our programme would enable the participants to learn how to conduct action research. For example, Dinara highlighted that her teachers publish papers and attend conferences at the final stage of the programme (Research Journal, 26.01.2017). However, this was not a case in Yntymaq school, where the majority of the teachers did not attend the Centre of Excellence programmes (Level I and II) and hence, they were not expected to conduct action research (Research Journal, 19.01.2017). This all raised a dilemma between enabling my colleagues to demonstrate competency in action research and facilitating genuine commitment to improvement.

As discussed in Chapter 2, I aimed to enable teachers to construct professional knowledge in collaboration with their colleagues, which would primarily benefit the professional community without confining them to the canons of research (Gibbons et al., 1994; Frost,

2013). On the other hand, facilitating participants' reflections on practice was identified as increasingly important during Phase 1. Therefore, we agreed that I provide an overview of the inquiry process but remain open to participants' own interpretations.

The first periodic review with the project team members enabled me to obtain support from the school directors and raise awareness about the structural barriers to the programme. Moreover, these meetings revealed the centrality of the vice-directors' roles in implementing professional learning opportunities in the schools. The majority of the vice-directors highlighted the importance of action research in their schools, which prompted me to make further adjustments to our plan.

The third series of group sessions

The dates and times of the group sessions were identified through the WhatsApp group chat. They were scheduled to take place between 19th-28th January 2017 in all four schools. As discussed earlier, the purpose of this session was to provide an overview of the inquiry process to enable the participants to reflect on their practices and lead their development projects. At this point of the programme, it became clear that guidance was crucial because of the ambiguity of self-directed learning as well as the necessity of enabling participants to consider alternative perspectives on their practice (Brookfield, 1986). Therefore, I provided an overview of the inquiry process to enable the participants to reflect on their professional concerns, challenge and change their practice, thereby produce knowledge and make informed decisions. By owning their own learning, participants could influence the learning of others, which was indispensable to TL (Swaffield and MacBeath, 2009; Poekert, 2011). As a result, I, engaged participants in discussion about ethical issues in leading the development project, made a power point presentation about the tools for inquiry and provided step-by-step guidance on planning the project.

Providing an overview of the inquiry process

Our conversation started with identifying the ethical issues that the participants could face in leading their development projects. In order to enable them to reflect on ethical issues, I adopted the ITL tool that included the checklist with questions on complying with the

schools' policies; seeking permission from students and parents/carers; sending out informed consent forms to parents/carers; consulting with colleagues and the school leadership team about the viability of their development projects; establishing clear protocols on privacy and reputation of students, colleagues etc. and ensuring anonymity. As the schools did not have any clear regulations related to conducting action research, I offered a sample of informed consent form to enable the participants to adapt it to their projects. Further on, I introduced the purpose and process of action research.

Whilst getting prepared for this session, I learned that there was limited amount of literature on action research in Kazakh. The only source in Kazakh was the handbook on action research co-authored by Elaine Wilson and Aizhan Abibullayeva (Wilson and Abibulayeva, 2016). The handbook helped me to introduce the purpose of action research and tools for inquiry. In order to provide clarity about the process of research, I adopted the spiral of actions by Kemmis et al., (2014). After that, I invited the participants to reflect on their own projects by filling in step-by-step planner (see Appendix 10).

It became evident that the majority of the participants had no previous experience in conducting action research. Their post-session reflective proformas indicated the emerging appreciation of learning as an integral part of leadership (MacBeath et al., 2018).

Teacher leader is a life-long learner. It feels that the discussion that we had today marked the beginning of our leadership. I learned about the tools and ways of inquiry.

(Kulimkoz, Yntymaq school, Reflective proforma)

I realised that leadership is not about being a leader but the process of self-learning and developing. My next step will be to search the resources.

(Sherim, Talap school, Reflective proforma)

The participants noted that introducing the tools for inquiry and providing step-by-step guidance helped them to clarify their further actions. Alua put it as follows:

I need to plan my further actions [...]. I will draft the informed consent form, search for resources and identify the tools for inquiry. (Alua, Talap school, Reflective proforma)

Raigul interpreted the tools for inquiry as a means to structuring her actions. The action was central to Raigul's understanding, whilst notions such as inquiry and reflection were emerging concepts for her.

This session helped me to develop a clear idea about where to start with and identify my further steps to lead the project. It also ensured that our actions are more structured.

(Reflective proforma, Raigul, Birlik school)

In a similar vein, Zauresh theorised inquiry from the prism of her daily practice:

In order to lead the project, I will plan my lessons, I will conduct my lessons and reflect on them.

(Reflective proforma, Zauresh, Alga school)

This prompted me to remain vigilant about participants' interpretations of inquiry. On one hand, given the centralised implementation of action research, participants could inquire into practice for the sake of inquiry. On the other hand, they could engage in limited reflection on practice and hence, yield no improvement. I had therefore to provide individual support to enable participants to plan their further actions.

In general, the third group sessions enabled me to offer further scaffolding by introducing an overview of the inquiry process. Participants' interpretations of inquiry required providing further support to enable them to reflect and improve practice, which I attempted to target during the third one-to-one meetings.

The third series of one-to-one meetings

Third one-to-one meetings took place between 30th January- 7th February 2017. The purpose of these meetings was to navigate towards reflection and action. Therefore, my role was to help the participants develop tools and provide critical friendship. I was also able to involve the schools' senior leaders in the process and support the participants' adjustments to the external circumstances.

Developing the tools

As indicated earlier, I provided an overview of the inquiry process to meet the schools' needs as well as promote participants' reflection in action (Schön, 1987). It is argued that enabling teachers to grow as inquirers is integral to enhancing their leadership capacity (Poekert et al., 2016). However, practitioners find it hard to view the research as a part of their daily practice which suggests the need for ongoing support and facilitation (McLaughlin et al., 2014).

Participants required different kinds of facilitation, as they were at different levels of enactment of their projects. Whilst some were still contemplating their plans, others had already developed tools and used them in their practice. In both cases, however, participants failed to integrate reflection into their action. It was particularly challenging when participants lacked the experience and knowledge of their development project. For example, Zamira, who started her teaching career that academic year, did not know where to begin. As indicated in the following excerpt, I helped Zamira to develop a tool, so that she could plan her next steps based on her students' feedback, as indicated below:

Zamira wants to develop tools that would enhance her Year 6 students' engagement in Biology classroom. She is still not sure where to begin with. I suggested that we could explore students' opinion on the teaching materials that she is currently using. So, we developed a small questionnaire to get her students' feedback. She is going to distribute it to her students tomorrow.

(Research journal, 23.01.2017, p. 67)

Although more experienced teachers had planned their next steps, they appreciated new ideas and resources to help them enact their projects. In Bibigul's case, for example, I helped to find up-to-date resources related to her project. As those resources were scarce in Kazakh, I had to bring materials in English. Bibigul managed to translate those materials, make meaning and use them, which I reflected on in my research journal:

Bibigul's Year 9 students are struggling to construct and analyse graphs in Biology. Last time I met her, I brought some materials in English. Although her English is at the elementary level, she managed to translate the materials, interpret them and develop a step-by-step guidance in Kazakh to her students. Above that, she is translating a Biology textbook from Russian into Kazakh to address her professional concern.

(Research journal, 31.01.2017, p. 93)

The knowledge of practice was the key for experienced participants (Schön, 1987; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). As they set the direction of their projects, they started developing tools to address their professional concerns. Central to their professional concerns was finding practical solutions to their problems (Argyris and Schön, 1996). For example, Ainur decided to experiment with her classroom practice by developing a tool to improve her students' learning, as indicated in the following excerpt:

Ainur's professional concern revolves around her Year 9 students, who cannot differentiate styles in art. So, she is developing a tool to help her students to keep track of their interpretations of styles and categorise them according to their types.

(Research journal, 31.01.2017, p. 86)

It was unclear, however, whether Ainur experienced, what Schön (1987) referred to as reflection-in-action, or whether it was her knowing-in-practice. In both cases, it was important that Ainur started to act. In order to systematise her actions, I suggested Ainur that she collect her students' notes periodically, take notes of her daily observations and invite her colleagues to observe her students' progress.

Interestingly, the experience was not the sole driver of participants' actions. Although Zaresh was in her first year of teaching, she managed to plan and enact her project without my direct involvement. The following entry describes Zaresh's proactiveness:

Zaresh is aiming at improving her own time-management skills in maths classroom. She has 45 minutes to introduce new topic, enable students to solve maths tasks, assess 25-30 students and get their feedback on the lesson. To do so, she is exploring and using new digital programmes. It looks like she has already shared her ideas and tools with other colleagues.

(Research journal, 02.02.2017, p. 105)

As a result, her project started sparking interest among other colleagues. Therefore, I suggested that she could involve her colleagues in identifying the effectiveness of digital programmes, invite them to observe her students' experiences of these and get their feedback, thereby obtaining critical friendship.

Providing a critical friendship

In many instances, enabling participants to reflect and plan their further steps required critical friendship. Central to critical friendship was trust and respect between me, the school leadership teams and the participants (Swaffield, 2004; 2005). The participants started inviting me to observe their lessons, which I interpreted as indicative of growing trust. However, establishing such relations between the school leadership team and the participants was challenging because of the power dynamics.

During one-to-one meetings, I used two types of tools to help participants to reflect on their projects. First, I asked them: What is your project about? Why is your project important? How could your project influence classroom/school improvement? What steps do you plan to take to achieve their aims? Our conversation helped participants to revise their plans.

After our conversation, Gulden decided to reframe her plan. She wanted to make it more specific and focus on developing students' analytical skills through essay writing.

(Research journal, 30.01.2017, p. 78)

Second, in order to promote further planning, I developed an action checklist (Appendix 10). The checklist helped participants to set their further plans:

Erlan set himself a target. He aims to promote peer-learning in robotics. To do so, he is planning to create a student club. He aims to identify Year 8 students, who might be interested in joining the club, as well as Year 10 students who might be willing to act as mentors. He then plans to split students into small groups, where they can learn from each other how to design and construct robots. At the end of academic year, he is planning to organise a competition, where teams will be able to present their robots.

(Research journal, 01.02.2017, p. 103)

In Talap school, my co-facilitator, Dinara joined the one-to-one meetings. Dinara was the Vice-Director for Teaching Methodology and had extensive experience in working with teachers. Her questions and guidance were more sophisticated and covered organisational details, which I was unable to grasp:

Dinara joined our conversation with Estigul. Estigul explained her concern, which was related to Year 7. Estigul was planning to provide individual classes to improve students' language proficiency. However, Dinara noted that Estigul could not take students' time after the classes, as they need to get prepared to educational Olympiads. Therefore, Dinara suggested that Estigul target the problem within her teaching time and suggested that she look at scaffolding. Estigul did not agree with Dinara and tried to justify her choice.

(Research journal, 30.01.2017, p. 82)

Dinara's suggestions were perceived as instruction from a line manager rather than the feedback of a critical friend. On the one hand, Dinara's standpoint was more about achieving results, which could have been a part of the performativity culture (MacBeath et al., 2018). On the other hand, Estigul felt self-protective, as her plan to enact the project was challenged. Being trapped between the school leadership team and the teacher, I had to act as a mediator to enable them to reflect on practice. First, I asked Dinara about the ultimate purpose of her school whether it was to prepare students for educational Olympiads or create conditions for learning. Then I suggested that Estigul might look closer at scaffolding and see if it might be of help to her project. This case indicated the barriers to nurturing school learning, as the power dynamics and the lack of trust between Dinara and Estigul hindered the open space for learning.

In a similar vein, I was able to observe the interrelation between the school leadership team and the teacher in Birlik school. As it was a subject week in Birlik school, when maths teachers had to conduct open lessons. Open lesson (*Ashyq sabaq* in Kazakh) is specific for the post-Soviet context, when teachers invite members of the school leadership team and other colleagues to observe their teaching (Khokhotva, 2018). Madina invited me to observe her lesson along with the School Director and other experienced teachers.

Both Madina and her students were doing their best to meet the expectations of the guests, who were sitting at the back of the classroom. After the lesson, when all students left, the guest provided their feedback, which included Madina not being able to sum up her lesson, not being able to engage all of her students and her lesson management skills. The Director also noted that Madina needs to consider her time management skills and student involvement. The Director noted that she had more comments on Madina's lesson but would tell it later.

(Research journal, 01.02.2017, p. 98)

Although it was evident that Madina diligently prepared for the lesson, the purpose of this event was to perform innovative teaching methods in front of observers rather than promote professional learning. The feedback of Madina's colleagues and the Director provided a limited space for 'double loop learning', wherein Madina could take critical stance, evaluate her own practice and change it (Argyris and Schön, 1996; Pedder et al., 2005). In contrast to Dinara, who was able to grasp her teacher's professional problem and provide a valuable suggestion, Madina's school leadership team could not provide such support. In both cases, however, the school leadership team did not act as trusted colleagues who were eager to equalise power to enable their teachers to reflect and act (Day, 1993a). Without trust and openness, I could not act as a critical friend too, as my comments made in front of the school leadership team need to be seen in relation to the accountability issue. This highlighted the importance of professional development and preparation to enable the school leadership team members to provide feedback that would foster professional learning and change in schools (Yakavets, 2016).

In general, navigating the participants towards reflection and action was not a straightforward process. During one-to-one meetings, I was able to guide participants towards revising and clarifying their further plans. Engaging the school leadership team as critical friends was challenging because of the power dynamics. These challenges indicated the centrality of school processes in enabling the teachers to lead improvement.

Adjusting to the external circumstances

At this stage of the programme, the majority of the participants had identified their professional concerns and started integrating their plans. However, there were cases when participants had to adjust their development projects because of school circumstances related to the changes in the participants' time-tables and the place of work.

These circumstances compelled Estigul and Kulimkoz to revise their professional concerns. Their concerns revolved around certain classes and students. These students they no longer could teach because of the changes in their time-tables. The decision of the school administrators to take Estigul's and Kulimkoz's students away in the midst of academic year affected their plans to enact their development projects.

Estigul has to adjust her development project. The school administration took away her Year 10 students, where she saw the need to develop students' critical thinking. But now she is left with Year 7 students only.

(Research journal, 31.01.2017, p.92)

Being an experienced teacher, Estigul adapted to the situation. She quickly identified that her Year 7 students had different levels of language acquisition and hence, she decided to change the focus of her development project. Meanwhile, Kulimkoz who was a novice teacher accepted the news more emotionally.

The school administration decided to give her history classes to a more experienced teacher. Kulimkoz accepted the news as a shame and looked unenthusiastic to continue the programme.

(Research journal, 1.02.2017, p.101)

Therefore, we had to look for other opportunities to enact Kulimkoz's project, which aimed at developing tools to enhance students' engagement in history classes. As Kulimkoz was still teaching the same students but in extra-curricular classes, she adjusted her project to that context.

In some instances, participants had to change schools. Symbat decided to resign from Alga school because of personal circumstances (Research journal, 7.02.2017, p. 130). However, she was appointed as a teacher to Birlik school and joined the group there. She decided to stick to the professional concern she developed in Alga school, as she was going to teach students of the similar age in Birlik school.

These cases made me reflect on the vulnerability of participants' projects to external circumstances, as it affected both the participants' emotional state and their projects. Therefore, it was important to provide support and guidance to help participants to recalibrate their development projects and enable them to reflect and plan their further actions.

In general, the third one-to-one meetings taught me that supporting the enactment of the participants' development projects requires helping teachers to develop tools that promote reflection in action, considering that the school leadership team might not be

prepared to act as critical friends as well as being able to help teachers to adjust to external circumstances. This experience prompted me to continue facilitating participants' reflections and engaging school leadership teams in our discussions during the fourth group sessions.

The fourth series of group sessions

The fourth series of group sessions took place during the period, 16th-18th February 2017. The purpose of these sessions was to facilitate participants' reflection on their actions. At this stage of the programme, I started gradually decreasing my role to facilitate the participants' ownership of the development process. Therefore, I facilitated participants' self-reflection on the expected outcomes of their development projects, the barriers that they were facing in leading their projects and their solutions to those barriers. Each participant had an opportunity to write and present their reflections in front of other colleagues. My co-facilitators, who represented the school leadership teams, joined the sessions and listened to the participants' reflections. Both my co-facilitators and the participants noted the positive impact of self-reflection on their further actions.

Self-reflection and leadership

As the participants were in the midst of enacting their development projects, it was important that they reflected on their current experiences to modify their further plans (Dewey, 1933; Raelin, 1997). By sharing those reflections with others, the participants engaged in social learning, wherein they could take closer look at each other's experiences (Bandura, 1977; Raelin, 1997; 2010). In order to engage the participants in such learning, I distributed three types of cards one after the other. In the first card they were asked to reflect on how their projects could influence the practice. The participants' reflections revealed that: whilst the majority were driven by the desire to improve their students' learning, some focused on ensuring results.

In contrast to their reflections during Phase 1 (see Chapter 5), it was evident that the participants developed deeper understanding about their development projects and hence, had clear ideas about the impact of their projects. Central to their reflections was students' learning. As Raigul put it:

When my project comes to an end, I envision that my students will be able to express their thoughts through a dialogue. In case their thoughts are challenged, they will be able to accept the criticism. In case they are certain in their claims, they will be able to prove it. My students will be able to engage in deep thinking.

(Raigul, written reflection, Birlik school, 16.02.2017)

Improving students' learning was the driving force for participants' development projects. Beyond that, there were instances when they started indicating their willingness to share their projects and contribute to wider school development. Assylym highlighted the validation of her project by her colleagues as central to her leadership practice. In a similar vein, Daniya emphasised her willingness to contribute to her school's development.

I will achieve my aim as a teacher when my students (non-native speakers) speak Kazakh fluently. I will achieve my aim as a leader when my colleagues support and use the outcome of my project in their classrooms.

(Assylym, written reflection, Alga school, 17.02.2017)

I hope that my project becomes a tool. I hope it will be used in our school on a constant basis. I hope that my colleagues will like it [...].

(Daniya, written reflection, Alga school, 17.02.2017)

Having said that, there were cases when the participants' reflections echoed the performativity culture, wherein the participants' agency was driven by the short-term intentions rather than the long-term impact (Biesta et al., 2015). Whilst Zhenis viewed students' participation in educational Olympiads as an indicator of his achievement, Ylias envisioned that his project would have a positive effect on the students' end of term test results.

I hope that at least one student is able to write a research project and win international competition because of my development project.

(Zhenis, written reflection, Talap school, 16.02.2017)

[...] I would like my students' term results improve because of this project.

(Ylias, written reflection, Yntymaq school, 18.02.2017)

This could have indicated the lack of discourse about the purpose of education and educational values in the schools, wherein the school and the system policies were being accepted without questioning (Biesta et al., 2015). However, there was a gradual shift in participants' understanding of the purpose of their development projects, an increase in their willingness to share and contribute to school development.

Identifying the barriers

Subsequently, I invited participants to reflect on the barriers that they were facing in enacting their development projects. Their reflections revealed organisational and personal barriers to their agency (Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Mezirow, 1990). Whilst external barriers differed slightly as between the selective and the comprehensive schools, the internal barriers were similar. By discussing internal barriers participants were able to achieve a degree of critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1990).

Participants' reflections confirmed my observations during Phase 1 (see Chapter 5), that external barriers to facilitating TL included the lack of time, access to literature in Kazakh and technical resources. These challenges differed in the selective and comprehensive schools. In the selective schools, participants noted the lack of time and access to the literature in Kazakh, whereas in the comprehensive school participants highlighted the insufficiency of technical materials, students' overload and paperwork. As a result, the lack of time was perceived differently in the two types of schools. Participants in the selective schools believed that they had to learn how to manage their time.

The challenge is that we are unable to manage our time well (I mean I need to allocate time well to meet the learning needs of my students).

(Assylym, written reflection, Alga school, 17.02.2017)

On the contrary, the teachers in the comprehensive Birlik school were preoccupied with paperwork and workload.

[...] We are required to provide a lot of paperwork. [...] The time is scarce.

(Ajar, written reflection, Birlik school, 16.02.2017)

During the Soviet time, we used to have one day for professional development, which we used to call a 'methodological day'. Nowadays, it is not a case, as we are compelled to take maximum teaching hours.

(Dina, written reflection, Birlik school, 16.02.2017)

The lack of time for reflection and learning was a major obstacle to focusing on teaching and learning and so, enacting TL in these schools, required reviewing organisational processes (Yakavets et al., 2017a). However, at this stage of the programme, the teachers' leadership projects were not perceived as an integral part of school processes in either type of school. As a result, participants were on their own in overcoming organisational barriers to their development projects.

Beyond organisational barriers, participants highlighted their personal traits as a challenge to their agency. Those challenges included the lack of self-efficacy and 'laziness'. Saltanat and Nassyr, who both were conducting teacher training in their schools, highlighted their own and their focus groups' irresponsibility.

I am being lazy and not reading sufficient amount of literature [...]. The teachers in my focus group are also being irresponsible.

(Nassyr, written reflection, Yntymaq school, 18.02.2017)

There is a limited amount of literature on my project. [...] the participants of my project are irresponsible too. They do not respect their profession [...].

(Saltanat, written reflection, Alga school, 17.02.2017)

Although both Nassyr and Saltanat courageously identified and revealed their inner challenges, their reflections made me question their commitment to acting to improve practices. The lack of commitment to action was replicated at different levels of the system. Sherim, for example, compared his perceived lack of self-efficacy and that of his students:

My students' lack self-efficacy. They are not eager to inquire into things. They are accustomed to act based on models and directives. I lack self-efficacy too. I am not eager to inquire into things. I am accustomed to act based on models and directives.

(Sherim, written reflection, Talap school, 16.02.2017)

The systemic nature of the lack of commitment and self-efficacy indicated the importance of looking at the environment as a means to achieving agency (Biesta and Tedder, 2007). In the environment, where the major decisions were taken elsewhere, and schools are bombarded with paperwork, both participants and schools were left with little space for reflection and agency. This resulted in professional apathy, wherein the teachers became accustomed to being led by others. In order to enable participants to take charge of the development process, I invited them to think about their own solutions to existing barriers.

Identifying ways to overcome barriers

Reflecting on possible ways to overcome external and internal barriers took the participants more time than the previous two activities. It was not a surprise, as their barriers were inflicted by the management system. Nevertheless, participants indicated that they could manage their time well, enact their projects systematically and plan more accurately.

Almost all participants noted that they needed to learn to manage their time well. Despite the criticality of time in the comprehensive school, Zamira noted the importance of trying to organise her daily routine:

[...] At least, I can try to do things in a timely fashion, complete tasks one after the other and use my private time more thoughtfully.

(Zamira, written reflection, Birlik school, 16.02.2017)

The major instruments for organising participants' daily routines included systematic action and planning. Assylym mentioned systematising her actions both within and outside of her classroom, in order to engage her colleagues:

I need to plan the activities well to manage the time in my classroom. Despite the scarcity of the literature on my project, I need to keep searching. I need to plan the activities and consult with my colleagues about the project.

(Assylym, written reflection, Alga school, 17.02.2017)

Gulden emphasised the need to reflect before planning and setting a direction:

I need to keep refining my plan by reflecting on it. I need to set plan on the right kind of direction.

(Gulden, written reflection, Talap school, 16.02.2017)

Interestingly, Sherim noted the importance of working on his inertia by setting clear targets and reading the literature related to his project (Sherim, written reflection, Talap school, 16.02.2017). Although critical reassessment of issues might not lead to action (Mezirow, 1990), this activity helped the participants to voice their external and internal challenges and think about the ways to overcome them.

The co-facilitators' attitudes to the facilitation of TL

Interestingly, participants did not feel reticent about voicing their personal barriers in front of their school leadership representatives, my co-facilitators. They observed the session and emphasised the positive impact of participants' self-reflections. Particularly, they noted that this activity helped the participants to revise their further actions. However, some of them noted the importance of being more demanding towards participants to enable them to complete the programme.

My co-facilitators' post-session feedback indicated a slight shift in their understanding about the facilitative nature of the programme, wherein the participants were encouraged to express their thoughts openly. Although during Phase 1 Dinara critiqued such an approach, it was evident that she started changing her attitude towards the programme's activities. Particularly, she noted that:

[...] This exercise facilitated the participants to act. They were able to reflect and assess their actions in leading the projects. (How can we improve the group sessions?) We need to invite the teachers to share their experiences of leading the project and help them structure their thoughts more clearly.

(Dinara, feedback, Talap school, 16.02.2017)

In a similar vein, Dana highlighted the positive impact of the participants' self-reflections but noted that I could have been stricter.

[...] The activity on self-reflection helped the participants to clarify their further plans. [...] It would be good if you could be stricter.

(Dana, feedback, Alga school, 17.02.2017)

Dana's suggestion clashed with the communicative, non-directive and negotiated nature of the relationships that I was building to facilitate participants' professional learning and leadership (Brookfield, 1986). However, I was aware that the setting strict requirements has been part of Dana's professional culture. Given the inspection-oriented nature of the professional culture in schools in Kazakhstan (Yakavets et al., 2017a), punitive measures dominated the practitioners' professional discourse. Although Dana attended the Centre of Excellence programmes on reflective practice, she was unable to exercise it in her day-to-day relationships with colleagues. This raised an issue of whether providing formal training (Yakavets et al., 2017a) could be sufficient to change school leadership teams' attitudes (Bridges et al., 2014) without changing the existing professional environment in schools.

In general, during the fourth group sessions I attempted to reduce my role and increase participants' ownership of their development projects. Therefore, I conducted an activity that helped the participants to reflect on the impact of their projects, identify the external and internal barriers and seek ways to overcome them. Although the senior leaders supported the communicative nature of this activity, their beliefs of practice contradicted the facilitative nature of the programme. The tension between existing practices and the programme became even more intense during the fourth one-to-one meetings.

The fourth series of one-to-one meetings

The fourth series of one-to-one meetings were held between 20th February-1st of March 2017. During these meetings I relinquished the pushing approach and instead listened to participants' reflections on their progress. Our conversations revealed the following key themes: the clash between attestation and development projects, the lack of commitment and resilience.

The clash between attestation and development projects

As the participants' projects evolved the organisational and system barriers became more evident. Participants' reflections indicated how they had to juggle with their 'ordinary work' and the 'extraordinary work' - inquiring into practice and leading improvement in their classrooms and schools (Kemmis et al., 2014: 93). Particularly, the participants in

Birlik and Talap schools became more preoccupied with the upcoming attestation in their schools, which clearly influenced their commitment to the development project.

During our conversation in the comprehensive Birlik school, the teachers highlighted the upcoming school attestation. The inspectors, who consisted of the local educational department representatives, were expected in May 2017. By then, both the teachers and their senior leadership team were working hard to make sure that all the necessary papers were in place. Although official documents indicated that teachers' professional practices were part of the school attestation process (GoK, № 1270, 2007), participants noted the technicality of this event. Adina highlighted the difference between the creativity project, which she was asked to provide for the attestation, and her development project:

I have never inquired into anything within my creativity project. I have been collecting artefacts: making sure that dates in the documents match and that evidence of working with gifted and failing students are in place. However, this development project is totally different. It requires you to act and engage with your students' learning. Other teachers are also noting that you make us think deeper about our professional practice. As we want to learn more about our practices, we are engaging voluntarily. Doing things voluntarily is completely different.

(Adina, Birlik school, 22.02.17)

This indicated the tensions between how the local educational department assesses teachers' performance and the MoES's reform initiatives (see Chapter 1). Despite promoting student-centred approaches, innovation and change, the reform initiatives were enacted differently at the local level. This could potentially result in, as Ball (2003:221) puts it, 'value schizophrenia', when the teachers are compelled to abandon authentic practices for the sake of performance. Having said that, the MoES was planning to promote schools' self-assessment and introduce a new attestation system in the upcoming year (Kudaibergenov, 2016; MoES, 2016).

Meanwhile, the new teacher attestation system was already in place in the selective Talap school. Although that school was not assessed by the local educational department, the teachers' attention was still fixated on attestation and so they had little or no time for leading their development projects. During our conversation Ainur noted the centrality of preparation for attestation, as her career advancement and salary depended on its outcome

(Research journal, 22.02.2017). As such, in both the old and the new attestation systems the teachers were driven by the performance management rather than authentic commitment to their students' learning.

The lack of commitment

Teachers' commitment to what they do was a key in enacting leadership, as they had to provide extra time and effort to lead their development projects. Not all teachers were willing to do so. Three teachers decided to withdraw in the midst of the programme. Whilst Madina (Birlik school) and Malika (Yntymaq school) noted that they were overloaded with other work-related responsibilities, Meirim (Alga school) remained inactive throughout the programme.

As Meirim was not progressing with his project, I offered to observe his lesson and help him collect evidence, but he kept postponing it (Research Journal, 27.02.17, p. 200). Later, it became evident that he was avoiding his school leadership team too. As Dana noted:

Given our work conditions, one really needs to have a commitment to this profession. Otherwise, it is extremely difficult to be a teacher. We are offering help to improve his teaching, but he keeps avoiding us [...].

(Research journal, 27.02.17 p. 201)

Similarly, Madina and Malika were unwilling to continue their projects. Whilst Madina referred to the increased workload and the upcoming school attestation (Research Journal, 21.02.17, p. 163), Malika noted that she had no time:

[...] As you know, I work both as a school administrative staff member and a teacher. As my administrative responsibilities increased, it became more difficult to handle things. I was unable to spend sufficient amount of time on my development project. I felt that it was a shame and decided to withdraw [...].

(Malika, Yntymaq school, 01.03.17)

My own observation was that these teachers had different expectations from the programme. As they were at the beginning of their teaching careers, they expected more instruction and guidance that would help them improve their teaching skills. The

programme, however, required that participants take charge of their own learning to improve practices. This made me reflect on the importance of addressing participants' expectations from the outset. Otherwise, it can be extremely difficult to facilitate TL, when they do not envisage to take charge of their own learning or take a commitment to improve their own practices.

Resilience

Despite the external circumstances and the lack of experience, the majority of the participants seemed resilient. Whilst some teachers used the tools for inquiry, others acted to develop their understanding and improve their practice.

The facilitation that I provided by introducing the tools for inquiry and helping the participants to use them started yielding tangible results. It became evident that some of the participants had already obtained consent from the parents. As Zhenis pointed:

It was a new experience for me to send such letters to parents. Almost all of them signed the consent form but for one parent. I will make sure that I take into consideration the parent's decision.

(Zhenis, Talap school, 23.02.17)

Similarly, Raigul and her colleagues were actively collecting students' reflections. It helped Raigul to diagnose the challenges that her students faced in creating dialogue in English classes. Apart from the language barriers, she learned that her students were afraid of each other's criticism. As a result, her next step was to identify the right kind of activities to help her students overcome their barriers. My own observations indicated Raigul's agency and resilience in leading the development project:

[...] Raigul seems to have a strong personal and professional motive to lead the development project without any external requirement. Although she had been substituting her colleague for the last couple of weeks and hence, had little time for her project, she has clearly identified her next steps.

(Research journal, 21.02.17, p. 158)

Similarly, Alua faced challenges in leading her development project, which looked at promoting Kazakh language in her school. She was setting up a student society to gather

together students who had passion for writing poems and stories in Kazakh. Her survey outcomes indicated the lessening role of Kazakh in her school. Given the trilingual policy promoted from the top, Alua was going against the stream:

As Alua's project is looking at practices outside her classroom, it seems to clash with the school leadership team's understanding of practices. They pointed out that Alua's project must not conflict with the students' study hours. It looks like Alua is going against popular ideas and school leadership's attitudes.

(Research journal, 22.02.17, p. 173)

Interestingly, the participants in Yntymaq school did not engage with the tools for inquiry. Instead, they preferred to adjust their plans depending on their observations of the process. For example, Ylias, who was looking at implementing the project-based learning in Year 8, noted that his students were not taking responsibility for leading their projects. Therefore, he decided to engage the students' parents and emphasise the centrality of team performance (Research journal, 01.03.17, p. 212). In such cases, I remained non-intrusive, as the participants were able to monitor their development projects and had clear ideas about their further plans.

As a result, the fourth one-to-one meetings revealed a clash between the attestation and the development project and that enacting the leadership required commitment, resilience and agency. Despite the school and the system challenges, the majority of the participants were actively engaging with their development projects.

The second School Network event

The participants and the senior leadership teams confirmed the date and the time of the second School Network event. It took place in Yntymaq school on 11th of March 2017. My co-facilitator in Yntymaq school, Balausa, kindly helped me to plan and organise the event. We considered participants' feedback on the first school network event, which was held in December 2016. As a result, we decided to conduct a welcoming session and divide the group sessions into two parts to provide more time for presentations and discussions as well as enable the participants to attend other sessions (Minutes, Second School Network event, 11.03.2017). As the number of group sessions had doubled, I

invited more teachers to lead sessions. The participants decided to opt for power point presentations rather than making posters. In order to ensure that their presentations were more structured and included reflections on the enactment of the development projects, I provided guidelines on making a presentation. In general, participants felt positive about the event, they highlighted the welcome speech of the Director of the Yntymaq school, the students' concert and my introductory presentation. More detailed analysis of the participants' interaction during and after the group sessions revealed the following themes: leading the group sessions, facilitating knowledge-sharing and growing activism.

Leading the group sessions

During the first School Network event (see Chapter 5), we learned the importance of assigning one person to facilitate each group session. This time, however, we were able to notice the difference between the facilitation of a school administrator and a teacher.

I invited four teachers to facilitate group sessions in addition to my four co-facilitators. As the facilitator's role was to bring together practitioners from multiple professional learning communities, encourage them to reflect and provide emotional support, it helped to build leadership capacity (Hands et al., 2015). Hence, by enabling teachers to facilitate the group sessions, I aimed to enhance their leadership capacity. The teachers accepted my invitation and diligently prepared to facilitate the group sessions. In all four sessions I observed the encouragement and collegiality, which I explain in the following excerpt:

Zhenis prepared an opening activity. He asked the participants to stand in a circle and introduce themselves. He then asked the participants to share any good news that happened in their lives recently [...]. One participant told that her parents bought a new house, another one revealed that his son got married. Teachers were laughing and congratulating each other. [...]. As a result, Zhenis was able to create a group bond.

(Research journal, 11.03.17, p.214)

At the same, there was another group session steered by Dinara, a senior leadership team member. It was not clear if her role in the school influenced her style of facilitation, but she acted more as a supervisor than supporter. After the teachers' presentations, Dinara highlighted the major problems that each teacher had to consider in their projects. Although her knowledge of pedagogy was useful, her facilitation did not create open atmosphere where the teachers would feel equal and confident to engage in discussions.

As a result, the participants in her room were quiet and did not engage in professional dialogue. As one of the teachers noted later:

It felt that there was no openness between the facilitator and the teachers.

(Teacher, post-event reflections, 11.03.17)

Despite my growing hope that Dinara had become more open to the communicative nature of the programme, changing senior leaders' beliefs and attitudes required more time:

My co-facilitator was dominating the group sessions. My initial thought was that her expertise might be helpful, but now I see that her attitude is more of an obstacle than a support to facilitating TL.

(Research journal, 11.03.17, p. 214)

As a result, it became evident that group facilitation was an important component during the school network, where the facilitator's attitude influenced the group's self-efficacy. The group processes influenced individual self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), wherein the participants either engaged in or refrained from sharing knowledge.

Facilitating knowledge-sharing

Beyond the facilitator's attitude, it was important that we consider the format of the group sessions to facilitate sharing of the expert knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). On the one hand the power point presentation approach had a positive effect on structuring and articulating participants' thoughts, but on the other hand promoting knowledge-sharing required more interactive methods.

The type of interaction that the presentations promoted was more about asking and answering questions. In some instances, the question and answer approach generated new ideas. As indicated in the following excerpt, Bibigul's question helped Zamira to identify her next step:

Both Bibigul (Talap school) and Zamira (Birlik school) were looking at enhancing students' engagement in biology classes through visual materials. After Zamira finished her presentation, Bibigul asked whether Zamira tried to identify her

students' learning styles. Bibigul then noted that based on her own experience not all students might be visual learners. Zamira thanked her and noted that she will look into that closer.

(Research journal, 11.03.17, p. 215)

This mutual interaction could be attributed to the common agenda of these two teachers, which is essential to knowledge-sharing in communities of practice (Wenger and Snyder, 2000). Nevertheless, such cases were scarce, as questions were not always perceived positively and so discouraged knowledge sharing. Assylym's post-event feedback indicated that the question from a colleague was perceived more as a threat than a help:

When the teacher asked me why I conducted a questionnaire in different language, I felt that she was trying to trip me up in front of other colleagues. Her question was not helpful at all. In other group sessions teachers were more supportive to each other.

(Assylym, Alga school, 14.03.17)

This made me reflect on the participant's sensitivity to public shaming, which reflected the social and organisational context (see Chapter 5). Since Assylym and her counterpart did not have similar organisational contexts, it could have diminished the reciprocity and communication between them (Mergel et al., 2008).

As a result, the presentation approach had a limited effect on promoting knowledge-sharing between participants from professional communities. However, the participants came up with their own ideas of facilitating knowledge-sharing during the next network event. As Balausa put it:

Next time we could suggest teachers to bring their lesson plans or share their teaching tools, so that they all engage in the discussions.

(Balausa, post-event feedback, 11.03.17)

As the presentation approach was limited to question and answer, Balausa's suggestion indicated participants' willingness to engage in practice-oriented interaction rather than merely reporting the outcome of their development projects. I took her suggestion into account and interpreted it as a growing sense of activism.

Growing activism

In order to wrap up the second School Network event, we all gathered in one room to reflect on what we had learned during this event. The participants filled in the reflection proforma without indicating their names which allowed them to express their thoughts openly. They reflected on their perceptions of leadership, inquiry and influencing others. Their written reflections and feedback, as well as my own observations, indicated growing activism.

The participants' reflections on leadership indicated a shift in their perceptions. Central to their narratives were self-accountability and strategic action:

Leadership is about identifying a professional problem, planning to tackle that problem, enacting your plan and influencing others.

(Teacher 1, post-event reflections, 11.03.17)

[...] today I realised that leadership is up to an individual teacher.

(Teacher 2, post-event reflections, 11.03.17)

My observations indicated that some of them have already started influencing practice. For example, Alua (Talap school) and Erlan (Yntymaq school) were looking at developing students' self-regulated learning. In order to achieve this, Alua set up a Kazakh language and literature students' society, whereas Erlan organised a robotics club. The following extract indicates their achievements:

Alua brought the first issue of her students' journal. It included the collection of students' poems and stories. Her next plan was to help her students organise a school-wide concert, where they could introduce their Kazakh language and literature society to the school community. In the similar vein, Erlan presented his students' robotics club, where Year 10 students taught Year 8 students how to design robots. He noted that his students were planning to hold a school-wide competition in robotics.

(Research journal, 11.03.17, p. 216)

Participants reflections indicated their growing appreciation of systematic inquiry and reflection:

I have learned that teachers' ongoing systematic inquiry can lead to a conscious knowledge. (Teacher 3, post-event reflections, 11.03.17)

During the group presentations, Saltanat shared the outcomes of her project:

Saltanat reflected on her challenges in promoting teachers' reflective practice in her school. She learned that the most important factor in facilitating a reflective practice was to ask the right kind of questions.

(Research journal, 11.03.17, p. 216)

In general, the second School Network event revealed participants' progress in leading their projects and reflecting on their experiences. Beyond that, my co-facilitators, who mainly represented the senior leadership teams, began taking charge of the programme:

During the wrap up session, Balausa thanked me for helping the participants to structure their practices. Her remark resonated with the audience, as they nodded. After that, Dinara informed the participants that her school was willing to host the ITL Conference. Moreover, she offered to publish the participants' reflective stories. We all clapped hands and thanked her for taking the initiative.

(Research journal, 11.03.17, p. 216)

This all made me reflect on the importance of enhancing participants' and the senior leaders' sense of involvement. The more they engaged with the programme activities the more responsibility they became eager to take.

Chapter summary and emerging insights

In this chapter I explained the enactment of TL in Kazakh schools, where the system and the school conditions were central to participants' actions. Therefore, it was important that I engaged the senior leadership teams and address their attitudes throughout the Phase 2. In addition, I provided an overview of the inquiry process, which promoted reflective practice and improvement. Self-reflection enabled the participants to think about the barriers and take charge of their projects. Having said that, attestation became a stumbling block in two schools, as the participants had little or no time for their development projects. Beyond the external barriers, participants' commitment to their profession was a key factor that both pushed them away from the programme and strengthened their resilience to external factors. Closer to the end of Phase 2, we were able to observe growing activism both on the part of the participants and senior leaders.

- National reform
- School structures
- Co-facilitators' beliefs and dispositions
- Facilitating the enactment of TL
- Collaboration and networking
- Impact during Phase 2

The full list (see Appendix 7) then served as a tool which I used to construct the next layer of analysis presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter 7

Phase 3: Reflecting

This chapter features the final phase of the programme between the middle of March and the middle of May 2017 in which there were final project team meetings, two more group sessions, one-to-one meetings and a conference (see Figure 9). During this time, the participants were working on their projects and trying to maximise the impact of them. This final phase was also characterised by reflection on the part of myself and my co-facilitators on what had been achieved and how this could be enhanced in the future. The reflections indicated a shift in participants' understandings about leadership, the increase in their self-efficacy and commitment to what they do. The narrative that follows highlights this thread of reflection as well as accounting for the unfolding of the programme and bringing it to a conclusion. In the construction of this narrative, I have drawn upon my analysis of research journal entries, minutes of meetings, materials from group sessions, participants' written reflections, notes from session observations, co-facilitator's written reflections, participants' reflective stories, portfolios and written reflections from colleagues from HertsCam who participated in our final conference.

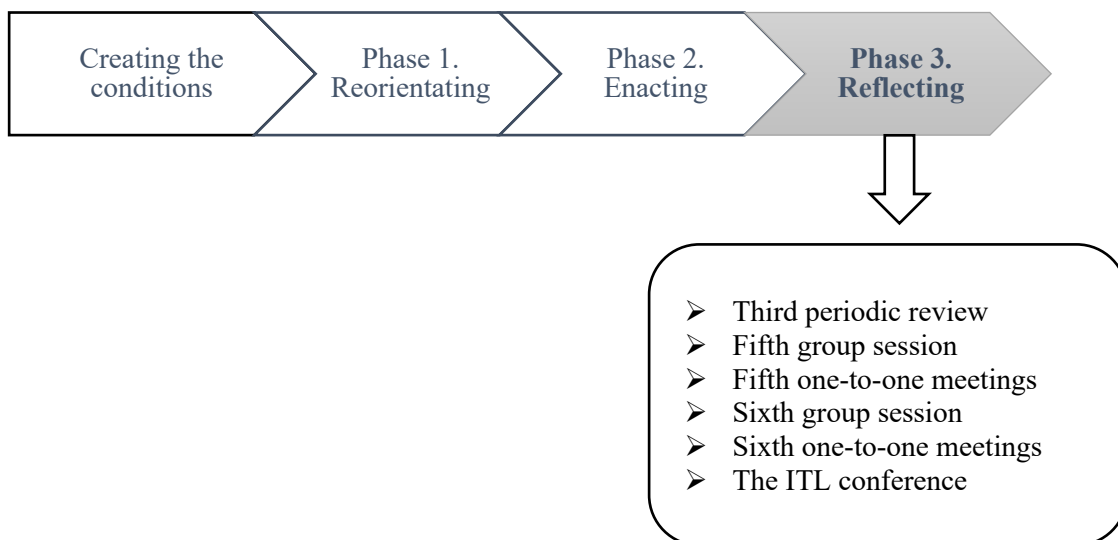


Figure 9. The main events of Phase 3 of the programme

I now begin the narrative with an account of the third project team meetings.

Third periodic review with the project teams

The focus of the third project team meetings was a review of Phase 2. The meetings took place in each school separately between 17th March and 5th April 2017. As discussed in Chapter 6, it was important to find ways to enhance the directors' roles in the programme. Therefore, my co-facilitators and I decided to bring the directors and the participants together to increase the effectiveness of the periodic review. I met with my co-facilitators separately to plan Phase 3.

Bringing the directors and the participants together

Bringing the directors and the participants together to talk about school practice had a multifaceted effect. First, the participants made presentations and raised issues related to the schools' teaching and learning. Second, the directors were able to recognise the barriers to students' learning and provide support to participants' initiatives. However, it became evident that not all directors were willing to engage with participants' projects.

Unlike our previous meetings, these took place in classrooms, as the participants were expected to make presentation about their projects. The school directors did not remain in their offices but came to the participants' classrooms to engage in matters of teaching and learning. The change of territory clearly had an influence on the power dynamic and enabled horizontal interaction between school directors and participants. This made me reflect on the importance of school directors in creating cultures of trust and building positive relations within their schools. In such an environment, teachers can develop the self-esteem and confidence required to exercise leadership (Frost, 2004). In all four schools, I was able to observe the extent of participants' confidence in presenting their development projects through which they were able to raise issues that required the directors' involvement:

The participants' presentations were structured. It was clear that they engaged with the literature, which made their claims powerful. Nassyr (Yntymaq school) pointed out that the school leaderships' 'pushing' is necessary for the novice teachers to attend the mentoring programme. Alua (Talap school) noted that students need the school leaderships' support to publish the first issue of their journal.

(Research journal, 29.03.17 and 5.04.17, pp.256-257)

In turn, the directors engaged in professional dialogue and offered different kinds of feedback to participants. As their projects revolved around the classroom and the school matters, this meeting created opportunities for dialogue between the school leadership and the teachers:

The director in Alga school suggested Batima to seek more feedback from students to refine her tools as well as share her project with other colleagues. The director in Yntymaq school asked ErKayim if she was able to monitor the impact of her project systematically. Interestingly, the director in Talap school, who was appointed recently, noted that every teacher in his school should be able to lead such kind of project. His vice-director, Dinara, noted that these teachers were privileged, as the programme provided clear steps on how to lead project.

(Research journal, 29.03.17 and 5.04.17, pp.256-257)

I was unable to achieve the same level of reciprocity between the teachers and the Director in the comprehensive Birlik school. The director left the room in the midst of the teachers' presentations, which limited the impact on the teachers. The Director's behaviour puzzled me, as she was attending the Centre of Excellence training programmes for the school leaders. Despite that, she failed to recognise this event as a good opportunity to engage with her teachers' professional learning. It has been stated elsewhere that the teachers' beliefs can be an obstacle to educational change in Kazakhstan (Yakavets, 2016), this case however indicated the urgency of addressing directors' beliefs about their roles in school. As discussed earlier (see Chapter 2), directors must become the 'learning leaders' in a system that is pursuing educational improvement (Fullan, 2016). School directors play a key role in leading teachers' professional learning and development as well as creating the necessary conditions (Robinson, 2011; Dimmock, 2011; Fullan, 2016). Meanwhile, the Director in Birlik school delegated teaching and learning issues to her vice-director. Kymbat, the Vice-director for Research and Teaching methods, observed all presentations. She noted that it was the first time she saw her teachers *think through and generate knowledge on their own* (Research journal, 17.03.17, p.252).

In general, bringing the directors and the participants together had a powerful effect. On the one hand it facilitated participants' commitment to their development projects, on the other hand it enhanced the directors' roles in teaching and learning. However, not all directors were willing to take part in such discussions, which required addressing their perceived roles and creating more opportunities for the professional dialogue in schools.

In addition, this event made me question whether the directors could act as facilitators of TL and lead school-based professional learning programmes in future, in spite of evidence from other contexts that this is not necessarily a problem (Ramahi, 2018). However, given the perennial lack of the directors' time, excessive external accountability and their perceptions about their roles in schools, the vice-directors might remain the key figures in planning and enacting such opportunities in future.

Co-planning Phase 3

I met with my-co-facilitators to plan Phase 3. In contrast to the previous two planning sessions, we had clear ideas about the participants' projects. This helped us to discuss ways how to maximise the impact of the participants' projects. My co-facilitators noted the importance of enabling teachers to share their projects at a wider scale. Particularly, Dinara highlighted that teachers in her school could publish their stories in local practitioner journals. She also offered to publish the participants' reflective stories. It was evident that teachers' publications were prioritised in her school.

Above that, Dinara noted that her school had already started preparations for the Final ITL Conference. The event would include the colleagues from the HertsCam Network (Research journal, 17.03.2017, p. 254). Dinara's meticulous preparations reflected the Kazakh culture, where guests are highly honoured (Michaels, 2007). I interpreted this as an increase of my co-facilitator's responsibility and ownership of the programme. In a similar vein, I was learning from my co-facilitators too. I attended Mariya's final training session, which made me think of a reflective activity that I used during the fifth group session.

The fifth series of group sessions

The fifth series of group sessions took place between 28th March and 3rd April 2017. The focus of the session was two-fold. First, it intended to generate group reflections on participants' experiences of the facilitation process. Second, it aimed at providing guidance on writing a reflective story. The particular focus here was to stimulate participants' thinking and agency through writing (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Frost, 2014). Enabling the teachers to write and share their leadership stories had the potential to enhance their voices. Having said that, I had to overcome system barriers to enable the

participants to share their stories on a wider scale. I explain these events by using the following metaphors: a butterfly leaving its cocoon, learning to fly and flying against the wind. I now discuss them in detail.

A butterfly leaving its cocoon

I opened the session with the story about a butterfly and its cocoon, which I adapted from Mariya's training session referred to above. The purpose of this activity was to generate group reflections on the facilitation process, which I describe in the following extract:

I showed the picture of a butterfly trying to leave its cocoon on the screen and asked the participants to read the story. The story was about a man who cut the cocoon with his knife to help the butterfly to fly. But the butterfly was not prepared to leave the cocoon on its own. As such, the external support made it crawl the rest of its life. I compared the man with myself and my co-facilitators and asked the participants how they felt about our facilitation.

(Minutes, 5th group sessions, pp.1-8).

The participants' view on the facilitation process varied depending on their work experiences. The experienced teachers felt that it was a collegial relationship and appreciated that we stimulated new ideas throughout the programme (Minutes, 5th group sessions, pp.1-8). Interestingly, the novice teachers wished that we provided more hands-on guidance, which I explain below:

Arman, Zamira (Birlık school) and Daniya (Alga school) noted that this was their first year of teaching and they had never led such project previously. Therefore, they wished that we pushed them stronger and met with them more often.

(Minutes, 5th group sessions, pp.1-8)

On the one hand, it was evident that that novice teachers required more support, as they had to juggle too many challenges at the beginning of their career, such as mastering teaching skills and managing classroom. On the other hand, my initial intent was to leave space for their agency, wherein pushing had to be balanced with scaffolding (Poekert, 2011). This prompted me to look closer at individual experiences of the facilitation at the final stage of the programme. This discussion helped us to make the transition to the next activity.

Learning to fly

The next activity looked at providing guidance on writing a reflective story, so to enable the participants to extend the impact of their journey at a wider scale. Central to such writing was to enhance participants' agency and ownership of the experience, wherein 'I' dominated throughout the text (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Knowles and Gilbourne, 2010). However, this posed a challenge, as the participants came from a predominantly 'oral' culture (Michaels, 2007). Based on my own experience, auto-ethnographic writing was not a widely spread practice in educational settings in Kazakhstan. Therefore, I provided a model for such writing and developed a handout with guiding questions. Although the participants' appreciated the guidelines, they noted that more time and thinking was required to produce a reflective story. Therefore, they agreed to submit their reflective accounts along with the portfolio of evidence.

Flying against the wind

Meanwhile, there were a few teachers who were planning to share their development projects on a wider scale. Whilst Estigul (Talap school) and Assylym (Alga school) were invited to present their projects at the Annual Conference in Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics in Astana (capital of Kazakhstan), Zamira (Birlik school), Zauresh and Daniya (Alga school) attended the national pedagogical competition for novice teachers in Almaty (the 1st largest city), where they shared their leadership stories. Despite the nature of these events, they offered an opportunity for the teachers to share their development projects with their colleagues from all over Kazakhstan.

We had to go against the system bureaucracy to fund Assylym's trip to Astana. As her school's budget was controlled by the local educational department, she needed official permission from the top. Therefore, I contacted the Conference committee to send an invitation letter with Assylym's name to the local educational department. This case made me reflect on the obstacles that thousands of teachers at the periphery have to face to access such events. It was not surprising that bureaucracy at the local educational department level had wider impact leading to professional apathy and lack of agency at the teachers and school levels.

The fifth series of one-to-one meetings

The fifth series of group sessions were followed by one-to-one meetings. This time, however, the format of our meetings was slightly different. As the participants' projects were reaching the final point (due to the end of academic year), they wanted me to come and observe their students' achievements. During these observations, I remained a critical friend who was there to help collect evidence and provide feedback. As a result, I was able to reflect on participants' achievements as well as the conditions that constrain their impact, which I explain below.

The emerging impact of the development projects

The participants were, in general, modest about the impact of their development projects. It was evident, however, that their projects had impact on students' learning, professional inquiry, parental engagement as well as societal issues to a different degree both within and beyond their classrooms.

Looking at professional practice, it became evident that the practitioners became more courageous in experimenting with new teaching approaches (Frost and Durrant, 2002). Particularly, new ideas were generated through engaging with the literature:

During our meeting in Talap school, Estigul was holding different kinds of books on action research and scaffolding. As an English teacher, Estigul could access such literature. In the similar vein, Kulziya and Sherim translated teaching strategies from English into Kazakh and applied them in their classrooms. In the comprehensive Birlik school, Zamira told me that she had never thought about her students' learning styles before she read Edgar Dale's 'Cone of experience'.

(Research journal, 6.04.17)

Having said that, there were the participants who sought learning for purely practical purposes. For example, Zauresh searched for the digital programmes that could help her save time in maths classroom. It became evident that her projects increased students' engagement in maths. Moreover, despite being a novice teacher, Zauresh's project was adopted by her more experienced colleagues, which I describe below:

During the lesson Zauresh used different kinds of digital programmes. It was evident that her students got accustomed to such programmes. As one of her students noted after the classroom: since their teacher started introducing the digital programmes 'solving maths tasks became much fun'. Another student pointed out that they became more 'self-regulated'. A colleague, who adopted Zauresh's teaching tools, noted that 'it was helpful in saving time and decreasing cheating in the classroom'.

(Observation, Zauresh's class, Alga school, 17.04.17)

Zauresh's achievements clearly indicate her progress between Phase 1, when she doubted that her colleagues might be interested in her initiatives, and Phase 3, when she was able to secure professional credibility among other peers. Moreover, looking beyond classroom experience, there were the development projects that instigated peer-learning between students of different ages. For example, Erlan, who set up a 'RoboClub' to stimulate students' self-regulated learning, was able to achieve peer-learning between Year 9 and 8 students. The students worked in teams and learned from each other how to construct robots:

Throughout one academic year students in Year 9 mentored students in Year 8. They learned how to design and develop robots. During the final school-based competition, which was organised by the club members, I was able to have a conversation with the students. Both Year 9 and 8 students indicated that they attended the club voluntarily. As a Year 8 student noted: he joined the club because he liked watching how robots fight with each other, but later his mentor in Year 9 explained that he can achieve much more and attend international competitions in future.

(Observation, Erlan's class, Yntymaq school, 11.04.17)

Beyond student-to-student learning, there were cases when parents got involved too. For example, Ylias's development project looked at integrating project-based learning in the school. Ylias's students developed projects that aimed at saving energy in their households. As they studied in the boarding school, they could not visit home on a daily basis. Therefore, the students involved their parents in monitoring the expenditure on electricity and saving energy throughout their projects. Therefore, it was legitimate that Ylias invited the parents for the final presentations to recognise their contributions:

We all gathered in a big hall, where teams presented the outcome of their projects. They all were highlighting their actions in saving electricity. The majority noted that it was beneficial not only for the family budget but had implications for the

world climate. At the end of the event, the parents thanked Ylias for the opportunity to engage in their children's learning.

(Observation, Ylias's class, Yntymaq school, 13.04.17)

There were cases when teachers' development projects had societal implications. Having helped her students to set up a Kazakh language and literature society, Alua and her students invited me to their first concert. During the concert the students read poems in Kazakh, performed classic drama and played national instruments. The event was attended by the children from local residential institutions and the elderly people from the care homes, which I describe in the following excerpt:

The concert took place in the school's main hall. The hall was full of students, teachers, school administration and guests, who came from the local residential institutions and care homes. Alua's students presented their society, the activities that took throughout a year to promote Kazakh language and literature. But it felt that this event achieved much more than promoting language and culture.

(Observation, Talap school, 19.04.17)

As such, Alua's development projects influenced not only students' self-regulation but helped to promote social responsibility. Nevertheless, not all the development projects had such impact.

There were cases when the participants required close supervision to enact their development projects. For example, Gulim and Arman, who both worked in the comprehensive Birlik school, appreciated that Mariya and I observed their classes and provided feedback:

Me and Mariya observed Arman's and Gulim's classes. We then discussed with them how they could extend the impact of their projects. For example, we noted that Arman needs to provide more time for his students, so that they could share their opinion, whereas Gulim recognised that she could let her students generate ideas on their own.

(Observations, Birlik school, 12-13.04.17)

Arman's and Gulim's cases indicate that participants still struggled to internalise their projects and hence, as Sergiovanni (1992) puts it, were motivated by 'what is rewarded' rather than 'what is rewarding'. This made me think about school and system barriers to enhancing the participants' moral commitment to what they do.

The culture of inspection

Three out of four schools had been subject to constant inspection from the local educational department. This form of ongoing control increased paperwork and decreased time, which was a barrier to promoting professional learning within schools. Most importantly strict accountability led to superficial attitudes and distorted school cultures, which had wider impact on system improvement.

The school inspection had been ‘the elephant in the room’ throughout the programme. In Yntymaq school we had to postpone the group sessions during Phase 1. After receiving negative feedback from inspectors, Balausa felt discouraged, as her students had been accepted to the world’s top institutions and received recognition from the public (Research Journal, 7.01.17). In Alga school my colleagues were overwhelmed by the upcoming national testing of Year 9 students, which clearly distracted them from their projects during Phase 3 (Research Journal, 20.04.17). The most vulnerable to external inspection, however, was the comprehensive Birlik school, where unexpected inspections were the norm throughout the programme. During Phase 3, teachers were bombarded with different kinds of paperwork. Apart from the paperwork, the inspection clearly affected the school culture, which I explain below:

Teachers came to school on Sunday to fill in the papers, which they were unable to do during the workdays. Whilst meeting with Zamira, I noticed couple of teachers in the corridor arguing for one document that both had to fill in.

(Research Journal, Birlik school, 9.04.17)

The inspection culture affected participants’ commitment to what they do, distorted collegial cultures within schools, but most importantly diverted participants’ attention from ongoing professional learning to a performance-oriented mindset. The contexts, which place the performance before the support, make system-wide educational improvement unachievable (Elmore, 2006; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Fullan, 2016). Paradoxically, such external inspection stole the very professionalism that it sought to increase in schools.

In general, the fifth one-to-one meetings enabled me to track the emerging impact of participants’ projects at classroom, school and societal levels. Embedding and enhancing

their impact, however, was challenged by the strict accountability cultures at school and system levels.

The sixth series of group sessions

The sixth series of group sessions took place between 20th and 27th of April 2017. The sessions revolved around exploring participants' emerging understandings of leadership. Having reached the final stage of the programme, it was important to enable them to bring to surface and make meaning of their leadership experiences. Understanding the 'why' of leadership had implications for its sustainability (Sinek et al., 2017). Therefore, I engaged the participants in group drawings, group discussions and individual reflections, which I explain below.

Exploring the emergent understandings of leadership

Participants' definitions of the leadership concept during the final group session contrasted with their initial accounts (Chapter 5). As with the first group session, I engaged participants in group drawings. The art-based methodology was useful in enabling the participants to illustrate their emerging understandings of this social phenomenon (Roberts and Woods, 2018). Group drawings of the leadership concept indicated a shift in participants' understandings, where notions such as leadership as a practice, professional learning, collaboration and commitment were highlighted in each school.



Photo 5. Teachers' conceptions of leadership process (Phase 3)

In contrast to the first group sessions, participants' concepts of leadership became more cyclical (see Photo 5 above). Central to their discussions was *leadership as practice*, wherein teachers place themselves within the larger school process (Yntymaq school, Minutes of the group session, 26.04.2017). Particularly, participants' reflections indicate the centrality of their own actions rather than external roles:

Before leading this project, I used to think that a leader is someone who is always on the plain sight [...] but I learned that a leader is someone who is able to introduce change through his actions, influence and collaborate with others.

(Alua, Talap school, Reflective account)

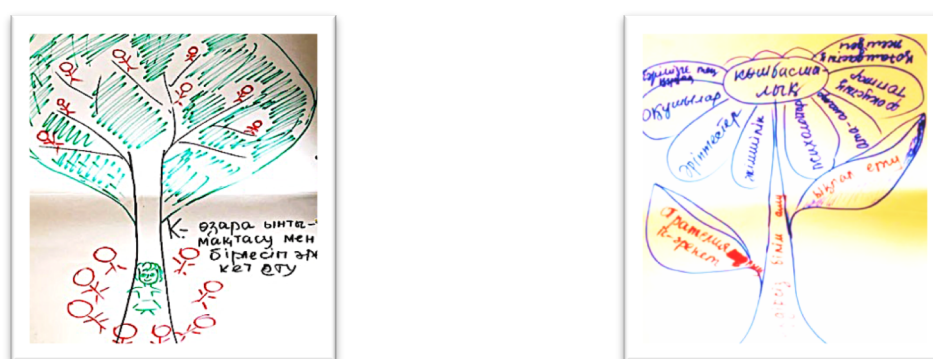


Photo 6. Teachers' conceptions of collaboration (Phase 3)

Central to group discussions was the notion of professional collaboration (see Photo 6). In Alga school, for example, participants indicated more open dispositions towards collaborating with colleagues in contrast to the initial stages of the programme, wherein Assylym suggested that they could co-lead the development project with the colleagues in other schools in future (Alga school, Minutes of the group session, 20.04.2017). In a similar vein, the participants in Talap school viewed collaboration as a means to their professional learning:

By joining this project, I started valuing my colleagues' ideas and skills as a source for enriching my professional practice. Therefore, I aim to continue collaborating with my colleagues [...]in future.

(Gulden, Talap school, Reflective account)



Photo 7. Teachers' conceptions of learning (Phase 3)

Professional learning was seen as a step-by-step action, wherein the seven steps of the TLDW methodology permeated discussions in all four schools (see Photo 7). As the participants in Talap school noted, central to such professional learning was the *love of what you do as a professional* (Talap school, Minutes of the group session, 24.04.2017). Participants' commitment to what they do, as Ainur put it in the following excerpt, was the driving force for their professional learning as well as enhancing opportunities for their students' learning:

Whilst pursuing my development project, I was able to increase my students' classroom engagement. Moreover, I learned discussing my professional concerns, collaborating, exchanging ideas with colleagues and developing strategies.

(Ainur, Talap school, Reflective account)

Improving students' learning was central to the majority of the development projects. Therefore, it was not surprising that the participants placed TL within their classroom and school practices, as indicated in the following reflective account:

TL is about improving teaching and learning practices in school, which can be enacted through focusing one a particular professional problem [...].

(Raigul, Birlik school, Reflective account)

Some of the participants referred to their leadership experiences as *shabyt* (an inspiration in Kazakh) (Talap school, Minutes of the group session, 24.04.2017), which could imply an adaptation and internalisation of the concept at the personal level. The participants' perceptions of the leadership concept could also be influenced by positive relations and the group bond, which I observed in all four schools. Particularly, such relations had a positive impact on the novice teachers' self-efficacy. During group discussions in Birlik

school, Arman conducted an activity and asked his more senior colleagues to follow his example. His activity united the group, which resulted in a cheerful laughter in the room. Afterwards, he explained that leadership in his understanding was about *coming together as a group* (Birlik school, Minutes of the group session, 27.04.2017). The participants' responses validated my observations that awakening, what Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) call, 'the sleeping giant' within Kazakh schools required bringing together, inspiring and enhancing the self-efficacy of professionals.

Our final group sessions in all four schools culminated with the group pictures. Looking back at those pictures, I felt grateful that we had a courage to embark on this profound journey. The impact of that journey was also depicted in participants' portfolios.

Submitting portfolios

By the sixth group session participants were able to finalise their portfolios of evidence along with reflective stories. As discussed in Chapter 2, portfolio submission was a part of the programme completion. As an evaluation tool, the participants' portfolios played an important role in recording their leadership development and facilitating self-evaluation (Bush et al., 2011; Gelfer et al., 2015). Having said that, my co-facilitators and I faced challenges in evaluating the participants' portfolios. First, as a part of the present attestation system, portfolio development has a performativity connotation (see Chapter 5). Second, it was difficult for me and my co-facilitators to switch from facilitation to evaluation, as our actions originated from a certain type of bias (MacBeath, 1999). For me the priority was to sustain participants' self-efficacy, whereas my co-facilitators were focused on enabling their colleagues complete the programme successfully. Therefore, in order to promote learning, we viewed the portfolio of evidence as a collection of documents but focused on participants' reflective stories. By providing guidance and feedback on their reflective stories, we were able to create a space for participants' self-study and communication (Gelfer et al., 2015). Central to participants' reflective stories were critical reflection and agency.

Critical reflection

As discussed in Chapter 3, critical reflection was a cornerstone of this study, which aimed at enhancing teachers' roles in educational reform. Participants' final reflective accounts indicated a separation from the dominant top-down ideologies (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Freire, 1998). Particularly, the participants in the comprehensive Birlik school highlighted the role of creative practice, which opened up a space for their leadership initiatives within a system of top-down hierarchy:

[...] our teachers used to be reactive to the directives from the top [...] but now they have been able to proactively engage in creative practice [...].

(Ajar, Birlik school, Reflective story)

Within the system of high-stakes testing and control, it was not surprising that participants viewed their roles purely in terms of teaching and learning practices, whereby their initiatives were subject to senior leaders' support:

[...] hierarchical model can be the biggest challenge, but teachers who are willing to research or lead the development project can get the school leadership's support in our school [...].

(Raigul, Birlik school, Reflective story)

Having said that, participants were able to make a shift from the power perspective towards their capability to take the initiative, wherein collegial relations were seen as a key lever:

In the past I used to think that enacting leadership requires positional power, but my thoughts have changed. First thing you need to lead is not the power but the ability to take initiatives and influence others. Our leadership skills can be enhanced when there are colleagues who are willing to support us.

(Assylym, Alga school, Reflective story)

Moreover, participants were able to address organisational challenges and the mistake-intolerant organisational cultures which were limiting factors (Kjellstrand and Vince, 2017). Participants' reflections validated my observations about the structural barriers. Whilst the participants in the comprehensive Birlik school highlighted *the lack of time* and *the insufficiency of interactive boards* (Zamira, Birlik school, Reflective story), the

participants in the selective schools were more concerned with the lack of access *to up-to-date literature in Kazakh* (Kulziya and Sherim, Talap school, Reflective story).

At the same time, participants were able to identify personal barriers to leading the development project. Nassyr felt anxious as his project did not succeed:

I faced a lot of challenges throughout the project. First of all, those challenges were related to my own inconsistency (I was unable to manage time well) and impatience. Second, I had no separate time to meet with my mentees systematically [...].

(Nassyr, Yntymaq school, Reflective story)

In such instances, it was important to provide support to enable participants to learn from their experiences. Particularly, the novice teachers required ongoing facilitation to make meaning of their leadership experiences, wherein the collaborative nature of support was seen most beneficial:

At the beginning I was a bit confused about the purpose of the programme. I realised its aim only during the first School Network event, because I learned that teachers with a varying work experience had the similar professional problems [...]. This made me think that regardless of our work experience, we should never stop developing ourselves and creating knowledge.

(Kulimkoz, Yntymaq school, Reflective story)

Additionally, there were instances when participants were able to reflect on their roles in school and view their practices beyond delivering a subject knowledge:

Throughout this project, I learned that the decisions I make as a teacher influence not only my students' subject comprehension but their future lives.

(Adina, Birlik school, Reflective story)

This once again confirmed the importance of engaging participants in reflective practice, which had potential to redefine their perceptions about educational reform:

[...] a reflective teacher will never feel himself/herself as a technician of the educational reform but act as its driving force [...].

(Saltanat, Alga school, Reflective story)

Central to such an endeavour was participants' agency, which I discuss in the following section.

Agency

Participants' reflective stories illuminated the enhanced agency at personal, organisational and community levels. Through the narrative approach, participants were able to identify their roles within social processes (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). The following accounts indicate their separation from external forces and the shift towards self-directedness (Bandura, 1997).

In order to achieve my aim, I learned planning my actions, identifying risks and exploring the literature related to my project [...]. Through leading the development project, I learned that only those who act can influence their own as well as others' practices. By influencing others, they bring about change and excel as professionals.

(Alua, Talap school, Reflective story)

Whilst Alua was able to develop her own strategies in enacting here development project, her less experienced colleague in Birlik school noted increased resilience and confidence to continue the project in future:

[...] despite the lack of time and the resources, I was able to meet my challenges. As the projector in my classroom did not work, I kept borrowing the portable one from my colleagues, searched materials on internet and prepared various tasks depending on my students' learning styles. Next year, I would like to make the similar experiment with my high school students to learn more about their learning styles.

(Zamira, Birlik school, Reflective story)

Interestingly, Erlan's reflective account indicates the increase in agency at the teacher and student level:

I explained my project to the school leadership team. They suggested that I could share my strategies with other colleagues [...]. Moreover, my students came up with new ideas about leading the RoboClub and organising different competitions on their own next year [...].

(Erlan, Yntymaq school, Reflective school)

Moreover, participants' initiatives had impact at the organisational level. Being the Head of Department, Bibigul realised the importance of sharing her experience with colleagues:

[...] I took into account the fact that my colleagues might be facing the similar challenges and decided to conduct a coaching based on my students' feedback.

(Alua, Talap school, Reflective story)

The increase of self-efficacy among novice teachers was particularly evident in Alga school. In contrast to the initial stages of the programme, Zauresh who avoided taking initiatives because of the fear of public humiliation (see Chapter 5), was able to share her experiences with more experienced colleagues and make recommendations to her Director:

I told the Director about the achievements and the challenges of my project [...]. She accepted my suggestions and agreed to tackle the problem before the next academic year [...]. My strategies were accepted positively by my colleagues. Despite being a novice teacher, I am glad that I was able to help other colleagues. This project had an immense impact on my professional development.

(Zauresh, Alga school, Reflective story)

Given the high-power distance nature of organisational cultures in Kazakhstan (McLaughin and Ayubayeva, 2015), Zauresh was able to make a huge leap from acting subserviently towards taking the initiative and making recommendations to senior colleagues.

Moreover, there were instances when participants' reflective accounts reached beyond one school. Particularly, Estigul related her future professional endeavours with the school networks:

[...] I am planning to continue collaborating and exchanging innovative ideas with other teachers. By sustaining our network with other schools, we can develop better projects. The more quality projects we develop, the more we can offer to the educational reform.

(Estigul, Talap school, Reflective story)

In general, participants experience of enacting their development projects created a space for their agency, wherein they were able to identify strategies for self-directed learning, overcome external barriers, take the initiative at the organisational level and acknowledge

the centrality of social dimensions of their professional learning. This made me think about the participants' experiences of the facilitation process, which I discuss below.

The sixth series of one-to-one meetings

Our final one-to-one meetings took place between 26th of April and 10th of May 2017. During these meetings, I engaged participants in conversation about their experiences of the programme to identify barriers and refine strategies for the future (see Appendix 1). The post-hoc analysis of the transcripts generated three main themes related to the strategies of the programme: facilitation, collaboration and networking, which I discuss below.

Facilitation

Participants highlighted two main aspects of facilitation of TL: facilitator-participant relations and guidance. Despite sharing ethnic, educational and social background, I was alien to participants' organisations. Therefore, it was important to establish mutual trust and respect. Such relations were essential for participants to engage in critical reflection and take the initiative (Brookfield, 1986; Büchel and Moss, 2007). Adina described it as *humility*, which helped her to navigate through the uncertainties of the programme, whereas Arman referred to it as *respect* (Birlik school):

...at the beginning...we were a bit.... well I did not understand it at the beginning. But later [...], it all went well. Ajar and I always say that you explain things with a certain humility. We appreciated such warm relations [...].

(Adina, Birlik school)

Some experienced participants identified my role as *a mentor with whom they wanted to continue working in future* (Estigul, Talap school). In a similar vein, my co-facilitators' relations with their colleagues increased. Dinara noted that she *engaged other divisions to support the teachers' development projects as well as consulted them individually, when needed* (Talap school). In general, providing guidance was seen as one of the key elements of the facilitation process.

Given the self-guided nature of professional learning, wherein the participants had to identify their professional concerns and lead development projects to improve practices, participants were challenged by the uncertainty of such a constructivist approach to learning (see Chapter 5). As the primary instigator of the programme, the major challenge for me was to achieve a balance between providing guidance and enabling participants to exercise agency. I had to manoeuvre these two approaches depending on participants' learning needs and the phase of the programme. For example, during Phase 1 I focused more on step-by-step guidance, whereas towards the end of Phase 2 the majority of participants were able to take ownership of the process. Particularly, providing guidance was emphasised by the novice teachers. My co-facilitator Mariya noted that *the novice teachers were challenged to identify professional values and lead a project, as they lacked experience* (Birlik school). Having started his teaching career that year, Arman noted that *he needed some incentive or model to take the initiative* (Birlik school). In a similar vein, Daniya wished she received more guidance throughout the programme:

[...] here you need to do all things by yourself. You are responsible for your own advancement. But I wished that someone could guide me by telling what is right or wrong. Of course, you can consult with other colleagues. But I wished someone would nudge me throughout the programme [...].

(Daniya, Alga school)

As adult learners, Arman and Daniya could have been socialised to a transmission-based approach to learning, where full authority for their learning resided with external experts. As a facilitator, I was challenged not to adopt similar approaches which might have prevented them from taking charge of their own learning (Brookfield, 1986). Having said that, it was evident that facilitating TL requires external stimuli of a knowledgeable other, who would incentivise, encourage and sustain participants' professional learning and agency (Brookfield, 1986; Bandura, 1997). One external incentive to enacting TL was professional collaboration.

The majority of the teachers highlighted the systematic nature of such facilitation, which enabled them to build professional knowledge gradually

Collaboration

Collaboration was at the heart of TL, whereby participants are expected to influence and learn from each other (Frost, 2011; MacBeath et al., 2018). Although participants' responses indicate a change of disposition and an increase of bonding within their cohort, collaboration was ad hoc at the organisational level. As a facilitator of the programme, I was challenged to promote collaboration between participants and colleagues, who were not part of the programme. The major barriers, as noted by the participants, were lack of time, culture of competition and indifference.

The change of disposition towards collaboration was highlighted by both novice and experienced teachers. Zamira, who started teaching that year, perceived collaboration as the means to her professional learning:

Through this programme, I learned that it is much more effective when you collaborate with colleagues. Asking advice from my colleagues helped me to see things from a different angle. We had a very close relations within our cohort. We interacted between each other on an ongoing basis.

(Zamira, Birlik school)

The increase of bonding between programme participants was evident in all four schools. Particularly, participants noted the importance of having a common agenda (Lave et al., 1991). Erlan believed that his relationships with colleagues, who attended the programme, *became closer because of the common problems* (Yntymaq school). My co-facilitators, who noticed this group dynamic, sought ways to make it a part of school processes. For example, Dana involved the same cohort in lesson study, where *the participants observed each other's lessons and tried to address the issues together* (Alga school). In a similar vein, Dinara noted that the teachers in her school were able to create a professional community:

The programme brought together 8 teachers from 6 different methodological units, who teach 7 different subjects. As a result, they were able to establish a professional community and became very close at the personal level. [...] We are planning to integrate the programme into our school's professional development process in future.

(Dinara, Talap school)

There programme also motivated participants to go outside their cohort. Having extensive work experience, Alua noted that her interaction with colleagues who did not attend the programme, increased:

[...] we did not use to have very close relations within our department. But because of the development project, I had to collaborate with other colleagues in my department and consider their opinions and views. This had an influence on me [...]. They also noted changes in my disposition.

(Alua, Talap school)

However, teachers outside the programme did not necessarily share similar attitudes. As Raigul pointed out, sharing a common professional concern *might not be a case between those who do not inquire but come with a 'teach and go home' perspective* (Birlik school).

The major barriers to facilitating collaboration outside the programme were related to schools' structures and cultures. First, participants indicated lack of time and workload as major challenges to collaborating with colleagues. Participants noted that they had multiple roles beyond teaching. As Batima put it, *multiple tasks that came from the top left them with no time for seeking collaboration with colleagues* (Alga school). Second, the culture of competition was present in all four schools. Participants noted the reluctance of colleagues to share materials as well as limited relationships beyond their departments. Given the system's focus on individual teachers' attainment (Ayubayeva, 2018), it was not surprising that teachers avoided sharing materials. As Ainur indicated, teachers in her school *put showing off themselves on the first place*, whilst Kulziya noted that teachers might *feel protective to share knowledge* (Talap school). In a similar vein, Arman noted that beyond his department colleagues *felt jealous that colleagues might succeed* (Birlik school). Third, participants in the comprehensive Birlik school noted a general indifference to professional collaboration in their schools. As Gulim noted there were cases when her *colleagues were indifferent to seeking knowledge from each other*. Her colleague Adina noted that even senior leaders did not comprehend the importance of collaboration, as they *felt reluctant to help teachers attend school network events* (Birlik school). This all prompted me to reflect on the importance of culture building to enable teacher leadership in schools (see Chapter 8).

Networking

In contrast to collaboration at the school level, networking outside the school was indicated as an effective tool to facilitating TL, which had been validated in other educational contexts (Frost, 2011). In the Kazakhstani context the participants noted the change in disposition towards knowledge sharing, enhanced personal and collective responsibility, as well as increased self-efficacy. As discussed earlier, I was able to witness how collegial relations and affirmation during the first School Network event (see Chapter 5) led to the growth of participants' activism during the second School Network event (see Chapter 6).

Participants reported the change in their disposition towards knowledge sharing during the school network events. Whilst the novice teachers highlighted the feedback, the experienced teachers felt indebted to share knowledge with their novice colleagues:

[...] I wanted other teachers to learn something from my experience [...]. I got feedback and felt motivated to move forward.

(Daniya, Alga school)

I noticed Merim, who came from Alga school, looked a bit reserved during the network. So, I advised him to keep asking questions and observe as many lessons as he can. Not only on his subject but other subjects too.

(Dina, Birlik school)

Interestingly, stepping outside one's own school culture opens up more opportunities for participants to share knowledge. For Ainur it was a new kind of collaboration:

When I went to different school and saw how teachers interact with each other, I thought that teachers can share knowledge and express their opinions [...]. I was able to meet people who had similar problems [...].

(Ainur, Talap school)

Participants reported that social interaction increased their responsibility during School Network events, as they were representing both themselves and their schools. Gulim defined such feeling as 'namys' (one's dignity in Kazakh), whereas her colleague in the selective school, Erlan, described it as 'abyroi' (reputation in Kazakh), whereby he cared about his school's reputation:

[...] I wanted to represent myself and my school successfully. [...]. More experienced teachers in my session kept supporting me and providing feedback. [...] Those two events made me stronger. I also learned what I did not know previously.

(Gulim, Birlik school)

[...] it was important that I explained my project properly to the practitioners, which required me to get prepared diligently [...]. my school's reputation was at stake, as I represented my school [...].

(Erlan, Yntymaq school)

This made me think about participants' heightened attention to community opinion. At the initial stages of the programme it posed a challenge to their self-efficacy (see Chapter 5), whereas during the school network events it became a trigger for the participants' self-regulation. This resonated with Bandura (1995), who claimed that social networks that are proximal, immediate and prevalent can be more regulatory than externally imposed normative sanctions (p. 31). This implied that such social phenomenon could be redefined in the Kazakhstani context. Instead of being a tool for naming and shaming (Ayubayeva, 2018; Kjellstrand and Vince, 2017), it could facilitate responsibility and self-regulation. This however requires creating conditions.

It was important to create conditions whereby the participants could exercise their agency repeatedly and share their knowledge successfully within their community (Bandura, 1995; 1997). As pointed out by Adina (Birlik school), the *support that she received from Estigul (Talap school) during the network event made her motivated.*

Such relations influenced participants' self-efficacy within their schools too. My co-facilitator, Dinara noted the increase of teachers' self-efficacy:

These teachers had different work experience and age. But, they all used to be 'invisible' among other members of the school. The programme increased their self-confidence. They started participating in the school discussions, became more active in seeking professional learning opportunities, sharing their knowledge with other colleagues, taking responsibility and achieving results.

(Dinara, Talap school)

Networking within a wider professional community had a positive impact on participants' knowledge sharing, self-regulation and self-efficacy. With this in mind, our last event of the programme looked at extending the sense of professional community beyond the borders of Kazakhstan.

The International Teacher Leadership Conference (ITL)

The ITL conference took place on 13th of May 2017. This was the final event of the programme. Creating opportunities for extended professional communities with an international aspect had a potential for enhancing participants' moral purpose and enabling them to recognise the value of exercising leadership (Frost, 2011; Underwood, 2017). The event was joined by teachers and school administrators from the HertsCam Network (UK). The international guests shared their leadership stories and facilitated group discussions. Moreover, this final event brought together directors and the vice-directors from all four schools, which offered one more opportunity to communicate participants' achievements to the senior leadership teams. The analysis of the guests' post-event written reflections and the minutes of the conference proceedings generated the following themes: group sessions and critical dialogue; leadership and intercultural learning; recognition.

The group sessions and critical dialogue

The conference started with the guided-tour around the school, the welcome speeches of the school directors and HertsCam colleagues as well as the students' performance, which then progressed into the poster and group sessions. During the group sessions practitioners from two different educational contexts were able to make presentations about their development projects and engage in group activities.

In contrast to the previous two network events, the group sessions were led by teachers only. Andrew, a Vice Director in the UK school, noted the positive impact of such group facilitation:

*Alua used an interesting ice-breaker activity which had instant impact on the atmosphere across the room and the physical locations of people. We had to prepare a timetable of meetings with everyone in the room without clashes [...]*as

clashes arose the group moved closer together until we were all gathered talking to each other [...]. This emphasised the importance of coming together as a group to solve a problem that we all faced [...].

(Andrew, HertsCam, UK)

This validated my previous observations, as bringing together the practitioners from different educational contexts required engaging them in group activities. The participation in and contribution to the group interaction, as Wenger (1998) puts it, is essential to learning within a professional community. In order to facilitate learning, each participant conducted a group activity after their presentations. Sharon, a teacher from the UK, described her experience of such a group reflection as follows:

Ajar invited the audience to form a circle and produced a ball of pink string. She asked us what we had learned about leadership through this video and gave the ball of string to someone across the circle from her. Colleagues commented on the importance of collaborating, supporting each other passing the ball to each other as they went on. Eventually a web of string was created and Ajar highlighted how we had formed a network.

(Sharon, HertsCam, UK)

During group interactions, participants were able to reflect on common problems. In the following excerpt, Sharon reflects on her own presentation and the kind of questions it raised from the audience:

During the reflective activity, [I] asked the audience whether this issue of growth mindset resonated with them. One teacher asked what it was that students felt were important as for him, it was the grades. [I] responded by saying that this was also the case in the UK but that as a teacher [I] had developed strategies to shift students from a performance-oriented mindset to a growth mindset. [I] went on to explain how [I] conducted assessments not giving grades to students until they had unpicked errors made both collaboratively and individually. [I] then explained how [I] then publicly showed the progress students had made.

(Sharon, HertsCam, UK)

Although Sharon and her Kazakhstani colleagues operated in two different educational contexts, their interaction generated performativity issues that were taking place across the borders. Most importantly, the international dialogue raised the Kazakhstani teachers' awareness of how teachers elsewhere were exercising their agency and going against the tide.

However, HertsCam colleagues noted that there were limited opportunities for a critical dialogue after the presentations. This implied that engaging the participants in group interaction did not necessarily provide a space for criticality. As Andrew pointed out, the participants were reluctant to question or critique each other's presentations:

[...] some presenters asked for questions, but the opportunity was declined. In hindsight I wish that I had asked more questions and facilitated the opportunity for more questions to be asked of me [...]. Participants also highlighted that for the learning process to be effective the importance of honesty and criticism is key but can present a barrier and be demotivating, so how feedback is delivered is the real key.

(Andrew, HertsCam, UK)

The avoidance of asking questions or critiquing a colleague's development project could have been related to two main factors. First, the group activities left little or no time for the questions and answers after the presentations. Second, critiquing a colleague's development project was perceived as a public shaming (see Chapter 6), which participants attempted to avoid in their extended professional community. My co-facilitator Mariya's reflection indicated her appreciation of the feedback and support rather than the scrutiny of a colleague:

[...] during the school network events our teachers had an opportunity to collaborate with each other by solving problems, discussing things openly, sharing opinion and exchanging ideas. Interestingly, in contrast to our previous seminars and master-classes, teachers were not criticising each other or providing such comments as 'this is wrong'.

(Mariya, Birlik school)

This made me reflect on the differences between the practitioners' perceptions about critique in two different contexts. Whilst Andrew saw critique as an integral part of the learning process, Mariya viewed it as a hazard to collegial relations. This had implications for the future interventions. It was important to promote critique without challenging trust between practitioners, which was integral to facilitating TL in the Kazakhstani context.

Leadership and intercultural learning

The HertsCam colleagues reflected on the alterations in the participants' perceptions of leadership, which validated my previous discussion. Despite the differences between

practitioners' perceptions of TL in two educational contexts, they both noted the importance of facilitation.

The HertsCam colleagues' reflections validated the development of the understanding about leadership as a practice among participants. As Andrew put it: *'until the project they believed that leaders had to be appointed'*. His colleagues provided more detailed account of the factors that facilitated such a shift. According to Eva, a Vice Head for Teaching and Learning, collaboration was a key for the novice teachers:

Kulimkoz pointed out that the collaboration with her colleagues was vital to her understanding of what leadership looked like at different levels and to different people.

(Eva, HertsCam, UK)

In a similar vein, Laura, a teacher in the UK school, indicated an increase of experienced teachers' self-efficacy:

[Zhenis] had felt he had gained some leadership as other colleagues "began to see the importance of my project". By presenting his ideas to his peers he felt that he had grown in confidence and his communication skills had definitely improved by the end of the project. Zhenis stated that he felt that his reputation in front of his colleagues had increased.

(Laura, HertsCam, UK)

However, it was evident that practitioners' views of TL varied in the two contexts. Whilst practitioners in the Kazakhstani context focused on their achievements in teaching and learning, Andrew highlighted the importance of developing teachers' leadership skills:

Teachers had clearly developed their leadership capacity but didn't explicitly mention what skills they had developed. [...] it is important that participants focus on the leadership skills they have developed and how they can be used rather than the teaching and learning achievements.

(Andrew, HertsCam, UK)

This indicated that practitioners in the Kazakhstani context focus more on the output of their practices rather than the input, which reflected the system they were operating in. Based on my previous observations, it was not surprising that they viewed TL within their own teaching and learning practices, as it was an area which they could control. Such

conceptualisation of TL resonated with the idea of pedagogical leadership (Male and Palaiologou, 2017) than a distributed one. Having said that, there was potential for the teachers to participate in decision-making at the school level in future. As Laura put it, the programme enhanced the participants' confidence in what they do:

Even if their idea doesn't go beyond their classroom, you can still make a difference in your classroom and then grow from there. And that's what Gulmira's done: given them the confidence.

(Laura, HertsCam, UK)

Practitioners in both contexts highlighted the importance of facilitating TL. Sharon reflected on the post-presentation activity, where participants drew a poster about their experiences of TL:

The 'Magic Egg' reflective activity was most revealing in what they had learned in terms of leadership. Both commented on how there were fundamentals that had to be in place for leadership to flourish. With the mushroom example, values and professional concern were at the heart of leadership whereas with the chick example, supportive structures were highlighted. Warmth would seem to suggest the importance of relationships and trust in nurturing the chick.

(Sharon, HertsCam, UK)

In a similar vein, Laura pointed out the importance of trust and respect to facilitating TL in the Kazakhstani context:

I think what we saw out there, they were given that space just like in our HertsCam network to build that knowledge by thinking, talking and supporting each other; here's the crucial bit, that makes a difference is in an atmosphere of trust and respect. I think it is very collegial. I know every workshop was different but there was a sense of positivity that would be present at our events as well.

(Laura, HertsCam, UK)

Her colleague Eva highlighted the role of guidance to enhancing TL, which resonated with participants' previous reflections:

What it has made me realise is that for good leadership you need guidance. You need a framework from which to work. Gulmira, for all those people, she became the vehicle through which all those people could demonstrate their leadership. From the girl with 9 months' experience to the teachers with 30 years' experience.

(Eva, HertsCam, UK)

Most importantly, I was glad that our experience of facilitating TL in Kazakhstan triggered reflection among our international colleagues, as they were able to take away some useful ideas. Whilst Andrew noted that he would be *'more pushy about his participants reading literature'*, Eva hoped to encourage her colleagues to *'take risks'*. Having completed poster and group sessions, we approached the culmination of the programme, which focused on recognising participants' achievements.

Recognition and certification

As discussed in Chapter 2, the programme entailed the award of certificates of completion. The major aim of the certification was to recognise the participants' efforts, which had multiple implications. First, it enabled us to stimulate participants' sense of achievement, which had a direct influence on their well-being (Pekrun, 2006). Second, acknowledging participants' achievements had potential for strengthening their self-efficacy and motivating them to take initiatives in future (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, given the participants' heightened attention on community opinion as mentioned above the recognition in front of colleagues was particularly important in the Kazakhstani context. As Andrew put it after his interaction with the participants: *the importance of praise in motivating people and particularly the praise of effort was acknowledged* (Andrew, HertsCam, UK). As a result, this final event involved awarding certificates, official speeches and group pictures.

During the award of the certificates, my co-facilitators and I paid special attention to the atmosphere in the room. We ensured that it was treated as an official event, which was attended by the HertsCam colleagues and the school leadership teams. As Laura described it, the atmosphere in the main hall of the school was very positive:

[...] when we entered the hall, I appreciate that we were guests, you could feel the energy in the room. People might argue that it was about us arriving, but it didn't dip during the day. Teachers felt excited about being given an opportunity to reflect and develop. If you can get that into all schools, a wider audience, but this makes my heart sing.

(Laura, HertsCam, UK)

We called each participant to the stage. On the way, they shook hands with my co-facilitators and HertsCam colleagues. Senior leaders awarded the HertsCam colleagues

and me letters of appreciation, thereby extending mutual recognition. Kymbat, a Vice Director from the comprehensive Birlik school, described the event as follows:

This event enabled the teachers to learn and motivated them to pursue such learning in future.

(Kymbat, Vice Director for Research, Birlik school)

Her colleague in the selective Yntymaq school noted the impact of this event on her colleagues' self-efficacy:

[...] I very much enjoyed the fact that the teachers were able to see themselves beyond teaching but leading [...].

(Alima, Vice Director for Teaching and Learning, Yntymaq school)

In general, my co-facilitators and I were happy that this final event of the programme was deemed a success by both the local and the international colleagues:

Participants given their cultural background and Gulmira should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved [...]. The quality of the posters and presentations was also in-line if not exceeding those that I have witnessed in the UK. I highlighted this during the closing speeches.

(Andrew, HertsCam, UK)

Most of all, I was proud of the consciousness that participants were able to develop about their roles in classrooms, schools and society. In his final speech to the audience, Zhenis inspired his colleagues to *never give in to external circumstances and keep innovating regardless of their age or experience* (Minutes, 13.05.2017).

Programme sustainability

As discussed above, the programme had a positive impact at personal, organisational and community levels. After the programme, my co-facilitators and the participants were able to share their stories on a wider scale. However, embedding the programme within the schools was problematic. The difficulty emanated from the structural barriers related to the lack of support at the school leadership level. As a result, the programme is currently run in one out of four of the schools. I now explain the post-programme effect in detail.

Co-discovering our voice

Having led the project for the last nine months, the programme enabled the participants to create and capture professional knowledge (Frost, 2012). This led to the majority of the participants disseminating their projects' outcome in the form of articles or conference papers. Given the government's push towards reforming secondary education (see Chapter 1), such means of knowledge sharing were recognised and supported by national educational entities. This also offered an opportunity for us to raise awareness about teachers' roles in reform and enhance their voice at the national level. Therefore, my co-facilitators and I provided support to enable participants to share their stories.

The first participant to publish her story was Assylym (Alga school), who shared her experience of developing interactive strategies in teaching Kazakh as a foreign language in the international conference proceedings. In a similar vein, Estigul's, Bibigul's and Alua's (Talap school) proposals were accepted for the international conference for the practitioners, which took place in Astana in 2017. The same conference united my co-facilitators, where they shared their experiences of facilitating TL and supporting the school network. Their presentation sparked interest among practitioners from other regions of Kazakhstan, as they wanted to join the network. Afterwards, my co-facilitator, Mariya (Birlik school) published her first article in the national journal for the practitioners. I also co-authored an article with Batima (Alga school), where we shared our experience of the programme and its impact on students' learning.

At the time of the writing, all eight teachers who were part of the programme in Talap school are attending the national conference in the next couple of weeks to talk about their leadership activities that continued after the programme. I now elaborate more on the post- programme barriers.

Institutional barriers

The institutional barriers were the major obstacles to sustaining the programme in all four schools. The reason behind this was multifaceted. First, I was unable to secure the support from school directors. Without the directors' willingness to continue the programme for the capacity building, I could not embed it within the schools (Frost, 2012). Second, the programme also discontinued in the schools where my co-facilitators either did not see their roles as central to teacher professional development or had to move their schools.

The lack of the director's engagement in the programme was evident in Birlik school. For Mariya it was the biggest challenge to act as the programme's facilitator in future, which I reflected below:

I had quite an extensive conversation with my co-facilitator. She highlighted that the Director and the Vice Director for Teaching Methodology provided little support to the teacher professional development in general. Although the Director seemed to be interested in the programme at the beginning, she could not support it throughout the process. It feels that without such support facilitating TL can become an extra burden to the teachers.

(Research Journal, 23.05.2017, p. 302)

The situation in Alga school was different. After the programme this school was ranked as the best-performing school and won the national award. However, both Dana and their Director had to move school the following year. Despite their achievement, the decision of the local educational department was puzzling for us (Research Journal, 20.06.2017, p. 354). At the time of writing, Dana is working as the Vice Director in different school, where she has launched her first TL group starting this academic year.

Having said, there were instances when my co-facilitators did not see the programme as a part of their job description. Despite being the Vice Director for Learning in Yntymaq school, Balausa noted that teachers' professional development was not part of her responsibility and hence, she could not continue leading the programme in her school. It became evident that there was no official position that would look after teachers' professional development in her school (Research Journal, 25.05.2017, p. 304).

In contrast to Yntymaq school, the programme is still taking place in Talap school. My co-facilitator Dinara took it forward and embedded it in her school. Being the Vice Director for Teaching Methodology, the programme matched her function in the school. She saw the programme as an opportunity to promote professional learning and collaboration in her school. Therefore, she included it in the school's development plan, which enabled her colleagues to continue leading development projects in the following year (Research Journal, 29.05.2017, p. 324). As a result, the participants were able to establish a professional learning community, thereby they co-led the development

projects with the colleagues from other departments. At the end of the academic year, they published their own reflective stories, which included the new teachers' voices.

In general, the post-programme observations enabled me to identify key elements of sustaining and embedding the programme in schools in future. First, the programme's outcome matched the wider policy imperatives, whereby the national entities offered different opportunities for the teachers to share their leadership stories and hence, amplify their voice. Second, embedding the programme in schools required the senior leadership team's support to create the necessary conditions as well as the internal facilitators' willingness to lead the programme. This all had implications for future interventions, which I discuss in the following chapter.

Chapter summary and main insights

This chapter provides a final account of the intervention process, which comprised Phase 3 of the programme. The chapter consists of events and activities that focus on enhancing the impact of participants' projects, our reflections on the achievements as well as the implications for the future interventions.

My analysis of this episode of the narrative led to the identification of a number of insights and key features of the intervention which I grouped under the following headings:

- National reform
- Structural conditions for sustaining the programme
- School structures and cultures
- Facilitating TL
- Impact on participants' collaboration and networking
- Impact on participants' practices
- Impact on professional identities
- Impact on participants' perceptions of TL
- Impact on school structures

The full list (see Appendix 7) then served as a tool which I used to construct the next layer of analysis presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8

Facilitating teacher leadership: key insights

Having constructed a critical narrative of the intervention programme, I now explain the key lessons that have been learned from this study. These insights have implications for future work in the field of education reform, school improvement and teacher development. They also challenge existing assumptions about ‘reform’, ‘leadership’ and ‘training’ to enhance teachers’ roles in education reform.

My aim to enhance the role of teachers in educational reform was driven by my personal and professional background, which prompted me to seek ways to improve the existing practices in schools in Kazakhstan. Having analysed the educational context in Kazakhstan, it was clear to me that I might encounter certain structural and cultural barriers in implementing my plan (Chapter 1). My understanding of the interrelation between education reform, school improvement, leadership and the role of the teacher was shaped by my reading of the literature which inevitably reflected a particularly western view of school leadership (Frost & Kambatyrova, 2019), where, for example, schools were assumed to have a certain level of autonomy within a state system (Chapter 2).

In spite of the obvious challenges of adopting and adapting the HertsCam TLDW strategy, my conceptualisation led to a degree of optimism and my commitment to launching the ‘Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration’ (TLLC) programme was undaunted. In preparing to launch the TLLC programme in Kazakhstan, I gave a careful consideration to the challenge of facilitating a particular approach to support for TL in a context which was markedly different to that in which the HertsCam programme has been successful. I was prepared for the possibility of failure but at least I would learn from that experience. Therefore, in order to sharpen my perspective and ensure that the monitoring and data collection was focused, I posed the following research questions (Chapter 3):

- What are the enabling and inhibiting *conditions* to the facilitation of TL, especially in relation to school director’s role, school culture and structure?
- What are the key features of the *strategy* designed to facilitate TL, especially in relation to reflection and strategic action as well as collaboration and networking?

- How can this strategy *enhance* teachers' roles in education reform, especially in relation to teachers' practices, professionalism and voice?

Although these questions were helpful in framing my view of the events as they unfolded, I do not propose to limit my reflection to these questions. Instead, my aim here is to engage in a critical discussion of what emerged as most significant in facilitating TL. As such, my analytical process has been multi-layered. In the flow of the project my sense-making and my responses to events was shaped by my understanding of the context and my theoretical perspective about leadership and the role of the teacher as encapsulated in the research questions set out above. The writing of the narrative entailed a further layer of analysis enriched with the benefit of hindsight. The reflection on action (Schön, 1983) enabled me to benefit from a little distance as I revisited the records of the programme materials, transcripts of meetings, my research journal and other sources of data. I was then able to take a further step back in order to address what seemed to be the most important lessons.

As the preceding narrative indicates (Chapters 4-7), the experience of facilitating TL was illuminating. My preparations, both practical and conceptual, were seemingly thorough but the reality of the lived experience has been most instructive. Having facilitated TL within a system which features top-down decision-making and an instruction-oriented mindset, I learned that in such contexts TL can emerge through systemic support and systematic scaffolding. Enabling teachers to lead educational improvement both within and beyond their classrooms can enhance their roles in schools and educational system. Such empowerment of teachers can have a ripple effect including the transformation of professional identity, improvements in practice and students' learning, increases in parent and local community involvement, as well as knowledge building within the wider professional community (see Chapter 7). However, the ultimate success on a large scale requires the consideration of structural and cultural differences in promoting TL in Kazakhstan. This study has demonstrated that facilitating TL within centralised educational structures requires a systemic approach (Fullan, 2000). Such an approach involves understanding of 'why' and 'how' of TL, engagement, recognition and supportive relations at all layers of the educational system.

Therefore, in this chapter, I discuss a number of themes that explain key insights, dilemmas and challenges of facilitating TL. The influence of existing structures and cultures on TL development permeate throughout each of these themes, which include:

- education reform and TL
- the role of school leadership teams in creating the conditions for TL
- culture building to enable TL
- teachers' professional identity and development
- the process of facilitating TL
- teachers' interpretations of leadership
- sustaining and scaling up the support for TL

I now begin with the discussion of education reform and TL.

Education reform and TL

In this, the first of the seven themes, I explore how TL might fit within the general reform process. At the outset of my research I identified the challenge of authentic and sustained change in classrooms and schools in relation to national educational reform. The experience of facilitating the TLLC programme enabled me to observe closely the link between reform and TL. Prior to my fieldwork I hypothesised that the TLLC programme had the potential to impact on teachers' professionalism. But I was also aware that cultural norms in Kazakhstan and in particular the centralised approach to reform left little autonomy at the school level (Bridges et al., 2014; Frost et al., 2014 and Yakavets et al., 2017a). As such, it became evident that building internal capacity and providing external conditions are essential for promoting TL and hence, ensuring sustainable improvement in the educational system in Kazakhstan.

The experience gained throughout the nine-month TLLC programme suggests that enhancing the teachers' roles in reform can and should begin within schools. This requires systematic strategies to enable teachers to influence their environment: take the initiative and enact change in their classrooms and schools (Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 2003; Coburn, 2003; Fullan, 2016; Frost and Roberts, 2013). The study outcomes indicate that teachers

can revisit their professional values, reflect on their practice, interact with colleagues and engage with senior leadership teams (see Chapter 7). The nature of school-based support has major implications for the enhancement teachers' professionalism (Hoyle, 1982). When teachers are enabled to systematically improve their students' learning, raise issues at the school level, they can build professional knowledge and share it at the national level (see Chapter 7). Moreover, such internal capacity-building can foster teachers' responsibility for educational improvement and mobilise moral purpose (see Chapter 7). Hence, facilitating TL within schools offers a prospect for sustainable educational improvement. However, it also became evident that TL development can be subject to external factors such as the way reforms are implemented and the influence of local educational departments' (LEDs).

Due to the rapid nature of the reforms, schools had to make sense of, and put into place, new practices which included action research, lesson study, trilingual education, a new curriculum and a new assessment system simultaneously. In such a scenario, teachers were not only passive recipients of external change drivers but were required to implement unfamiliar pedagogical practices in their classrooms and schools (Bantwini and Letseka, 2016). This resulted in teachers' scepticism towards those reform initiatives (see Chapters 4 & 5), as illustrated by the comments from the experienced teachers who participated the TLLC programme:

[...] I understand that we need to keep up with the global changes [...]. Unfortunately, there is no coherence and systematic approach to implementing the reforms. It is sad that they remain unfinished [...].

(Zhenis, Talap school)

It has been 18 years since I started teaching. The reforms had taken place way too often. When we begin learning, accumulating and adapting new practices, the reforms get replaced.

(Estigul, Talap school)

Teachers' exposure to multiple externally-imposed reforms raises concerns about their sustainability and the internal capacity to accommodate new practices. Fullan (2016) highlights that multi-purpose reforms are doomed to failure, when teachers do not have supportive school cultures, when schools are not supported by local educational departments, and when local educational departments do not receive assistance from the

state to sustain those reforms. The intensity of adopting international practices also suggests the problem of translating those alien practices into teachers' daily work (Bridges et al., 2014). Although these initiatives are closely followed by training programmes (Chapter 1), they seem to be insufficient for ensuring improvement for the school as a whole. After returning to schools from training programmes, teachers lack sufficient time, space or support from school leadership teams to disseminate the new knowledge throughout the school (see Chapter 5). This can be particularly challenging in the context of the comprehensive school, as put forward by one of the teachers who attended the Centres of Excellence Level 1 programme:

[...] I do not think that the teachers are implementing the programme for a hundred percent. The main challenge is the lack of time. The majority of the teachers have the maximum teaching hours.

(Raigul, Birlik school)

This indicates that the cascade model of educational reform introduced by the Centres of Excellence programmes in Kazakhstan (Wilson, 2017) requires changes to structures and cultures at the local level. Particularly, in order to lead professional development and school networks, teachers need the support of the LEDs, which is the authority locally (Boylan, 2016; Nguyen and Hunter, 2018).

Within the existing system of educational governance in Kazakhstan (see Chapter 1), the authority to implement educational policies in schools resides with the LEDs. Their responsibilities are the enactment of policies within schools and the provision of external stimuli such as seminars, competitions, student Olympiads and student research projects. This results in excessive bureaucracy at the school level, as illustrated by this comment of a teacher who participated the TLLC programme:

I love working with children. I also like my subject. But the main challenge is the paperwork. There are too many requirements, for example, planning, portfolios, they say we need to have nine types of portfolios, normative documents and many more [...]. We are left with no extra time.

(Zamira, Birlik school)

Such an approach to governance fosters cultures of compliance, professional apathy and fear, which has major implications for professional identities and relationships within schools (see Chapters 6 & 7). This is echoed in earlier studies on how the top-down

approach involving control and punitive measures stagnates local innovation (Ball, 2012; Biesta, 2004; Nicholl and McLellan, 2008; Troman, 2008) and promotes the growth of performativity cultures within schools (Ball, 2003; Lunneblad and Dance, 2014).

The insufficiencies in the LEDs' measurement system to foster learning within schools, which I observed within the nine-month interaction with the practitioners, raises an issue about LEDs' institutional roles and capacity to implement educational policies (see Chapters 6 & 7). This echoed Fullan's (2005) claim about the importance of the local authority's role in ensuring the sustainability of large-scale educational reforms. Fullan (2005) goes on to say that 'basically, what they need is an understanding of and continual learning orientation [...]' (p. 67). In the context of Kazakhstani schools, this may require reshaping their institutional roles from the language of control to one of support for learning. The heritage of the Soviet governance style seems to be still strong in the hearts and minds of those who work in the local authorities, which limits their roles to ensuring compliance and imposing punitive measures (Shamatov, 2006; Fimyar and Kurakbayeva, 2016; Ayubayeva, 2018).

The LEDs' influence over schools' and teachers' practices echoes challenges in promoting TL in centralised hierarchical contexts (Ho and Tikly, 2012; Bolat, 2013; Szeto and Cheng, 2018). Thus, in such contexts building LED's capacity is essential to promoting TL within and across schools. This is in line with Sachs's (2003a) point on the importance of trust, respect and reciprocity amongst the main stakeholders to promote activist teacher professionalism. Particularly, within the current educational system in Kazakhstan, the local authority's capacity to understand and interpret innovatory practices such as TL is problematic. As such, LEDs roles in educational reform and school improvement should be subject to further research.

The above discussion raises a dilemma about the sustainability of educational reform in Kazakhstan, unless there is a support for TL. The teachers' engagement in reform requires school-based scaffolding and support. Heightened attention to building local capacity should be integral to ensuring the sustainability of reforms. The importance of the LEDs' control in shaping schools' and teachers' practices requires reviewing their institutional roles. Currently their understanding, recognition and support are important external

conditions for TL. Further on, I explain the schools' senior leadership teams' roles in providing internal support for TL.

The role of school leadership teams in creating the conditions for TL

In Chapter 2 I outlined the connection between school improvement and transformational leadership in which school directors seek to build capacity. My study brought this into sharp focus. It was important that school directors played their part in developing the structures and the professional culture of the school in order to create an enabling environment for teacher leadership. At the initial phase of the intervention, it became evident that school directors' autonomy from the LEDs' control and the MoES's educational standards varies with a higher level of autonomy exercised by the selective schools (see Chapter 5). Despite the organisational differences, there were some similarities in how school directors engaged with the schools' teaching and learning practices. Particularly, the school directors were distanced and delegated this responsibility to their vice-directors (see Chapter 4). Therefore, the vice-directors played a central role to introducing and facilitating TL within the schools. It also became evident that engaging in systematic school-based professional learning was rather novel to school senior leadership teams. This raised issues about senior leaders' assumptions about their roles in schools as well as their capability in facilitating teachers' professional learning. It also suggested that there is a potential for changing existing practices when there are extended opportunities for learning-focused, horizontal communication between the school leadership teams and the teachers (see Chapter 7.).

International studies indicate that school directors play key roles in promoting TL, for example, through facilitating teachers' professional learning, sharing leadership and recognising teachers' achievements (Crowther, 2002; Mitchell and Sackney, 2016; Sebastian et al., 2017; Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012; Louws et al., 2017). My experience of supporting TL raises a question about school directors' roles in schools in Kazakhstan, as they are more engaged with organisational issues rather than teachers' professional learning (see Chapter 4). In some instances, they avoided opportunities to communicate with their teachers (see Chapter 7). The lack of the school directors' support seems to

have a direct influence on the teachers' motivation for professional learning, as noted by the teacher who was part of the TLLC programme:

It would be great if our director could provide support by showing us, for example, how we could improve our practice [...] this would really elevate your spirit. I wish we had more encouragement, such as 'you will make it' [...]. Unfortunately, we are left on our own [...]. As a result, some teachers succeed, whereas others do not. I believe it is because of the lack of support.

(Adina, Birlik school)

Adina's comment may suggest that professional learning is left to the teacher's own discretion rather than treated as a key pillar of school and system improvement (Mitchell and Sackney, 2011; Fullan, 2000; 2016). Above that, the teaching and learning issues in Adina's school were mainly delegated to the vice-director. There were cases when their vice-director, who was not part of the TLLC programme, saw no value in creating the structural conditions that would allow teachers to engage in school network events, which was a key element in the development of TL. Adina's colleague, who was also part of the programme, highlighted the vice-director's role in enabling access to professional learning opportunities:

Although the director told us that we were exempt from teaching during the network events, the vice-director did not let us go [...]. She required that we find substitute teachers if we wanted to attend the event [...].

(Arman, Birlik school)

This may also suggest that in such school conditions teachers are dependent on the senior leaders' decisions. Within existing structural conditions, there is no room for distributing leadership in schools, as the local practice provides limited opportunities for horizontal communication between leaders and followers (Spillane, 2012; Gronn, 2002; Dempster and MacBeath, 2009; Yakavets et al., 2017a). This corroborated earlier studies on the challenges of introducing distributed leadership in post-Soviet contexts (Magno, 2014; Frost et al., 2014). Having attended the TLLC programme, Ajar noted the vertical nature of the communication between the school leadership team and teachers in her schools:

[...] our director is always right. Whenever you try to express your viewpoint, she takes up the floor [...] and highlights that her opinion is more important [...]. In short, teachers' opinions are in the last place.

(Ajar, Birlik school)

Ajar's comment may suggest the need to consider socio-cultural interpretations (Grant, 2005; Segiovanni, 2007; Ho and Tickly, 2012; Magno, 2014) and structural properties of leadership. Particularly, in post-Soviet countries, there is a little understanding about leadership as a means to innovation or capacity-building, which is dominant in the western discourse (Magno, 2014; Frost et al., 2014; Yakavets et al., 2017a). Despite the international call for enhancing teachers' participation in decision-making (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; TALIS, 2013; Shirley, 2017), there is limited discussion in the post-Soviet bloc on how such social, cultural and structural shifts can take place. In cultures of deeply ingrained conformity, teachers might find it challenging to take part in decision-making (Yakavets et al., 2017a; Ayubayeva, 2018). On top of that, school directors are not provided with formal training before assuming leadership roles and hence, might not be prepared to exercise leadership in this way (Magno, 2014; Yakavets et al., 2017a). Given the country's heightened attention to internationalisation (Chapter 1), there is a significant need for strategies that would alter 'people's system-related experiences' (Fullan, 2005:40).

Strategies that can alter cultural and structural practices may rest on school senior leadership teams' skills to facilitate learning-focused, horizontal communication (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Mangin, 2007; MacBeath et al., 2018). Particularly, in a centralised hierarchical context, leadership teams' initiation of interaction can be influential (Szeto and Cheng, 2018). Frost et al. (2014) highlight the importance of creating dialogic structures in schools in Kazakhstan, wherein senior leaders engage in sharing and discussing leadership practices. Throughout this study, however, it became evident that the leadership teams need the skills to foster such dialogue.

Senior leaders who attended the Centre of Excellence in-service training programmes, had the skills to facilitate group discussions during the school network events that opened up a space for horizontal communication outside the schools (see Chapters 5 & 6). Having said that, the communications inside the schools remained rather vertical and provided little scope for learning. This could have been related to the lack of the senior leaders' skills to provide constructive feedback and act as critical friends (see Chapters 6 & 7). This can be related to the challenges of translating the new skills into practice (Elmore, 1996; 2004; Kenny and Clarke, 2010). Such skills, however, are essential to promoting

teachers' professional learning, boosting their confidence and enabling learning-focused, horizontal communication within schools (Swaffield, 2008; TALIS, 2013; MacBeath et al., 2018). The following extract from a conversation with Nassyr, indicates his appreciation of the school director's role in promoting professional learning:

In my previous school, for example, we used to have conversations with our director on teaching and learning matters [...]. Our director would push us forward through modelling and communicating new teaching practices [...]. This is a missed opportunity in this school.

(Nassyr, Yntymaq school)

Nassyr's comment may suggest that equipping senior leaders with the necessary skills can be a starting point for promoting professional learning and TL in schools in Kazakhstan. For example, through acting as facilitators of the TLLC programme, some senior leaders were able to revise their roles in teachers' professional learning (see Chapter 7). This may have implications for reshaping senior leaders' roles from administrators to leaders of learning (Frost et al., 2014; Yakavets, 2016; MacBeath et al., 2018; Abrahamsen, 2018).

In sum, senior leaders' attitudes to their roles and their engagement in teachers' professional learning are of paramount importance in promoting TL in schools in Kazakhstan. It also indicates the necessity of enhancing leadership teams' skills to facilitate learning-focused, horizontal communication, provide feedback and offer critical friendship to teachers within their schools. This all may have multiple implications for senior leaders' roles in schools, facilitating TL and altering the system practices. I further discuss the importance of the enabling environment for TL.

Culture building to enable TL

In Chapter 2, I highlighted how the school as an organisation can either promote or impede improvement and capacity building. The outcomes of this study suggest the centrality of professional cultures in which teachers are enabled to engage in ongoing interaction and are committed to sharing professional knowledge with each other. Success in building a professional learning culture for teacher empowerment is shaped by several factors in schools in Kazakhstan. For example, school evaluation undertaken

by the local authority, can be an impediment to building collaborative cultures within schools. Another factor is the extent to which senior leadership teams allocate time and create the space for teachers' ongoing interaction (see Chapters 4-7).

A professional culture, where teachers feel trusted, respected and committed to school improvement, is an important pre-condition for TL (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Mitchell and Sackney, 2011). During the TLLC programme, teachers noted limited opportunities to collaborate with colleagues who were not part of the programme. They related it to the lack of time, the indifference of colleagues beyond the group and the culture of competition (see Chapter 7).

The way the system is constituted has the effect of promoting competition. In my study it became clear that school inspection did not prioritise professional learning or experimentation within schools. As discussed in Chapter 1, school and teacher performances in Kazakhstan are assessed in accordance with their students' results in the Unified National Test, participation in Olympiads, teachers' awards and certificates of participation in professional development events, as well as publications in educational newspapers and journals (McLaughlin et al., 2014; Frost et al., 2014). This reflects what MacBeath and Mortimore refer to as the tactical approach in which schools' and teachers' attention is focused on results rather than the promotion of authentic learning opportunities. This, in turn, has a direct influence on relationships within schools, wherein the 'processes and procedures' are emphasised over the 'content and aims' (Biesta, 2004: 248). In such professional cultures, teachers have little motivation to engage in professional dialogue or share materials with each other (Little, 1990). As a result, schools' excessive attention on external accountability leaves little space for building the conditions that could promote commitment and responsibility (Elmore, 2006; Fullan, 2016).

Despite external accountability pressures, it is believed that schools can create positive professional cultures (Sergiovanni, 1987b; Dimmock, 2012; Bridges et al., 2014). This, however, requires strong leadership that can create conditions for professional learning and collaboration in schools (Opfer and Pedder, 2011; Louws et al., 2017; Li et al., 2017). Throughout the study school directors' roles in relation to building professional learning cultures were rather limited (see Chapters 4-6). The study outcomes suggest that the

school directors' involvement in teachers' professional learning is rather instrumental (see Chapters 4 & 6). Recently, the CoE programmes introduced school-based professional development through coaching, action research and Lesson Study, but the teachers seem to be on their own in promoting such professional learning opportunities in their schools (see Chapter 5). In the light of the upcoming per-capita funding policy, which may increase schools' autonomy, it seems to be important to provide leadership development programmes to school directors to enable them to build culture and increase their engagement with teachers' professional learning. The starting point for such engagement could be creating time and space for teachers' professional learning and ongoing interaction.

Although the lack of time was evident in all four schools, it was particularly challenging in the comprehensive school due to student numbers and six days of study (see Chapter 4). My co-facilitator and I had constantly to negotiate time with the school leadership team for the teachers to engage in group sessions and network events. Because of the limited support from senior leaders, teachers were compelled to make time between their teaching hours or find substitutes to take up their classes in order to be able to attend group sessions. However, in the academic year after the TLLC programme completed, the ministry introduced five days of study in the majority of the comprehensive schools in Kazakhstan, whereby schools now have half a day on Saturdays which could be used for promoting professional learning (IAC, 2016). This may indicate the urgency of attending to senior leaders' roles in creating enabling conditions in schools.

Looking closer at the school conditions, it is evident that the lack of availability of a staff room can be a challenge for promoting collaborative cultures in schools. It became evident that only one out of the four schools had a staff room (see Chapter 6). Such physical space is believed to be important for the teachers to reflect on their practice and interact with each other on a daily basis (Galland, 2008; Frost et al., 2000; Bolat, 2013). It also has implications for building mutual trust and social capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Li et al., 2017). Sachs (2003b) refers to social capital as 'a glue' that enables teachers to move from individualistic to collectivist perspectives, which is key to promoting teacher activism (p. 10). Having said that, Ayubayeva's study (2018) indicates that the availability of staff rooms does not necessarily guarantee professional learning or collaboration in Kazakhstani schools, as teachers may prefer to remain isolated in their

classrooms. My experience of supporting TL in schools in Kazakhstan illustrates that beyond the provisions of physical space there is a need for facilitation that can strengthen social capital and foster professional learning communities in schools. Such facilitation has implications for the creation of professional cultures that are conducive for school and system improvement (Frost, 2012; Mitchell and Sackney, 2011; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

In general, promoting TL within schools requires a review of the school evaluation system and increasing school directors' roles in building professional learning cultures in schools in Kazakhstan. The school evaluation system should promote learning and collaboration within schools rather than maintaining the focus on test results and performance evaluations of individual teachers. Moreover, school directors need to realise the centrality of their roles to school improvement. In order to build professional learning cultures, school leadership teams may need to allocate time, space and provide systematic facilitation in their schools. Such school conditions have further implications for teachers' professional identity.

Teachers' professional identity and development

As discussed in Chapter 2, I envisioned that facilitating TL can enhance teachers' professionalism and voice, which had implications for their professional identity. Existing studies indicate that teachers' professional identity is constructed within system and organisational practices, and interrelated with their personal identity (Day, 2002; Hoyle, 2008; Wilkins et al., 2012; Lightfoot and Frost, 2014). The outcomes of this study suggest that system and school practice, as well as the teachers' skills and dispositions, have a strong influence on their understanding of what it is to be a teacher. Neglecting teachers' existing perceptions of their roles in school may lead to the resistance to a concept of TL (see Chapter 4) and the lack of commitment to taking the initiative (see Chapter 7). Also indicated is that enabling teachers to own the initiative and providing ongoing support can increase their resilience to external factors, facilitate pedagogical creativity and enhance teachers' responsibility (see Chapter 7).

Pressure for internationalisation and educational reform were evident in all four schools. Accountability was imposed both from the top and from colleagues, leading to a culture of compliance (see Chapter 4). Thus, teachers' relationship to reforms suggests an 'entrepreneurial' rather than 'activist' professional identity (Sachs, 2003b). The following comments of the experienced teachers who completed the TLLC programme indicate how teachers are striving to keep up with externally imposed change imperatives (McLaughlin et al., 2014):

[...] being teachers, we always need to succeed in doing our work and showing our achievements.

(Raigul, Birlik school)

[...] I have never regretted becoming a teacher, but the requirements these days are tight. I am doing my best to meet those requirements. It is not easy. There is a lot of responsibility.

(Gulden, Talap school)

These comments may relate to the idea of 'legitimised identity', which, according to Castells (2004), reproduces social identities and reflects structural domination. Such a compliance mindset could be related to the Soviet background, when the role of a teacher was largely about transmitting the state's policies (McLaughlin and Ayubayeva, 2015).

Lack of consideration of teachers' existing identities, however, is believed to lead to instrumentalism (Day, 2002). Throughout the TLLC programme, I came across cases where the teachers resisted new concepts (see Chapter 4) and lacked commitment to improving their practice (see Chapters 6 & 7). The concept of TL clashed with teachers' understandings about their roles in schools. As the TLLC programme evolved, however, it became evident that the ownership of the initiative can enhance teachers' commitment to educational improvement (Day, 2002; Hall et al., 2013). The key to ownership of improvement processes rested on enabling the teachers to identify their core professional values (see Chapter 5). In the context of Kazakhstan, this element of the TLLC programme was particularly important and hence, may need more prominence in future. In many instances, such values revolved around students' learning and upbringing as well as teachers' creative practice, as depicted in the following accounts of the teachers who attended the TLLC programme:

Despite the amount of paperwork, I like working with children. [...] I keep thinking that I could not work in any other field, because I like seeing and interacting with children on a daily basis (Assylym, Alga school).

I never regretted becoming a teacher. Teaching is about upbringing children. [...] upbringing children is about reading different resources and 'oh, this is interesting, I have never thought about it before!' kind of discoveries and reflections.

(Kulziya, Talap school)

[...] I am proud of being a teacher. It is close to my heart. I like working with children and engaging in a creative practice on an ongoing basis.

(Batima, Alga school)

This is not to suggest that the teachers' espoused theories are synchronised with their theories-in-use (Argyris, 2010). However, systematic, school-focused professional development may have implications for teachers' professional activism. The TLLC programme lasted for almost one academic year, which was essential for enabling the teachers to lead their initiatives. Throughout the TLLC programme, the teachers were able to identify and address their classroom and school challenges (Argyris and Schön, 1996), which facilitated pedagogical creativity (see Chapters 6 & 7). Above that, ongoing feedback and reflection on their practice (Schön, 1987) increased teachers' consciousness about, and resilience to, external factors (see Chapter 7). Moreover, the affirmation that the teachers received from their colleagues during network events influenced their sense of responsibility and commitment to improving practice (see Chapters 6 & 7) and hence, the group dynamics played an important role in TL development. This may suggest that the formation of TL identity is an ongoing process that requires time and systematic support (Allen, 2016; Sinha and Hanuscin, 2017; Boylan, 2018). Without a systemic approach to facilitating TL, however, teachers' initiatives may result in a samizdat professionalism (Hoyle, 2008), which ironically echoes the Soviet background of a hidden resistance to the dominant political structure.

In this subsection, I argue for the importance of considering the teachers' professional identities to introducing TL. Within centralised educational systems, teachers can be fixated on complying with external requirements rather than instigating improvement internally. Thus, shifting teachers' professional identities may require a systematic approach, which takes into account teachers' professional values, enables them to own

the development process, ensures feedback and affirmation from colleagues. Such school-focused development then requires systemic support (Fullan, 2004) for TL to thrive. I now explain what I have learned about the process of facilitating TL in more detail.

The process of facilitating TL

In Chapter 2, I suggested that facilitation is a process of unlocking teachers' leadership capacities by exploiting certain strategies and engaging teachers in professional learning. The study outcomes indicate that facilitating TL can be much broader and require the creation of structural conditions and safe environments; negotiating with school leadership teams; establishing relations based on mutual trust and respect; constantly engaging teachers in reflective practice and providing feedback; enabling teachers to make a shift towards a self-directed learning; actively listening; bringing existing ideas and experiences to the surface; providing guidance; equipping teachers with the tools to enact leadership (Hogan, 2009: 33; Schwarz et al., 2005; Poekert, 2011; Sinha and Hanuscin, 2017). According to Hogan (2009), facilitation is distinct from training, as it brings together groups of people to generate new ideas for improvement. She goes on to say, 'facilitators need to give away the need to be the fount of all learning and expertise' (p. 31). My experience of facilitating TL, however, suggests the importance of considering the contextual nuances of facilitation. Particularly in Kazakh schools, teachers' conception of learning, school networking and role of a facilitator can be central to promoting TL, which I discuss below.

Teachers' conception of learning

Teachers' conception of learning can influence the mode of facilitation. My experience of supporting TL indicates that introducing constructivist approach to learning, which entails risk-taking and uncertainty (Biesta, 2014), can be problematic in schools in Kazakhstan. Throughout the TLLC programme teachers were invited to reflect on their practice, identify their professional concerns, develop action plans, consult with colleagues, generate strategies for improvement and lead development projects (see Chapter 2). Introducing such a self-directed approach, wherein the teachers are encouraged to construct their own learning (Schunk, 2012), was challenging due to the

teachers' beliefs about learning, the conception of their roles in school and the lack of a conducive environment. Therefore, both the experienced and the novice teachers requested the provision of clear direction about the steps that they need to take to achieve their goals (see Chapter 5). As a result, I had to vary the mode of facilitation as the programme evolved.

The study outcomes point to several barriers to introducing the constructivist approach to learning in schools in Kazakhstan and hence, influenced the process of facilitation. The teachers confronted the problem of exploring their own practice. They struggled to identify their professional concerns, as noted by my co-facilitator in Birlik school:

It took some time before the teachers were able to identify their professional concerns. During the 1st School Network event, some of them were uncertain about their choices. Later on, there were couple of teachers who decided to change the focus of their development project [...].

(Mariya, Birlik school)

Whilst Mariya's comment may suggest insufficiencies in the facilitation process, it also indicates that leading problem-based projects was a rather novel experience for the majority of the teachers. This was particularly evident with the novice teachers, who required ongoing guidance throughout the programme. Yakavets et al. (2017a) point out that introducing the constructivist approach to the teachers' learning in schools in Kazakhstan can be challenging due to the top-down approaches of learning in Pedagogical Institutes as well as the culture of teaching profession (p. 612). The outcomes of this study, however, suggest the importance of the organisational environment, as illustrated in the following evaluation of my co-facilitator:

[...] Most of our teachers got used to and feel comfortable with being told what to do and how to do it. Even inviting them to our group sessions required constantly sending them reminders. [...] It feels that they are accustomed to the authoritative ways of working. There were teachers, who voluntarily joined the programme, but had no will and commitment to complete it. I think we need to reflect on this experience and plan our actions accordingly next time.

(Dana, Alga school)

Dana's comment suggests the lack of a work ethos for promoting self-directed learning in schools in Kazakhstan, which may reflect wider societal relations (Muratbekova-

Touron, 2002; Kjellstrand and Vince, 2017). In addition, one of the most pressing factors in promoting self-directed learning in schools is the lack of quality literature in Kazakh (see Chapters 5-7). As noted by my co-facilitator in Talap school in the following comment, the teachers needed to access literature in Kazakh that would inform their leadership of development projects:

[...] as soon as they identified their problems, it was important to provide scaffolding [...]. It was also important that they accessed resources in Kazakh [...]. The more resources we can access in Kazakh, the easier it would be to promote TL.

(Dinara, Talap school)

This reinforced earlier observations that poorly resourced libraries undermine the facilitation of teachers' professional learning in schools in Kazakhstan (Ayubayeva, 2018).

Facilitating TL within such conditions requires a transition from directive to non-directive approaches to learning. Heron (1999) identifies three modes of facilitation: hierarchical, cooperative and autonomous, which is echoed by Hogan's (2009) three activities of direction, negotiation and delegation. Although I had no position in the schools' hierarchy, I was expected to provide direction to lead in the participants into the concept of TL and provide support along the way. As a result, my experience of facilitating TL consisted of 'creating the condition', 'reorientating', 'enacting' and 'reflecting' phases (see Chapter 4-7).

I had to provide 'rigid' scaffolding at the initial phases of the facilitation process and then release it as the teachers started taking charge of their development projects (see Chapters 5 & 6). In the following extract, Heron (1999) highlights the importance of providing such support especially when the participants' previous learning experiences were based on authoritative teaching approaches:

[...] it is a watershed time between two educational cultures. An authoritarian educational system, using oppressive forms of teacher authority, is still widespread; hence, learners who emerge from it are conditioned to learn in ways that are relatively short on autonomy and holism. In a special sense they need leading into freedom and integration, when they enter another more liberated educational culture where these values are affirmed (p. 24).

This echoes my experience of supporting TL (see Chapters 4-7), wherein facilitation involved enabling teachers to make the transition from directive to self-directed learning by establishing trust and enhancing their self-efficacy (Brookfield, 1986; Bandura, 1997). Such an approach may resonate with the Vygotskian (1930) view of learning, wherein my role as a key instigator was to evoke the teachers' inner motivations for learning and development. The key element of such support was systematic scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) that focused on enabling the teachers to identify their own professional problems and lead their development projects to achieve educational improvement. The key techniques of scaffolding included vignettes, feedback, critical friendship and reflection.

During the initial stages of the programme, it was important that I provided vignettes of TL projects. Both the novice and experienced teachers preferred to see models of TL projects, as the concept of TL was rather new to them (see Chapter 5). Bandura (2000b) highlights the importance of social modelling on one's self-efficacy, whereby 'models foster aspirations and interest in activities [...] raise observers' beliefs in their own abilities' (p. 185). Social modelling, however, is not to be confused with mimicking others' practices, which has been a tradition at the policy level (Silova and Steiner-Khamsi, 2008). Rather, the point is to simulate 'new instances of behaviour that go beyond what they have seen' in those models (Bandura, 2008:2). As a result, vignettes help to facilitate teachers' reflection on practice and increase motivation to lead improvement (see Chapter 5).

With the growth of mutual trust, the teachers appreciated continuous feedback and critical friendship (see Chapters 5-7). There are a number of studies that emphasise the importance of feedback in developing TL (Frost and Roberts, 2004; Poekert et al., 2016; Sinha and Hanuscin, 2017). Providing feedback was particularly important in enabling teachers to overcome the fear of failure as well as encouraging them to experiment with practice (see Chapter 6). Socio-cultural aspects of the context have to be taken into account whilst offering critical friendship. In contrast to educational contexts where challenging one's viewpoint can be acceptable (Swaffield, 2007), critical friendship has to be carefully constructed in Kazakh schools, so that the teachers do not feel intimidated (see Chapter 6).

The key element of enabling teachers to review their beliefs was to provide the conditions for reflection on practice (Schön, 1983; Durrant and Holden, 2006). In addition to creating time, space and safe environment, it was important to use tools that would promote reflection (see Chapters 4 & 5). Poekert (2011:20) considers teachers' 'wondering about their classroom practice' as a key element of TL development. The outcomes of my study suggest that introducing tools for inquiry enables teachers to learn more about their professional concerns, which then prompts them to seek strategies to improve their practice (see Chapter 6). This was equally important in implementing a reflective writing activity after each group session, which then became a reflective story. The teachers transformed their stories into a publishable material and shared their leadership journeys within a wider professional community (see Chapter 7), which had future implications for enriching the professional discourse in Kazakh. The mixture of the above strategies enabled the teachers to think critically about their roles in school and society (see Chapter 7), which indicated the potential for deeper personal and professional transformation (Mezirow, 1991; Friere, 1974).

Despite joining the programme voluntarily, there were instances when the teachers decided to withdraw from the programme both at the initial and the final phases (see Chapters 5 & 6). Their withdrawal from the programme suggested a clash between those teachers' previous experiences of professional learning and the programme's main principles. Those principles invited the teachers to leave their comfort zones and challenge their existing 'schema' (Mezirow, 2001). Hogan (2009) contends that 'defences play an important part in an individual's strategies for survival in the world as they have experienced and therefore perceive it. [...] facilitator should respect the 'choice' of the individual' (p. 30). My experience suggests the importance of explaining in detail the key differences of TL facilitation and traditional professional development programmes at the 'creating the conditions' stage. It also indicates that a facilitator has to be prepared for the participants' withdrawal at any point of the facilitation process.

In sum, the teachers' perceptions of learning can influence the mode of TL facilitation. In centralised contexts, where teachers are exposed to authoritarian modes of learning, facilitation may involve gradually reorientating teachers from directive to self-directed

learning by tapping into their internal motivations for learning. One of the influential tools for promoting such learning can be school networking.

Promoting professional dialogue through school networking

Before launching the TLLC programme, I expected that the strategies that I used would foster collaboration within the schools, which was of paramount importance to promoting TL (see Chapter 2). However, organisational realities hindered the development of collaborative cultures due to the reasons explained above. It became evident that creating opportunities for professional dialogue outside the schools can have a powerful effect on facilitating TL. During school network events teachers were able to build positive relationships and receive affirmation from colleagues, which influenced their ownership of and commitment to the leadership of initiatives (see Chapters 5 & 6).

School networking is considered to be a key instrument for creating a community of learning, wherein teachers can build relationships, explore their professional concerns, achieve common purpose and develop leadership skills (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Wenner and Campbell, 2017). Such communities are believed to promote learning for all through professional dialogue (Swaffield and Dempster, 2009; Starr, 2017). Lambert (2003) points out that within professional networks ‘teachers see themselves as part of a profession; they find themselves listened to in new ways; they hear and see how others think and interact and, in so doing, change how they perceive themselves as teachers.’ (p. 427). The outcomes of this study confirm that school networking can enable teachers and school leaders to engage in horizontal dialogue regardless of their experience or position (see Chapters 5-7).

Little (2005) believes that the success of external school network depends on schools’ ‘internal leadership and professional community’ (p. 278). My study indicates that external networking can be a powerful tool for promoting teachers’ professionalism regardless of internal conditions. This however may require scaffolding. As professional dialogue within schools may be limited to merely seeking professional help from a more experienced colleague or constrained by the teacher’ fear of public humiliation, professional dialogue outside their schools can be a rather novel experience for them (see Chapter 5). Therefore, before engaging teachers in school networking, it was important to provide scaffolding to lessen their anxiety. This involved establishing relationships

between co-facilitators from different schools and engaging them in moderating group discussions. The moderators' skills were important in bringing the group together and creating environment conducive for a professional dialogue (see Chapters 5 & 6). Facilitating professional dialogue during the network events also required closer attention to the format of group sessions. Particularly, it became evident that the presentational style of communication can be limiting and hence, it was important to introduce more interactive activities (see Chapter 7).

During the School Network events, teachers highlighted being able to build positive ties and receive affirmation from their colleagues (see Chapters 5 & 6). Given the collectivist nature of the society, the sense of belonging can be a powerful driver for the teachers (Gambrel and Cianci, 2003; Hofstede et al., 2010; Ayubayeva, 2018). Hogg and Vaughan (2010) contend that 'being successfully connected to other human beings, interpersonally or in groups may have a positive impact on one's self-esteem' (p. 170). This may suggest that affirmation received from colleagues can be an important element of TL development (Donaldson, 2007b; Searby and Shaddix, 2008; Printy et al., 2010). This study suggests the positive influence of such relationships on the teachers' ownership of and commitment to their leadership initiatives (see Chapter 7).

The above discussion indicates the importance of school networking in the promotion of professional dialogue and hence, the facilitating of TL in schools in Kazakhstan. Engaging teachers in school networking however may require scaffolding, which is focused on building positive relationships and enabling affirmation between teachers from different school contexts. When the right kind of scaffolding is provided there is the potential that school networking element of TL development could act as leverage for developing teachers' professionalism. Ensuring such scaffolding is one of the key roles of a facilitator.

The role of a facilitator

In Chapters 2 and 3, I explained the centrality of a facilitator's role to TL development. I explained that the role of a facilitator can be carried out by both an external expert and internal stakeholder. Although as an external facilitator my role was central to implementing the TLLC programme, developing internal facilitators offers more prospect for sustaining TL in schools in Kazakhstan. As an external instigator, it was essential that

I built partnerships and engaged the schools' senior leadership team members and the experienced teacher. This enabled me to create conditions and secure structural support for facilitating TL. A number of studies view the facilitator as a neutral person, who has the skills to support learning and increase a group's effectiveness (Schwarz, 2005; Hogan, 2009; Poekert, 2011). My study however indicates that, in Kazakhstan at least, a facilitator has to have some authority to create the structural conditions as well as the professional credibility to facilitate teachers' learning in schools.

The key role of a facilitator is about creating an environment, wherein participants can feel safe and supported to take action (Hogan, 2009; Sinek, 2017). Hogan (2009) highlights that such an environment has to be 'conducive for people to move out of their comfort zones' (p. 30). The vice-directors' involvement in the facilitation process 'legitimised' TL development, ensured time and space for the teachers to attend group sessions and school network events and secured support for the teachers to lead their development projects (see Chapters 4-7). Most importantly vice-directors' engagement in the programme activities, for example school network events, influenced their perceptions about teachers' professional learning (see Chapter 7). This may have the potential for shifting positional leaders' roles in Kazakh schools from imposing control to providing organisational support for TL development.

This is however not to claim that the facilitator's role can be taken up solely by a positional leader. In Birlik school, for example, an experienced teacher was able to provide support to her colleagues throughout the TLLC programme. Having extensive teaching experience and having attended different kinds of professional development programmes, including the Centre of Excellence Level 1 programme, Mariya had professional credibility among her colleagues. Mariya's peers Arman and Adina highlighted her 'encouragement' and 'accessibility' as important elements of the facilitation process:

I felt a bit insecure during the 1st School Network event. But Mariya encouraged me not be afraid of sharing my professional concern with the teachers from other schools. She told that they were there to support me not to judge me [...]. She invited us to introduce ourselves before the Network event. During the 2nd School Network event, I felt much more confident.

(Adina, Birlik school)

Mariya has never rejected or left unanswered my questions throughout the programme. For example, I called her yesterday at 23.00. Although this was impolite, I urgently needed her help. I called her because I knew that she would pick up her phone and provide answers to my questions [...].

(Arman, Birlik school)

These comments may suggest that a peer facilitator can be influential in TL development. MacBeath et al. (2018) highlight the role of a peer facilitator in extending teachers' professionalism *despite* 'hierarchical bureaucracies' (p. 148). In high power-distance organisational cultures, peer support can be influential *because of* hierarchical bureaucracies, as teachers might find it challenging to seek help from positional leaders (Hofstede et al., 2010). According to Supovitz (2018), the lack of authority may limit teachers' abilities to influence their colleagues. However, my study indicates that horizontal relationships as well as soft power exerted by colleagues can lead to genuine engagement and ownership of leadership initiatives (see Chapter 7). This poses a dilemma about who might be most suitable to take up the role of a TL facilitator. Throughout this study it became evident that the facilitator's conception of learning and skills in steering group discussions can be the most important considerations in the selection of facilitators.

The facilitator's understanding about learning and skills were essential in engaging the teachers in open discussions and motivating them to lead educational improvement. As explained above, the constructivist nature of the programme clashed with local understandings of learning. At the initial stages of the TLLC programme, my co-facilitators preferred more of an instruction-based approach rather than discussion, whereby some of them insisted that I exercise control to ensure that the teachers were able to accomplish their tasks (see Chapters 5 & 6). This clashed with the view that a facilitator is a 'process person', whose main role is 'to enable people to draw out learning from experience' (Hogan, 2009:29). Thus, it took time and engagement for my co-facilitators to value the dialogic nature of the programme (see Chapter 7). Having said that, some of my co-facilitators, who attended the Centre of Excellence programmes, had skills to conduct interactive activities, which had a positive influence on promoting professional dialogue. My co-facilitators' skills were useful in steering discussions during group sessions and school networking. As a result, we were able to create affirmative

environments, which had a positive influence on a group's self-efficacy (see Chapters 5 & 6). This may suggest that developing facilitators' skills and enabling them to exercise dialogic approaches to learning can have the potential for shifting their understandings about learning and hence, promoting TL.

The above discussion indicates the centrality of internal stakeholders to facilitating TL. It also raises a question about who can act as a facilitator within schools. Given existing structural conditions in schools in Kazakhstan, there is a need for auditing environmental contingencies before selecting potential candidates with heightened attention to his/her understanding of learning and skills to foster group discussions. This, in turn, has implications for building internal capacity and sustaining TL within schools.

Teachers' interpretations of leadership

In Chapter 1 and 2, I explained the urgency of developing leadership capacity in schools in Kazakhstan. Despite adopting and adapting the teacher leadership development strategy, which was successfully tested in different educational contexts (Frost, 2011), I was prepared for its possible clash with local interpretations of leadership. It became evident however that there is a possibility to shift local understandings of leadership, when teachers are enabled to enact leadership initiatives. As the TLLC programme evolved, I was able to observe how local views of leadership gradually changed from role and position towards one's own action and responsibility (see Chapters 6 & 7). Interestingly, the majority of the teachers focused on improving their students' learning and classroom practices rather than engaging in school-wide improvement. There seemed to be little enthusiasm among teachers to lead improvement beyond their classrooms, which may have implications for a wider professional, organisational and system improvement in future.

The concept of leadership as a practice was rather new to the majority of the teachers. At the initial stages of the TLLC programme the teachers' understandings of leadership revolved around the idea of leadership as a role (see Chapter 5). Therefore, the majority of the teachers struggled with the concept of teacher leadership, as noted by Gulim who completed the TLLC programme:

Speaking frankly, I have never had such an understanding as teacher leadership. I knew concepts such as a teacher of the new formation, an innovative teacher and a creative teacher. I have learned about teacher leadership only after attending this programme.

(Gulim, Birlik school)

Gulim's comment may suggest inadequate understanding about leadership and the possibility of teacher-initiated action. Having said that, the concept of teacher leadership has been introduced in the Kazakhstani schools as a part of the Centre of Excellence Level 1 programme since 2011 (see Chapter 1). For the teachers who were part of that programme, the concept of teacher leadership was not new. In the following comment, Raigul, who attended the Level 1 programme, explains her experience with both externally and internally provided leadership development programmes:

I have completed the Level 1 programme. I have learned about the theories of teacher leadership there. The majority of the teachers, who joined the TLLC programme, did not attend the Level 1 programme. However, I noticed that as they explored their development projects, they started giving suggestions and influencing colleagues [...]. Whilst eight of us were working together, the colleagues outside the programme were curious about our projects. Some of them even took offence and complained that we were not inviting them to our group observations. As such, we were able to trigger interest among other members of the school community.

(Raigul, Birlik school)

Raigul's observation of the programme's impact is in line with previous studies on organisational learning and school improvement (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999; Day, 1999; Mitchell and Sackney, 2011). Senge et al. (2012) highlight that school improvement can take place only when interventions take into account how 'people think and interact' within their schools (p. 25). A major feature of such learning is the systematic approach which includes focused exploration of professional concerns, interaction with colleagues and enactment of real-world improvement (Frost et al., 2000; Durrant and Holden, 2006; Argyris, 1999; Hunzicker, 2012). Thus, the teachers who attended externally provided leadership development programmes may need internal scaffolding for implementing new knowledge and skills into their classrooms and schools. By enacting leadership initiatives within their classrooms and schools, teachers seem to develop a different kind of understanding about the concept of leadership (see Chapter 7). Bibigul's comment may suggest the increase

of teachers' activism in seeking opportunities for learning, which reflects the idea of leadership as a practice as discussed previously (Chapter 2):

Before this programme, I have never thought about conducting a coaching for my colleagues, translating resources into Kazakh and searching up-to-date books in English. But now, it is quite the opposite. I became more curious and keep asking useful resources from my colleagues. I also became accustomed to browsing on internet to find more innovative ideas.

(Bibigul, Talap school)

This echoes MacBeath et al.'s (2018) view of leadership, whereby the 'learning culture embraces everyone' within school (p. 44). The teachers highlighted opportunities for interacting with their colleagues, which increased bonding within schools (see Chapter 7). The following teachers' evaluations of the TLLC programme outcomes suggest how both experienced and novice teachers appreciated the 'shared' nature of leadership (Sergiovanni, 1987:121):

[...] Through this project I have learned about the 'hows' of leadership. Teacher can become a leader by exchanging information and collaborating with each other.

(Arman, Birlik school)

I have learned that you can influence colleagues by sharing knowledge [...]. There were times when I used to make my lesson plan and think that my lesson was the best one. But, because of this project and after moving schools, my views have changed. In order to grow as a professional, one needs to learn to listen and respect opinions of other colleagues. Such mode of learning is having a positive impact on my practice.

(Gulden, Talap school)

The teachers' comments may suggest the possibility of shifting school cultures despite the cultures of performativity and competition promoted at the system level. Creating a sense of community and enhancing professionalism, according to Sergiovanni (1992), may increase responsibility and self-management within schools. Such a view of school leadership resonates with this study outcomes (see Chapter 7). Notions of responsibility and self-regulation can be traced in the teachers' evaluations of the TLLC programme:

Leadership is not an easy thing. It requires a certain kind of patience, time and responsibility [...]. You need to manage your time well to complete tasks on time. Whilst leading the development project I had to improve my personal traits. This experience motivated me to do so (Alua, Talap school).

I used to think that leadership is about managing things. But throughout the TLLC programme my views have changed. Leadership is not only about managing but rather influencing and helping out others. You do not need a position to enact leadership. Everyone can lead. The most important thing is to be able to take responsibility.

(Ylias, Yntymaq school)

This may have implications for educational policies that place high stakes on teachers' self-regulated professionalism (see Chapter 1) but leave little space for enabling teachers to take charge of their practice (see Chapters 4-7). Within existing school and system practices, teachers' conceptions of leadership may be limited to classroom practice rather than school-wide improvement (see Chapter 7). Having said that, the teachers' final evaluations of the TLLC programme suggest the potential for enabling teachers to go beyond their classrooms, as suggested by an experienced teacher, Zhenis, who completed the TLLC programme:

I believe that teacher leadership should not be limited to methodological units rather extend at school level. Even school level can be narrow for teacher leadership, we need to bring several schools together. We can accomplish such task [...].

(Zhenis, Talap school)

Although Zhenis's endeavour can be subject to school and system constraints, which I discussed earlier, it certainly depicts a shift in local understandings of teacher leadership. Estigul's interpretations of leadership, for example, offers some challenge to the existing socio-cultural norms, wherein experience is emphasised over expertise (see Chapter 5):

I used to think that leader is a member of school administration or experienced teacher [...]. Now, I see that even novice teachers can lead others by sharing ideas, openly expressing thoughts and collaborating with colleagues.

(Estigul, Talap school)

In similar vein, the teachers experience with TL seem to enable them to look differently at the existing structural relations within school, as espoused by Symbat and Zamira:

I view a leader as someone whom I could respect and be able to communicate with easily [...]. Our Vice-director for Research and Methodology is that kind of

person to me. There is no borderline between us, such as a boss and a teacher. She is always eager to provide support whenever you need it [...].

(Symbat, Birlik school)

[...] A leader is the one who does not provide mere directives, such as 'do this or do that', but identifies direction and works in sync with others towards that direction [...].

(Zamira, Birlik school)

In sum, the above discussion indicates that enabling teachers to enact leadership can influence their interpretations of leadership. This study confirms that the concept of leadership as a practice can develop when teachers are provided with the necessary support for action to lead improvement. Providing such support has the potential to enable teachers to improve practice beyond their classrooms and challenge existing practice around them. I now explain how such support might be sustained and scaled up in future.

Sustaining and scaling up the support to TL

My experience of promoting TL in the centralised educational system of Kazakhstan indicates that sustaining and scaling up TL in such contexts may require awareness, support and engagement at all layers of the system. In contrast to contexts where the institutions (for example teacher unions) for elevating teachers' voice are in place (Bangs and Frost, 2012; Bangs and MacBeath, 2012), enhancing teachers' roles in the Kazakhstani school system may necessitate building structures for professional networks and communities. The outcomes of this study indicate that school administration can sustain TL by creating internal structures for professional learning communities within which teachers can lead learning and improvement (see Chapter 7). It also became evident that in systems where school directors are appointed by the local authority, sustaining and scaling up TL can be subject to external entities.

There are number of studies that view TL as a key element of system improvement (for example Frost, 2012; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Fullan, 2016; Boylan, 2016; 2018). In the Kazakhstani school context, there is potential for the teachers to influence system improvement by leading learning within professional learning communities. Boylan (2018) contends that teachers can develop a 'system-oriented professional identity'

through leading professional development of colleagues (p.88). This, he goes on to say, requires developing teachers' leadership skills (ibid.). In similar vein, Cooper et al. (2016) highlight the importance of developing teachers' skills to lead purposeful educational change among other peers. Similarly, this study suggests that teachers' skills for promoting professional dialogue within and outside their schools can be important leverage for promoting and sustaining TL. Above such skills, teachers might need the 'trust and encouragement' of colleagues and administrators to lead learning within professional communities (Hunzicker, 2012). This, in turn, requires supportive school structures.

This study suggests that school directors and vice-directors play a key role in creating structures conducive for sustaining TL. Moran and Larwin (2017) believe that school administrators' roles in TL development is essentially about empowering teachers to grow as professionals. However, this study suggests that school administrators' perception of their roles in schools can be problematic, as they distance themselves from teachers' professional learning (Hofstede et al., 2010; McLaughlin et al., 2014). However, school administrators' direct engagement in TL development may have potential for altering their roles in schools. Having directly engaged in facilitating TL, a Vice-Director for Teaching Methodology, Dinara viewed her role as central to sustaining TL in her school:

[...] my plan for the next academic year is to support the teachers who attended the TLLC programme, so to ensure that they stay together and continue their leadership initiatives. Such an approach should become part of our school structure [...]. Therefore, I aim to include TL into the school's development plan [...]. The local mentality is that you need to sign the document and make such initiative official, so that no one can challenge it [...]. My aim is to ensure that TL is recognised by all school community [...].

(Dinara, Talap school)

Dinara's comment may suggest that it is important not only to raise school administrators' awareness about TL but equip them with the tools and enable them to facilitate TL, which may have potential for altering existing relationships between administrators and teachers in schools. Cheng and Szeto (2016) point out that school director's direct involvement in TL development can motivate teachers to take up informal leadership roles. Therefore, it can be speculated that scaling up TL within schools might take up a cascade model (Wilson, 2017), whereby directors or vice-directors might become a support person for

heads of methodological units as well as teachers, who could then facilitate TL within their units. As TL becomes part of the school's professional culture, learning communities could span across methodological units and new TL facilitators could emerge from among all school-staff members. Such an approach could have a potential for altering the existing structural and cultural barriers in schools and hence, lead to a whole school improvement.

Frost (2006; 2012) highlights the importance of external support to TL development. As I have explained earlier, schools in Kazakhstan function under the tight control of the local authority. Thus, sustaining TL within schools requires LEDs awareness and support. Particularly, the role of LEDs can be of paramount importance in creating the necessary conditions and promoting school networks. Lambert and Gardner (2002) claim that 'a fully functioning school district must become a learning community in the same sense that each school must form its own learning community culture' (p. 166). Such an extended view of LEDs' role in the educational system highlights the urgency of revisiting their relations with schools, which currently seems to emphasise hierarchical bureaucracy. As such, further research is required on LEDs' institutional roles in the context of rapid education reform in Kazakhstan.

Sustaining and scaling up TL may also require revisiting the current system of selection and appointment of the heads of LEDs and school administrators (see Chapter 1), as they play a key role in enhancing teachers' professionalism. Hence, ensuring that both LEDs' and school administrators are provided with formal leadership training seems to be critical for system-wide educational improvement. Moreover, enhancing formal leaders' professionalism is becoming urgent, as the government aims to introduce per-capita funding of schools in the next couple of years (see Chapter 1). There is a need for further research on the interrelation between LEDs' and school administrators' professionalism and TL development in schools in Kazakhstan in future.

Last, but not least, sustaining and scaling up TL may require the support and involvement of higher education institutes that can provide external facilitators and develop pre-school training programmes focused on TL development. Having acted as an external facilitator, my main role was to introduce and develop strategies for facilitating TL in collaboration with the practitioners.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I discuss seven key themes that emerged from the critical narrative of TL facilitation in four Kazakh schools (see Chapters 4-7). I highlight the roles of a systemic approach and systematic scaffolding to facilitating TL in the centralised educational context of Kazakhstan. With the benefit of hindsight, I have been able to identify key dilemmas, challenges and insights about facilitating TL in relation to educational reform, the role of schools' senior leadership teams, the school environment, teachers' professional identities and development, the facilitation process, teachers' interpretations of leadership and opportunities for sustaining and scaling up TL. These insights suggest the importance of reviewing local understandings of reform, leadership and training.

Whilst promoting TL within schools offers the prospect of facilitating educational reform in Kazakhstan, the top-down and rapid nature of reforms leaves little space for local agency to thrive. This raises a question about the sustainability of those reform initiatives, as they are reinforcing the culture of performativity rather than encouraging the participation of key stakeholders who have to implement those reforms into practice. In addition, the local authority's influence on schools' and teachers' practice indicate a discrepancy between reform agendas and quality measurement systems. Thus, I argue for the importance of creating external conditions for TL development as a means to bottom up innovation and improvement.

School administrators' conceptions of their roles in schools can be a key variable for TL development within schools. Within the system of hierarchical bureaucracy, school administrators view their roles mostly in terms of school maintenance issues rather than teachers' professional learning. Within such school structures, sharing leadership seems not to be a viable option in the near future. However, developing schools' senior leadership teams' skills for steering horizontal communication within and beyond schools offers potential for extending their understandings about leadership.

The overarching theme that permeates this discussion is that facilitating TL requires a systematic, school-based professional learning, facilitated by internal stakeholders, which has the potential for altering relationships within schools. Such a view of professional learning challenges existing training approaches that are provided outside school

premises and leave little space for implementing new knowledge and skills in the school's daily practices.

In the following two chapters, I conclude my dissertation by discussing the implications of this study for policy and practice as well as reflecting on my PhD journey.

Chapter 9

Implications, recommendations and contribution to knowledge

The incentive behind this study was to learn how to facilitate TL with the purpose of enhancing teachers' roles in education reform and ensuring sustainable improvement of practice in schools in Kazakhstan. Having become an independent country after almost a century of functioning under the influence of the Russian culture and language and being part of the Soviet structure, Kazakhstan is now undergoing social, cultural and economic transition. The country's heightened emphasis on internationalisation and the pursuit of economic competitiveness has led to rapid educational reform in schools in Kazakhstan. This study highlights the importance of acknowledging the importance of teachers' roles to those reforms at all layers of the educational system in Kazakhstan. In contrast to externally-driven and top-down approaches, building capacity locally offers the prospect of sustainable educational improvement and the 'awakening' of society in the future.

This study has implications for the 'how' of enhancing teachers' roles in education reform and ensuring sustainable improvement of practice in schools in Kazakhstan. It enables me to put forward some recommendations for researchers and practitioners who are interested in professional development, school leadership and educational reform in Kazakhstan. It has also generated valuable knowledge about facilitating TL for wider theory and practice. I now explain each of these themes separately.

Implications

This study has two main implications for educational stakeholders in Kazakhstan. First it places the teachers' role as being central to education reform and calls for systemic support at all layers of the system. Second it indicates that sustainable improvement of practice can take place when TL is facilitated on a systematic basis within schools, as discussed below.

Enhancing teachers' roles in education reform

For authentic and more sustainable educational improvement to take place in schools in Kazakhstan, education reforms need to embark on building local capacity. The country's endeavour to catch up with the developed world emphasises the need to review the

existing hierarchical and bureaucratic approaches to reforming schools. The legacies of the Soviet style of top-down school governance are promoting cultures of conformity, performativity, apathy and fear within schools, which contradicts immensely the kind of transformations that the country is seeking in the modern world. In contrast to this, it could invest in bottom-up and system-wide educational improvement by empowering teachers within their professional settings. In such a scenario, enhancing teachers' roles in education reform would require transforming the focus of local education authorities from control to support. In addition, schools' senior leadership teams need to recognise the learning of a whole school-community as a cornerstone of their leadership practice, enabling teachers to lead educational improvement within and outside their schools. Such an organisational and system transformation could begin with systematically facilitating TL within schools.

Facilitating TL for sustainable educational improvement

Facilitating TL has potential for ensuring sustainable educational improvement in Kazakhstan. This study suggests that teachers can lead educational improvement at classroom, school and system level. Teachers can influence and steer the learning of colleagues both within and outside their schools. Teachers can engage in creative practice, develop strategies, identify and address existing barriers to students' learning and school improvement. Teachers can build professional knowledge and share it at on a wider scale. This all however requires supportive school conditions and strategies. The TLLC programme, which was based on the TLDW strategy, enabled teachers to identify their professional concerns, exchange knowledge with colleagues, lead development projects, involve the wider community and build professional knowledge. Providing scaffolding within schools, enabled teachers to make the transition to self-directed professional learning and take charge of the improvement process. Such an approach allowed the identification of school barriers, engaged leadership teams and enabled senior leaders to review their roles in schools to create the conditions conducive to professional learning and TL development. Embedding such strategies systematically within schools can trigger greater school and system improvement in future.

Recommendations

The nine-months interaction with the teachers, school leadership teams and local educational authorities has generated the following recommendations for TL to thrive in schools in Kazakhstan. The recommendations revolve around professional development, school leadership and education reform:

Professional development

- Professional development should be provided on an ongoing basis within schools.
- Professional development is most effective when it enables teachers to identify and address their existing professional problems.
- Professional development is most influential when it takes into account the school's cultures and structures.
- Professional development should take into account teachers' core professional values and enable them to reflect on those values within their work premises.
- Professional development needs to provide scaffolding for teachers to transit from directed to self-directed mode of learning.
- Professional development can be facilitated both by school leadership team members and teachers.
- Professional development is most effective when in it builds social capital and provides access to other practices through school networking.

School leadership

- School leadership teams need to provide time, space and create a no-blame environment for teacher to take leadership initiatives.
- School leadership teams need to reconsider their roles in schools and transit from the control to support language.
- School leadership teams' engagement in teachers' professional learning has a potential for deeper cultural and structural transitions within schools.
- School leadership teams need skills to steer horizontal communication within and across schools for TL to develop.
- School leadership teams need strategies and tools to facilitate TL within schools.

Educational reform

- There is a need to reconsider the existing system of selection and appointment at the local authority and school leadership team level.
- There is an urgent need to revisit the institutional roles of local authorities in education reform and school improvement.
- There is a need to provide leadership training at local authority and school leadership teams level.
- There is a need to support school leadership teams in prioritising and facilitating professional learning within their schools.
- There is a need to create enabling environment within which schools and teachers are able to engage with and take responsibility for education reform.

Contribution to knowledge

It is evident in this study that there have been changes in participants' consciousness and the transformative effect of the project is likely to last. This is difficult to measure, of course, and we can only imagine the extent to which this new practical knowledge locally continues to deepen. More widely my study can be said to have contributed to what is known about educational leadership and teacher and school development in the following ways.

First, the study has illuminated the importance of reciprocity in education reform and demonstrated how this can be fostered and supported. It is evident in this thesis that teachers' ownership of educational improvement can increase and teachers' moral purpose and commitment to students' learning can be nurtured within a system having the characteristics described in Chapters 6-7.

Second, the study has shown that there is an opportunity for local education departments to support professional learning and school improvement by making adjustments to the system for evaluating schools.

Third, it has become evident that school leadership teams are key to capacity building and the study indicates ways in which their roles could be enhanced to enable them to play an active role in building professional learning cultures and facilitating TL.

Fourth, it has brought to the fore the ways in which schools can create the conditions - safe environments, mutual trust and affirmation - which foster the kind of professional development which enhances teachers' professionalism and enables them not only to become reflective practitioners but also to become agents of change.

Fifth, the study has brought into sharp focus the nature of current beliefs and understanding of the kind of the process of learning which constitute a barrier to reform. The idea of self-directed learning for example clearly represents a significant challenge in the Kazakhstani education system.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have explained the implications of my study, provided recommendations for professional development, school leadership and education reform and discussed the study's contribution to knowledge. Further on, I present my final reflections and clarify future plans.

Final reflections and future actions

I now want to reflect on my doctoral journey which has been one of the most empowering experiences in my life. I grew up in the family of a teacher, so teaching has always been part of my life. My true understanding of and affection for this profession has been shaped by my own teaching experience. I enjoyed every moment I taught students in schools, educational centres and universities. This study however extended my understanding about teaching as a profession. I have come to the view that teachers can act as primary agents in the education system. This prompts me to remain a reflective practitioner as well as a strategic thinker in order to enable teachers like myself to grow as agents of educational improvement in my country in the future. Therefore, I believe that this study has had an impact on my own growth at many levels including personal, interpersonal and professional.

This PhD journey has had an enormous effect on my personal beliefs and understandings about learning. I used to have a firm belief that it is an educator's role to take charge of students' learning. Therefore, at the initial stages of this journey, I expected directives to take action. Just like my participants, I feared the uncertainty of constructing knowledge based on my lived experiences. I was blessed to meet great educators on my PhD journey, who provided emotional support and accepted me as a producer of knowledge. This made me confident in my thoughts and actions. I attempted to provide my participants with a similar kind of support so as to enable them to 'own' the process of learning. Whilst fostering my colleagues' reflection on practice, I became vigilant about my own thoughts and actions. I became more sensitive to wider organisational and societal issues that I had previously experienced merely as norms. This enabled me to think strategically and to seek 'ways out' of the limitations I encountered and foster more extended views about learning and practice. Such a liberating experience was gained through my interaction with practitioners.

In the way discussed by Bandura (1997), I was able to develop interpersonal efficacy by interacting with the educators. I negotiated with educational stakeholders and collaborated with more than 30 educators in schools in Kazakhstan. As a result, I have generated knowledge about teachers' professional learning and developed skills that can

be applied in future interventions. At the initial stages of the interaction, I acted as their supervisor and guide to enable them to overcome the fear of uncertainty. After they became more confident in their actions, I became their critical friend and supporter. This enabled me to open up a whole new world of facilitation, which I aim to pursue in my future professional endeavours.

Through this study I came to a deeper understanding about facilitation as a practice. My role as a facilitator spanned the personal, organisational and system levels. In order to create conducive conditions for my participants, I had to develop closer understanding of their organisational structures and cultures as well as awareness of the wider political course of the educational system. This enabled me to develop my analysis about structures and relationships within organisations and develop strategies that can effect a shift in existing practices. As a researcher, I aim to apply the skills of analysis gained to develop knowledge for wider system improvement in future.

As a researcher, I became more appreciative of action-based studies in developing educational contexts. By constructing my research around the action of empowering teachers in my country, I was able to produce knowledge both for theory and practice. I was able to reflect on the reality of the Kazakhstani context and take action with the teachers to improve practice. This enabled us to co-develop strategies that can foster classroom, school and system improvement in Kazakhstan in future. Such a view of research serves well the kind of education that aims to empower individuals and societies.

Finally, this PhD journey taught me the importance of action. Therefore, I aim to continue such interventions in future. I am particularly interested in taking action and researching the following areas:

- evaluating the tools and strategies for facilitating TL in schools;
- evaluating the impact of TL facilitation on students' learning;
- evaluating the impact of TL facilitation on teachers' personal and professional identity;
- evaluating the impact of TL facilitation on school improvement;

- action-based study on means of developing facilitative leadership at local authority and school leadership team levels;
- action-based study on embedding and scaling up the TL development in schools in Kazakhstan.

Pursuing further research in these areas can develop strategies and generate recommendations for educational policy and practice in Kazakhstan. With such support, teachers can craft a better future in this country.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

1st one-to-one meeting questions

1. What did you find most challenging during our first group session?
2. Is there any challenge/concern/problem that has been bothering you in your daily practice? Could you please tell me about it more?
3. Whom do you usually consult with about your professional concerns?
4. Have you ever discussed your professional concerns with the school leadership teams? What was the outcome?
5. How would you describe the educational reforms that are currently being introduced in your school?
6. Could you please tell me about it more?

6th one-to-one meeting questions

Programme:

1. How do you feel about the programme?
2. Could you please describe strong and weak parts of the programme?
3. What are your future plans? Could you please tell me about it more?

Barriers:

1. What kind of challenges have you experienced throughout the programme?
2. How would you describe the professional culture in your school? To what extent do you think is the professional culture collaborative in your school? Could you please tell me about it more?

Strategies:

1. What have you learnt about leadership?
2. What have you learnt about professional learning?
3. What have you learnt about professional collaboration?
4. What motivated you during the school network events?
5. How did you feel before and after the school network events?
6. What kind of barriers did you face in sharing knowledge/material with other colleagues? Could you please tell me about it more?

Appendix 2: Observation tool



Participant observation form

Name of school or group:	Date of session:
Venue:	Group leaders:
Group members attending:	
Group members not present:	

Activities used

Describe in outline what happened in the session

What went well

Describe what seems to be very successful or some indications that the aims of the programme are being realised

Even better if

Note any issues, challenges or concerns

Appendix 3: Research Journal Checklist

Room:

Time:

Participants:

Activities:

Key themes:

Conditions

- School director's role
- School culture
- School structure

Strategy

- Reflection
- Strategic action
- Collaboration
- Networking

Influence

- teachers' practices at classroom
- teachers' practices at school and
- teachers' practices at system level
- teachers' professionalism
- teachers' voice

Reflection on my role

How did I feel about it?

Appendix 4: List of participants

№	Fictitious names of participants	Fictitious names of schools	Work experience as of 1.10.16	CoE programme attendance
1	Symbat	Birlik school	11,5 years	Level 1
2	Zamira	Birlik school	2 months	Did not attend
3	Arman	Birlik school	2 months	Did not attend
4	Adina	Birlik school	5 years	Did not attend
5	Ajar	Birlik school	10 years	Did not attend
6	Dina	Birlik school	28 years	Level 1
7	Raigul	Birlik school	17 years	Level 1
8	Gulim	Birlik school	3 years	Did not attend
9	Batima	Alga school	32 years	Level 1
10	Saltanat	Alga school	7 years	Level 3
11	Zauresh	Alga school	2 months	Did not attend
12	Assylym	Alga school	10 years	Level 2
13	Daniya	Alga school	2 months	Did not attend
14	Erlan	Yntymaq school	4 years	Did not attend
15	Yliyas	Yntymaq school	6 years	Did not attend
16	Nassyр	Yntymaq school	5 years	Did not attend
17	Kulimkoz	Yntymaq school	2 months	Did not attend
18	Erkayim	Yntymaq school	6 years	Did not attend
19	Alma	Yntymaq school	4 years	Did not attend
20	Estigul	Talap school	18 years	Level 2
21	Gulden	Talap school	28 years	Level 3
22	Zhenis	Talap school	24 years	Level 3
23	Alua	Talap school	6 years	Level 3
24	Sherim	Talap school	4 years	Level 3
25	Kulziya	Talap school	27 years	Level 3
26	Bibigul	Talap school	16 years	Level 1
27	Ainur	Talap school	24 years	Level 3
28	Dinara (co-facilitator)	Talap school	30 years	Did not attend
29	Mariya (co-facilitator)	Birlik school	28 years	Level 1
30	Dana (co-facilitator)	Alga school	10 years	Level 1
31	Balausea (co-facilitator)	Yntymaq school	10 years	Level 3
32	Zhiyenkul	Birlik school	Drop off	Level 1
33	Aru	Alga school	Drop off	Did not attend
34	Malika	Birlik school	Drop off	Did not attend
35	Meirim	Alga school	Drop off	Did not attend
36	Madina	Yntymaq school	Drop off	Level 3

Appendix 5: The informed consent form for directors

Informed consent form

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісім беру формасы

Preamble:

My name is Gulmira Kanayeva. I am a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education (hereinafter - the researcher). I wish to invite your school (hereinafter - the school) and teachers of the school (hereinafter - participants) to participate in the study entitled: '*Facilitating teacher leadership in Kazakhstan*' (hereinafter -the study).

Преамбула:

Менің аты-жөнім Гүлмира Қанаева. Мен Кембридж университетінің Білім беру факультетінің докторант студентімін (бұдан әрі - зерттеуші). Мен Сіздің мектебіңізді (бұдан әрі - мектеп) және мектеп ұстаздарын (бұдан әрі - қатысушылар) '*Қазақстан ұстаздарының көшбасшылық әлеуетін дамыту*' атты ғылыми жұмысына (бұдан әрі - ғылыми жұмыс) қатысуға шақырамын.

Time period of the study:

October, 2016-June, 2017

Ғылыми жұмыстың жүргізілетін уақыты:

2016 жылдың қазаны - 2017 жылдың маусымы

Purpose of the study:

To develop and evaluate a strategy for enhancing teachers' role in educational reform in Kazakhstan using an approach that enables teachers to exercise leadership for the purposes of enabling collaborative and sustainable development of practice.

Зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты:

Қазақстандағы білім беру саласындағы реформаларда ұстаздардың рөлін арттыру мақсатымен ұстаздардың көшбасшылық қабілеттерін қолдануға мүмкіндік беретін тәсілді қолдана отырып ұстаздар арасындағы әріптестік пен тұрақты кәсіби дамуға жағдай жасайтын арнайы стратегияны дамыту және бағалау.

The study procedure:

1. The researcher collaborates with a designated school representative (-s) to conduct a teacher leadership development programme (hereinafter - the programme);
2. The programme consist of 6 (six) sessions that take place within the school premises;
3. The researcher and a designated school representative (-s) conduct 6 (six) face-to-face consultations with participants;

Зерттеу жұмысының рәсімі:

1. Зерттеуші арнайы бекітілген мектеп өкілімен (-дерімен) біріге отырып ұстаз көшбасшылығын дамыту бағдарламасын (бұдан әрі - бағдарлама) жүргізеді;
2. Бағдарлама мектеп ішінде өткізілетін 6 (алты) сессиядан тұрады;
3. Зерттеуші мен арнайы бекітілген мектеп өкілі (-дері) кеңес беру мақсатында қатысушылармен 6 (алты) бетпе-бет кездесулер өткізеді;

4. The researcher, a designated school representative(-s) and participants attend 3 (three) teacher networking events that may take place outside the school premises;

5. Participants, who successfully complete the programme, receive certificates;

6. The successful completion of the programme includes attending sessions, networking events and presenting a development project.

The programme materials:

1. The programme contains materials with the HertsCam and International Teacher Leadership logo.

2. The school cannot distribute, copy or use materials with the HertsCam and International Teacher Leadership logo unless a separate permission has been obtained from the HertsCam and International Teacher Leadership organisation.

Data collection

1. The researcher may use photo/video/film and sound recording to monitor and evaluate the process of the study;

2. The researcher informs and signs a separate consent form before photo, video, film and sound recording with participants;

3. The researcher may make a copy of materials produced during the sessions, face-to-face meetings and networking events;

4. The researcher may conduct lesson observation and interviews to collect subsidiary materials. The researcher obtains prior consent from participants before using any of these methods.

Risks and benefits of the study

4. Зерттеуші, арнайы бекітілген мектеп өкілі(-дері) және қатысушылар 3 (үш) мектепаралық ұстаздар әріптестігін дамыту кездесулеріне қатысады. Аталмыш кездесулер мектептен тыс жерде орын алуы мүмкін;

5. Бағдарламаны сәтті аяқтаған қатысушыларға сертификаттар беріледі;

6. Бағдарламаны сәтті аяқтау сессияларға, мектепаралық кездесулерге қатысу және шығармашылық жобаны қорғаудан тұрады.

Бағдарламаның материалдары:

1. Бағдарлама аясында HertsCam және International Teacher Leadership деген таңбалары бар материалдарды қолданылады.

2. Мектеп HertsCam және International Teacher Leadership мекмелерінен арнайы рұқсатын алмайынша, HertsCam және International Teacher Leadership деген таңбалары бар материалдарды тарата, көшіре немесе қолдана алмайды.

Ақпарат жинау

1. Зерттеуші ғылыми жұмыс барысын бақылау және бағалау мақсатымен сурет/видео/кино және аудио таспаға түсіруі мүмкін;

2. Зерттеуші сурет/видео/кино және аудио таспаға түсіретіндігін алдын ала хабардар етеді және қатысушылармен қосымша рұқсат қағазға қол қояды;

3. Зерттеуші сессиялар, бетпе-бет кездесулер және мектепаралық кездесулер кезінде пайда болған материалдардың көшірмесін алады;

4. Зерттеуші қосымша ақпарат жинау мақсатымен сабақты бақылау мен сұхбат алу әдістерін қолдануы мүмкін. Аталмыш әдістерді қолданар алдында зерттеуші қатысушылардың рұқсатын алады.

Ғылыми-жұмыстың қауіптері мен артықшалақтары

The risks associated with this study may include difficulties related to participants' time and workload. Therefore:

1. The researcher consults with a designated school representative to schedule the programme sessions, face-to-face meetings and networking events.

The benefits which may result from this study include:

1. Participants obtain professional development opportunity;
2. Participants learn how to exercise leadership by conducting the development project;
3. Participants collaborate with colleagues;
4. Participants learn how to conduct a development project;
5. The school develops its human capital;
6. The school can conduct the programme in future;
7. The school can collaborate with other schools to share experiences.

Subjects' rights

The school and participants have the rights to:

1. participate voluntarily;
2. withdraw the consent;
3. discontinue the participation.

Research outcome

The study results will be used to:

1. make a significant contribution to science and professional knowledge and recognize teacher achievement;

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысудың қауіптері ұстаздардың уақыты мен жұмыс сағаттарына кедергі тудыруына қатысты болуы мүмкін. Сол себептен:

1. Зерттеуші сесиялар, бетпе-бет кездесулер мен мектепаралық кездесулердің уақытын мектептің арнайы бекітілген өкілімен (-дерімен) кеңесе отырып бекітеді.

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуыңыздың келесідей артықшылықтары болуы мүмкін:

1. Қатысушылар кәсіби біліктілігін дамытады;
2. Қатысушылар шығармашылық жоба жасау арқылы көшбасшылық қабілетін дамытады;
3. Қатысушылар әріптестерімен біліктіліктерін бөлісуге мүмкіндік алады;
4. Қатысушылар шығармашылық жоба жүргізудің жолдарын меңгереді;
5. Мектеп адами ресурстарын дамытады;
6. Мектеп бағдарламаны тұрақты түрде ары қарай жалғастыра алады;
7. Мектеп басқа мектептермен тәжірибе алмасу мүмкіндігіне ие болады.

Мектеп пен қатысушылардың құқықтары

Мектеп пен қатысушылардың:

1. ерікті түрде қатысуға;
2. зерттеу жұмысына қатысу туралы келісімді кері қайтаруға;
3. зерттеу жұмысына мүлдем қатыспауға құқығы бар.

Ғылыми жұмыс қорытындысы

Зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері мынадай мақсаттарда қолданылады:

1. ғылым және кәсіби білімге пайдасын тигізу және ұстаздардың жетістігін жария ету;

2. write up a doctoral dissertation;
3. be presented at scientific or professional meetings;
4. be published in scientific journals and/or book (-s).

Anonymity and confidentiality

1. To safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of your school and participants all data will be coded and protected in any research papers and presentations that result from this work.

2. The school and participants will be given a pseudonym and all identifying information related to the school and participants will be removed.

3. If data is to be recorded that would identify the participant (photographs, audio or video), and if there is any intention to use this material in any publication or presentation, a separate consent form will be obtained from the school or participants after the recording has been made.

4. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly observed, unless the school and participants wish to be identified.

Contact information

If you wish to ask questions related to my study, please contact me at +77015707327 and gk359@cam.ac.uk.

Record of Consent

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in the study:

2. докторлық диссертация жазу;
3. академиялық немесе кәсіби кездесулерде көрсету;
4. ғылыми журналдарда және/немесе кітап (-тар) ретінде баспаға ұсынып, шығару.

Анонимділік пен құпиялылық

1. Анонимділік пен құпиялылықты қамтамасыз ету мақсатында мектеп пен қатысушыларға қатысты барлық ақпараттар ғылыми жұмыстың аясында пайда болған барлық материалдарда, ғылыми мақалаларда және презентацияларда кодталады және қорғалады.

2. Мектеп пен қатысушыларға бүркеніш аттар беріледі және мектеп пен қатысушылардың тұлғаларын анықтайтын барлық ақпараттар алынып тасталады.

3. Егер басылып алынғын материалдарда (сурет, аудио немесе видео) мектеп пен қатысушылардың жеке тұлғаларын анықтайтын ақпарат болса, аталмыш материалдарды қолдану мақсатында зерттеуші материалдарды басып алғаннан кейін қосымша рұқсат қағазға қол қою арқылы мектеп немесе қатысушылардан қосымша рұқсат алады.

4. Мектеп және қатысушылар өз еркімен аты-жөндерін анықтайтын ақпаратты беруге ниет білдірмейінше, анонимділік пен құпиялылық қатаң бақыланады.

Байланыс ақпараты

Ғылыми жұмысқа қатысты сұрақтарыңыз болған жағдайда, менің байланыс ақпараттарым: ұялы тел. +77015707327 және электрондық жәшік gk359@cam.ac.uk.

Келісімді тіркеу

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісіміңізді берсеңіз, берілген формаға қол қоюыңызды сұраймыз:

1. I have carefully read the information provided;
2. I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
3. I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
4. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
5. I have received 1 (one) copy of the consent form for my own record;
6. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

The school principal

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher

Signature: _____

Date: _____

1. Мен берілген формамен мұқият таныстым;
2. Маған зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты мен оның процедурасы жайында толық ақпарат берілді;
3. Мен жинақталған ақпарат пен құпия мәліметтерге тек зерттеушінің өзіне қолжетімді және мәлім болатынын толық түсінемін;
4. Мен кез келген уақытта ешқандай түсініктемесіз зерттеу жұмысына қатысудан бас тартуыма болатынын түсінемін;
5. Мен осы келісім формасының 1 (бір) данасын алдым;
6. Мен жоғарыда аталып өткен ақпаратты саналы түрде қабылдап, осы зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға өз келісімімді беремін.

Мектеп директоры

Қолы: _____

Күні: _____

Зерттеуші

Қолы: _____

Күні: _____

Appendix 6: Informed consent form for participants

Student Name	Gulmira Kanayeva
Email	gk359@cam.ac.uk
Supervisor	Dr David Frost and Dr Ros McLellan
Thesis Title	'Facilitating teacher leadership in Kazakhstan'

My name is Gulmira Kanayeva. I am a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education (hereinafter - the researcher). I wish to invite you to participate in the study entitled: '*Facilitating teacher leadership in Kazakhstan*' (hereinafter -the study).

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to develop and evaluate a strategy for enhancing teachers' role in educational reform in Kazakhstan. As such, your written feedback and reflections on the event would enrich the understanding about the impact of that strategy and identify ways to improve it.

Research process:

The study is based on the programme called Teacher Leadership for Learning and Collaboration programme (hereinafter – the TLLC programme), which will take place between October 2016 and June 2017. The programme consist of 6 (six) sessions and 6 (six) face-to-face consultations that take place within your school premises. You will then be invited to attend 3 (three) teacher networking events and 1 (one) International Teacher Leadership Conference that may take place outside your school premises. The successful completion of the programme includes attending group sessions, networking events and presenting a development project in oral and written forms.

Research outcome:

The study results will be used to:

1. make a contribution to theory and practice of teacher leadership development and recognize teachers' achievement;
2. write up a doctoral dissertation;
3. be presented at scientific or professional meetings;
4. be published in scientific journals and/or book (-s).

Your rights:

As a participant of the TLLC programme you have rights to:

1. participate voluntarily;
2. withdraw the consent;
3. discontinue the participation.

Anonymity and confidentiality:

1. In order to safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality, all your details will be coded and protected in any research papers and presentations that result from this work.
2. Your names will be anonymized and all identifying information will be removed.
3. In case there is a need to use any identifying information such as photographs, audio or video, and if there is any intention to use this material in any publication or presentation, I will send a separate consent form to obtain your permission.
4. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly observed, unless you wish to be identified.

Contact information:

If you wish to ask questions related to my study, please contact me at gk359@cam.ac.uk.

Record of Consent:

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in the study:

1. I have carefully read the information provided;
2. I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
3. I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
4. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
5. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix 7: Key issues, insights and features of the programme

This document comprises the four lists of key issues, insights and key features of the intervention derived from my reflective analysis of the critical narrative.

From Chapter 4

The list of issues and insights from the analysis of the narrative in Chapter 4. The items listed below all relate the ‘creating the conditions’ stage of the narrative.

National reform

- teachers felt challenged by the new concepts introduced as a part of the reform initiatives

Schools conditions

- selective and comprehensive schools vary extensively in terms of infrastructure, students’ number, academic background and teachers’ workload
- more effort was required to create the structural conditions in comprehensive school
- the professional learning was perceived as an externally provided activity rather than the school-based ongoing process and hence, creating conditions for TL required providing time and space within schools.

School directors’ roles

- lacking the autonomy
- not seeing their roles as directly responsible for the school improvement, teachers’ professional learning and building collaborative cultures and distancing themselves from the teachers
- middle management were more involved in teaching and learning practices

Schools’ professional culture

- coaching and seminars offered sporadic opportunities for professional collaboration and knowledge-sharing
- three out of four schools had no staff room, where all school community could interact with each other on an ongoing basis

Schools’ structure

- lack of time and increased bureaucracy in all four schools

Teachers’ professional learning

- teachers’ perceptions of the professional learning were related to the externally provided short-term trainings
- the majority of the teachers in the selective schools and the smaller number of teachers in the comprehensive schools were able to attend the Centre of Excellence programme, where the Level 1 focused on TL

Teachers’ attitudes to the concept of TL

- attending to the teachers’ professional values was important in introducing the concept of TL

Establishing partnerships and negotiating organisational conditions

- identifying the co-facilitators

- setting up the project teams, which consisted of the school leadership members
- selecting the participants in collaboration with the co-facilitators
- planning the programme with the school leadership team and my co-facilitators enabled to create the structural conditions; legitimize the programme in schools; challenge the existing understandings of professional development; revealed the obstacles to open discussions.

From Chapter 5

The list of issues, insights and key features of the intervention are derived from the analysis of the narrative in Chapter 5. The items listed below all relate the ‘reorientating’ stage of the narrative.

National reforms

- reforms being perceived as both top-down and horizontal, which had led to the superficial approach to improvement
- teachers having a dilemma between ensuring the results and promoting learning
- the participants’ perceptions of the development project were influenced by their previous experiences with the creativity project, which was part of the attestation (teacher performance evaluation) process

School structures

- introducing the school-based professional learning was more difficult in comprehensive school due to the variations in the teachers’ schedules
- both selective and comprehensive schools prioritised external inspection over internal professional learning
- organizing the first School Network event required creating structural conditions and working closely with the school leadership teams

Participants’ assumptions of learning

- the pre-school training with a strong reliance on the instruction and the external guidance influenced the participants’ assumptions of learning
- the novice teachers struggled to reflect on their practices and identify their professional concerns due to the lack of experience and self-efficacy
- facilitating ongoing learning was a challenge because of the limited access to the quality literature in Kazakh

Social-cultural factors

- fear of public humiliation was an obstacle to promoting social learning
- experienced teachers’ voices were stronger in comparison to their novice counterparts

Co-facilitators’ roles

- the co-facilitators’ engagement in the programme varied depending on their roles in schools: the teacher co-facilitator instigated the new ideas for the group session, while the vice-directors ensured structural conditions
- the co-facilitators’ (Aqбота and Dinara) perceived the programme as a training of the new teaching methods and the instruction-based learning
- the co-facilitators who attended the Level 1 of the Centre of Excellence programmes had the skills to facilitate the interaction between the participants during the School Network event
- inviting the co-facilitators to lead the School Network event increased their engagement in the programme

Reorientating towards reflective practice

- building trust and critical friendship as well as providing guidance and emotional support to the participants
- systematic facilitation was required to enable the participants to write a reflective account
- pushing and pulling the participants to enable them to identify their professional concerns, plan their further actions and consider collaboration with colleagues
- inviting the participants to reflect on their practices to reorientate them from the technician approach to improvement
- providing different examples of portfolios opened a space for a more creative practice

Professional collaboration and networking

- clear guidance and induction were required before conducting in the School Network event
- teacher seek collaboration based on the principle of expertise and experience
- enabling the participants to present their professional concerns during the School Network event increased their personal power and commitment to their projects
- affirmative atmosphere during the School Network event promoted the knowledge-sharing
- novice teachers appreciated the School Network event because of the support of the experienced teachers
- poster sessions did not generate much knowledge sharing or feedback
- positive relations during the School Network event was a key to facilitating knowledge-sharing and collaboration between Kazakh speaking schools
- collaboration and knowledge sharing were more vibrant during the School Network event but less evident in the schools' daily practices

Impact on participants' practice during Phase 1

- the novice teachers finding it difficult to identify their professional concerns
- teachers still had no clear idea about the concept of TL
- vignettes with the TL stories facilitated the participants' reflection and action
- the participants started appreciating the opportunities to collaborate with colleagues
- two participants withdrew from the programme due to the lack of commitment to the development project and the programme's principles

From Chapter 6

The list of issues, insights and key features of the intervention are derived from the analysis of the narrative in Chapter 6. The items listed below all relate the 'enacting' stage of the narrative.

National reform imperative

- the action research, which was being introduced as a part of the reform initiatives, influenced the schools' and the participants' perceptions of the programme
- the local educational departments' approach to ensuring the quality education increased the culture of fear, influenced the participants' workload and decreased their commitment to the development project
- the schools and the participants focused on the upcoming school attestation rather than professional learning
- with the new teacher attestation system teachers were more fixated on the formalities of meeting the requirements rather than the actual improvement of practice

School structures

- external facilitators have limited power over the school structures

- the school directors more interested in the structural conditions rather than the programme details
- the instructional practices were perceived as the vice-director's responsibility
- the vice-director (Dinara) finding it hard to balance between instructing the participants and acting as a critical friend
- the vice-director's (Dinara) knowledge of subject and pedagogy was a key to providing a support to the participants
- the school director (Birlik schools) feedback was limited to surface problems rather than learning
- the participants had to adjust their development projects depending on the structural factors

Co-facilitators' beliefs and dispositions

- the co-facilitator (Gainy) was still contesting the lenient nature of the facilitation of TL and required me to be more strict
- the co-facilitator (Dinara) became more open to a dialogic nature of the programme

Facilitating the enactment of TL

- facilitating the participants' reflections and enabling them to enact the development project involved introducing the basic tools of inquiry
- due to the lack of experience the novice teachers required ongoing support to lead the development project
- critical friendship was a key to enabling the participants to enact their development projects
- promoting the participants' self-reflection enabled to increase their ownership of the development project
- the key obstacles to enacting the development project included the lack of time and the self-efficacy

Collaboration and networking

- teachers leading the second School Network event helped to increase the group self-efficacy
- teachers leading the second School Network event was based on horizontal and equal relations
- facilitating the knowledge-sharing during the second School Network event required more interactive approach rather than question and answer session.

Impact on participants in Phase 2

- the participants' resilience to the external factors started increasing, whereby they began adjusting their plans to overcome the external barriers
- the participants' perceptions of TL started shifting towards self-accountability and strategic action
- the participants' projects started influencing their classrooms' and schools' practices

Chapter 7

The list of issues, insights and key features of the intervention are derived from the analysis of the narrative in Chapter 7. The items listed below all relate the 'reflecting' stage of the narrative.

National reform

- it was a challenge for the teacher (Assylym) to attend the international educational conference due to the school's (Alga school) dependence on the local educational departments' funding
- the local educational departments' ongoing control increased paperwork and decreased time for promoting professional learning within schools; diverted the participants' attention to the performance-oriented mindset
- inspection culture affected the participants' commitment to what they do and distorted the professional cultures within schools

Structural conditions for sustaining the programme

- the lack of the school directors' support
- the school leadership teams moving the schools
- the vice-director (Dinara) sustained the programme by created the professional learning communities in her school

School structures and cultures

- structural barriers to facilitating TL: *the school leadership teams' attitudes to and engagement in* the teachers' professional learning; *structures*: lack of time, technical support and literature;
- cultural barriers to facilitating TL: limited opportunities to collaborating with colleagues outside the programme because of the lack of time, the culture of competition and the indifference
- personal barriers to facilitating TL: lack of experience and commitment to leading the development project

Facilitating TL

- bringing the school directors and the teachers together influenced the participants' commitment to the improvement and the school directors' engagement in the instructional practices
- inviting the international practitioners raised an awareness about the importance of TL
- interacting with the international practitioners revealed the differences in the attitudes to critique in two educational contexts
- recognising the participants' achievements in front of their colleagues increased their self-esteem

Role of the facilitator and co-facilitators

- the experienced teachers appreciated new ideas and novice teachers requesting more nudging
- the facilitator's main challenge was to balance between providing guidance and enabling the participants to exercise agency
- the co-facilitators initiated to publish the participants' reflective accounts to enhance the impact of their projects

Impact on participants' collaboration and networking

- increasing group bond and changing disposition towards collaboration was highlighted by both novice and experienced teachers
- increasing group bond between the programme participants
- the school network events triggered the participants' self-regulation; altered their dispositions towards knowledge-sharing; enhanced personal and collective responsibility and increased their self-efficacy

Impact on participants' practices

- sharing their development projects within a wider professional community

- becoming more courageous with experimenting, influencing students' learning and schools' practices
- increasing interaction with the parents and the community

Impact on professional identities

- revisiting their roles in schools and making a shift from the subject-deliverer to influencing the students' future
- separating from the external forces and shifting towards the self-directedness
- novice teachers becoming more courageous in influencing the school practices

Impact on participants' perceptions of TL

- facilitating TL opened up a space for the pedagogical creativity within the system of the top-down hierarchy
- making a shift from the power perspective towards the individual's capability to take the initiative
- perceiving TL within teaching and learning practices

Impact on school structures

- increasing the school leadership teams' engagement in the school-based professional learning

Appendix 8: Participants' ethical protocol

Schools	English	Kazakh
Birlik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not be late - Manage time well - Listen to a colleague and do not interrupt - Be active - Support each other - Accept critical thinking positively - Everyone's opinion is important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Кешікпеу - Уақытты үнемді пайдалану - Әріптесін тыңдай білу - Белсенділік таныту - Бір біріне қолдау көрсету - Сынды дұрыс қабылдау - Әркімнің пікірі құнды
Yntymak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not be late and be on time - Listen to each others' opinion - Provide moral and psychological support - Taking notes of necessary information in a timely fashion - What is said in the group remains in the group - Treat a new initiative with responsibility - Do not get distracted by mobile phone during seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Уақытылы жиналып кешікпеу - Бір-біріміздің ойымызды тыңдау - Моральдық, психологиялық тұрғыдан қолдау - Қажетті мәліметтерді уақытылы жазып отыру - Топта айтылған мәселелерді топта қалдыру - Бастаған іске жауапкершілік таныту - Семинар уақытында ұялы телефонға уақыт жоғалтпау
Alga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not be late to seminars - Switch off your mobile phones - Listen to each other - Help each other, collaboration - Ensure the confidentiality of information discussed during the group sessions - Value each others' opinion - Time management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Семинарға кешікпей келу - Ұялы телефондарды өшіру - Бірін-бірі тыңдай білу - Көмек көрсету, ынтымақтастық - Топ құпиясын сақтау - Бір бірінің пікірін бағалау - Уақытпен жұмыс істеу
Talap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not be late - Be active - Complete the tasks in timely fashion - Offer a quality critical thinking - Be open to professional criticality - Respect others opinion - Be positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Кешікпей келу - Белсенді қатысу - тапсырмаларды уақытымен орындау - кәсіби сынды сындарлы беру - кәсіби сынға ашық болу - пікірді сыйлау - көңілді болу

Appendix 9: Reflective pro forma

(an example of a teacher's reflections after the first group session in Kazakh)



Семинар 1

Семинарға қатысқандығы жөнінде рефлексия (өз-өзіне есеп беру)

Күні: 15.11.16

Семинар өткен дәрісхана: 218

Семинардың мазмұны/жаттығулар

Көшбасшы ұғымы. Көшбасшыға тән қасиеттер. Білім алу мен ынтымақта-
судағы ұстаз көшбасшылық бағдарламасының мақсаттары мен міндеттері,
кезңдері, құрылымы. HertsCam Жобасы, тарау аймағы! Ұстаз көшбасшылық
ұстаз жетекшілігімен жүргізілетін дайын жұмыс.
"Мен қандай сұхбат" жүргізу арқылы кәсіби құндылықтар анықтау

Білім алу туралы не білдім?

Кәсіби құндылықтар анықтау, өзгеріс енгізу аяққа анықтау.
көшбасшылық және оның маңызы

Көшбасшылық туралы не білдім?

Көшбасшы белгілі бір әрекет арқылы мәселені шешуге ықпал етуші тұлға
екендігін, көшбасшылық кәсіби құндылықтар анықтаудан, өз педагогтік
ұстанымын нақтылаудан, стратегиялық іс-әрекетін жоспарлаудан бастап
аламындықтан өтеді. Өзгеріс енгізу мақсатында бастамада көптеген ала-
тын, жоспарсыз және өзгерісін басқара алатын ұстаз көшбасшы болып
табылады.

Білгенімнің менің кәсіби әрекетіме әсері қандай?

Мүдәлімнің кәсіби құндылықтан ажырау арқылы өзгеріс енгізуі,
тәжірибемді жақсартып алуға, өзгеріс енгізу мақсатында қарастыруға
ықпал етті.

Менің келесі әрекетім қандай болады?

Өзіндік кәсіби құндылықтар анықтау, жоба жүргізу бағытына
анықтау.

Appendix 10: Planning tools

Action checklist 1 (third group session) (English)

Step 1: My professional concern

Step 2: What kind of question/s will I keep in mind?

Step 3: What kind of tools will I use to understand my concern?

Step 4: Whom will I involve in my project?

Step 5: How will I ensure ethical issues?

Step 6: What will be the timeline of my project?

Step 7: How will my project influence the practice?

Action checklist 2 (third one-to-one meetings)
(Kazakh)

Дамыту жобаның тақырыбы _____

Дамыту жобаның сұрағы: _____

Қайтіп _____ ?

Жобаның негіздемесі:

Сұрақшалар	Мәлімет көздері	Мәлімет көздері	Мәлімет көздері	Мәлімет көздері
Не?				
Неге?				
Қайтіп?				

Ақпаратты жинау құралдары:

Сауалнама	Сұхбат	Құжаттарды талдау / оқушылардың жұмыстарын талдау/суретке түсіру	Зерттеуші күнделігі	Бақылау	т.б.

Дамытуды жүзеге асыру үшін қолданылатын құралдар:

Әріптес (тер)пен кенесу	Талқылау	Рефлексия	Тақырыпқа қатысты әдебиет көздерін оқу	Қауымдастық мүшелерімен хабарласу	Бірігіп жоспар құру	Сабақта жана әдістерді/ құралдарды қолдану
Тағы басқа?						

Іс-әрекет жоспары

#	Іс-әрекет	Орындау мерзімі	Орындалды/ орындалмады	Не кедергі болды?
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				