TELLING TALES AND PAINTING PICTURES:
A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OF
NORTHERN TERRITORY PRIMARY TEACHERS

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Curriculum
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November 2015
ABSTRACT

Education in Australia is currently under intense scrutiny by the media, state, territory and federal governments, parents of students, industry and other stakeholders. The extent and range of literature about every aspect of the education experience for is evident. Many of the significant directions and decisions being made about education practices do not appear to include teachers explicitly in the decision-making processes. There are conflicting ideas about the role of education in the current environment and the role of teachers as key agents of change. There is scant research about the beliefs, perceptions and viewpoints of teachers about the changes to and within their profession. Professional development and learning are important parts of every teacher’s daily working life. There are increasing expectations that teachers will be actively involved in the development of learning plans where they are fundamentally linked to improvements in student outcomes.

This study uses an interpretive narrative inquiry to story the professional lives of classroom teachers. Informed by a social constructivist perspective, the purpose of this research was to investigate the scope of the professional learning, development and professional enhancement experiences of seven Northern Territory (NT) classroom teachers, through co-constructed narratives.

The teachers narrated their own experiences over the past two years, examining their own reflections on the quality and value of their professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL) experiences. They identified common themes such as the effectiveness and relevance of their PD against regulatory requirements and models of PD delivery, quality and learning. This research study included an examination of teacher agency as well as school factors which inhibited or supported valid and meaningful PD and PL. The qualitative data are re-storied into a research narrative extending the body of knowledge about the professional learning and development of teachers in the contextually specific context of the Northern Territory. A model of Ongoing Professional Enhancement (OPE) is included in this research study and is based upon the experiences of these teachers and current literature which supports a model offering a greater degree of engagement and participation in schools.
STATEMENT OR ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that this work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed: QUT Verified Signature

Date: 5\textsuperscript{th} November, 2015
KEY WORDS

Interpretive narrative inquiry, narrative inquiry, professional development, professional learning, PD, professional enhancement, PL, professional growth, Northern Territory, NT, co-constructed narratives, professional agency, teacher agency, social constructivism, models of learning, quality teachers, quality teaching, effective teachers, effective teaching, teacher values, teacher beliefs
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Life sometimes takes us in different directions. Ten years ago I was debriefing with a group of teachers in the staff room after school one day. Their comments and questions about their PD experiences were perplexing. Some of their contributions are included in the vignettes at the beginning of this thesis and the stories from these teachers were the genesis of this research study. While they have now scattered across the world, I thank them for the impetus to start this inquiry.

I thank Professor Susan Danby, who took a chance and allowed me to join the learning community of QUT. I told Susan then that I would likely be the last of my cohort to finish my thesis! I thank Professor Steven Ritchie for becoming my first supervisor and for pointing me in the right direction! Professor Mary Ryan came into this journey at a critical time and Mary, your expert assistance, support, patience and determination have been most appreciated. Without your late night additions and immediate responses, I would still be floundering. I thank you for your encouragement and I have no doubt that I contributed mightily to your stress levels. I would like to thank Professor Margaret Lloyd and Associate Professor Denise Beutel for taking the time to offer such valued constructive criticism at my final oral seminar. Your extensive notes and clarity of “hints” are very much appreciated. I hope the final document reflects all of your expert opinions and it is without a doubt a stronger document for your input.

A valuable part of my journey has been the development of a friendship with Dr. Linda-Dianne Willis. We met at that first meeting of enthusiastic doctoral candidates in Brisbane at QUT and Linda’s friendship, knowledge about QUT and steady support have been invaluable. Thank you, good friend, for being there during this journey.

To those in the Student Research Centre who assisted this distance student with the processes for completion of key target deadlines, I thank you. You are truly dedicated individuals and your assistance has been invaluable over many years. A very particular thank you to the IT and library teams at QUT, particularly those engaged in the digitising of library resources and references to enable me to access a cornucopia of electronic reference material from a home well away from Brisbane.
I thank the participating teachers who engaged in this research and entrusted me with their thoughts, feelings and beliefs about professional development. You are the heroes for your unstinting dedication and commitment to your students and schools. Teaching is a difficult profession in that teachers don’t often get praise but these seven teachers are exemplars in their profession. They like teaching. They like being teachers. They like the students in their classes. In the words of Leonard Nimoy of Star Trek fame: may you all live long and prosper.

Last, but definitely not least, I sincerely thank my family, particularly my husband Ian, our children Christopher, Tracey and Taryn and their partners for their unfailing love, interest, support and understanding of my determination to investigate a field close to my heart. During those years, Jacob, Tiger, Leo and Emily, my amazing grandchildren, were born and have brought so much joy and laughter into my life – and such welcome relief from working in the coal mines of thesis production! To my very good friends who provided a strong sounding board and cheer squad, thank you for the many cuppas along this journey, your steady words of encouragement and opportunities to discuss and debrief. Sadly, in the final stages of completion of this thesis, my mother Helen Stefura passed away at the age of 89 years after a short terminal illness. While she didn’t hear the result of those many years of writing, she shared her love, support and pride at my work to date. I will forever remember a wonderful mother and treasure her words in our last fortnight together. RIP Mum.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page 1
Abstract 2
Statement of Original Authorship 3
Key Words 4
Acknowledgements 5
Table of Contents 7

CHAPTER 1: Telling the Tale and Painting the Picture of Professional Development 13
1.1 Reflections from the Field 11
1.2 Telling Tales: The Narrative Approach 13
1.3 Context and Rationale of the Study 18
1.3.1 Introduction: Professional Development (PD) and Professional Learning (PL) 19
1.3.2 Defining PD and PL for this Research Study 21
1.3.3 Extent and Range of Literature in this Study 25
1.4 Research Aims and Questions 27
1.5 Significance of the Study 28
1.6 Research Limitations 30
1.7 Overview of the Study 32
1.8 Use of Photos in this Study 33
1.9 Summary 33

CHAPTER 2: The Research Context 35
2.1 Context: The Northern Territory (NT) 35
2.2 Education Services in the NT 38
2.3 Summary 42

CHAPTER 3: The Complex Picture of Professional Development 44
3.1 Changing Priorities for Education and Teaching 44
3.2 Challenges to Traditional Professional Development Delivery 56
3.3 Defining Professional Development (PD) and Professional Learning (PL) 59
3.4 PD and PL Around Australia 69
3.5 Characteristics of Effective Teachers 73
3.6 Principles of Effective Professional Development 77
3.7 Professional Development in the NT 82
3.8 Models of Professional Development and Professional Learning 86
3.8.1 Guskey (1986): Model of Teacher Change 88
3.8.2 Day (1999): Interactive Professional Development 90
3.8.3 Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002): Interconnected Model of Professional Growth 93
3.8.4 Bredeson (2003): Architecture of PD 96
3.8.5 Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2004): Model of Transfer of Learning 100
3.8.6 Diaz-Maggioli (2004): The Teacher’s Choice Framework 101
3.8.7 Justi and Van Driel (2005): Craft, Expert and Interactive Models of PD 103

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 7
CHAPTER 4: Narrative Inquiry
4.1 Telling the Narrative Tale
4.2 Narrative Inquiry (NI): An Overview
4.3 The General Turn to Narrative: Reviewing the literature
4.3.1 Post-modern Perspectives Influencing Narrative Inquiry
4.3.2 The Influences of Different Disciplines and Analytic Strategies
4.4 Key Concepts of Narrative Inquiry
4.4.1 Words and Stories as Data
4.4.2 Local and Specific Context
4.4.3 Narrative Knowing
4.4.4 Relationship of Researcher and Researched
4.5 The Second Wave of Narrative Analysis
4.5.1 Personal Narratives are Sequential and Meaningful
4.5.2 Narratives as Human Sense-making
4.5.3 Narratives as Representations and Reconstructions
4.5.4 Narratives as Transformation and Change
4.5.5 Narratives as Small or Big stories
4.6 Summary

CHAPTER 5: The Conceptual Framework
5.1 The Conceptual Framework
5.2 Link to the Conceptual Framework: Professional Agency (PA)
5.3 Link to the Conceptual Framework: Social Constructivism Paradigm (SC)
5.4 Comparison of Key Characteristics of SC, PA, PD/PL and NI
5.6 Summary

CHAPTER 6: Research Methodology
6.1 The Inquiry Process
6.1.1 Locating Sites and Individuals and Purposeful Sampling
6.1.2 Participating Teachers
6.1.3 Gaining Access and Establishing Rapport
6.1.4 Data Organisation
6.1.5 Recording Information and Resolving Field Issues
6.1.5 Storage of Data
6.2 Trustworthiness, Validation and Reliability
6.3 Role of Researcher
6.4 Data Analysis
6.5 Summary

CHAPTER 7: The Plot Thickens, NT Teachers Speak
7.1 Classroom contexts
7.1.1 Eliza
7.1.2 Mark
7.1.3 Jeanne 203
7.1.4 Olivia 205
7.1.5 Tally 208
7.1.6 Terry 210
7.1.7 Samantha 213
7.1.8 Theme 1: The Effective Teacher 215

7.2 The range and extent of PD experiences for NT teachers 219
7.2.1 Eliza 219
7.2.2 Mark 228
7.2.3 Jeanne 236
7.2.4 Olivia 243
7.2.5 Tally 253
7.2.6 Terry 259
7.2.7 Samantha 267
7.2.8 Theme 2: Definition of PD in comparison to Models of PD 275
7.2.9 Theme 3: Quality Professional Development 281
7.2.10 Theme 4: Professional / Teacher Agency 285

7.3 Summary 290

CHAPTER 8: The Tale Ends and the Last Stroke is Painted 291
8.1 The Final Chapter 291
8.2 Response to Research Question 1 292
8.3 Response to Research Questions 2 and 3 295
8.4 Conceptual Model: Ongoing Performance Enhancement (OPE) 299
8.5 Implications of this Research 305
8.6 Conclusion 308

LIST OF FIGURES
1.1 A “Wave” of Narrative Inquiry and this Research Study 17
1.2 Teachers, Schools, Students and PD 22
1.3 Teachers, Schools, Students, PD and PL 24
1.4 Sunset on Darwin Harbour :Wet Season 2015 (photo) 34
2.1 The Barkley Highway at Sunset between Queensland and the NT (photo) 43
3.1 Teachers, schools and students with PD and PL 69
3.2 Performance and Development Culture: Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework 79
3.3 Guskey (1986): Model of teacher change 89
3.4 Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002): Interconnected Model of Professional Growth 94
3.5 Day (2009):Interactive Professional Development 91
3.6 Bredeson (2003):Architecture of Professional Development 96
3.7 Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2004): Model of Transfer of Learning 100
3.8 Diaz-Maggioli (2004): The Teacher’s Choice Framework 102
3.9 Borko (2009):Professional Development System 105
3.10 Low Tide Darwin Harbour Wet Season (photo) 111
4.1 Narrative Inquiry and this Research Study 126
4.2 Mindil Beach Storms: Wet Season (photo) 142
5.1 Conceptual Framework 146
CHAPTER 1: Telling the Tale and Painting the Picture of Professional Development

In 2005, while still a practising teacher, I was a project manager with curriculum and pedagogical responsibilities. On this particular afternoon, I had been a key facilitator in the delivery of professional development (PD) in a primary school in the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia. I was invited for a late afternoon coffee in the staff room with many of the teachers. Some of these teachers reflected on their own PD experiences. They painted the picture of their school, one in the throes of significant curriculum and pedagogical change and of shifting priorities for students, parents and staff. The following vignettes have been taken from my professional diary of that time, sparking interest in how teachers described their own PD experiences.

1.1 Reflections from the Field

These are the stories that some of the teachers told on that memorable afternoon. The teachers described below were genuinely perplexed at the variances of their PD and were uncertain about the extent and value of their PD experiences.

Annie, a teacher with fifteen years of experience in special education, attended a two-hour lecture from a visiting expert, along with one hundred and twenty of her colleagues at the local university campus, in a large lecture theatre. After taking copious notes, she presented a synopsis of the lecture two weeks later at an afternoon staff meeting and deemed that she had attended professional development. The teachers who listened intently to her at the staff meeting felt that they had attended professional development.

In line with the school’s overall action goals for improvement, Robert, a senior teacher, attended four consecutive and intensive days at a collaborative and interactive workshop delivered by a trained and experienced interstate consultant. He did not share information with the other teachers, as it was made explicitly clear to him by the trainer that he was trained to use these strategies in his own classroom only. On that afternoon, three months into his trial of the strategies in his own classroom, and after much feedback and networking

1 All names used in these vignettes are pseudonyms.
with other workshop participants, he was an enthusiastic convert. As well as ensuring that this approach was prioritised for future consideration by the relevant curriculum committee, he was engaged in the development of a major submission to the school council for targeted funding for additional teachers to be trained in this approach. His belief was that the PD was excellent, and he had learned and grown professionally and personally by implementing such an approach in his classroom.

Nene, a teacher with seven years of teaching experience and the acknowledged Information Technology (IT) guru of the school, developed innovative and interactive projects with her students using school and personal technological resources. During the school break a few weeks before, she attended an interstate conference (at her own expense) and purchased new software and hardware for her own classroom use. Her use of such technology and her innovative approach had earned kudos for the school, who now proudly boasted on their website of being a centre of technological excellence. She shared information and new strategies with interested colleagues in both formal and informal after-school sessions. Nene believed that she had engaged in both personal and professional learning.

Another teacher, Eibo, with thirty years as a bilingual / English as a Second Language (ESL) support teacher, attended a two-day educational conference. Even though the stated conference title, outcomes and session outlines appeared to link with the school’s action plan and her professional interests, it soon became clear that the target audience were administrative and leadership personnel. Eibo did not feel that this conference was directly applicable to her teaching situation. While she gave her folder to the school’s registrar and provided a brief summary of key points from some sessions, she did not intend to share or disseminate much information from this conference to other teachers. She did not believe she had engaged in PD.

Mel, an Early Childhood teacher, was engaged in further tertiary studies in the counselling area, particularly with adolescents and young adults, and away from the “nitty-gritty of face-to-face Early Childhood teaching” (her words). Over the past three years, the school had been buffeted by the tragic deaths of three people in the school community, one a much-loved, much-remembered and very popular ex-student. Her input had been critical to the school’s development of early intervention processes and well-being programs, and she had acted as liaison between the professional counsellors who worked intensively with some
school staff after the deaths. Mel was reluctant to consider her studies as professional development related to her teaching duties.

These vignettes indicated the uncertainty by practising teachers about the parameters of their professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL). Not only were they uncertain about what “counted”, but they were also hesitant about considering their own personal growth as a teacher as part of their ongoing professional development. Of the teachers informally surveyed that day, none seemed definitive about what constituted valid and genuine professional development.

This was of concern. Teachers are essential to classroom teaching; classrooms do not exist without a teacher and students. Teachers have engaged historically and traditionally in multiple professional opportunities to engage in learning, all aimed at inculcating some worthy knowledge and skills in curriculum, pedagogy or school initiatives. From the time a teacher becomes a member of a school community, of course there is professional development. The question had to be asked about why teachers seemed so uncertain, so hesitant, so unwilling to consider their personal needs as practising teachers as part of their professional development, growth and enhancement.

Grounded in the tales that teachers told about their understandings about PD, and the pictures that they painted of their experiences, these vignettes sparked personal interest and a purpose in exploring the beliefs and understandings of teachers about PD. This research uses a narrative inquiry approach to explore key questions about professional development from the perspective of seven primary school teachers in the NT.

This was the beginning of this investigation into the PD experiences of practising teachers and it led to the development of this research study (as further explained in Chapters 1 – 5).

1.2 Telling Tales: The Narrative Approach

Story telling is a universal experience shared by every social group (Clandinin, 2007; Elliot, 2005; Reissman, 1993). A guiding focus of this study is that teachers’ lives are storied, that their words explain their context, environment and personal beliefs about their individual learning. In other words, they paint pictures and tell their personal tales about their professional learning experiences through the words, thoughts and concepts of their stories,
their descriptions of key events and thought processes. These personal stories are significant but described in different ways by different people using text, stories, descriptive metaphors and visualisation. Narrative researchers see the need for such a graphic approach in addition to using words and stories Teachers weave their own lives, metaphors (Yero, 2001-2002), characters and storylines through their lessons and institutional lives. They include their own beliefs, values and personalities (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

The title of this research study is *Telling Tales and Painting Pictures*, using the words of the participating teachers to generate a dialogue and a further story or picture about their professional development experiences. Further, it contains photos of Darwin, in the Northern Territory, to ground the research in a real-life context, and to enable the reader to visualise the place where the seven participating teachers of this research inquiry live and work.

Narrative inquiry is a valid methodology for an analysis of social phenomena such as teacher professional learning through a series of shared, sequenced verbal, symbolic or behavioural acts (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). This chapter lays the framework for the use of story as a specific reflective and narrative tool, unused to this extent in other research methodologies. Narrative inquiry is purposely chosen for this research study, as it is a specific way of exploring and examining experience. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that narrative inquiry as “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (p. 20). These authors further refer to the simultaneous “commonplaces” of narrative inquiry where temporality, sociality and place define the inquiry and serve as a framework for it. Temporality refers to the elements of past, present and future of places, people and the events under study. Narrative inquiry refers simultaneously to the personal and social conditions while also situating the context in a meaningful way. These specific characteristics are the reasons why this particular methodology was chosen for this research study and the lived experiences of these seven teachers and their PD experiences.

Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 1994) are credited with first using the term narrative inquiry and note that the two terms of *narrative inquiry* and *narrative research* are used almost interchangeably. Sikes and Gale (2006) refer to narrative as not just a spoken or written account of something, but as an account of any occurrence including the possibility of other types of accounts, such as visual, aural and tactile, to give just some examples. Qualitative in nature (Creswell, 2007), narrative inquiry, is a multi-layered approach for the gathering of information and/or the phenomena of study (Conle, 2001).
This may be as told stories or as a source of inquiry, narratives as data, and data as narratives (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

As the significant part of this research study, I wanted to explore the sequential history of the participating teachers in this study. Teachers work within a cultural context within their classrooms and are experienced practitioners and purveyors of professional learning. Both concepts are reflected in characteristics of narrative inquiry. The postmodern approach values contextualization and cultural influence are important ways of understanding.

Clandinin and Connelly (2010) add that narrative is “a way of thinking about, and studying, experience” (p. 436). It is through individuals’ personal stories that narrative researchers are able to better capture the nuances and the complexities of human experiences. Narrative has a role as a sense-making mode. Bruner (1991) refers to experiences and our memories of events as being organised narratively. Josselson (2011) notes that narrative truth involves “a constructed account of experience, not a factual record of what ‘really’ happened” (p. 225). People’s versions of reality are derived from being causally worthwhile and useful in that reality results from the relationship between the person and an external social reality of social processes, phenomena, structures and social relations (Collier, 1994).

The use of stories, as the key element of narrative analysis and of this research study, implies a chronological, sequenced story where some elements are evaluated (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, 2007). The past, imbued with individual experiences and culture, shapes perceptions of the present, but also touches intrinsically on directions for the future. The teachers in this study were reflective about their PD experiences, with implications for their current classroom practices. Narrative analysis is an empowering research methodology, in that it gives participants opportunities to express their viewpoints and place their own judgments side by side.

Words as data, a focus on experiences, settings and people and multiple ways of knowing are essential concepts within narrative inquiry and this research study. Other characteristics of narrative inquiry such as the importance of characters, plot and timeline, multiple voices and holistic truths, relationships between disciplines, practical concerns, personal views and social, ethical and cultural responsibilities (Webster & Mertova, 2007) are central within this study. These characteristics differentiate narrative inquiry and provide a strong basis for its selection as the methodology for this particular study. Using the actual words of individuals...
is a valid source of information (Lyons & Kubler LaBoskey, 2002; Reissman, 1993; McEwan & Egan, 1995) about pedagogical knowledge, teachers’ ways of knowing and understanding subject matter.

While the focus of this study is the teachers and their multiple truths and viewpoints about PD and PL, narrative research can have different foci depending on its starting point. Some inquiries begin with the telling of stories, that is “life as lived in the past” (as mine has done with my starting point of the vignettes) while others start with what Connelly and Clandinin (2006) note as “life as it unfolds” (p. 482). It is possible, as this current study does, to use both ‘telling’ and ‘living’ as complementary terms. Similarly, PD is discussed in the past but also PL as it is unfolding for the seven teachers in this study (see Section 1.3.2 for distinctions between PD and PL for this study).

plethora

The graphic image of my visualisation of the process of narrative inquiry, along with where and how I view the intersections of my narrative and those of the seven participating teachers, is illustrated below (Fig. 1.1), painting the picture of how words as data and the cultural contexts are embedded. This wave is my own personal graphic metaphor for the way in which professional development has evolved over time in Australia, and where my story and those of the research participants are intermingled together. Those stories are cast against a backdrop of key characteristics of narrative inquiry that impact on this study. The photos that are included in this study ground the research to a specific time, place and space, a ‘snapshot’ of the views and beliefs of these research participants at this point in time, or at this crest of this particular wave.

The story doesn’t begin with me. The story begins long before my introductory anecdotes. Similarly, the story doesn’t end with me or the seven participating teachers; the story moves on well past this research study. This small section of the narrative about PD contributes to the body of research, the “bigger picture” of both narrative inquiry and the knowledge and understandings about the ongoing development and enhancement of teachers. This is reflected in the graphic illustration below where only my part of the wave is visible, but we all know that there were waves before mine, and there will be waves after this research study.

There is a finite time for this snapshot of teacher viewpoints but it is a wave of human experience, here and now. This research study sits briefly at the crest of that wave and as the
crest passes, other influences, other directions are formed. Other teachers experience PD in different ways and a new crest, a new wave is formed. I use the narrative metaphor of “rising action” to indicate the preparation and rising of my own personal interest in this field of study as well as the influences that impact on this picture of PD in the NT. The narratives of the seven participating teachers form not just my narrative, but “our” narrative about this snapshot of teacher learning. Part of the research process, again using a narrative metaphor, is to identify complications and themes before reaching resolution in the final chapter of this inquiry.

PD is a complex field and one that is forever evolving and changing. The views about PD for teachers have been influenced by a variety of factors including how teachers are using, and needing to use their PD within their schools. The wave continues past this small snapshot and the views of teachers continue to change as well. In Chapter 3, I further discuss the evolution of this diagram and what it means when the field of professional learning is added to it. The concept of narrative inquiry with its focus on interactions of human thought is a valid one for this research study. Narrative inquiry and the reasons for its selection for this research study are further discussed in Chapter 4.

Figure 1.1: A “Wave” of Narrative Inquiry and this Research Study
1.3 Context and Rationale of the Study

The daily professional lives of teachers have become open to more scrutiny than ever before. Accountability has escalated and become more visible through mandated teacher standards and publication of national test results. Teacher quality has been called into question (Ryan & Bourke, 2013) and therefore the national and international spotlight has moved back onto the professional capacities of teachers and the ways in which these can be improved or maintained (Bourke, 2011).

The tasks of a teacher in any given day span a diverse range of competencies, meeting the demands and needs of a range of key stakeholders, including their students and parents, the school community, industry, business and society. A teacher is defined in Section 2.4 (definitions) of the Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act as a “person who is qualified to program and deliver a course of instruction at a school and to assess the work of students in relation to that course of instruction.”

In the same section, an educator is defined as a person (a) who is a specialist in the administration of education, (b) who is a specialist in the theory and practice of education, or (c) who delivers, outside of a school, a course of academic instruction to adults. There is little delineation in the NT between the use of “teacher” or “educator” within primary schools, and teachers use the phrase almost interchangeably. For the purposes of this study, while the phrase “teachers” will be used throughout, the broader concepts embedded in the term “educator” will be used. That is, most primary teachers consider themselves as experts or specialists in the administration and delivery of quality education and specialise in the theory and practice of education. The teachers in this study are self-identified practising primary teachers, in that they are all qualified, registered teachers under the terms of the Teacher Registration Board (NT).

In the NT, the Early Years (EY) or Early Childhood (EC) include Preschool to Year 3, or students aged from three to eight years of age. The Primary years include Years 4 – 6, or students aged from eight to eleven years. The Middle Years of schooling currently include Years 7 – 9, or students aged from eleven to fourteen. Previously Year 7 was included as part of the Primary years but was moved to the Middle Years and Secondary schools in 2008.
1.3.1 Introduction: Professional Development (PD) and Professional Learning (PL)

While the previous section simplistically describes the genesis of this research study, the reality is that the learning of and by teachers is an evolving concept. Their learning professionally is not immune from worldwide influences which directly affect schools and schooling, teachers and teaching, learners and learning.

In 1994, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, in an Organisation for Cooperation and Development (OECD) report titled *Quality in Education*, proposed with the concept of new expectations on school communities, advances in understandings about teaching and learning and the need to manage increasingly diverse classrooms. They further added that there are new demands and challenges on schools and teachers. Over twenty years ago, this report further outlined the new capacities and knowledge required by teachers, along with the complexity of tasks and responsibilities assigned to teachers and the differentiation of roles among and between teachers and other school staff. This report further advised that teachers must be able to accommodate change in both curriculum and pedagogy.

The reality today is that there are unprecedented pressures and expectations on teachers to ensure that students are articulate, literate, numerate, technologically-savvy and creative problem-solvers as well as socially astute and collaborative team-players. There are increasing expectations that teachers will be responsible for literacy and numeracy. There are demands that they will convey and reinforce life skills such as religious instruction, sex and health education, fiscal and technological awareness. In order to teach those skills, teachers must feel comfortable, confident and competent in this new variety of skills. Therefore, it is timely that a professional discussion about the parameters of their ongoing development, enhancement and growth should take place with their involvement.

Life has changed for teachers since that OECD report in 1994 and regardless of time of entry into a professional teaching career, individuals need to be empowered to design and manage their careers. This report further explains that, in order to flourish, individuals need to be self-managing people who know their strengths and limitations have the confidence to follow their dreams and are willing to seek help from and to support the career journeys of others.

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development (2010) outlines a current environment where individuals are likely to transition between a variety of life, learning and work roles.
The Australian Federal Department of Education (2014) in the section of their website titled *Students First*, emphasis is on teacher quality. This site states that “the first step to achieving a quality education which is so critical for the future of young Australians and our nation is to lift the quality, professionalization and status of the teaching profession.” (para. 1).

On the same website, the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, in a section of their website titled *Strengthening the Curriculum*, further advises that “the Australian Government knows that having well trained and knowledgeable teachers provides the foundation for a strong, high quality education system in Australia. Quality teaching is one of the keys to driving student outcomes. Broadly Australia has a high quality teaching workforce, however there continues to be room for improvement.” (para. 1).

While the Australian Curriculum, recently introduced nationally is under review, key areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) have been identified for development within both primary and secondary schools. Additional funding is focused on at least 40% of year 12 Australian students studying a foreign language (para. 5). For these initiatives to become a reality in schools, teachers will need to be upskilled further in the skills, knowledge and understanding to transfer specific learning to students. The NT is not immune to such initiatives. Whether in a remote or urban primary or secondary school, teachers will need to engage in quality PD in order to transfer this learning to the students in their classrooms.

This research study is about exploring the findings in current literature, current directions within the education arena and the perceptions, values and beliefs of teachers about their PD experiences. At its core, the reflections of seven practising NT teachers lead this study. Their reflections and narrations about their own experiences about their own learning are of critical importance to this study.

1.3.2 Defining PD and PL for this Study

In this section, I briefly discuss the evolution of professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL). While there are many aspects of professional life which affect teachers (and many of these are discussed further in this study), it is difficult to visualise teachers and not immediately link the schools where they teach, and the students in
classrooms. There is a symbiotic relationship between teachers, schools (physical, social, emotional, hierarchical relationships) and students.). Circumstances of learning events and opportunities are affected both by the environment and ethos of the schools and school communities as well as by the students in classrooms.

Throughout this study, the phrase *professional development* (PD) is used extensively and is discussed further in Chapter 3, including references to different learning and professional development and delivery models. In this study, I distinguish between professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL)

While the literature often uses the terms interchangeably (explained further in Chapter 3), increasingly there was a distinction between the intent of the learning by teachers and what may occur as a result of it. I have used this as a means of differentiating development, in a professional sense and ongoing learning, in a professional sense. This is further discussed in Chapter 3: Professional Development. I further clarify my definition, with input from my research participants in Chapters 7 and 8.

I use the term professional development or PD in the traditional sense where it refers to events, topics and areas of interest where PD is on offer either within the school parameters or outside of it. However, this type of event or activity is not necessarily linked to an ongoing action research cycle of learning, trialling, sharing, enhancing of current skills and growing of new skills. Diaz-Maggioli (2004) outlines some of the characteristics of traditional PD such as the inclusion of a hierarchical, top-down decision-making process. Traditional PD includes an approach that, while clearly linked to school and student needs, tends to look at PD as the immediate answer to issues and challenges. Depending on their school and conditions within that school that govern the management of teacher learning experiences, not all teachers take responsibility for their PD or are involved in the governance of it. Usually there is little differentiation between stages of schooling within the school or pedagogical differences between classes, schools or jurisdictions. Additionally there is little follow-up to track changes in teacher practice. Evaluation is often limited.

Again dependent upon the school, its context, staffing and other factors, traditional PD may be managed and coordinated by various members of the school hierarchy. There may be management input directly from teachers, but the hope is that the PD will affect and improve student outcomes. This is an almost linear linkage, and is expressed and discussed further in
Chapter 3. It is further explained in Figure 1.2: Teachers, students, schools and PD (below) where the links between schools and teachers are affected by the input from PD but also hopefully, indicate an improvement of student outcomes for students.

![Figure 1.2: Teachers, students, schools and PD](image)

In Chapter 3, where I explain in greater detail about the evolution of understandings about the role, complexity and intent of PD, I use the phrase *professional learning* (PL), to differentiate the explicit and transparently articulated learning preferences and cycles of teachers and their ongoing growth and development as a preferred aim. This refers to the process to inculcate learning with specific links to changes in classroom practice and the wish to improve student outcomes. PL is a more holistic explanation of the processes that are embedded in learning at an adult level, with the viewpoint that there will be professional benefits for the teacher as well as for the student.

The differences are in the areas identified by Diaz-Maggioli (2004). These include the explicit purpose of the learning as well as the natural, fluid and organic development of learning based on genuine need (whether teacher or school). Engagement with and by participants and an expectation of teacher collegiality and support differentiate PD and PL, as does the concept of shared governance of the PD and PL agenda. Transformational leaders with both awareness of and the ability to share governance are essential in PL, as is a genuine
desire for student-centred learning, whether by students or teachers. In PL there is an expectation of not just curriculum and pedagogy changes, but cultural changes as well.

Diaz-Maggioli (2004) further outlines the characteristics of activities that teachers might envisage as a part of their ongoing learning experiences. These include collaborative decision-making and an approach to PL which includes the enhancement and growth of current skills, knowledge and understandings. Pragmatically, teachers look for inquiry-based ideas which fit in with the concept of an action research cycle, whether collectively constructed or individually tailored to specific contextual needs. Teachers want to know about adequate and appropriate resourcing, but also explicit and data-driven assessments and evaluations. Lastly, Diaz-Maggioli (2004) explains that teachers are looking for adult-driven delivery techniques in their PL. PL carries implications for teacher discussion, collaboration and opportunities to explore alternative strategies and to trial new ways of operating within classrooms.

There are, however, direct links between PD and PL in that they both affect the learning of teachers. The extent and range of that embedded learning and the growth and enhancement of skills and understandings drive PD into a more complex type of learning in the professional domain. PL implies a symbiotic relationship between the concepts of development and learning, with each feeding the other in a cycle of renewal and change, not just for the teacher but for students as well. For this study, this professional development and learning looks more like the visual representation below with the triad of school, teachers and students.

In this viewpoint, professional development leads to professional learning, which in turn leads to enhancement and growth of skills and understandings – which leads to further development in a professional sense. PD is a part of the picture of PL, but ongoing PL, in the “big picture” sense of the word, may not necessarily be present in PD. Without the characteristics identified by Diaz-Maggioli (2004), PD may be a cluster of learning activities but without a firm foundation based on both teacher and school needs. Without shared governance and transformational leadership, PD may be relegated to Tuesday staff meetings, but not necessarily accomplish a long-term student or classroom changes. In PL there is almost an assumption that there will be ongoing growth and enhancement. This is explained further by this visual representation, which encompasses ongoing PL while illustrating the role that traditional PD holds within a school.
With reference to this research inquiry, I have used PD as the generic term for the learning experiences of teachers, as this term is well-known and oft-used by teachers, school hierarchies, academics and researchers alike. However, I indicate the limitations of that use, by referring to PL, or the learning by and of professionals where ongoing growth and development is implied.

An example of the complexity of this field and differentiating PD and PL comes from Hughes (1991). This author alluded to professional learning concepts, (albeit using the phrase PD), noting that PD is a totality of formal and informal activities carried out by a system, school or individual to “promote teacher growth and renewal” (p. 54). Another aim is to empower individual educators, teams and organisations to improve curriculum, pedagogy and student outcomes (Bredeson, 2003; Gordon, 2004). A further example comes from Diaz-Maggioli (2004) who defines professional development as “a career-long process in which educators fine-tune their teaching to meet student needs” (p. 5), and directly addresses the patterns of decisions that teachers make when mediating students’ learning.

Guskey (2014) introduces his research article about professional learning with the following vignette, which is a fitting metaphor for this research study. One of his favourite films is The Emperor’s Club, with Kevin Kline as Mr. Hundert, a teacher at St.
Benedict’s Academy. In the opening scene, the headmaster addresses the assembled students to explain the school motto, *Finis Origine Pendet* (The End depends upon the Beginning). In other words, the headmaster goes on, what you accomplish in life and the significance of your contributions will depend largely on what you do here (St. Benedict’s). How you begin determines what you will achieve. The film portrays the students’ relationships, the people they become and how they translate that motto into their own lives.

So too, the end of this research study depends upon its beginning. My vignettes marked the official beginning to this study, the time of awareness of the dilemma within some teachers about their professional development and learning, and the place that professional development plays in their professional – and personal – lives. Guskey (2014) applies his metaphor to professional learning by stating that “the same is true of professional learning for educators. What it accomplishes and the significance of its contribution depend largely on how it begins.” (p. 12)

This chapter outlines the storyboard for this research. It introduces the storied approach taken in the research, then justifies the significance of understanding the professional lives of teachers, and poses the questions that warranted investigation. Finally, it provides a précis of each chapter of the thesis.

### 1.3.3 Extent and Range of Literature in this Study

The key ideas contained within this study are summarised below. It is my intent to create a narrative about both professional development and narrative inquiry and where that narrative intersects with the narratives of the seven NT teachers. That overall view will be enhanced by graphic visual representations and metaphors, to assist in the development of the overall picture of PD and PL in the NT. While key concepts are discussed more extensively in later chapters, the extent and range of literature which was sourced for this research study has framed the discussion and provided a conceptual framework for further discussion about teacher viewpoints on their learning experiences in a professional sense. Using a narrative approach as the inquiry methodology, the aims, focus and key questions of this study follow on from these key areas listed below. These areas are further explained in the following chapters.
Initially, the concept of PD seemed almost a “stand-alone” field. It soon became evident that issues such as professionalism, professional identity, adult learning and social constructivism, leadership at each school and a range of other environmental and professional factors intervened. A teacher’s engagement in a career path that has an element of ongoing and negotiated learning is reflected in classroom practices. Sachs (2003a) explains that government policy in Australia examines both teacher professionalism (and the embedded concepts thereof) and professional development (including its broader cousin professional learning) as being informed by democratic professionalism, where governance is shared and managerial professionalism, where decision-making is part of a hierarchy (Evans, 2011; Ryan & Bourke, 2011). Diaz-Maggioli (2004) refers to professional identity as the way each teacher relates to the norms and values of the profession but this can be interpreted as an exclusive or conservative approach.

These conditions and characteristics are reflected in the models of learning discussed in Chapter 3. Each model displays an aspect of that learning by and with teachers, whether it is about a model that encompasses teacher change or transfer of learning, or whether it describes the essential characteristics of effective PD and PL. The concept of school culture, environment and climate includes the vision and ethos in each school but also each school and school community characteristics (Bredeson, 2003; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). The characteristics which differentiate between schools influence the tone, purpose and intent of a school as well as the teachers and students in that school in positive and negative ways. Diaz-Maggioli (2004) outlines concepts such as goals, communication, power and resource equalisation, cohesiveness, morale, autonomy, adaptation and problem-solving as key aspects influencing schools and the teachers within. These all have implications for teacher learning and the effects in the classroom to improve student outcomes particularly if they are open and supportive of learning or closed and hindering learning (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). These concepts highlight the possible disconnect between processes and concepts that support teacher learning and those that hinder it or create challenges to the achievement of effective learning. These disconnects are further explained in the words of teachers in Chapters 7 and 8.

Specific learning approaches, particularly the theories of learning to which teachers subscribed and/or actively displayed, also played a part in this study. Each teacher has a
learning style, so their experiences as learners are very different. This study is based in the NT, where the NT is as affected by educational trends and directions in the delivery of learning for teachers as any other state or territory. However, the factors influencing that delivery vary slightly, and this is discussed in Chapter 2, along with relevant links throughout this research study.

1.4 Research Aims and Questions

At the beginning of this chapter, the question was asked about whether the term “professional development” best represented the work-related, specific adult learning most teachers had experienced while practising their profession in classrooms and schools. McRae, Ainsworth, Groves, Rowland and Zbar (2001) provide a clarification about PD as the generic term for very deliberate processes of professionally related education and training. McCrae et al. (2001) provide other phrases that refer to the same or similar things within different jurisdictional contexts, such as training and development, in-service education, and professional learning. It is through the discussion of professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL) in Chapter 3 that I hope to delineate these terms in a more concise way for use in this research inquiry.

The purpose of this research inquiry was to explore the perceptions of practising teachers about their learning experiences. The key intent was to use the genre of narrative inquiry to explore several related narratives. There is a narrative about the development and evolution of narrative inquiry, a narrative about the evolution of our current understandings about the learning that teachers engage in professionally and the foundation upon which our current education systems operate in the field of that teacher learning. There is a narrative about the research process and my role in that and a narrative that tells the stories of these teachers in reference to the question of PD and PL.

The key questions of this research are related to the professional development of teachers, exploring their definitions, perceptions and viewpoints about this professional issue. This study explores understandings about the core questions listed below:

1. What are the beliefs, understandings and values of practising classroom teachers regarding their professional development and professional learning?
2. What is the significance of both PD and PL on practising classroom teachers? and

3. What are the key and critical elements of both PD and PL that led to change in teachers and teaching practices?

The purpose of this research, therefore, is to analyse these aspects of teacher professional development, particularly those teachers in the NT through a narrative inquiry methodology, specifically examining:

- The extent, range and calibre of professional development and learning experiences of practising classroom teachers, as described by them in narratives;
- The common categories or themes embedded in the narratives of seven practising classroom teachers about their professional learning; and
- The significance and impact of the professional learning to classroom teachers.

A further aim of this research study is to produce a model of professional development and learning which encapsulates current knowledge, understandings and directions and clarifies the complexity of the field in a user-friendly way. The significance of the study and its limitations are listed below along with an overview of the key chapters of this research study.

1.5 Significance of the Study

While the global influences affecting PD and PL and the current educational landscape in the NT are outlined in Chapters 2, it is the significance of both PD and PL to teachers that is of importance. Changing societal priorities, and the move towards a critically thinking knowledge society, sets the educational scene for a discussion about professional development and an analysis of that agency by teachers themselves.

There are many expectations on teachers in the classrooms of today. Change in curriculum and pedagogy are currently aspects of great importance around the country, with calls for an Australian curriculum which will be taught to all children in the country. The upskilling of teachers to enable that common curriculum, amidst a sea of research into appropriate pedagogy for different stages of schooling, is a costly exercise but one where teachers need to be integrally involved in implementation. It is timely for this level of analysis about best practice professional development, and effective, quality PD to occur.
Hargreaves (2003) observes that any educational system that does not engage in the quest for sustainable improvement is a system awaiting disaster. The implications are that educational systems must provide quality professional learning as one way to ensure sustainable improvement of outcomes for both students and teachers (Guskey, 2014). The need for teachers to remain current in their professional knowledge, skills, understandings and competencies is acknowledged, but whether professional development is offering the best approach is open for debate (Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998). This section explains the significance of this research.

Professional learning is seen as one component that can lead to change, more innovative and effective schools and an improvement in learning outcomes for students (Abdurrahman, Anwar and Sultana, 2012; Hargreaves, 2003; Hargreaves, Fullan, 2001). The significance of this study is that there is limited research that accurately encapsulates the explicit links between the learning that teachers do in their professional capacities and improved outcomes for students. Teachers are not asked for their viewpoint about their improved practises and improved learning opportunities for students. There is a disconnect where teachers do not appear to be asked on a regular basis, at the school or jurisdictional level, for their opinions about what constitutes quality PD or PL, the importance of effective PD and PL to them personally, and what happens in their classrooms.

There is an increasing emphasis for teachers to be lifelong learners, and for teaching to be a multifaceted performance to cater for the needs of students in a rapidly changing society (Istance, 2003). Professional development is often not viewed as the long-term medium by which to support substantial change (Joseph & Keast, 2005). In today’s educational climate, teachers gauging the importance, or otherwise of their professional development has implications for future discussions about responsibilities and accountabilities and from an employer stance of funding ongoing professional development and its allied processes or systems of delivery and facilitation.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), in discussing the past fifty years of research history about teaching, teachers and their work, note that teachers, while decision makers in their own classroom environments, have a chequered history of being involved in the research process itself. This is of concern at a time when debate about professional responsibilities and accountabilities is in the public domain. There is no doubt that teachers have often been the
topics of study and the sheer volume of research literature about PD and PL is evidence of the complexity of the field. My aim in this research study was to ask teachers directly, and report their words directly about their PD and PL experiences, as a possible pointer to further research. While there is no doubt that the NT is a small jurisdiction and a reasonably isolated one, the viewpoints of these teachers are still valid and timely. The significance of this research is in the rich narratives of practising teachers’ experiences of PD. It is a timely opportunity for seven teachers to describe and paint the picture of their professional learning and to engage critically as part of the debate about the directions of professional development.

Their classrooms are often the sites for data collection and research ranging from classroom management, climate, environment, contexts for learning and the interplay of content and pedagogical knowledge. Teacher thought processes, personality attributes and interactions between students and teachers have been researched. However, this raises the question about the “voice” of the teacher rather than the researcher, and the issue of the teacher as an inside inquirer (Lyons & Kubler LaBoskey, 2002). The level of governance that teachers have over their own professional lives is a discussion point allied to teacher agency in this study.

1.6 Research Limitations

Narrative research can be challenging, particularly when developing a clear context of participant lives. Culling essential material from the sources of individual lives requires knowledge of contexts to uncover the multiple layering of meaning. The context of this inquiry situates it with NT classroom teachers with cultural, social, physical and historical perspectives. However, Georgakopolou (2006) notes that:

It is far from controversial…to say that narrative remains an elusive, contested and indeterminate concept, variously used as an epistemology, a methodological perspective, an antidote to positivist research, a communication mode, a supra-genre, a text-type. More generally, as a way of making sense of the world, at times equated with experience, time, history and life itself; more modestly, as a specific kind of discourse with conventionalised textual features. (p. 122)

This research is a snapshot of only seven teachers’ views, so the application of
generalisations to the wider cohort of NT teachers is limited. While this study has provided
direct illumination about the issues identified by these teachers in their stories, the themes are
limited to the relevance that the teachers attribute to them in terms of their own PD and PL
experiences. The professional lives of teachers are filled with far more than PD or PL but
only those themes with direct relevance to PD and PL are included in this research study in
Chapters 7 and 8. For example, some of the teachers allude to the transfer of learning from a
specific PD session to their classrooms, but as no measures were used to explore the extent
and range of that transfer, this does not form one of the key themes of this inquiry.

The participating teachers self-identified as Primary teachers, albeit in a variety of teaching
contexts within the NT. These included different stages of schooling, different career stages,
use of primary pedagogy and curriculum in a secondary context and a move from a primary
school to a home-schooling environment. This variety of contexts was unexpected during the
planning of this inquiry. While initially the different contexts may be viewed as a limitation
of the study, in that all teachers were not directly allied to a primary classroom in a Primary
school, the variety of contexts also showed the diversity and flexibility of these teachers. The
point remains that they all self-identified as primary teachers, albeit using their Primary
related skills in a variety of contexts.

These teachers are urban Primary teachers, albeit in two of the more isolated cities in
Australia, but more remote and isolated teachers might doubt the experiences by these
practising teachers. Fortunately at least three of the teachers in this study have taught in
remote localities but while not explicitly questioned about those PD and PL experiences,
there may be scope for understanding that those experiences shaped their views. However,
these teachers did not explicitly allude to any remote area PD or PL over the past five years.

This narrative inquiry allows opportunities to engage meaningfully with teacher participants
and to develop relationships with them that bear fruitful commentary about their professional
learning experiences. Active collaboration with participants was required, and this takes time,
trust, and a willingness to reflect on my own engagement with the research questions. This
would not be possible in a larger study.

The re-storying of the accounts can be coloured by personal, political and cultural views of
the researcher, and this can be a limitation of the research. The re-storying process involves
the analysis of the key themes within individual narratives of the teachers, and placing them
within a contextual narrative governed by chronology, context, importance of the themes presented and other factors. This re-storied account is the story of the classroom teachers can be affected by conflicts about the ownership of the stories and my role and agenda as part of the research but also in generation of the stories. Ethical considerations about the amalgamation of the stories link to concerns about the extent of each individual’s story. There are also varying degrees of engagement in whole school initiatives, which may impact on those individual stories, possibly leading to conflicts of interest or different points of view.

In traditional research methods, teachers can be perceived as implementers of curriculum programs to meet predetermined objectives and achieve certain outcomes, whereas in narrative inquiry they are seen as part of the curriculum, involved in establishing goals and making achievements (Webster & Mertova, 2007), but this may not be so for individual teachers. There were some contradictory issues raised by the teachers and these are included in the research narrative so that this is not an overall narrative of seamless and congruent teacher narratives, but a complex and messy re-storied narrative of real teachers working in challenging contexts. Further, my own narrative is woven through this research to provide transparency around my own biases and experiences, which necessarily influence my telling of the research narrative.

1.7 Overview of the Research Study

Chapter 1 introduces this narrative inquiry, providing an overview of its storyline and its key components. Briefly touching on the narrative methodology and overarching narrative, this chapter introduces teachers as professionals and alludes to the dilemma of professional development. Chapter 2 provides the setting and context for this investigation, providing a descriptive look at the NT as a particular context in which cultural influences, long distances, isolation, climate and geographical factors have played pivotal roles in shaping its development. The key characters, the seven participating teachers are introduced. I introduce myself, and my role in the emerging narrative of the teachers’ experiences with regards to their PD.

Chapter 3 examines the historical global and Australian journey of professional development, along with key NT perspectives. Professional development and learning are analysed, and models of PD are introduced. Chapter 4 further explores narrative inquiry, providing a
historical context to its development but also an underpinning philosophy for this research. Chapter 5 introduces the Conceptual Model which underpins this study. Social constructivism (SC) is introduced as a theoretical influence on this study with particular reference to how teachers learn. Professional agency, with links to the professional lives of teachers, is introduced as an integral part of the conceptual model of this study. PD and PL are linked as the key field of investigation, with narratives linking in as the stories that teachers tell about their PD and PL experiences. Chapter 6 explains the research methodology and data collection, including the individualism of each of the practising teachers. Chapter 7 details the viewpoints of the seven practising teachers about their learning experiences. This chapter contrasts the levels of engagement of their professional learning experiences and draws out the criteria for quality PD that these teachers identified. The models of PD were compared and contrasted to the words of the teachers, looking for similarities between their words and key research. Key themes emerged from the data, and these four themes are explored further in this chapter. Those four themes include the effective teacher, a more comprehensive definition of PD in comparison to existing Models of PD, quality PD and professional teacher agency.

Chapter 8 outlines my responses to the three key research questions, linking together research and data to reflect and reach recommendations and conclusions. The Teachers Professional Learning Model is explained in this chapter, as a possible consideration for further research.

1.8 Use of Photos in this Study

To ground this study in the context of the NT, and to paint the picture of the NT for the reader, photos of the NT have been placed at the end of every chapter. These photos and visual representations throughout this study underpin the title of this inquiry. Narratives from seven teachers tell the tale about professional development and the photos and visual representations assist to paint the picture of the situated context of those teachers.

1.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the vignettes that prompted this research study, outlining some of the various ways that teachers at that time engaged in their learning. This chapter introduced the
context and rationale of this study, including a definition of professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL). These definitions are used to differentiate these concepts throughout this study. The extent and range of the literature is described and both the significance of this study and its limitations are outlined.

This photo of Darwin Harbour is taken from the beach between the Darwin Ski Club and the Darwin Yacht Club. Only six minutes from Darwin central business district (CBD), this photo was taken at sunset on a cloudy, wet season afternoon.

Figure 1.4 Sunset on Darwin Harbour (Wet Season 2015).
Photo: N Batenburg
CHAPTER 2: The Research Context

This research study is a narrative inquiry investigating the professional development of seven practising primary level teachers. While the nuances of professional development will be explored in Chapter 3, and narrative inquiry outlined further in Chapter 4, it is important to situate this research and establish the context. In line with wider understandings about stories and narratives, I will be using narrative metaphors. This chapter outlines the context of this research study, the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia and the characters, the teachers who agreed to participate in this research study. In this section, the narrative is firmly situated in the NT context, but through the description of the NT, I provide a “picture” of living and working conditions for the seven participating teachers in this research study. My involvement as both a teacher and a researcher are described as part of the personal narrative about this inquiry, with its basis in a narrative inquiry methodology.

2.1 Context: The Northern Territory (NT)

The Northern Territory (NT) of Australia is a unique place. This research study takes place in the NT, a territory, not yet a state with full state rights of governance. The NT is a region bordered by the states of Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. Originally the northern territory of South Australia, cultural influences, long distances, isolation, climate and geographical factors have played pivotal roles in shaping the development of the NT. This section outlines that context and grounds this research in the unique conditions of the NT. It also explains some of the comments made by the participating teachers when they discuss PD and PL with a genesis in other states, territories or countries. For example, First Steps® in Writing, Spelling, Oral Language and Reading came to the NT from Western Australia, where Tribes®: A new way of learning and being together came from Canada and the USA (with large acceptance in the NT).

The NT has approximately 17.5% of the land mass of Australia, in comparison to its similarly sized cousin Queensland with 22.5% and Tasmania with .9%. (Area of Australia-States and Territories, Australian Government) This main comparison gives the NT and Queensland approximate similarity in terms of area and geography, with a shared border between the NT and Queensland. There the similarities end, in terms of schools, locations, numbers of teachers and students. Tasmania is much closer in education jurisdiction size in terms of the
two departments of education and the numbers of schools, teachers and students. The ease of providing PD and PL in a state the size of Tasmania is something that cannot be achieved in the NT, with an equivalent size to Queensland.

Home to the world heritage listed Uluru (Ayers Rock), Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and Kakadu National Park wetlands, the NT has a diverse and contrasting environment. With sweeping views from the tops of ancient escarpments, to tropical wetlands in the north, to the desert country of Central Australia, the NT stretches 2100 kilometres from top to bottom. The Stuart Highway begins in Darwin and its closely allied satellite city of Palmerston. It then stretches fifteen hundred kilometres through the middle of the NT, linking Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs as well as many road-stop inns and pubs (hotels). The road then goes on for another 700 kilometres to Port Augusta in South Australia. The Barkley Highway veers off from the Stuart Highway at the pragmatically named Three Ways, near Tennant Creek, where Darwin is north, Adelaide is south and Cloncurry, Mt Isa and the Queensland/New South Wales coast are east. The point of this description of setting is to show the sweeping distances between the NT and the logistical difficulties of providing services, including educational services to such a far-flung and remote audience, the additional costs incurred and the differences inherent in providing full services in urban, rural and remote areas. While other states and territories also have logistics issues in this regard, this is a territory of a limited number of schools, a school system on a par with Tasmania in terms of size, schools and students.

With the top half of the NT firmly in the tropics, Darwin, the capital city of the NT, lies on the northern coastline of Australia near the Timor and Arafura seas, in what is called the Top End. With a climate closely allied to those of Indonesia, East Timor and Malaysia, there are two distinct seasons which are referred to as the Dry Season (roughly equivalent to an Australian autumn and winter from April to October) or the Wet Season (roughly equivalent to Australian spring and summer from October to April). Those in Darwin do not celebrate or notice the four traditional seasons of winter, spring, summer and fall, and have more in common with Asian neighbours to the north. As a result, the school system revolves around holidays which better suit the outdoor lifestyle of its residents. For example, there is a full month of school holidays in June/July of each year and the school system here does not equate exactly to the semester dates in other states or territories. The relevance to this study is
that due to differences, there are often PD delivery issues purely and simply linked to climatic conditions which limit or restrict travel, transport and telecommunications.

Classified as a regional centre by big business in Australia, often the NT lags behind the country in terms of technology such as the National Broadband Network implementation. There are still many areas of the NT without effective technology, communication and transport, due to distance, geography and other factors. This is a significant consideration particularly with relevance to the surging interest in online PD for teachers, but also in terms of communication and access to relevant PD, particularly for rural and remote areas of the NT. While all NT schools pride themselves on having quality technology, courtesy of the NT Department of Education (NTDE), often there are issues with maintenance of that technology.

Darwin is home to the Larrakia Nation of Aboriginal people, a group with a strong sense of pride in their cultural heritage, but with an active role in the Top End of today. The Larrakia have the longest running land claim in the NT with the court finding in favour of the Larrakia in the Kenbi Land Claim. This claim covers the Cox Peninsula, west of Darwin and was used by the Commonwealth Government over the last 70 years for communications and defence purposes. This battle lays claim to Australia’s oldest unresolved legal dispute with no transfer of land ownership and title rights rejected in 2006. This is used as an example of the rich history of the NT, as well as some of the political challenges that are still reaching resolution in the NT. This has implications for the delivery of educational services, but also overall from the perspective of a living, rich culture which is not necessarily reflected in curriculum and pedagogy resources. This aspect is not considered as part of this study, but this example illustrates the close involvement of Indigenous people within the NT and highlights the difficulties of providing quality educational services, particularly PD to teachers within these areas.

Darwin and its satellite city Palmerston have long played host to refugees and boat people but as the first Australian port of call for cataclysmic events such as the Bali Bombing in 2002 and the Thailand tsunami in 2004. Darwin has a strong military presence, with a strong aviation history as well. Darwin was bombed during the Second World War. War relics dot the cliffs of Darwin, particularly at East Point, the vantage point where the first invading fighter planes were sighted. Events of the past still live on in Darwin with Japanese
submarines recently found in Darwin Harbour and declared as war graves by the Australian and Japanese military. This goes some way to explaining the cultural diversity of the NT, and the demands on teachers to be responsive to a changing society with needs that also require PD and PL, but may not necessarily be considered part of curriculum or pedagogy.

It is easier and cheaper to go on holidays in Indonesia than to travel to any east or west coast mainland city in Australia. Darwin and Palmerston have the distinction of being more closely linked to Asia in terms of climate, air travel and proximity to our northern neighbours. The point of this description of the NT is to provide a context whereby educational services are influenced by trends emerging in our Asian neighbours and educational authorities as those influencing the eastern states. While definitely a part of the Australian education system, the NT copes with its many challenges in terms of that PD and PL delivery in pragmatic ways, due to its geographical, climatic and population constraints.

This section described the NT context and some of the conditions under which the NT teachers live and work.

2.2 Education Services in the NT

This section briefly outlines the educational context for the seven participating teachers in this research study and gives a background to their current employment. Policies and other educational information are outlined in Chapter 3: The Complex Picture of Professional Development and Chapter 8: The Tale ends and the Picture is Painted. While this section is an overview of education services, this description provides a “picture” of those services which impact upon the delivery and access to PD and PL in schools where these teachers work.

Education services reflect the diversity of the environment, with geography, distance, isolation, transport, isolation and ethnic diversity all playing a part in the ethos, vision and operating nature of the schools who service the outstations, communities, townships and cities of the NT. The NT Department of Education is the main employer of teachers and educator of students. In my years as a teacher, the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training (NT DEET) became the NT Department of Education and Training (NT DET). The website now refers to it as the NT Department of Education (NTDE) and this will be
used in this research study in reference to this educational jurisdiction. There is also a Catholic Education Office in the NT, governing Catholic schools in the NT. A small number of Independent schools complete this mix with schools such as the Rudolph Steiner School and the Montessori School.

While there are many urban schools in Darwin, Palmerston and other key population centres, some remote schools have much smaller outstations, remote satellite settlements of small groups of people living a very traditional lifestyle. Where outstations can be situated some distance away from the main school, there is a high reliance on teachers and their pragmatic abilities and skills to cater not only for a diverse range of students, but exceptionally diverse teaching contexts. These teachers need to carry a variety of camping equipment, educational resources and the requisite skills to teach a range of literacy and numeracy skills, as well as engage with a range of languages, dialects and cultural beliefs. A significant proportion of NT students enter formal schooling without sufficient English language capability to access the curriculum completely, with many from disadvantaged backgrounds. The NT Department of Education 2012-2013 Annual Report attests that:

The social, economic and health challenges in remote areas are significant. Fifty-three per cent of the Northern Territory Government schools are classified nationally in the lowest docile on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage. This requires that delivery of education services gives consideration to health and wellbeing factors and that training, both within school and for pathways beyond Year 12, aims to build local industry and support broader Northern Territory economic development.

Although a significant proportion of students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, or enter the schooling system without the English language capability to access learning, the Northern Territory has some of the highest performing students in the country. This requires that education policies, programs and curriculum are developed and implemented to meet the needs of diverse learners. Each and every young person needs to be supported in order to achieve their full potential. (p. 10)

This presents challenges with consistent and ongoing staffing of teachers in schools and in the delivery of relevant quality curriculum and pedagogy and the PD and PL required to inform that curriculum and pedagogy. Within the comfortable surroundings of Darwin and Palmerston, with access to modern conveniences and technology, there is still significant
diversity within schools and an expectation of quality teachers, support staff and parents working in partnership to achieve sustainable outcomes. While the geography of the NT is the size of Queensland, the pool of teachers is more the size of Tasmania. While I alluded to the similarities and differences between educational jurisdictions in the previous section, this next section highlights the conditions under which education services are provided in the NT.

Key facts about schools, teaching and learning in the NT come from the 2012-2013 Department of Education Annual Report and include the following comparisons with Queensland from the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment Annual Report 2013 – 2014 (p.38) and with the Tasmania Department of Education Annual Report 2013. Table 2.1: Comparisons between NT, Queensland and Tasmania (below) illustrates how the NT compares geographically to Queensland (in terms of geographical size, educational services and service delivery) but has links to educational service delivery to Tasmania, an educational jurisdiction of similar size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>Queensland</th>
<th>Tasmania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of enrolled students</td>
<td>33339</td>
<td>506944 (p. 38)</td>
<td>64273 (p.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools in total</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>203 (p. 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools: Darwin (urban)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools: Palmerston (urban)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of students living in remote or very remote areas</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>18.8% Note below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Indigenous students</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>29.4% (p. 39)</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average student attendance</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>90.8% (p. 39)</td>
<td>Note Below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Indigenous student attendance</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>75-86% * Note Below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of students with a language background other than English</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>~8% Note Below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers</td>
<td>2348 (p. 42)</td>
<td>40000</td>
<td>3801 + 525*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates Advanced Skills Teachers (p. 20)

* denotes a fluctuating attendance in Queensland dependent upon year / grade level, i.e. year 11 denotes the lowest Indigenous attendance.

The Multicultural Development Association, in its paper *Improving education outcomes for Queensland’s refugee and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) school students*:
Submission to the State Budget 2012-2013 notes that “It is understood the exact number of Queensland primary and secondary school students currently receiving ESL support is not collected centrally and is not publicly reported, but as of August 2011 approximately 8% of enrolments in Queensland state primary and secondary schools were students from a ‘Main Language Other than English background’ (p. 2). This compares to the NT with 29% of its students identifying with a language background other than English, and those teachers requiring support to assist them professionally.

In Tasmania, rural and remote is viewed as proximity to Hobart (capital city), Launceston and Burnie. While the NT educational system is a similar size to Tasmania, the issues of service delivery to rural and remote schools is very different. Some information, such as the proportion of students with language background other than English, and the student attendance rates were not readily available from the Tasmanian Department of Education Annual reports and website reports.

The number of teachers in the NT is much lower and the number of students is significantly different from Queensland, so service delivery of PD and PL presents similar challenges geographically to Queensland where PD and PL might be delivered to clusters that could share the cost and engage in collegial support. In the NT, that same PD might be delivered to one or two schools or alternative delivery options explored to bring together greater numbers of teachers from far-flung areas. While it would be easy to state that this difference might make for a compact teaching service, allied to much smaller student numbers, the reality is a far-flung teaching service reliant on themselves and a much smaller pool of support curriculum and pedagogy experts and staff to maintain currency, expertise and vision. The issues of distance, geography, isolation, cultural diversity, and other factors play such a significant role in delivery of education services, not just for students, but for teachers too.

From the perspective of this research study, the provision of adult learning opportunities for teachers is related to those issues, and to the smaller proportion of leading experts to provide valuable and ongoing professional support to teachers.

The NT has its share of professional associations who also support teachers professionally. These cover the range of professional associations allied to curriculum areas such as the Science Teachers Association of the NT, the Mathematics Teachers Association of the NT or the English Teachers Association of the NT (and others). Other associations representing
stages of schooling, such as the Preschool Teachers Association of the NT, also offer teacher mentoring, support and professional activities. The NT Joint Council of Professional Associations as well as the Australian Education Union caters for different professional needs of teachers.

Teachers are expected to engage in PD and PL to ensure that their skills and understandings are current. In January 2013, all teachers in the NT began working to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at their individual career stage, usually as linked to their school-based performance reviews (now mandatory for teachers in NT schools). These Australian standards are in place for all Australian teachers, with increasing scrutiny of all aspects of their professional lives. Not only are there are gradient measures between graduate, proficient, highly proficient and lead teachers, but professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement which includes professional learning. Part of the performance review process and ongoing registration are commitments to ongoing learning in a professional capacity. In line with other states and territories, professional learning is now mandatory for every registered teacher and monitored by the NT Teacher Registration Board. This section briefly described the similarities and differences between the NT educational context and those of Queensland (the nearest geographic neighbour) and Tasmania (the state with similar student and teacher numbers).

2.4 Summary

This chapter provided a description and a “picture” of the Northern Territory context for this research study, with background about the NT, including some of the relevant factors that affect the delivery of education in the NT. While this study is based in Darwin, the capital city, and Palmerston, its satellite city, the participating teachers have backgrounds outside of these two cities, which impact on their views about their professional development. The teachers and their stories are introduced in Chapter 5, with more information about their teaching contexts. Additional information about the specific provision of PD and PL delivery is included in Chapter 8, with a comparison of each state and territory.

The next chapter explores the broad canvas of professional development in Australia, but with specific reference to NT research studies. Included in this chapter are models of professional development implementation, with links to ongoing professional learning.
The photo below portrays the isolation, harshness and beauty of the environment and distances between major centres in the NT. The Barkley Highway is the main road linking Queensland and the NT. In the NT, the road ends at Three Ways. Three Ways, near Tenant Creek, is the junction of the Barkley Highway and the Stuart Highway, which runs from the northern tip of the NT (Darwin) and south past Alice Springs and into South Australia.

Figure 2.1: The Barkley Highway between Queensland and the NT
Photo: N Batenburg
CHAPTER 3: The Complex Picture of Professional Development

The new challenges and demands on schools and teachers emerge from new and heightened expectations of schools, advances in research on teaching and learning and the need to manage classrooms that are increasingly diverse... These challenges and demands require new capacities and knowledge on the part of teachers... Schools are being organised in different ways, in terms of the both the tasks of and the responsibilities assigned to teachers and the differentiation of roles among teachers and between teachers and other school staff... Teachers must be able to accommodate continuing change - dramatic in some countries - in the context of what is to be taught and how it can be taught best. (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1994, p. 9)

This chapter begins to tell the tale about professional development in Australia, but with particular attention to the Northern Territory context. When words such as professional development and professional learning are stated, stories, images and pictures begin to unfold of teachers, students, classrooms and the types of knowledge and skills that teachers accumulate during their careers. Anyone with an education background, or with links to a school, has understandings about this concept of being a professional, engaging in adult learning and undertaking development to inform teaching practices. This chapter discusses some of the key concepts that underpin this study, the factors that affect professional development, including conditions that support effective PD, and delineates the boundaries of professional development and professional learning.

3.1 Changing Priorities for Education and Teaching

With emerging global trends, with communication, technology, transport and social interactions changing almost every year, our lives have changed over the past few years. Our society is in the throes of a transformation (Drucker, 1994). The twentieth century has been marked by fundamental and far-reaching developments in social structure, community, government, economics, education, politics and technologies. Schools are increasingly being expected to organise in unique ways to cater for increasingly diverse groups of students. This organisation may require different skills, understandings, using space/s in different ways and using time and people in different ways (Power, 2000). Researchers such as Fullan (1982),
Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) and the Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1994) identified these trends where the teaching and learning of our young had entered a new phase in the evolution of education. More recent researchers such as Hollins (2011) add that teaching continues to be a highly complex and multidimensional process, requiring extensive knowledge and understandings across a wide range of areas.

Part of the dilemma to educators around the world is that life skills have changed substantially. An increasing reliance on technological devices has emerged, not just to connect our lives but as essentials in the workplace and classroom. There are significant educational, technological, economic and social challenges for teachers and schools, merely hinted at in the vignettes from Chapter 1 (Darling-Hammond & McLoughlin, 1995; Day, 1999; Denicolo & Kompf, 2005; Drucker, 1994: Guskey, 2014; Ryan & Bourke, 2013).

Teachers now know so much more about how best to foster learning in their classrooms due to a steady proximity to information via the Internet. There are multiple websites which share everything from video teaching strategies, art, craft, science, technology, home economics, and other curriculum projects, print resources and full units of work. Communication with other teachers and schools not just within Australia but also around the world is possible.

Teaching takes place in a world dominated by change (Zapeda, 2008) that is marked by new challenges, demands, uncertainty and increasing expectations and complexity. Australia is linked to the rest of the world in communication, transport, social media and other ways never before seen in our history. That changed world-view comes with increased responsibilities to be current, timely and pertinent in terms of professional skills. Teachers are under increasing pressure and scrutiny to become the best that they can be in their profession. Government initiatives aimed at tracking student progress nationally, reporting on it via an open website and having professional standards applied to their daily work are all a part of that scrutiny. Hollins (2011) discusses the concept of quality teaching where knowledge is applied in ways to promote equitable access and opportunities to develop skills such as the ability to “synthesize, integrate and apply this knowledge to different situations, under varying conditions, and with a wide diversity of groups and individuals” (p. 395). Avalos (2011) further outlines the capacity and willingness of teachers to examine their convictions and beliefs and alludes to the capacity for improvement or change. These changes are
dependent upon the goals and individual and collective needs of teachers, as well as their students.

The demands on teachers have become immense, with expectations that teachers are ready, willing, able and eager to accommodate a rapidly changing curriculum, with current and timely pedagogical practices that reflect this changing environment (Borko, 2009; Zapeda, 2008). The emerging awareness and growing importance of lifelong education is often linked to an emphasis on team-work, cooperation, tolerance, mutual understanding and environmental issues (Zapeda, 2008). Each school, and each teacher, is different and each has different attributes and resources to cope with those challenges and to become agents of change. Teachers are aware of underpinning factors such as the history and traditions of groups of teachers and the identified educational needs of students. Teachers understand the expectations of various education systems and their specific working conditions. This research inquiry indicates that they are aware of their opportunities to learn (Avalos, 2011).

There can be no discussion about teachers without consideration of the needs of their students in classrooms around the country. The pressures are not just on teachers but on students as well. These pressures have implications for significant changes to teaching practice. There are expectations that students will emerge with better than average communication, interaction, collaboration, problem-solving and decision-making skills. The hope is that they will be savvy not just in using a variety of technology and social media, but also will develop complex understandings of finance, sexual health, spiritual options and possible workplace and business pathways. Many teachers cite an over-crowded curriculum, with increasing demands on their time, expertise, knowledge and skills (Australian Primary Principals Association, 2014).

There is acknowledgement that jurisdictions need to be proactive to cater for these changing needs of students and their evolving needs. In the NT, the Department of Education Strategic Report 2013- 2015 states that:

Quality education is the key to positive participation of Territorians in our community and our economy. The strategic plan outlines the priorities that we as an agency will work towards, to deliver our vision to educate young Territorians to become confident and capable global citizens. It builds on our commitment to provide sustainable and innovative programs and services from early childhood through to senior years. These
programs are reflective of 21st century technology and the contemporary social environment in which we operate. The plan refocuses our effort to ensure that every student in the Northern Territory can and does access a quality education. (p. 2)

The links between the quality of the teaching force and student learning have been iterated strongly over the years (Dawkins, 1988; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Goe & Stickler, 2008; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Kirtman, 2002; Parker, 1988). Student improvements require new capabilities, new capacities, new knowledge and new ways of working by teachers within schools (OECD, 1994). Any overview of current research indicates the complexity of factors inherent within any examination of student learning and teacher quality. Abdurrahman et al. (2012), in an extensive review, explored the association between quality teaching and learning outcomes. They found that quality teaching, with the power to affect disadvantage is influenced by factors such as the common sense level of the teacher, self-efficacy and knowledge of subject matter. Other important factors include mastery of communication technology that contributes to the quality of student learning outcomes. In short, the quality of pedagogy affects the quality of learning.

Hattie (2003) explains that there are many sources of variance in student achievement, an essential consideration in any discussion about quality teachers and effective teaching. Students, according to Hattie, account for fifty percent of variation of achievement, but home, schools, principals and peer effects all play a role. Hattie attributes the influence of the teacher to thirty percent of the variance in student achievement. This has implications for PD and PL in terms of quality teaching and teachers and effective students and learning. Hattie, (2003) states:

We need to ensure that this greatest influence is optimised to have powerful and sensationally positive effects on the learner. Teacher can and usually do have positive effects, but they must have exceptional effects. We need to direct attention at higher quality teaching, and higher expectations that students can meet appropriate challenges - and these occur once the classroom door is closed and not by reorganising which or how many students are behind those doors, by promoting different topics for these teachers to teach, or by bringing in more sticks to ensure they are following policy. (p. 3)

This dilemma about the quality of teaching did not emerge overnight. There is a history and
evolution to education within Australia that supported the conditions for these changes and fostered them across the country. A historical context is useful for exploring the influences, practices and institutional arrangements reflected in professional development language, contexts and environments. The emergence of new terms to describe evolving concepts has implications for professional development.

Smith (1996, 2001) credits Basil Yeaxlee (1929) and Eduard Lindeman (1926) as the first spokesmen for lifelong education, in reference to the needs of society. How that phrase has now become embedded in the professional lives of teachers! Lifelong learning is the ongoing process by which one acquires knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for the development of general capabilities and specific work-related performance, through education, training, work and general life experiences (Chapman et al., 2003).

Over sixty years ago, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), took the (then) innovative step of developing far-reaching plans to eradicate illiteracy. While, at first glance, this does not have anything to do with PD, it illustrates that the landscape has changed for teachers, with many key terms included in professional vocabularies today. This plan to eradicate illiteracy is one still being implemented today, and that decision had far-reaching consequences for teachers in schools even today. Milestones identified by UNESCO on their 50 Years for Education Milestones, note key events such as The International Conference on Public Education (1946). By 1949 pilot projects were launched in the field of literacy. In 1965, UNESCO launched the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy and defined the concept of functional literacy. A further project on special education was launched in that year as well. By 1967, the first International Literacy Day was launched. By 1968, recommendations were published on Education for International Understanding with a focus on curriculum and life of the school. That year saw the International Conference on Educational Planning with a revision of plans for the future.

Australia was not immune to the emerging focus on education. The milestones listed on the UNESCO (no date) website list “lifelong education” as the main theme of the 1972 UNESCO Institute for Education. This website lists the introduction of Technology as a component for general education. By the early 1970’s, Australian industry and business had embraced the
concepts of lifelong learning and expense-sharing with the community at large (R. J. Ryan, 1999).

The Australian Federal Government had vowed to combat unemployment and provide a transition between education and work. By the late 1970s, the emphasis was firmly focused on social and individual development of the worker, capacity building and improving equality through access to lifelong learning, with access for teachers through PD (Smith, 1996, 2001). In 1979, UNESCO released Edward Faure’s report *Learning to Be* (Ryan, 1999), with the introduction of, and emphasis on, organised lifelong education. There was the gradual but inevitable revamp of educational systems and a transformation, a revolutionary change into a *learning society*, a new term in the education vocabulary. A learning society is one where learning is valuable and valued, and where people are encouraged to learn throughout their lives (Van der Zee, 1996). These are terms that pepper our educational vernacular today and has led to allied concepts such as transformational leadership where leaders and others engage in processes that capitalise on motivation and innovation to improve student outcomes. Learning communities or communities of best practice are communities of collaborative and cooperative learners mutually engaged in the negotiation of specific learning goals (Wenger, 1998). These concepts are pivotal ones for the evolution of PD and PL.

By the 1980s, the Federal Ministry for Employment, Education and Training endorsed the need for a well-trained, technologically literate and progressive workforce. The Ministry outlined the role of schools and the importance of the intellectual and social development of young people (Dawkins, 1988). Curriculum and pedagogy had been further defined in the intervening years, with technology and information communication technology (ICT) achieving a significant level of importance, not just within industry, but filtering into schools. The ability of teachers to reflect and meet the needs of a rapidly changing workforce (*capacity building*) had implications for social and individual professional development. Politically and socially, there were increasing demands for a well-trained and futures-focused teaching force, able to embrace these changes and teach these skills to students (Dawkins, 1988).

Responsibilities and accountabilities were passed to schools, in a process of devolution, with the expectation that while each school was part of the jurisdictional system, each school was
semi-autonomous and accountable to the school community. There were increased calls and measures put in place for control of education centrally and competency-based training (CBT). A term used widely within the vocational education field, competency-based training refers to the collection of essential understandings, skills and practical knowledge, linked to specified standards of achievement and underpinning performance, usually within employment. Currently, the competencies of teachers are under increasing scrutiny through the development and implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, which include key teaching competencies as standards with gradations of skills, knowledge and professional understandings. A standard for professional knowledge is included with engagement in professional learning graded according to competencies within the graduate, achieving, highly achieving and lead teacher categories.

CBT ties in with a move towards the analysis of transfer of learning, whereby previous learning is viewed as a building block towards future learning (Leberman, McDonald & Doyle, 2004). The principles of competency based learning lie parallel to those of PD and PL, where ongoing learning by teachers is seen as the building block towards an improvements in teaching and learning within the classroom. In an age where there is increasing dependency on technological advances, and globalisation is affecting many aspects of daily life, the Information Age requires information and thinking that will transfer relatively easily. At this time there was increasing acknowledgement that improved accountability and evaluation systems were affecting return-on investment and the need for focused education and training programs with impact (Leberman et al., 2004).

By the late 1980s and 1990s, based on much research into educational effectiveness (Clandfield & Kerr, 2005; Kennedy, 2001), despite social and other factors, the links between student learning and the quality of the teaching force were iterated strongly (Dawkins, 1988; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Hattie, 2003; Hollins, 2011; Kirtman, 2002; Parker, 1988). The overarching view was that enhancing schools or changing them could affect school performance and promote equitable standards (Guskey, 2014), but this required professional learning to become a reality (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). This research flourished in the 80s and 90s, particularly in the United Kingdom (UK), becoming gradually more sophisticated in both the data used and in the statistical modelling. This research appealed greatly to the government of the day for its quantitative approach to a

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures  50
qualitative problem. This has continued, with The National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) high-stakes tests now an established part of the educational landscape.

Enhancing schools or changing them could affect performance and promote equitable standards (Goldstein & Woodhouse, 2000), a discussion that continues today in Australia. Rowe (2003) contributed to that debate by reiterating ‘real’ effects from recent and emerging local and international research into educational effectiveness. These show overwhelmingly that the quality of teaching and learning provision are, by far, the most prominent influences on students cognitively, affectively and behaviourally. Rowe (2003) added unequivocally that quality teachers and teaching, supported by strategic teacher professional development are what matters the most in improvements in schools, and in improving student outcomes. The debate continues into the necessary steps to achieve both quality teachers and teaching in every school across the land, without other social, financial, cultural or disadvantage playing a part.

A significant trend within jurisdictions and schools has been that of critical accountability and the learning by teachers is under increasing scrutiny for the links to improved outcomes within their classrooms. The application of an industrial model to education, viewed as a nakedly economic agenda (Reid & Johnson, 1993), emerged, with user-pays implications. This industrial model has a cost-neutral view of education, where the user pays for services rendered and outcomes can be measured against defined standards. Schools are increasingly considering and measuring the cost-benefits of PD and PL for teachers against the potential for improved student outcomes. The Australian Education Union or AEU (2004) discussed embedded customs and traditional practices, organisational cultures, leadership hierarchies, teacher standards and engagement in educational decision-making inherent within contemporary education (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Hargreaves, 2003). Changes to empirically-based and target-oriented goals, similar to competitive and commodity-focused business and industry approaches invaded the education industry (Smith, 2001). The delivery of PD and PL is affected through this need for stringent accounting and targeted goals against the traditional delivery modes of PD in schools where the outcomes for those PD events may not necessarily comply with school or departmental targets or directions. Additionally, with the human factor embedded within PD and PL, it may be impossible to quantify the benefits.

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures
of any particular PD or PL within a financial year or to provide immediate evidence within a classroom.

By the late 1990s, the concept of recurrent education drove the linkages between school, education and work. Along with lifelong education, recurrent education was viewed as a strategy to ensure and distribute education, formally or informally, over the lifespan of an individual in a recurring way and in alternation or as part of work and other activities (Ryan, 1999). The focus was on the increasing importance of education within society and the vision for schools as flexible learning organisations. These are organisations where continuous learning is a guiding ethos for all members, where equitable and constructive environments such as the social and economic climate, work environment and stakeholder expectations cater for the needs of all learners (Lyle, 2012). These organisations respond, adapt, create and innovate with flatter management and leadership structures and effective team building (Hargreaves, 2003). The concept of the teacher as learner and the continual update and transformation of knowledge and information have become pervasive ideals for schools (Gordon, 2004: Gardner & Kelly, 2008). The theory and spirit of learning communities is an alluring one for schools, who pride themselves on both academic excellence and as centres of learning. All of these descriptors require sustainable and imaginative professional learning.

The teacher as learner and the continual update of knowledge and information have become pervasive ideals, but allied to these concepts is the newer phenomenon of over-crowded curriculum (Australian Primary Principals Association, 2014) and reform failure (Behrstock-Sherratt, Rizzolo & Laine, 2013). Many teachers are currently seeking a greater voice in education policy, including direction of their own profession, at a time when they are being increasingly externally regulated. While there is growing acceptance for a heightened teacher role in creating a stronger profession, many teachers are generally tired of instantaneous responses to new, bigger and brighter reforms planned for schools. While there is acknowledgement generally of the need for professional development by teachers, Gordon (2004) discusses the range of research, which shows the need for teachers to be involved in shared school governance, as part of their involvement in their own professional accountabilities.

This has implications for professional learning where the concept of learning is not restricted to the Tuesday afternoon staff meeting. The intent of PD and PL has changed from a

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures  52
pragmatic acquisition of curriculum or pedagogy knowledge and skills. Rather, current thinking implies a need for a structured, continuous spirit and impetus of renewal and adaptation. As the needs of society change, so do the needs of teachers and presumably their professional development focus areas. Evans (2008) refers to personal enlightenment and a series of teacher-changing experiences affecting a teacher’s professional life and practice for years to come. These intrinsic concepts about PD and PL indicate a journey, rather than a destination in terms of ongoing learning by teachers.

The relevance of that change in focus to this study is that there is a marked trend towards critical accountability within schools and the learning by teachers is under increasing scrutiny for improved outcomes within their classrooms. In this section, I outline some of the conflicting thoughts regarding teachers, teaching, their allied learning and the role that this learning plays within an evolving education context.

On the one hand, there is an evolution of thinking, pushing the traditional sense of PD into the domain of ongoing, recurrent lifelong learning (my argument for the terminology to change from PD to PL), but both PD and PL are under increasing expectations to be visibly and economically effective. Professional development is an essential factor in assisting the development of new skills, understandings and capabilities in teachers, but that view is balanced by the need for accountability in professional, financial and societal terms. This lies at the heart of the vignettes at the beginning of this study where teachers were uncertain of the parameters of their own learning. Avalos (2011) links this changing educational environment to professional development in that PD is a complex process, requiring cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers, not just individually but collectively as part of a school organisation. It also requires school community involvement to optimise resources within the school and this may require transformational leadership and an acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of that learning. PD is about teachers learning, learning how to learn and transforming that knowledge into practice for the sake of their students’ growth and development but this is a difficult concept to anticipate prior to the PD or PL experience.

Avalos (2011) further explains that not every form of PD is relevant to all teachers. She argues the constant need to “study, experiment, discuss and reflect in dealing with teacher professional development” (p.10). This reality is that traditional PD does not always include
active learning (Fiszer, 2004). Often there is a presenter or facilitator who advocates for active classroom learning but does not demonstrate it in the PD event. Fiszer adds that this approach is “not only hypocritical and agonising but outdated and a disservice to professional educators…Ongoing professional development fosters the kind of support that teachers do not have within their traditional culture of isolation” (p. ix).

The ideal is for teachers to be involved in developing common purpose, expertise and methods for analyzing and solving curriculum and instructional problems, accepting that these may involve change. Gordon (2004) further argues the need for transformational teachers (Jones, 2009) and leadership, those that foster a collaborative and professional culture and facilitate teacher development and student-centered learning that is based on student experiences and interests. All of these items require sustainable and imaginative professional learning. Hall (2004) and other researchers such as Abdurrahman et al. (2012), Day (2012), Desimone (2009), Ryan and Bourke (2013) allude to changes on the educational landscape and sum up some of the current range of issues within contemporary education. Decreased status, lack of control and ownership of educational issues of concern and an even greater loss of autonomy head the list.

While the needs of society have changed, so have the perceptions and views about education generally, and schools and teachers specifically. There is a perceived general lowering of morale and subjugation to increasing government and external control of education through an increasing number of policy decisions. Abdurrahman, et al. (2012) reinforce the view that since the start of mass schooling across the world, public education has been burdened with expectations. The idea is that education can be used to save society, to save students from poverty and destitution, for schools and teachers to develop universal literacy as a part of economic survival, create skilled and diverse workers. Schools and teachers have been expected to develop tolerance in conditions where there are religious, ethnic and economic conflict, to inculcate democracy, economic competition, drug awareness, an end to violence and to make restitution for the ‘sins of the present generation’ (p. 664).

These authors outline the pessimistic thought that poor results brought an end to such optimistic assumptions in many developing and Western nations, with education suddenly becoming the problem, not the solution. Teachers were blamed for everything by everybody – by governments, by media, by society. If Hattie (2003) is believed, teachers are responsible
for only thirty percent of variance in student achievement, with other factors including home
and students themselves accounting for sixty percent. However, this view does not seem to
prevail in the media. This puts extensive pressure on teachers (Abdurrahman et al., 2012).
Day (2012) further asserts that the new lives of teachers, schools and classrooms have been
characterised as sites of struggle with pressures of financial self-reliance (as evidenced in the
NT by the implementation of new methods of financing schools in 2015) and pressure for
ideological compliance. Increasingly changes in curriculum, management, monitoring and
performance assessment systems have been implemented in schools with expectations of
support and success, but have resulted in increased and intensification of work for teachers.
The perception by some teachers is of a vote of no-confidence by the public and by
successive federal, state and territory governments. There have been some significant
challenges to the changing face of education. John Paulett (2014) is a recipient of the Golden
Apple Award for Excellence in Education and an adjunct professor at National Louis
University, an instructor of Theology and Film at Fenwick High School in Chicago, Illinois
(USA). He wrote his article *Teaching is an Art, not a Science* for the Chicago Sun-times in a
series of articles exploring the big challenges faced by teachers and education. He outlines
the American national despair about the performance of schools, where this has fuelled an
industry of tips and techniques being mechanically applied to teaching in an attempt to
achieve predictable results. He cites the attempts to inculcate instruction to the detriment of
teaching, along with the fallacy that if structured activities are performed, preferred outcomes
will emerge. Paulett states:

> Learning is not a mechanical endeavor and it is not more likely to happen because of a
toolbox of techniques. Education is a human and loving act. It is the product of an
authentic encounter between people. When I enter my classroom, I have a choice. I
can take the risk of bringing myself, with my flaws, vulnerabilities, and uncertainties
or I can try to mask my fears and insecurities with strategies designed to keep me at a
distance from authentic human interaction. (para. 3)

Altered conditions of employment, nebulous purpose and direction in a changing world and
increasing anxiety, depression and health issues are affecting teachers around the world. Hall
(2004) succinctly adds that the raft of initiatives currently being served on teachers seems
designed to reduce, rather than enhance, the professional knowledge and critical scholarship

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures   55
that teachers bring to their work. Reductions in access to PD and PL, the financial burdens of both teachers and schools to access quality PD and PL and the unknown quality of the value of that PD and PL over time are serious issues. These concerns reduce the political impact that teachers might bring to bear through their instructional activities. Toom Pyhältö and O’Connell Rust (2015) note that while teachers are engaging in this new world of innovation and change, making independent choices and finding a balance between personal preferences and collaborative collegial understandings might be difficult. While the teacher as an active change agent is still central in educational research, practices and policies, Toom et al. note that teachers’ active professional agency illustrates far more than just coping mechanisms in the face of challenging circumstances. Teachers perceive themselves as experts in curriculum and pedagogy and in management of learning, particularly acting in new and creative ways.

It is within this context of changing priorities and a critically thinking knowledge society that sets the educational context for a discussion about professional learning and an analysis of the investment in the future of teaching and learning. Hargreaves (2003) makes the point that any industrial or educational system that does not work towards sustainable improvements is an ill-prepared system for the future, and one waiting for disasters to happen.

This section explained some of the evolution of the changing landscape in education but also has tracked some of the terms that are now common in the vocabulary of many teachers. This section described the critical need for PD and PL to evolve along with the changing needs within classrooms and schools.

3.2 Challenges to Traditional Professional Development Delivery

Let’s face it. Professional development, as we have known it for years now, has yielded little or no positive effects on student learning. Thus complain the many weary professionals who flinch at the mere mention of the word “workshop”. In the collective imagination, the term “professional development day” conjures only images of coffee breaks, consultants in elegant outfits and schools barren of kids. Of course, professional development was never intended to trigger such pessimistic reactions. Even critics of the professional development movement admit that all forms of teacher development, whether effective or not, have at their core the noble intention.
of improving student learning… In this era of high-stakes testing and increased accountability, it is necessary to reposition professional development so that the collective efforts of teachers, students and administrators result in enhanced learning for all members of the teaching community. (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, p. 1)

Professional development links to the systemic need to bring change in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of teachers with a view to informing their classroom practices and to effect improvements in student outcomes and achievements. Fiszer (2004) makes the argument that if teacher learning is a priority, educational leaders must support the development of a cultural shift to a genuine ongoing model of professional development, one including peer observations, dialogue and feedback. Guskey (2000) adds to this by stating that “never before in the history of education has greater importance been attached to the professional development of educators.” (p. 3). There are issues with the traditional modes of PD delivery and this section outlines some of the issues besetting PD.

Traditional professional development often fails due to a number of pertinent reasons (Fiszer, 2004). Often it is linked to a deficit model, one where additional professional input and expertise is viewed as necessary to correct imbalances in the achievements of students or the performance of teachers. Fiszer (2004) describes how little attention has been paid to teacher perceptions about professional development, and the need to support a model of ongoing PD that connects education, training and practice. Where teacher PD is just one component of school, teacher and student plans for improvement, there is a need for teacher learning to be ongoing, interactive and supportive to the teacher (Leberman et al., 2004).

Most teachers want to improve their teaching practices. The shift from an isolated classroom to a collaborative culture of cooperation and analysis of common goals and objectives is imperative, but so is the sense that teachers must be supported as practitioners maximising student success and personal accomplishment. Just as there are alternate views about what constitutes the most effective teacher, there are alternate views about teacher PD. If teaching is viewed as labour, then it is logical to assume that teacher learning involves knowledge and skill workshops to improve mastery of content and curriculum (Hoban, 1997). Teaching can be viewed as a dynamic, action-filled, complex series of interactions, communication, active learning, collaborative support and development (Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban, 2012). If that is the case, then different expectations impact on professional development. If the view of
teaching and learning is for long-term gain, then the professional development needs to reflect that changed focus. The change needs to be to a future-oriented growth plan, rather than addressing shortfalls and immediate concerns in a deficit model to the detriment of the long-term overall plan.

Diaz-Maggioli (2004) outlines the factors that currently constrict professional development practices. The decisions made by administrators and school leaders, in top-down decisions about professional development, serve to muffle teacher voices, but also to burden teachers rather than provide welcome solutions to classroom problems. The idea that teachers need to be “fixed” is an uncomfortable one. Fiszer (2004) identified this as a significant issue, and allied to a lack of ownership of the PD process and its results.

Diaz-Maggioli (2004) notes the technocratic nature of the PD content, where much more energy and effort is required to transfer the PD to the classroom, where often the process is seen as a top-down management process (Aubusson et al., 2012). Leberman et al. (2006) outline the various reasons why transfer of adult learning is an essential step in any discussion about professional growth of skills and understandings. These authors comment that from an educational perspective, our assumption is that whatever is learned is retained or remembered over time, and used in appropriate situations. Significantly, there is an assumption that what is learned in one context will and can be transferred to another and if learning has occurred, then it can be displayed later. In general terms, transfer of learning occurs when previously learned knowledge and skills affect the way in which new knowledge and skills are learned and performed, both positively and negatively.

Diaz-Maggioli (2004) refers to the lack of the support in transferring professional development knowledge ideas to the classroom. This author cites the high level of support for pre-service teachers to move effectively between theory and practice, but the limited support for in-service teachers to do the same. Evans (2011) refers to the embedded factors of behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development necessary for effective professional development, factors that need to be considered when schools and teachers are engaging in PD opportunities. While she speaks of professionalism, she discusses professionalism as focused on what teachers do, rather than what and how they think and what attitudes they hold. She references that to the extent that they are able to analyse and rationalise their
practice, which Diaz-Maggioli (2004) refers to as the effective move between theory and practice.

Kennedy (2014), ten years after Diaz-Maggioli (2004), comments that the state of literature on the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers is partial in coverage, fragmented and often under-theorised, supporting Dias-Maggioli’s earlier views. She does not take away from the many excellent, useful analyses of PD initiatives, but rather suggests a more holistic look to identify how to strengthen endeavours to pursue deeper and better understandings of teacher professional learning. Kennedy (2014) identifies the non-existence of longitudinal studies, something of critical importance if the impact of PD is a factor. She cites a very few examples of studies across the career lifespan, but even these studies tend to take place at one point in time, with a sampling of teachers spanning the career lifespan. Potentially allied to this concept is the idea by Diaz-Maggioli (2004) that there are often few systemic evaluations of professional development and the comment is made that a “learning organisation should yield knowledge that enriches not only the immediate community but the profession as a whole.” (p. 4).

Stewart (2014) stresses that teacher learning has gone through a reform movement whereby the links are now established between high quality PD to higher quality teaching to student achievement. When appropriate conditions and characteristics of PD align, there is a high potential for a greater depth of understanding and change in teaching practice. Stewart comments that the concept of passive and sporadic PD has shifted to one that is “active, consistent, based in the teaching environment and supported by peers in a professional learning community” (p. 28). Stewart’s statement is that professional learning communities have demonstrated success when teachers from the same school have ‘autonomy to select their learning objectives and have gone through training on how to collaborate’ (p. 28).

This section has outlined some of the discussion about the challenges embedded within any discussion about professional development.

### 3.3 Defining Professional Development and Professional Learning

Professional development is an essential element of comprehensive or systemic reform. The nation can adopt rigorous standards, set forth a visionary scenario,
compile the best research about how students learn, change textbooks and assessment, promote teaching strategies that have been successful with a wide range of students, and change all the other elements involved in systemic reform – but without professional development, school reform and improved achievement for all students will not happen. Unless the classroom teacher understands and is committed to standards-based reform and knows how to make it happen, the dream will not be realized. (American Federation of Teachers, 2002, p. 2)

The first question in this research study relates to the extent and range of teacher experiences of professional development and how these affect their professional learning into the future. The links between school improvement and change, teacher learning and professional development are symbiotic in nature (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Marshall, 1998; Parker, 1998). Substantial literature is available about teacher change and the necessity for those changes in an education environment never before seen in our history (Evans, 2011; Gordon, 2004; Hargreaves, 2003; Hollins, 2011). As a result, there has been much research into the promotion of those changes, as diverse as they might be, and support for the quality and quantity of professional development to sustain and maintain standards of professional accountability (Evans, 2011; Hollins, 2011; Richardson & Lidstone, 2003: Rowe, 2003).

This view is reinforced by Ryan and Bourke (2011) who state in their introductory paragraph that the education context for teachers has substantially changed. These authors state:

For at least 20 years, teachers have been ‘casualties’ (Hargreaves & Lo, 2000, p. 173) of declining support, tighter controls, shrinking budgets, intensified workload and standardisation. At the same time, they are under increasing pressure from politicians and the community to be more accountable and to maintain standards (Sachs, 2003). Over the past decade, their position has been further weakened by curriculum prescription, testing regimes, performance management, a casual workforce, new standards of professionalization, increased monitoring and appraisal systems as well as the continued ‘discourses of derision’ (Ball, 1994; Hargreaves, 2000, p. 168; Thomas, 2011). (p. 411)

Along with that changed educational landscape, the need for complex, multi-layered PD and PL is necessary. If agents of change are required, then the resourcing and intellectual capital of PD needs to reflect that impetus. Kennedy (2014) argues that the need is very pressing for
more sophisticated and accessible means of understanding continuing PD. This author comments on the move towards managerial approaches to measurement where pupil performance on standardised tests is used as a proxy for teacher quality. Those areas, as outlined by Guskey (2002), include change as a result of teacher engagement in continuing professional development, change in classroom practices of teachers in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students.

In the literature, there is a hesitancy about the parameters of PD with authors such as Feiman-Nemser (2001) reflecting on the ambiguity of the term professional development. The ambiguity between the traditional views of PD against the wider learning, self-management, student-centred (for both the teacher and students in classrooms) and the enhancement and growth of skills and understandings divided the literature. As an example, Hughes (1991) noted that PD is a totality of formal and informal activities carried out by a system, school or individual to “promote teacher growth and renewal” (p. 54). Another aim is to empower individual educators, teams and organisations to improve curriculum, pedagogy and student outcomes (Bredeson, 2003; Gordon, 2004). Diaz-Maggioli (2004) defines professional development as “a career-long process in which educators fine-tune their teaching to meet student needs” (p. 5), and directly addresses the patterns of decisions that teachers make when mediating students’ learning.

Feiman-Nemser (2001) noted the variety of phrases, descriptors and concepts that various writers and researchers have used to imbue professional development with its widest sense of learning for teachers. Certainly during the decade from 1990, there seemed to be ambivalence about what professional development was, and what it should, could and might be doing. Guskey (2000) argues that the importance of professional development of educators is of the utmost importance but Fiszer (2004) cautions that traditional professional development often fails particularly where teacher perceptions about professional development are ignored or not valued. The definition of professional development as a gap between achievement and performance implies that when achievement goals and performance are significantly different, teachers have not been achieving adequately themselves. This once again harkens to that “deficit model” (Fiszer, 2004). There has been a gradual switch in emphasis from PD as something done to teachers, into something more
integrated, holistic and relevant to the lives of teachers as an active, lifelong process of ongoing learning (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Gordon, 2004).

Ryan and Bourke (2013) raise the issue whereby teachers may be the last in a line of management hierarchy (p. 421), where educational decisions are made elsewhere. It is up to the teacher to work effectively and efficiently in a standardised, accountable environment, with teachers as unquestioning supporters (Leeton Gray & Whitty, 2010). Ryan and Bourke (2013) discuss the idea that bureaucratic, hierarchical and managerial controls replace cultures of collaboration; there are competencies and licensing rather than trust. Toom et al. (2015) note that this may be counter-productive to the concept of teachers as active learners. The teachers who are active professional agents perceive themselves as active motivated learners. Environments that promote active participation and engagement are those where there is a promotion of professional agency. This has relevance for the implementation of professional development requirements and links to ongoing teacher registration.

While there appears to be a growing consensus and agreement about the principles of effective professional development (Hawley & Valli, 1999; Imants & Van Veen, 2010; Newmann, King & Youngs, 2000), there are strong links between school improvement and change particularly in teacher beliefs and attitudes, content knowledge and instructional practices (Fullan, Bertani & Quinn, 2004; Goldstein & Woodhouse, 2000), teacher learning and professional development (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Marshall, 1998; Parker, 1998). Feiman-Nemser (2001) refers to the committed and aware change agent, engaged in active and transformative learning with impact on individual practices but also on shared responsibilities. The complexity of teaching and the need to be responsive to demands of the future are acknowledged (Beattie, 1995; Dufour, 2003, 2004; Fullan, 2002; Friedson, 1987; Hall, 2004; Hargreaves, 2003; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Skilbeck & Connell, 2004). The urgent need, in recent years, for vigorous reform of approaches and strategies in education has led to an examination of professional development capability to address some of these demands (Rowe, 2003).

Schools are busy places, and with the upsurge of new skills, technologies and expectations, teachers have limited time for anything without a clear, explicit, pragmatic purpose. Gordon (2004) affirms this concept of PD being linked to a particular purpose. As the parameters of change are made explicit, the guiding principles underpinning professional development
change, partly explain the uncertainty in attributing specific characteristics and domains to the field. The implication is that professional development is fluid in its development and is evolving to suit the new education environment. This is reflective of the changed focus of professional development to one of active engagement by key stakeholders. Gordon (2004) outlines some of these extended parameters that emerged onto the educational landscape, where PD was viewed as essential in key areas.

The first of these is shared governance where teachers need to be involved and engaged in school governance which includes their PD and their PL. By collaboratively developing a shared vision, teachers will develop the skills for shared decision-making, planning, conflict management, data-based inquiry and critical reflection. The second key area is transformational leadership where dynamic school leaders foster communication skills, trust-building, collaborative problem-solving and facilitative skills to foster innovative and entrepreneurial approaches. Student centred learning, with a clear focus on teaching and learning processes, fosters independent students and active critical thinkers on their own lifelong journeys. Teacher collegiality is critically important as professional dialogue fosters collaborative planning and implementation, experimentation and genuine constructive critiquing. Lastly, opportunities to analyse school culture can lead to genuine transformation of schools into adaptive, flexible and innovative learning communities.

The literature supports the move to more genuine, teacher-focused models of professional development and learning that include peer observations, peer dialogue and feedback (Fiszer, 2004). This is reinforced by Evans (2011) where she refers to the new professionalism era linked to the standards agenda of most developed nations. While Evans (2011) refers to the situation in England, with specific discussion about the concepts within professionalism, there is resonance with Australia where she outlines the movement towards government-initiated professionalism-shaping mechanisms. Currently these include mandatory performance management and the associated development of professional standards for teachers. She refers less to the aspects of professional development that are necessary to effect genuine change in both the classroom and in student achievements, or the mechanisms such as peer discussion that might be a useful strategy to enact that change, but refers to the internal processes of behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development that are precursors for genuine change within the teacher.

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 63
Therefore, use of the terms *professional development* and *professional learning* and their seemingly interchangeable use within the profession needs to be clarified. Some authors believe that PD is something that a teacher does or is provided or is done to teachers and therefore tied intrinsically to the context of teaching and the capacities of teachers (Little, 1993; McLaughlin, 1994). There is scope for both development and learning and when allied to professionals planning their own growth in understandings, skills, attitudes and pedagogical knowledge, the thinking is that it can only make a better workforce of teachers. The totality of formal and informal activities to promote teacher growth and renewal (Evans, 2011; Hughes, 1991) is becoming more useful to describe activities and processes by which teachers renew and review their own knowledge and skills.

Some authors argue that it is an impossibility to link a specific PD activity with a directly related improvement in student outcomes within an articulated period of time (Ladwig, Smith, Gore, Amosa & Griffiths, 2007; Kennedy, 2014; Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008). For example, a workshop based around a particular writing genre may not necessarily yield instantaneous results. It may be more useful to consider the links within the process of professional learning. The provision and access to identified and effective teacher PD, changes in professional reflection and dialogue with peers and learning processes with support and assistance within a school, to expected changes in professional practice and student learning (Meiers & Ingvarson, 2005, Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis, 2005; Supovitz, 2001).

The question still remains about the parameters of PD and where it begins to veer into PL (despite both being called PD within schools and education systems. The following table details some of characteristics, taken from this discussion about PD and PL but which graphically indicate the wider range of expected skills in PL. There was no research which categorically proved the links between improved teacher knowledge, skills and understandings and a causal improvement in student outcomes. Kennedy (2014) noted that there are no longitudinal studies in this area. There is a consistent hope, reflected in almost all of the literature that such improvements in teacher learning will result in more effective teaching in classrooms. In turn, more effective teaching will improve student outcomes.

Gordon (2004) for example, refers to PD but has inferred a wider definition encompassing consistent PD related to teacher particular needs or for a particular purpose. This complies
with my definition of PL, so this researcher has acknowledged this wider definition of PD. This table does not refer to specific PD events or experiences but to the wider array of characteristics which move PD into PL. These characteristics underpin my differentiating between these two terms. Please note that the research did not indicate any longitudinal studies into PD or PL by teachers.

The definition of both PD and PL is dependent upon an understanding of those wider connotations embedded within PL. This table summarises much of the research in terms of the more current views about that move to an ongoing PL cycle of renewal and growth. While traditional PD events may have included a more active style of learning, dependent upon the type, range and extent of the planned and implemented learning by practitioners, this characteristic is embedded within discussions about that wider scope of PL.

Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald and Zeichner (cited in Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) state that teacher education should lay the foundation of lifelong learning and that it should be an active, meaningful process, not just a cliché. If it is accepted that learning is important, often the traditional forms of professional development do not support a stance that advocates for active, meaningful learning, supportive of the key goals of the organisation or indeed the individual goals of the teacher. These authors describe academic and social goals, with teachers making a myriad of decisions daily. While much may become routine, unexpected classroom events and student needs often require complex decision-making and problem-solving skills. The characteristics that new teachers need to teach in a community provide a strong sense of where they are going and how they are going to get there (good practice).

Table 3.1: Characteristics of PD and PL (below) brings together these descriptive characteristics of PD and PL. In comparison to each other, based on the literature, the differences are evident, in that PL is consistently related to the needs of teachers and plays a particular purpose within schools and for teachers engaged in their own learning. There is an embedded view in PL that there will be a cultural and educational improvement and change whereas that is not always obvious in traditional PD delivery. In the table below, I have used the term PD but when wider connotations are used by a particular researcher, in line with my understandings of the characteristics of PL, I have indicated that the research encompasses PD and PL.
Table 3.1: Characteristics of PD and PL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key characteristics of PD and PL (based on Literature Review)</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent PD related to teacher needs / particular purpose (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent PD related to school needs / particular purpose (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in knowledge and skills (Hoban, 1997)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in attitudes and beliefs (Evans, 2011)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in classroom practice</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural change (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centred learning (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher collegiality (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content of PD to include peer observation, dialogue and feedback (Fiszer, 2004)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A component of plans for improvement (schools, teacher and students) (Leberman, McDonald &amp; Doyle, 2004).</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative support and resourcing (Ambusson, Ewing &amp; Hoban, 2012)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex series of interactions, communication, (Ambusson et al., 2012)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active / action learning (Ambusson et al., 2012)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative / shared governance of teacher learning</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficit mode planning, delivery and expectation of results (Fiszer, 2004)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>Not always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of learning (Ambusson et al., 2012; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004: Leberman et al., 2006)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development (Evans, 2011)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher agency (Toom et al., 2015)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal enlightenment (Evans, 2011)</td>
<td>Not always</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evans (2008) describes her view that to get the best out of teachers, there needs to be understanding about teacher development (as opposed to professional development). Evans goes on to state that the enhancement of teacher professionality which results from the acquisition of a professional work-related body of knowledge is possible through a consciously or unconsciously applied mental internalization process. This process allows for the displacement and replacing of previously-held work-related knowledge, understandings,
skills, attitudes or competencies. Evans adds to the discussion something that many other authors have not included. PD is a form of personal enlightenment that ranges from exceptionally minor to an enormous, teacher-changing series of experiences affecting an individual teacher’s professional life and practice for years to come.

As this is a NT study, NT Department of Education (NTDE) defines professional learning in its document “What is professional learning?” This document states that in the NT:

Professional learning has often been seen as something that occurs outside normal work practices, something additional, usually provided by someone from outside your workplace. In reality professional learning is something most teachers and educators do every day, as we reflect on our professional practice, work together and share ideas, and strive to improve student outcomes. With rapid change all around us and an evolving role for education and schools, finding time to update our knowledge, skills and professional thinking is vital. (p. 1)

The website information goes further by outlining that professional learning takes place at several levels which include the individual, the workplace and the organisation, with the avowed aim that professional learning at each of those levels is essential for the Department to develop as a learning organisation. It is stated that in a learning organisation, there is a:

… shift away from the traditional training model of professional learning, to a model where learning is interfaced with work and is used to achieve continual improvement. To this end, professional learning must focus on key outcomes areas for DEET (Department of Employment, Education and Training) and for the workplace and on building the capacity of individual employees to achieve these outcomes. (p. 1)

The website states that successful professional learning is that which is (1) embedded in daily practice, (2) needs based and linked to student / client learning needs, (3) tailored to meet the specific circumstances or contexts of participants and (4) sustained over a period of time. The Department asserts that it is working to establish a self-directed, collaborative and dynamic culture of learning, and to build and develop the capability of staff to engage in such a culture of learning. Within this learning environment, staff take control of their own professional learning, integrating it into their daily work lives; their focus on improving outcomes for students. The conditions for professional learning are listed on page 2 of this
NTDE states that acceptable opportunities arise from school-based/initiated activities, school-based curriculum project programs (a program initiated from outside the school but conducted within the school), visits to other schools, programs initiated by an employing authority, professional association activities and professional learning resources. These categories compare to Bredeson’s (2003) categories of professional development in that the range encompasses at and in work activities to those external to the school. Less formal models of professional development, as indicated by the Department, include study groups, learning partners, mentoring, networks, action research and case studies and professional dialogue groups.

Figure 1.3: Teachers, Schools, Students, PD and PL (in Chapter 1) indicated my understandings of the relationship between PD and PL. This can be taken further to include the classroom and school factors, such as the school community and students in the classroom and their unique composition and environment. This is further illustrated in Figure 3.1 (below) where teachers and students interact with each other in classrooms and schools, which influence potential PD and PL. The individual needs of a particular school influence any PD or PL that takes place within that school. Research indicates a need by teachers to commit personally and professionally to ongoing, consistent, engaging, meaningful and challenging PL that fulfills the aims and objectives of a more complex learning cycle (whether it is called PD or PL within any given school). There is scope within this representation to include the personal needs of teachers as well.

A key point of this representation is that there is a cycle of learning, renewal and growth. Not only do teachers in the current educational environment commit to such a cycle, but presumably they are receiving feedback and acknowledgement of their efforts to maintain current understandings about their students and key factors affecting those students. While the avowed aim of PD and PL is to improve student outcomes, there is acknowledgement that a key aim of PD and PL is to make far more effective teachers, responsive, resilient and enlightened (Evans, 2011) by their learning experiences. The aim of PD and PL might include the vision of renewing the excitement of teaching and supporting students to learn...
better, smarter and more efficiently. The research indicates that personal factors, such as teacher commitment, play a part in PD and PL and are illustrated in this visual representation below.

![Diagram of PD and PL](Image)

**Figure 3.1: Teachers, schools and students with PD and PL (adaptation of Figure 1.3)**

This section has explained some of the complexity about the interchangeable use of the terms *professional development* and *professional learning*. I have also indicated my use of the terms PD and PL with the wider connotations of ongoing, active learning cycles being embedded firmly within PL.

### 3.4 PD and PL around Australia

Around Australia, the use of the term PL is reasonably firm but when exploring state education websites further, the terms PD and PL are used interchangeably. The explicit engagement of teachers and shared governance is not explicit from any of these websites, nor
in policy documents, if they were attached to the website by link.

1. South Australia: Department of Education and Child Development:
   a. Reference to PL
   b. Teaching for Effective Learning Framework with links to Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and includes:
      i. Understand how self and others learn
      ii. Develop deep pedagogical and content knowledge
      iii. Participate in professional learning communities and networks
      iv. Engage with community
      v. Discuss educational purpose and policy and
      vi. Design, plan and organise for teaching and learning
   c. No explicit engagement of teachers in decision-making
   d. The website page on professional learning has now been changed to the intranet and requires log-on details to be accessed: no further information was supplied.

2. Western Australia: Department of Education
   a. Reference to PL on the website: no specific indication of explicit teacher engagement in the process
   b. Sections on website devoted to PL for all staff, teachers, leaders, business managers, registrars and support staff
   c. Institute for Professional Learning includes:
      i. Graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teachers (HALT) and
      ii. Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
   d. Website contains a directory of Centrally Provided Professional Learning Offerings
   e. Website contains a directory of External Providers
   f. A variety of PL modules are offered to teachers in online and face-to-face mode, along with external providers of PD and PL with the aim of improving teacher practice.

3. Northern Territory: Department of Education
   a. Reference to PL but with a PD policy (2005) and reference to PD in Global Budget Funding (2015)
b. Website includes reference to graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teachers (HALT)
c. Website includes reference to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
d. No explicit engagement of teachers in decision-making

4. Queensland: Department of Education and Training
a. Reference to PL
b. Website includes reference to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
c. Website includes reference to the Pedagogical Framework Policy which includes:
   i. Expectations of a research-validated pedagogical framework including
      school values, PL processes and instructional leadership (no specific
      mention of teacher engagement but implied) and inclusion of core
      systemic principles
      1. Student-centred learning
      2. High expectations
      3. Alignment of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment
      4. Evidence based decision-making
      5. Targeted and scaffolded instruction and
      6. Safe, supportive, connected and inclusive learning environments
         which include use of digital technologies
   ii. No explicit engagement of teachers in decision-making
d. Website contains five online coaching modules
e. E-learning which includes access to resources and contemporary practice
   resources

5. New South Wales: Department of Education
a. Reference to PL but PD in other sections of the website;
   i. Professional Learning Policy for Schools (last updated 2006): no explicit
      engagement of teachers in decision-making
b. States explicitly that all PL should relate directly or indirectly to improved student
   outcomes
c. Links indicated to:
   i. Graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teachers (HALT):
   ii. Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
d. Electronic learning, short courses, conference and attendance and mentoring or coaching are indicated as possible PL pathways, but no links provided for more information

6. Victoria: Department of Education and Training
   a. Performance and PD includes PL brief description, explanation and strategies (no explicit engagement of teachers in decision-making)
   b. Reference is made to Professional Learning in Effective Schools: the seven principles of highly effective professional learning (2005)
      i. Reference made to action research, including teachers as researchers and PL teams
   c. Reference is made to Performance and Development but this is a secure section of the website requiring log-on details.
   d. Professional development institutes are listed on the website.

7. Tasmania: Department of Education
   a. Reference to PL and Professional Learning Policy (no date)
   b. No explicit engagement of teachers in decision-making
   c. Professional Learning Institute:
      i. Flagship Programs 2015 (title): offering 55 programs running in 2015

8. ACT: Education and Training Directorate
   b. Centre for Teaching and Learning as primary source of principal venue for professional learning delivery, including workshops, seminars and conferences.
   c. Website includes provision for teachers, leadership, administration and support staff
   d. No explicit engagement of teachers in decision-making

It is obvious that each state and territory interprets their own policy and implementation of PD and PL programs. While there are some consistent elements within each website, possibly more recent information is often restricted to registered teachers within each state or territory.

This section has explored how different educational jurisdictions refer to PD and PL and the explicit references to delivery options in each state and territory. The next section explores the current research into effective teaching and effective PD opportunities.
3.5 Characteristics of Effective Teachers

The changing landscape of teaching has affected every teacher, including those in the NT. It is no longer acceptable for teachers just to have access to professional development opportunities. It is imperative that they are seen to be improving their teaching practices and student achievements in their classrooms. Hollins (2011) explains that teaching “is a complex and multidimensional process that requires deep knowledge and understanding in a wide range of areas and the ability to synthesize, integrate, and apply this knowledge in different situations, under varying conditions, and with a wide diversity of groups and individuals.” (p. 295)

While there are views about a changing landscape for teachers, with the thrust of information technology changing that landscape (Stewart, 2014), there are increasing expectations not just on students but on their teachers as well. Hollins (2011) explains that in quality teaching, knowledge is applied in ways that extend what learners already know in facilitating “the ability to acquire, construct, and create new knowledge.” (p. 295)

The concept of the “good” or “effective” teachers is often a subjective view, particularly in recent years where there are links to professional competency and accountability within education systems. While there are reasonable attempts to ensure objectivity, mutual agreement and professional standards in any assessment and analysis of teachers, there are still many viewpoints about competency. A judgement is implied which raises the spectre of qualitative and quantitative assessments which can affect a teacher directly. There may be discrepancies or perceived inequities in judging teacher effectiveness where there are calls in the media allegedly reporting programs to “reward” quality teaching with additional pay scales. There are process issues such as teachers, senior staff or departmental representatives involved in that judgement call. While the graduate teacher is included as a separate category in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the highly experienced mature teacher is not necessarily acknowledged for the great depth of pragmatic teaching skills that he or she may bring to a school. Increased consideration may need to be given to teachers at different stages in a career that may span decades, or changing contexts or consideration of the school’s location and community issues. While professional learning is an important part of any assessment of teacher capability, the many factors which impact on the effectiveness of
that PD or PL must also be called into question. The standards do not reflect the fact that a highly experienced teacher may be a neophyte in a new school, location and type of teaching.

Heck (2009) questions whether a particular school and teachers have a substantial effect on student achievement and an increase in accountability. This relates to the concept above in that there appear to be no studies that calculate a particular teacher’s impact on one group of students and the longitudinal tracking of the effects of that one teacher. Therefore, an assessment of teachers based on student achievements, engagement in PD with no quality control or follow-up and other factors inherent within the development of teacher standards is problematic. The point is made that students are in multiple classrooms in schools over several years so the concept of performance related salary incentives, with rewards when students make substantial academic gains can be problematic. There are issues with attempting to classify one teacher as more effective than another. Heck (2009) raises the issue about whether having these more effective teachers in a school conveys any academic advantage over years. Heck questions whether collective effectiveness differentiates schools in terms of their students’ achievement levels.

While there are numerous studies that examine the characteristics of teachers in relation to teacher quality (Rice, 2003; Wayne and Youngs, 2003), many of these studies referred to content knowledge as a key indicator of quality teachers and teaching. This is a limiting approach, not taking into account pedagogy at various stages of schooling. This approach does not consider other processes embedded within teaching and learning such as assessments, analysis of student achievements or use of differentiated curriculum for each student. It plays into an age-old discussion about the subject area content of early childhood classrooms against the specialised knowledge required in year 12. Ko, Sammons and Bakku (2013) outline their characteristics of effective teachers and while some were not within the parameters of this research study, some have relevance to it. According to these authors, effective teachers are those who are clear about their instructional goals. I interpreted this to mean both curriculum and pedagogical goals. They state that effective teachers are knowledgeable about curriculum goals and the strategies for teaching them, are knowledgeable about their students and adapt instruction to their needs. These teachers teach students metacognitive strategies and give them opportunities to master them. I viewed this as inclusive of a variety of pedagogical strategies which allow for the development of those meta-cognitive
Effective teachers monitor their students’ understandings and accept responsibility for student outcomes.

Ennis (2014), while discussing effective physical education teachers in the USA, notes their clear vision for his or her program, specific objectives and multiple opportunities for students to learn content. She notes their energy, commitment and dedication to their students, a concept not widely mentioned often in discussions of the “good” teacher. She notes that these teachers with these goals allocate time to planning, presentation, differentiating the curriculum based on student needs and ability and their willingness to continue to teaching until students have learned, holding themselves accountable till students learned. This comment allies with my own belief in the sense of internal accountability, commitment, dedication and professionalism as indicative of an effective teacher but these are the difficult areas to quantify, to monitor and evaluate.

There are other ways where teachers can evidence their effectiveness. Berry (2003) makes the point that teachers must know how to organise and teach in ways that allow a range of students to learn their subjects and know how and why their students learn. Cruikshank, Jenkins and Metcalf (2003) provide specific characteristics of good teachers, as those who are caring, supportive, concerned about the welfare of their students, knowledgeable about their subject matter, able to get along with parents and genuinely excited about the work that they do. These authors state that effective teachers help students to learn. Some would argue that this summarises the teaching profession. While knowledge of curriculum is listed in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, being excited about the profession was not mentioned.

Heck (2009) outlines some of the complex factors which impact on any such discussion about the assessment and evaluation of these good and effective teachers. This author outlines aspects relating to teacher quality such as the “kinds of preparation and knowledge teachers possess, what should be taught to students and how knowledge should be imparted, to classroom effectiveness.” (p. 229) He refers to the implications of professional qualifications, professional skills such as classroom observations, video analysis, questionnaire items estimated from student progress, cognitive components of teaching such as domain specific activities, goal setting and orientation, regulation, monitoring and student learning. Heck (2009) outlines concerns about internal learning contexts such as classroom composition,
structures such as class size and student groupings and social relationships that may transect individual teacher characteristics and instructional behaviours to impact on student learning. Heck explains that “teacher effectiveness implies variability in the relationship between teacher instructional strategies, behaviour, or effects and student outcomes.” (p. 230).

Hattie (2003) contributes to the discussion with factors such as instructional quality, class environment, challenging goals, teacher style and effects of factors such as ability groupings, individualisation and class size as all having an influence on a teacher being classified as effective. Hattie notes that too often, current work has ignored the profound effects of experience. Allowing for that experience, Hattie believes then the question might be asked about the differences between excellent, accomplished and experienced teachers. Additionally, Hattie warns about the assumption that non-excellent teachers are poor teachers when there may be other factors impacting such an assessment.

School communities sometimes infer effectiveness from an estimate of the teacher’s current class achievements, but as stated previously, students have many teachers over time (Heck, 2009). Student outcomes resulting from being assigned to a particular teacher are not definitive, and each teacher’s estimated effect depends on other teachers in the school, whether positively or negatively. Heck raises the example of the effects of the first grade teacher on the student in the middle elementary years. The question is asked about whether there are truly observable differences in teacher effectiveness between schools that provide academic advantages or disadvantages, or even within the same school over many years with teachers of varying effectiveness. This is particularly important in the NT where teacher turnover is an aspect that affects the majority of schools, whether urban, rural or remote. The dilemma is that teacher characteristics vary so significantly from teacher to teacher, from student group to student group, from school to school in different localities and with different social advantages and disadvantages.

The health, well-being of the student and his or her family and community is another factor, a complex one to evaluate, in terms of the effects on a student’s accomplishments or academic achievements in any given school year with any given teacher. The disparities between cultural groups, socio-economic factors, health and well-being of families and school communities and the teachers’ proficiency in languages other than English are factors that affect schools and teachers in the NT.
Hattie (2003) sums up his findings about what makes an excellent or effective teacher. These are the teachers who can identify the teaching and learning processes and more to the point, use this information to organise and implement learning in their classrooms. These teachers guide learning through classroom interactions, monitoring learning and providing feedback. These are the teachers who plan, produce and improvise as necessary to assist learning, ensuring that their classrooms are proficient and optimally effective. Hattie identifies those teachers who have respect for their students, but who also are passionate and excited about teaching. This section briefly discusses the effective teacher, and some of the characteristics which that teacher brings to the teaching and learning process. This discussion also raises the issue of factors other than the teacher and how judgements about a teacher can be affected by these other factors.

3.6 Principles of Effective Professional Development

In previous sections, the importance has been stressed of the intent or purpose of PD and PL and the pragmatic need for it to be meaningful, applicable to teachers and relevant to the school and classroom environment.

Guskey (2014) makes the significant point that for decades, “schools have implemented professional development, not knowing exactly what they hoped to accomplish” (p. 12). While the complexity of factors embedded within the concept of an effective or quality teacher is significant, the sheer range of expected skills required of the teacher of today plays a role in creating uncertainty within schools and between teachers. Borko (2009) delineated the factors involved in different modes of effective PD, linking facilitators, multiple sites, variations of teachers, content and scenarios to improved student outcomes. Guskey (2014) adds that unlike many fields with a history of steady improvement based on a continually expanding knowledge base, there is a mixed history (at best) about professional learning for educators. He states that we do not have “strong and convincing evidence from activities and programs implemented in diverse contexts that resulted in better practice and improved student learning.” (p.12). Without a specific purpose to guide their PD and PL planning, management and experiences, schools are prone to fall prey to those consultants and entrepreneurs who are less concerned with genuine improvements to student learning (Guskey, 2014). Guskey (2014) uses phrases such as “seduced by dynamic presentations and
“jazzy technology” (p. 12) to describe the situation where “desperate” school leaders jump onto education “bandwagons” (p. 12). He outlines the scenario where limited resources are committed to strategies and programs based more on “wishes and promises” (p. 12) rather than on “solid evidence of effectiveness” (p. 12).

Guskey (2003) compared principles of effective teacher professional development (once again calling it PD and not referring to PL) and noted that there are differences in opinion about the determinants of “effectiveness”. The five most recurring principles for the PD itself, according to Guskey (2003), were (1) enhancing teachers understanding of content and pedagogy knowledge, (2) providing sufficient time and resources, (3) promoting collegial and collaborative exchanges, (4) establishing procedures for evaluating PD experiences and opportunities, and (5) conducting school-based professional development. These link to the characteristics identified previously in Figure 3.1: Characteristics of PD and PL where PL responds to identified need in curriculum and pedagogy by practising teachers. Other factors in the discussion about PD and PL include teacher collegiality, active student-centred learning, cultural changes and transformational leadership which support PD and PL. Nisbet, Warren and Cooper (2003) argue that teacher ownership or agency and continuity of professional development over time were important factors, allied to the relevance and purpose of the PD, along with opportunities to learn from credible mentors. These factors link with my discussion in chapter 1 about teacher agency.

Diaz –Maggioli (2004) outlines other factors affecting teachers and their engagement in PD and PL. Curriculum factors, that knowledge element in learning by teacher practitioners, including the nature of the subject, teaching methods, assessment policies and syllabus models are all valid. This author makes the point that there are different kinds of curriculum, leading back to Guskey (2014) and his assertion about the importance of teacher knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy. Psychological foundations (how students learn), epistemological factors (the nature and purpose of knowledge), sociological (the role of schooling in relation to students, their families and communities) and didactic factors (practices more likely to result in desired learning outcomes) are all embedded in the profession of teaching. This links to Evans (2011) where behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual factors are discussed as part of the overall picture of effective professional development.
The school culture and climate, issues of professionalism and professional identity and other factors within the school such as the school community and a teacher’s unique teaching and learning style may play a role in the success or otherwise of professional development. These conditions are reflected in the models of learning discussed in section 3.7.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), through its legal entity, the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC), now the Education Council, has been working closely with key stakeholders to develop standards about quality PD and PL. The debate has now become one about “quality teachers” and what professional support and enhancement is required to inform and sustain that quality workforce of excellent teachers. This is not to be mistaken for delineation between neophyte and experienced teachers, in that a quality teacher can be at any stage in their career. Key stakeholders in this development of key understandings about PD and PL include all state and territory education agencies and employers, including government, Catholic and Independent employers, regulatory bodies, peak national bodies including teacher unions and principal associations, as well as practising teachers and principals to develop the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework or “The Framework” (2012).

Figure 3.2: Performance and Development culture: Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework – August 2012 (p. 3)

The Framework has attempted to develop nationally consistent approaches to teacher performance and development by outlining the essential elements that should be present in
schools. Acknowledging that “Australia has a high performance education system that fares well on international comparisons… [this has been] achieved in a large part through the efforts of highly skilled and motivated teachers and school leaders over generations.” (p. 2).

This performance and development cycle outlines a culture that promotes equity, excellence and ongoing development and growth in Australian schooling. A key premise is that it promotes all young Australians as successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. By promoting genuine professional conversations, the Framework promulgates the requirement that teachers know what is expected of them. They need to receive frequent, useful feedback on their teaching and access high quality support to improve their practise.

The demands for effective professional development are viewed as a key means of promoting and supporting educational change within education jurisdictions. Little (1993, 2006) notes that supporting teachers through the pedagogical and emotional work of ongoing professional development has not solved problems related to learning impoverished schools. Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini (2015) add that a lack of active, collective responsibility for learning, a lack of professional agency is a problem in school development. Conditions such as teacher burnout (Ozer & Beycioglu, 2010; Santoro, 2011) remain an issue.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers which all states and territories are implementing was begun in the NT in January 2013. Figure 3.1 attempts to tie together theories of learning, the framework and teacher professional development. Ryan & Bourke (2013) outline their concerns that that critical elements of reflection and goal setting (as taken from this performance and development cycle) are of critical importance. They note that while change or transformation may be necessary for improved outcomes, teachers need to examine and reflect as they engage in professional actions. It is important to understand the ways in which teachers work both objectively and subjectively and the decisions that they make in their working lives.

This holistic approach, developing a performance and development culture as well as articulating the key elements necessary to sustain it, has a behaviour orientation. This framework does not necessarily include the intellectual or emotional, such as the attitudinal and intellectual domains of professional development as indicated in Evans (2011). It emphasises the links between professional standards, professional learning and improvements.
of outcomes for students, taking into account that all schools, whether learning is impoverished or rich, have a basis for ongoing performance and development which includes PD as a key element.

The elements listed in this performance and development cycle are increasingly seen as factors in actions plans within schools as they reposition themselves as learning organisations or communities of best practice. The focus on reflection and goal-setting, professional practice and learning and feedback and review all sit at the heart of many performance review plans. Allied to a specific focus on the improvement of outcomes for learners, responsive services and systems, the links are between quality leadership, teachers, schools and partnerships with key stakeholders. While coherence is listed, that symbiotic relationship is between the overall plans of the school and the overall approach to teaching and learning. There is less coherence between Evans (2011) and her behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development.

Other factors need to be present for effective change to take place, such as that high level of reflexivity as discussed in Ryan and Bourke (2013) as linked to cultural change within a school or classroom. For an organisation to value learning, flexibility, leadership and coherence support those learning communities (Purcell, 2000). Evans (2011) lists motivational changes and in order for that to occur, reflection, inculcation of professional understandings and the conscious intent to improve teaching and learning. Active monitoring of the necessary types of learning as well as the frequency of that individualised or collaborative learning is another element to consider.

This closely aligns with a vision of ongoing professional learning as the core of a professional attitude by teachers for continual improvement by all key stakeholders. Learning takes place when members respond to changes in their immediate environment, modifying their behaviours and professional strategies, in light of increasing knowledge, individually or collaboratively with others. Ryan and Bourke note that “managerialism sees teachers as unquestioning supporters and implementers of a competency-based, outcome-focused pedagogy related to the world of work” (p. 412). These authors explain that democratic professionalism is an emphasis on collaborative and cooperative action between teachers and other key educational stakeholders.

This new way of thinking potentially requires a different type of leadership (Senge, 1990),
one that requires a leader to be capable of building an environment that engages with complex concepts simultaneously, as well as building a clear vision and sharing the journey through effective planning (Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 2003; Schmoker, 2004). This leadership is linked to any discussion about teacher agency, where teachers are inherently involved in discussions about their own learning. Encouraging participants to become actively involved in ongoing learning processes, throughout all stages of their careers, and the passing of knowledge between members, a leader must first understand fully the implications of lifelong learning and engage in it. This section has described some of the current principles which underpin effective PD.

3.7 Professional Development in the NT

This discussion centres on PD and PL in the NT. In Chapter 2, the context for the NT was outlined, but this section uses the foundations from that chapter to layer understandings about PD and PL.

The Australian component of The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) was coordinated through the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). This study correlated the viewpoints of teachers across the country in terms of their perspectives about current PD opportunities and delivery. The 2013 results, which included teachers from the NT, indicate that:

- Teachers and principals in Australia report strong access to and support for teacher development programs and significantly fewer unmet professional development (PD) needs than the TALIS average in every category measured. In Australia, teachers report almost universal access to PD opportunities (97%). Most teachers work in schools where the principals report that teachers have access to induction programs (95%) and mentoring opportunities, either for all teachers (39%), new teachers to the school (39%) or those new to teaching (19%). Most teachers (75%) report not having to bear the cost of their PD and more receive a time allowance (79%). However, only a few (4%) report receiving salary supplements for out-of-hours activities. (para. 2)

- Teachers do not always see the positive impact of such PD in their teaching, with this same TALIS report indicating that in Australia, fewer teachers than the TALIS average report that
their PD experiences had a meaningful impact on their capabilities. This report went on to add:

This is particularly evident in individualising learning, teaching students with special needs, and teaching cross-curricular skills such as problem solving and approaches to developing cross-occupational competencies for future work, where nearly twice as many teachers (between 37% and 42%) report little or no impact from their PD on their teaching, compared with the average for TALIS countries (20% to 23%). However, despite the lower average impact, more than three-quarters of teachers in Australia reported a positive impact in the development areas of subject knowledge and understanding, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical competencies. (para. 3)

The Teacher Registration Board (TRB) of the NT links professional development and professional learning. The TRB makes the observation that ongoing PL is an essential element of raising teaching standards and is supported by planned learning activities and programs to improve professional knowledge, practice and engagements. This Board note that teachers use PD and PL interchangeably. The TRB website states:

Professional development refers to what teachers do and experience that provides the opportunities to enhance professional knowledge, practice and engagement. Professional learning describes the growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes that comes from being engaged in professional development activities, processes and experiences… Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory uses the term “professional learning” to reflect more accurately that it is not just the knowledge gained in a professional development session that makes the most difference to professional practice, but how this knowledge is applied. Powerful professional learning is collaborative, sustained, practical and closely linked to the actual teaching of learning in schools. (para. 1-5)

The NT Department of Education (DET) website states that professional learning takes place on several levels: (1) the individual, (2) the workplace and (3) the organisation. Each of these levels is deemed essential for DET to develop as a learning organisation. It adds that successful learning is embedded in daily practice, is needs based and linked to student/client learning needs, tailored to meet the specific circumstances or contexts of participants and sustained over a period of time.
Professional development plays a significant role in the working lives of teachers in the NT. Most literature indicated that the complexity of teaching and the need to be responsive to demands of the future are acknowledged (Beattie, 1995; Dufour, 2003, 2004; Friedson, 1987; Fullan, 2002; Hall, 2004; Hargreaves, 2003; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Skilbeck & Connell, 2004). Within the Northern Territory (NT), teachers deliver a professional educational service, and are guided by frameworks of professional ethics, responsibilities and standards.

Since the TRB of the NT was established in 2004, it is the responsibility of the Board to liaise with institutions providing initial teacher education and those providing ongoing professional development, to ensure the relevance of those programs to the teaching profession of the NT (Teacher Registration Board of the NT, Annual Report, 2012 - 2013). The report states “The Board liaises with the agency administering the Education Act on strategic priorities for the professional development of teachers in the NT and with employers of teachers in developing the competencies of teachers during all career stages,

NTDE currently lists a number of policies including that of professional development. The current website (which was updated in July 2013 indicates a review date of 2014 in the bottom credits) contains a document about PD policy that reflects its 2005 heritage (as NT DEET). When searching the NT Board of Studies website for information on ‘professional learning’, the link is the same for both websites. In this document, PD is defined as

… opportunities or experiences that promote enhanced skills, knowledge, attributes, attitudes and behaviours of staff to improve service delivery in order to meet present and future organisational objectives and individual career development. Learning is a shared responsibility between the individual and DEET. Individuals have an obligation to take charge of their own development and DEET has an obligation to offer a cultural environment that is conducive to learning and aligned to DEET values: respect, inclusiveness, innovation, professionalism and integrity. (p. 1)

Appreciating that this policy is dated 24.10.2007 (when the title of the department was NT DEET), this policy goes on to state that NT DEET recognises the changing world of work in the 21st century and reiterates much of the transformation of the educational landscape. New approaches and changing workplaces include changes to the way in which service divisions interact with clients, and this will impact on all DEET / DET employees. It states that “the ability of all employees to respond to this changing world and the ways in which we work,
communicate, teach and learn in response to client needs is the key driver of Professional learning in DEET.” The PD Policy plan outlines that this will happen when:

Individuals engage in the performance review process and commit to professional learning that is integrated into everyday work practices and shared with others. Workplace managers and leaders ensure performance review process, professional learning teams and workplace professional learning plans are established and implemented. Workplace managers and leaders plan and resource professional learning requirements within budget allocations, report on and evaluate those activities. (p. 2)

This policy explains that clusters and professional associations coordinate and allocate resources for professional learning, aligning with DEET and school priorities, and that these same clusters and professional associations acquit funds, evaluate and report on professional learning. The policy advises that Corporate Divisions develop, deliver and provide access to professional learning aligned with DEET priorities through consultation with workplaces; ensuring professional learning is addressing individual, workplace and systemic needs. They have a further function in evaluating professional learning activities for impact and effectiveness and reporting on the achievement of professional learning priorities.

The six key principles underpinning that professional learning includes a systems approach, learning aligned to business (delivery of client services or school and cluster performance goals) and leadership of learning where “a focus on leadership at all levels is essential to ensure the changing needs of the Territory are met (p. 2). The guiding principles include the concept of appropriate learning opportunities linked to the school-based work of teachers. The daily work of all DEET employees includes “a commitment to lifelong learning practices to build shared knowledge and meet the needs of students or clients” (p. 2). Professional learning is “data-driven, measured and supported by evidence. It is enriched by current research, ideas and knowledge about pedagogy and adult learning. The link between learning and performance is explicit” (p. 2). The fifth principle is collaborative learning (based around collaborative problem-solving) and an individual commitment to learning (where professional learning is the individual and collective responsibility of the staff member, the workplace and DEET) as articulated through performance review processes.
From the individual perspective, this means that individuals engage in performance reviews in an active way, to develop an individual learning plan aligned to the DEET and workplace strategic priorities, and commit to professional learning that is integrated and applied in everyday work. Additionally individuals agree to the sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience in the workplace / cluster. From the workplace perspective, workplaces support a professional learning team to plan those experiences in alignment with DEET priorities and with school and cluster plans. Workplaces ensure the Performance Enhancement and Workplace Professional Learning Plans are undertaken and implemented within budget allocations and according to the principles in the policy document. Lastly, workplaces report and evaluate professional learning. There are more policy points which pertain to clusters, professional associations, the People and Learning Division and the Service Divisions and Professional Learning Providers.

3.8 Models of Professional Development and Professional Learning

This section encapsulates some of the forms and models of professional development and professional learning. While there is that symbiotic relationship between PD and PL, the differences and similarities in perspective have been described earlier in this chapter, key characteristics were ascribed to each, with the relationship implying the construction of knowledge, skills and understandings.

The complexity of the field has been described, but there are a plethora of models which give clarity and credence to various aspects of learning by and with teachers. Each of the models selected below has impacted on my research questions. This section documents attempts by other researchers to articulate the complexity of processes that are embedded within the acquisition, development and implementation of professional knowledge.

These models have been purposely chosen because of their direct links to particular aspects of the purpose of my research, as outlined in Chapter 1, and linked directly to my research questions as well as the interview questions outlined in Chapter 5 as part of my Conceptual Framework, and in Chapter 6, as part of the inquiry process.

1. The extent, range and calibre of professional development and learning experiences of practising classroom teachers, as described by them in narratives, leads to a discussion
about common themes, effective teachers and quality PD and PL.

2. The common categories or themes embedded in the narratives of research participants about their professional learning lead to research and models of professional learning and engagement.

The Models that resonated with a discussion about the qualities, characteristics and essential elements of any PD program included:

- Day (1999): Interactive Professional Development
- Bredeson (2003): Architecture of PD
- Diaz-Maggioli (2004): Teacher’s Choice Framework
- Justi & Van Driel (2005): Craft, Expert and Interactive PD
- Borko (2009): Professional Development System
- Evans (2011): Professionalism and PD

3. The significance and impact of the professional learning to classroom teachers (teacher beliefs, perceptions and values leads to models where change, growth and development occur.

These Models resonate with this research aim and are included in this research study as a comparison of their strengths and inclusion in the words of my research participants. These models include:

- Guskey (1986: Model of Teacher Change
- Clarke & Hollingsworth (2002): Interconnected Model of Professional Growth
- Leberman et al. (2004): Transfer of Learning

These models provided an explanation, starting with Guskey in 1986, about the pragmatic realities of life for practicing teachers, against the theoretical need to enhance learning in relevant and meaningful ways. While there are other models that attempt to give a description of the processes, protocols and embedded factors that make up quality professional development, it does not necessarily mean that an absence means that the PD is less than stellar. Each model merely highlights the contextualized nature of quality PD and to a certain extent the focus of the researcher.

Each model shows that for that particular researcher, at that particular time, against the backdrop of the changing educational landscape, these were critical factors which needed to
be considered in the implementation of PD programs for and with teachers. There is that
sense of chronology, however; from the simplistic model of Guskey (1986) to the more
complex factors articulated by Evans (2011). There is a resonance to their times in the
development of key understandings.

This sentiment cannot be stressed sufficiently. These selected models all have links to PD and
PL. These models all play a role in describing aspects of the complexity of PD and PL. This
is logical as each researcher focused on different aspects of PD and PL, and my focus in this
inquiry is on what teachers believe and say about their PD and PL experiences. The question
remains whether any of the participant teachers also subscribe to any of these views and in
Chapter 7 I compare and contrast the words of teachers to these models. If a teacher is a
strong subscriber to a particular way of looking at PD and PL, this may be an underlying
foundation for their comments about their PD and PL experiences.

Brief descriptions of each of these models in included in the following sections, with a view
to informing a comparison to my research participants and their views about PD and PL. This
is not to diminish their worth or validity but to examine where the thinking of the research
participants lies. If one particular model dominates the discussion, then this model is likely to
influence my description and definition of PD and PL, according to the words of participants.
For that reason, at the end of this section, there is a table, with key factors of each model
outlined, and with their relevant strengths and limitations. In Chapter 7, the views of teachers
are linked with particular models, based on their transcripts and their views about PD and PL.

3.8.1 Guskey (1986): Model of Teacher Change

Guskey (1986) initially proposed a four-step model of teacher change and spoke of it further
in Guskey (2002). This is a linear model of professional learning with implications for
change within a teacher’s repertoire of classroom strategies and practices but was not
explicitly a model of professional development. Changes in student outcomes come only after
intensive engagement by the teacher in trials. Guskey (1986) viewed change as a process
requiring time and study, with the professional development as the medium or catalyst for
promoting and supporting those changes. Guskey’s model is outlined below, as a method of
explaining the processes of change within schools. At its heart lies the optimistic concept that
professional development is the catalyst for change, most obviously in the domain of classroom practice.

While reinforcing the role of teachers in changed practices, Guskey’s model is a very linear model and implies a ‘lock-step’ approach to professional development. There is little opportunity to reflect on changes to beliefs and attitudes as an ongoing process, nor to begin the process in a dynamic way, if necessary, as part of a more dynamic action research model. There is a lot of implied knowledge within each of those circles for a neophyte school leader to pick up this model and run with it.

Where processes of change are complex, non-sequential and dependent upon environment and circumstances, there may be more to think in terms of the variables affecting professional growth and development. This is a neat model and clearly articulates the links that Guskey deems essential, at an intrinsic level, to enact a transfer of learning to the classroom.

Guskey (2000) outlined a comprehensive listing of different methods of teacher professional development in the following four years, ranging from training, observation, curriculum development, study groups, inquiry/action research, individually guided activities and mentoring, each with its own set of characteristics, benefits and limitations.

Listed below is a table which starts the comparison of the learning models with the strengths and limitations of each model. While Guskey’s model included key characteristics of effective PD, and engagement of the teacher, the complexity of factors affecting quality PL was not included. This model was initially developed in 1986 when discussions about the current evolution of PD and PL were based around different needs in schools. Each model is added to this table.

Table 3.2: Guskey (1986) Model of Teacher Change
This model is focused on the processes involved in the transfer of learning. It is a very limiting approach without the myriad of factors that influence effective PD and PL. It outlines teacher change and the essential processes involved in triggering that change. While Guskey (1986) used this as a starting point, it is a very simplistic model of a complicated process.

3.8.2 Day (1999): Interactive Elements of Professional Development

Both Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) and Day (1999) acknowledge that factors such as the culture of the school and ideology are part of the change environment but Day expands this concept. In this iteration of his thinking, links between key elements, such as life history and career plans which feed into professional learning. Day (1999) discusses the biography of individual learners, and teachers being given credit for their life skills. Professional learning cultures of the school impact on learning attitudes, values, preferences and learning practices but so too do external influences and stakeholders, government agencies and media. Professional learning also impacts on learning attitudes, values, preferences and teaching practices.

Leadership is an element in this view of PD and PL. Support from school leadership, other colleagues and other agencies, as well as those learning attitudes, values, preferences and teaching practices impact on quality professional learning activities. Combine all of these factors and the impact on the effectiveness of learning.
In exploring Day’s criteria, it is obvious that some of these elements refer to the individual teacher, while others refer to the professional context wherein a teacher works. The personal factors feed into that perception of quality, whereas the school factors include discussions about school leadership and external forces. The following is my version of Day’s Interactive elements where the individual teacher is acknowledged by the double lines around significant elements which impact on that teacher. Other aspects are in a box with a single line. This picture is deceptive, however. This implies an almost cause-effect relationship when reality is that many of these elements are interacting simultaneously.

The terms discussed in Day’s model are common to most teachers. The acknowledgement of existing skills, the extent and range of professional learning in the past permeate the career plans of the future. These combined factors play a role, along with the surrounding professional learning culture of the school, and the external influences which govern the direction of schools, into creating learning attitudes, values, preferences and ultimately into effective teaching and learning classroom practices.
Supportive leadership is important, but so is collegial support from colleagues and other agencies. Timely, meaningful, appropriate and quality PD contributes to the picture of effective PD within a school context. The surrounding and supportive learning culture of the school will vary, as will perceptions of the importance or contribution of the PD to the school vision and ethos.

The interactivity as described by Day is summarised in the table below.

Table 3.3: Day (1999) Interactive Elements of Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Strengths and Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD factors and characteristics</td>
<td>A realistic model, with pragmatic approaches to the concept of the ‘life history’ with individual elements of each teacher linked to the quality of the PD, as well as the school, leadership and external factors such as stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of PD</td>
<td>Concrete examples overlap; a complex model which, once started as a mind map, showed extensive potential but became very complicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students / stakeholders</td>
<td>Limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change / context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools who have a high value on ongoing learning by all members of the school community will affect participants in a different way than those schools who view learning as a hurdle or challenge, from either a theoretical or practical perspective. Day (1999) adds to this explanation and defines professional development in the following way:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and
extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching, and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (p. 4). This interactive model widens the definition of professional development to include professional learning, with that sense of ongoing direct and indirect benefits over time. Indicating that this is a process, rather than a finite journey, Day alludes to emotional intelligence, further reflected and expanded in Evans (2011). The following table gives a précis of this model including its strengths and limitations. The reference to professional learning culture of the school is an interesting one which directly affects the quality of learning within different schools. The references to the biography of teachers suggest the level of individualised learning of PL. This model promotes quality PD and refers to many of the characteristics of effective professional learning. It refers to the complexity of factors which impact on not just the delivery of effective PD, but also the links through to effective teaching. This model refers to the paths in acknowledgement that different factors influence teachers at different stages. While students are not explicitly stated, the purpose of this model was not necessarily to discuss the improvement of student outcomes, but has more of a focus on the teacher, teaching and schools in the PD debate. The inclusion of life events and career plans includes these influences in quality PD, and is a reminder of their importance for improving the quality of such PD. This one model links to Guskey (1986) in terms of the quality PD on offer, one component of Guskey’s model.

3.8.3 Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002): Interconnected Model of Professional Growth

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) described the Interconnected Model of Professional Growth (IMOPG). This is a model that allows for the complex nature of change within the education workplace and provides a framework for analytic processes. These authors acknowledge the reflective processes by which teachers grow professionally and the interactive nature of the conditions that support and promote that growth. Their model identifies the reflective and enabling processes whereby change in one domain can be tracked through to change in another. It gives detail to a complicated process where external factors play a significant role in how professional growth occurs. It acknowledges the possibility of knowledge, beliefs and
attitudes being changed through the interconnected processes which occur.

There are strong links between Guskey’s (1986) Model and the IMOPG, in that there is a meeting of concepts between them such as change in attitudes and beliefs. For example, changes in teacher practice as identified by Guskey (1986) sit comfortably within the bounds of professional experimentation and the Domain of Practice (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002). Changes to student learning outcomes (Guskey 1986) link to salient outcomes (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002) and teacher knowledge or information, beliefs and attitudes are similar in both models. Change in one domain is translated into change in another domain through the mediating processes of either reflection (red dotted arrow) or enactment (blue arrow).

![Interconnected Model of Professional Growth](image)

**Figure 3.5:** Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) Interconnected Model of Professional Growth

Enactment refers specifically to the translation of a belief or pedagogical model into action. Enactment, the process of engaging action, or translating processes to be action, is different from acting and action. The process of acting represents something a teacher knows, believes or has experienced and where conscious thought is required to experiment and trial new strategies or understandings in either content or pedagogy.
These authors acknowledge the reflective processes by which teachers grow professionally and the interactive nature of the conditions that support and promote that growth. These authors further explain that the pathways between elements and domains can result in a growth network or a change sequence. The model acknowledges the possibility of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes being changed through the interconnected processes which occur. This model attempts to explain the interrelationships between elements that play a direct part in professional growth, with direct referral to a change in outcomes within the domain of consequence.

The key elements of this model are summarized below.

Table 3.4: Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) Interconnected Model of Professional Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Strengths and Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD factors and characteristics</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Facilitation of PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students / stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) Interconnected Model of Professional Growth: Personal, external and practice domains linked to the domain of consequence. Lesser emphasis on the facilitation of PD but mention of the salient outcomes and external sources of information and stimuli. Links to Day’s Interactive Elements of Professional Development through a detailing of the multiple factors which impact PD, its delivery and effectiveness.</td>
<td>Links to the complexity and interactivity of PD, with acknowledgement of the consequence of reflection and enactment; an active learning approach with links to personal practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD √</td>
<td>T √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model was very complex but the interactivity is acknowledged. The PD and PL were not addressed specifically except in the salient outcomes that could be achieved. However, there is a change environment along with one of consequences, and if interpolated from that, one of the mechanisms for that change would be PD and PL. The predominant strength in this model is that it gives a graphic image of the interconnected nature of professional learning and growth.
Bredeson (2003) defined his model of professional development against an architectural metaphor. He states that professional development is a human endeavour, much like architecture, one that brings the three components of beauty, structure and function together. He refers directly to the creation of an architecturally well-designed and well-built frame that supports the needs of the people engaging in it. This is linked to my integrated definition, where the emphasis on people and their learning, and the embedded characteristics of professional development such as the beauty of it, the function or client needs, interests and priorities and the structure which includes the design, delivery and content of the learning.

Figure 3.10 shows Bredeson’s architectural model of professional development. He states that professional development is designed to meet the needs of both educators and their students, helping them to learn and grow, and for teachers to strengthen and improve their teaching practice.

**Figure 3.6: Bredeson (2003) Architecture of Professional Development**

The function of professional development is to improve the working lives of educators, facilitate organisational changes and support school improvements and reforms. It is a function of the professional development to enhance and contribute to the capacity building of schools, and to develop the quality of teaching and administration. The overarching view of PD is as an agent of change, an agent of transformation and an agent to improve outcomes for students.

Structure links to function, and refers to the elements of design, delivery and content of learning opportunities, the concrete and visible dimensions of the professional development. The example is given of a situation where planned and implemented staff development activities are more the result of convenience and organisational expediency rather than the
critical needs and interests of staff. This may result in fragmented professional development that might not necessarily accomplish key educational aims.

Beauty comes from the artistic arrangement and use of materials and systems to create learning spaces that meet the needs of teachers and administrators and change them as people and professionals (linking directly to function). The phrase learning space does not necessarily refer to the physical space or place, but the active thinking and reflection that promote learning and create new ways or designs for professional learning. This is not a superficial aspect of professional development, but a function that refers intrinsically to the in-depth and higher-order thinking that accompanies genuine, determined and committed professional learning. Hughes (1991) refers to professional development as a process of growth in competence and maturity, through which teachers add range, depth and quality to the performance of their professional tasks.

Bredeson outlines the key design themes that underpin his architectural concept of professional development. His first theme is that professional development is about learning and is work. Professional expertise is a journey, not an end point or credential. This journey provides many opportunities for ongoing learning, with student-centred learning, PD and organisational mission all related. The most important factor is that PD is about people, not programs.

Against those design principles, Bredeson explains that professional development is a combination of learning opportunities, critical and reflexive engagement and improved practice. He continued the architectural metaphor by explaining about the deep, wide footings that must be created to hold a substantial structure. This concept equates to the valuing of learning by educators to ensure its ongoing importance in quality teaching and learning programs.

The other valuable aspect of Bredeson’s work was this researcher’s classification of professional development into various categories of PD such as:

PD as work:

Bredeson classified this PD as essential to work, collaborative with school purpose, developmentally appropriate and linked to student-school-teacher priorities, embedded in
daily work, centred in expertise and capacity-building and focused on enhancing collective professional knowledge and capacity.

PD in work:
This PD includes the variety of learning opportunities embedded within daily work, individual learning, growth and development linked to organisational purpose, communities of practice and collective capacity.

PD at work:
Bredeson classified this type of PD to include workshops, training, meetings, on-site classes, teacher networks, distance learning, electronic connections and in-school exchanges.

PD outside of work:
This is an extensive list which includes off-site learning activities that are not a part of ordinary work routines or responsibilities by teachers or principals. Included in this category by Bredeson are such activities as conventions, conferences and workshops, exchanges and site visits, sabbatical leave or study tours, retreats, special training sessions, university courses or distance education, virtual professional networks, professional association or governing body meetings or presentations, external review panels, task forces, summer programs or institutes, funded research projects or collaborative research with universities, participation in union activities, self-study and any combination of one or more of these activities.

PD beyond work:
Bredeson viewed that these PD opportunities encompass experiences and learning opportunities away from school and not directly related to work that feed the heart, mind, soul and passions of teachers and principals.

This pragmatic model provided initial excitement for me personally, in that it was possible to plot the types of PD of each research participant against this model. It was inclusive in that it is hard to think of a PD scenario that is not covered as work, in work, at work, outside of work or beyond work. Similarly, beauty, structure and function appealed to me as a simplistic benchmark for quality PD facilitation, one that would be translated easily to neophyte PD presenters and facilitators for quality of presentation. By including key considerations of beauty, function and structure in every PD and PL presentation, this model would provide a strong framework for PD facilitators. The beauty of professional development, that sense of
excitement when pathways become clear, that sense of satisfaction when PD does its job and spurs active classroom changes, is one of the attractions of this model. It was difficult to think of this model in a deficit way; due to its encompassing nature, it showed the extent and range of PD possibilities much more explicitly than implied in other models.

The limitation of this approach is the use of the architectural metaphor, one that may require a degree of building or renovation knowledge to visualise professional development adequately in such a three-dimensional way. While it made mention of the structural soundness of the footings, the concept of quality, or capacity building were more difficult concepts to visualise against this metaphor. Listed below is the summary of this PD.

Table 3.5: Bredeson (2003) Architecture of Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Strengths and Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD factors and characteristics</td>
<td>Architectural of PD: PD fulfilling needs of teachers and students through beauty (development of learning spaces), structure (design, delivery and content) and function (working lives of teachers, school organisation and improvements). PD as work, in work, at work, outside of work and beyond work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>F Implied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students / stakeholders</td>
<td>S/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change / context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>A beautiful interpretation of the complexity of PD delivery; a catalyst for my thinking about the extent and range of PD within school contexts including the sense of teacher enlightenment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>Knowledge of architecture / building metaphor is necessary. Less emphasis on the facilitation of the PD and its influence on effective change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While delving into this model, it was an easy one to adapt to a variety of purposes, one of its strengths. It as easy to adapt to include a number of factors which influenced PD planning and delivery.
3.8.5 Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2004): Model of Transfer of Learning

A generic transfer of learning model explains the preferred conditions for any transfer of learning but while this model (Leberman, McDonald and Doyle, 2004) quite specifically outlines the process involving the educational process through to the desired outcomes through a series of personal development actions and job specific actions.

Figure 3.7: Leberman, McDonald & Doyle (2004) Model of Transfer of Learning (p. 67)

With reference to this study, this model has a focus on the educational process in the teaching and learning context, whereas other models focus on different aspects of the teaching and learning cycle. This has a focus on personal development with organizational support, which feeds into the desired outcomes and the implied transfer of learning. The importance of the teaching methodology and the selection of appropriate learning activities are emphasised. As with other models, these processes may occur simultaneously, such as PD and personal development occurring naturally.

Leberman et al. (2004) refer specifically to the cultural, social, economic and political environments in which teachers operate and that these influence the various elements of the model. The three-dimensional nature of these elements is alluded to, with the concept of organisational support for personal development as well as job-specific outcomes.
The authors feel that this model integrates pertinent elements embedded within transfer of learning to the wider theoretical debate. With a focus on the educational contexts, again, this model specifically alludes to the move to the workplace from school, but similarly teachers move from an educational context to a workplace context. This model further describes how that movement of learning takes place.

The key elements of this model are summarized below.

Table 3.6: Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2004) Model of Transfer of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Strengths and Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD factors</td>
<td>The emphasis on personal learning as a critical factor which leads to educational processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Facilitation of PD</td>
<td>A generic view of learning, from desired outcomes through to personal development and educational processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students / stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change / context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2004)</td>
<td>Model of Transfer of Learning for adult learners from classroom to workplace: the cultural, social, economic and political environments in which they operate and that these influences may be supportive or detracting on the various elements of the model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model was used in planning some professional development sessions (by me) and was a good one to include items such as personal learning activities. This is a very pragmatic model in that each element plays a role in planning a PD session that included all of the key elements, including organisational support.

3.8.6 Diaz-Maggioli (2004): The Teacher’s Choice Framework

Diaz-Maggioli (2004), in describing the Teacher’s Choice Framework, acknowledges that teachers are talented individuals with much interest, experience and knowledge about interacting with students. Each teacher differs not only in their professional knowledge and understandings but that they are essentially a pragmatic group of people whose ongoing development is linked to the context in which they work. This author notes that in order for teachers to take ownership of their PD, active participation is required along with
individualising PD to suit their needs. The comment is made that mandatory PD offered only for administration and convenience is of little value to teachers.

Diaz-Maggioli notes key factors for professional development planners. Teachers are talented, devoted, experienced individuals who have gained enormous experience by interacting with students but they differ from one another in their theoretical and professional knowledge and their stages of career. They fulfil different functions within schools, as educators, administrators, counsellors and resource for parents and the community. Teachers need to be actively engaged in the development of their own ongoing professional development based on their needs and motivations, but it should involve the whole school community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Updated Knowledge</th>
<th>Lack of Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong>: teachers possess up to date knowledge and can help other teachers through mentoring, coaching and on-site training. They engage in feedback and development.</td>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong>: teachers possess updated knowledge but don’t know that they do. They are involved in mirroring and collaborative coaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3</strong>: teachers are aware of their developmental needs in specific areas. They engage in action research, critical development teams and maintaining dialogue journals.</td>
<td><strong>Level 4</strong>: teachers are unaware of their need to explain knowledge in certain areas. They engage in in-house workshops, mentoring and expert coaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.8: Diaz-Maggioli (2004) The Teacher’s Choice Framework

The Teacher’s Choice Framework refers to technical awareness where reflection is on the classroom procedures or teaching methods. Personal awareness is highlighted where reflection is about how classroom activities relate to life outside of work. A problematic awareness refers to reflection about how to problem-solve professionally while critical awareness is that reflective process about established thoughts, feelings or actions that have been called into question. The Teacher’s Choice Model helps teachers to make decisions on their PD by allowing them to reflect on practice.
While this model suggests appropriate PD for each level of awareness, this model could become unwieldy if trying to make it a multi-dimensional model incorporating the four areas above and/or involving a staff of 80 in deliberations about effective PD and PL rubric, in today’s accountability-focused professional world would be useful for teachers exploring their own feelings and beliefs about a professional development experience, something that has been lacking in all of the models to date.

The summary of this model is summarised below.

Table 3.8: Diaz-Maggioli (2004) The Teacher’s Choice Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Strengths and Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD factors and characteristics</td>
<td>Teacher's Choice Framework, a key framework for professional development planners. References to the technical / pedagogical awareness of teachers, personal awareness, problematic awareness (how to solve professional problems) and critical awareness / reflection on established thoughts, feelings and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Facilitation of PD</td>
<td>Links between pragmatic pedagogy through to action strategies to reflect and build on existing skills and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students / stakeholders</td>
<td>While effective facilitation is implied, this is not about the PD implementation itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change / context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model is more about the process of engaging in PD and assessing their PD / PL needs. This is a link between planning and implementation of a PD Plan.

3.8.7 Justi and van Driel (2005): Craft, Expert and Interactive Models of PD

Justi and Van Driel (2005) describe three main models of professional development, the model of PD from a craft perspective, advocating that teachers develop as a direct result of becoming more experienced teachers, with knowledge emerging from classroom experiences. While teaching may be deemed a craft, it may be problematic at a time when issues of professionalism are being debated.
This model is important as it refers to the various stages of a teacher’s professional life, and the changes embedded at various stages of expertise, skill acquisition and attitude to ongoing learning. The expert model is focused on teachers being taught what to do and how to do it by perceived experts, and changes to teachers’ knowledge and practice being deemed as a result of the training, usually measured at the end of the training session. This relates well to Borko’s model, which looks at those multiple dimensions of complexity in PD delivery, but does not necessarily give full credence to the teachers’ active role in learning, the building up or layering of new knowledge, with reference to older knowledge.

Interactive models of professional development refer to the collaborative processes of learning; this is relevant in that increasingly current models of PD delivery are dependent upon that concept of collaboration and cooperation and in providing opportunities for teachers to work together to increase their knowledge and skills over time, as opposed to single PD sessions where the long-term effects may be very short-term.

This model is summarised below.

Table 3.8: Justi and Van Driel (2005) Craft, Expert and Interactive Models of PD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>PD factors and characteristics</th>
<th>Teacher Facilitation of PD</th>
<th>Students / stakeholders</th>
<th>Change / context</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justi and Van Driel (2005)</td>
<td>PD ✓</td>
<td>T ✓</td>
<td>F ✓</td>
<td>S/S Implied</td>
<td>C/C Implied</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of professional aspects of a teacher’s life in the classroom / collective learning and its application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative processes of PD implementation</td>
<td>Craft of teaching</td>
<td>Expert Model of delivery / training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inclusion of information about the PD /PL is of value in that it creates discussion about the anatomy of the PD session itself. There is a craft perspective which relates to Bredeson’s
(2003) model which includes beauty of the PD session. From a facilitator approach, this gives a structure to PD presentations.

3.7.8 Borko (2009): Professional Development System

Borko (2009), in outlining the situation and providing examples from the USA, views that there are three key elements of any professional development program, and the PD system outlined is within a specific context. According to this author, the key elements of any PD program include (1) facilitators of the PD, (2) the PD program itself and (3) teachers as learners, all contained within a learning context. These three elements combine in different ways to provide relationships which, according to Borko, have delineated research into the three phases below, all leading to quality professional development with a view to enhancing the skills of teachers and the outcomes of students.

Figure 3.9: Borko (2009) Professional Development System

This author outlines much of the research into professional development as being one of three phases. Phase 1 is where there is extensive proof of effective PD development and is further described below. Phase 2 is well specified PD programs with Phase 3 characterised as multiple effective PD programs. Phase 1 is all of the research activities that focus on an individual professional development program at a single site. Typically, this is a simple...
relationship between the teachers as learners and the professional development program. The goal is to create an “existence proof”, that is, to provide evidence that a PD program can have a positive effect on teacher learning. The focus may be on enhancing teacher knowledge or improving teacher practices through intensive PD.

Borko (2009) makes the point that teachers change as a result of their PD and PL experiences and engagement. This allows PD to be examined by a collaborative and supportive learning community. Borko (2009) alludes to the research that contends that records of practice are strong motivators. Within Australia, there are demands for the recording of PD experiences and events. This model examines the teacher as learner, the group dynamics and the context for learning.

Phase 2 is a single professional development program with more than one facilitator at more than one site. This phase examines the interactions between the facilitator/s, the PD program and teachers as learners. The central goal is to determine whether a professional development program can be repeated with integrity in different settings and by different PD providers. In order to fit into these criteria, Borko (2009) observes that a PD program must be well-defined and clearly specified. This phase includes criteria such as clearly defined academic tasks and instructional materials, descriptions of teaching and student outcome measures, with development, field-testing and revision. Phase 3 focusses on the comparison between multiple PD programs enacted at multiple sites, with the relationships between the facilitator/s, teachers as learners, the PD program and the context itself. The goal at this level is to provide comparative information about implementation, the effects and resource requirements of well-defined PD programs.

There are few research studies that examine the delivery PD and PL (Borko, 2009). This is a model where the extent and range of the PD itself is examined against other criteria such as the teacher as learner and various contexts for learning. The consideration of PD programs using near-vision and distance vision is essential to policy decisions and resource allocations and yet Borko comments that few, if any research studies exist at this level. Borko (2009) focuses on the PD itself, calibrating the qualities that researchers have summarised as key elements in effective PD. Research with a focus on the facilitator and PD program were excluded, as were those where a single PD event was evident. The links between single workshop or PD sessions in comparison to the multiple, systemic-offered sessions, with the
different characteristics of each is included in this model. Additionally, there is an inclusion of the facilitator as having an influence on the success or quality of the PD session or sessions, in a range of contexts.

The overview of this model of PD delivery is included below, with its strengths and limitations.

Table 3.9: Borko (2009) Professional Development System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Strengths and Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD factors and characteristics</td>
<td>One of few studies which discussed the role of the facilitator as an element of integrity and an agent of possible change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of PD</td>
<td>Limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students / stakeholders</td>
<td>While student improvement was implied, this model focused more on the teacher and system description s for effective PD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change / context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borko (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1: links between PD and teachers (single site)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2: Multiple facilitators at multiple sites with multiple teachers: emphasis on integrity of PD delivery in various scenarios.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple PD programs enacted at multiple sites, with the relationships between the facilitator/s, teachers as learners, the PD program and the context itself (students implied)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was a model of PD delivery and implementation which includes the facilitator in the delivery models for PD / PL. While this research study does not necessarily examine the role of the facilitator, the influence that the facilitator can have in creating quality PD events and experiences is significant.

3.8.9 Evans (2011): Professionalism and PD

While Evans (2011) has a focus on professionalism, this includes professional development. This author argues that the study of the profession and professionalism is an evolving one,
and there is a relationship between a study of the constituents of a profession, and its professionalism. This in turn leads to a discussion of trust, values, ethics, control and the nature of the profession. I cannot see that Evans has named her model incorporating behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual change, but she argues the necessity of each in the work of teachers, including their development in a professional sense. Evans (2011) has an assumption change is good, and that optimistically these aligned factors will result in genuine change and sustaining of a model of professional life for teachers. She delineates the behavioural development as one of three essential elements in PD / PL. This element includes factors relating to process and processual changes, procedural change, productive change and competential change. As schools investigate factors which might result in changed teaching practices, this is an important inclusion.

This model is summarised below.

Table 3.10: Evans (2011) Professionalism and PD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description, Processes and Factors</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Strengths and Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD factors</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Facilitation of PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and characteristics</td>
<td>T √</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evans (2011)</td>
<td>Behvioural change</td>
<td>Attitudinal and intellectual change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The attitudinal development in PD refers to the perceptual change, evaluative change and motivational change, with reference to the teacher and classroom. It is the intellectual development, with its allied epistemological change, rationalistic change, comprehensive change and analytical change which give teachers credit for being change-agents within their schools. This is something often not included in other models.

This is a very holistic model which aims high in terms of factors that should be intrinsically included in quality PD and PL. If teachers are expected to be agents of
change, it is these sorts of challenges to their thinking and reflection which must be included in PD. This level of analysis is likely to pay dividends in terms of schools and teachers examining their PD experiences for this level of integrated engagement. This model has a focus on the teacher, with the needs of students not directly addressed. However, from the perspective of adding intellectual rigour to PD models, this one describes a greater range of applicable skills to consider in any PD and PL plan.

3.9 Identifying Gaps in the PD Literature

The current wave of school reform has been fundamentally engaged in restructuring schools and professionalizing teaching (Richardson & Lidstone, 2001). While everyone has the capacity to learn, the structures in which they function and work are often not conducive to reflection and engagement (Smith, 2001), and this is particularly relevant to teachers and their full timetables. While the culture for teaching has changed, some of the existing structures of traditional education are taking longer to reflect societal demands for differing styles of education. Hierarchies of leadership, including principals and senior leadership teams reflect academic and educational roots. These hierarchies might not necessarily reflect the emerging need for trained, qualified, entrepreneurial managers and others in organizations with the skills necessary to promote genuine adult learning within their educational settings.

While there are some statistics outlining the NT context, and the stories of the participating teachers contribute to that picture, this is necessarily a partial viewpoint about professional development in the NT.

There are increasing demands for teachers to move beyond the boundaries of their classrooms and schools, not just physically, but to include societal and systemic initiatives in what many perceive as an overcrowded curriculum (Australian Primary Principals Association, 2014: Brennan, 2011). Curriculum is no longer the sole domain of the educational jurisdictions, with diversity and more flexible learning pathways being demanded to cater for individual student needs (Jasman, 2001). Teachers can no longer work as if each class is a homogeneous group who progress through a program of study as a cohort. The reality of life in the classroom is that there are limited opportunities for teachers to reflect and this difference and diversity within each class presents real challenges to teachers. PD programs with limited opportunities for individuals are unlikely to be implemented successfully in every classroom.

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 109
The reality is that there is limited research involving NT teachers about their PD and PL and the factors that they consider to be critical in their inclusion in the PD process. While teachers are no longer the sole arbiters of what is counted as valued knowledge, this is an important opportunity for teachers to ensure their voices are heard. Teachers voicing the extent, range and scope of their professional learning, and what they value most about it, may raise some issues about best practice professional learning in this time of educational change and fiscal accountability. My research questions have been framed and established to address these perceived gaps in the literature.

Lastly, there is an acknowledgement that educators are diverse and individual, learners who require differing approaches to develop higher-order thinking skills. Unfortunately, much professional development, tailored to fit within time constraints within the school or limited times at the end of a busy work day, does not often offer teachers much respect in their learning. It is for that reason that I responded to individual teachers’ requests for interviews to be conducted in disparate ways.

3.10 Summary

This chapter explained the development of the professional development agenda in Australia over the past fifty years, but had a focus on PD for teachers in a changing environment. The links between professional development and professional learning were explored in the literature review, but models with links to PD and PL were outlined and described. These models will emerge again in Chapter 7 where the views of the practising teachers are compared to them. The limitations in the literature, particularly the paucity with regards to the NT context and PD were described.

The next chapter examines narrative inquiry, as both a general methodology as well as a guiding principle for this research study where the stories of the participating teachers are analysed against the three key questions outlined in Chapter 1.
This photo portrays Darwin Harbour on a cloudy wet season afternoon. The tide, which can vary from .36 of a metre up to 7 and 8 metre tides, was going out. This photo was taken only 8 minutes from Darwin CBD. There are no heavy industries that can affect the clarity of the water in Darwin.

![Photo: N Batenburg](image)

Figure 3.10: Low Tide Darwin Harbour: Wet Season

Photo: N Batenburg
As researchers, we come to each new inquiry field living our stories. Our participants also enter the inquiry field in the midst of living their stories. Their lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue. Furthermore, the places in which they live and work, their classrooms, their schools and their communities are also in the midst when we researchers arrive. Their institutions and their communities, their landscapes in the broadest sense, are also in the midst of their stories. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 63)

A narrative… A story, a narration, a tale, anecdotes at this point of time, a message that tells and describes the particulars of people, and words that paint pictures of people, places and events presented in a variety of ways. An inquiry… A systematic investigation of the area of interest, a search for knowledge, questions, interrogations, analysis. Put those two concepts together and there is the basis for formulating a systematic narrative telling and retelling of its own, linking known knowledge with new knowledge.

4.1 Telling the Narrative Tale

Qualitative research offers the possibility of being able to make broad generalisations and theories about the world or social phenomena in a specified context. The key characteristics of qualitative research link genuinely with narrative inquiry; coping with multiple realities, analyses of social phenomena, engaged discussion of values and research within the field. Qualitative researchers and narrative inquirers embrace the ontology of multiple realities (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007). When studying individuals and the multiple meanings that they attribute to a social or human problem, the aim of both qualitative and narrative research is to collect data in a naturalistic setting, sensitive to people and places, and to engage in inductive data analysis that establishes patterns or themes. Multiple sources of information and perspectives are often taken from the actual words of individuals (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2007; Creswell, 2007).

Smith (2007) notes the myriad of views with regards to various researchers and their approaches. While narratives are important in the process of constructing self and identity through the telling and retelling of their personal stories (their storied lives), narratives are effective in providing the impetus to social and individual transformation. This author notes
that “the context, setting, audience, the particular situated purpose of the story, the “tellability” or ability to tell that story and the narrative resources available to tellers frame what might be said, how it can be narrated” (p. 391). The critical importance of that quote is that it links directly to my conceptual framework which is outlined in detail in Chapter 5. I use professional agency and social constructivism to frame why and how teachers are learning. I look at the specific developmental influences and evolution of PD and PL to explain what teachers are learning. I examine narratives in narrative inquiry to describe and frame the experiences of those teachers in reflective telling and re-telling of their stories.

Smith (2008) notes that narrative is distinguished from other traditional social scientific perspectives but notes the influences of various social sciences in discussing the interactionism embedded within narrative inquiry, depending on theoretical stance. Smith comments that narrative is a dialogic process and more discussion may be essential to frame and define more precisely what narrative inquiry can mean without being prescriptive. This author refers to the woven nature of narrative in that it is embedded in life experiences and is the mechanism whereby meaning is both explicit and articulated.

This section defines and situates narrative inquiry as a valid interpretive methodology with explicit links to the concept of teaching. Narrative inquiry can be viewed as an interpretive and reflexive activity (Webster & Mertova, 2007), something well suited to this type of study. The turn to narrative inquiry as a valid methodology is discussed, and the key concepts at the core of narrative inquiry pave the way for the teachers’ stories at the heart of this research. Conle (2001) refers to the concept that narrative inquiry, as well as being a method of inquiry, is a means to personal, professional development. Smith (2007) cautions that we need to make choices about narrative inquiry in a “reflective, informed, principled, strategic and responsible manner” (p. 392).

This section outlines the reflections underpinning my choice of narrative inquiry for this research study and the manner in which narrative inquiry is used. This is further outlined in my Conceptual Framework, as described in Chapter 5. While this chapter extensively outlines what narrative inquiry ‘is’, it narrates the development and evolution of this form of inquiry and the key characteristics that intersect so significantly and justify its selection as the methodology for my particular research study.
4.2 Narrative Inquiry: An Overview

People are always tellers of tales. They live surrounded by their stories and the stories of others. They are everything that happens to them through those stories and they try to live their lives as if they were recounting them. (Jean Paul Sartre, Words, 1964 in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p. 1)

Few would dispute that people tell stories, to explain and make sense of events in their world. From ancient times, from those early cave paintings showing the exploits of the hunters, myths and legends of their time through pictures and glyphs to the instant communication, interaction and entertainment of Australia today, narration has always influenced and been central to people’s lives (Herman & Vervaeck, 2001; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The use of narrative has been aligned with “the study of experience understood narratively” and “a way of thinking about, and studying, experience” (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 436). It is through individuals’ personal stories that narrative researchers are able to better capture the nuances and the complexities of human experiences. Narrative has a role as a sense-making mode. Bruner (1991) refers to experiences and our memories of events as being organised narratively. There is some general agreement that narrative truth involves “a constructed account of experience, not a factual record of what ‘really’ happened” (Josselson, 2011, p. 225). People’s versions of reality are derived from being causally efficacious in that reality is a result of the relationship between the person and an external social reality of social processes, phenomena, structures and social relations (Collier, 1994).

Clandinin and Connelly (1990) are credited with first using the term narrative inquiry to reflect and describe the multi-layered approach (Craig, Zou & Poinbeauf, 2014) to teacher education that focused on personal story-telling (Clandinin, 2007; Conle, 2001). Webster and Mertova (2007) explain that the two terms of narrative inquiry and narrative research are used almost interchangeably (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004).

Craig (2015) points out that while Clandinin and Connelly (1990) pioneered the narrative inquiry research method when examining what and how teachers come to know, “narrative is less a method and more a way of thinking about the curriculum field. From the beginning, narrative inquiry and person-centered, curriculum-related studies have walked hand-in-hand, taking up a respected place in the teaching and teaching education literature” (p. 20). Smith
(2007) adds that at its heart, narrative inquiry is a dialogic process, a “communication between simultaneous differences or horizons of understanding” (p. 397). A key premise of Clandinin and Connelly’s (1990) research was that it was written for the teacher audience. Craig (2015) outlines the move at this time to view teachers as having their own ideas, as agents not just of change but of education, not necessarily of subject matter.

In a perusal of the literature, that there is a range of interpretations of narrative inquiry and the role of narratives in that inquiry. Smith (2007 argues that not all narrative researchers believe that people are tellers of stories and that life is a storied journey, instead believing that people construct stories out of life experiences, relationships and experiences. Narrative research can be influenced depending on the starting point. Some inquiries begin with the telling of stories, that is “life as lived in the past” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 482) while others start with the living or “life as it unfolds” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 482).

The notion of working “in the midst” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 63) is understood as a three-dimensional inquiry space along the dimensions of temporality, sociality and place. Researching experience involves the simultaneous exploration of these three dimensions. These dimensions, referred to as “commonplaces” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479) in narrative inquiry literature, help the researcher focus on the particular rather than the general. As such “the value of a particular experience, in a particular setting, involving particular people” is understood to be powerful in its own rights (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 21). This has led Josselson (2003) to refer to narrative research as being “up close and personal” (p. 4).

The commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place are a major strength of narrative inquiry and are transferable to other modes of narrative research. They create ways to explore social phenomena without reducing their complexity. They provide a way of integrating broad cultural aspects, the particular person, other actors and change over time which is essential for this research.

Creswell (2007) credits Czarniawska (2004) with the post-modern, organisational orientation, defining narrative research design. Czarniawska discusses narrative as a chronological, spoken or written text that gives an account of individual or series of events or actions. This author focuses on the nature, intensity and speed of institutional transformation, but was unable to account for these transformations using existing vocabulary, conceptual frameworks and metaphors. Czarniawska (2004) redefines the research product as something
closely aligned to narrative structure in terms of its fictional qualities, using characters, setting, plot development, tensions, climax and resolution.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that teacher education is about teacher knowledge. Craig (2015) asserts that narrative provided a method of addressing problems about knowledge. At the time, this was contrary to the dominant viewpoint that required detailed knowledge about what teachers must know and do or that professional knowledge “is a possession dictated, controlled and tested by others” (Craig, 2015, p. 22). Narrative understanding of teacher knowledge is based on the personal and social meaningful construction of that knowledge over time. When an event is known narratively, it has a history as well as being indicative of relationships, interactions and growth among people (Craig, 2015).

To explain even further, the concept of story can be developed as a narrative of experience and learning within a culture (Clandinin, 2007; Josselson, 1996), one that is oriented towards teaching, learning and the achievement of specific goals. In this research study, the stories or tales that are told by the seven participating teachers have been lived, reflectively told, relived and reflectively retold (Craig, 2015). Simplistically, this linking of descriptive words from the personal stories of the practising teachers in the NT to inquire, analyse and paint the picture of their professional development experiences is the reasoning for the title of this research study: Telling Tales and Painting Pictures. The inclusion of multiple perspectives is a critical element of narrative inquiry, but while the narratives can be a source of the inquiry, the end result can be a story, one systematically and authentically produced.

Typically narrative inquiry involves situating experiences in the context of others, but also in terms of the experiences in other years as well as globally (Craig et al., 2014). Craig et al. (2014) notes the sociality of the relationships and interactions and the locality, with reference to situation and place, in accord with Connelly and Clandinin (2006).

Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) concept of professional knowledge landscapes of teachers is explained by Curtis, Reid, Kelley, Martindell and Craig (2015) with the metaphor of “braided rivers… multiple streams diverging and converging repeatedly over the landscape” (p. 175). This describes the multiple interpretations that are possible as part of a narrative inquiry. Webster and Mertova (2007) refer to traditional aspects of teaching as “packages of situated knowledge” and where the purpose, audience and content of teaching practices are quite clear (Elliot, 2005). Calderhead, Denicolo and Day (2014) comment that there is an
assumption that the professional behavior of teachers is, in part, determined by the organisational context of his or her educational life, but also by life history and allied experiences. Experiences from the past and expectations from the future influence greatly the perceptions of any current situation.

The concept of a professional knowledge landscape is explained by Clandinin and Connelly (1996) who include historical, moral, emotional and aesthetic shaping forces. The richness in the stories is affected by the past, present and future temporality (Craig, 2015). Narrative inquiries into teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes produced some useful categories of narratives (Craig, 2015) such as teacher stories, stories of teachers, school stories and stories of school (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). Teachers stories are viewed by Clandinin, Huber, Huber, Murphy, Murray Orr, Pearce and Steves (2006) as personal practical knowledge and the stories that teachers live, tell, re-live and re-tell. In contrast, stories of teachers have an emphasis on the stories that others have of teachers. School stories, according to these same authors, are the ongoing narrative constructions of school composed by key stakeholders whereas stories of school are outsider constructions about that particular school. Craig (2015) added two other dimensions in terms of paired stories, adding reform stories / stories of reform and community stories / stories of community. Reform stories are the humanly lived reform narratives whereas stories of reform are stories given to schools and teachers. Stories of community are stories told about communities where as community stories are lived and told by community members including parents.

Webster and Mertova (2007) cite reasons why story is therefore particularly fitting to make teachers’ voices public, including the concepts that stories rely on tacit knowledge to be understood and take place in a meaningful context. The story-telling tradition gives structure to expression, but sometimes involves a moral lesson, or to voice criticism in a socially acceptable way. There is a dependence on the dialogue between the teller and the audience.

A critical element of teacher knowledge is an understanding of teacher expertise and proficiency. Craig (2015) notes that teachers and teacher educators are experts and active agents, constructing and reconstructing meaning as they use and produce personally and socially constructed knowledge. In narrative inquiry, Craig (2015) notes the importance of teachers’ experiences being honored but that other factors such as strategies, tactics and rules from other considerations are avoided. This is a resonant concept within this study, where the
views of teachers are of critical importance.

While the complexity of time, space and place are integral elements of both teachers’ experiences and narrative inquiry, one of the key factors that resonated with this study was the richness, intent, honesty and integrity that can be discerned in the narratives of the inquiry. Craig (2015) delineates the process of narrative inquiry by the focus on the specific details of experiences but then the storying and re-storying that occurs. However, the “narrative truth” of those storied lives is acknowledged along with the three dimensional situated knowledge and inquiry space of narrative inquiry.

Conle (2000) refers to “narratives that have the life sucked out of rich human experience” (p. 129). The concept explained by Craig (2013) is that narrative fragments feature versions of professional life (evident in my research study) that encapsulate and are more than just the telling of stories. It is these narrative fragments that allow others to learn from the experiences of these seven participating teachers. Craig’s (2013) comment is that “narrative inquiry’s uncanny ability to transcend temporal, contextual, cultural and social conditions (Huber et al., 2013) facilitates this deep kind of learning” (p. 129). These characteristics reinforce the decision to use a narrative inquiry approach as a suitable methodology for this particular research study.

4.3 The General Turn to Narrative: Reviewing the Literature

Concern with humans, experience, recognizing the power in understanding the particular and broader conceptions of knowing coalesce in flashes of insight and old ways of researching and strategies for research seem inadequate to the task of understanding humans and human interactions. (Clandinin, 2007, p. 8)

Just as there has been a changing educational environment, changing priorities in the professional development and learning experiences of teachers, there has been a changing environment in research as part of the narrative turn from traditional research methodology (Craig et al., 2014; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Craig (2015) refers to this phase of narrative inquiry as the “first generation narrative explorations” (p. 21). The influences upon the evolution of narrative are described below.

Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) outline the two, almost parallel, paths of narrative
inquiry. The first path was as a result of the post-war push to humanist, people-centered approaches, often including biographies, individual case studies and life histories. The second approach followed the path of the Russian structuralists and later, the French post-structuralists including Barthes (1977) and Todorov (1990).

Andrews et al. (2008) outline the post-modern camp, which included Foucault (1972) and Lyotard (1984), but this research methodology is recent when held against other methodologies. From its initial literary roots as narratology, the content, form and structure of interpretive narrative inquiry have been shaped by a variety of analytic and teacher approaches, preferences and forms of narrative inquiry and theoretical approaches. These various influences are outlined in Clandinin (2007), with an overview of the influences and movements which have impacted narrative inquiry over years of steady evolution. These influences and movements include:

- The literary roots of narratology and its key concepts of narrative grammar, poetics, and rhetorical analysis is explored as classical narrative theory by Schmidt and Starritt (2010) who provide the Germanic and literary roots to narratology.
- Post-modern perspectives that offered a more human-centred context, which caters for multiple realities and truths and sociological adjustments and reforms. This influence is the most important in terms of the approach used in this research study and is outlined below in section 4.3.1.
- Different disciplines and allied analytical approaches with some of those from anthropology, sociology or psychology (Clandinin, 2007).
- Different forms of narrative such as autobiographies, biographies, life history or oral history.
- Different theoretical lenses such as the feminist perspective or psychoanalytical;
- Advances in understanding in qualitative research.
- Conceptual orientations towards metaphor, genre or discourse analysis.
- Paradigm influences such as social constructivist paradigm.

This brief description of the roots of narrative inquiry positions this research study as one with a focus on post-modern perspectives but also one which has been influenced by different disciplines (as explained below). Forms of narratology were not deemed relevant to this particular research study, but the paradigm influences of social constructivism was embedded.
within this study (and discussed in Chapter 6).

4.3.1 Post-modern Perspectives Influencing Narrative Inquiry

Not all of the influences listed above are explored in detail in this research study, as some were deemed peripheral to the key concepts. Critical to the methodology of this particular study are the post-modern influences and the effects of different disciplines in defining where this research study most aligns.

Acknowledged as one of the standard disciplines of literary theory, narratology was developed in 1969 by Todorov (Reissman, 1993), and underscores the development of narrative inquiry. The development of narratology was driven by a need to raise literary theory to a level of scientific rigour and precision. Relationships or structures between key elements in language, literature and other fields were explored in depth, as a place where cultural, social, linguistic and mental structural networks were built. Webster and Mertova (2007) classify the study of narratology into the three main perspectives of study:

- **narrative grammar** (focus on the narrated or the story);
- **poetics** (focus on the relationship between the narrated and the narrative / story and the discourse); and
- **rhetorical analysis** (linguistic mediation of a story to determine its meaning and effect).

These influences, as listed above, often dictate the methodology of deconstruction to reach the essence of meaning within the story and are still used within different studies within the literature field. These particular approaches differed from the humanist narrative move within social research and focused on concepts of narrative fluidity, contradiction, conscious and unconscious meanings and power relationships. This approach is concerned with the social formations that shape language and subjectivity and Andrews et al. (2008) note that the storyteller does not tell the story, so much as he/she is told by it.

With narrative inquiry defined by contexts and contextual perspectives, and indicative of a certain interpretive set of tools and processes, the post-modern push to a more human-centred approach capable of coping with multiple truths was an important influence. It was argued that a broader, interdisciplinary approach was essential (Reissman, 1993) and narrative
inquiry supports a wide variety of cognitive, interpersonal and communicative insights. Narrative research acknowledges the links of people and phenomena to society, history and time (Josselson, 2006). Josselson (2006) notes the constructed nature of knowledge but different researchers, situations and people create contextualised interpretations and different ways of theorising that knowledge. An issue is the development of a knowledge base that incorporates the insights and understandings of many researchers.

Narrative inquiry as a potentially critical and significant interpretive approach is explained by different analytic and disciplinary lenses (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Conle, 2001; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The potential in an analysis of professional learning practices is certainly one of multiple truths, where a wide variety of cognitive, educational, interpersonal and communication insights may emerge.

4.3.2 The Influences of Different Disciplines and Analytic Strategies

There is allowance within the narrative inquiry story for different analytic approaches within disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and of course, education (Creswell, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Elliot, 2005; Clandinin, 2007). Further outlining the theoretical perspectives which influence narrative inquiry, this section describes some of these approaches, and illustrates the scope of narrative inquiry, as used by these author / researchers when linked to a disciplinary lens. The following is an overview of some of those analytic approaches.

Smith (2007) observes that while meaning is integral to being human, being human means an active process of creating and construing meaning. Narratives are involved in this process. It is important to note the genesis of some of these influences on narrative creation. Andrews et al. (2008) raise the spectre that theoretical assumptions about subjectivity, language, the social context and the narrative itself remain in contradiction. Perhaps it is this point that best explains the wealth of information about narrative inquiry. The construction of historically relevant and valid forms of narrative inquiry may account for the wide variety of ways in which narrative is viewed today (Andrews et al., 2008). This plays a part in how researchers conceptualise what a narrative is, how to study it, why it is important – but also which parts of it are important. Andrews et al. (2008) ask the question about whether narrative research is
a material, a method or a journey into understanding social phenomena – or all of these.

Reissman (1993) frames this discussion by stating that storytelling is what we do with our research materials and what informants do with us. She explains that we create order and construct texts in particular contexts. Psychology researchers in the field try to make these experiences explicit rather than search for statistically significant tendencies in contrived experimental conditions.

My research is a practical, pragmatic look at those PD experiences. Polkinghorne (1988) is concerned with the nexus between research and the practical problems of the psychotherapist (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Polkinghorne outlines the importance of research strategies that work with narratives to help people understand their world in a descriptive or explanatory way. He notes the differences between two different phrases, both using narrative but from differing perspectives. Analysis of narratives involves description of themes across stories, whereas narrative analysis has a greater focus on explanatory descriptions of events or happenings and connecting them in a causal sense, telling their story and using a plot line (Creswell, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The links between these two approaches are with the concept of reflection and the creation of the stories of the participating teachers.

Reissman (1993), in her sociological approach, defines narrative as talk organized around consequential events. She uses Bruner’s work to explain how the central characters or protagonists interpret things, and then, how we go about systematically interpreting their interpretations.

This research study is an exploration of the practical applications of PD experiences by seven teachers. Schön (1983, 1987, 1991) discusses professional practice between technical rationalism (intelligent practice as an application of knowledge) and reflection-in-action ((Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The narratives of the teachers in this research study were compared, looking for significant similarities as well as differences. Bateson (1994) focuses on learning across themes of continuity and improvisation, with the narrative as a form on inquiry most suitable to anthropology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Bateson (1994) iterates that learning is a human endeavour, but a tentative one, with change from a personal perspective always open to revision.
Professional development happened long before my research study and will continue for many years to come. To a large extent, the ability of each teacher to be self-observant is linked to an acknowledging of learning styles, aims and purposes of any professional development and individual bias to professional development. Bateson (1994) notes the concepts of temporality and raises the issues of the inquirer’s situatedness to observations linked to personal, first hand inquirer biases, perspectives and learning. These concepts resonated with an analysis of professional development, in that personal perspectives are often affected by time and the situatedness of teachers to their learning environment.

While their individual disciplines might differ and their researcher foci might be very diverse, all of these researchers discuss the importance of the story-telling as a part of narrative inquiry. They discuss the proximity of participants to their particular story and the situated knowledge within those stories, whether as part of the parade or watching it from the sidelines. They all refer to the meaning and value attributed to those stories, something that is fundamental to this research study.

4.4 Key Concepts of Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin (2007) describes some of the key conditions for narrative inquiry, identifying common themes in the movement towards narrative inquiry. There are basically four turns, or changes in direction, in the thinking and actions of researchers that evolved in the process of designing, studying and engaging inquiries. The first change of direction involved the interactive relationship between researcher and research participants. The second change is the significant use of words and stories as data and analysis and thirdly that the essential understandings are embedded in a particular context. The fourth key concept is that narrative knowing is essential to the inquiry.

From an epistemological perspective, when considering the nature of the relationship between researcher and that being researched, Creswell (2007) states that it is a qualitative practice to conduct the research in the field, where participants live and work, as a basic context for understanding what participants are saying. This research, engaging a teacher as a researcher and others as research participants has been conducted in the field where participants work. Narrative is an ideal choice as the organising structure allowing for both
social and educational contexts. The ways in which the stories are told says much about the participants themselves (Andrews et al., 2008).

Squire (2005), one of the chapter authors in Andrews et al. (2008) outlines the premise that when we consider personal narratives as event-centred, three basic elements are often neglected. The first is that talk that is not about events is still significant for the story, as it indicates who the narrator is. Because of the distance from the events described, the uncertain, changing nature of the artefacts, whether written, spoken or visual symbols) have many meanings. They are never the same when told twice. The representation itself needs to be examined thoroughly. The third consideration is that there are interactions between the story-teller and the listener, the researcher and research participant. There is co-construction of the stories. There are assumptions embedded in an experience-centred approach, as outlined by Squire, in that the narratives are sequential and meaningful and re-present experience, reconstituting it as well as expressing it. Narratives also display transformation or change.

In selecting events, participants create plots for their stories. Labov (2006) recognises that in order for a narrative to be constructed, the narrator must firstly go through a process of preconstruction which “begins with a decision that a given event is reportable ... and proceeds backwards in time to locate events that are linked causally each to the following one, a recursive process that ends with the location of the unreportable event” (p. 37). Creating a plot, therefore, has a meaning making function that is considered to be much more than just an act of textual arrangement. In their reflections on their experiences, teachers attach importance to the telling and to the events and experiences themselves.

From an axiological perspective, the views of the classroom teachers are discussed as the narrative about professional learning is shaped (Creswell, 2007; Herman & Vervaeck, 2001; Reissman, 1993). The very act of reflecting, and constructing stories about experiences, involves an insight into the culture, values and shared meanings of the people who tell the stories (MeEwan & Egan, 1995; Craig, 2013). This research study is interpretive research. The views of the teachers form the data for this research study as well as the final narrative about their priorities and values. It is also a narrative about my experiences as a researcher. Narrative inquiry for this study is defined through the study itself, that is, it is under development and evolving within and through this particular research context (Clandinin &
Connelly, 2000).

It stands to reason that if researchers refer to narrative inquiry in terms of the rich descriptions and words as data, that some narrative researchers would use metaphors to describe and translate narrative inquiry concepts and characteristics. Josselson (2006) describes narrative inquiry as a richly layered jigsaw puzzle, rich with contextual and cultural information (McEwan & Egan, 1995), self-directed actions (reflexivity), co-construction and the expression of multiple truths.

Josselson (2006) describes narrative inquiry as a richly layered jigsaw puzzle, rich with contextual and cultural information (McEwan & Egan, 1995), self-directed actions (reflexivity), co-construction and the expression of multiple truths. Geertz (1995), another anthropologist, uses the metaphor of the parade when describing narrative inquiry. This concept of a colourful parade, as told from the perspective of key bystanders and organisers, is this author’s attempt to explain the complexity and nuances of narrative inquiry. The metaphor is used in a way that emphasises the situated context and the use of descriptive words and stories as essential elements. Geertz describes change in the whole over time, but discusses the tentativeness embedded within this approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). He noted that one’s position in the parade affects our view, but the parade moves, and the position changes. Geertz states that what were needed were tableaus, anecdotes, parables, tales and mini-narratives with the narrator in them.

A key word for this research study is “journey”. This study is not a final destination; it is a section of the PD parade, from the perspective of participant and narrator as the parade passes. The interviews took place predominantly in 2013 so another interesting study would be to ask the same questions and seek comparisons and similarities. If the parade contains several thousand people at various stages of the entire parade performance, and with varying levels of experience, the passing of seven individuals, albeit very experienced participants, does not make up the entire parade.

This resonates with my “wave” visual representation from Chapter 1, Figure 4.1: The “Wave” of Narrative Inquiry and this Research Study (below). My graphic representation illustrates the temporality of the PD experiences as well as the teachers’ roles in this research study and my own. There are many waves in the ocean with no two waves ever the same so this “wave” about PD and PL is unique.

While all research has a common element of being unique and individual to a particular time, space and participants, with narrative inquiry the story goes further. These participants will
never tell the same stories again either, so their words are specific to this particular configuration in a very specific situated context. That sense of immediate temporality, allied to their situated knowledge, brings together key elements of this research. The words of the teachers can be examined for commonalities and for emergent themes as part of the “bigger picture”. Within this one study, there are links to the meanings that the teachers attribute to those experiences and professional lives as part of that bigger picture.

Diaute and Lightfoot (2006) view human development as an ongoing social process of complex patterns involving individuals, institutions, cultures and multiple levels of analysis to address questions such as identity, knowledge, citizenship and equality. Even before the first of the participating teachers engaged with this research, there was an assumption that each teacher, school, school culture, teaching context and teaching styles and experiences were all unique and individual. The social processes of each teacher were complex, but evidenced a degree of thought and reflection about their responses. As outlined in Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Gergen (1985) contributed the concept of socially constructed meaning from descriptions and reflections, in this case of their teaching experiences.

Descriptions of phenomena, places and events tend to make narrative inquiry ideal for...
interpretive research with a developmental focus (Clandinin, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Diaute & Lightfoot, 2006; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Daiute and Lightfoot (2006) note that narratives are cultural forms, often referred to as discourses or master narratives (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2007) with embedded values and moralities.

Clandinin (2007) identifies the four main markers that are significant aspects of narrative inquiry and which are reflected through my research:

1. The use of words and stories as data and for analysis;
2. The potential to capture the local and specific instead of the general and universal, where what we know is embedded in a specific context;
3. The widening acceptance of different epistemologies (or ways of knowing) where narrative knowing is essential to the inquiry: and
4. The interactive quality of the relationship between researcher and participants in the study (the researched).

Clandinin’s four key aspects of narrative inquiry (above) are allied to the historical developments towards a narrative inquiry approach and provide a framework through which narrative inquirers can situate themselves within a specific history. I am using Clandinin and Connelly’s framework, as it is a logical one rephrased by other researchers in various ways (Creswell, 2007; Lyons & Kubler LaBoskey, 2002; McEwan & Egan, 1995)

4.4.1 Words and Stories as Data

Researchers who desire a deeper opportunity to establish the authenticity and trustworthiness of their findings may move toward formats of research that allow research findings to be presented in the words of the participants, in ways that represent the experience of the researcher and the researched and allow evidence of the quality of the interaction and relationship to emerge in the research report. (Kirk & Miller, 1985 in Clandinin, 2007, p. 21)

One of the underlying premises of narrative inquiry is the use of words and stories as data for analysis. Andrews et al. (2008), outline the differences between approaches, first describing the spoken recounting of particular life events as they happened to the narrator. Experience-
centred work about real or imagined phenomena, personally experienced events or those they have heard about are then described. This second type can encompass spoken and written media, from scraps of paper to journals, from recipes to photo albums. These authors explain that the extent of usable material could be perceived as robbing narrative of its descriptive and explanatory power. However, life experiences portrayed in different media often imbue the data with richness and support the primary topic, the true narrative.

Smith (2007) contends that there are researchers who are “playful” in working within the sphere of narratives and narrative inquiry in that they develop “plausible interpretations of narrative (are) generated in a highly flexible way and without mathematical or strict formulas. These are moreover represented in a fashion similar to a realist tale or species of creative analytic practice (Sparkes, 2002)” (p. 393). This suggested to Smith that some researchers play with ideas or narratives in an artful manner rather than aspiring to unlock the narrative code, albeit from a different orientation in the dialogue.

The negotiation and sharing of stories in narrative inquiry through eliciting and describing experiences using the words of the research participant, allows a better understanding of social and commumal practices at work. It offers insight into the particular, specific, unique and meaningful ways that individuals order and describe the complex knowledge and understandings in their lives (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Reissman, 1993).

Embedded within this discussion of words and data are acknowledgements of the co-construction of narratives between people. Andrews et al. (2008) warn that while this co-construction does not fit neatly within either event or experience-oriented narrative research, the concept of socially constructed narratives may be assumed to be reflective of internal cognition or affective states. The possibility exists that this co-construction is in fact a social code, one perhaps known only by equal participants, and addressing stories as dialogically constructed (Andrews et al., 2008). Researchers in this field then view the story in terms of the social patterns and functions and perhaps representative of broad cultural narratives.

Narratives are shaped by their audiences, and potentially what they tell us about individual thinking and feeling and whether the narrative is about event or experiences. This is a concern in this research study; so much of the stories by the practising teachers has deeply embedded understandings, a social code about the learning environment and context, even of
broad cultural understandings that in some cases are unique to the NT in terms of situated knowledge.

To comply with principles underlying the concept of objectivity, the efficiency of translating verbal data into numbers is often viewed as necessary for accuracy and reliability in findings and to avoid accusations of unreliability and lack of accuracy (Clandinin, 2007). The complexity of many research questions, with the factors that cannot be answered through numeric, scored responses, even when allied to in-depth analyses of causal relationships was a Clandinin concept that resonated with my study into professional learning. Surveys would indeed give data, and a comfortable anchoring of the study, about levels of teacher satisfaction, for example. Used on their own, they might not give the rich, diverse insights that I seek in a holistic, grounded study.

The options between seeking a genuinely rich, dialogic narrative inquiry or the sterility of numbers or a discussion describing those same numbers are very different concepts. The interviews with teachers portrayed them in a rich and genuine light and it would be difficult to convey that same intent and purpose in numbers. This argument is not to say that there is no place for numbers when using narratives as the focus for the inquiry (Clandinin, 2007). Elliot (2005) discusses her research with its links between quantitative and qualitative methodology within narrative inquiry. Kirk and Miller (1985), in Clandinin (2007) argue that if a phenomenon (through its occurrence or absence, repetition or regularity) can be counted, then statistical analysis can be conducted. Clandinin makes the observation that numbers, representative of quantity, relationships and formulae, are a specified language with distinct parameters. Language can be used to deconstruct, identify, define, specify, exclude, include and link to numbers, where necessary and, appropriately within the context of the study. In turn, the language itself can be the object of deconstruction for the same purposes. While valued for their specific, concrete and consistent meaning and application, Clandinin argues that numeric findings are usually accompanied by a narrative analysis to explain and capture the essence of the numeric findings.

4.4.2 Local and Specific Context

When researchers make the turn toward a focus on the particular, it signals their understanding of the value of a particular experience, in a particular setting, involving
The value of relationships is in bringing about profound changes through a richly textured and layered narrative in an interactive context and careful descriptions of the settings and people (Clandinin, 2007). Relationships and interactions provide secure anchors for acquiring contextual knowledge that can be used successfully in other settings and through the sharing of narratives. This information is not only shared, but meaning is constructed. Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) note the fictional / imagination elements in stories and their own concerns about the journey of narrative construction as an aesthetic process through which individuals construct hypothetical selves oriented towards unrealised futures. Narrative inquirers, according to Clandinin and Connelly (2007), embrace this approach of understanding experience from a particular perspective and using the findings from the research to inform themselves about specific places at specific times.

Another key principle is that the emphasis is on the social dimension of inquiry and understanding, with narratives exploring the stories that people tell about their lives. This in turn influences a person’s inner life, their environment and their unique personal history (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A criticism is that the narratives are a reflection of limited social realities and perhaps Daiute and Lightfoot’s (2004) concept of a hypothetical self might not be the accurate. On the one hand, the parameter says that experience informs the narrative, but the narrative itself might not transcend into genuine and pragmatically useful knowledge. Clandinin and Connelly view that narrative inquiry is an approach to the study of human lives, conceived as a way of honouring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding.

Narrative researchers hold the study of stories or narratives or descriptions of series of events as their mantra, the story / stories being fundamental as accounts of human experience. What differs however are the types and kinds of stories or the methods that narrative researchers use to study them.

4.4.3 Narrative Knowing

Hallmarks of narrative inquiry are the acceptance of the relational and interactive nature of the narratives, the use of the story and the focus on a careful accounting of the particular, local and specific. Embracing and executing the methodology of narrative inquiry as the
preferred methodology for this study, narrative inquirers recognise the multiple connecting ways of knowing and of building knowledge.

This acceptance is a function of the characteristics of narrative inquiry, the key and critical factors which make it such a rich, descriptive way of exploring key questions, particularly those where definitive answers may not be possible. Inquirers accept the way that narrative inquiry allows for reflection and for alternative views to exist in the same space and context. Olson (1997) explains that time is more a dimension of space, and describes time as being similar to looking down through it, like looking through water (another metaphor to describe aspects of narrative inquiry). Depending on the view, and what is there, different things come to the surface of that water, but nothing goes away. Allied to this is the concept of temporality. Any one experience is temporal but so too are collective experiences temporal. Whether an individual journey or a collective one, this situated knowledge, people and events are temporal and changing (Craig, 2013). These simultaneously connecting elements (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) lie at the heart of narrative inquiry.

It is only in the past thirty years that narratives have emerged as a legitimate field of study, means of communication and orientation towards the meaningful acquisition of truth. The robust debate about who owns the stories that have traditionally been the raw material of social science research has seen an upsurge in ownership by subjects such as the teachers in this study. A key construct is the collaboration and interaction between researcher and participating subjects.

Knowledge is not decontextualised. In order to understand who we are, we accumulate and amass ideas, images and associations that colour and flavour the social and cultural contexts of our lives. Personal reflection, whether pragmatic or abstract, shapes the internal and voiced observations, descriptions and stories that people tell about their experiences (Bamberg, 2007). This informs both learning and the creation of knowledge (Bamberg, 2007). Classrooms are complex, social and cultural places, pockets of situated knowledge, inculcating the active sharing of both implicit and explicit knowledge, interpersonal relationship building with teachers, students and information (Yero, 2001).

Narrative, memory and identity are all implicated in narratives (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006) but talk is important as the vehicle to describe and explain the range of practices in which our identities are constituted (Bamberg, 2007). Identities are in part conferred, but also
constructed, contested and negotiated by active speakers (Bamberg, 2007). Teachers are storytellers who individually and socially lead storied lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). Many studies have shown that the beliefs and values of the individual teacher provide the unconscious foundation for behaviour, practices and identity (Yero, 2001-2002). They play a vital role in shaping the objectives, goals, curriculum and instructional methods of schools, and success or failure of any reforms (Bauman, 1992; Hargreaves, 2002; Pajeres, 1992). Their professional learning experiences are but a part of a teacher’s life.

4.4.4 Relationship of Researcher and Researched

So while researchers have new respect for the human in the subjects they study, they continue to perceive themselves as capable of being objective. Researchers outlining their movement from a positivist discourse to a discourse of self-study describe and characterize their stance in the role of the researcher in ways that articulate and catalogue the position of narrative inquirers as they move away from an objective conception of the researcher – researched relationship. (Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Pinnegar and Placier, 2004 in Clandinin, 2007, p. 11)

A critical and rational concept in narrative inquiry is interpretation and meaning. In narrative inquiry, there is an accepted relationship between the researcher and the participants, or the researched in the study (Clandinin, 2007). There is an awareness and acceptance that learning and change may occur as part of the interactions and building of a relationship. Interactions exist in a specific context but the context changes, even as a direct result of some key interactions. The interactions are influenced but also the researched exist in time, in itself a socially constructed concept.

Narrative inquirers study experience, with John Dewey’s (1976) philosophy of experience, outlined in Schön (1992) and underpinning narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2000; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Elliot, 2005; Creswell, 2007). Dewey viewed that experience, as a concept, is a changing entity characterized by continuous interactions of human thought within a personal, social and material environment. Clandinin (2007) argued that inquiry is an act that generates new relations that, in turn, become part of the future experience. This is a problem too. The parameters of the inquiry itself are a form of relation that can and should be
questioned in the course of the research. The role of the researcher and the participants in that research (researched) must also be examined.

Although it is possible to make use of all three voices across a study, based on the theoretical frame of this inquiry the researcher’s interactive voice is dominant in this study. However, at the same time it must be acknowledged that a relationship with the participants developed over the course of the research.

As Dewey believed that experience is the fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry (including narrative) advances, it is deemed as transactional. Because people, cultures and events have a past and a history of individual and shared experiences that affect the present and future, narrative researchers provide accurate descriptions in order to understand and use findings from the study. The ideal scenario is the development of a new relationship between the researched and the environment and context. The point is made by Clandinin, (2007) that different researchers, with differing personalities, interaction skills and access to particular community members, have different experiences in their fieldwork. The researched is not the only one who interacts, changes and builds new relationships. The researcher is also in that position.

A concern of narrative inquirers is the maintenance of objectivity from a research perspective as well as being explicitly involved in the development of those interactions and relationships. This concern is addressed through a variety of research strategies such as triangulation, audit trails, consistency in interpretation and accuracy in fieldwork with a view to obtaining valid analysis and results. Narrative researchers collect verbal data to make sense of it (Josselson, 1996), and the words of participants represent thinking, and by proxy, behaviour (Clandinin, 2007). Narrative researchers need to consider the parameters of their relationships and interactions with participants. They also need to consider the integrity and honesty of the accounts, the ability of the subjects to articulate their responses in an articulate, thinking and appropriate way, and the role of both tacit knowledge of participants and shared knowledge with the researcher.

According to Chase (2008), there is a relationship between the researcher and the researched as researchers develop their own voice(s) in the construction of others’ voices and realities. Knowledge and proximity to the social resources, circumstances, cultures, historical moments and situated knowledge mean that the researcher narrates results in both enabled and
constrained ways. Additionally researchers are affected and influenced by particular audiences for their work.

Chase (2008) offers insight into the three types of voice that may be adopted by narrative researchers.

- The “researcher’s authoritative voice” (Chase, p. 74) serves to both connect and separate the researcher’s and narrator’s voices through interpretations. This authoritative interpretative voice has a different interest from the narrators in the narrated stories (Chase, 2008).
- In comparison, the “researcher’s supportive voice” (Chase, p. 75) foregrounds the narrator’s voice and aims to create a self-reflective and respectful distance between the voices of researcher and narrator.
- Finally, the “researcher’s interactive voice” (Chase, p. 77) focuses on the interaction between the stories of the narrator and the researcher. Researchers adopting an interactive voice “examine their voices – their subject positions, social locations, interpretations, and personal experiences – through the refracted medium of narrators’ voices” (Chase, p. 77).

Chase’s (2008) approach is a pragmatic approach. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note the continuum of past, present and future experiences, and the linking of this through to the temporality of knowledge generation. Where one positions oneself in the experience is reflected by the notion that experience is always more than we know, and more than a representation of words, statements and paragraphs. Thinking about the parade metaphor, or my “wave” graphic, observing is different from participating.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that inquiry is a series of choices, inspired by intent and purposes shaped by past experiences and undertaken through time in a particular context. The consequences of those choices can be traced in the individual’s or community’s shared experiences. There is a difficulty, however. While narrative might be the most appropriate form to use when thinking about an inquiry within an education framework, because it is a representation that unfolds over time, and often by the researcher, it is sometimes viewed as less empirically honest and valid. This is the aim: to ensure that the representation is honest and true for this time and space.
4.5 The Second Wave of Narrative Analysis

This section outlines the second wave of narrative analysis. Narrative inquiry, as with other methodologies has a history and evolution with links to research in other key areas in the professional lives of teachers. Craig, Zou and Poinbeouf (2014) note that school or field based narrative approaches are linked to initiatives in curriculum development. In years gone past, the teacher’s key responsibility was viewed as subject related (whether interpreted as curriculum and/or pedagogy within schools) and PD was offered to improve the teaching and learning in classrooms based on that premise. Now the scope of teacher responsibility is far more expansive than this. Craig and colleagues outline the move towards study about the teaching and learning processes as well as an acknowledgement of teachers’ personal practical knowledge. These authors highlighted the move towards discussions about the role and influence of teachers but also the professional landscape and context and their role in the teaching and learning process. The significance of experiential learning in an interactive and jointly constructed form of research (Craig et al., 2014) such as narrative inquiry is emphasised along with the emphasis on people, places and things in a social and personally satisfying intellectual creation of meaning and knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Craig et al., 2013).

Craig (2015) views this move by narrative researchers and participants as the next wave of development, the second generation of narrative conceptualisation. She outlines the concept of narrative resonance where Conle (1996) defines resonance as a “process of dynamic, complex, metaphorical relations. It is not confined to one single strand of connections. It is a complex relationship among many aspects of a story. The metaphorical connections or correspondences come holistically as a field, a scene, a narrative image (p. 313). The discovery that there is resonance in both sharing narrative inquiries and staying close to experiential stories (Conle, 1996; Craig, 2015) is an aspect of this second wave or next generation interpretation of narrative inquiry.

There is no doubt that experience, relationships with others and constructed knowledge play integral roles in narrative inquiry. There is now tacit acknowledgement that knowledge construction is transactional and part of a bigger picture as individuals shape and form their knowledge base and identity based on those experiences. Craig (2015) asserts that the notion of narrative authority has emerged in this next generation, a concept that she attributes to
Olson (1995). Olson and Craig (2001) explain this authority as “the complexity of personal practical knowledge into a social, public and self-reflective realm” (p. 668). These two authors explain that “narrative authority becomes the expression and enactment of a person’s personal practical knowledge that develops as individuals learn to authorise meaning in relationship with others” (p. 670).

Some confusion about narrative inquiry has been due to the often-conflicting stances taken by various analysts and researchers. There has been discussion and debate about whether narrative has been, or should be, a stand-alone tool for deconstruction and discussion, or whether it is the process of formulating the narrative. Questions have been asked about whether narrative inquiry is a personal narrative of research intent or is a cumulative narrative of others’ experiences. The importance to both storyteller and researcher is considered. While the characteristics of narrative continue to be based on Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) main characteristics, interpretation of those has been broad. This generative approach to teacher development, as described by Olson and Craig (2001) resonated with my research study, particularly in reference to the evolution between PD and PL.

Conle (2001) views that the links between narrative inquiry and teaching are reasonable if good teaching is viewed not just as an accomplishment in appropriate planning, excellent techniques, and thoughtful pedagogical moves. If teaching is viewed as a lived accomplishment linked explicitly to a teacher’s life, to relationships with people and to patterns of teaching and learning acquired in life, then narrative inquiry is amply appropriate.

Good teaching often includes the creation of an effective, efficient, supportive and professional learning or knowledge community whose role is in the nurturing, assisting and supporting of teachers within their particular contexts. Craig (2015) observes that these communities are safe, storytelling places where teachers can engage in dialogic processes to witness raw experiences. Teachers can negotiate meaning and ascertain and authorise interpretations of situations in valid and meaningful ways appropriate to their teaching and their schools.

Georgakopolou (2006) refers to “the second wave of narrative analysis” (p. 123). This is in reference to the move away from the study of narrative as text to the study of narrative-in-context. Smith (2007) alludes to the narrative turn, which has been linked to a “performance turn” (p. 394), agreeing with Georgakopolou (2006) about the emergent literature suggesting
a narrative turn. This new turn does not necessarily advantage narrative inquiry where Smith (2007) raises concerns about its demise and its relative form in the social sciences. Smith’s (2007) questions are whether narrative inquiry is now “unidirectional or multi-directional? Could it be a form of fragmentation or zesty disarray? Further, does work published on, and debates about narrative occur almost exclusively inside narrative circles and speciality journals?... In short, is the narrative turn fact, fashion or fiction?” (p. 394).

Squire (2005), one of many chapter authors in Andrews et al. (2008), outlines some of the key factors in this emergent turn, ones that ensure that narrative is richer in description and use of narratives, contextually oriented and focused on the experiences of participants. Squire refers to experience centred and culturally-oriented approaches to narrative, and extends the understanding about the role of a more culturally and socially oriented research framework.

Squire (2005) in Andrews et al. (2008) explains that the concept of experience-centred narrative research rests “on a phenomenological assumption that experience can, through stories, become part of consciousness” (p. 41). This upfront assumption ensures that narrative inquiry still has a valid role to play as a key methodology in the investigation of teachers’ storied lives and their creation of contextually appropriate and meaningful knowledge. She notes that it also takes on a hermeneutic approach, in that the goal is the full pragmatic understanding of the stories, rather than a structured analysis.

These characteristics, particularly the concept of re-presenting stories, some perhaps relayed from an experience of some time ago, linked into the key research questions.

4.5.1 Personal Narratives as Sequential and Meaningful

Clandinin and Connelly (1988) introduced the concept of personal practical knowledge and described it as knowledge found in a person’s past experience and included in their future plans and actions. With an emphasis on teachers’ knowing in the classroom, these authors put forward the idea that curriculum is experienced in situations. Because teacher knowledge is a personal and lived experience, and is found and lived in their narratives of experience, therefore these narratives of experience are educative.

Experience-centred narrative is different in representation from event-centred narrative in that it assumes that personal narratives contain sequential and meaningful stories that people
produce as part of their repertoire. People create their own informed and pragmatically meaningful sequences of situated knowledge. Squire (2005), in Andrews et al. (2008) notes that the narrative may still slide into the category of event-centred, but that the narratives are more flexible about time and personal events. Narratives are defined by theme, rather than structure. The narrative might address a specific turning point, and it is perhaps this key concept that lies at the heart of my question about transfer of learning.

Squire (2005) in Andrews et al. (2008) describes that experience-centred narrative may take place over several interviews. While the narratives may contain sequence and meaningfulness as followed through thematically over one or more interviews, they may contain non-story materials, such as description and theorising. To complicate matters, Squires concurs with Reissman’s (1993) approach, where sequence spans dialogue, not just what the interviewer says. Meaningfulness is analysed as part of the interactions between interviewer and interviewee, the researcher and the researched, as well as the actual words of the interviewee. Personal narrative can be about interviewing several people about the same phenomenon (Squire, 2005 in Andrews et al., 2008), which is basically what this research study did.

4.5.2 Narratives as Human Sense-making

People do not tell their stories in a vacuum. There is a relationship between the storytellers, their stories and their audiences. Squire, in Andrews et al. (2008), notes that “the examination of a life, without which life is not worth living, consists in the recounting of it“(p. 43). Smith (2007) explains that the construction of meaning is basic to being human and narratives are an essential tool to the process of making that meaning both useful and efficient in the construction of knowledge and identity, whether personally or professionally. It is this aspect which discriminates and identifies narrative inquiry as separate and distinct from other forms of social science research perspectives. Stories are significantly social activities, maintaining social interactions.

In this research study, the key aim is for teachers to make sense of their PD and PL experiences and to articulate those through their use of professional narratives, which are rebirthed as a process with me as collaborating researchers. Craig (2015) outlines the porous but different places where teachers dwell, outlining the “in-classroom” place (a safe place where teachers and students interact and live out curriculum) and the “out-of-classroom”
place (the professional place with expectations, mandates, responsibilities and demands from external sources). Where this may seem to be describing situated knowledge and influences, this plays a part in the sense-making that teachers engage in as part of their experiences. Craig’s use of the word *porous* indicates that neither zone is self-contained or independent (which allies with Bredeson’s 2003 architectural model of PD). The interactions between these two zones indicates the potential for tensions, challenges, dissention and resistance in teachers’ stories of their experiences, and these may be displayed in their narratives which describe their attempts to make sense of different contexts and situations. Craig (2009b) alludes to the contested classroom space and the volatility of a globally shifting teacher education landscape, contributing to the uncertainty in sense-making by teachers.

In this research study, the teachers describe their professional knowledge landscapes, bringing their stories forward, exploring how these stories are held against their own personal chronologies and professional lives.

### 4.5.3 Narratives as Representations and Reconstructions

Squire’s (2005) third assumption in her chapter, as outlined in Andrews et al. (2008) is that experience-centred narratives involve some reconstruction of stories across space and time. She points out that narratives never mean the same thing twice. During the reconstitution of stories, there are multiple and changing story-lines. There is an acknowledgement of the collaborative construction of the story and of knowledge. Clandinin (2007) indicates that researchers need to go than the words from the narrators in order to recognise the links between narrators and their wider culture. There are links between the local context and the wider, societal context, but similarly, there are links to the sociocultural issues and concerns.

### 4.5.4 Narratives as Transformation and Change

Narratives can be seen as transformative and linked to change, whether intrinsically or extrinsically. Stories in society exhibit a specific narrative reality and preferred form of analysis (Jaber, Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). Casey and Edgerton (2007) indicate that:

> Narrative is language put to the service of employment, weaving events into a coherent story-line. Stories are good to think with. Storytelling is as old as language
itself and perhaps its root function, playing a significant role in brain evolution. Telling one’s story constructs a continuous sense of self over time (p. 123). While Casey and Edgerton (2007) outline that “to be human is to communicate as a group, according to its norms and genres; narrative genres are central to cultural participation. Narrating does not just reveal but constitutes the structure, processes and contents of subjectivity” (p. 123). Because that reality is about the substance of the stories as well as the active process of storytelling about real experiences, narratives can be viewed as transformative and both support and enhance change. Gubrium and Holstein (2009) explain that stories reflect inner lives and social worlds and that “society has a way of shaping, reshaping or otherwise influencing stories on its own terms.” (p. 14). The texts are important, but so are the contexts. Because the substance of the stories and the specific storytelling define the parameters of the narrative reality, there is much scope for change to be both noted, but also implemented through conscious and specific action. Experience-centred narrative researchers believe that narratives include personal changes that are represented as themes rather than distinct clauses.

Squire (2005), one of many authors in Andrews et al. (2008) explains that experience-centred researchers often look for improvement in stories, as well as participants trying to understand them. She stated that everyone involved in the co-construction of such stories can lead to controversial results. Kligyte (2011) outlines the concept of a transformational learning framework, where non-reflective actions move to a more conscious practice.

Teaching practice can be developed but teachers also gain in confidence through their narrative practices where reflective practices accompany descriptions of self-initiated changes.

4.5.5 Narratives as ‘Small’ or ‘Big’ Stories

Narrative research embodies the concept of narrative data as autobiographical in nature, in that the stories are about personal experiences and past events. Georgakopoulou (2011) outlines some of the dilemma of narrative inquiry where “narrative remains an elusive, contested and indeterminate concept, variously used as an epistemology, a methodological perspective, an antidote to positivist research, a communication mode, a supra-genre, a text-type. More generally, as a way of making sense of the world, at times equated with
experience, time, history and life itself; more modestly, as a specific kind of discourse with conventionalised textual features. (p. 122)

Phoenix (2008)) in Andrews et al. (2008) outlines one of the more recent divisions in narrative inquiry. The debate is about pitching small stories against big stories (Andrews, et al., 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2011). Small narratives focus on the micro-linguistics and social structures of every day events and experiences and small narrative phenomena that occur naturally between people. Georgakopoulou explains that small stories reflect ongoing and shared events, events and future or possible events.

Hymes (1996) states that much detail can be missed if only fully-fledged stories are investigated. Bamberg (2007) notes the orientation of small stories into the overall orientation, giving a stronger centre and grounding. Paying attention to the naturally-occurring, everyday phenomena and social structure, small stories may embody past singular events as well as currently unfolding events and experiences. Analysis of small stories may involve the examination of repeated content or themes in interviews. Big story researchers often note the small aspects of their data to achieve the big story approach.

Small stories usually prioritise events over experiences, and are socially oriented over individually oriented narrative research (Bamberg, 2007). Clandinin (2007) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe these small stories as spoken or written, paralanguage (nonverbal language communication) or action as:

- unfolding, anticipated, imaginary, habitual and indefinite events and states;
- past, singular events; and
- repeated content or themes spread out across representations.

In my research study, the small individually oriented stories are represented. These include the unfolding of events, particularly past PD experiences which describe recurring themes.

4.6 Summary

From the first whisperings of this research study in the vignettes outlined in Chapter 1, through to this research study, narrative inquiry is embedded into the very foundation. This chapter has explored those links through to experience deconstruction. The second wave of
narrative inquiry, where an experience-centred approach raises issues linked to local, cultural and societal contexts of teaching and learning, is a valid way of investigating professional development experiences. This chapter has outlined the key features of narrative inquiry as linked to both my Conceptual Model (explained in Chapter 5) and the methodology and data of my research study (as explained in Chapter 6). Historical elements and discipline influences are discussed in this chapter, with identification of specific features that resonate with my study. The next chapter outlines the methods used in this research study, and has a significant role in outlining the processes that were employed to ensure rigour in this study.

This photo was taken on low tide at Mindil Beach, home of the Darwin Sunset Markets. The view is looking back to Sky City Casino, with thunderstorms brewing (Wet Season).

Figure 4.2: Mindil Beach Storms (Wet Season)
Photo taken by N. Batenburg
CHAPTER 5: The Conceptual Framework

The discussion in previous chapters has been about the complexity of teaching and the extent of factors that influence teachers and students in classrooms around the country. There are increasing expectations, responsibilities and factors that affect the overall job and role of teachers in the classroom. In Chapter 2, I outlined the context of this study in the NT. In Chapter 3, I described the evolution of PD and PL. Concepts such as lifelong learning and communities of best practice are now commonplace understandings in most schools. In Chapter 4 I outlined the evolution of narrative inquiry and how the second wave, or second generation of narrative links with current developments in PD and PL.

This chapter describes the conceptual boundaries of this study, outlining graphically how this study fits into the overarching expectations, demands and responsibilities of teachers also in addition to the linkages that have formed the key and critical areas of research in this study. It includes the “cohesive ties” of the narrative: the social constructivist paradigm, which underpins this study, the influences on how and why teachers learn, and professional agency (or teacher agency) which examines the identity, choices and actions that teachers take with regards to decision-making about their PD and PL experiences.

5.1 The Conceptual Framework

The field of PD and PL is a complex one, and this research inquiry examines a small section of that field. An assumption of my conceptual model is that the PD and PL experiences of practising classroom teachers are a part of their daily working lives and their PD and PL are impacted by their context. Craig (2015) and Bredeson (2003) both note that teachers are not locked in classrooms and their domain is not restricted by it either. Teachers dwell in classroom places and spaces, safe places where teachers and students interact, but also in out-of-classroom places where the professional demands, responsibilities and mandates influence the classroom and school.

PD lies is at the core of this study but PL, with wider implications for professional growth and enhancement, is included as the key content in an expanded agenda about teachers and their own professional learning. Affecting their learning are factors such as their identity and the inculcation of personal and professional choices and actions which affect why a teacher engages in learning. The concept of professional agency (PA) is included in this conceptual
The conceptual model, necessarily limited to explicit factors that underpin this particular research inquiry, as indicated below, is a small part of the myriad of factors that influence and affect a teacher over the space of any working day. Embedded within school issues are jurisdictional influences that filter into classrooms (thus Figure 5.1: The Conceptual Model as indicated below) includes the word “school”). Whether it is a simple thing such as updates of attendance software from departmental mandates or the complex and planned implementation of individual school support programs such as those allied to combat bullying, these all impact on the time, effort, energy, work and engagement of teachers in schools. The relationship between teachers and students, with its widest connotations is indicated in this conceptual model as are curriculum and pedagogy issues (the crayons indicating some subject areas). These are not the only factors influencing teachers, but are indicative of the wider picture of work and life within the profession.

Essential to both jurisdictional mandates and overarching school plans, PD and PL are still viewed as essential tools in the updating, upskilling and enhancement of teacher skills, understandings and knowledge about the teaching profession generally and specifically. The blue hexagons indicate the extent and range of this research study, with its interrelated factors of Social Constructivism (SC), Professional / teacher agency (PA), PD and PL and Narrative Inquiry (NI).

Times may change, schools and classrooms may evolve, but teachers have an immense job to keep up with change. While some of the factors that influence teachers daily are not only alluded to in this study, the key areas of consideration include:

1. Social Constructivism:
   
   This paradigm was included in this study as it indicates the mindset of teachers to engage in their own learning. It indicates their ability to reflect on their experiences but then to build and construct relevant and meaningful personal and professional knowledge. Simply stated, Social Constructivism, as applied to this study, indicates the “how” and “why” teachers learn. While Social Constructivism is often used in discussion about children’s learning, these teachers indicate their understanding of the concept through the use of SC in their classrooms. Characteristics of SC, as described...
by these teachers about their classrooms, also apply to their own learning at an adult level. How and why a teacher learns relates to my research and interview questions about the key characteristics identified by teachers of quality learning by them as adult practitioners.

2. Professional Agency or Teacher Agency:
   This is included in this study as it indicates the choices and actions that teachers take in their learning. While linked to their identity, PA is linked to active decision-making about their own capabilities and needs, their ownership of their PD and PL responsibilities. PA represents the “why” of the professional learning journey. Professional agency or teacher agency, as it applies to this study is explained in this chapter.

3. Professional Development and Professional Learning;
   Teachers develop professionally by dint of being in the job and interacting with other teachers and their students, but they engage in long-term, sustained and purposeful growth and enhancement plans which are better represented as PL. PD and PL were elaborated in Chapter 3.

4. Narrative Inquiry:
   Teachers tell their stories to make sense of their personal and professional worlds. Implicated within their narratives are the descriptions and explanations of their experiences, their interactions and relationships and the problem-solving and the decision-making within daily professional lives. It is through use of their words and social relationships that understandings and knowledge are built and meaning is confirmed. Narrative Inquiry was explained in Chapter 4.

There is no beginning or end in this Conceptual Framework. In the real world, these elements are happening simultaneously, with no clear division between the effects of one element on another. Teacher agency, for example, could just as easily be inserted before teachers and classrooms. Agency, for example, has an effect on the perceptions of teachers (and in this study, specifically on their views about PD and PL), but similarly teachers develop their own sense of agency. The process is not quite as nicely linear as this visual representation.

Figure 5.1 Telling Tales and Painting Pictures Conceptual Framework (below) is a simple visual representation only to explain the boundaries of this study. The reality is that there are
many other factors that the teachers discuss in this study, which did not form a significant part of it. For example, teachers note the hierarchy of their schools and transfer of learning, but these fields were not included for extensive examination as part of this study.

Figure 5.1: Telling Tales and Painting Pictures Conceptual Framework

This framework does, however, graphically explain the boundaries of this research and the key elements that are examined throughout. The local and specific context of this study is the NT, but more specifically the educational contexts where these seven teachers work. The characters or research participants are the seven self-identified primary teachers who engaged in this research inquiry, relating and recounting their PD and PL experiences over the past five years. Their words and text in transcripts were used as data with the creation of a restored account of their PD and PL (as further outlined in Chapters 7 and 8). The links between SC, PA, PD, PD and NI are explained in section 5.5 of this chapter.

5.2 Links to the Conceptual Framework: Professional Agency (PA): Teachers

There is an ongoing tension within education policy worldwide between countries that seek to reduce the opportunities for teachers to exert judgment and control over their
own work, and those who seek to promote it. Some see teacher agency as a weakness within the operation of schools and seek to replace it with evidence-based and data-drive approaches, whereas others argue that because of the complexities of the situated educational practices, teacher agency is an indispensable element of good and meaningful education (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015, p. 624).

Internationally, the professional workplace, role and identity of teachers have changed significantly (Pantić, 2015). Teachers are being increasingly expected to engage and adapt to diverse requirements in both curriculum and pedagogy, with increasing scrutiny and judgement of their efforts (Toom, Pyhältö & O’Connell Rust, 2015). Key words such as relevance, meaning, intent and purpose are used to indicate the efforts of teachers to build inspiring, exciting, enlightening and constructive classroom environments where students do not just improve their results for their school records, but engage in active and demonstrably effective learning for their future.

The extent of professional accountability for classroom teachers has changed considerably. Contemporary approaches to education include the development of Australian standards. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) promotes teacher standards for graduate teachers, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teachers. Key categories display the extent and range of skills necessary when considering the professional workload and aims of a society that is trying to define quality teachers. These two examples give some indication of the changes in the professional landscape for teachers and raises questions about ownership of, and engagement in, these types of initiatives. Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) outline the ongoing tensions in those countries that reduce opportunities for teachers to exert judgement and control over their own work, and those who support and promote these within their educational context.

The move towards accountability policies has changed the professional norms that have changed education in the USA (Buchanan, 2015). This situation is relevant in Australia where the history of change to the Australian educational environment has also seen moves to accountability and measurable student performance. With the input of professional standards for teachers, accountability and responsibility frameworks are of significant influence on the ascertainment of teacher performance. Buchanan (2015) asserts that these moves over the
past twenty years of standardisation have reshaped the professional identities of teachers and their active understanding of, and engagement in, their professional contexts. Toom et al. (2015) make the pertinent point that “teachers’ active professional agency is more than just coping with challenging professional situations. Agentic teachers perceive themselves as pedagogical experts who have the capability of intentional and responsible management of new learning at both individual and community levels” (p. 615). The discussion about professional agency interrogates whether the move towards quantified accountability resonates with the measures that teachers need to take to become those agentic teachers.

School development is dependent upon the active engagement and endorsement of people in the school who are willing to collaborate and promote change. The concept of teachers being active change agents at the school level has emerged, with teacher agency being used to describe the purposeful efforts and intent by teachers to make a difference in the school context (Toom, Pyhältö & O’Connell Rust, 2015).

Linked to the discussion about teacher professionalism, the concept of agency includes teachers’ perceptions, beliefs, values, judgements, decision-making, motivations and actions. Agency includes the wider jurisdiction or systemic vision of the purpose of education, and whether the promotion of teacher agency includes collective development and consideration. Toom et al. (2015) note that the idea of a teacher as an active change agent with professional agency is actively linked to teacher efforts to make choices and engage in intentional action in order to make a significant difference. Teachers are expected to interpret aspects of their professional lives to a level never before seen as well as negotiating with peers, parents and students. The idea of making independent choices and finding a balance between personal and professional responsibilities and accountabilities is important to this discussion about PD and PL. The changing professional context means that building a meaningful, creative and constructive environment for students and for themselves as teachers is the new expectation.

Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2012) note the several decades where teachers were offered prescriptive curricula and regimes of testing and inspection. However, the more recent push for teachers to exert professional ownership and agency within their work contexts is an emerging dimension of teacher professionalism. This expectation that teachers are agents of change must be accompanied by factors that promote teacher agency. Critically, PD and PL are viewed as key factors in the change and improvement processes within not just
classrooms, but within schools and departments of education.

Biesta et al. (2015) argue that while there is much theoretical research into agency as it pertains to social actions and contexts, it is less represented in terms of the activities of teachers in schools and in change models. In these situations, agency tends to be underplayed and misconstrued. These authors posit the view that critical consideration is the phenomenon of agency itself, along with how it is achieved in the pragmatic reality of teaching contexts and the particular “ecological conditions and circumstances” (p. 626).

Priestley et al. (2012) further this view of agency as the capacity of teachers to take responsibility and interact individually with resources and contextual and structural factors in often unique situations. Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) expand the definition of teachers’ agency as “their active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions for the overall quality of education” (p. 624). It is this active contribution and shaping of the professional landscape that is important to any discussion on PD and PL.

Biesta et al. (2015) state that the current turn – and return - to teacher agency is a significant shift away from the “prescriptive curriculum and oppressive regimes of testing and inspection” (p. 624). Teacher agency allows teachers to embrace greater professional agency in their teaching contexts as a critical aspect of their professionalism. Teachers are expected to be agents of change but Pantić (2015) states that there is little clarity about what teachers are expected to contribute to the change process. This author notes the discussion of the possibility of teacher agency not just within the school environment, but beyond schools as linked to the transformation of a particular aspect of change in relational and context-specific ways. The potential lack of collective and individual intent, purpose and teacher agency is recognised as a problem in schools in terms of the collective responsibility for learning through change (Pantić, 2015).

Priestley et al. (2012) view agency as an active, quality process of engagement. Key aspects of agency include the need to be reflexive and creative, but also enabled and constrained by the social and material environments known to teachers. These authors explain that agency builds upon past achievements, understandings and patterns of action, as explained by the model of teacher agency below.

Professional agency is linked to concepts relating to professional learning practices of
teachers. As a key capability for facilitating student learning, professional agency is necessary for ongoing and collaborative PD and PL and school development (Toom, Pyhältö and O’Connell Rust, 2015). Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini (2015) link teacher learning to the professional community of the school, which in turn, provides a very complex and “nested learning environment for teachers” (p. 1). These authors describe the organisational structures, which include communities of learners in the school. These communities of learners provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and to interact with others in a positive professional social climate with support from colleagues. Teachers are involved in learning but the extent of that involvement depends upon contextual factors, teacher skills and knowledge, teacher beliefs and motivation to adopt, adapt and process new ideas at various levels (Pyhältö, et al., 2015). Contextual factors include workplace conditions, professional relationships, leadership and organisational factors, which all contribute to teacher engagement through active learning. Believing and perceiving oneself as an active, reflective, motivated, intentional learner and decision-maker is a significant part of becoming an active professional agent who is developing expertise and skills (Pyhältö, et al., 2015). Agency, according to Pantić (2015) includes culture and structures interacting with collective agency building with key components of purpose, competence, autonomy and reflexivity of participants in a cycle of transformed or reproduced teacher agency (Pyhältö, et al., 2015).

Professional agency is linked symbiotically to professional identity. As identity is created, and teachers understand their place and space within their school, they take actions to align themselves with that construction (Buchanan, 2015). Of particular importance for this study, Craig (2015) notes the shift from narrative accounting of teacher knowledge, to the professional knowledge landscapes and contexts, to teacher identities and how that impacts on change. Agency is a function of encouraged, mediated professional actions that teachers take within a specific context and includes perspectives that teachers state about their educational context.

Scott and Rodgers (2008) outline four approaches that influence the formation of identity. In relation to this study, identities are multiple, changeable and contextual. Identity is:

- formed by the influences from multiple social, cultural, political and historical perspectives. This concept provides the links to both PD and PL.
- formed by the active and emotional engagement in the development of relationships that are important for PD, PL and PA.
- inherently unstable and being formed and reformed in light of current experiences and influences.
- involves the construction and reconstruction of stories told over time. This inherently links narrative inquiry to the key aims of this research study.

Teachers use their current contexts and the cultural tools available to them to construct their identity. Their own personal and professional experiences, the current school culture and environment and current policies and official discourses assist in the creation and recreation of identity within a particular school. Identity is both a process and a product; it is not a concrete and easily discernible entity. It is unstable, constantly in a state of flux with new information flowing in constantly as teachers engage in their daily practices. It is this changing internal presence that affects how teachers respond to the challenges in their workplace and the extent and range of their ownership, accountability and responsibilities towards that workplace (Buchanan, 2015).

Priestly et al. (2012) outline the processes (in Figure 5.2 below) whereby the achievement of agency is always informed by past personal and professional experiences. For this study, the use of narratives has enabled these experiences to be foregrounded in terms of enablements and constraints for professional agency.

Agency is concerned with the way that teachers shape their responses to problematic situations and challenges, with the emphasis on practical evaluation (Edwards, 2015). Biesta et al. (2015) view these emergent phenomena as an “actor-situation transaction” (p. 626). Temporality, interactions and relationships of contexts in action are not only key elements of quality PD, PL and narrative inquiry, but also play a part in teachers engaging and reactivating previous patterns of thought and actions. Other aspects include the generation and projection of future actions against this configuration of reflective thoughts. The interplay between a person and their practice or culture is paramount when considering agency (Edwards, 2015).

Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2012) developed an overarching visual representation of teacher agency (Figure 5.2 below) where they describe the iterational and projective inputs into the practical evaluation of the main facets of a working teacher’s professional life.
Decision-making and analysis of the cultural, structural and material aspects of professional life impact upon the creation of perceptions. These perceptions indicate teacher agency.

**Figure 5.2:** Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2012): Teacher Agency (p. 5)

The NT Department of Education and Training (NTDE) is a relatively small government jurisdiction. While this may be limiting in terms of personnel, resources and the ability to cater for a student and school population spread around a large geographic area, easier proximity to key education personnel, resources and communication networks could be viewed as a strength. Buchanan (2015) raises the issue of the relationship that teachers have with the political arena, where they “confront the policies and professional discourses they encounter, not as tabulae rasae (blank slate), but rather actively use their own pre-existing identities to interpret, learn from, evaluate and appropriate the new conditions of their work in schools and classrooms. In this process, their identities are reformed and remade – and professional agency is carved out.” (p. 701). The stance taken by the NT Department of Education is one that is of concern to the teachers in this study, for there have been changes in policy which affect their daily work and their future PD and PL needs.

The importance of teacher agency is highlighted in this research study. It investigates teachers’ ownership, engagement and personal accounting of their PD and PL experiences but also what they do with them, the actions they take professionally.
5.3 Links to the Conceptual Framework: Social Constructivism (SC)

The interpretive nature of the study, allied to the identified need to understand the world in which teachers live and work, makes the social constructivist (SC) paradigm useful in terms of its explanatory power for this study. As professional learning concepts and narrative inquiry focus on human interactions, social contexts of teaching and learning environments and intrinsic personal and professional characteristics and qualities, the links to social constructivism are strong.

Historical elements informing the future and past, present and future timelines are key concepts of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Reissman, 1993) constructivism and social constructivism. The relationships between people and the constructed environment (including social relationships) as a transactional or situated cognitive perspective is another shared concept. From a bigger picture perspective the professional learning of teachers based in schools implies a very situated and specific perspective. Teachers develop subjective meanings, rich, varied and multiple, which allows a search for the complexity of views (Creswell, 2007).

Porcaro (2011) refers to the concept of the “knowledge society” as referenced in the 2005 World report titled Towards Knowledge Societies, by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) where there is a need for people to move towards the equitable development of locally valued knowledge and cultural. The basic premise behind this vision is the move from simple information sharing to knowledge building on a far more complex level. As well as having the capability for such knowledge societies to grow and thrive, people need to have the ability to access information, create that knowledge and share it globally in a cycle of knowledge building (Porcaro, 2011).

The term constructivism describes a range of ideas and approaches to learning and teaching including the concept that the individual learner can personally construct knowledge through a social process (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011). Fox (2001) refers to it as “basically a metaphor for learning, likening the acquisition of knowledge to a process of building or construction.” (p. 24). Constructivism specifically includes the concept of building on existing knowledge to create new, relevant and meaningful skills, knowledge and understandings, a concept with links to professional development, professional learning and narrative inquiry. Palinszar (1998) references the upsurge in interest in social constructivism.
to global reforms over the past twenty years where learners are encouraged to be more active participants in their learning (Matthews, 2003). Critical to this view is that learners share and discuss their ideas, even disagreements, and to problem-solve and make decisions through reflection and internalisation of multiple inputs.

Fox (2001) summarises the key factors that define constructivism:

- Learning is an active process;
- Knowledge is constructed, rather than innate, or passively absorbed;
- Knowledge is invented not discovered;
- All knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic;
- All knowledge is socially constructed;
- Learning is essentially a process of making sense of the world; and
- Effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for the learner to solve.

These key factors provide the links to this study and the raison d'être for the inclusion of Social constructivism as an underpinning discourse in the development of this narrative inquiry. It links the developmentally appropriate, active learning by teachers, as adult practitioners in a personally relevant way to them and makes sense of their educational environment. Knowledge is constructed through communication and social interactions with others, imprinted with what has come before, but forming new understandings for the future (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Kim, in Orey, 2001; Liu & Chen, 2010; Porcaro, 2011). A key element of this research is to investigate understandings through communication of individual narratives and interactions.

The relationship between people and their constructed environment (including social relationships) as a transactional or situated cognitive perspective is important (Liu & Chen, 2010). From a bigger picture perspective the professional learning of teachers based in schools implies a very situated and specific perspective. From a practical perspective, this research engages teachers employed within schools in the NT, a specific constructed environment, and transactional in terms of similar but different contexts.

Teachers develop subjective meanings, rich, varied and multiple, which allows a search for the complexity of views (Creswell, 2007). The goal of this research was to rely on the
participants’ views of the situation and these subjective meanings are negotiated, often in timelines or ordered ways, socially and historically (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2002; Creswell, 2007; Liu & Chen, 2010; Lyons & Kubler LaBoskey, 2002).

Social constructivism is characterised by certain traits such as research questions or problem-solving being broad, general and open-ended. This enables participants to construct the meaning of the situation, and learn, through discussions and interactions (Creswell, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Porcaro, 2011). Researchers or inquirers generate or inductively develop a pattern of meaning: the aim of this research was to explore these potential themes and analyse them for their similarities and differences, and the meanings imbued in them.

With reference to this research study, and to the teachers involved as research participants, the NT Department of Education and Training introduced the NT Curriculum Framework (NTCF) in 2002 to all schools. This document was designed to cater for national requirements in curriculum, assessment and reporting and embedded national statements of learning, reporting to parents against national mandates and national curriculum development. Key principles of deep understanding, a developmental approach, lifelong learning, expected standards, flexibility and inclusivity underpinned this document. The preferred learning approach, which infiltrated curriculum outcomes in every subject area and every stage of schooling, was a social constructivist approach, with active, collaborative inquiry learning at its heart. All teachers were in-serviced extensively, not just in appropriate use of the NTCF for planning, programming and assessment, but where the content was about SC. While the PD was planned for adult educators based on the same SC principles that dominated the curriculum document for students, all teachers are aware of key principles of SC. In this research study, those same SC are discussed but in this instance, the words and text of the teachers is used to show their deep understandings of SC for themselves as well. Between PD, PL, SC and PA, there are many similar principles; Section 5.4 provides examples of this close interaction between concepts underpinning this research study.

5.4 Comparison of Key Characteristics of SC, PA, PD, PL and NI

There are conceptual relationships between social constructivism and professional agency as the conditions that inform professional development and professional learning. Narratives are the tool by which understandings and sense-making take place. They are the mechanism
whereby clarity is sought, but also where conceptual understandings are developed and actions taken by each teacher. Table 5.1 shows the coherence of these elements of the conceptual framework for this study. This table builds on the comparison of characteristics between PD and PL, in Section 3.3: Defining PD and PL by further adding a comparison to key concepts of both PA and SC.

The characteristics outlined below have been discussed in relevant sections of this research study, with PD and PL discussed in Chapter 3. Narrative Inquiry was discussed in Chapter 4, where critical characteristics were identified for use in this comparison table. Social Constructivism and Professional (Teacher) agency are discussed in this chapter (above). Characteristics of both PD and PL are included in an extensive comparison in Chapter 3.

Table 5.1: Comparison of Characteristics of SC, PA, PD/PL and NI (variation of Table 3.1)

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<tr>
<td>Building on existing knowledge to create new, relevant and meaningful skills, knowledge and understandings: Fox, 2001; Palinszar, 1998; Powell &amp; Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011</td>
<td>Teachers taking responsibility and ownership of their education environment including their learning: Biesta, Priestley &amp; Robinson, 2015; Pyhältö, Pietarinen &amp; Soini, 2015; Toom, Pyhältö &amp; O’Connell Rust, 2015</td>
<td>Consistent PD related to teacher needs / particular purpose (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>School or field based narrative approaches are linked to initiatives in curriculum development (Craig, Zou &amp; Poinbeauf, 2014) If teaching is viewed as a lived accomplishment linked explicitly to a teacher’s life, to relationships with people and to patterns of teaching and learning acquired in life, then narrative inquiry is amply appropriate (Conle, 2001) Personal narratives are sequential and meaningful (Andrews et al., 2008)</td>
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Consistent PD related to school needs / particular purpose (Gordon, 2004)
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<tr>
<th>Key characteristics of Social Constructivism (SC) which align with PD, PL and PA</th>
<th>Key characteristics of Professional Agency: Teachers which align with PD and PL</th>
<th>Key characteristics of PD and PL (based on Literature Review)</th>
<th>Key characteristics of Narrative Inquiry (NI)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Building on existing knowledge to create new, relevant and meaningful skills, knowledge and understandings (continued from previous)</td>
<td>The extent of learning and change affected by contextual factors, teacher skills and knowledge, beliefs and motivation: Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015</td>
<td>Change in knowledge and skills (Hoban, 1997)</td>
<td>Knowledge construction is transactional (Craig et al., 2014)</td>
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<td>Reflection and internalising from multiple inputs: Matthews, 2003</td>
<td>Change Agents: Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015</td>
<td>Cultural change (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>The role and influence of teachers in the professional context and their role in the teaching and learning process (Craig et al., 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student centred learning: cognitive and/or social constructivism: Powell &amp; Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011</td>
<td>Workplace / classroom environment and needs: Biesta et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015</td>
<td>Student-centred learning (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>Teaching-learning processes and acknowledgement of teachers’ personal practical knowledge (Craig et al., 2014)</td>
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<td>Learning is a social process and is socially co-constructed, is ‘connected’ when individuals are engaged in shared activities: Beattie, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Taber, 2011</td>
<td>Collegiality: Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015</td>
<td>Teacher collegiality (Gordon, 2004)</td>
<td>Experience centred and culturally-oriented approaches to narrative (Andrews, Squire &amp; Tamboukou, 2008)</td>
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<td>Effective classroom is widely viewed as one where teachers and students are interacting and communicating: Powell &amp; Kalina, 2009</td>
<td>Interactions and relationships in the development of PA: Biesta et al., 2015; Edwards, 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015.</td>
<td>Content of PD to include peer observation, dialogue and feedback (Fiszer, 2004)</td>
<td>People, places and things in a social and personally satisfying intellectual creation of meaning and knowledge (Clandinin &amp; Connelly, 2000; Craig et al., 2014)</td>
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<td>Active, personal learning: Fox, 2001; Powell &amp; Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011</td>
<td>Communities of learners and practice Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö, et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015.</td>
<td>Collaborative support and resourcing (Ambusson et al., 2012)</td>
<td>Dynamic, complex, metaphorical relations (Craig et al., 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and control over own learning: Biesta et al., 2015; Pantić, 2015; Toom et al., 2015</td>
<td>Influences from multiple social, cultural, political and historical perspectives: Biesta et al., 2015; Scott, 2015</td>
<td>Complex series of interactions and communication (Ambusson et al., 2012)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key characteristics of Social Constructivism (SC) which align with PD, PL and PA</td>
<td>Key characteristics of Professional Agency: Teachers which align with PD and PL (based on Literature Review)</td>
<td>Key characteristics of PD and PL (based on Literature Review)</td>
<td>Key characteristics of Narrative Inquiry (NI)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive knowledge acquisition based on individual or social thought processes: Powell &amp; Kalina, 2009</td>
<td>Collaborative / shared governance: Pyhältö et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Collaborative / shared governance of teacher learning</td>
<td>These communities are safe, storytelling places (Craig, 2015) Use of narratives, contextually oriented and focused on the experiences of participants (Andrews et al, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is an active process; Fox, 2001 Effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for the learner to solve: Fox, 2001</td>
<td>Communities of practice: Pyhältö et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Transfer of learning (Ambusson et al., 2012; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Leberman et al., 2006)</td>
<td>Good teaching often includes the creation of an effective, efficient, supportive and professional learning or knowledge community whose role is in the nurturing, assisting and supporting of teachers within their particular contexts (Conle, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic: Fox, 2001 All knowledge is socially constructed (Fox, 2001)</td>
<td>Formation of identity Biesta, et al., 2015: Pyhältö et al., 2015: Toom et al., 2015.</td>
<td>Behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development (Evans, 2011)</td>
<td>Teachers can engage in dialogic processes to witness raw experiences, negotiate meaning and ascertain and authorise interpretations of situations in valid and meaningful ways appropriate to their teaching and their schools (Craig, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Agency: Biesta et al., 2015; Pantić, 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015</td>
<td>Importance of Teacher agency on PD/ PL (Toom et al., 2015)</td>
<td>Implied enlightenment and teacher satisfaction: Biesta et al., 2015; Pantić, 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015</td>
<td>Personal enlightenment (Evans, 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These cohesive links underpin my Conceptual Model, where SC and PA play an integral role in teachers’ ongoing access and willingness to engage in PD and PL. Narratives frame their experiences and enable knowledge construction based on previous learning and professional agency which impact on that learning and knowledge construction. Narratives, in their widest sense of interactions and relationship building with others, as well as the descriptions, explanations and questions evident in articulation of experience, play a singular role in enabling and strengthening concepts of SC and PA, which in turn enables PD and PL to become valid and meaningful for teachers.
5.6 Summary

This section has described the key factors of social constructivism and professional (teacher) agency in reference to my interconnected conceptual model with PD and PL at the core of this research study. The role of narratives is included with reference to their role in articulation, knowledge building and sense-making of those PD and PL experiences, but the operationalisation of narrative inquiry, as the research methodology, is explained in Chapter 6.

This photo is once again of Darwin in the Wet Season, when huge thunderstorms come in over the city, whipping up the seas against the rocks of Nightcliff Beach (twelve minutes from Darwin CBD).

Figure 5.3 Season storms and surf; Nightcliff Beach
Photo with permission from Fred VantSant
CHAPTER 6: Research Methodology

In this chapter, the elements discussed in previous chapters are brought together in an active research inquiry. This narrative inquiry uses qualitative methods for examination of the narratives of seven practising teachers. The narrative approach allows for the organic and naturalistic exploration of professional learning, using individual descriptions, communications and narratives by the classroom teachers.

Roller (2013) outlines the key characteristics of qualitative research which apply to my use of narratives in this instance and which were iterated by Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls and Ormston (2013). Roller (2013) refers to the plausibility of the interpretation rather than the truth of findings, the importance of context and meaning, and the dimensionality of the various underpinning factors. These factors included key considerations such as teachers choosing their environment to provide their interviews, the shared context of schools in the NT and the shared language and relationship between researcher and participants. Lichtman (2013) reinforces this view in that narrative research inquiry is a group of cross-disciplinary approaches that rely on spoken words or visual representation of individuals, where the lives of those individuals are told as stories.

I narrowed my research focus in this research study to a descriptive one whereby an “accurate description is produced of the interpretive narrative accounts individuals or groups use to make sequences of events in their lives or organisations meaningful” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 161). Polkinghorne (1988) refers to narrative as a “kind of organisational scheme expressed in story form” (p. 18) and further, that “narrative is a scheme by means of which human beings give meaning to their experiences of temporality and personal actions” (p. 11). While narrative can refer to one story, in this instance “scheme” refers to the collective storied wisdom, expressed through the teacher participants’ individual stories. This is expressed in itself as a narrative in Chapter 7. There is space for literary metaphors, with Polkinghorne (1988) referring to those individual stories as narratives or accounts of the embedded meanings of past events and actions. There is a plot, a theme or main point to the narrative, that is, PD experiences and opportunities. Polkinghorne (1988) describes the plot as ‘the logic or syntax of narrative discourse” (p. 160), the powerful potential of the stories to give meaning to, in this case, teachers’ professional lives. The plot captures the essence or spirit of the story or stories, and can be encapsulated and exposed.
6.1 The Inquiry Process

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the NT Department of Education (NTDE) both gave their permissions for this research to proceed.

Application was made to engage in research to QUT and the NT Department of Education. Approval to engage in research was granted from QUT with approval number 1200000012 (Appendix B). Approval to engage in research with NT participants was granted by the NT Department of Education (no approval number but the letter of approval is in Appendix B).

Trial interview techniques were tested with a research volunteer, whose responses are not included in this research study. Lita engaged in the interview process from beginning to end, answering questions in the contextual audit, as well as engaging in an interview. Her role-playing extended to an adverse reaction to the interview questions, where her consent was withdrawn (role-play only). Technology was tested prior to interview. Her input to the research process resulted in changes to the contextual audit and the interview process.

An advertisement was placed in the NT News, Darwin’s local newspaper, requesting research participants to engage in this research study. The original plan was for teachers to engage in a survey online, but the NT News declined to publish the website address, preferring a telephone number as direct contact instead.

Teachers engaged in an initial survey and contextual audit over the telephone, to discuss their suitability. The telephone discussion ascertained a short variation of the contextual audit including positive responses to key criteria such as their registration in the NT, their engagement in PD over the past five years and the likelihood of their principal’s permission to engage in research. All teacher participants self-identified as primary teachers and the diversity of the teachers who responded to this request fulfilled criteria for diversity and experience of PD and PL. Information about QUT’s research processes was shared in this telephone conversation, as was NTDE approval to engage with teachers. This information was also offered to teachers by email and fax: all declined this offer, stating that verbal information was acceptable at this stage.

As a result of their willingness to engage in this research, verbal and email approvals were sought from relevant principals. All approval information from QUT and NTDE was shared with principals, along with an estimate of the amount of time for the interview process.
Further approval was sought for me, as researcher, to be on school grounds during school hours if teachers preferred their interview during school time. In all cases, principals were supportive of the research, engagement by their staff member and for me to be on-site, if necessary.

Teachers who indicated their willingness to engage further in this research received the written contextual audit (details are included in this chapter). These were returned to me, and seven participants were deemed suitable for this research. My original number of research participants was five. Discussion with my principal supervisor at the time indicated that it would be valuable to gain the additional information to ensure the provision of rich text so necessary for a narrative inquiry.

Interview times and places were coordinated with each teacher and interviews were conducted with each teacher according to their personal requirements. Mark was the only teacher who requested his interview during school hours at his school. All other teachers requested weekend interviews in my home office. My home office is a quiet, secure room in my home and in accordance to guidelines laid down by the Federal Attorney General of Australia. I am a civil marriage celebrant and require a space that provides for privacy and confidentiality and complies with guidelines governing marriage celebrants; these teachers were interviewed in that office.

All consent forms were signed, with each teacher giving written permission to engage in this research. All processes were explained and sighted by each teacher, including the approvals and withdrawal of consent. At this point, the diversity of teaching contexts emerged. While each teacher self-identified as a primary teacher, not all teachers were in classrooms in schools. All teachers were registered as primary teachers and engaged in teaching primary curriculum and using primary pedagogy. This dilemma was discussed with my principal supervisor at the time and permission was given to continue with my current seven research participants. My principal supervisor and I discussed whether additional research participants (such as those exclusively in primary classrooms in primary schools) should be sought, but based on the rich transcripts that each teacher provided, a decision was made to include all seven research participants in my inquiry.

Initial interviews were envisaged for one to two hours. Each interview extended to a minimum of two to three hours. Each participant was given opportunities during and after the
interview process to clarify and add to the interview (but not to delete any initial comments). Six of the seven research participants engaged in this reflective exercise, and added, amended, clarified and extended their information upon reflection.

Transcripts were written and the variations in the transcription process are discussed in this chapter. Authentication of the transcripts was confirmed with the teacher participants, with opportunities for further clarification and addition encouraged. In one instance, Jeanne reflected upon her transcript and a fortnight after its completion, she rang me for a further opportunity to clarify sections of her transcript. This was done in a telephone call and her additions noted in her transcript with the date of her additional information.

The transcripts were collated and data was compared. Key words were selected as descriptors of each teacher’s words and text. These key words included educational words such as transfer of learning to assist in the identification of the concepts that emerged in the interviews and transcripts. Lita, who was used to trial the inquiry process, provided peer confirmation of the key descriptors, with no identifying information about the research participants. Samantha, one of the research participants, engaged in member checking of some of the emerging themes, without any identifying information about participants.

Key themes which were within the boundaries of the Conceptual Framework of this research study emerged from the text and transcripts. While some themes, such as transfer of learning, were discussed briefly by all teachers, decisions were made about exclusions and inclusions, based on the purpose of this study, the key interview questions and the resultant text and transcripts. No measures were in place as part of this study to quantify or qualify transfer of learning (and other identified themes) and as a result, these themes are not included in detail in this research inquiry.

All teachers were offered an opportunity to engage in a focus group discussion about the emerging themes. As some had already given me three and four hours of their time in adding and clarifying their thoughts to their original transcripts, all teachers indicated that they would prefer not to return for a focus group discussion.

Creswell (2007) outlines a qualitative cycle of data generation and collection activities as indicated below (p. 118), applicable to narrative inquiry. He iterates that while it is an integrated cycle, there are numerous entry points to it. There are multiple phases to the
collection of data, some overlapping, and some taking precedence over others. The research process is discussed against the key elements of this cycle, which includes:

- Locating sites and Individuals:
- Getting access and making rapport:
- Purposeful sampling:
- Collecting data:
- Recording information:
- Resolving field issues: and
- Storing data (p. 118).

This cycle was used to guide the discussion in this chapter and each element is discussed below in relationship to the overall research process listed above.

6.1.1 Locating Sites and Individuals and Purposeful Sampling

This narrative inquiry has a focus on teachers and their viewpoints so their specific sites were of lesser importance. It has already been established that this research study is embedded in both the NT and with reference to primary teachers and their experiences with PD and PL. This is a study of the conscious and active engagement of teachers in the phenomena of PD and PL, and their first-hand and first person recounting of those experiences, is under investigation.

Purposeful sampling involves the intentional selection of individuals to learn about and understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). It is defined by Creswell as a process by which specific settings, people or events are selected deliberately for their explicit information. In this research study, while the site was instrumental in influencing and affecting teacher responses (mostly due to the complexity of factors inherent within schools), it is the teachers who form the focus of this study.

The settings are of critical importance in affecting a great variety of factors which impact on the delivery of PD and PL within a school and in this study, the educational setting of the teachers is local and specific but implied rather than actively examined. The responses to this study could not be obtained unless the setting was very specifically oriented towards students
and influencing the teachers in their comments. The purposeful sampling needs to be considered (Souza, 2014). Sousa explains that:

In a narrative-based phenomenological methodology, this means that the participants should be chosen because they can offer fertile examples of the theme under study. As the unit of analysis is experience and not the individuals or group, the participants are chosen in accordance with specific criteria, in order to make important contributions to the structure and character of the experience under investigation. These assumptions limit the representativeness of the sample, and more important than the number of participants are the data gathering procedures and the variety of evidence that they can produce (p. 214).

An advertisement (ad) was placed in the NT News, the local daily newspaper in a Saturday edition to ensure that teachers had maximum access. I chose not to give any personal identifying information in this ad so the option of responding to it was dictated by personal interest in engaging in a research study that included the PD experiences of the teachers.

This ad included the following brief information:

1. Research participants required
2. PD experiences of NT Primary Teachers (approved research)
3. My home telephone number

Initially, I preferred to send potential participants to Survey Monkey, a software application which creates electronic surveys for the collection of basic information with voluntary contact details given as the last question. The NT News was reluctant to publish a website as the chief contact for this ad, citing the need for a telephone number at least. Eight teachers responded to this advertisement, citing the need for a telephone number at least. Eight teachers responded to this advertisement.

1. All participants were informed of the validity of this research, citing both QUT and NTDE approvals for it. All potential participants were given opportunities to ask questions about the proposed research.
2. Initial questions to the eight callers included the following contextual audit / survey to ensure that teachers had sufficient PD and PL experiences to discuss and describe. The initial questions included
1. Are you a qualified, registered primary school teacher in the NT? Yes/No
   a. As this study involves NT teachers only, only teachers with a current registration with the Teacher Registration Board of the NT were accepted.
   b. All teachers self-identified as primary teachers.
   c. A secondary question was asked about the length of time of their teaching career.

2. Where in the NT are you located? Darwin / Palmerston / rural / remote
   a. All research participants are in schools in Darwin and Palmerston, with one teacher working in a rural school.
   b. NT Department of Education and Training is represented as DET.

3. How large is your current school (approximate number of students)?
   a. This question related to the availability of possible regular school based PD and a variety of possible centrally-located PD opportunities for comparison and mention.
   b. Urban schools are represented as those within Darwin and Palmerston (satellite city) boundaries. Remote schools are those outside of the those boundaries.
   c. All participants were from urban schools and of sufficient size to offer adequate PD and PL opportunities.

4. What is your current stage of schooling? Early Childhood (EC) / Primary (Prim) / Secondary (Sec)
   a. This research study has a focus on the primary years of schooling.
   b. All teachers self-identified as primary trained and experienced. Two teacher identified that they were currently teaching in Early Childhood classes, but were in a primary school where their grade levels were assumed as part of the primary focus of this study.
   c. Two teachers currently teaching in secondary schools identified as primary teachers, teaching primary curriculum, using primary-based pedagogy. It was not until their interview that they identified as currently working with secondary students.

5. What is your gender? Female / Male
   a. One teacher is male and six teachers are female.

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 166
6. What is your age group?
   a. While age group does not necessarily relate to years of experience as a practising teacher, and while this criteria was not a necessary one for exclusion or inclusion of participants, it did relate to the maturity of participants and their possible need as a practising teacher.
   b. The variety of teachers indicated teachers from every career stage.

7. Over the past two years, have you engaged in professional development activities (type of PD);
   a. Within your school as in-house activities with internal presenters, eg mentoring, moderation, school planning?
   b. Within your school with external presenters?
   c. With other schools at an off-site location?
   d. External presentations, eg conferences or offsite training?
      * Please note: these categories are represented as 1 – 4 in Table 6.1 below.

8. Approximately how many professional development activities of any kind have you engaged in over the past two years?
   a. All teachers had engaged in a minimum of ten PD or PL activities in the past two years. This time frame was chosen to reflect multiple opportunities for each teacher to engage in a variety of PD and PL activities.

Answers to the questions above indicated eight appropriately qualified teachers were suitable for this research study. Seven participants were selected to engage in interviews and their overall contextual audit is included in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Initial survey responses (pseudonyms used throughout)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teacher Registration</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Size of school</th>
<th>Current Teaching / Class</th>
<th>PD sessions</th>
<th>Type of PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40–50</td>
<td>Y Graduated 1993</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Urban Darwin / DET School</td>
<td>200–350</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>1. Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Teacher Registration</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Size of school</td>
<td>Current Teaching / Class</td>
<td>PD sessions</td>
<td>Type of PD</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tally</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Y Graduated 2006</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Palmerston / DET School</td>
<td>200-350</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>1. Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Y Graduated 2005</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Rural / DET School</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Primary (Languages)</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>1. Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Y Graduated 1973</td>
<td>Primary and EC</td>
<td>Urban Darwin / DET School</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>EC and Primary: Teacher release time/Cross curricular</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>1. Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The summary of teacher responses is included below as an indication of the sampling processes that occurred at the start of this narrative inquiry.

- All teachers are registered with the NT Teacher Registration Board;
- All teachers self-identified as Primary teachers;
- All teachers hold relevant teaching qualifications:
  - Four teachers have a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) teaching in a Primary school;
  - One teacher has a Bachelor of Education (Primary);
  - One teacher has a Bachelor of Education (Secondary): this teacher has a Graduate Diploma (Primary Education);
  - One teacher has a Diploma of Teaching (Primary) as well as a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood); and
One teacher, who volunteered to trial the interview questions, has a Bachelor of Education (Primary) as well as a Graduate Diploma with a Special Education focus.

- The participating teachers represent a cross-section of chronological ages and stages in their professional careers (based-anecdotally on their date of graduation and employment as a teacher since that date);
- All teachers have been continually employed as a teacher since their university graduation and were deemed to be “practising” teachers;
- All teachers said that they had links to primary teaching contexts, whether through their primary school, their teaching of Primary curriculum, using predominantly Primary-oriented pedagogy, or through their divergence into other related primary context such as working with children in home-schooling situations;
- All teachers have had at least ten professional development opportunities in the past two years (in particular);
- While all teachers are currently in either Darwin, Palmerston or the rural area, two of the seven participating teachers listed have remote teaching experience (anecdotal evidence);
- Their schools vary in size from 200 – 1200 students so have varying numbers of teachers and opportunities for interaction with other teachers in a variety of school-based professional development opportunities;
- Their teaching preferences range from Early Childhood, which incorporates Preschool to the primary years up to Year 6. During the time frame of this research study, Year 7 was transferred from the primary stage of schooling to the secondary stage of schooling.

This initial survey of questions established the credibility and suitability of all eight applicants. While one was used to trial the interview questions, the seven teachers identified above participated in the interview stage of this narrative inquiry.

6.1.2 Participating Teachers

The participating teachers in this study are described below, with information gained from discussions with teachers over the phone after their initial survey responses. They are diverse individuals with varying degrees of classroom experiences but also different PD and PL opportunities. Some of the information in the descriptions below was gathered prior to the
formal interview process (explained in Section 6.1.3: Gaining access and developing rapport). This section introduces Eliza, Mark, Jeanne, Olivia, Tally, Terry and Samantha, the seven teachers who participated in this research study and Lita, the teacher who engaged in the trial of the questions and the inquiry process. Her responses are not included in the inquiry but Lita’s input and engagement in the trial added another layer of trustworthiness to the inquiry process. A further description of each of the participating teachers is included in Chapters 7 and 8.

Eliza is an Early Childhood (EC) teacher in an urban school and professed not to be interested in senior positions. She stated in her first comments that she loves teaching. Eliza said that she is one of a core of solid teachers in her school and is very focused on the students in her classroom. She has had a variety of EC teaching positions but has gradually begun moving into middle primary which she has enjoyed. At the time of her interview, she had taken her previous Year 3 class into Year 4 and she enjoyed the experience of having the same students for the second year. Her personal aim was to develop a better appreciation of technology and its role within daily teaching and learning. While NT teachers have access to departmentally supplied laptops / notebooks / think pads, Eliza indicated that she was not using them sufficiently well in her classroom. She is keen to fine-tune her pedagogical knowledge and she has done a lot of networking with experienced teachers to update her ideas. Eliza spends a lot of time outside of school hours looking for resources for her class and believes that one of her strengths is her dedication to being a good teacher.

Mark’s strength is Maths and his focus within his urban school is the development of numeracy programs to assist students. He has long held an interest in literacy and has been directly involved in the coordination of school-based professional development in his primary school. He is interested in leadership positions now and he has been supported by his school to engage and implement whole school projects. Mark is currently involved in the coordination of PD, particularly in numeracy projects aimed at improving student achievements. Mark has previous experience in a previous school as a Special Education teacher and has a keen interest in assisting and supporting children with learning and developmental delays.

Jeanne explained that her forte and love is Science. While she was initially Early Childhood trained, she soon realised that middle and upper years of the primary stage of schooling were
a better fit for her teaching skills. She has moved into an urban secondary school to teach the younger Middle Years students (Year 7 and 8). She now prefers to teach students in transition between primary and secondary education. She states that she uses some of her early childhood pedagogy with some of her lower achieving students, finding that they react well to the use of concrete, hands-on materials and lessons which cater for these students with less defined literacy skills. While this study has a focus on primary teachers, Jeanne felt that she fulfilled those criteria by being a primary teacher working temporarily within a secondary school. Jeanne was very explicit about her reasons for participating in this study: she indicated strongly that teachers are the missing link in the current discussions about PD delivery and implementation at both Federal and state/territory level. While much discussion goes into what should be happening in schools, she believes there is a nexus to what is actually happening in schools and the pragmatic reality of classrooms.

Olivia is a secondary trained teacher with over thirty years of experience in urban and remote schools in the NT, mostly in Primary schools. When I first met Olivia, she had just transferred into an urban Primary school from a remote locality and became the teacher of a smaller classroom of students with behavioural issues. While she had her Bachelor of Education (Secondary) and taught in secondary schools in both Victoria and NSW prior to her move to the NT, she studied for her Graduate Diploma in Primary Education (and eventually her Certificate IV in Training and Assessment). She ran her classroom as an EC class in that she had many concrete materials, short, sharp and succinct teaching times, explicit oral and visual instructions and many personal resources to challenge and intrigue a class of very active students. She was using Lego™ Robotics™ when it first emerged on the Australian market, prior to its common use in classrooms. She achieved good results with reluctant learners who were required to use Mathematical concepts such as space, quantity, complex calculations, and technology. When she volunteered for this research, she had just taken leave without pay, prior to starting in a position in private enterprise. Her training skills were going to be used to assist both primary and secondary teachers to gain specialised skills in a targeted behaviour management approach. Olivia stated that she had much to say about her professional development experiences. As she was preparing for a new career as a PD facilitator, Olivia requested feedback from this research study, as she wanted to use the information about effective PD for her own personal and professional interest.
Tally explained that she lives, loves and revels in being an EC teacher in an urban school. A teacher who is just over her first hard seven years of teaching, she indicated that she was enjoying her personal focus on the “art” of teaching, on fine-tuning her understandings of pedagogy, in particular. She has begun specialising in the coordination of pertinent and meaningful professional learning experiences for and with other teachers on her team. With an interest in senior positions, Tally has had short periods of time where she has been ‘acting’ in senior positions. With a keen interest in pedagogy, Tally has done much mentoring of neophyte teachers, particularly in early childhood. During her interview in my home office, Tally was very much interested in how I coordinated and organised my multi-age classrooms as this was an area she wanted to explore. She laughed that she was engaged in her own research study and, while I was hopefully getting the information that I required, she too was hoping to get information that she required for her classroom. After the interview, we spent some time discussing operational issues of multi-age classrooms and how to coordinate these effectively to individualise teaching programs.

Terry has just finished eight years as a practising teacher in a rural NT Primary school. While Terry initially trained as an EC teacher, she was very explicit that she was not comfortable in EC classrooms. Very early in her teaching career, she began making the move into middle and upper primary classes. Terry has a personal interest in Indonesia, dating back to her own high-school days when she was part of an Australia–Indonesia year 10 exchange trip. Adopted by her Balinese family, Terry spent many enjoyable holidays becoming increasingly fluent in Bahasa Indonesia. In her fifth year of teaching in NT schools, she was offered a position as the Language and release time teacher, a position she accepted eagerly. In her sixth year, she applied for and won a position in a rural high school teaching Bahasa Indonesia and Studies of Society and Environment. She was explicit in her insistence that she is a Primary teacher who was using her Primary expertise with her academically challenged students in a Secondary setting. Recently Terry transferred to Victoria, again winning a position as one of three Languages teachers at a prestigious school but considers herself well qualified to give the Languages PD perspective as part of the Primary focus of this research study.

Samantha is a teacher with over thirty-five years of teaching experience, all of it in the NT. She started her career in Gove (Nhulunbuy) as a young teacher. She spent several years
around the Gove area as a teacher at Nhulunbuy Primary School with close links to the nearby Yirrkala settlement and school. She eventually moved to Darwin and spent the next few years in a variety of urban Primary schools, many of them in senior leadership positions. In her long and varied teaching career, Samantha has taught in both EC and most primary grades except for Year 7. Her last position was as a release teacher (taking the classes of teachers for their mandated weekly release time), teaching a variety of curriculum areas within classrooms. In the past year, Samantha has now retired from teaching in the NT, but is now working in a voluntary capacity with key organisations with a focus on children and their learning delays. Samantha wanted to participate in this research as she feels that she has been engaging in PD for a great number of years. At the time of the interviews, she was working as a Primary teacher in a Primary school and had not yet retired. She admits that as she neared the end of her teaching career, perhaps use of technology in the classroom was not her strength.

Lita volunteered to do the trial of the interview questions and the technology. She is an experienced teacher with over twenty-five years of teaching experience and currently is a Special Education teacher in a primary school of around 300 students. The questions were initially developed but with Lita’s help in deconstruction of intent, meaning and purpose, primary, secondary and tertiary level questions were developed to assist with clarification if necessary. Technology, in the form of audio and video equipment and software on my computer, was fine-tuned as I walked through the inquiry process with Lita to gauge its flow, benefits and usefulness in the interview. Lita’s responses to the questions are not included in this research study as they were intermingled with commentary on the process and suggestions to fine-tune the questions themselves.

This section introduced the seven participating teachers who lie at the heart of this research study. While they were working in schools or with Primary students at the time of the interviews, it is their reflections on their PD and PL experiences, which are critical to this research study.

6.1.3 Gaining Access and Establishing Rapport

With approval from both QUT and the NTDE, all principals of those schools were approached and approved each staff member’s involvement in this research study. Two
requested details about identifying information that might be used in this study but all
principals were satisfied at the limitation of information to urban or remote status and general
size. Only one principal has expressed ongoing interest in the key findings of this study and
the other six did not wish for any further feedback.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) outline basic criteria which govern the appropriateness of
research sites, but which will influence sampling processes:

1. Entry and access to site/s (Marshall & Rossman, 1999);
In this narrative inquiry, with its focus on teachers and their viewpoints about their PD
experiences, the concept of “site” is deemed to be the wider generalisation of practising
teachers in NT schools. Approvals were gained from principals for interviews to take place
within each teacher’s school if necessary. Six teachers preferred their interviews in my home
office after-hours while one teacher preferred his interview in his office in the school.
As there is general information about schools (in particular about the ability of schools to
provide for interaction and purposeful PD), principals were aware that limited information
would become a part of this study. No specific identifiers have been used in this study.
Creswell (2007) raises the issue of gaining access to organizations, and some of the
difficulties inherent within the process. When entry to a school was required, as in Mark’s
interview, appropriate protocols were used, that is, signing into and out of the school as an
invited visitor.

2. High probability that the elements to be studied are plentiful at the site (Marshall &
Rossman, 1999);
The teachers who volunteered to participate in this research study indicated in their initial
survey responses, and in our discussions afterwards that they had sufficient PD experiences to
engage in valid and credible reflection and commentary on their PD experiences. There are
few schools in the NT where teachers are not, or have not previously engaged in professional
learning, but one criterion for selection was at least a minimal engagement in professional
learning opportunities. Creswell (2007) indicates that participants should be distinctive for
their accomplishments and ordinariness or who shed light on a specific phenomenon or issue
being explored. The teacher participants have been outlined above, and they fulfil the criteria
of maximum variation, defined by Creswell (2007) as “diverse variation and identifies important common patterns” (p. 127).

3. The researcher develops trusting relationships with participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999);
As explained in Chapter 4, narrative inquiry is a descriptive, interpretive journey of discovery in which explanations emerge over time, but one where the creation and construction of a valid and realistic account, the “final, collective story” (Huber & Whelan, 1999 in Creswell, 2007, p. 126). In the interests of transparent and open processes, participants were made aware of my motivations and purpose of the study and were granted respect for their confidentiality and anonymity (Creswell, 2007). Each participant was provided with approved Participant Information for QUT Research Project (overview), additional information for the face-to-face interview and the process for withdrawal (if necessary). These are all included in Appendix B.

Creswell (2007) indicates that individuals must be willing to engage in the study (which all were). Extensive information about the research questions and the processes for gathering data were shared explicitly with teachers. In the event that a teacher was reluctant to engage with the research questions and interactions with his or her peers, a process for any teacher to withdraw from the research was explained. None took up that option but all individualized their response processes to the interview questions.

4. Data quality and credibility of the study are reasonably assured (Marshall & Rossman, 1999);
The Teacher Registration Board of the NT dictates registration procedures that are dependent upon standards of professional qualifications, behaviours and ongoing updating of professional learning. While qualified teachers are not required to be registered, in this instance all seven teachers within this study are registered teachers who are therefore entitled to teach in NT classrooms. While this is no promise of data quality and credibility in terms of this particular study, registered teachers have met at least minimal requirements for ongoing registration. This ensures a level of implied reliability and credibility within the wider NT education community.
Care has been taken to ensure holistic and integrated methods of data collection with reference between data sets. For example, limited professional environmental information was collected through use of a context audit. Individual interviews were part of the process to ensure the cross-referencing of research information and that there was sufficient difference in research participants. Teachers were given opportunities for their own individual narrative about their experiences (one source of data) and to articulate concerns or issues in multiple opportunities during and after their interviews. While these second and third opportunities allowed for feedback, they allowed participants to offer authentic descriptions of their PD experiences.

Creswell (2007) identifies an additional key factor in the selection of sites and individual teachers who are engaged in this research. Equal participation and responsibilities are essential in the inquiry process. Participants were informed of the ethical processes for approval by their NTDE, schools and QUT during their initial telephone call to me, in email when their contextual audit was supplied to them in written format and in their initial interview. Teachers understood completely that this research was both acknowledged and approved by relevant authorising bodies prior to interviews taking place.

Each teacher was given the information that their principal had agreed to their participation, and prior to setting up an interview place and time, they were also given the information about their principal’s permission to use school premises for the interview, if necessary. Each teacher participated equally against the same set of sampling criteria and answered the same questions. While photographic and video evidence was initially to be collected, permission to use images was refused by individual teachers.

Consent forms signed by each participant teacher and me, as researcher, included the following information as suggested by QUT protocols for engaging in ethical research and Creswell (2007). A copy of the approvals from QUT and NTDE, consent forms and withdrawal forms are all included in Appendix B. The following information was shared with research participants:

- The right of participants to withdraw voluntarily from the study at any time;
- The central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in data collection;
- Steps to protect the confidentiality of the respondents;
- A statement about known risks associated with participation in this study;
• Expected benefits to accrue to participants in this study; and
• The signature of the participant as well as the researcher.

As identifiers were purposely limited about each teacher’s school, and limited identifiers were supplied about each teacher’s class, no permissions were sought from parents. As no children are referred to within this research, except in general terms regarding the improvement of student outcomes, no additional permissions were required from that perspective.

6.1.4 Data Organisation

The aim of this research was to generate knowledge and information about each teacher’s PD and PL experiences, and to collect data from seven participating teachers in the NT about their unique views of their PD and PL.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest collecting field texts through a wide variety of sources to ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data. Referring to generated data, these authors define this data as that “created specifically through the research process in an interaction between researcher and participant such as that through interview or group discussions” (p. 54). These authors make the observation that this may be referred to as researcher provoked data. They prefer to use the terms naturally-occurring and generated, with the differentiation about whether the data would have been generated somehow or whether it was created specifically for research purposes.

Data that were generated through this narrative inquiry for further analysis included a short questionnaire including some questions from the contextual audit. This information was discussed by telephone with each potential participant ensured that selected participants were suitable for inclusion in this study. Relevant approvals information was shared with each potential participant at this time. A contextual audit (as discussed in Section 6.1.1 of this chapter) was supplied to each participant by email and also discussed at first interview.

Trial of the narrative interview process, including technology used for the interviews, enabled the peer confirmation process to begin, with amendments and tweaking of both process and templates. Narrative interviews occurred with each individual (discussed further in Chapter 7) and each research participant was given multiple opportunities to clarify and amend their
transcripts prior to analysis.

Key descriptive words were allocated within each transcript. Lita provided peer confirmation of the validity of those descriptors. Eliza’s transcript is included in Appendix A, as an example of the coding within the transcripts. Samantha provided a member check of some of those descriptors and of the key themes that were emerging and discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8. All teachers were offered an opportunity to engage in a focus group; all teachers preferred not to return for this focus group discussion.

The crucial concept behind this research study was the eliciting of stories through interview (Creswell, 2007). It is the oral, living stories that teachers tell about their professional learning experiences that most intrigues me. While teachers generally are used to writing reports, submissions and programs, it is their oral stories that form the basis of this research. Primary interview questions were designed, developed and trialled with one teacher whose responses are not included in this narrative inquiry. As a direct result of her involvement, second and third level questions were developed in the event that clarification of the question was required. Further options were explored from a technology perspective to assist in transcription.

Ethical considerations prior to the interview process included the concept of relationship building. Creswell (2007) refers to the power relationships between participants in interviews, referring to the power hierarchy that sometimes is perceived to exist (also referred to by Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls & Ormston, 2013). The interviewer is perceived as controlling the interview, but in this instance, teacher participants were afforded some control and in many ways owned the process.

All participating teachers were asked the same common questions which all had direct links to the broad research questions outlined in Chapter 1. In the interests of consistency, all participants were asked the same initial question, with a second and third level question as necessary. The direct questions that were asked are marked in bold and italics in the full transcripts. Eliza’s transcript, detailing the three levels of questions and her responses is located in Appendix A. As with all discussions during interviews, some additional questions were required for clarification purposes on occasion and these are so marked in the transcripts. The general overview of interview questions is indicated below, including references to the overall narrative purpose of the questions as well as the professional
significance of them in terms of this research study.

The following section contains the interview questions of the seven participating teachers in this research study. While these questions may appear to be very precise and specific, particularly when the intent is to engage teachers in a narrative with their own direction, some teachers can be garrulous. The intent was to use the questions as “starting points” for the discussion and to use them as necessary but not necessarily to restrict the discussions that emerged from them. Discussion is a two way street and I did not wish to waste my research participants’ time. A framework was essential to keep me, at least, on task to explore the viewpoints of teachers about these specific aspects of their professional learning lives.

Linked to these questions are the pertinent areas of this research study, which are embedded within these questions and likely to offer insight into the viewpoints of teachers in a holistic and natural way. For example, the embedded narrative elements are listed along with the focus on relevant content such as SC and PA which may emerge in the responses. Additionally, these research questions were designed specifically to elicit information about each teacher’s beliefs about PD and PL and their perceptions about the value of the PD and PL, and more importantly their engagement in those PD and PL experiences. Many of the questions ask for the importance of the experience to each teacher.

Another aspect to consider is that while the literature review indicated a move between PD and PL, the participating teachers in this study were using the more generic term PD. The nature of their PD experiences was the more common approach and it was a part of this study to explore whether teachers were innately moving into PL conceptual understandings and use of terminology.

The following indicates first, second and third level questions which are reflected in the transcripts from each participating teacher and the focus areas embedded within each question. There is a very direct correlation between the research questions, the embedded conceptual framework including NI, SC, PD and PL, and the interview questions asked of research participants. The actual questions which formed the interview are marked in italics for easy reference to the Eliza’s transcript (which is included in Appendix A).

The broad research questions are detailed in Chapter 1, Section 1.4 Research Aims and Questions. The key narrative elements embedded within each broad research question are
listed below and indicate that a question is setting the scene, for example. The research study focus is also included where, for example, the question might elicit information about the significance and value of PD to the teacher. The Analysis purpose seeks the deeper concepts embedded within the interview questions such as teacher voice, for example.

1. **Broad Research Question** (taken from Chapter 1, Section 1.4: Research aims and questions):

   a. **What are the beliefs, understandings, values and beliefs of practising classroom teachers regarding their professional development and professional learning?**

      - **Narrative Elements**: Elements of Narrative Inquiry (NI), Introduction, Setting the scene, Character identification and Initial plot identification
      - **Research Study purpose**: establishing significance and value of PD and PL, establishing parameters of interaction between researcher and participant, eliciting rich description, ascertaining conceptual understandings and indicators of Professional Agency (PA) and Social Constructivism (SC)
      - **Analysis Purpose**: Teacher Voice, PA, Significance and value of PD

   Interview questions are indicated below, with further linked analysis applications. The initial question is often backed up with a secondary or tertiary level question. These questions were thoroughly discussed with my principal supervisor prior to the interview process.

   i. **Embedded concepts: Teacher Voice, PA and Educational Context**

      - *How important is Professional Development to you as an educator?*
      - *Is PD important to you as a classroom teacher? Why?*

   ii. **Embedded concepts: Educational Context, SC**

      - *Describe your class / classes and school (in general terms).*
      - *What is your classroom like?*

   iii. **Embedded concepts: Professional Context, PA, SC links to PD and PL questions**

      - *How do you define your role within your classroom?*
      - *What words or phrases would you use to describe your teaching style?*

   iv. **Embedded concepts: Professional Values, Context, PA**

   Interview questions and alternatives are listed.
• As a professional in a classroom, what is important to you about teaching and learning?

v. Embedded concepts: Contextual Understandings about PD and PL

• What is your definition of Professional Development?

ii. Broad Research Questions (taken from Chapter 1, Section 1.4: Research aims and questions):

a. What are the beliefs, understandings, values and beliefs of practising classroom teachers regarding their professional development and professional learning?

b. What is the significance and of both PD and PL on practising classroom teachers?

c. What are the key and critical elements of both PD and PL that led to change to in teachers’ teaching practices?

• Narrative Elements: Plot development, Character development, Complication, Implications

• Research Study purpose: intrinsic value of PD and PL to participant teachers, implications for improvement of both teacher and student outcomes, links to models of PD

• Analysis Purpose: Professional development or professional learning

i. Embedded concepts: Extent of PD and PL

• What general types of learning or professional development activities have you engaged in over the past 2 – 5 years?

• What general types or types of learning or professional development activities have you engaged in over the last 2-5 years?

• For example, describe some of the ‘in-house’ learning experiences or PD that you have engaged in. What other types of learning experiences or PD have you engaged in?

ii. Embedded concepts: Range of PD and PL, PA, SC, Narrative elements of NI

• Describe some of your learning or professional development

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 181
experiences.

- Describe some of your PD experiences including the "good, the bad and the ugly".

iii. Embedded concepts: Professional or personal need, PA

- Why did you choose to attend those particular PD sessions?
  What was the process by which you were attending?
- Were the learning experiences / PD related to school needs?
- How were the needs determined for your engagement in particular learning experiences or PD?

iv. Embedded concepts: Extent PD and PL, PA, SC

- What was your level of engagement in these described learning experiences or PDs? Participant? Coordinator? Presenter? Negotiated attendance?
- What was your knowledge or interest level prior to engagement in these learning experiences or PDs?
- Were these in areas of individual interest or decided through school processes (and what were those school processes)?

iii. Broad Research Question (taken from Chapter 1, Section 1.4: Research aims and questions):

1. What is the significance of both PD and PL on practising classroom teachers?
2. What are the key and critical elements of both PD and PL that led to change in teachers’ teaching practices?

- **Narrative Elements**: Complication, Resolution

- **Research Study purpose**: teacher perceptions, characteristics of quality professional development

- **Analysis purpose**: characteristics of quality professional development

i. Embedded concepts: Professional Purpose, Teacher Voice, Significance and value of PD, PA, SC

- Identify and describe your most significant PD experiences.
- Why did you choose to attend those particular PD sessions?
- Why do these PD sessions stand out for you? What was
ii. Embedded concepts: PD/PL quality and effectiveness, PA, SC
   - What do you view as the most important contributing factors of those PD experiences?
   - Why do you value them so strongly?
   - Identify the critical elements that made those PD experiences so valuable to you.

iii. Embedded concepts: PD, PL, transfer of learning, SC
   - How did the PD opportunities provide you with opportunities to extend your learning (personally and professionally)?
   - How did these PD experiences affect your teaching?
   - How did these PD experiences affect the learning in your classroom? How? What? When? Where?

iv. Are there any particular issues with your attendance at PD that you would like to talk about?

These questions provided a framework for the narratives to emerge and for teachers to provide the descriptions and explanations of their PD and PL experiences.

6.2.5 Recording Information and Resolving Field Issues

The next section outlines the recording of data and the resolution of field issues. Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls & Ormston (2013) explain that complex experiences are often best addressed in face-to-face interactions where opportunities for clarification and amendment can occur. These authors explain that an understanding of motivation, decision-making and impacts is often best achieved in the personal focus of such exchanges.

The original intent was to video and audio record the individual interviews, preferably within the schools. Most of the teachers diverged from this plan due to their preferred learning styles and ownership of the research project.

- Lita, who was trialling the interview process using both audio and video recordings, engaged with the entire inquiry process. Her responses were mixed responses to the
interview questions and fine-tuning use of the equipment and its methodology in the inquiry process and were not used in the research study as data;

- All seven participating teachers refused video recording;
- Mark and Tall agreed to audio recording;
- Only Mark preferred his interview to take place within school hours and at his school in his office;
- Six teachers preferred to do their interviews after-hours, preferably Saturday and in my home office.

To the experienced researcher, these minor discrepancies may not have raised any red flags. As a neophyte researcher, my concern was whether the six teachers who engaged in interview proceedings in a less formal and non-school related context (my home office) provided valid data with the same integrity as a “formal interview” with Mark who engaged in traditional interview protocols on site at his school. Each teacher was unique in how he or she approached the interview process, and their attempts to ensure accuracy in their reflections, clarity in their words and a determination to give a full and meaningful response added to the veracity of this study.

The questions were the same for all participants, providing a thread of stability and consistency between all research participants and I was the only researcher asking those questions. While six interviews took place within my home office, this office is similar to any school-based office, providing privacy and confidentiality to participants. Their stories are important, the comfort of teachers is paramount and the circumstances of the location for the telling of those stories seemed irrelevant during the telling of these narratives. If anything, I think the setting for the interviews was essential in creating rapport between researcher and participants as the discussions were rich and detailed with no time constraints on the interview process and with no concerns of school-based interruptions.

Creswell (2007) suggests that researchers use adequate recording procedures when conducting interviews; the audio and video equipment was ready to be used to record the narratives. I had a prepared template with the questions already inserted for ease of transcription after each interview. However, all seven participants chose not to engage in the planned interview strategies.
• Lita, the teacher who fine-tuned the inquiry process with me was both audio and video taped, but preferred these to be deleted from camera, recorder and my computer once the need for further analysis was completed.

• Eliza refused both audio and video recording. This was her first experience as a research participant and while she discussed her concerns about both audio and video recording, she had a clear idea of how she wanted to answer my research questions. Eliza knew that I could touch-type, and once we discussed her concerns, a mutual decision was made for me to type her responses directly into the prepared template. As I was facing Eliza, with the notebook between us, we were still making eye-contact and interacting directly. Eliza would respond to my questions, reflect and then direct me back to something she had just said to add a clarifying statement. Having a transcript emerging between us proved beneficial to Eliza as after our morning tea, she went back to think about her responses and immediately added in comments before proceeding further.

• Mark preferred his interview in the confines of his school office. He agreed to audio recording but not to video recording. His reasoning was that it would be exceptionally dull to watch him talking afterwards. He allocated a lunch appointment to my interview so he had a finite time in mind for completion of the interview. Mark’s responses were transcribed after the face-to-face interview and while he requested a copy to be sent to him, he had no further feedback or clarification that he wished to add to his initial comments.

• Jeanne refused video recording and was anxious about audio recording. She requested the research questions ahead of her interview and wrote her own responses initially. She was uncertain of the need for a face-to-face interview and this was Jeanne’s first experience as a research participant. She was immediately concerned that she had not given me sufficient information, so we started the face-to-face interview with coffee and general school discussion about her EC training and her experiences in the secondary stage of schooling. We then discussed her responses and immediately she began providing clarification and expanding her responses. Jeanne’s preference was for us to be talking while her comments were typed by me directly into her prepared template. Jeanne took a copy of her responses with her when she left the interview, and rang after reflection to add clarification.
• Olivia noted that I had Dragon Naturally Speaking™ a voice recognition-to-text software program on computer (mainly as I was using it when she arrived). Olivia asked to use it to see so we spent her initial hour of oral interview time “training the dragon” to recognise her voice and to transfer that to a text based document. Olivia’s interview took the longest with her return on successive Saturdays for a month while she played with the voice recognition software. Olivia was pleased with this method of transcription and was highly satisfied with her transcript (taking full ownership that it was exactly what she wanted to say and was faithfully transcribed). She has communicated with me that she now routinely uses a voice recorder in her car on longer journeys to transcribe her thoughts. As this voice recorder is synched with her voice-to-text software, this innovation has since resolved some time issues for her.

• Tally initially agreed to audio-taping of her interview but when she replayed her interview at home, she requested a second interview time. I had already transcribed her oral interview so she requested a copy of that document to peruse. When she came back for a second interview, the discussion was about amalgamation of the two interviews or the status of interview to as a possible replacement. As Tally’s concerns were about whether she had provided sufficient clarification on some points, the decision was made to take her initial interview and add comments to it. Tally preferred the notebook with me touch typing additional responses but Tally led the interview. While I clarified the intent of some of the questions, she directed where additional comments were needed. She requested that no one listen to her initial interview.

• Terry preferred to discuss the questions with me first, to ensure that she was correct in her interpretation of them. Despite reassuring her that no right or wrong answers were possible, and I was after her viewpoints and descriptions of her PD experiences, we still had a coffee first to discuss her teaching context. For example, when asked about the extent and range of her PD experiences, she wanted clarification as to whether that included her own PD, only school based PD or what sort of PD. This was difficult as this was the information that I wanted to elicit from her and how she viewed her PD experiences. Her interview was problematic for me as a researcher, trying hard to gather her viewpoints without bias or input. Terry preferred to discuss and have her answers transcribed immediately into the template for her consideration. After reflection of her
immediate transcript and another coffee, Tally went back and amended her initial transcript with clarification comments.

- Samantha’s interview hour became a day. She too declined to be audio-taped, and wanted to discuss possibilities for her response with me and then formulate her “official response”. The first question was awkward. I explained that I was having problems with this approach and that her answers seemed carefully rehearsed and artificially produced. We discussed the dilemma and she was happy to speak and her responses to be touch-typed immediately into the template. Samantha is a very voluble but reflective speaker and while we kept returning to her transcript, our “off track” discussions are not included in her transcript. Samantha returned several times to her transcript, and her amended comments are indicated on her final transcript. Samantha authenticated her transcript at the end of the day as being a valid description of her PD and PL experiences.

I could find no research studies comparing and contrasting various transcription methods within the same study or attesting to the validity or invalidity of such inconsistency within the same study. I am a neophyte researcher. While it may speak more about my concerns for the integrity of the collected data, this unexpected field issue prompted a greater examination of professional / teacher agency. The participating teachers chose to engage in this research as full, actively participating partners in the research process to the extent that they made choices about the methods of recording and transcribing their data.

As a direct result of the participant teachers and their determination to engage in this study in their own ways, my personal philosophy about PD and PL being an individual journey and the need that it be tailored to each individual was crystallised. I have no doubt that had I insisted on the planned audio-taping and eventual transcription, that two participants would have left rather than continue to engage in the inquiry process.

While the lack of consistency in data collection and transcription methods is obvious, the participating teachers were deeply interested in ensuring that their answers to my questions were anonymous, but accurate and a valid representation of their viewpoints. All were prepared to amend and clarify their initial answers and to expand where necessary. It was of interest as a researcher to see member checking in action, where the accuracy of viewpoints was ascertained by research participants naturally taking on this role to ensure accuracy and validity of their responses.
A planned focus group final session did not take place as initially planned. Shortly after transcription, teachers were invited to a focus group to discuss their individual responses and all teachers declined. I invited all seven teachers for a feed-back session about the emerging themes from this research study. The invitation was for a feed-back session which all seven had initially indicated as desirable. Six of the seven teachers agreed to the invitation and authenticated their original transcripts as being accurate and valid, despite the passage of time between their interviews and the feed-back discussion. None of the teachers requested any clarification or amendments to be included in their narratives. When asked individually about the validity of their narratives, all six expressed their satisfaction with the transcripts as being a valid and honest appraisal of their PD experiences. One teacher, Eliza, noted that her more recent experiences supported her comments at the time of her interview.

6.2.6 Storage of Data

Some participants expressed anxiety about copies of their transcripts and the possibility of its being inadvertently shared with third parties without their authorisation. Mark did not wish his audio file to be uploaded to Cloud technology but was happy for his audio file to be stored, along with all electronic transcripts, initially in a password protected, secure section of my computer. All electronic transcripts currently reside on a password protected external hard drive, within a locked filing cabinet in a secure office. Upon completion of this research study, in line with participants’ requests, the full electronic transcripts will be deleted from the external hard drive.

6.2 Trustworthiness, Validation and Reliability

Sousa (2014) refers to trustworthiness where he defines it as “a series of procedures that involve the clear and rigorous description of all the methodological steps used in the research process, from the adequacy of the research question and participant sample to the theme under study, and the collection and analysis of data.” (p. 213). He outlined a group of techniques to establish trustworthiness in both quantitative and qualitative research, which included establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

- Internal validity corresponds with the qualitative term of credibility;
- Generalisability corresponds with the qualitative term of ‘transferability;
- *Reliability* corresponds with the qualitative term of *dependability*; and
- *Objectivity* corresponds with the qualitative term of *confirmability*.

Validity and rigour relate to the extent, scope, transparency and thoroughness of the data collection. The standards of validity and reliability have been promoted in different ways, one of which is the development of parallel criteria, with the origins in quantitative methodologies where the terms are matched.

Craig (2013) notes that narrative inquiry texts have a truth-like character but make no claims to certainty and that it is natural for multiple perspectives to emerge. While field texts can be triangulated and processes put in place to assure veracity and integrity of the narratives, narratives refer to chronological events and personal perceptions. Craig notes that researchers seek narrative resonances between and among research participants, and this relates to my analysis to discover emergent themes in the narratives themselves. While experiences may differ between research participants, similarities and resonances add validity and increase the “truthlikeness” of claims (p. 129). Craig explains that narrative truth follows where stories lead rather than a focus on historical facts (albeit considered as part of historical with time-event correspondence). She makes the claim that it is the reader “who decides whether the research texts we produce are believable and able to inform future decisions and actions (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002)” (p. 130)

Sousa (2014), in addressing the idea of credibility in qualitative research observes that “qualitative research seeks to provide rich thorough descriptions and interpretations about the phenomena under study as they occur in their natural environment. The starting point is not a previously determined theory, but instead the conclusions are rather based upon data, and therefore inductive” (p. 211). Sousa outlines various areas where trustworthiness needs to be considered. He refers to the adequacy of the research questions, a process which involved, in this study, reference between experienced supervisors, reference to other research, to teachers and to my own quest for data about this topic.

The adequacy of the data is important with Sousa (2014) explaining that the central aim of data gathering is to “determine evidence on the experiences that are being researched, so the researcher, in analysing the data, may define general descriptions from them of those same experiences” (p. 214). This concept of adequacy is in line with my research, which seeks a deep understanding of the practising teachers and their understandings and perceptions of
their professional development experiences. She argues that criteria for goodness must be tied to different theories, paradigms or qualitative communities.

Taking that one step further, Webster and Mertova (2007) propose that narrative inquiry should not be judged by the same criteria as that applied to more traditional qualitative research methods, suggesting that narrative inquiry and story-telling is more concerned with individual truths, more engaged in individual interpretations of complex, human-centred events. Therefore, they argue, the definitions of validity and reliability need to be re-examined and reconsidered to cater for that differentiation that is narrative inquiry. Webster and Mertova (2007) assert that

…reliability in narrative research usually refers to the dependability of the data, while validity typically refers to the strength of the analysis of the data, the trustworthiness of the data and ease of access to that data (p. 89)

Webster and Mertova (2007) indicate that this has implications for narrative research where a personal narrative is not meant to be a world view or a definitive record and is more closely linked to meaningful analysis rather than with consequences. Reliability is less about stability of measurement but rather trustworthiness of the notes or transcripts (Webster & Mertova, 2007). In this regard, validity has been ensured through opportunities for participating teachers to transcribe their descriptions according to their preferences as well as opportunities to amend, clarify or expand upon reflection. Webster and Mertova (2007) state that access, verisimilitude, authenticity, familiarity, economy and transferability may be applicable. These terms resonated with my narrative research, both in terms of what I hoped to accomplish and in terms of the conditions engaged to ensure the validity and reliability of this particular study.

Access, as defined by Webster and Mertova (2007) is not just access by the reader to the participants, their cultural context and the knowledge and information generated by the researcher – participant interactions (of which there were many in this study) but also access to the range of information generated by this study. Webster and Mertova (2007) explain that “honesty” within the context of responsiveness, including the ability to interact with a situation and to sense its dimensions and make it explicit. I suggest that participants accomplished this by engaging fully with the research questions, but this was limited by the research questions. I did not explore explicit links between one PD session and their
classroom practice; I was asking teachers about their perceptions and viewpoints overall about their professional learning. Within that parameter, they were making their learning explicit, with opportunities to elaborate and clarify as necessary (another aspect of honesty, according to Webster and Mertova, 2007). Some participants alluded to their use of their responses to frame their in-school performance reviews, a part of the knowledge base expansion, their adaptability and their ability to recognise holistic emphasis. These factors are explored by Webster and Mertova as part of their definition of honesty.

Verisimilitude, according to Webster and Mertova includes three key concepts, with the first being that the research and reporting of the events should resonate with the experience of the researcher. My own work history as a practising teacher and key interest provided impetus to this study, and the participants selected were interested in engaging in this research for their own clarification and use within their classroom situation. Secondly, the reporting should have a high level of plausibility (Webster & Mertova, 2007), which is addressed in Chapter 7, with the results of this study clarified. Plausibility refers to the element of factual reality, and the sense that the results are in fact truthful, fair and reasonably accurate, at least at that point in time. Further, the truthfulness of the participating teachers’ accounts and the results are both explicit but also visible for confirmation.

Authenticity is a key concept. This is a small study, only involving seven participants. While teachers are not often asked specifically about their professional learning experiences and what they view as important, this study is a genuine and honest attempt to explain this phenomenon in a realistic way. The richness in this study comes from the genuine need and wish by participants to express their feelings, attitudes and beliefs about their professional learning and what it has accomplished and contributed to their professional lives. Their integrity and credibility is not questioned; each is a concerned, committed teacher who all appear to want the very best for the students in their classrooms and that in itself, contributes to the authenticity of this research study.

On the one hand, my familiarity with their context and situation may play against this study, in that objectivity may be questioned. On the other hand, as this is a narrative inquiry, that familiarity highlighted different concerns within their chronology and their different experiences, some related to their overall experiences as teachers. For example, having a similar background to Samantha and to a lesser extent to Olivia, I understood their references...
to the traditional PD events and experiences that were offered in the past in the NT. I had lesser experience in common with Tally and Terry, not having experienced the PD of the Australian Curriculum and its implementation across the country. This is an authentic research inquiry in that it is guided by teachers, and written by another teacher. There was an acknowledgement during the interviews of our mutual credibility, which, I believe, aided in the explicit nature of the authentic transcripts, and in the level of honesty about their experiences.

Transferability, as explained by Webster and Mertova (2007), relates to the ability of the richness of detail and the accessibility expressed in this study is sufficient that there may be applications in other settings. I believe that while this is an authentic study, there are certainly questions raised that could be raised in other applications. This is explained further in Chapters 7 and 8.

Economy was another concept that was considered, with the seven teachers providing many pages of rich description and chronologically referenced text in response to the three levels of questioning. My aim was to discover critical broad themes that emerged as part of their descriptions, with a view to providing directions for exploration.

Member checking by individual teachers who were offered multiple opportunities to engage in reflection and further annotation of their interview transcripts is explained as part of this section. Similarly credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are all discussed with a view to ensuring that the research methodology is valid and sound.

6. Role of Researcher

I am involved in this research study, both as the narrator of this research study, as a participant in the collection of the research, and interpreter of much of the NT specific concepts or contexts. While it is aimed specifically at exploring teacher viewpoints, my background as a practising classroom teacher and a Project Manager with curriculum and pedagogy responsibilities and working with teachers in schools, all provided credibility and authenticity to my questions and discussions with participating teachers. I engaged in this research as a colleague as well as a researcher.
My thirty-eight year teaching career in the NT counted towards my credibility with the participating teachers. In 2000, I became a Project Manager within DET, assisting in the development of an outcomes-focused and constructivist approach to the emerging NT Curriculum Framework (NTCF). My job was to liaise with senior staff in urban, remote and rural schools to deliver PD and to assist in the implementation of the new curriculum in schools. I worked considerably with teachers over several years. I have my own credibility with teachers, and interviews were not necessarily viewed solely as researcher-participant but more teacher–teacher. We spoke the same language, we jointly understand the culture, ethos and vision of NT schools and our discussions were interspersed with shared PD events. This familiarity is discussed in this chapter in Sections 6.2 and 6.3.

In support of my stance to operate as an “insider researcher”, Unluer (2012) notes that it is critical to clarify the role of the researcher because researchers take on a variety of member roles. These roles can include being an insider, where there is complete membership of the group. One of her more interesting comments was that insider researchers generally know the politics of the institution, not only the formal hierarchy but also how each context really works; that is, how to approach people. This was evident in this study, as the teachers and I shared common language, understood the precepts and vision of NTDE and had experienced many of the same or similar types of PD and PL.

DeMunck and Sobo (1998) provide several advantages of using participant observation and involvement in research situations. The refer to the “backstage culture” (p. 43) where the rich details of the descriptions, describing behaviours, intentions, situations and events as understood by informants, can be highlighted. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) add that it improves the quality of data collection and interpretation and facilitates the development of new research questions or hypotheses.

DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) discuss the situation where the researcher determines the extent of participation, however vicariously, in the lives of participants. This level of participation can be hazardous in itself and there were times when I debated internally over continued questioning for my clarification vs my active participation as a source of erroneous description (Johnson and Sackett, 1998). I worried about the “assumed” knowledge and whether my insider knowledge was attributing a description that was mine, rather than the teachers concerned. Additionally, DeWalt and DeWalt note that male and female researchers

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 193
have access to different information, such as different people, settings, bodies of knowledge and access to that knowledge. They believe that researchers must understand their own gender, sexuality, class, and theoretical approach for these may affect observation, analysis and interpretation. This type of information may apply to Mark, the sole male participant who was insistent on the interview being done during school hours in his office, rather than the female participants enjoying a sojourn in my home office, replete with tea, coffee, snacks and lunch as necessary.

My background meant that the seven teachers and I shared a common language, sometimes a common school history and a common understanding of living, teaching and learning in the NT. As an insider researcher I feel this makes this study richer and more accurate, and leaves the door open to further investigation of a wider number of teachers in the future.

6.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organising the data (i.e. text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes throughout a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. (Creswell, 2007, p. 148)

Creswell (2007) likens the process of data analysis to a spiral, with the researcher moving in analytic circles rather than a fixed and linear process. He describes the process of touching on several facets of analysis and circling around and around to develop various codes (or categories), making assertions about the frequency and importance of themes, and identification of significant events during the study.

In this study, there are three levels of analysis, which are described in Chapter 7. In the first instance, reference to key criteria and characteristics of a narrative inquiry approach are explored within the transcripts from the participating teachers. As this is the underpinning conceptual framework for this research study, it is imperative that the data collected complies with this inquiry methodology. In the second instance, the transcripts, as categorised by the research study aims and key questions, were collated and analysis was conducted to note the emergence of key themes, supported by evidence from the transcripts themselves. In the third instance, the emergent themes were compared to existing models of learning for their links or discrepancies.

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 194
Data management is the first step of the analysis process, and while qualitative text units are large, as word and sentence analysis, several researchers allude to the volumes of data when using a narrative approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Creswell, 2007; Elliot, 2005). While the data collection was oral initially, the resultant text documents are extensively detailed as transcripts for analysis. As stated elsewhere, narrative inquiry can be an organic and interpretive process. With the individual nature of the descriptions of their PD experiences, there is no choice but to circle around in a spiral to make sense of the extent of the data produced.

Creswell (2007) outlines the second steps of data analysis, which are to read copiously, make notes through use of memos, begin making sense of the overarching concepts that begin to emerge. The data were reviewed extensively and multiple variations of descriptive words and phrases were used to reach understanding about the emerging themes. One of the participant teachers, Samantha, was included as peer confirmation that the themes that emerged from her transcript were deemed accurate by her.

Creswell uses “code” or “category” interchangeably and the process of describing, classifying and interpreting the categories is at the heart of qualitative research. In this research study, descriptive words and phrases were used initially to link the words in the transcripts to possible groupings or categories of similar concepts, and from there to overarching themes for further discussion. This is where new themes emerge and where the true value of narrative becomes evident. Presenting multiple perspectives from the basis of time and chronology, background and current events and as linked to current research are considerations in the creation of themes or categories as well.

Creswell (2007) refers to lean coding, where he uses a maximum of five or six emergent themes, before enlarging it as a result of his reading, reflection and re-coding. In this research study, descriptive words and phrases were used initially to link the words in the transcripts to possible groupings or categories of similar concepts, and from there to overarching themes for further discussion. While many themes emerged as part of this overall theme generation, only those within the parameters of this research were discussed further. These emergent themes are discussed in Chapter 7. Creswell (2007) cites the use of pre-existing codes, sometimes based on a model, admonishing new researchers to be open to additional codes emerging through the research process. This has been an important part of the data analysis,
where the pre-existing models of professional development and learning, as described in Chapter 3, have linked to the commentary from the teacher participants.

### 6.5 Summary

This chapter explained and described the data collection and analysis process for this research study. It tracked the steps necessary to engage in this valid research, including the ethical approvals process through both QUT and NTDE. Copies of documents are included in Appendix B. Additionally, Eliza’s transcript is included in Appendix A, explicitly showing the links between the research questions, the conceptual framework and the interview questions. In Chapter 7, the viewpoints and perceptions of the seven teachers are described and linked to current research about both professional development and learning, as well as the Models of PD as described in Chapter 3.

The photo below is of a typical tropical sunset in the Dry season, in the rural area surrounding Darwin and Palmerston.

![Figure 6.1: Rural Sunset: Dry Season](Photo with permission Taryn Batenburg)
CHAPTER 7: The Plot Thickens and NT Teachers Speak

This chapter explicates descriptions and explanations about PD and PL experiences, as taken from the narrative interviews of the seven participating teachers to produce new knowledge about the PD and PL experiences of seven practicing primary teachers. It brings together the elements of the literature review into PD and PL, research methodology and key concepts of narrative inquiry.

The key questions of this research, which are used extensively in the interview process, are related to the PD and PL of teachers, exploring their definitions, perceptions and viewpoints about this professional issue. This study explores understandings about the core questions listed below:

4. What are the beliefs, understandings and values of practising classroom teachers regarding their professional development and professional learning?

5. What is the significance of both PD and PL on practising classroom teachers? and

6. What are the key and critical elements of both PD and PL that led to change in teachers and teaching practices?

The purpose of this research, therefore, is to analyse these aspects of teacher professional development, particularly those teachers in the NT through a narrative inquiry methodology, specifically examining:

- The extent, range and calibre of professional development and learning experiences of practising classroom teachers, as described by them in narratives;
- The common categories or themes embedded in the narratives of seven practising classroom teachers about their professional learning; and
- The significance and impact of the professional learning to classroom teachers.

Chapter 7 describes the opportunities by each protagonist, each participating teacher, to tell his or her story, to describe how each understood and contributed to the overall plot development of this narrative about their PD and PL experiences. They have an opportunity to describe their complications, the issues that arise along their professional learning journey. In this chapter, the plot thickens…
7.1 Classroom Contexts and Research Participants

A key consideration of this analysis is in reference to key characteristics of narrative inquiry. The words of teachers in their interviews and transcripts formed the basis of the data for analysis. While the interviews were conducted separately, this is the narrative of the process and the weaving, and re-storying, of the stories of those seven teachers into one narrative.

The participating teachers capture the local and specific situation in relation to their PD and PL experiences. They describe their classrooms and their individual context including their site (in generic terms), but also the relationships between them and their PD experiences. Another criterion of NI is that of situated knowledge, and by their descriptions, each of the seven shows the chronology of their experiences and the value of their reflections about their PD experiences in reference to their professional needs.

The individual narratives of the seven primary teachers are described below, allowing for a picture to emerge about each teacher and their narrative to be explored.

7.1.1 Eliza

Eliza, a trained Early Childhood (EC) teacher preferred Years (grade levels) 2, 3 or 4 (Middle Primary). She has only ever taught in Darwin, and has no remote experience. She was fully aware of the needs of her students, and noted that her students have many learning challenges. Her situated knowledge of the needs of these students was clear, and she acknowledged the contextual situation of her classroom. She captured the local and specifics of her teaching context in terms of the academic levels of her students but also some of the issues within her classroom. Her narrative begins with a description of the students in her class:

*My classroom is very low, filled with children with low and lower academically and (I) have lots of behavioural problems and special needs. It’s behind academically by one or two, sometimes three year levels – it’s a lot of work – and behaviour problems are children with emotional (problems) and being abused, those sorts of problems. Low social skills interaction and special needs as in low developmental – not being able to remember things – both cognitive and intellectual needs.*
Eliza had reflected on the capabilities of her students and was aware of their needs. She acknowledged that there are multiple truths, or different ways of knowing the students in her classroom. She listed the variety of groupings and ways she organised her class to optimise that learning (Beattie, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Taber, 2011). She had reflected on the need to support her students with social skills as well as academic knowledge and skills (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011).

*I facilitate their learning through individual ways, sometimes in group work or a buddy way, with a high level kid working with a low level, so both kids will benefit from each other. With the children with special needs, they get to work with the tutor in a group. I go around and make sure that I work with individuals, and that’s my close monitoring and observation.*

Eliza understood the characteristics of SC for the students in her class. She tried to make her classroom into an effective learning community, with different learning strategies and opportunities to share their learning. She showed her innate understanding of SC for the learners in her classroom, outlining the strategies that she uses to scaffold learning in her classroom and to engage in purposeful, real-life activities (Fox, 2001; Palinszar, 1998; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011). She states:

*I like to create my classroom as a big family who can work in a team, and harmonious. I model them as “we need to get along” and accept everyone’s differences. That’s through hard work, lots of modelling, lots of talking to the children about what’s right and how to behave socially and interact with each other in the classroom. I do a lot of hands-on activities, lots of visual cues and lots of visual aids. I teach the children from bottom to top experiences, through lots of hands-on experiences and then we go to the theory. At the moment, we do a lot of gardening and we harvest from the garden to cooking and our cooking lessons and then to our writing. And hard work...*

Eliza planned for a variety of transactional teaching methods which optimise learning experiences in her classroom, describing her “planning (of) individual, paired, group and tutored activities” to support her students (Craig, 2014).
I do a lot of hands-on activities, lots of visual cues and lots of visual aids. I teach the children from bottom to top experiences, through lots of hands-on experiences and then we go to the theory. At the moment, we do a lot of gardening and we harvest from the garden to cooking and our cooking lessons and then to our writing. And hard work...

As part of her personal beliefs, Eliza stated that “I think learning is all about their (students’) future but the teaching is up to us and we have to do a good job” which resonates with Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015), Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini (2015) and Toom, Pyhältö and O’Connell Rust (2015).

Eliza was a teacher during the development of the NT Curriculum Framework (NTCF) in 2000. This document was underpinned by Constructivist principles. There was an extensive professional development program which incorporated the development, trial and implementation of the NTF, but which modelled Constructivism in action and as an explicit theoretical paradigm. Eliza displayed characteristics of SC for herself as well. She believed that her role in the classroom was a “learning journey” where “teaching and learning is a lifetime education.” Eliza views herself as a “facilitator” of learning through use of “cooperation and collaboration”. She is a teacher who uses concrete, hands-on activities to assist her students.

Eliza stated strongly that she too is part of the learning in her classroom, with a comment that she learns from the children. She noted that she cannot stick to one particular way of teaching because part of her job is to cater for the needs of each child (Gordon, 2004; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011). The improvement of learning for her students is important to her as is the knowledge and skills that teachers need to learn without an end point that always focusses on the students.

7.1.2 Mark

Mark is an experienced teacher whose recent teaching experiences have been in urban Middle (MP) and Upper primary (UP) classrooms. He spoke briefly about a short time in EC as part of his remote experiences when he first began teaching in the NT. His career plan includes
senior positions in the future and he has attended leadership PD with that goal in mind. He has attended over twenty PD sessions over the past two to five years.

Mark was in a short-term Assistant Principal (AP) position, and engaged in classroom teaching for only six hours a week (with the rest of his load being administrative and management duties in collaboration with the senior management team of the school). While he was applying for contractual senior positions in other schools, he anticipated that he would likely return to classroom duties in the near future. He has clear ideas about his role as a teacher:

Well I think that we are providing the foundation for the children’s future in whatever year level they are at so we need to make progress so that they’ve got the right sort of foundation so they can continue on and become lifelong learners really. So I guess I have a bit of a holistic outlook that the world being of the child is very important. That’s not just the academic success but especially in the primary section you can have so many things that get in the way of a child being able to learn and often it’s something to do with the family or the home situation and so they, all those things need to be addressed before they can have success as a learner. I think you need to have good leadership to make that possible, to make sure that the conditions for success are inculcated and actively fostered.

Mark has taught in urban, rural and remote schools. While he considered himself a primary teacher, in his capacity as one of the senior managers in the school, he was keen to take on additional responsibilities. He was enthusiastic about his role in the identification of school needs and the coordination and implementation of school-based PD (Evans, 2011; Gordon, 2004), particularly within his key interests of literacy and numeracy acquisition. Already thinking globally, Mark was part of a management team linking departmental directions and implementation within his school and classroom (Gordon, 2004). Mark indicated the role that he played as a change agent within the school as part of that management team (Biesta et al., 2015: Pyhälto et al., 2015: Toom et al., 2015). He commented:

Well, the teachers need to be up to date with changes that are happening including things like curriculum changes. They also need to get PD if they have a particular child in their class who they need to learn more about how to teach them properly and for instance, if they have a child on the autistic spectrum and they have not had
before, they will need professional development in that area. With the changes that are happening like the Australian Curriculum coming in, all the staff need professional development in that area so that they’re both comfortable with doing it in that they can do that properly.

Mark noted that one of his aims is for his students to have a happy and successful experience in his class, believing that part of his job is to “challenge students from what they know to what they don’t know”, clearly indicating his understanding of SC principles (Fox, 2001; Palinszar, 1998; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011). Mark was a part of what he views as a transformational leadership team (Gordon, 2004) assisting in the move towards an outcomes-focused approach and implementation of that SC paradigm within his school as part of the NTCF implementation package of PD and PL events. He viewed this as good training for his current position where his school is looking at significant changes to their literacy and numeracy curriculum and pedagogy within his current school (Leberman, McDonald & Doyle, 2006).

A valid aspect of teaching for Mark was his sense of “humour” and he ensured a mix of light-hearted and serious activities and tasks within his class. He spoke often about the need to meet the needs of the range of students in the class by using “concrete” hands-on materials, “small groups”, “peer tutoring”, “streaming” of ability groups and “extension” activities, aspects of learning identified by Fiszer (2004). Mark alluded to academic expertise but he commented on the links to the family and home situation of each student and the variables that played in the classroom (Biesta et al., 2015; Scott, 2015). Mark also spoke about the strategies that he employs to assist and support students to learn. He commented that he reflects about:

...different ways to cope with that would be, depending on the learning style, in some cases, some peer tutoring can help those sorts of children. If they feel that they’re (pause to reflect)… if they are not responding as well to the teacher as I might hope, it might work out well that they can get some support from the other children. I think in the children who do have challenging styles, it is pretty important to try and get alongside them and help them out and not just set them a task and expect them to go on with it.

Mark outlined some of the strategies that he employs with different groups of students, and
the need to scaffold struggling students, indicating his awareness of SC principles within his classroom.

7.1.3 Jeanne

Jeanne initially trained as an EC teacher but soon became interested in Middle and Upper Primary. She was enjoying her life as a Year 7 teacher in a Primary school when this grade level was transferred to the Secondary stage of schooling. She applied for and won a position in her local high school with specific skills and expertise in Year 7 curriculum and pedagogy and became a member of the Science faculty. By her own words, this was a “dream come true” for Jeanne as she thoroughly enjoys Science and thoroughly enjoys the Year 7 and 8 students who form the bulk of her classes. She considered herself a Primary teacher first and foremost, however, and believed that she has been able to combine the best of Primary and Secondary pedagogy, in terms of pedagogical constructivism in action (Fleury & Garrison, 2014).

Jeanne viewed the research questions ahead of time, requesting them several days prior to her face-to-face interview (Mathews, 2003). She constructed personal responses to the questions (Fox, 2011), developing her own template to allow her to jot dot-points prior to her interview. Jeanne had not attended PD or PL with other schools in a cluster of schools, but had engaged in on-site PD and PL, as well as centrally based PD and PL for Science teachers.

In response to the first broad research question about her teaching and learning context, Jeanne stated that she was in an ideal situation to compare EC, Primary and Secondary stages of schooling. Jeanne self-identified as a Primary teacher, albeit teaching in a context where the lower academic levels of her students required a Primary pedagogy within Secondary constraints.

The first paragraph below is what she provided, in written format, prior to our face to face interview, when asked about her students. The second paragraph indicates the additional face-to-face (FtF) verbal comments that she added when we were sitting down together for the interview.

(Written response): Students in my classes are from different backgrounds and have widely diverse abilities. About 33% of students are not working to year level in
literacy and Maths. Probably 10-12% of my students are well behind. Several students need assistance to carry out simple instructions. No assistance is available in class.

FtF: I find that my Early Childhood training comes in so handy when working with these kids. It is really easy to damage their self-esteem and with hormones mucking up too, some of the kids really worry me. There is rigidity at secondary that doesn’t really allow for kids to succeed at their own level in their own time. The curriculum is set, the teachers change and there are few opportunities to allow for those same individual differences but I try to do the best that I can.

Jeanne much preferred being in a Secondary school, as programming is basically done for the term, with a focus on the teacher developing and implementing a culture of learning (Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö, et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015). She stated that in her personal experience, Secondary teaching was a lot easier than EC. She was very clear about her role in the classroom:

My role is to teach! This involves getting to know the students, making the class situation a positive atmosphere for students to work in, assisting with understanding as much as possible, developing just discipline, keeping the classroom quiet enough, to assist concentration and a hundred other facets.

She expressed some differences between Primary and Secondary teaching, noting the windows of opportunity for moderation and subject area enhancement were more extensive than in a Primary classroom. Jeanne also commented on the value of her Primary training and experience.

I love teaching the high fliers and the kids who are just there to learn, and there are so many options for them, but it becomes evident early in the piece who is struggling and who is not and there are limited avenues for support and assistance. Like there is the bottom Maths class for basic Maths but its level really starts around year 5/6 so anyone missing basic addition or subtraction is just so much further behind and with many fewer options to progress within the timetables of secondary. I have had to use my earlier training and experience to assist these students, or they would be left far behind.
Jeanne liked teaching, stating that “working with kids, when it happens, teaching is really a joy, an inspiration. I think kids are innately clued into learning, but we just sometimes don’t clue into what they need to learn at any given time. And things change so much that sometimes it is hard to keep them working on the foundation skills they will need five, ten, fifteen years into their future.”

When asked about Jeanne’s role in the classroom, her written answer indicated a student-centred response (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011) in that students “grasp basic concepts”, “have fun learning” and have “an appreciation of Science”. In her research, Evans (2011) notes the sense of enlightenment and this is reflected in Jeanne’s responses which she expresses in her own way. When questioned further, Jeanne professed some uncertainty about how to answer this question, indicating that she is a good teacher and teaching and learning is a key responsibility (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015; Pyhältö, Pietarinen & Soini, 2015; Toom, Pyhältö & O’Connell Rust, 2015).

7.1.4 Olivia

When the call for research participants went out, Olivia was working in a Primary school as a self-identified Primary teacher. At the time of the interview, Olivia had just taken leave from her classroom / school position to work as a private education consultant to three independent schools and home-schooled children. At the time of the interview, she had been a private consultant for around a month. She classified herself as semi-retired, in that she chooses how and where she will work. She has chosen not to work in a traditional classroom within any school at the time of the interview but views that she is still a Primary classroom teacher.

Olivia has been a teacher since early 1980 and initially she was trained as a Secondary teacher. In the opposite story to Jeanne, she eventually moved from the Secondary system and upgraded her teaching qualifications to become a Primary teacher. Being an older teacher, she had much to say about PD over the many years of her career and focusing her on the past two to five years of experiences was “interesting” in that she was planning her own directions and a new career path. Additionally Olivia was in the position of planning and delivering explicit PD for teachers, so she had a vested interest in sharing her views. It was her aim to find out what the overall interviews garnered in terms of teacher opinions about
effective PD.

Olivia had clear opinions about how she wanted to complete her interview and the transcript. She was transparent about what she hoped to gain from engaging in this research study to add to her own knowledge base (Fox, 2001; Palinszar, 1998; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011). Her comments about her personal repertoire of skills and current teaching situation indicated her understanding of the need for reflection and building on existing knowledge (Matthews, 2003).

I don’t have a typical class (now). I work with teachers, parents and kids, but usually in their own classrooms or homes. I don’t put up displays, or provide programs for other people. I consult on programs and I provide strategies and good activities, but I don’t actually do the programming for the kids, nor do I do intensive teaching anymore.

(Researcher Question): OK, but what is your context like? How do you like to operate?

I am organised, and my car is actually an extension of my home office. I have crates in my boot with some of the things that I like to share with teachers and parents, but I actually give them resources that work. I do a lot of my planning for sessions as I drive and I dictate into a small recorder, so when I get to the next place, I have already debriefed and planned from the first place. I use my IPad to record kids too so I can reflect on some of their answers and figure out where they are coming from. I am lucky because I spend a lot of time in reflection and have the opportunity to analyse behaviour so my recommendations are things teachers and parents can do – but they might not have got there without that time benefit.

Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) comment on the different layers of meaning, often analysed in connection to each other while Josselson (2006) refers to multiple truths. Olivia shows that even though her teaching context is very different, the levels of reflection, organization and implementation are key aspects of her teaching. Her experiences as a Primary teacher have enabled her to make connections and to see the multiple ways that her students are learning.

In response to the first broad interview question about what teachers say about their learning context, Olivia spoke of her “credibility” in government and non-government schools and in
her private enterprise job as an educational consultant. She currently works with a number of children who are being home-schooled. Olivia viewed her PD in a different way, linking it to her particular need to gain skills in her new business. She cited the need to expand her skills, but has not ruled out a return to a classroom at the end of the next school year.

Olivia cares for her students but as an experienced teacher, she showed her ability to explore options to find solutions for challenging behaviours and to scaffold their learning. She gave the example of a child who was struggling in class and the strategies that she was able to employ to assist the child, as well as parents.

Yes, one of my more recent jobs was to figure out what was happening with this little one who was suddenly performing, refusing to go to school, crying all the time, showing a whole heap of confrontational behaviours that were not the usual thing for this kid. I spoke to the parents, the teacher, senior staff and the child. I videoed her in action and what became evident really quickly was that this child had some sensory issues and as much as she was trying to avoid some activities like fingerpainting and sitting on the carpeted floor, the teacher was viewing this as the child not cooperating.

We sent the child off for a screening by the Occupational Therapist and she has serious sensory and tactile defensive issues which were obviously creating challenges for her, particularly with that teacher. Unfortunately the teacher felt threatened as she was providing a very integrated and broad curriculum and already this little girl was embedded in her head as a problem. In this case the recommendation in the end was to move schools. It just was not working with this particular teacher who felt the little girl was being naughty and strong-willed, despite test results and professional reports.

Olivia viewed herself as a “liaison”, “special education teacher”, “consultant”, “advocate” and “support for children” in her work in the classroom as well as in her new position as a private consultant. Olivia found it difficult to give one description about her role as a teacher, insisting that the role, responsibilities and accountabilities had grown extraordinarily in recent years, in particular. These comments indicate her understanding of the changing educational landscape (Andrews et al., 2008) but also how her role within that landscape is changing (Craig, Zou & Poinbeauf, 2014).
7.1.5  Tally

Tally commented that she is a born EC teacher, and so enjoys being a teacher. Her school has recognised her enthusiasm and shortly after her interview, she was taking on additional senior responsibilities within the EC section of her school. She has had over twenty PD opportunities over the past couple of years and she viewed the opportunity of this interview as another to clarify her own feelings and direction of these PD experiences. She viewed the interview and the inquiry process as her own learning experience, using the opportunity to ask me about key organisational principles of multi-age classrooms. She viewed the interview and our subsequent professional discussion as her own PL.

When asked to describe her classroom, Tally described her Transition class, the class in the NT delineated between pre-school and Year 1. Transition is usually the year prior to compulsory schooling for a child at six years of age. Tally had some behaviour challenges in her class but characterised the class as “young”, in that they were a Transition class getting used to being in “big school” (primary school as opposed to preschool). Tally outlined some of her preferred classroom strategies which included “students working in groups” and “whole class teaching, play-based learning and hands – on activities”. Tally uses these activities to explore concepts, as building blocks for further learning (Palinszar, 1998; Taber, 2011).

She was fortunate to have a teaching assistant working with her in the classroom for at least part of the school day and this woman had valuable child-care expertise with regards to Tally’s class of young learners. Tally acknowledged the benefits of providing a staff member very attuned to the needs of students who are moving from informal learning into more structured learning within a primary school.

Tally defined herself as more of a “facilitator” of learning, rather than a “director of learning”, trying to be guided by the interests of her students as well as by the curriculum. She described the range of strategies that she uses in her classroom to support and scaffold learning for her students:

Groups, and time for explicit teaching / whole class teaching. Group play-based and hands-on activities to explore the concepts further. We have an assistant as well who we share with the other Transition classes – she work still lunch time on a roster.
Mostly in my class and we had another one last semester so she had lots of childcare 
experience and she was awesome. We have a new one that we have to train and let 
er her know how we like things. So this hasn’t been quite as good but it is still great to 
have a second pair of hands in the class.

She described the difficulties of planning for student interests, play-based learning and formal 
assessment and the balance required between these concepts. She added the comment below 
showing her understanding of SC (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011) but also the extent of 
PA (Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015) that Tally shows in her 
acceptance of the needs of her students:

A teacher can stand up there and lecture but a facilitator takes into account student 
skills, knowledge, interests and tries to direct learning from there to make it 
interesting. I think I am more an initiator of activities which will sort of spur them 
into learning, sometimes despite themselves.

Tally indicated her acknowledgement and willingness to take on responsibilities to become 
the best teacher that she could become. She noted:

... that everyone feels that they want to learn, that they feel safe and willing to take 
risks, and try something new, have a go. That includes me as well, so if I am not 
confident in a topic, then it is important to try my best to make teaching and learning 
interesting for all of us. I really love teaching... I love working with children but the 
expectations from all areas, the government, curriculum, yourself, parents and 
community, I find really .... Oh I don’t know. It’s really difficult to allay everyone’s 
concerns and still do a good job and be fair to the kids. I would like to be flexible with 
how and what the kid’s learn, but sometimes it is difficult with set time frames and 
there is a lot of pressure to make sure that every child is achieving at least to a 
minimum standard. It’s like being in a vice.

This statement indicates a degree of conflict however. While Tally was aware of systemic 
and school needs, the concern was for her students. As with Olivia who felt that part of a 
teacher’s role is to act as an advocate, Tally’s concern was to be “fair” to her students in a 
context beset with timelines and expectations of levels of achievement (Pyhältö et al., 2015: 
Toom et al., 2015). As one of the youngest teachers in this research study, Tally noted that
there are expectations about the role of teachers and student achievements. There are so many challenges as many aspects of schools are now results-driven. Her comment was “people in policy don’t really have any idea of what it is like in the classroom.” While there have always been expectations of credible academic achievements for every student, Tally’s comments indicated a growing concern that the job of teaching and learning is beset with competing pressures, many of which are outside of the classroom (Andrews et al., 2008).

7.1.6 Terry

Terry is a qualified and registered Primary teacher, one whose personal interests in Indonesia and the national language Bahasa Indonesia led to a position initially in a Primary stage of schooling as a Language teacher. Eventually she accepted a position in a Secondary school in the Social Sciences faculty, teaching Bahasa Indonesia and Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) to Years 7 – 10 students.

Terry was asked questions relating to the first broad research question, initiating the narrative about her teaching experiences. Terry emphasised the local and specific of her particular context (Clandinin, 2007) in that she was a Primary teacher who was teaching in a Secondary context. Terry believed that she would return to a Primary school at some stage in her career but was happy for the moment in a Secondary school. She indicated her awareness of her students and their needs, particularly those students who were struggling academically (Gordon, 2004). Her teaching situation in a secondary teaching context was complex and included coordinating a teaching assistant and special needs students. Special needs students are those with learning challenges that have hindered their learning. She felt that she was teaching her students using many of her Primary strategies, and using curriculum from the Primary sections of the NTCF.

Terry’s initial preference was for a co-constructed interview, discussing all the questions with me first. When I explained that I wanted her sole responses and reassured her that her experiences, and her descriptions of them, were valid and noteworthy, she returned to explain her responses further. For example, she initially outlined her classroom situation.

My last class was 22 Year 7 students and half were diagnosed and highlighted on the special needs database for various reasons. If they weren’t on the database, they were
ESL Indigenous so it was a mainstream classroom but because of the unique characteristics of that classroom, I had a special needs assistant teaching with me. I was teaching SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment), English, Maths and Pastoral Care. It was a secondary class but because of the needs, and because of the change of system, it was really a primary classroom.

Terry was not happy with her first response and upon reflection, she came back to add more to her response about her classroom situation.

2nd Interview / additional comments: The special education teacher worked closely with me on that class. It was outside of her experience level to have so many high needs kids in the one class so she did some of her PD working on behaviour management. So I was really in charge of the behaviour management aspect as well as somehow trying to teach the kids Indonesian. I don’t know if they needed Indonesian, but it was what was timetabled. We didn’t really get too far along, to be honest, so we played a lot of collaborative games with simple answers.

Her comments related to her context being unique and to her allied PD. She showed her understanding of her school context and some of the factors affecting her students.

All those subjects were three 1 hour session a week but we did a mix of primary curriculum with secondary scheduling and ways of operating. The school is also rural, so the needs of kids in the rural area are different from those in urban schools too, and these kids were not necessarily in it for the academic benefits.

When asked to define characteristics of her role in her classroom, Terry used phrases and words several times to indicate her conscious academic adaptations in order to make the curriculum accessible by her students. She explains that “I present the knowledge and then I will work from that – use the knowledge to complete activities. Not an inquiry learner, not research based. I impart the knowledge and work from there.” When questioned about her teaching and learning practices, Terry noted that “seeing the kids develop from where they are,” is important (Palinszar, 1998; Taber, 2011). She went on to add that “you want to see them learn and develop, and understand why they are doing it, the benefits of it (learning). You want there to be real purpose in the learning, a real need for them to use the learning in their lives.” She said that:
As a teacher, we should not be in the teaching game unless we are really interested not just in teaching and learning, with regards to the kids, but in learning ourselves... I know that after this past couple of years, what I now understand about behaviour management is so far past what I knew before, but already there are different issues coming up and I have to find out about them.

While Terry identified the need for a well-rounded curriculum, she expressed some frustration when the needs of the students are not being catered for in an appropriate way. She added:

I try to be collaborative but sometimes the kids’ needs are very different than the school’s needs. The rules say that every year 7 and 8 will get Indonesian or at least another language, but often that’s really silly if a kid is struggling so much in English. I know there is a need to offer kids a well-balanced curriculum and things have changed so much in terms of what we do and how we do it, but sometimes the rules get in the way of taking a good hard look at the kids themselves.

Terry’s comments reflected her belief in student-centred learning, but the difficulties inherent in providing that student-centred learning in a flexible and meaningful way. She was aware of her professional responsibilities and capable of individualizing the curriculum and pedagogy as necessary.

The year 7 one (class) you have to be adaptive, flexible. You had to adapt everything to their level so you were constantly trying to adapt the year 7 curriculum to meet their needs, so they could access the curriculum. You stood there and I would explain everything and have all these blank faces. I thought I had dropped it enough but there would still be these blank faces. You write this program at the start of the year, aim it at year 7 but just don’t get there. Even though they were year 7, I was teaching at a much lower primary level.

Her comment after reflection: For some of those kids, I was gearing it towards a year 2 – 3 level, not just in terms of the Indonesian stuff I was using. Some of these kids were rural kids with really limited school attendance and academic success while others were EFL (English as a Foreign Language), not even ESL. So it wasn’t even
geared at a primary level some days. It was really geared towards early childhood levels.

Terry believed that teachers would not be in the “teaching game” unless as a group, “we were interested not just in teaching and learning, with regards to the kids, but in learning ourselves.” She mentioned that two years ago she might not have been as interested in behaviour management, but that currently there were issues that she needed to investigate. She stated that “we don’t learn one thing at a time. We learn heaps of things daily, accumulating that knowledge over time. I was trying hard to sort of display it in a graph because I don’t know that my words are enough.” She referred to the application of new knowledge to old knowledge, at whatever academic level the students in her class were, an element of SC (Palinszar, 1998; Taber, 2011), as something important to her as well as her students. She outlined how sometimes she would be teaching the Indonesian words for different colours, but would have to return to teach them first in English.

7.1.7 Samantha

Samantha is the teacher in the group with the most experience and years in a classroom, and she has had a varied career ranging across schools in remote and urban settings. An EC teacher at heart, she has enjoyed teaching a range of grade/year levels. Samantha has acted in several senior roles within schools, but found her niche as an EC senior teacher. At the time of the interview, Samantha was planning her retirement. In her last school she voluntarily became the “release teacher”, providing classroom teachers with their mandatory release time but teaching across the curriculum in each teacher’s classroom. With a personal interest in Science and Art, she varied her teaching to cater for each teacher and what they requested.

When describing herself and her role, Samantha stated:

I was last in a classroom as a full-time classroom teacher a couple of years ago… I like colour, excitement, dynamic displays. I like to teach through art and craft, and I like kids to be creative. I like there to be people working to their own level, including me.

Her role, as Samantha saw it, was to be a part of the class – but apart from it. She saw herself
as the leader of the class and the one who is doing the teaching but also providing a place for students to take ownership as well. She viewed that the students who succeed over time are those who take ownership of their own learning. Samantha had a clear idea of her role in the classroom and the parameters of her job as a teacher.

I like to be the facilitator of the learning. Let’s get real here. There is nothing really that new in any EC classroom so we are not usually talking high level content here. The really important thing at EC level is pedagogy, yet there is so little acceptance that pedagogy is at least equal in terms of achieving results as the content. If you have a good teacher, if you have a good student, they will pick up on any content. But if you don’t have a good teacher, it doesn’t matter how logical the content, but he or she can wreck it for kids. A bored teacher is a bad teacher purely and simply because she will bore the kids too. And that’s not what learning is about. Learning is exciting, and fun and the start of so many new journeys for the kids, but the focus seems to be on programming excellence, or interpersonal relationships with other staff, or using new IT systems to report.

Samantha finds increasing demands on teachers to be problematic when faced with the genuine needs of learners. As an advocate, Samantha outlined the complexity of factors in the professional landscape and context which influence and impact on teaching and learning in classrooms (Craig, Zou & Poinbeauf, 2014).

There are so many factors that affect learning but they just aren’t considered and when you have a program that is tight, concise and with no room for error, you know that kids are bound to create a situation where that error can’t be fixed. I listened to a conversation where a young teacher was trying to tell the senior teacher that she needed to “re-teach” her last week’s program, and that could not happen. Why make a teacher feel so guilty about the need to slow down and let the kids catch up? Everything is weighted towards accountability but there are times when it is really important to just sit back and let the kids move forward.

As she viewed it, Samantha’s role in the classroom was to lead the students to understandings, but without forcing the issue. She believed her role was to show students how to access information, but not to give it to them. This is in line with Hollins (2011) who described quality teaching where knowledge is applied in ways to promote equitable access.
and opportunities to develop skills in synthesising, integrating and applying knowledge to different situations. The concept of building upon previous understandings sits at the heart of SC, and Samantha too was a part of intensive PD planning over many years of implementing an outcomes-focused curriculum with the NTCF. While she can assist students to find answers in their own way, Samantha viewed that her role was to assist them to find different ways that work better (not necessarily linked explicitly to one specific program).

7.1.8 Theme 1: The Effective Teacher

There are some limitations in this research study. This research study did not examine the full contexts for teaching, in that the schools themselves were not described in detail and questions about them were simply to ascertain their approximate size and implied staffing to provide adequate opportunities for relevant PD. No school hierarchy was detailed nor any personnel listed. Similarly while students were referred to within each teacher’s context, there were no specific details supplied of individual students. There are no external arbiters or measures of success or effectiveness. This research study examines what teachers say about themselves, their classroom context and their professional development. These are teachers of their time. The changing landscape of teaching has affected every teacher, including those in the NT, and for PD and PL to make sense, it is logical to examine the stories of the seven participating teachers to explore their links to their counterparts around the country. The literature attests that is no longer acceptable for teachers just to have access to PD events and opportunities. It is imperative that they are seen to be improving their teaching practices and student achievements in their classrooms.

One of the first themes to emerge was that of the effective teacher, seeking ways to improve teaching practices. These are teachers with a clear view of the ultimate aim of improving student outcomes within classrooms. This theme was tempered by the feeling expressed by Mark, Olivia, Tally and Samantha that competing systemic and school needs are often working contrary to the identified needs of their students. On the one hand, there is a definite push towards accountability and ensuring that teachers are becoming all that they can possibly be. There is tacit acknowledgement that it is a teacher’s responsibility to ensure adequate measures, strategies and ongoing learning are taken to promote the improvement and enhancement of teaching and learning practices in the classroom.
Defining the effective teacher, teaching and learning can be problematic. While there are views about a changing landscape for teachers (Zapeda, 2008), with the thrust of information technology changing that landscape, a key concern is the ability and capability of teachers to examine their own convictions and beliefs to plan effectively to improve their teaching and learning (Avalos, 2011). This in itself is problematic, as there seems to be an underlying assumption that the teacher of today is inadequate and needing enhancement and improvement regularly.

Numerous studies examine the characteristics of teachers in relation to teacher quality (Rice, 2003; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Many of these studies referred to content knowledge as a key indicator of quality teachers and teaching. While primary teachers are currently not necessarily specialist teachers, and have a general knowledge of key learning areas, using content knowledge as an indicator of effective teaching is not necessarily applicable. While deep understanding of curriculum content is important, there may be greater impetus to have greater subject understanding within the secondary stage of schooling. Proud EC teachers such as Samantha and Tally argue that content knowledge is reflected in a different way at this stage of schooling. It may be critically important to possess high-level understandings of literacy and numeracy, but it might be more critically important to understand the necessary pedagogy of conveying those key understandings to five year olds with limited concentration and varying degrees of understanding about early literacy and numeracy.

Teachers have many professional skills, including knowledge about how to teach in ways that allow a range of students to learn in a variety of ways, but also how and why students learn. These strategies and teaching techniques are reflected in the words of the teachers as they described their classes, their classrooms and their teaching styles. Cruikshank, Jenkins and Metcalf (2003) provide specific characteristics of good teachers, as those who are caring, supportive, concerned about the welfare of their students, knowledgeable about their subject matter, able to get along with parents and genuinely excited about the work that they do. These seven teachers indicated similar characteristics in their narratives, including their care and support of their students in a variety of ways. Each of the seven teachers stated their love of teaching and the students in their class, and outlined the extent and range of the strategies that they use to enable effective learning in their classrooms. These authors state that effective teachers help students to learn which is, in effect, how Samantha summed up her

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures  216
role within the classroom.

Ko, Sammons and Bakkum (2013) outline their characteristics of effective teachers. Teachers in this study indicate one of those characteristics with their knowledge and familiarity with curriculum content and their use of a range of teaching strategies. Each of the seven practising teachers indicated their knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy in relationship to the students in their classroom. Olivia identified a need for assistance to challenging students and home-schooled students, and acted on her reflection. Each of the teachers showed expertise in their chosen stage of schooling and a willingness to engage in pedagogical strategies to underpin their teaching of curriculum content. Terry, teaching Bahasa Indonesia was engaged in establishing effective behaviour management strategies, along with her teaching assistant, to ensure learning for the cognitive and academic levels of the students in her classroom. Samantha and Tally are EC teachers and engaged in facilitated learning at that level to ensure the learning in their classrooms. Tally described a teacher who can stand up at the front of a classroom and lecture against her vision of herself as a facilitator, someone who takes into account student skills, knowledge, interests and tries to direct learning from there to make it interesting.

Another characteristic outlined by Ko et al. (2013) relates to teachers being knowledgeable about their students, adapting instruction to their needs and anticipating misconceptions in their existing knowledge. All of the teachers involved in this study indicated their immediate ability to categorise, plan effective strategies to support students with identified needs and to engage in professional learning as necessary. Key concepts emerged in the stories of the seven practising teachers that indicated their understanding of their students and the strategies they had to take to adapt both instruction and curriculum content to their student needs. Eliza referred to her lower academic students and Terry referred to her secondary students operating at Year 2 – 3 levels. Tally referred to her younger students who needed time to come to grips with being at school.

All teachers referred to different teaching and learning strategies to assist students in their classrooms. They had a key awareness of student achievements with a very pragmatic view of the strategies necessary within each classroom, whether based on SC principles or as a function of their professional / teacher agency. They listed strategies varying from the creation of a family / team, modelling, talking / discussing, social interaction, use of concrete,
hands-on activities, use of visual cues and teaching assistants / aides, collaboration, and active learning. They described a variety of class groupings to facilitate learning, listing individual / differentiated curriculum, groups, buddy system and collaborative classrooms incorporating active learning. Each of the seven teachers indicated awareness of steps being taken to address gaps in their professional knowledge. Samantha referred explicitly to her attendance at many Information Technology PD sessions as a necessity at her stage of schooling, but Tally referred to her online perceptual motor PD because she felt she needed more skills and information.

Ko et al. (2013) discuss the teaching of higher and lower level cognitive objectives. Teachers also monitor student progress and take responsibility for learning outcomes. The awareness of teachers of the academic abilities of their students was noted in each interview. Each teacher indicated the need to refresh skills, to cater for the needs of students. While feedback as a concept was not included nor mentioned as part of these interviews, the key point is that the teachers had a comprehensive understanding of their students and the curriculum content and pedagogy that was required to teach them effectively. Each teacher described his or her classroom situation, stage of schooling and the various teaching strategies that were part of that teacher’s ethos about effective learning pedagogy. The sense of catering for individual needs was strong in each of their interviews. All of the teachers openly accepted and stated that their job was to do the very best by their students.

All seven participating teachers were aware of the needs of their students and catered for them in a variety of teaching strategies, particularly with links to their particular stages of schooling. Terry was conscious of the fact that her lower academic students required additional assistance, and programmed her classroom to have hands-on activities and visual cues and aids to assist them. Olivia described her responsibility to one of her recent students where her job was as a teacher, psychologist, liaison, behaviour management expert and an expert in allied health (sufficient to send this child to an Occupational Therapist for additional assistance). Avalos (2011) explains that there are underpinning factors such as the history and traditions of groups of teachers.

Avalos outlined factors affecting quality teaching as the identified educational needs of students, the expectations of the educational system, teachers’ specific working conditions and the opportunities to learning that are open to them. Each of the teachers raised these
issues in their own way. Zapeda (2008) and Borko (2009) both allude to the need for students to emerge with better than average communication, interaction, collaboration, problem-solving and decision-making skills. Each of the teachers in this study indicates their knowledge of those skills and their modelling of such skills in the diversity of teaching and learning strategies.

7.2 The Range and Extent of PD Experiences for NT Teachers

The critical aspect to this research is the exploration of the viewpoints and perspectives of NT teachers about their PD and PL experiences. Their school and classroom situations are important from the perspective of putting their PD experiences into a context but it is the teacher reflections, descriptions and explanations that are critical to this study. The key purpose of this research study is, therefore, to examine the extent and range of professional development experienced by each teacher and to delve into the attributed importance and meaning of those professional learning experiences, as described by them in narratives.

All teachers in this study had engaged in at least ten PD or PL events prior to their interviews. Each teacher had experienced a range of PD events, ranging from those on-site within their schools to those held centrally and involving teachers from a range of schools. Questions were asked of each teacher about the extent and range of those PD sessions, their levels of involvement in them, their perceptions, beliefs and analysis of the PD events in terms of their effectiveness and quality, and what each teacher valued about their PD and PL.

Please note: In each table for each teacher below, critical PD and PL experiences that are specifically mentioned in their narratives are outlined below. For example, while Eliza may have attested to attendance at over twenty PD events over the past two or three years, the PD sessions referenced in her narrative are listed specifically below. The preferred PD experience of each teacher is marked in shading and with an asterisk * while the PD experience each teacher identified as least effective is marked with < and identified in italics.

7.2.1 Eliza

The Staff in Australia’s Schools survey (McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy & McMillan, 2013) indicated that primary teachers engaged in approximately nine days of PD per year,
and Eliza has attended over twenty PD events over the past two years. Eliza outlined her PD opportunities, with these ranging from school based workshops and meetings to external PD program. Listed below are Eliza’s PD experiences, which she specifically referenced in her interview. Eliza listed staff meetings and mandatory pupil-free days, as part of overall school directions. Also listed are mandatory PD sessions, where the word “mandatory” is defined as school organised and coordinated PD and where Eliza was given no option other than to attend. The mandatory sessions are a part of the overall school direction and all teaching staff are required to attend. Items listed as collective participation were those where Eliza was expected to trial and participate in programs, contributing and using her expertise, but where decision-making about her engagement was not her choice. For example, her school committed to a specific Behaviour Management program and teachers were expected to develop and trial units of work in their classrooms, using the specific strategies learned in the PD session. Eliza was unaware of this commitment of her time and expertise.

Table 7.1 Eliza’s PD experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*PD Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>Clusters</td>
<td>Content focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: NTDET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This PD was identified by Eliza as the least effective for her purposes. The PD delivery was in clusters of schools within a specific area, had a content focus and attendance was mandatory.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Management</td>
<td>Whole school; ongoing workshops and trials</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math’s Curriculum</td>
<td>Trainer / training whole school</td>
<td>Collective participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Registration PD</td>
<td>Workshop whole school</td>
<td>Collective participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School PD (every Tuesday)</td>
<td>Readings, log-book, workshops</td>
<td>Varies: Content focus or</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>active learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2C: Curriculum into Classroom</td>
<td>Stage of Schooling</td>
<td>Collective participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Steps</td>
<td>Stages of Schooling</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* First Steps Literacy®</td>
<td>Trainer / training whole school</td>
<td>Collaborative participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This PD was identified by Eliza as the most beneficial PD for her personally, and a trainer delivered this PD to the whole school. While attendance was mandatory, this PD was collaborative and</td>
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Eliza had a very pragmatic approach to her definition of PD and what it meant to her. Eliza believed that PD is about specific, in-depth topics that cater for her classroom or student needs. She believed it should not be restricted to school hours but perversely, it should not be enforced after hours. Without referring to the phrase PL, she indicated that with new problems in the school, sometimes reference to experts and other teachers was necessary. Stating that there should be a mix between a deficit need in most teachers (such as critical information that neophyte teachers in the school might require) and personal choice, she did not necessarily believe that the annual, mandatory performance reviews were the right way to achieve effective PD.

*I think it’s learning more about things you don’t know much about. I think there has to be a mix between what is seen overall as a lack in most teachers but there has to be an element there of personal choice. I don’t know how to get there though because performance review is not necessarily accurate or truthful; they don’t really want to deal with a teacher who might need serious help. There isn’t the money or the time to help a teacher who is really struggling and might need basic stuff when another teacher might be fine-tuning a much higher level of understanding about curriculum. We know about learning but we don’t know about learning.*

Eliza described her PD experiences, including the links she has made to her teaching and learning practices, adding:

*I mean we as teachers know about learning with kids and we believe it and all, and we try to do it all the time with the kids, but I don’t think we give ourselves the same permissions to learn that we give the kids. And I don’t think those who make the decisions know about how to make good decisions for teachers to learn properly.*

When Eliza was asked about the importance of the PD sessions to her, she indicated that PD is important: *“I think I personally need to do regular PD to keep my teaching fresh. It isn’t just about improving things for the kids. I think sometimes there are just things that teachers need to learn without there being an end point that always focusses on the kids.”* She referred specifically to the needs of neophyte teachers, where a perceived lack in a teacher has to be balanced against personal choice. Eliza referred specifically that there was insufficient time
and money, for example, to cater for the needs of struggling teachers who need support and assistance while other teachers may be trying to fine-tune their skills at a different level of expertise. Her comment was that “we know about learning but we don’t know about learning,” This is in reference to moves towards individualising the curriculum for students but that teachers don’t get the same in their PD and PL.

Eliza valued some of her PD for the expertise of the presenters, the explicit and well-presented sessions and concrete, hands-on activities. She commented on the acknowledgement of her professional skills but also the social networking and interactions with other teachers. This is significant when allied with her definition of professional development, which indicates her veering more into using the phrase PD, but believing in the wider conceptual understandings of PL. She added that “the content (of PD and PL) is important and how it is delivered is important to me. Presentation is important and whether I will use it or not, whether it will enrich my knowledge and whether I can use it in my classroom or not. Otherwise it is useless and wasting time.”

Eliza commented on the positive aspects of some of her PD opportunities and what she valued about them. As someone involved in implementation of SC approach to student learning in the NT through the NTCF implementation, Eliza was aware of SC strategies in her classroom. Many SC strategies, such as building on learning, use of multiple ways of teaching and learning reference back to her own understandings of this paradigm and are reflected in her viewpoints about her own PD and PL. It relates back to her own beliefs about her role in her classroom, as a facilitator developing teams of learners, where she is comfortable using a variety of strategies such as modelling, talking, social interaction, use of concrete / hands-on materials, visual cues and other active learning methods. The way she teaches, the types of activities she uses are valued by her in her own learning, as indicated below:

_The best PD was First Steps® PD because it’s thorough, it was full with hands-on activities and I can actually use it in the classroom, so it’s a worthwhile PD to go to. The presentation was good because the presenters were presenters for each subject, so not one boring person. It was four different things. Each one of them was very explicit and well-presented. There were lots of hands-on so we don’t fall asleep on the chair. It was exciting. It was good to see what you were doing well but then find out_
some strategies for what you needed to improve. It was fun to talk to other teachers too, and find out how they were doing things.

Eliza viewed that this PD was a very worthwhile exercise. Fiszer (2004) describes the lack of attention to teacher perception about PD, and the critical need to connect training and practice. While Eliza felt there were direct links between training and her teaching practices in the classroom in the First Steps® PD, she was less happy with some of the other PD experiences which were not as valuable or productive. The identified need by Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2004) for PD to be ongoing, interactive and supportive apparently didn’t happen with many of her PD experiences.

The concept of student-centred learning, linked to developmentally appropriate activities which cater for the needs of student learners was evident in Eliza for t, but also applies equally to adult learners grappling with the development of new knowledge or skills (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011). Active personal learning (Fox, 2001; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011), through the use of hands-on activities and social processes connects learners when they share such activities (Beattie, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Taber, 2011). Eliza valued her First Steps experience as an adult learner because it offered her those characteristics. While Eliza was critical of the Australian Curriculum allied PD, because this PD did not include hands-on activities, active student-centred (in this instance with adults as learners) and personal learning, it was shortly after making this comment that she decided she had a choice to make between honesty in her assessment of her PD experience and confirming her anonymity in terms of using her real name in this research. Two issues arose at this time. Eliza expressed concern about the extent of readership of this research study and honesty in her responses to questions. I do not wish to give the impression that Eliza was a teacher complaining about her school, its management or the role of senior staff in decision-making about PD. In preliminary discussions with Eliza at the start of this interview, she was complimentary about her school and her peers and she was quite clear that she was only ever a PD participant. Eliza has no aspirations to become a PD presenter or coordinator, but she is an experienced teacher with many skills and much knowledge. Eliza was showing many signs of using the term PD, while referring to the wider picture of the ongoing learning of PL and of engaging in learning as necessary, according to her own internal analysis of need in her classroom. Eliza was reassured that her anonymity would be respected and her real name

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 223
would not be used in this research study. No identifying information would be shared about her, her students or her school.

The second issue was about the PD session that she was discussing. Eliza was less critical of the need for the implementation of an Australian curriculum but more critical of the delivery of that particular PD, noting its lack of differentiation between stages of schooling, the levels of expertise of participating teachers and the assumptions about the ongoing input of teachers into feedback and trial projects without their engagement in that decision-making. Eliza pointed out that a complicating factor for her personally was that PD was decided on her behalf with little preliminary discussion at her school level and that often there did not appear to be a specific goal or purpose to sections of the PD itself (although mandatory participation was expected). She noted the ‘dumbing down’ of sections of that particular PD for the sake of brevity and convenience, with little or no regard or reference to the existing curriculum of the NT Curriculum Framework as an outcomes-focused document with SC underpinnings. Her comment was that teachers were told to “focus on this bit, but ignore the rest” and the rationale and theory behind the Australian curriculum were ignored. She noted that it was as if teachers did not “need or require that information for their education and knowledge.” She noted other instances where there were mismatches between mandatory curriculum sessions and support materials in the classroom.

Eliza pointed out that some of her best PD experiences were those programs and allied PD developed by teachers, for teachers and implemented with teachers, referring to Gateways to Literacy. This program is a teacher-developed, school-supported and collaborative Oral Language and Perceptual Motor program begun at a school with a very diverse student cohort. Joining forces with a Speech Pathologist and an Occupational Therapist, teachers within the school worked collaboratively to develop an effective program that changed the school results significantly in literacy and numeracy. It aligns with the Evidence-based Framework in the NT and was shared freely with several NT schools for their own implementation.

Eliza pointed out the mandatory nature of some programs, and an assumed agreement on behalf of teachers for participating not just in the PD but in the resultant trial and implementation phase. Eliza saw this as a complication in a busy professional life, indicating her lack of investment and agency in these particular types of PD activities (Pantić, 2015: Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 224
Toom et al., 2015). Aubusson, Ewing and Hoban (2012) argue the need for dynamic, action-filled, complex series of interactions, communication, active learning, collaborative support and development, and the impression from Eliza’s interview was that her PD experiences fell short of that overall. Gordon (2004) refers to shared governance, a concept of shared decision-making planning, data-based inquiry and reflection (both individual and collective). Eliza does not feel she is involved in making those decisions.

*I think there has to be a mix between what is seen overall as a lack in most teachers but there has to be an element there of personal choice. I don’t know how to get there though because performance review is not necessarily accurate or truthful; they don’t really want to deal with a teacher who might need serious help. There isn’t the money or the time to help a teacher who is really struggling and might need basic stuff when another teacher might be fine-tuning a much higher level of understanding about curriculum. We know about learning but we don’t know about learning.*

She raised the issue of “permission to learn” for teachers as well as students but the issues, as identified by her are the funding and the acknowledgement by departmental decision-makers about the reality of the classroom. This too displays a lack of conviction about her ability to influence learning opportunities, a perceived lack of shared governance and agency to impact on learning opportunities (Pyhäläö et al., 2015). Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban (2012) note the process of PD coordination is often a top-down management process. Ryan and Bourke (2013) note that teachers are often repositioned as both non-experts but also the last line of the decision-making management hierarchy with central office, descending through to regional offices and principals. Eliza supports those comments by noting:

*I don’t think people in those positions where the decisions are being made actually understand classrooms. It might be OK in Canberra or somewhere but it sure doesn’t work in the NT. You can’t say that we have too many normal classrooms where all the kids are pretty well doing the same thing. Even here in town (in reference to Darwin) you get so many kids with so many different problems and so many things stopping them from learning. So this nice picture of a classroom of happy and well-behaved children doesn’t really exist. So it is sort of like the curriculum is a fairy tale of what someone thinks kids should be learning but then you get teachers trying to get it through to kids and it isn’t working.*
Eliza refers to that deficit model of professional development where there is a perceived lack of skills, which need rectifying (Fiszer, 2004). That sense of a voluntary collaborative of learners, in an effective learning community is no doubt an attractive one to schools. While Eliza is agreeable to participation, she made the comment that:

Well things like administrative stuff are mandatory and we just have to attend. The Australian Curriculum was mandatory and we will have to do more work on that. That is never negotiated. If I had something horrible to say it is that they keep expecting us (teachers) to do things for these things but they never ask. They never find out if we want to contribute or we want to be involved. They just ask the principal and that is it.

The critical question in this interview was posed to find out if there is a change or an improvement in her teaching and learning practices and the type of PD that most influenced that change. According to Eliza, the PD sessions that created the most change in her teaching and learning – First Steps Literacy® - is one that was introduced to the NT in or around 1993/4 with evaluation of the trial schools around 1995 (National Report on Schooling in Australia, 1996, p. 198). While she has subsequently upgraded her knowledge and skills in this program when it was offered more recently for teachers in the NT, it could genuinely be described as professional learning (from the context of ongoing use, particularly over time, reference and changes to her teaching practices). In this part of her interview, Eliza referred once again to the “practical and meaningful approaches” of effective PD and the ability to “cater not just for learning differences but to enrich her students’ learning.” Another critical factor for Eliza is her ability to see the improvement in her students’ achievements, aspects she has inculcated within her own classroom as best teaching practice for her students.

Researchers: How did the PD opportunities provide you with opportunities to extend your learning (personally and professionally)?

Eliza: Professionally, I am able to cater for individuals and personally it really enriches me with knowledge on how I am going to implement in the classroom. Also, it gives me a background in how enrich the children’s learning and I am seeing results.

Researchers: Can the results be directly linked to your PD?
Eliza: Yes, in things like First Steps, you can put the kids on the map and then see the next strategies. If you do the right thing, you can really see the improvement. First Steps works really well with my Small Steps program because you can see those little things improving and plan for more.

Researcher: What about the mandatory PD?

Eliza: No, I haven’t attended many that really stayed with me. Usually I put the handouts in my desk drawer and then get rid of them at the end of the year... No, not really. I guess I know a bit more about Australian Curriculum but it hasn’t changed my teaching a whole lot.

Eliza showed her willingness to engage in learning, that commitment to improve that teaching and learning in her classroom, and her willingness to carry strategies from the theoretical to the practical. She mentions the practical resources of her First Steps Literacy® experiences, and how she has enjoyed working with this program to enhance the literacy in her classroom. Eliza wanted to improve her teaching practices for the good of her students and is willing to take steps to do that. Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2006) outlined that from an educational perspective, whatever is learned is retained or remembered over time and used in appropriate situations. Eliza’s ongoing use of notable PD links to Constructivism and resources indicate a long engagement in improving her teaching and learning practices.

Eliza indicated clearly that a stimulating program, multiple credible presenters, concrete, hands-on activities with relevance to her classroom and a network of her peers interacting about best practice were all aspects that made this a quality professional learning event (Evans, 2011; Hoban, 1997). She continued her narrative, implying future strategies for use in her classroom, identifying areas for her own improvement within that community of learners (Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015). She indicated an awareness of her situation and context, but also the individualised situated learning going on for her students and for herself (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly, 2007; Craig, 2014). She indicates multiple truths about the ways that children learn, and the reflection processes necessary to identify future learning pathways, not just for her students but for herself.

In the transcripts, teachers identified characteristics that they valued in their own learning. These are the characteristics that were specifically described in their discussions about the PD or PL that they most valued. Eliza identified the following characteristics in her narrative and
defined them as valid and valued in her PD and PL:

- Thorough, explicit content as a key part of her PD and PL;
- Hands-on / concrete activities;
- Practical use of PD and PL concepts in classroom;
- Good presenters and well-presented PD and PL sessions or events;
- Exciting;
- Reinforcing of her good practice;
- Providing possible strategies for improvement of her teaching; and
- Networking and interaction with other teachers.

Eliza relates to Guskey’s (1986) Model of Teacher Change, clearly articulating her PD with links to changes in her teaching practice. She can view that the ultimate aim is the improvement of student outcomes. She views her PD as specific topics, pragmatic links to her teaching practice yet she spoke about the ongoing nature of her individual learning. She explicitly articulated her perspectives on quality PD. Guskey (2003) refers to one factor, enhancing teachers’ understanding of content and pedagogical knowledge. Eliza’s list explicitly lists content and pedagogy. Time and resources were provided in Eliza’s favoured PD experiences.

Eliza shared her views about her context, her PD experiences and some of the characteristics that she valued in her PD and PL. She has raised some interesting questions about the ability of teachers and their individual differences to be catered for in PD sessions, but also the clear message that some trial and implementation of programs often assumes teacher agreement and acknowledgement to use of their time, efforts and energy.

7.2.2 Mark

Mark indicated that PD is essential to meet individual needs as well as the needs that arise in the classroom. He referred to PD and its essential nature to teachers by linking it to change:

There are some times when professional development is really necessary with change, like the Australian Curriculum but there are other times when it’s more a case of meeting individual needs, needs that arise in the class. There are different functions of it I guess. I think it’s also something that is an important part of our job and it’s
something that we have to organise within school largely because we don’t get a lot of support to do professional development.

While Mark agreed that teachers provide the foundation for children’s futures, he noted that teachers need to be kept up-to-date in their knowledge and skills. Mark made reference to the improvement of outcomes for students as well as the “improvement of outcomes for teachers”. Desimone (2009) refers to effective models of PD as linked to clear goals and objectives but also aligned with teacher and student needs. Listed below are Mark’s PD experiences as referenced in his narrative. His most and least preferred PD are indicated. Mark indicated those that are mandatory and voluntary, as well as the engagement focus of those PD sessions, summarised from his comments.

Table 7.2: Mark’s PD experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Reading Rotations</td>
<td>Whole School / stages of schooling</td>
<td>Collective participation / active learning</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was the PD that Mark actively coordinated with the senior management team, but he viewed it as highly beneficial to himself personally but to all staff. While parts of it were for the whole school, the PD split into stages of schooling for more active learning and implementation by smaller groups of teachers. While it was mandatory and a school initiative, he felt it was beneficial to all staff and he had witnessed some differences in teaching within classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>Workshop / whole school</td>
<td>Content focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: NTDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Mathematics PDs</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Active Learning/ ongoing</td>
<td>Voluntary: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mark viewed this PD as highly beneficial to those who participated in it. It was active learning over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders in the Making</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Coherence / duration</td>
<td>Voluntary: NTDE and School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;Leaders” Forum</td>
<td>Clusters / Corporate Division</td>
<td>Collective participation</td>
<td>Voluntary: NTDE / School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This PD was viewed as not addressing key aims for Mark. Parts of it were not pertinent to his teaching situation and the coherence within the PD was lacking. The intent was good, but there were parts that Mark found less than effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School-based PD</td>
<td>Readings, log book, workshops</td>
<td>Varies; Content focus or active learning</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mark described his PD and PL activities ranging from the school focus of developing an effective guided reading program to the PD about asthma awareness and Happy Healthy Harold, a program long implemented in many NT schools with a focus on healthy living. This program is both on the internet but presenters are also available to come to each school in the van which has been set up as a mobile classroom.

Mark’s personal PD plan included his selection to leadership training PD and his involvement in departmental sponsored and supported PD. This is an intensive PD program over time, and he was proud of being selected to engage in this program, and enhance his career plans. While he referred to PD, he alluded to the ongoing cycle of leadership and management training, with modules building upon each other. He indicated the level of personal work required by him in addition to the sponsored PD events that are a part of this program. He was required to attend external workshops and become familiar with essentials of leadership modules. He noted the addition of elements such as emotional intelligence modules, coaching and a project based on his school. One of the key factors of this PD was looking at successes in schools.

Mark has clearly engaged in self-directed actions, reflecting on his engagement in PD that will support his teaching career. His professional agency with regards to his own learning was clearly articulated and he had clear plans for himself. While attendance at the Leadership Forum does not automatically equate to Mark’s achievement of senior positions, it does indicate his serious intent to gain the necessary skills for leadership positions.

His most significant difference to some of the other teachers in this study was in his position as part of the senior staff team and his awareness of his class and school needs. Mark spoke of shared governance which included other key stakeholders in the school (Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban, 2012; Gordon, 2004). Mark currently straddles a position whereby he has credibility as a classroom teacher but is involved in coordination of PD for the whole school. Mark described PD that was meeting individual and class needs, including his own, in clear links to his understanding of SC. He expressed the view that PD has different “functions” and he outlined literacy PD where there were multiple ways of attaching meaning (Biesta et al.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happy Healthy Harold</th>
<th>Whole school</th>
<th>Content focus</th>
<th>Mandatory: School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>Content focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 230
2015; Scott, 2015). He raised the complicated issue of provision of PD within the school “largely because we don’t get a lot of support to do professional development”, referring to PD and PL outside of the school.

*Mark raised a further issue in terms of the ability of the school to foster ongoing external PD opportunities for teachers. In this, his views were somewhat like Eliza’s, who felt that there was limited support outside of the school environment for PD. Mark noted that there were national and NT needs to be met, as well as school-based needs that require support through PD.*

Ryan and Bourke (2013) refer to a situation where bureaucratic, hierarchical and managerial controls replace cultures of collaboration, accompanied by budgetary restrictions, standardisation of work practices, performance targets and accountability, rather than professional judgements. Mark commented on the difficulties of trying to organise external PD for teachers and the complex task that this now presents to teachers in schools, particularly from a budget perspective. This ability to straddle the differing needs of his class, school and departmental expectations indicate a level of both reflexivity and the ability to understand multiple truths such as the different ways that groups of teachers learn (Josselson, 2006). This helped Mark to assist in the facilitation of excellent PD and PL sessions with and for staff at his school, particularly where he could offer assistance, mentoring and support as part of his senior teacher role in the school.

Mark felt that concrete, hands-on learning is very valuable as is the facilitation of learning for others. He had clear ideas about what worked in PD and what he valued. This planning and delivery of PD was such a powerful learning tool for him personally. He described the implementation of reading rotations within the school as PD, but he referred to many of the concepts embedded in PL. This was a PD where it included a mix of theory and strategy and built on previous successes of previous programs and experienced staff within the school. An involvement in presenting, ensuring accurate interpretations of theory, planning for open-ended activities to engage adult learners with different learning styles, planning action learning cycles to implement key conceptual understandings are all very powerful tools.

*Firstly the presentation included all the resources that they would need, the theoretical resources so each teacher received a memory stick that outlined all the things that were described in the PD, including the models of reading rotation. Then*
after that initial lead introduction of the theoretical side, then different groups from the school broke up into small groups to discuss it.

Mark, as one of few of the participating teachers who is involved in the development of school-based PD, referred to his own personal learning journey as a direct result of being a presenter. Mark added that this PD touched on his personal philosophy about the teaching of Mathematics, and reinforced his “belief in the importance of concrete materials, breaking down problems, getting to the root of the problem, for kids to problem-solve in Maths, they need to break it down into parts”. He indicated his deep understanding of SC and that ability to build on known understandings. He used words such as “applicable”, ”realistic” and “practical”, also key elements in SC, to explain the success of this PD. There are links between his preferred classroom mode of teaching and what he values in his own personal PD.

Mark engaged in PD that he valued. He identified the following characteristics from his preferred PD and PL sessions:

• His integral involvement as both a developer and a presenter of PD in his school;
• Mixed modes of PD and PL delivery to cater for the learning needs of staff;
• Inclusion of theory into PD and PL sessions;
• Practical use of PD and PL concepts in classroom;
• Opportunities for teachers to personalise their learning;
• Reinforcing of good practice;
• Providing strategies for improvement in the classroom;
• Networking and interaction with other teachers;
• Clear purpose for PD and PL sessions;
• Practical relevance of the PD and PL; and
• Improvement in teaching and learning practices in his classroom and in the school.

Mark noted many of these characteristics when describing the PD where the focus was on implementing the concept of reading rotations in classrooms, which he felt was very successful. This PD was coordinated by a group of teachers within the school, but he was involved in the decision-making at a management level, prior to implementation within the school. This resonates with Gordon’s (2004) characteristic of shared governance as well as transformational leadership. Mark noted the purpose of the PD, the reinforcement of good
practice and the links between theory and practice. He spoke about opportunities for teachers to personalise and differentiate the content of the PD to suit their individual classrooms. He spoke about the transfer of learning whereby skills in developing reading rotation groups can be transferred to other areas of the curriculum.

Well in the case of the reading rotations PD, everyone is doing that now. Like we had comments before like “You can’t do that without a helper in the class. You can’t do that by yourself”. So there was this sense that I’m not going to do that because I don’t have the personnel to help but going through the model that we used where there is one group that’s working with the teacher while the other three groups are doing activities that are independent, but related, has meant that I feel like the teachers have embraced the idea a lot and it has answered questions that they had. I think it has opened their eyes to different ways they can include rotation in other areas of their classroom, individualising the learning for their students in a greater way.

Mark referred to his own personal change in attitude and skills (Evans, 2011; Hoban, 1997) when he outlines his most memorable PD. He referred to the types of activities on an ongoing basis that indicate his understanding about effective PD. Mark referred explicitly to his own involvement as both developer and presenter. He noted the types of activities during this PD, with the supply of practical resources for teachers to use in their classrooms.

Mark felt that there was a transfer of learning (Ambusson et al., 2012; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Leberman et al., 2006) in the reading rotations in particular. The learning was individualised to each person’s level. Mark felt that it was dependent upon the make-up of the group and the group facilitating the transfer of learning in a supported environment, underpinned by the SC paradigm with people working at their own levels:

Some concepts still come through. Not the content. The same principle behind both is that you have people working at their level and as a result, have small groups in the class. How that’s constructed depends a lot on the makeup of the class and what you are trying to achieve. Sometimes mixed ability groups or ability groups and in both cases the principles carry over from Maths to reading.

Mark felt the most influential PD for him personally was Exploring Mathematics in the
Classroom (a PD that Mark attended outside of the two to five year limitation outlined as part of this study). He referred to the characteristics that made this an effective PD, reiterating his listing of valued characteristics in quality PD such as hands-on experiences, the use of concrete materials, opportunities for reflection about why and how they teach Mathematics in the classroom. This was a PD where the sharing of strategies was a critical element including a “what works for me” section. He commented, using the pronoun “we”, implying his move to the bigger picture affecting his school, not just the students in his classroom. This is different from the other participants who still viewed themselves primarily as classroom teachers.

These are the things I like to try and incorporate in what we are doing as well because of the influence of that course... it was the early 90’s. I wish they would run something like that again. It probably had more of an impact as I was one of the presenters. Three of us did the training and then we presented to staff and that probably makes it sink in a little bit more. I think it was such an accessible course and very comprehensive. It went for around 10 sessions and it was very thorough and it covered all areas of Maths.

When I asked Mark if this PD affected his teaching of Mathematics only or whether it transferred to his general teaching, he added that he was now involved in Family Math’s, a program which involved students and their families engaging in Family Maths evenings of fun and enjoyment of various Mathematics concepts. This resonates well with Bredeson’s (2003) Model of PD, which included beauty, structure and function. Through Mark’s clear descriptions of the holistic nature of the PD sessions he preferred, valued and assisted to coordinate, these elements came through. While Day’s (1999) model was one of the few to include career aspirations, Mark’s descriptions had a closer fit with Bredeson’s model.

When Mark was asked to identify some issues with PD, he cited the longstanding concern about school budgets, noting that the days of sending teachers away for several days of intensive PD are now a luxury due to limitations on funding. Mark is a member of senior staff, the decision-making team about PD in his school. Mark explains below how his awareness of teacher needs, allied to his awareness of the needs of students and demands from decision-makers within NTDE and federally, is translated into PD within his school and his role in implementing that PD.

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 234
Well, amongst senior staff when we were discussing what our strategy would be, we did look at different areas that would improve pedagogy. The initial two would have been probably most likely would have been Math’s especially with the interaction with the Australian Curriculum and something to do with English and we chose reading essentially. And the background to that is we have put in place structures that improved the teaching of reading in school. So one example is that we have a designated person who tests the children so they all get tested regularly to see what their reading level is. And we have also introduced the Lexile Reading program for the upper primary kids and we also employ someone to change the readers. So those practical difficult things that teachers often find frustrating, we’ve put in place structures so that they happen smoothly and they can concentrate more on their teaching.

There’s an argument that they should be testing their own kids and not having someone outside the class testing them and I can see that, but there is also a time factor and also the fact that we have one person testing all the children, there is consistency there too.

Mark’s and Eliza’s comments were comparable in terms of the characteristics of effective PD and also in mentioning effective PD from the 1990’s which affected their teaching and learning practices. Neither Mark nor Eliza showed clear understanding about the delineations between professional development and professional learning, often using the phrase PD, but referring conceptually to PL. Now that Mark is involved in the coordination of PD, he was in a different situation to Eliza who was happy to be the recipient of PD but not involved in the coordination. Mark’s issues were more pragmatic from an organisation perspective. He wanted to ensure a quality PD, using many qualities he innately was using and could identify, indicating his willingness to organise quality professional development that would engage the teachers and ensure a transfer of learning to their classrooms. He was aware of direction from NTDE, particularly the focus on literacy acquisition and more effective teaching practices which could be addressed through his PD on reading rotations. An improvement in this area of literacy school-wide would have implications for other curriculum areas which could be improved through the addition of rotational practices to differentiate learning for learners in his school. While this indicates Mark’s acknowledgement of the monitoring in his school, it
indicates his pragmatic involvement in addressing school and systemic needs in a professional learning encounter that benefitted him personally as well.

There are elements of Guskey’s (1986) model of change in Mark’s succinct comments, with his direct links between professional development, the changes to teachers’ classroom practice, and changes in student learning outcomes. While there is an element of change in teacher’s beliefs and attitudes, Mark referred to this as well, when he outlined his most memorable PD. Mark referred to the presentation of the PD, and the effectiveness of specific school-based programs, which fits into Borko’s (2009) key elements of PD where phase 1 is the level of research activities with a focus on individual PD programs at a single site; Mark outlined their guided reading program which involved theoretical perspectives as well as practical resources for implementation. The teachers, as the unit of analysis, were involved in active participation in this program, and Mark referred to its success by the level of collaboration within the school as a direct result.

7.2.3  Jeanne

While Jeanne might be viewed as a teacher who was teaching in a Secondary school (and therefore marginally included in this study as a Primary teacher), her initial training and experiences are in both Early Childhood and Primary classrooms. Jeanne found her niche as a Year 7 teacher, and when this year level was transferred to the Middle Years in Secondary schools, Jeanne preferred to teach that grade, regardless of its location. She identified as being a Primary teacher and noted the composition of her classes was usually lower academic Year 7s and 8s. While she currently enjoyed working in a Secondary school, she felt she had flexibility and could, if she chooses, return to teach year 6 within a Primary school in the future.

Jeanne was the most succinct in her narrative about her PD. Jeanne indicated a preference for straight-forward, content-based responses to questions about her PD and PL. She made it clear that she does not like PD where there is no clear purpose or PD that wastes her time. Jeanne perused the interview questions ahead of time, and provided a written response in dot points but attended the face-to-face interview to add to her responses.

Jeanne referred to the changing landscape of education (Andrews et al., 2008; Craig, 2014;
Zapeda, 2008) and to the different ways of knowing, both for students and teachers. Jeanne noted the increase of technology in her field of Science. She commented that it may be more environmentally friendly to dissect a frog electronically but that technology had not necessarily made her job as a Science teacher easier. Jeanne observed the “growth of ideas and knowledge and the refreshing of enthusiasm” as some of the key aims of PD. This is referenced in Evans (2011) when speaking about that sense of personal enlightenment. She observed the need to teach students better but also to the skills and knowledge that can be shared amongst teachers in order to improve professional practice.

*I think it is the things that teachers need to teach the kids better, the things that can be shared amongst professionals to improve ourselves. I think things have changed so much over say the past ten, twenty, thirty years and things we might have taught back then aren’t even included anymore. The basics of Science are really very different in some regards. We might still take a look at the innards of frogs, but we might do it through computer software and other ways now.*

Jeanne’s initial written reflection was that “it is very important to have relevant PD sessions to consider new ideas and revisit good practice and positive influences in the classroom” She tempered that by commenting that the quality of PD sessions varied and noted less effective PD as repetitive, impractical and not considering the reality of what happens in schools. Jeanne is in the unique position of having taught in three stages of schooling. She is in a position to assess the differences in PD and PL across those stages of schooling, although her experiences over the past two years have been only at a Secondary level. Jeanne reiterated that PD is ultimately for the benefit of the students but the emphasis on PD is very different in Secondary school. Jeanne and Terry are two who have straddled different stages of schooling in their careers. Jeanne noted that there is inbuilt release time and time for marking and moderation in Secondary which she missed in both EC and Primary. The opportunities for PD are different, with greater flexibility to confer with colleagues. Jeanne noted:

*So the PD usually has a different focus. I found there was less trust in teachers at the EC level. There are good teachers everywhere but those good teachers need different things at different stages of their careers. I might have been an experienced Early Childhood and then Primary teacher when I moved to Secondary, but I needed support almost like a new teacher till I got my feet with these slightly older kids and*
the secondary system. My needs were not curriculum and planning, but they were in
behaviour and in dealing with hormones, but I had to struggle to get that support
because I’ve been in the system for so long. So for me, PD, even in the form of regular
mentoring would have been just so beneficial.

While Jeanne observed the differences between stages of schooling, she noted some
complications. Abdurrahman, Anwar and Sultana (2012), in reviewing quality teaching and
learning, noted concepts such as the common sense level of the teacher, self-efficacy,
knowledge of subject matter and mastery of communication technology. Jeanne expressed all
of these, in her common sense attitude to effective PD and in her determination to master
Secondary level curriculum, pedagogy and technology. She described the local and specific
of her teaching context (Clandinin, 2007), and that situated knowledge of various factors that
impact on both her teaching and her PD experiences. Her most preferred and least preferred
PD events are indicated below and she noted those that are mandatory and voluntary.

Table 7.3: Jeanne’s PD experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Content Focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Critical feedback</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderation</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Science related topics</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Content Focus / collective participation</td>
<td>Mandatory / Voluntary: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the PD that Jeanne found most beneficial. It involved her faculty and while it was content-
based, it required collective participation in action learning as a result of the PD. Attendance was
mandatory for her faculty but voluntary for the rest of her school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Content Focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Staff Appraisal</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School Staff meetings</td>
<td>Faculty / Whole School</td>
<td>Content Focus or active learning</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jeanne valued her external PD on Water and implemented the knowledge from it in her
classroom. As with the first two teachers, Jeanne has engaged with a variety of PD events,
with some being valued more highly by her than others. Jeanne enjoyed her Science content PD and PL, and as she now identifies as a Science specialist, she enjoyed learning more about this subject area. Jeanne raised the issue that there are plenty of “teacher only” domains in need of improvement, that is, teacher collaboration or methods of moderation (a particular need at UP and Secondary level). If there are no stated outcomes to improve literacy or numeracy, she expressed uncertainly about whether those PD sessions really “counted”, questioning the links to mandatory PD for the sake of teacher registration. Jeanne expressed her wish to be the best teacher that she could be and that PD and ongoing acquisition of knowledge was one way to achieve that. Justi and Van Driel (2005) refer to a craft perspective in reference to the craft of teaching in a professional sense. These authors advocate that teachers develop and grow as a direct result of becoming more experienced teachers, with knowledge emerging from classroom experiences. This seems to ally with many of Jeanne’s comments, particularly her need for PD to assist her as a neophyte Secondary teacher (after years of teaching in the Primary stage of schooling). She felt that she needed support to become comfortable with the craft of teaching secondary students. This craft of teaching perspective refers to the various stages of a teacher’s professional life, and the changes embedded at various stages of expertise, skill acquisition and attitude to ongoing learning. The expert model is focused on teachers being taught what to do and how to do it by perceived experts, and changes to teachers’ knowledge and practice being deemed as a result of the training, usually measured at the end of the training session.

It was at this point in the interview that Jeanne confirmed her preference for anonymity in the publication of this research before adding the following comment:

*I really don’t know what I need, or what counts towards registration, but I am offended that this now seems to be the holy grail of PD, the only reason we might be doing it. It is not categorised into personal or professional PD. It is also part of performance reviews in our school. The bad part of that is that we are all playing this game to make sure you aren’t identified as a rat shit teacher. So people go off to do personal stuff because that is what they want and need, using their own networks and information and do the school-based stuff so that boxes are ticked. And I resent that. That’s really what it feels like, that some of the PD is just purely and simply to tick boxes.*

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 239
Accountability is discussed in Ryan & Bourke (2013) where “bureaucratic, hierarchical and managerial controls replace cultures of collaboration; there are competencies and licensing rather than trust.” (p. 412). Jeanne reflects this sense of loss and lack of agency, that her PD is more a case of ticking those boxes for accountability and managerial reasons rather than a genuine need of teachers to engage in adequate and appropriate learning opportunities at their level of capability and need. Jeanne noted the “busy work” within staff meeting times, particularly where budget restrictions, performance targets and standardisation of work practices (Ryan & Bourke, 2013) are all factors playing into her PD experiences. Jeanne reiterated many of the same criteria that both Eliza and Mark indicated as criteria for effective PD sessions. She attended two days of PD on underground water through her Science professional association and found it to be relevant, timely (in that it was new knowledge for her) and included both practical work and Information Technology.

While these characteristics are identified by Jeanne, many similar characteristics were stated by both Eliza and Mark. Characteristics noted by Jeanne about her valued professional development include the following:

- Opportunities to consider new ideas during the PD and PL sessions;
- Opportunities to re-visit good practice;
- Opportunities to re-visit positive influences;
- Relationship to her needs as a teacher;
- Synthesis of good curriculum and good practice;
- New information;
- Practical links to the classroom;
- Inclusion of Information Technology (IT);
- An intelligent program with clear purpose and with adults treated as genuine adult learners;
- Catered for the variety of teachers; and
- Opportunities to help and extend understandings in a network context.

Jeanne referred to many SC principles in the valuing of her PD, the growth of new
knowledge from her current understandings. She spoke about organising her classroom to model different strategies in alternative conceptions of learning (Windschitl, 1999). She viewed that it was “a synthesis of good practice but also good curriculum.” She used an interesting phrase when referring to this PD when she called it an “intelligent program” as the PD session catered for the variety of attending teachers and it created opportunities to assist and extend each other. Her written comments about less effective PD were reinforced as PD events where repetition within the PD session and unnecessary PD, without a clear purpose, were not working for her. She raised the issue that decisions about governance of PD are made at a management level, with limited consultation with teachers. These PD events were delivered without a real expectation of effective change at a classroom or school level. In written format, when asked about her best and worst PD sessions, Jeanne wrote:

The bad/ugly: unfortunately many prac (practicums) and PD were either:

a) We are being preached at about the same old stuff – mainly what I would term “touchy-feely” stuff

or

b) Where we are being told to do this or that by management, and then when we get back to class, the reality is that we are not allowed to teach that way.

When asked to explain further in her face-to-face interview, Jeanne added more information.

For example, in a recent PD, (whole school) we spend 2 hours listening to how we were supposed to work out the levels of the lower achieving students and teach them at the appropriate level. We even went through the roll and worked out the “target” students. About 2 weeks later the management decided we were not doing very well on NAPLAN for spelling, so that in the morning Pastoral Care time (1/4 hour) all classes throughout the school had to teach spelling and the same words for all students. What utter madness! Students who had difficulty spelling 3 letter words were given 12 letter words, many of which they would not even know the meaning.

Jeanne was dismissive of the changes of approach and questioned their effectiveness as one of the teachers expected to implement the new decision. Jeanne goes further in noting that PD sessions are usually related to what the management hierarchy within the school wants, such as a recent PD on peer appraisal. There is an expectation that a peer will observe his or her
buddy in action, fill in a written appraisal to submit to the management hierarchy. According to Jeanne, there are a few teachers who feel comfortable about the process. While this ties in with regulatory standards, and the need for both monitoring and acquittal of available funds within NTDE for teacher upskilling, she clarified:

*I know that senior staff has a role to play in assessing the needs of staff just as we assess the needs of students. But often it is a case of the higher-ups deciding what the focus will be and sometimes I don’t know where the information comes from. Sometimes it is PD just for the sake of PD and like I said before, you just get trained in something and then you can’t do it anyways. We know levels of kids but then don’t use that information to really improve things. Sometimes it seems like the left hand doesn’t know what the right hand is doing, or the vision overall just isn’t there. It seems reactive rather than proactive at times so it is hard to get motivated to attend something with no purpose to it, no follow-up in class, and no reason to even talk about it with other teachers. Sometimes we have to endure (emphasis was Jeanne’s) the PD, on days when you have a full teaching load and perhaps things have not gone well. You want to debrief but instead you sit there listening to someone waffle on, knowing it will never be used but somewhere you are ticking the box by attending it.*

Jeanne summed up her comments that PD provision in her school was inconsistent and perhaps not helpful in improving the outcomes of students. While Jeanne had some valid feedback for her senior staff, she indicated that she had not shared her views with senior management. While she felt personal responsibility to attend PD, she was less committed to mandatory but generally inconsistent PD. As with the other teachers, this is less a judgement on the content of the PD, but more about her sense of agency in raising concerns about the processes inherent in the delivery of PD in her school and how she accesses her ongoing learning.

While she felt that good PD events renewed her enthusiasm or give her a new viewpoint on her teaching, she felt that there really were not that many PD sessions that got her excited – “excited about the kids and teaching, but PD is not exciting”. She commented on the insular nature of current school-based PD, which is often to the detriment of collaboration and networking with other teachers, schools and other (education) systems. Jeanne commented that often the school brought in PD presenters who were described as subject specialists or
experts in their area and sometimes they were exactly that. She noted that often other teachers in schools were just as expert and qualified but were not given the same acknowledgement within the school or educational jurisdiction. She linked PD options to the very real issue of disenfranchised teachers, as an issue of concern for the future, including what the PD picture looked like in her school.

>I think it (PD delivery) is a very isolated and isolating way of looking at things for the future. The more I think about this, the more I think that it isn’t now that they will see a lot of teachers disenfranchised and dismayed about the way they are treated. I know a lot of teachers who are looking for anything else and if they keep losing good teachers, then the kids will suffer in the future. There are good dedicated teachers, but there just might not be in the future. I know you want to talk about PD, but I think this is a bigger picture than just PD. I know they have to cut back on government departments, and education is no different but I don’t think they have thought about things long-term. They put a good picture to things. Our AP (Assistant Principal) said it was a good time to restructure and allow new projects to develop and it was all spin. The good stuff went along with the bad, and there has been no real assessment of what seriously is important and what is not.

According to Ko, Sammons and Bakkum (2013), effective teachers are those who are clear about their instructional goals. Jeanne did not enjoy sudden changes in direction or direction without clear purpose. Ko et al. state that effective teachers monitor their students’ understandings and accept responsibility for student outcomes. Jeanne indicated that while she appreciated the focus on student outcomes, there was space in the equation for a focus on teacher needs as well.

Jeanne expressed some real concerns for the future of PD in her school, from the perspective of one who had deeply reflected on many of the issues. She identified similar issues to Eliza and Mark in that there does not seem to be a consistent approach to PD. While regulatory issues must be considered, sometimes they are operating as a challenge to teachers trying to improve their own teaching practices.

7.2.4 Olivia

When Olivia first answered the NT News advertisement, she was attached to a Primary
school and her principal gave permission to engage in this research. Unbeknown to me, she had also applied for a year on leave without pay. This was subsequently granted between the time of coordinating our interview and her arriving for her interview. However, Olivia self-identified as a Primary teacher, and had been teaching in these year levels for a number of years. Her position for the following year was in private enterprise as an educational consultant, but still working with Primary aged students who attended school in Independent schools or were being home-schooled. While this level of diversity of research participants was unexpected, the determination of participating teachers to identify as flexible, creative Primary teachers who are able to teach a variety of students in diverse contexts is noteworthy. These teachers felt that they had the skills to address learning delays and challenges by using their knowledge of Primary curriculum and pedagogy.

Olivia’s transcript was created through use of Dragon Naturally Speaking software, after we played on successive Saturdays to develop her skills in using voice recognition software. Olivia felt that this allowed her the control to tell her story direction into a transcript. Olivia is in the unique situation of choosing what professional development she does, or does not do, particularly as she was beginning her new career as a private education consultant. Most of her PD over the past two years has been voluntary and selected by her to suit her needs. When asked about her attendance at mandatory school-based PD, Olivia shrugged her shoulders and indicated she only attended what she wanted. On the one hand, her ownership of her PD commitments and emphasis on her own decision-making about the value of any specific PD is indicative of a high degree of teacher agency.

Olivia felt that the name for PD was not right. While she believed in the concept of each person developing professionally in their own way, she viewed PD as a way of reforming and amending teaching practice. This links to Fiszer (2004) and the concept of a deficit conceptual model about PD. Olivia explained her thinking in that she does not believe that teachers are viewed as professionals and that there is a level of disrespect towards teachers (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). She viewed that PD may be a mix of teacher learning, job and school improvement and professional tasks that attempt to ensure minimum standards within any given school. Olivia referred to the trend towards linking completed base-line, content-driven PD to an assumption of transfer of learning but also to some of the “busy work” (with no transfer of learning) type PD that she had seen in schools.
Olivia observed that in the past, there was more emphasis on improving individual teacher’s skills, but “I think everyone is now in panic mode and trying to improve everything schoolie to the detriment of considering the long-term implications of PD”. This view may be at odds with those decision-makers who are making decisions which they believe are in the best interests of education, generally and specifically (Ryan & Bourke, 2013) but who may not be necessarily including teachers in the decision-making and governance of PD and PL within the school (Pyhältö et al., 2015).

Listed below is a summary of the PD attendance for Olivia as referenced to her narrative but Olivia did not identify her most preferred or least preferred PD or PL. This is not the full extent of Olivia’s attendance, merely the PD and PL events that are specifically referenced in her narrative.

Table 7.4: Olivia’s PD experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-house, school-</td>
<td>Whole school / stages</td>
<td>Content / collaborative participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>based PD (classified by</td>
<td>of schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia as “small PD”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Steps in Literacy</td>
<td>Trainer / clusters /</td>
<td>Collaborative participation</td>
<td>Voluntary (trainer);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whole school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mandatory Participation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Management</td>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>Collaborative Participation</td>
<td>Unstated whether voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(unstated but implied)</td>
<td></td>
<td>or mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative Justice</td>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>Collaborative Participation</td>
<td>Unstated whether voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(unstated but implied)</td>
<td></td>
<td>or mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Olivia has attended more than these PD and PL events, but these are the ones that she referenced in her narrative. Behaviour management and Restorative Justice were identified by her but she did not provide descriptions of them. She implied that these were whole school and based on collaborative participation but did not indicate whether these were voluntary or mandatory within the school.
Both Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) and Day (1999) acknowledge that factors such as the culture of the school and ideology are important, as part of the change environment. Olivia referred to many of the interactive elements of Day’s (1999) Model of Quality PD. She felt that many stakeholders and decision-makers ignore the life history, biography and experiences of teachers when making decisions about PD and PL. The skills, knowledge and expertise of teachers are rarely acknowledged. The next phase of her career as a private educational consultant brought elements in her teaching career together in a credible way. Olivia referred to the culture of the school (Biesta et al., 2015; Scott, 2015) along with teacher preferences (Gordon, 2004) while still acknowledging the influences of other key stakeholders such as government decision-makers. She did not dispute the need for mandatory PD where the learning was valid and meaningful, but she noted the discrepancies in the delivery of PD and the unacceptable lack of acknowledgement of differing abilities and competencies of participants in PD and PL events.

As a teacher with much teaching experience, when asked what was important to her about professional development, Olivia made the following comment about the current trends in thinking. This comment resonates with the deficit mode planning, delivery and expectation of results as noted by Fiszer (2004).

Well, this is my soapbox I guess. This is presupposing that teachers believe that previous teacher improvement practices were static and finite in nature and that all teachers are currently deficit in their skills, understandings and practices. Any PD from even two years ago is viewed with suspicion as somehow it cannot possibly have any effect on student outcomes. I find it offensive that any teachers believe the myth that they all need continual improvement to be successful teachers or that the achievement of at least minimal standards of literacy and numeracy are their sole responsibility.

Olivia has chosen to do off-site professional development with a view to her current context as a consultant for a specific program that she is offering to particular schools who have requested her expertise. She is still a registered primary teacher and while she cannot forecast what might happen after a year as a private consultant, she was keen to retain her registration with a view to possible future job opportunities within schools. While Ryan & Bourke (2013) indicate that teachers are increasingly being perceived as the non-experts, in this instance
Olivia has certainly parlayed her credibility into the perception that she is definitely the expert within her new educational context. Olivia may be the rare teacher who has transferred her skills into a new role as education consultant and developed a niche market of families with children with challenging behaviours and attitudes in schools and home-schooled families.

*I think getting into this type of work was excellent because it clarified for me that every child deserves the best. Every single child deserves to have the best teachers, the best programs, the best of everything but they aren’t. I think this job has really clarified for me that I love kids, that what is important about the teaching IS the learning. I also want to maintain that element of freshness as a teacher. I was a Secondary teacher, then a Primary and Early Childhood teacher and I am back at a Primary teacher now but in a new role.*

*I like being a teacher and yet I find it very sad that various schools and parents have felt a need to employ me to wade through some of the issues and reach a stage of illumination. I think that this should be the domain of the schools and teachers should have the skills and the time and the support to be doing what I am doing. But in answer to your question, I think those who are forever curious are the best teachers, and that to me is also an important part of being a teacher involved in good teaching and learning.*

Olivia explicitly manages her own PD now, with the view that as she is paid as a consultant, she needs to have answers to questions, whether that solution is content-based, programming or crash courses to parents. She “*doesn’t fuss with unnecessary PD but I engage in ones that I need personally.*” Olivia observed that society has struggled with the new paradigm for teachers, teaching and learning (Abdurrahman, Anwar & Sultana, 2012) and that within society, teachers are not seen as professionals. She noted that there is a level of disrespect for teachers, a concept which is implied in the work of Abdurrahman et al., 2012 and Ryan & Bourke, 2013. She had opinions about PD as well, linking it to job improvement, “*a task oriented bit of time spent in an attempt to ensure minimum standards within any given school.*” However, it was Olivia’s observation that the government of the day “*don’t trust teacher training, so they have now implemented a series of base-line PD to ensure that teachers are to minimum standards.*”
She noted that no other profession was a scrutinised as intensively as teachers. She observed that there are government –sponsored websites where testing results of students are displayed in grade levels and published online about the school, parents are encouraged to analyse their child’s school. Olivia commented that this scrutiny was taking place whether parents understand their particular school dynamics or whether their child is one who is doing well. Olivia’s view resonated with that of Ryan and Bourke (2013) who outline that for the past twenty years, teachers have been casualties and suffering from declining support, tighter controls, shrinking budgets, intensified workload and standardisation. These authors spoke of the increasing pressures from other stakeholders such as politicians and the community for increased accountability. Ryan and Bourke (2013) note the position of teachers has been weakened by curriculum prescription, testing regimes, performance management, a casual workforce, increased monitoring and appraisal – and the resultant derision from various sources. Olivia noted:

We (teachers) are earnest people by and large. We are dedicated to kids but a lot of PD, supposedly with these lofty aims of improving things for kids, well, some of them are pretty lame. Once you get a teacher who feels that her time has been wasted, you have to work really hard to gain back that trust. At the moment I am seeing so many disillusioned teachers who are feeling really disempowered by the whole PD process but also distrustful that if they stand up and tell senior staff that something is not working for them, they will somehow be on the back foot when it comes to promotions and being seen as a good corporate soul.

She cites her understanding of the need for schools to ensure at least “base-grade standards of teaching, but it is not something that is really professional... nor is it development-oriented where you expect to see each teacher improve in his or her own way.” She goes in her criticism, wondering at the capability of the “system” to cater for the needs of hundreds of teachers and decide if there has been an improvement. She explains:

What is happening now is the transference of content basically, whether it is information dissemination or telling you about things that are going to improve your practice, like reporting formats or something IT related. There is little genuine discussion about the big issues about changing pedagogy to something more effective, or a radical new way of organising the school to make it really accessible to the kids
and their families. I miss that excitement about education.

She goes on to add that she worries about the future, as the purpose of schools has changed but there is the complication of a changing landscape. Olivia noted similar trends, but related it directly to her own teaching and learning experiences, reflecting on many years in the teaching force. Olivia questioned the future of teaching, and reiterated that sense of derision articulated by Ryan & Bourke (2013). Olivia questioned the place of professional judgement against dimensions of knowledge, the moral and social purposes of education and the emotional dimensions of teaching (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). She states:

We are holding our own against a tide of change and I don’t know what the future holds for schools and teachers. It is not just the use of technology, but really the purpose of schools and how they are achieving that, and I don’t think we are doing so well in either coping with change or catering for it. So there is no PD for stressed teachers, or more effective time management or planning for serious change or even taking the plunge and changing school hours or ways of organising the schools. We continue to do the same things year after year, expecting the kids and their parents to fit what we provide but we aren’t catering for them in a world where every eight year old is being offered a mobile phone for safety and has access to multiple computers at home. What are we doing?

Olivia was asked to consider the important elements of her PD opportunities and experiences. She considered that the most significant PD sessions were those “where teachers are interacting and sharing both the knowledge base but the action towards change” (Ambusson et al., 2012). She added that she valued some PD because it was:

...the PD where I was integrally involved where I was integrally interested and where I was already planning how to include strategies in my daily teaching. Those are the ones where I think my teaching practices were not just enhanced but improved, where at the very least, there was a change in what I was doing.

Olivia cautioned that a focus just on literacy and numeracy was short-sighted as teachers do so much more than just teach these areas. When asked about the significant contributing factors of PD, she outlined the intent of the PD. Olivia felt this was critical, tying in with her previous comments about disliking teacher busy work, a diminishing of trust and
disempowerment of teachers when a teacher feels his or her time is wasted. Olivia was more vocal about this than Eliza and Mark, but they too referred to some of the less important PD sessions that they were expected to attend. Olivia’s entire focus was on student-centred learning, but she admitted that she is in an exceptionally fortunate circumstance where she can make her own decisions about her PD. Her actions, by her own words, are completely self-directed (Josselson, 2004) but she appreciates that this is not possible for most teachers.

She referred in her description to quality professional learning activities, with the transference of learning to the classroom (Hoban, 2014) as a critical factor for Olivia. The factors and characteristics identified by her in her narrative, those that influenced Olivia’s views towards her valuing of quality or effective PD included the following:

- Related to personal teacher need;
- PD and PL contained current, up-to-date knowledge and skills;
- The purpose of the PD and PL is to reform and amend teaching practice;
- PD and PL fostered change;
- People experienced “aha” moments as a direct result of engaging in PD and PL;
- Excitement about PD and PL;
- Multiple opportunities to grow and enhance teaching practice;
- Opportunities to reflect and share knowledge;
- Collaboration opportunities to find answers;
- Gender, age and ability mixed;
- Development of action plans;
- Evidence of school support;
- Some pre-knowledge leading to enhanced knowledge;
- Clear intent of the PD;
- Indication of trust in the teacher and her professionalism;
- Good presenters;
- Excellent content in the PD and PL;
• Wonderful pedagogy (in terms of the PD presentation); and
• Supportive, collaborative mix of ideas and strategies.

Olivia commented on another major issue in the current push towards self-sustaining schools and global funding arrangements, an initiative of the current NT Department of Education. Contrary to the current move towards self-contained schools, managing their own budgets and making their own educational decisions, Olivia observed that:

... We have to stop thinking of schools as businesses and this whole concept of gaining business managers instead of principals is a really interesting idea. Schools are made up of little souls with so much personality, individualism and potential and they just don’t fit into a black and white, linear pattern of education. We are being increasingly pushed into a way of operating that is increasingly negative, punitive and confining and education cannot operate in that way.

Olivia was quite outspoken about some of the other key stakeholders in the education equation who might need to be considered but also expressed the opinion that we are being trained to “take on all the blame’ for any shortfalls in education and other areas that are not a teacher’s domain.

Olivia referred to organisational issues in trying to deliver effective PD, particularly after teachers have already taught a day of work or at other professionally unsuitable times. She believed that PD should not be demeaned “as unimportant when the times are tight.” Olivia introduced the concept of “big” PD activities, “those where changes come with people experiencing “aha” moments and then racing back to their classrooms to change their practice.” She believed there is so much potential for teachers to grow and enhance their practice and she noted the opportunities for reflection (Matthews, 2003), collaboration to seek answers as a mixed group (Ambusson et al., 2012), and opportunities to learn from each other are all hallmarks of effective PD.

For that reason, Olivia did not like the basic premise of mandatory PD where a standardised, non-differentiated approach might not necessarily suit even two teachers at the same time. She commented that information delivery (as opposed to collaborative knowledge construction) should be the rare PD when in fact it is becoming increasingly the norm. Unless such a PD session is necessary and allied to action plans with practical and concrete support
(Fox, 2001; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011), she is not in favour. She stated that she finds the current crop of PD to be quite uninspiring, and that “I used to fall in with the idea that I needed to do everything “in case” I needed it in the future, but I no longer subscribe to that theory. Things change so often and so quickly that the program that is a buzz word today will be obsolete tomorrow and I will worry about organise specific PD if I need it at a point in the future.”

It is obviously Olivia’s experience that shared decision-making, development and implementation of PD opportunities between management and teachers does not necessarily occur. The lack of teacher agency in engaging in the governance and implementation of PD plans (Pyhältö et al., 2015) is an aspect that Olivia has noticed. Most classroom teachers do not have an option of openly refusing to engage in a mandatory PD or PL event as planned within their school. This is even more of an issue if PD attendance is linked to both a performance review and to fulfil PD requirements for ongoing teacher registration. Ryan and Bourke (2013) observe that decision-making implies contractual responsibilities and accountabilities that impact on PD and PL. Olivia’s decision-making about her attendance or otherwise at PD sessions within her school is not one that most classroom teachers would feel comfortable replicating. Olivia’s narrative explored her determination and conviction of her right to make professional decisions about her engagement in PD and PL in her school and her acknowledgement of agency in her decision-making.

As Olivia pointed out, it is impossible for teachers to be truly honest about their needs in situations where a teacher may be struggling to be deemed competent by peers and possibly petrified to admit to a need for genuine assistance. An experienced teacher, according to Olivia, might be put down for sharing insights freely or be promoted out of the classroom. The most effective PD sessions are those where interaction and sharing a knowledge base as well as action towards change are included explicitly. She fears for the future, where without cross-pollination of ideas from a wide variety of presenters and PD opportunities, a “moribund system” will get even more moribund. Olivia felt strongly that “teachers deserve good PD”. Her interpretation, according to her commentary in her narrative, was in reference to the qualities that she deems important and valuable to quality PD and PL and part of the process of decision-making about PD.

Both Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) and Day (1999) acknowledge that factors such as the
culture of the school and ideology (Biesta et al., 2015; Scott, 2015) are a part of the change environment. Day (1999) expands this concept, which resonates many of Olivia’s comments. Olivia observed many of the interactive elements of Day’s (1999) Model, referring to the concept of a life history and biography, in reference to what teachers bring to the table. Olivia referred to the culture of the school along with teacher preferences, while still acknowledging the influences of other key stakeholders such as government decision-makers. She referred in her description to quality professional learning activities, with the transference of learning to the classroom.

7.2.5 Tally

Tally has had over twenty PD opportunities over the past couple of years (but only those sessions mentioned in her narrative are listed below). She viewed this interview as an opportunity to clarify her own feelings and direction of her future PD and PL, particularly for her own use in her next performance review at school.

This is a teacher who has clearly thought about professional development and professional learning, and has delineated it in her own mind. She identified professional development, professional learning and professional enhancement, three separate but linked pathways of her own learning journey.

Tally explained that PD is about learning to develop her own understandings or knowledge, particularly in areas where she is not yet confident. She believes that PD is very important as a “good way to refresh your knowledge and see how you can improve your practices within your class and meet the needs of your students.” She defined professional learning as “how you use your professional development, how you are using it and how you reflect on your learning as well.” Tally had a clear understanding not just of the nature of PD and PL, but also that in her context, there were varying factors at work. She acknowledged that it was her responsibility to cater for her own needs. Tally showed a perceptive awareness of not just her classroom situation and what she had to do to improve her personal teaching and learning practices but the general directions of her school as well.

She noted that professional learning is a more active process than professional development thereby showing her understanding of the differences between the two concepts. Whether it is a function of her closer proximity to her teacher tertiary training, or simply Tally herself with
these qualities, she presented with a greater working knowledge of the questions asked in this research study.

*PD is one of those things that you don’t think about, because teaching is such a busy profession, but we get PD in a variety of ways. I used to think PD was the formal sessions, cleverly labelled as PD in our weekly schedule but since teaching for a while, I know that I get professional learning in a variety of ways. I think there is a difference between professional development, professional learning and professional enhancement, but I don’t know that others think about it like this. The usual definition of PD is someone delivering it to you, whether you want it or not, but professional learning and enhancement is a more active process. I think we get a variety of all of these and the ones that I consider the most important ones are the ones where I engage in learning and enhancement.*

Tally was one of few to refer to the theoretical aspects of PD, along with the difficulties and challenges of transferring this learning to her classroom practice (Ambusson et al., 2012; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Leberman et al., 2006). Tally’s views were in line with Evans (2011) in terms of her expectations of PD and PL. Her optimistic view is that change is not threatening and every teacher needs to be in an ongoing spirit of renewal and refreshment (hence Tally’s use of the word “enhancement” in her definition of PD and PL).

Tally referred to characteristics underpinning professional development such as behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development as part of sustaining a professional life for teachers. Tally discussed her ideas about PD as a methodology for improvement of her skills and understandings across many domains:

*Professional development is learning to develop my own understandings or knowledge, or could be improving some of the curriculum content that I am struggling with. It could be that I am not as confident or strong as other teachers or I am doing something that is counter-productive for real learning in my class. I might have attended PD and I just have the theory wrong if it doesn’t kick in for me. I need to attend PD to fix some of these things, but it is my attitude that is critical. If I am having a bad day, I just won’t get anything out of PD so the conditions have to be right as well. Getting further ideas because once you are a classroom teacher, it is hard to get out there to see other ideas of how things are done. Sometimes you can*
stagnate if you don’t get out there and get new ideas. I sometimes get online to see what other teachers are doing, and apply to my classroom. It is refreshing to see how other people do things.

She noted that PD is learning to develop her own understandings or knowledge, but with the caution that it is easy to stagnate if a teacher does not get new ideas. This is in line with Olivia’s warning about the possibilities of a moribund system.

Tally was the only one of the seven participating teachers who had embraced technology as part of her PD and PL experiences. Tally’s most significant PD experience was an online Perceptual Motor Program (PMP) for EC. Because it was of interest to Tally, and she wanted more information about particular skills and how to teach them in this classroom, she went online to get the expertise that she wanted. Tally could do engage with this PD at her own time and pace. It was engaging and had YouTube® clips to accompany it. Tally found this to be a practical and engaging opportunity. The coordinators supplied resources so she could apply it to her own teaching context. Tally noted that she uses YouTube® when she needs to see other teaching strategies in action, advising that there is a huge library of useful teaching tools on many different social media and dedicated sites for teachers.

As one of the younger participating teachers, Tally feels that there are so many ideas about what teachers are supposed to do, and how they are meant to help children to learn. She noted that there are so many challenges to meet those expectations as so many aspects of schools are now managed in not necessarily effective ways (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). The concept of being result-driven is not a new one. Tally stated that there has always been a drive to improve student outcomes and to provide stable educational environments to optimise the capabilities of student learners.

Tally referred to the expectations and pressures upon teachers (Biesta et al., 2015; Ryan & Bourke, 2013; Scott, 2015) and the resultant challenges for them to be creative about to meet those expectations and achieve results. Tally spoke about the possible need for “streaming” teachers or differentiating their PD into two different pathways. The first pathway could be for teachers who only require a refresher PD whereas another pathway could be for teachers requiring a full PD with new knowledge. Terry referred to the expectations of her school leadership team to put in time and effort into implementation of different projects as well.

Her comment, similar to Eliza’s, was:
People in policy don’t really have any idea of what it is like in the classroom. I love working with children but the expectations from all areas, the government, curriculum, yourself, parents and community. I find really .... Oh I don’t know. It’s really difficult to allay everyone’s concerns and still do a good job and be fair to the kids. I would like to be flexible with how and what the kid’s learn, but sometimes it is difficult with set timeframes and there is a lot of pressure to make sure that every child is achieving at least to a minimum standard. It’s like being in a vice.

This text indicates a teacher conscious of the demands from various stakeholders for minimal standards of literacy and numeracy at the least. Terry’s comments indicate a teacher who is aware of the demands of her job, and of being monitored to ensure that she does her job. Tally finds the job of being a teacher to be:

...constricting because there are so many ideas of what teachers are supposed to do and how they are meant to help children to learn, but it’s challenging because you have to be crerative in how to meet all those expectations and achieve results, as it is so results-driven. That’s a big pressure for teachers.

I love teaching but the paperwork is astronomical, and being accountable for every little thing and writing it down. It’s not just teachers but childcare workers as well. People in policy don’t really have any idea of what it is like in the classroom. People want to support you but they can’t because they can’t physically, someone might be away or whatever...lack of funding, that sort of thing.

This comment allies with Eliza’s and Olivia’s that sometimes it appears that key decision-makers are unaware of the true reality of the classroom. Tally raised the issue of purposeful PD with co-construction and shared governance of professional learning (Pyhältö et al., 2015) within the school. Listed below is a summary of the PD attendance for Terry, as referenced in her narratives, with her most preferred PD opportunities.

Tally identified some of the other whole school PD sessions that she was involved in, including one on differentiation of the curriculum in terms of the content and how students access information and learning, While she could see the purpose of this PD from the school perspective, and gave credit to senior staff who felt she and her school would benefit from it, she could see the possibilities for cultural change within the school (Gordon, 2004). With a
focus on student-centred learning in her classroom, Tally enjoyed PD and PL for the teacher
colleagiality (Gordon, 2004) and the opportunities to see different ways of applying
knowledge within her classroom (Beattie, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Taber, 2011).

Table 7.5: Tally’s PD experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Steps in Number</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD Experience</td>
<td>PD Delivery</td>
<td>Engagement Focus</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Steps in Writing</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Reporting</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions of Learning</td>
<td>Clusters</td>
<td>Content (Theory) and expected collective participation</td>
<td>Voluntary (selected): School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>Clusters</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Mandatory: School and NTDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Online PD on Physical Education</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Active Learning</td>
<td>Voluntary: Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tally viewed this PD as her preferred online learning, which she tracked as having influenced her
classroom practice. This was an individual PD which was completed in her own time outside of
school hours, but which involved much action learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs PD</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special readings: Big Book</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Voluntary: Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Meetings</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Content and collective participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Pre-service teachers</td>
<td>Individual / Clusters</td>
<td>Active learning</td>
<td>Voluntary: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation of Content</td>
<td>Whole School</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2C: Curriculum into Classroom</td>
<td>Stages of School</td>
<td>Collective Participation</td>
<td>Voluntary: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tally believed that EC teachers are comfortable with the concept of socially constructed
knowledge, but that time constraints did not necessarily foster this in terms of adult learning
within the school. She commented that “I am not criticising (that PD) as it was a directive

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 257
from the department, but when you consider how precious our time is, by the time you finished that day, and started our planning, everyone was not enthused and it was difficult to get into an enthused state to get into planning.” She raised a concern in that often teachers are not asked, nor are their learning levels catered for adequately. Tally outlined her concerns:

One of the things about differentiation was trying to stretch your students, not make it hard for them, but make it that little bit more challenging, so that they are engaged, stimulated. I said to the in-school facilitators, I want to be that child who is stretched because I didn’t feel stimulated at all. Their response was that everyone is at a different stage of their learning journey and fortunately or unfortunately some people aren’t quite there, and wherever I am in my journey, there really wasn’t a choice.

Tally indicated her understanding of SC in action, where she was able to differentiate that her journey might not have been the same as other participants. Tally discussed some of the factors that she valued in her PD and PL experiences as well as those that she found less impressive in assisting her to transfer new skills and knowledge to her classroom. Tally referred to the five days of Dimensions of Learning (DoL) where the presenter from Queensland was very knowledgeable and used DoL strategies in her presentation as well as encouraging collective sharing. Tally commented more than once that this PD was very theoretical and she has not implemented it in her classroom to the full extent.

Influential characteristics which emerged from Tally’s narrative included the following:

- Engaging PD for participants;
- Online PD to do it at your own pace and time;
- Visual examples on YouTube®;
- Practical content in PD and PL events;
- Practical resources;
- Knowledgeable presenters;
- New concepts embedded in PD presentation;
- Variation of activities to cater for a variety of learners;
• Opportunities to share, collective sharing;
• Wide group of teachers involved from EC to Secondary;
• Broad picture of how PD fits into bigger picture of education;
• Inclusion of theory to give background and understanding;
• Strategies and ideas linked to theory; and
• Excitement and enthusiasm.

Aubusson, Ewing and Hoban (2012) argue the need for dynamic, action-filled, complex series of interactions, communication, active learning, collaborative support and development. Tally’s comments indicated her agreement with this approach to learning and where she currently sits in the debate.

Tally mentioned issues with provision of PD, citing “lack of funding, relief teachers, out of hours PD”. This was not a criticism of the governance of the school, but more a comment on general trends towards the provision of PD within school budgets and allocation of resources. She believes that teachers do not mind prioritising important PD if there is a purpose to it, but they do not enjoy anyone wasting their time, either in school or in outside PD. Overall, Tally had the widest understanding of professional development and professional learning, and she was quite clear about the demands of critical stakeholders to improve student outcomes. She appeared to find the best balance in terms of coordinating her need for professional knowledge within the parameters of available technology and time constraints.

Tally was the only one of the seven participating teachers who had embraced technology in terms of using it effectively in her own access to PD and PL opportunities and accepted that PD was likely to be her own personal and professional journey. She was catering for her own needs with those underpinning understandings.

7.2.6 Terry

Terry also self-identified as a Primary teacher, noting her many years in schools catering for Primary aged students, and her grounding and experience at a Primary level. She did not view that her current appointment to a Secondary school was a permanent move, and she believed that her teaching in her current context was dependent upon her expertise and skills attained
as a Primary teacher.

Terry defined PD as “any activity or learning that will help improve your teaching skills or practices within a classroom, or your role in a school, so that if you aspire to move up the ladder, you can be supported in that aspect as well, if you want to.” Terry felt that the most significant PD sessions were ones that were “interactive and meaningful” (Ambusson et al., 2012). She referred to the application of new knowledge to old knowledge (concepts of SC), as something important to her personally, as well as her students, stating that “we don’t sort of learn one thing at a time. We learn heaps of things daily, accumulating that knowledge over time. I was trying hard to sort of display it in a graph because I don’t know that my words are enough.” Terry also refers to another SC where knowledge is scaffolded and built as foundations for learning. She observed several times in her interview that she has a teaching assistant and their job is to support students with knowledge and information at a level that her students can understand, before building and accessing further knowledge. Terry believed that teachers would not be in the “teaching game” unless as a group, “we were interested not just in teaching and learning, with regards to the kids, but in learning ourselves.” Terry cautioned about wasting her time as a busy teacher, stating:

I know they talk about PD being to improve you as a teacher, but I think sometimes it is misused, and it is less about the teacher, less about the students and more about the system and what “they” want. Sort of their own agenda rather than mine as a teacher who wants to improve.

Terry is in a unique position in that she has taught in different stages of schooling. While she is currently teaching as a Secondary teacher of Bahasa Indonesia, she is using many of her Primary stage of schooling strategies with lower achieving students in her allocated classes. While she may be a part of her Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) faculty, her specialisation was translated by Terry to mean that she works often at a tangent to other staff members. She stated:

I don’t want to be critical but there are really not that many PD sessions I can attend as a Languages specialist, but the whole movement to upskilling teachers just in their schools, on things like the national curriculum, don’t always fit my teaching load. I get that I need to know about things in a general way, but sometimes I feel this is one-
sided. No one ever wants to know what the national agenda is towards the acquisition of language as a necessary skill for the future.

This link between purpose of PD and teaching load is reflected in research such as that of Guskey (2014) who state that there must be a specific purpose to guide teacher PD experiences (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Gordon, 2004; Hall, 2004; Nisbet, Warren & Cooper, 2003). Terry quickly drew the grid below, Figure 7.1, as an explanation of the projects, workload and allied PD and PL to which she was committed and engaged.

She used this grid to explain that some of these projects were based on identified school needs and the time allocated to implementation of these projects (including her active engagement). A major project such as behaviour management included a range of professional readings, trialing of both strategies and inclusion in daily pastoral care sessions with students and professional meetings with other teachers to monitor implementation. She appreciated the need for whole school software updating of skills and the decision to implement whole school projects with every teacher involved.

![Figure 7.1: Terry’s Projects, Workload and PD Overview](image)

Terry needed this sort of diagram to make it clear what projects and simultaneous learning
was taking place in her professional life. Terry attempted to track specific learning and credit it to a particular project or PD event but was unable to make the links. She also observed that none of her school PD or PL was in her specialist area. While she was happy to engage in the range of PD and PL activities, she also felt that her contributions were not as valid as someone with a strong focus on the subject area. She was also conscious that her students were operating at a lower academic area, so she tended not to contribute much to trial or mentoring programs within the school.

I was just trying to analyse what I have learned over this past year and the sort of milestones about when I learnt what and from who. But it was all sort of happening at the same time, so you can’t really say that one (PD) happened and then something happened after that.

Terry pointed out that her individual learning came from her attendance at a conference, in her own time, at her own expense and working individually on implementing strategies and knowledge gained from conference proceedings. Terry stated that there was much PD she was doing just in case it was needed for the future. Not only was the bulk of it inappropriate to the academic level of her students, but Terry felt it was not of high relevance to her personally, her area of expertise and specialisation or her future career directions. Terry appreciated that she was one of many staff-members in this faculty and school and she had not shared her concerns with her direct management team. While Terry felt little purpose in attending these PD sessions, many were mandatory, so she is unable to choose to make a professional judgement as to their suitability or appropriateness to her professionally. Terry indicated that attendance registers are taken at PD sessions, even staff meetings and as such, only a valid doctor’s certificate is viewed as sufficient to be excused from a PD or PL session planned by her school or faculty. She stated:

Whole school curriculum days? I guess they are essential and important but there is very little interest level from me. I guess it is really important that I know about Australian Curriculum and History but the age range and skill level of kids they have given me over the past two years means these kids are unlikely to enter an academic strand anyways. The presenters were sort of smug. They knew they had a captive audience and at the end of it they made it a point of saying they needed all feedback forms.
This comment underpins Terry’s disenfranchisement from the process. Her uncertainty about the value of such PD combined with her inability to acknowledge the relevance of all teachers in the country having at least a modicum of relevant information about such a momentous Australian milestone as common curriculum. While Terry was not a key decision-maker in her PD choices, there is an element of some decision-making that is necessary in every school, or the committee work would halt any teaching and learning. Terry saw her role as not integral to the process, and this is reflected in her comments. This does not address her comments about the smugness of the PD presenters and there may very well be a reason for her dissatisfaction with the PD presentation and delivery but this was not explored fully in this research study.

Listed below is a summary of the PD attendance for Terry, with her most favoured and her least favoured PD opportunities. While Terry attended more PD sessions than this, these are the ones particularly mentioned in her narrative.

Table 7.6: Terry’s PD experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Information Communication Technology</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Content focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This was the PD session that Terry found least helpful or useful with regards to her current teaching context and class load. While it was a system being implemented throughout the school, Terry classified her expected engagement with it as minimal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Content focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Grammar</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Content focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>Whole school</td>
<td>Content Focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Days</td>
<td>Faculty / whole school</td>
<td>Content Focus / collective participation</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Conference in Victoria: Languages</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Collective participation / active learning</td>
<td>Voluntary: Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* External PD in Bali</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Active learning / coherence</td>
<td>Voluntary: Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terry spoke enthusiastically of these two PD, referring to them using PL terms and concepts. She spoke of her long-term engagement in learning, her collaborative participation and her ongoing and implementation of strategies from these events. While the events were of limited duration, she was in online contact with peers in Bali and from the conference who were assisting her with new directions in her teaching.
Overall, Terry stated that she is cooperative about attending PD and PL but in real terms, she found little of value in the PD sessions that she was required to attend. While she attended school-based PD sessions, she admitted that she did not actively participate in them, nor plan to transfer learning to her classroom in an active way. She noted the extremes in her current position; her cohort of students was exceptionally low academically, many of them with functional English literacy and numeracy skills at an EC level at best. Their life experiences outside of school were increasingly at odds with possible academic pathways within the school.

Terry commented that 90% of her PD opportunities were completed at the school level with “internal presenters” (meaning school presenters). She noted that one external PD session, spread over three days, was attended by multiple staff members attending half or one session each, providing “disjointed” PD to share at a faculty staff meeting. By the time Terry was attending her one session of this PD event, she had no knowledge or understanding of previous sessions, and her allocated time at the PD made no sense to her whatsoever. She noted that this felt to her as the opposite of SC in action where there were no foundations to build upon. Even when the PD was summarised in the relevant order by those who had attended before and after her session, it still did not make much sense.

In Terry’s school, PD needs were identified by senior staff, with limited input from teachers. Her specific PD needs with regards to her teaching specialisation were not supported within the school and she was not encouraged to seek other Language teachers in other schools. She had asked for time to meet with School of Languages (a branch of NTDE) but was refused unless it was in her own time.

She referred to her learning experiences predominantly as PD except when discussing the conference in Victoria for Language teachers around the country and her extended breaks in Bali when she focused on her own written and read language skills in Bahasa Indonesia. While she stated that internal PD and PL events within her school were engaging, Terry commented on the incidental learning where people were far more excited:

> Because they are enthusiastic and taking the time to introduce it to you, and how well it is working for them, then you are more likely to take something like that on board and try it yourself <reflective pause> and have your own success stories with that sort of thing.
Terry was asked about the third research question related to the broad elements that she acknowledged and valued in her PD. Terry commented that her interest in the Student Representative Council, or SRC meant she had a particular interest in peer leadership, mostly as she had opportunities to speak to others who were implementing good projects within their schools. A critical PD session was with the Victorian Indonesian Language Teachers Association (VILTA) because, as Terry explains, “I started to believe in what I was teaching.” This aligns with Justi and Van Driel (2005) and their model of PD, where one of the features is the emergence of knowledge through experience. Another feature is the emphasis on different learning at different stages of a teacher’s career, and this resonated with reflection that Terry has made about her own teaching career.

Key characteristics noted by Terry about her preferred PD that emerged from her narrative included the following:

- Opportunities for incidental learning to be shared with colleagues;
- Teacher interest in the PD and its content;
- Opportunities for networking with other teachers;
- Sharing good projects;
- Potential to transfer learning to the classroom;
- Potential to change or enhance perceptions about best practice;
- Able to trial something new;
- Knowledgeable presenters;
- Authentic purpose for the PD or PL and
- Reinforced my views about myself.

Another PD opportunity that she enjoyed was with professionals using languages, and inspiring Terry by making language use real. Terry acknowledged the importance of “real purpose” and “real benefits” not just in what she is doing with regards to her own PD needs, but in terms of her own teaching (Biesta et al., 2015: Pantić, 2015: Toom et al., 2015). Terry acknowledged that she is happiest teaching languages. Her personal PD sessions have substantially changed her teaching practices, in that to be successful, particularly in the
teaching of Languages, “I had to make them (students) see the real opportunities.”

I think the PD sessions I have found most valuable are those where I can see myself trialing something new and actually getting something out of the trial. I can try a new strategy, like in behaviour management and I can see something improve for me. I have spoken Indonesian for a long time now since going there in my own high school days, but it was my trips since then and trying to relate sessions to kids that have made the biggest difference to how and what I teach. I brought a whole bunch of craft things back from my last trip so getting the girls making flower clips and the boys dyeing fabrics has been a lot better approach to learning why and how to use the language successfully.

Terry’s biggest issue, as viewed by her, is the exclusivity of her area of expertise; there just is not that much on offer for teachers of Bahasa Indonesian, unless she goes interstate and/or pays for it herself. Curriculum and pedagogy specifically geared at teachers of specialist areas such as Language is not easy to find, according to Terry. In her last school, PD was not linked to performance management in a direct way and Terry felt there was a mismatch between her limited ability to feed her opinions into the selection of PD, and the money spent on PD within the school. Terry commented that “I guess somewhere someone is ticking the box that PD has been delivered and the outcomes should improve but if they don’t know what we want, how can the improved outcomes be measured. And if each of us is different, how do senior staff decide what we need if no one ever asks us?” Terry’s lack of agency, her inability to speak for herself, her disenfranchisement from decision-making or ownership of school-based PD is of concern.

By her comments, Terry craves the attitudinal, behavioural and intellectual stimulation of Evans (2011) model of PD. She had noted her need for additional skills and upon reflection, took action to address her own perceived need for additional knowledge and skills. She noted her attitudinal change, but also the intellectual stimulation of engaging in PD in her specialist area. She actively sought motivational changes, with a view to becoming excited again about her specialist area. Terry took it upon herself to coordinate her own Balinese connections at real-life PD. She notes the opportunities where she has been given those options as part of the quality PD she has experienced in Languages, and she noted many of the same characteristics of quality PD as the other participating teachers.
Samantha is a long-term Territorian teacher, with an extensive career in Primary schools in the Top End. At the time of the interview, she was in her last year of teaching, and was reflective both about her long career but also her PD opportunities over more years than the two requested as part of this research study.

Over time, Samantha changed her mind about the importance of PD. As a younger teacher, she believed at the time that it was important to be up-to-date with content and pedagogy, as well as current beliefs about teaching and learning. Now, as a teacher planning her retirement, she is uncertain about the direction of PD. She did not believe that PD is as related to either the individual or collective needs of teachers in schools.

She brought up the concept of monitoring and regulation, where accountability is an issue (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). Despite systemic policies and practices to raise levels of teacher accountability, Kleinhenza and Ingvarson (2006) dispute whether these systems have the capability to ensure teacher quality or to improve teaching and learning practices in classrooms. While attendance may be used to confirm a teacher’s presence, it does not necessarily mean that they are fulfilling their PD responsibilities through active engagement, Samantha felt that it did not matter whether PD is implemented or not in classrooms. She used the example of a whole-school grammar PD session where many teachers who might not have interest or need for intensive grammar PD were tuning out but having completed the PD, all teachers are now considered to have the same level of understanding.

Samantha believed in the aim of PD to fulfil ongoing needs of teachers but suggested that there was limited acknowledgement of the differences between teachers and those personal needs in terms of making individual teachers better at their craft and profession, and professional needs as they relate to students and the classroom. She commented that:

*I think PD is dreadfully important to individual teachers and to improving the classroom, the school and the system, but I don’t think it is being handled well at all now. It is almost punitive in nature, sort of flowing to the lowest common denominator. As a good solid EC teacher, I was spending more time planning to teach than actual teaching, and then feeling guilty that I had not taught what had been approved by the senior teacher.*

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures  267
When asked Samantha’s definition of PD, she summed it up quite succinctly: “It is a bad word.” I asked her to explain further.

Samantha: No one even knows that being a professional is, so how on earth could we define “professional development”? We have this vague idea of what being a professional entails. We can talk about good interpersonal relationships and effective teaching and becoming good adult learners, but that is all things around being a professional. I looked it up once.

Researcher: What did you look up?

Samantha: I looked up “professional” and all it says is things like trained, proficient, skilled, expert, those sorts of words. Short of the newbies, we all are reasonably proficient and experts in our classrooms so the concept of development is an interesting one when linked with those words.

Researcher: What do you think it means?

Samantha: I think that PD must, by definition be something for each individual teacher to decide. It is one of those things where an analysis is needed surely, but this whole school PD, where half the teachers are already experts, is sort of silly. But there is no more money for individual PD, but even more importantly there is little inclination to contribute to an individual teacher’s long term development. If she wants to improve her skills, she has to do that herself really.

I think PD is the sum total of all of the things that a teacher needs to improve herself. It might be more IT to understand computer systems, or new content, or a better way to look at teaching practice. I think there might be a case to make for small groups of teachers to engage in common needs PD, but I really don’t think whole school PD is ever really effective. It ticks school and system boxes but it rarely ticks classroom and individual teacher boxes.

Samantha mentioned “good interpersonal relationships”, “effective teaching” and “good adult learners” as part of being a professional, but felt that PD was something for each individual teacher to decide. She agreed that there was a need for analysis at a school level, but was less certain about the need for whole school PD where half the teachers were already experts in the field. She felt that there was little inclination, presumably referring to the
schools, the NT Department of Education or both, to commit to a teacher’s long-term development. She defined PD as the sum total of all the things that a teacher needs to improve, but she did not feel that whole school PD was, by and large, successful. While it “ticked” system boxes, it did not tick the boxes of individual teachers. Samantha notes, from the perspective of someone with a long investment as a teacher in the NT that:

*The older that I get, the more I wonder at the direction that professional development has taken. It is imposed from on high, whether that is by the department or by the school, and basically it no longer seems to matter what the teacher might need individually or collectively to make the classroom a better place for both the kids and the teacher.*

While Tally represents the newer generation of teachers, Samantha represents the older, retiring generation, many of whom are still teaching in classrooms and have that degree of experience though all of the various iterations of the department and its expectations of teachers. Her focus was clearly on the needs of the students in her class, but with a reflection on the increasing role of monitoring and regulation in the workplace (Ryan & Bourke, 2013), Samantha stated:

*What is important in the classroom, and to me as a teacher, is setting the kids up for life. I think schools are so concerned with the short term view that we forget that we are setting these kids up for the next 30, 50 and 60 years of their lives, not just today. The child who is turned off learning at age 7 is unlikely to be excited by it at age 17. And that’s our job. To turn kids onto learning, to give them the strategies to access the learning that they want and need. Sometimes I think the view of teachers is to fill in paperwork and write reports and program but it is all about the kids. They talk now about how schools must change to suit the kids but we don’t. Things are still 8:15 till 3 pm, their days are ruled by bells and the mandatory hours of literacy and numeracy are often dictated.*

Samantha’s dilemma appeared to be the nexus between regulation and monitoring now common across all of Australia and her priorities towards her students. Samantha was not using technology in an active way and current monitoring depends upon the active engagement of teachers with various software applications, which provides for ease of assessment, analysis and reporting. It is uncertain what role this played in Samantha’s
comments in her narrative. While Samantha had attended more than just these PD opportunities listed below, these are the PD sessions that were specifically mentioned in her narrative. Of all the teachers, Samantha had attended the least number of PD or PL events in the past two years. In her annual performance review, the use of IT had been raised by her immediate senior teacher as an issue for Samantha. Despite this, Samantha felt that good teaching was the core skill of teachers. While IT could enhance learning, IT could not replace good teaching, according to Samantha.

Listed below is a summary of the PD attendance for Samantha, with her most favoured (*) and her least favoured (> ) as taken from her narrative. Also indicated are the content focus of that PD and its participation level within the school.

Table 7.7: Samantha’s PD experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Experience</th>
<th>PD Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement Focus</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Information Technology (IT)</td>
<td>Stage of Schooling</td>
<td>Content Focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>Clusters</td>
<td>Content Focus</td>
<td>Mandatory: School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Tribes™ TLC</td>
<td>Clusters</td>
<td>Active Learning / Duration / Coherence</td>
<td>Voluntary: School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of negotiation, emphasis on interpersonal skills and relationship-building made this an attractive choice for Samantha.

Samantha identified her best PD as Tribes LC (Learning Community®: A New Way of Learning and Being Together). Tribes® is a program with a focus on pedagogy and support, with content decided by the teacher. In line with Samantha’s focus on good teaching, it stands to reason that she is happiest with a pedagogy program rather than one with new ideas in curriculum. With a focus on personal interaction and communication, this is a factor noted by researchers as being linked to effective or quality PD (Ambusson et al., 2012). This is collaboration in action (Ambusson et al., 2012), which fits in with her philosophy, particularly with reference to communities of active learners engaged with purpose and intent to improve both personal and professional outcomes. A critical point, as raised by other teachers as well as Samantha, is that Tribes® engaged teachers at their own level, or as
Samantha states, “good teaching but also good learning”. Samantha found the PD to be affirming and one that she has reflected upon over time. She has implemented her training into her classroom practices, with no one way of learning, but allowing for peers to support each other to find their own ways. An alternative PD that Samantha attended was a mandatory IT session where a presenter spoke for two hours, with no expectation of implementation in the classroom.

When asked about the PD sessions that Samantha valued, she indicated that she liked the “open-ended learning pathways” and that no one way was the right way. While the tasks might have been content-based in Tribes, for example, each teacher’s interpretation of those tasks was individual and creative. A critical factor of the success of that PD was the time to interact and develop interpersonal relationships, but it was interpersonal relationships in context. Samantha appreciated the blend of engagement, teaching strategies and making the content individual and accessible.

Samantha noted the students who are not succeeding or achieving to delineated standards and what that means for her teaching and learning in the classroom. Samantha echoed the comments of Terry, Olivia and Eliza about the seeming disparity between the reality of the classroom and decision-makers at both a territory and national level.

Samantha had strong opinions when asked about her own PD experiences and believes there are important considerations about older teachers possibly requiring far less PD. While some people might view older teachers as having less take-up of new ideas and ways of teaching, Samantha viewed that older teachers have an appreciation of good teaching. However, a critical PD for older teachers might be in the area of Information Technology. Samantha has no interest in designing a website, instant messaging or libraries around the world, but “a good teacher with the right student doesn’t need IT, she just needs to teach and teach well.” While the IT teacher might feel otherwise about her easy negation of IT in the classroom, she has a point that good basic teaching is essential to every student.

When Samantha began her career with NTDE, a calendar of potential PD was offered each term / semester to teachers around the NT. Teachers were encouraged to attend individual sessions, depending on need and interest. While departmental initiatives may still attract participants from around the NT, a bank of possible PD opportunities is no longer there. Schools increasingly cater for their own PD in relation to identified needs of the school.
Key characteristics identified by Samantha in her narrative about her preferred PD and PL included the following:

- PD and PL provided a new way of looking at teaching practices;
- Opportunities for collaboration and networking with other teachers;
- Solidly supported way of helping kids to learn;
- Links to her own philosophy and interest;
- Content in perspective to teaching and learning;
- Engagement of teachers at their level;
- Modelled good teaching;
- Modelled good learning; and
- Varied groups of teachers.

Bredeson’s model of PD (2003) resonated with Samantha’s sense of fun and beauty in her teaching. There was a strong sense that her dynamic displays and excitement related to the “beauty” of PD as explained by Bredeson, with its focus not just on artistic arrangements and use of materials and systems to create learning spaces. The beauty of PD lies in its linking to other elements but also in the delivery of strategies to meet the needs of professionals. She refers to the elements of design, delivery and content of learning opportunities, through the dimensions of PD that work for teachers. She referred to the function of PD as a means to improve the working lives of teachers. She supported the capacity building of teachers through PD, but lesser so the capacity of schools. Bredeson’s (2003) key themes of PD include an emphasis on learning and work, the ongoing learning journey of each teacher and the opportunities to enhance professional practice. While Bredeson (2003) emphasises that student learning, PD and organisational mission are related, ultimately PD is about people, which resonates with Samantha’s belief about the importance of PD to individual teachers.

When asked about her choices with regards to her PD preferences (as part of the third broad research question), Samantha stated:

_I cannot think of the last time someone just came out and asked me what I want and need. We all have to do performance reviews and the like and they might ask you then_
what areas you want to work on but they never say they will actually send you off to do anything about that area. No one checks year to year if the same things are put down, if there has been any improvement, if there has been any support from the school, if heroic measures needed to be taken to improve teaching practice.

Whether as a function of her age or years in the classroom, starting her teaching career in a different era in NT education where PD was centralised and offered across many subject areas, Samantha’s comments has the advantage of reflecting on the overall lack of tracking from one PD session to the next, from one year to the next, from one effective program to the next, as to whether there have been improvements in student learning.

While she views the presenter is important, the content of the PD and the “PD practices must be exemplary.” She joined Mark, Olivia and Jeanne in mentioning the role of the presenter and the importance of varied PD activities, but added:

*I think it is hilarious that we talk so much about being adult learners and we know so much from research about best practice and then so many teachers just ignore all of that when it is their time as the presenter. We know about best practice with EC kids, for example and break up sitting sessions with practical things to do but then we ignore all that for ourselves. So we know what we should be doing but so often, in the interests of expediency, we just forget all that, race through a whole heap of important concepts and content, and then that’s it. We don’t have time so a common mistake is to cram a lot into a short PD because if the presenter is school based, there just will be no further time to settle down and take a long lingering look at important concepts.*

While Samantha noted that we, as teachers, are now living in an interesting time and she has had a fantastic time as a teacher, she felt that her interview was negative.

Researcher: Oh no, I am sorry you think that! Do you want to reflect on your answers and add something more to them?

Samantha: (pause) *No, I don’t. Overall I think teachers work damned hard and we do a great job and I have had such a great career in the NT. There are some things that the other states cannot replicate and I don’t think we should have the reputation that we do for bad teaching. I think the department (NTDE) does some things well but*
there are other things where they really need to improve. You asked specifically about PD and that is one area that is raising alarms with me.

Researcher: What makes you say that?

Samantha: Well our NAPLAN results are always low and the implication is that it is the teachers who are substandard and somehow risking the kids. But this current attitude to PD is a point where the results might be short term gain but long term pain. Stopping effective PD in the short term will probably result in cost savings for the government but the whole picture in the NT is one of isolation. Without that fertilisation of ideas, without important PD being done anymore, with funding for interstate PD being reduced, we stand the risk of really becoming insular and isolated.

Mandating the entire time to teachers is really not an effective strategy either. Every man and their dog in the Federal and Territory government think that somehow mandating specific PD to teachers is going to improve things and I don’t think it does. I don’t think this concept of “one size fits all” is working, and the second there is consideration of individual teachers and what they need to improve their teaching, then the whole concept might improve. Spending more time with the teachers who need it most might be a better use of PD time and money.

In this, Samantha joined Olivia in lamenting the lack of cross-pollination of ideas and opportunities to communicate professionally with other teachers. All of the participating teachers mentioned the benefits of network and interaction. Samantha raised an interesting point about the quantity and quality of PD for older teachers and a better outlay of time and money might be to focus on those teachers who need additional skills, knowledge or understandings about teaching and learning. Each of the teachers presented as organised and teaching in ways that allow a range of students to learn, using varying pedagogy according to their knowledge of the students (Berry, 2003). The concept of caring, supportive, concerned teachers, each knowledgeable about subject matter was evident in these data. These teachers were all enthusiastic about their teaching situation (Cruikshank, Jenkins and Metcalf (2003).
7.2.8  Theme 2: Definition of PD in comparison to Models of PD

One of the difficulties in discussing professional aspects of development, learning and enhancement is that the definitions are nebulous. An identified purpose of this research study was to examine the extent, range and calibre of professional development and learning experiences of practising classroom teachers, as described by them in narratives. While the second purpose was to discover the themes embedded within their words, this was also to examine any commonalities in their understandings about PD and PL. I defined PD and PL for the purposes of this study early in Chapter 1, and then more extensively in Chapter 3: Professional Development. In light of the current research and the words and text about the impact and significance of PD and PL on the professional lives of these seven teachers, it is appropriate to revisit that definition.

In reference to the narratives of these particular seven teachers, it is also appropriate to discuss their use of the word PD but their intentions towards that wider picture of learning that is embedded within PL. All of the participating teachers hold great knowledge about their classrooms, their students, their individual needs and the PD they have attended. They hold significant knowledge about the calibre of the PD they attend and its value to them personally and professionally. In Chapter 3, after describing ten different models of professional development, and their key concepts, I developed tables that gave an overview of each model. When trying to arise at one definition from these seven practising teachers, I felt it would be advantageous to revisit these models to gain an overview of the embedded messages within each teacher’s narrative. The table below compares the viewpoints expressed by each of the participating teachers in their narratives, as detailed in Section 7.1 and 7.2 of this chapter, against the models of PD and PL.

Table 7.8: Models of Professional Development and Links to Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Teachers linked to each model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guskey (1986)</td>
<td>Model of Teacher Change: While none of the teachers disagreed with Guskey’s model, only Eliza and Samantha discussed the simplicity of PD and what it was meant to accomplish</td>
<td>√ Eliza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√ Samantha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Teachers linked to each model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Day (1999)**                            | Interactive Elements of Professional Development  
 Each of the seven teachers mentioned many of the critical elements of Day’s model. They all discussed the natural, conscious and planned learning experiences and activities of direct benefit to their students. Jeanne, Olivia and Samantha discussed the excitement and renewal of knowledge and skills, while Mark explicitly discussed PD as change agent. Mark and Olivia’s comments were most in parallel with Day. | √ Mark  
 √ Olivia |
| **Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002)**       | Interconnected Model of Professional Growth:  
 All of the seven teachers discussed different personal and professional factors detailed by Clarke and Hollingsworth, particularly in some of the external sources of information and stimuli and the multiple factors that impact PD. Olivia outlined many of these. | √ Olivia |
| **Bredeson (2003)**                       | Architectural Model of PD:  
 The concepts of fun, beauty, excitement and enthusiasm were raised by only three teachers: Jeanne, Olivia and Samantha. All of the teachers outlined the range of PD using many of the categories outlined by Bredeson. | √ Jeanne  
 √ Olivia  
 √ Samantha |
| **Leberman, McDonald and Doyle (2004)**   | Model of Transfer of Learning for earners from classroom to workplace                                                                                                                                       |                               |
| **Justi and Van Driel (2005)**            | Craft, Expert and Interactive Model of PD:  
 Jeanne, in particular, made reference to the craft of teaching and her enjoyment of the collaborative processes of PD implementation and professional models of PD delivery. Terry referenced this through her developing awareness of different PD she needed for different stages of her career and to address her own needs. | √ Jeanne  
 √ Terry |
| **Borko (2009)**                          | Professional Development System:  
 Phase 1: links between PD and teachers (single site)  
 Phase 2: Multiple facilitators at multiple sites with multiple teachers: emphasis on integrity of PD delivery in various scenarios.  
 Phase 3: Multiple PD programs enacted at multiple sites, with the relationships between the facilitator/s, teachers as learners, the PD program and the context itself (students implied)  
 All of the teachers referenced Borko’s model about their preferred PD. Borko brings in the concept of the facilitator and the role that is played in PD delivery. | √ Eliza  
 √ Mark  
 √ Jeanne  
 √ Olivia  
 √ Terry  
 √ Tally  
 √ Samantha |
One model did not suit all seven teachers. In each case, elements of each model resonated with different teachers, all at different stages of their teaching careers. Bredeson (2003) was explicit about his categories of PD, and in each narrative, teachers referred to their engagement in PD and PL over the past two years, in particular. They used phrases such as PD in their schools (where Bredeson referred to these PD events as PD in and at work). All teachers referred to PD outside of work, another of Bredeson’s categories or PD after-hours. These categories from Bredeson (2003) are listed below with the activities of some of the teachers.

- **PD in work:** the variety of learning opportunities embedded within daily work, individual learning, growth and development linked to organisational purpose, communities of practice and collective capacity. Each of the teachers referred to some of their PD experiences in this area.

- **PD at work:** workshops, training, meetings, on-site classes, teacher networks, distance learning, electronic connections and in-school exchanges. Tally, in particular, referred to her YouTube and online PD sessions, but all referred to workshops and school-based PD opportunities.

- **PD outside of work:** off-site activities being detailed from years ago, but were detailed by the participants in a very limited way in more recent years. Terry and Jeanne detailed the conventions, conferences, and workshops. Terry was the only one who detailed her trips to Bali for her own learning, for her experiences in PD beyond work, that PD that relates to the heart, mind, soul and passions of teachers.

As well as teachers picking up on the models illustrating different aspects of PD and PL, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald and
Zeichner (in Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) describe key characteristics that teachers need to teaching in a forward thinking community of learners working towards a best practice approach. The teachers provided their own listings of characteristics of effective PD and PL and these characteristics, taken from their narratives also inform the development of a new definition of PD. They indicated, again, through their narratives, that they are using the term PD but in reference to the wider picture of PL, as discussed in Chapter 3. The framework of Hammerness et al. (2005) may be helpful in trying to reach consensus on a more current and workable definition by the seven participating teachers and includes the following characteristics:

- Development of *vision* for their practice;

  This includes images of the possible, the potential images that inspire and guide good practice. Eliza understood her students and classroom well. Mark was working with senior staff to inculcate a learning community in his school. Jeanne understood the needs of her students but felt disenfranchised by the process of PD planning in her school. Olivia was making her own decisions about what PL she needed in her new career. Tally had taken responsibility for her own directions and was working towards them. Terry had clarified her role and was out-sourcing the PD and PL that she required. Samantha was winding up her career but acknowledged the need for further IT if she remained a teacher. Each of these teachers had a clear vision about personal directions for their professional learning to improve their teaching and learning practices.

- A set of *understandings* about teaching, learning and children;

  This implies a deep knowledge of content, pedagogy, students and social contexts such as the knowledge, methods, purposes and forms of discipline or intrinsic understandings about learning and development. Each of these teachers displayed this with their knowledge of their students and identification of their own PD and PL needs.

- *Dispositions* about how to use that knowledge;

  This includes habits of thinking, and action regarding teaching and children such as reflection on practice, using in inquiry approach and persistence in achieving success
with children. All teachers described their reflective practices and the actions that each had taken to improve their teaching and to transfer learning to their classrooms.

- **Practices** that allow them to act on their intentions and beliefs;

  This includes developing, practising and enacting a repertoire of effective instructional strategies such as discussions, debates and providing feedback. Each of the teachers indicated their different teaching and learning practices and what they valued in their PD sessions that allowed them to integrate new knowledge, skills and understandings into their classroom practices.

- **Tools** that support their efforts.

  This includes conceptual tools such as understanding learning theory as well as practical ones such as the use of running records to analyse reading. Each of the teachers detailed the strategies that are common in their classrooms and how that related to their views about their role in the classroom as well as the needs of their students.

All of characteristics do not articulate specifically as professional development. If these characteristics are viewed as embedded concepts, then there is scope for a revised definition of PD. I purposely use the phrase PD at this point, as it is the accepted use within schools to describe the professional facilitation of new skills, knowledge and understandings by teachers, with teachers and for teachers. While the narratives of the seven teachers indicated that they were engaging predominantly in longer term action cycles of learning, trials, experimentation and reflective practices, only Tally used the phrase PL. Each of the teachers indicated flexibility, if even in their current selection of teaching contexts, but each had identified that they had need to be flexible and adaptive in their teaching and learning programs. They each indicated an understanding of the innate and embedded nature of SC principles, not just for their students but also for themselves.

Through an amalgamation of ideas from each of the seven participating teachers and other research as identified in the literature, the definition of PD, PL and professional enhancement (PE) can be extended to include these understandings. This revised definition is not meant to be viewed as a grab-bag of ideas. In this research study, I have outlined the extensive development and evolution of PD and PL within Australia, including many researchers who
have contributed significantly to the field and my understanding of the complexity within. The words of the teachers in their narratives, their positioning (through their words) in relation to expert researchers and their listing of valued characteristics from their own PD and PL have all influenced this extended definition of PD. The direct influences and contributions of various researchers is acknowledged explicitly in this revised definition but the point must be made that the identification of valued characteristics from the narratives of the teacher contributed just as strongly to this revised definition. The phrase PD may continue to be used, but the concepts of professional growth, learning and enhancement have emerged through this research inquiry. PD can now be defined as:

Professional development for teachers is an individual and collective progressive process (Day, 1999; Guskey, 1986) that allows for collaborative, interactive and sustainable processes of learning and inquiry (Biesta et al., 2015; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Toom et al., 2015) and enhancement of knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and understandings (Leberman, McDonald & Doyle, 2004) throughout each career phase of teaching lives (Gordon, 2004). It consists of a combination of pertinent, relevant and meaningful learning experiences (Ambusson et al., 2012) in a cycle of conscious, purposeful and active activities (Ambusson et al., 2012) that engage, empower, benefit and build upon the capacity and capabilities of:

• individual teachers;
• educational teams; and
• communities of learners;

  o to reflect upon, assess, review, renew, enhance and extend commitment to improving teaching and learning processes;
  o to instil, adapt, adopt and transfer relevant new learning, understandings, skills and knowledge in pertinent and relevant professional practices (SC);
  o to inculcate professional modes of behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development (Evans, 2011) in professional thinking and practice;
  o to improve access by all student learners to current knowledge, outcomes and pedagogy; and
to celebrate the sense of excitement, renewal and enlightenment (Biesta et al., 2015; Pantić, 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015) that comes with experience, ongoing learning and enhancement of professional skills, knowledge and understandings (Justi & Van Driel, 2005).

While teachers continue to use the phrase PD, the words of the seven teachers has indicated that they are engaging in PD that aligns with many facets of this revised definition. The analysis of models of PD provided the information that none was comprehensive enough to cover all aspects of the PD of these seven teachers.

7.2.9 Theme 3: Quality Professional Development

Oliva summed it up best by saying “teachers deserve quality PD.” It would be easy to dismiss some of the teachers’ viewpoints by stating that they are all getting what the Staff in Australia’s Schools Survey (McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy & McMillan, 2013) refers to as the average of nine days of PD per year per every Australian teacher. NTDE lists its policy ensuring commitment by schools and teachers to ongoing PD. One of the critical themes that arose from their narratives was the concept of quality professional development, with their views about the characteristics of such preferred, valued PD in their professional careers.

BI described the narratives of the seven practising teachers, I selected key words and phrases that each used to describe their preferred PD. These were listed with each teacher’s narrative.

In Table 7.3 below, I have categorised the comments of the seven participating teachers into those about the PD presentation itself, such as the presenters, the presentation and the types of activities included in the PD (the pedagogy). The content of the PD refers to the key aims and objectives and while not articulated by participating teachers, any comments about that content are included in this category.

The impacts for the teacher are the items that the teacher gained from the PD, the knowledge, skills or attributes they took away from that PD that offered them the skills and knowledge necessary to begin that transfer of learning to their classrooms. The effects in the classroom hint at the ongoing effects or consequences in the classroom, where the transfer of learning became apparent to the teacher concerned. They describe some of the tangible and intangible
consequences within the classroom, where there is an implied duration of time from the time they identified that particular PD event and their consideration of the lingering effects of it in their classrooms.

By examining what each teacher has said about characteristics that they prefer to see in their PD experiences, it becomes evident that there were commonalities in description and explanation between the seven teachers. For example, many of the teachers indicated the practical, meaningful and purposeful use of PD information, knowledge and skills in their classrooms. These characteristics have already been referenced to current research (in Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of this chapter) but sighting these as a table indicates the commonality of thinking by these seven teachers.

Quality PD includes professional practices that are linked at their core to professionalism. This means professionalism not just from the teachers who have responsibilities and accountabilities in terms of their ongoing learning, but professionalism on the part of other key stakeholders, such as those coordinating and implementing PD programs within departments and schools. Where teachers are being expected to engage in transformative practices (Moekler, 2004) and to act as change agents (Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015: Hargreaves, 1998; Toom et al., 2015), there is a responsibility to support them in the most professional way possible. Table 7.9: Categories of comments from teachers about their PD illustrates the extent and range of observations by teachers about their most valued PD, the PD that they felt had the most influence on them and their teaching practices.

Table 7.9: Categories of comments from teachers about their PD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>PD Presentation</th>
<th>Content of the PD: Active learning</th>
<th>Impacts for the teacher</th>
<th>Effects in classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliza</td>
<td>• Hands-on, concrete activities • Good presenters and well-presented</td>
<td>• Thorough, explicit content • Provided strategies for improvement</td>
<td>• Practical use in classroom • Networking and interaction with other teachers</td>
<td>• Exciting • Reinforcing of good practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>PD Presentation</td>
<td>Content of the PD: Active learning</td>
<td>Impacts for the teacher</td>
<td>Effects in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>• Integral involvement as developer and presenter&lt;br&gt; • Mixed modes of delivery</td>
<td>• Inclusion of theory&lt;br&gt; • Opportunities to personalise learning&lt;br&gt; • Reinforcing of good practice&lt;br&gt; • Strategies for improvement&lt;br&gt; • Purpose</td>
<td>• Practical use in classroom&lt;br&gt; • Networking and interaction with other teachers&lt;br&gt; • Practical relevance</td>
<td>• Improvement in teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne</td>
<td>• Catered for a variety of teachers</td>
<td>• Synthesis of good curriculum and good practice&lt;br&gt; • New information&lt;br&gt; • Practical links to class&lt;br&gt; • Inclusion of IT&lt;br&gt; • Intelligent program</td>
<td>• Opportunities to consider new ideas&lt;br&gt; • Revisit good practice&lt;br&gt; • Revisit positive influences&lt;br&gt; • Related to teacher needs&lt;br&gt; • Network context</td>
<td>• Change of practises in classroom&lt;br&gt; • Mentoring between teachers&lt;br&gt; • Integration into normal routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>• Gender, age and ability mixed&lt;br&gt; • Good presenters&lt;br&gt; • Wonderful pedagogy (presentation)</td>
<td>• Current, up-to-date knowledge and skills&lt;br&gt; • Collaboration&lt;br&gt; • Pre-knowledge leading to enhanced knowledge&lt;br&gt; • Clear intent of the PD&lt;br&gt; • Excellent content&lt;br&gt; • Supportive, collaborative mix of ideas and strategies</td>
<td>• Related to teacher need&lt;br&gt; • “Aha” moments&lt;br&gt; • Opportunities to grow and enhance practice&lt;br&gt; • Reflect and share knowledge&lt;br&gt; • Development of action plans&lt;br&gt; • Evidence of school support</td>
<td>• Reform and amend teaching practice&lt;br&gt; • Change&lt;br&gt; • Excitement&lt;br&gt; • Indication of trust in teacher and her professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>PD Presentation</td>
<td>Content of the PD: Active learning</td>
<td>Impacts for the teacher</td>
<td>Effects in classroom</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Samantha | • Modelled good teaching  
• Modelled good learning  
• Varied groups of teachers | • Content in perspective to teaching and learning  
• Engagement of teachers at their level | • New way of looking at teaching practices  
• Collaboration and networking | • Solidly supported way of helping children to learn  
• Links to own philosophy and interests |
| Terry    | • Knowledgeable presenters | • Potential to transfer to classroom  
• Potential to change or enhance perspectives  
• Authentic purpose | • Incidental learning shared with colleagues  
• Networking with other teachers  
• Sharing good projects  
• Able to trial something new | • Teacher interest  
• Reinforced my views about myself  
• Integration as normal practice |
| Tally    | • Online: do at your own pace  
• Knowledgeable presenters  
• Variation of activities  
• Wide variety of teachers  
• Broad picture of PD | • Engaging  
• Visual examples on YouTube  
• Practical content  
• New concepts embedded in PD  
• Inclusion of theory | • Practical resources  
• Collective sharing  
• Strategies and ideas linked to theory | • Excitement  
• Enthusiasm  
• High teacher interest |

While total self-regulated and self-managed learning (McLoughlin, 1996; Smith, 1996, 2001) within schools with regards to PD and PL may not be possible under current constrictions and challenges inherent in complex classrooms, schools and educational jurisdictions of today, the development of an inquiry based approach to formulate effective, purposeful and meaningful PD and PL experiences needs to be considered. Supportive and organisational culture and environment needs to be examined to engage in realistic, practical and collaborative professional learning (Dufour & Dufour, 2004; Fincham & Rhodes, 2005; Fullan, 2005; Schmoker, 2004) in a sustained methodology. It is for this reason that my definition may be useful in extending traditional views about the role, extent, calibre and thinking about PD. It is an appropriate time to move the phraseology into the wider
understandings about PL as that traditional sense of PD is of lesser importance in today’s world.

Appreciating that the teachers in this research study were able to identify their own valued and preferred PD, the ongoing learning that resulted from that PD opportunity and the results in their classroom (vicariously described as practical application in the classroom), the question then is about “quality professional development” and if the seven teachers were receiving it consistently.

It is useful at this point to return to Evans’ (2011) Professionalism and PD (explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.9). The teachers in this research study refer to changes in their behavioral development. They each made reference to procedural changes (reflection on best practice, opportunities to try new strategies). Productive changes (solidly supported ways of helping children to learn) were apparent, as were changes in competency (revisiting of good practice and good influences). These teachers refer to their attitudinal changes, evincing an “excitement” and “enthusiasm” in their motivations in the classroom. They referred to the links to theory, the changes made intellectually to their practice. It is clear that the seven teachers of this study have experienced much PD and PL in the past two years, in particular. It is also clear that they individually understood what effective, quality PD looked like and could identify characteristics which marked specific PD events as significant and valued by them personally and professionally. However, each teacher also indicated quite clearly what they did not like about some PD events and several pointed out that they had no mechanism for assessing those PD events or for sharing that information. Their engagement in PD planning and management was minimal with some teachers taking steps to coordinate their own ongoing learning outside of their school environment. This is the discussion point for the next section, which addresses the issue of teacher agency.

7.2.10 Theme 4: Professional / Teacher Agency

Professional learning for ongoing enhancement of existing knowledge, skills and understandings is a key element in the life of a teacher. For professional learning to be worthwhile it requires at least some level of professional agency. Teachers need to be responsible for understanding and pursuing their own needs in relation to their classroom, school and jurisdictional needs.
NTDE has a clear mandate about professional learning. The webpage, updated in 2014, clearly states that:

We recognise that professional learning is essential to achieving exemplary education and training outcomes for Territorians. Our Professional Learning Policy defines professional learning (PL) as opportunities or experiences that promote enhanced skills, knowledge, attributes, attitudes and behaviours of staff to improve service delivery in order to meet present and future organisational objectives and individual career development (para. 1-2).

This site goes on to add that learning is a shared responsibility and that there are obligations on each individual to manage their PL but the department has obligations to offer a ‘cultural environment that is conducive to learning” (para. 3). The Professional Learning Policy linked to this webpage is dated 2005 and it includes direction for “clients”, “schools” and “workplaces” and “individuals” linking the performance review process with the establishment of professional learning teams to plan and implement professional learning plans.

The PL framework clearly states that “individuals identify their PL needs and the learning experiences that will best address these needs. They make explicit links between professional learning and workplace performance by ensuring that new knowledge is applied, reviewed and revised. They seek opportunities to broaden and deepen knowledge (para. 7). It is clear that the NTDE expects teachers to manage and take control of their learning, dependent upon their needs in classrooms and schools.

The NTDE workplace has obligations in that they “commit to lifelong learning practices to develop as a learning organisation. They recognise that whole school improvement will occur when individuals work together toward goals that are grounded in their daily work. They commit to PL that is enduring rather than transient. Evaluation is an ongoing component of PL” (para. 6).

The purpose in reiterating this information is that there is a clear commitment on behalf of NTDE to ensure adequate, purposeful PL for its employees, not just for teachers in schools. The policy has been in existence since 2005 so every teacher and school should be familiar with its contents and direction. The PD policy does not appear to have been updated since
that time, yet reference to and on the website indicates ongoing commitment to PL. In that mix of policy and clear direction, five of seven teachers felt disenfranchised from the decision-making and implementation of effective PD and PL plans for themselves. There is a limited sense of direct input by teachers as key stakeholders in their performance reviews and those links to pertinent, timely and effective PL. This is a crucial point in that there do not appear to be mechanisms to assess and analyse PD and PL on offer to teachers to judge if the PD is pertinent, timely or effective. In that mix of policy and explanation, there are no overarching processes to ensure quality PD for teachers or to ensure that individual PD needs are being met regularly, consistently and directly. Annual performance reviews are expected, yet most of these teachers, albeit a small sampling of NT teachers, professed that their PD needs were not being articulated or addressed through their performance review plans. This was not a key element of this research study and no research was included in this research study to explore this further. However, the performance review plan is one mechanism in NT schools where there is professional dialogue between senior teams and teachers about their needs in the classroom, with implications to PD and PL, and the teachers of this study felt disenfranchised from the PD and PL management within their schools.

In Olivia’s case, she indicated her determination to assume full agency and responsibility for her ongoing learning needs as a professional. There was no sense in her narrative, though, that she had informed her senior or learning team of her concerns about PD in the school. In Tally’s case, while engaging in PL at her school, she had a clear vision of her own needs which she coordinated and managed for herself where the school’s planned PD did not fully meet her needs. She did not indicate whether her own online learning was a part of her performance review plan or not. In Terry’s case, she attended a relevant conference and took unilateral action to enhance her Language teacher skills. She indicated that she had discussed her lack of relevant PD with her senior teacher but her proposed actions to link with other Language teachers in school time (albeit her release time from classroom responsibilities) was denied. Mark felt he was a part of the team managing and coordinating timely PD. He clearly had his own vision of the format of that PD to comply with his internal guidelines of quality PD for and with staff. Eliza, Jeanne and Samantha did not take individual action in ensuring their senior management knew of their concerns.

Despite these individual narratives and concerns, it is obvious that seven different schools
manage the concept of a PL team in different ways. Mark felt a part of the senior management team and therefore integral to the inculcation of both PL processes and specific PL events in his school. Olivia, Tally and Terry all indicated their unilateral action to address their own needs, slipping around the school-based PD to coordinate their own learning. In that regard, they fulfil NTDE’s policy admirably in that they individually sought opportunities to broaden and deepen their knowledge. Eliza, Jeanne and Samantha showed little engagement in planning their PL journeys and whether a function of her impending retirement, Samantha had clearly little investment in planning future PL for herself.

Olivia is on a different journey, one most teachers are unable, unwilling or uninterested in making. Despite PD and PL sessions being deemed “mandatory”, it is a rare teacher who would arbitrarily decide whether to attend such sessions or not. It is quite possible that Olivia’s actions could have been deemed highly provocative and confronting within her school, both to the principal and their authority and to the learning team within that school (though she does not indicate this in her narrative). There is no sense in NTDE policy on PL as to the discretionary actions that can be taken by a teacher who does not feel that a PD or PL event is unnecessary or irrelevant to their teaching position. There is no mention of actions that can be taken with a teacher who does not conform to the school PD plan and who independently judges the worth, quality and advantage of attending any particular PD or PL session within the school.

Olivia’s actions lie at the heart of this discussion about professional / teacher agency because of her determination to take assume full teacher agency with regards to her own learning. From a professional perspective, every PD session on offer should be open to such scrutiny and decisions can and should be made by each teacher as to their value and worth. No one disputes that schools are busy, active places and sometimes time constraints rule even the simplest of decisions. No doubt learning teams (whether as senior management or specific teams created solely to manage PD and PL) feel the need to make decisions on behalf of teachers as to PD and PL opportunities which address school needs holistically. Ryan and Bourke (2013) refer to management styles in school with one identified as top to bottom management. The narratives of the seven participating teachers reinforced this model, at least in their minds. . The narratives showed that there is a much lesser sense of full engagement and collaboration in engaging in a performance review, identifying individual needs and then
engaging in cooperative decision-making as to future PD and PL plans with direct links to classroom actions.

While there is no doubt of the importance of the senior team / senior management team and their input into information gathering, decision-making and their involvement in coordination and delivery of PD and PL, there was no sense of every teacher in this research study having direct input. The business plan by NTDE includes clients, individuals, workplaces and Corporate Divisions to deem suitable, appropriate PL, which must be aligned to overall departmental priorities. The second priority is that this plan must be allied to needs of schools and their school communities. The individual needs of each teacher, and support for long-term, ongoing, sustainable quality learning for teachers was not identified as a priority, despite the policy and section of the website being labelled Professional Learning.

Most of the teachers in this study clearly indicate that they are not stakeholders in planning professional learning experiences. The concept that teachers are taking responsibility and ownership of their education environment, including their learning, is indicative of professional agency (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015; Pyhältö, Pietarinen & Soini, 2015; Toom, Pyhältö & O’Connell Rust, 2015). Teachers indicating that they feel little impetus to take responsibility, indicates a lack of agency in the decision-making. If the links between professional agency and school development (Pantić, 2015; Toom et al., 2015) are not sustained, encouraged and supported, this has implications for teachers, students and schools long-term.

There is no doubt that schools have multiple educational, social, cultural, political and historical inputs (Biesta et al., 2015; Scott, 2015) and PD and PL are perceived as a small part of that overall complex picture. However, the literature is adamant that a well-trained, dynamic and resourceful teaching force, in a cycle of renewal of knowledge, skills and understandings, is a major influence on the achievement levels of students. The impact of the teacher is paramount in influencing those achievements. Many schools genuinely create communities of learners, or communities of best practice, and genuinely try to engage teachers in collaborative, empowering actions. The creation of a powerhouse of teachers working in a dedicated, committed way to improving outcomes for students is a reality in many schools. Limiting the judgement and control that a teacher can assume over something as deeply personal as professional needs (where the school may benefit long-term) seems a
very questionable action. The long-term health of any education system is at least partly dependent upon the empowerment and engagement of teachers, not their disempowerment and disenfranchisement over issues that so directly affect them.

This section has described the lack of teacher agency experienced by some of the research participants in this study. A lack of agency has led to disenfranchisement with PL and PD opportunities and outcomes for these teachers. A new approach to PL is necessary for teachers to maintain a satisfying and sustainable career plan.

7.3 Summary

This chapter analysed the narratives of the seven participating teachers, with a view to clarifying the extent and range of their PD experiences, and clarifying the factors that they viewed as pertinent and meaningful in their PD. The chapter examined and analysed the three main research questions, with particular relevance to narratives as the phenomenon being analysed. The narratives raised four key themes, which were linked to research in the field. In the next chapter, my responses to these key questions are discussed and a new model for PL is proposed. Implications for further research are discussed.

This photo was taken at the front of the Darwin Yacht Club, six minutes from Darwin CBD. This photo displays a high tide and sunset over balmy seas in the Dry season.

Figure 7.2: Sunset at the Darwin Yacht Club

Photo by N. Batenburg
CHAPTER 8: The Tale Ends and the Picture is Painted

The title of this research study is *Telling Tales and Painting Pictures*, a purposely chosen title with the express aim of telling the narrative about professional development for duly qualified and registered teachers in the NT and painting the picture of their engagement with PD in schools. There are two levels of telling tales and painting pictures, two intersecting story-lines woven through this research study. In the first instance, there are seven individual tales bordered by their skills, experiences, chronology and professional knowledge. Sparked by the teachers in the introductory vignettes, this thesis details the narratives of the seven teachers who underpinned and grounded this study. Through their personalities, their individual interpretations and nuances embedded in their interviews, these characters formed the nucleus of this research.

This research inquiry is an overall narrative, this one including me as the narrator, telling the tale narratively and painting the picture of this inquiry of those PD experiences. Looking wider than NT schools, this study examined global and Australian influences on professional development. This chapter weaves together those influences, the narratives and stories from those seven teachers, and their celebrations, complications, impediments and themes for further and future consideration.

8.1 The Final Chapter

To recap, the key questions of this research are related to the professional development of teachers, exploring their definitions, perceptions and viewpoints about this professional issue. This study explores understandings about the core questions listed below:

1. What are the beliefs, understandings and values of practising classroom teachers regarding their professional development and professional learning?

2. What is the significance of both PD and PL on practising classroom teachers?

3. What are the key and critical elements of both PD and PL that led to change in teachers and teaching practices?

The purpose of this research, therefore, is to analyse these aspects of teacher professional development, particularly those teachers in the NT through a narrative inquiry methodology, specifically examining:

*Telling Tales and Painting Pictures* 291
• The extent, range and calibre of professional development and learning experiences of practising classroom teachers, as described by them in narratives;
• The common categories or themes embedded in the narratives of seven practising classroom teachers about their professional learning; and
• The significance and impact of the professional learning to classroom teachers.

A further aim of this research study is to produce a model of professional development and learning which encapsulates current knowledge, understandings and directions. This final chapter brings together all of the elements in the conceptual framework, the narratives of the seven teachers and the literature about this field.

8.2 Response to Research Question 1

The first research question was: What are the beliefs, understandings and values of practising classroom teachers regarding their professional development and professional learning?

The seven classroom teachers in the NT who participated in this study stated that they were experienced, active teachers with clear knowledge about the students in their classrooms. At different stages of their teaching careers, of varying ages and levels of experience, they nonetheless share characteristics that show them as enjoying their profession. They all presented as individuals who were able to reflect on the nuances of that profession, including their own individual learning journeys. These were not ambivalent teachers; these were teachers who described their commitment to their profession, to their students and to be the best teachers they could be, all using their words to explain their role within their classrooms.

In Chapter 7, the characteristics of effective teachers were discussed. The seven teachers indicated their processes, strategies and beliefs about teaching and learning which resonated with research in the field. Each teacher reflected on their beliefs about their classrooms, their own teaching and the types of strategies, groupings, consistent approaches and understandings as they tried to cater for individual differences of students within their classrooms.

As teachers, they took their PD responsibilities seriously, acknowledging the need for ongoing renewal of skills and the development of new knowledge, skills and understandings.
to improve their performance and outcomes for students. Each teacher catered for their learning journey in different ways and outlined the processes briefly within each school to enable attendance and participation at valued PD and PL sessions. They indicated explicitly what they valued about their PD and PL, and described the characteristics that each viewed as fundamental to quality PD delivery and implementation. They indicated their beliefs about teaching and learning in their classrooms, and their words linked them to some of the learning models presented in this thesis. There is a nexus though between what the teachers believe and say about themselves and what is being said about them in society and by some stakeholders. Bourke (2011) refers to “teachers conducting their practice as docile bodies” (p. 237) and that there is “no retaliation from teachers and deficit points of view about teachers” (p. 237).

There is a national agenda about teacher accountability, quality and standards, outlined in Chapter 3. This is an Australia-wide (and global) agenda, not just one affecting teachers in the NT. While there is no doubt that different jurisdictions have varying strengths and challenges, and respond to this agenda in different ways, it goes without saying that NT teachers are not immune from increasing pressures affecting all stakeholders in the delivery of education. Increasingly there are expectations on the delivery of quality teaching and learning, and attempts made to delineate and define that concept. Bourke, Lidstone and Ryan (2013) reflect on the many political, social and economic issues currently besetting education including a reduction of funding and the increasing devolution of responsibilities to schools. These authors reflect on the current links to accountability and standards and the business move of linking competency-based outcome-oriented pedagogy related to the world of work. Bourke et al. (2013) note the perceived crisis in education vis-a-vis the falling literacy and numeracy levels and they argue that managerial and other competing discourses are at play in relation to professionalism and professional standards.

The move towards new performance and development frameworks for principals and teachers has been linked to the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework, as discussed in Chapter 3, indicates that there is “no more important endeavour than further improving the quality of teaching in Australia. Nationally and internationally, there is unequivocal evidence that the quality of teaching is
the most significant in-school factor affecting student outcomes” (p. 2). In particular, this report continues, “it requires that teachers know what is expected of them, receive frequent, useful feedback on their teaching and access high quality support to improve their practice” (p. 2). This Framework, upon which the NTDE (and other states and territories) bases its performance framework of development and learning, aims to promote professional discussions with an avowed aim to “minimise the risk that administrative and bureaucratic requirements will become the focus.” Yet, according to this same report, in aggregate, Australian teachers report that they do not always get the feedback that they want or need to improve, with 63% of Australian teachers indicating appraisal of their work to fulfil administrative requirements.

Surprisingly, none of the teachers in this study gave themselves credit or acknowledgement that, according to the literature on professionalism, they are performing in an adequate appropriate and effective level at the least. While there are programs within each state and territory to acknowledge the expertise and skills of practising teachers, none of the teachers in this study noted this accomplishment or their rating within their school. Olivia, plotting her own future career, is the only one who alluded to her “credibility” in translating an effective teaching career into one whereby she is now a self-employed consultant. Mark and Tally both noted that they are performing in more senior positions.

Both a Google and QUT Library search for words to the effect of “acknowledgement of teachers and teaching” received no hits from any jurisdiction in the country with genuine celebrations of the work that teachers do. International Teachers Day is an acknowledgement of the importance of teachers, and is celebrated in the NT once a year. There were many articles outlining what a “good” or “effective” teacher is (in the abstract), and the steps that teachers need to re-form themselves into good or effective teachers. There are professional standards which teachers can use to scrutinise and analyse their teaching capabilities and avenues for improvement. However, there was no sense of ongoing satisfaction that the majority of teachers are working hard, long and well to do the best job they can in a rapidly changing world.

Through my research, these seven teachers indicated their proficiency in their chosen profession, and their determination to continue to prepare their students for life. These teachers believe that they are engaging in teaching and learning methodologies that are
providing significant opportunities for their students to learn. They believe that they are entitled to quality PD, and have identified the characteristics of quality PD that results in changes in their teaching practices and their classrooms. They believe that they are disenfranchised from the process of management and implementation of PD plans, with Mark the only teacher who felt that he was playing a role in providing effective, timely and quality PD with his peers. These teachers know and understand their classrooms and schools and understand about the complexity and nature of their educational context but despite the disparity in context, six of seven teachers did not feel that they were integrally involved in PD and PL within their schools. These teachers believe that there should be some judgements made about the extent and range of PD and PL opportunities, and that currently, they have no voice in discussions regarding PD delivery.

These same teachers showed differing abilities in advocating for themselves and in confirming their agency in the midst of varying professional environments. I argue that teachers need a stronger voice generally, not just in mapping their professional learning. They know their students and their contexts and they know themselves as professionals. This research study had a focus on learning by professionals. I argue that this is an opportunity for teachers to develop a rigorous, flexible and reflective program of PD and PL that meets their needs and those demanded by their context and place in society at this time.

8.3 Response to Research Questions 2 and 3

The two key research questions for this section include:

1. What is the significance of PD and PL on practising classroom teachers?
2. What are some key and critical elements of PD and PL that led to change in their teaching practices?

Examination of teachers’ responses indicated an overall acceptance of PD, and a confirmation that the experiences and opportunities are significant to each of them personally and professionally. Their responses indicated their preference for the phrase PD, but their intentions to engage in PL. In Chapter 6, teachers’ PD experiences were described, with characteristics identified by the seven teachers about their preferred mode of PD delivery. Using similar words, the seven teachers described the active learning and content of their preferred PD experiences, the effects in the classroom as well as the longer-term effects.
These characteristics were compared to the PD sessions that were less valued. Optimal characteristics, shared governance (Pyhältö et al., 2015), equality of input into the planning of professional learning (Stewart, 2014), teacher choice and voice were discussed Chapter 3. The creation of effective communities of learners (Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhältö, et al., 2015: Toom et al., 2015) and reflection as an aspect of adult learning and of SC were added to this list. A practical and pragmatic application of learning to real-life experience is a hallmark of SC. Also discussed by Stewart (2014) was that sense of reciprocity, constituted by an active process of participation (Ambusson et al., 2012; Fox, 2001; Powell & Kalina, 2009; Taber, 2011), engagement and feedback, with the collegiality of network sessions (Gordon, 2004). This author noted that dissatisfactions were expressed when these conditions and characteristics were not met.

It is that identification of key characteristics, reflected in the literature surrounding the field of PD and PL that explains the significance of PD and PL to these seven teachers. They were aware of the types and combinations of adult learning strategies that resulted in engagement of participants in a highly effective way. Similarly they were aware of PD events or sessions where the quality of the delivery, the pedagogy of the PD itself, was deemed to be wanting, with the PD content unlikely to be transferred easily into their classrooms. Categories of comments from teachers about their PD showed some idiosyncratic preferences, such as the sense of fun in a PD session (Samantha) or the dislike of “touchy-feely” activities designed to promote interaction and relationship-building (Jeanne), the majority of the comments reflected the optimal characteristics identified in the literature of this field.

The seven teachers indicated their participation in professional development events but raised some serious issues about the delivery of consistent, quality PD. They raised their dissatisfactions with their current PD and PL plans. In some instances, Samantha referred to one-off PD that had an implied single purpose as her engagement in PD. On the other hand, in her preferred PD, she referred to wider ongoing and sustainable learning (PL) with implications for transfer to and in her classroom.

Olivia indicated the differences between “big” and “small” PD experiences, significantly important PD sessions versus incidental, possibly transferrable PD sessions. Others referred to ‘busy work’ and directions within the school, which were not linked to performance reviews. All teachers indicated their mandatory engagement in some PD opportunities, which
were less than positive and most referred to PD where they had little choice, voice, preference or interest. Significantly, while the teachers did not dispute the need for some mandatory PD, their concerns were with the quality of the engagement process, delivery and implementation. Other issues included a perceived lack of support and funding for professional development, allied to a lack of relief teachers for teachers attending PD out of school hours and venue (Mark and Eliza).

The question was asked about the key and critical elements of both PD and PL that led to change in their teaching practices. There did not appear to be explicit or consistent processes or protocols within each school that engaged teachers in the PD discussion. The same uncertainties about PD from the vignettes of so long ago still seem valid. From the narratives of the seven participating teachers, they continued to refer to PD whether in reference to a single PD event or the wider concept of sustained learning embedded in PL. While the seven teachers appear to have a belief that everything they do professionally to improve student learning outcomes is sufficiently within the range of PD, only Tally and Terry seemed able to take the pathway of self-directed PL.

Taken further, this means the key decision-making to obtain the learning that they needed is not necessarily evident in these schools nor is teacher agency in this aspect of their educational lives. If teachers are not motivated, involved or engaged in PD and PL processes, it is a difficult job to ascertain the level of transfer of learning into classrooms. Terry was motivated by a need to find specialist PD and use it with her students while Tally was motivated by her need to develop herself professionally in an areas where she had identified a personal deficit.

There were some PD opportunities that were more highly valued by the teachers, but none of the supporting documentation appeared to give voice to teachers’ evaluations. There did not appear to be opportunities to rate the effectiveness of the PD sessions. While it is standard departmental procedure to engage in reflection and assessment of all learning opportunities, it was not evident from the narratives of the seven teachers as to the extent of assessment of every learning experience. Similarly there was no indication of the direction of those results and what action was taken as a direct result of those teacher assessments. In light of the NTDE policy on professional learning being a priority of the workplace, and resources actioned to support this stance, the question must be asked about whether this situation is
likely to change. Opportunities for real feedback on PD and PL experiences were not evident in the narratives of these teachers. Similarly, a quick perusal of policy documents that were available electronically indicates that NSW, Victoria and Queensland do not explicitly articulate teacher involvement in their PD and PL processes. The Professional Learning in Schools policy document from the state of NSW, the 2014 – 2018 Strategic Plan for the Department of Education, Training and Employment in Queensland and the Performance and Professional Development website in Victoria did not elicit any further information about the engagement of teachers in pertinent, timely analysis of PD opportunities, and engagement in PD processes in those states.

In 2015, the NT Department of Education introduced Independent Public Schools with a view to give “school communities a greater say in the way schools are administered and education programs delivered”, including presumably professional development programs for teachers. Six schools in the NT nominated and were selected to implement this program in 2015; to date it is far too early to judge its effectiveness, particularly with regards to PD implementation.

Not only is NTDE continuing to support its 2005 PL policy but also PD now firmly lies within the management of each individual school (albeit with guidelines and support from NTDE). The NT Teacher Registration Board (TRB) has supplied sample logs for teachers to maintain a valid record of their PD experiences. The categories against which PD and PL may be applied and logged include the following on Table 8.1 where teachers are encouraged to record all PD against these particular standards.

Table 8.1 NT Teacher Standards

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<th>Professional Engagement</th>
<th>1. Teachers are active members of their profession</th>
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<td>2. Teachers reflect on, evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and practice.</td>
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<td>Professional Knowledge</td>
<td>3. Teachers know their students.</td>
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<td>4. Teachers know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.</td>
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<td>5. Teachers know the content they teach.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.</td>
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<td>8. Teachers use a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning.</td>
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An anomaly in these standards is that there are no direct references to personal performance review plans and no differentiation between PD and PL where intensive learning by teachers may spawn six months of continual reading, trialling, mentoring with other teachers or other similar but related activities. There is opportunity for teachers to reflect on the type of PD of a certain activity and to indicate a reflection on the effectiveness of the PD activity to support and enhance professional practice and/or knowledge.

The log has space to indicate the impact and evidence of a particular activity, inviting accounts of the successful changes as a direct result of this activity. This, no doubt, provides some of the data-driven evidence about PD activities by every teacher in the NT and if there has been successful transference of learning. It is my contention that these standards are very general and provide little opportunity for deep and transformative reflection about one’s practice and how it could be improved. Reflection can be undertaken in quite superficial ways unless teachers are prompted to engage in an ongoing cycle of inquiry-based practice in context in consultation with their relevant learning or PD teams within the school. These issues of teacher voice, choice, shared governance and ownership are important, while still being linked to external modes of accountability and determined guidelines. It is these factors which play a significant role in whether the content knowledge, skills and understandings of a particular PD or series of PL experiences transfers successfully into the classroom.

In some instances the PL process was linked effectively to performance reviews within the school, but Tally, for example, is doing online learning because it is something she wants personally, not something that is mandated or expected or necessarily linked to her performance review. While she might be celebrated as an entrepreneurial, highly achieving teacher, Tally considered her online learning as professionally and personally satisfying because she chose it for herself and the mode of PD delivery is one that she enjoys.

I propose a new conceptual model for ongoing professional enhancement that takes these many differences and factors into account, while still allowing flow-on benefits and continuity to the school, school community and jurisdiction.

8.4 Conceptual Model: Ongoing Professional Enhancement (OPE)

In Chapter 7, I proposed a more encompassing definition of PD, which embedded PL and
Professional development for teachers is an individual and collective progressive process (Day, 1999; Guskey, 1986) that allows for collaborative, interactive and sustainable processes of learning and inquiry (Biesta et al., 2015; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Toom et al., 2015) and enhancement of knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and understandings (Leberman, McDonald & Doyle, 2004) throughout each career phase of teaching lives (Gordon, 2004). It consists of a combination of pertinent, relevant and meaningful learning experiences (Ambusson et al., 2012) in a cycle of conscious, purposeful and active activities (Ambusson et al., 2012) that engage, empower, benefit and build upon the capacity and capabilities of:

- individual teachers;
- educational teams; and
- communities of learners;

  o to reflect upon, assess, review, renew, enhance and extend commitment to improving teaching and learning processes;

  o to instil, adapt, adopt and transfer relevant new learning, understandings, skills and knowledge in pertinent and relevant professional practices (SC);

  o to inculcate professional modes of behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development (Evans, 2011) in professional thinking and practice;

  o to improve access by all student learners to current knowledge, outcomes and pedagogy; and

To celebrate the sense of excitement, renewal and enlightenment (Biesta et al., 2015; Pantić, 2015; Pyhältö et al., 2015; Toom et al., 2015) that comes with experience, ongoing learning and enhancement of professional skills, knowledge and understandings (Justi & Van Driel, 2005). I propose a conceptual model (below) that includes this definition intrinsically embedded within it while allowing for a tracking of ongoing learning. In many years as a teacher, I have found the vast majority of teachers to be inherently trustworthy. The majority of teachers in my networks are committed, dedicated and active professionals. My research confirms these previous experiences and beliefs about teachers and this model examines that
concept of trust in that teachers are more than capable of taking control and ownership of their own learning. This model addresses concerns raised by the seven teachers in Chapter 6 as explained through the latter two themes explored in that chapter:

- **Theme 3: Quality PD:**
  In my model, teachers have ownership of their professional learning and therefore the quality of the overall experiences is in their hands. However, this does not address quality control issues by presenters or facilitators, whether within the school or external to the school and measures may be developed to ensure that teachers are offered quality PL on a consistent basis.

- **Theme 4: Professional / teacher agency:**
  Not all PD / PL can be negotiated with teachers. Days could be spent hammering out a PL calendar that would still not suit every teacher in the school. There are windows of opportunity for schools to negotiate with teachers, for teachers to engage in their own PL for their own enhancement. This would be with an expectation that classroom practices would be affected (and over time, enhanced).

This Ongoing Professional Enhancement (OPE) Model, as indicated below in Figure 8.1, gives credit to teachers in varying stages of their teaching careers. Currently PL is viewed as a totality of all professional learning opportunities, with an almost equal “weighting” or importance rating given for anything and everything that equates to teacher learning within that context. All teachers do not need every PD or PL session within a school. There are some schools who do not need repeat PD sessions on a yearly basis. It seems a small step to allow a degree of differentiation at this level to allow those teachers to move on to more important work. An optimal situation is where teachers are a part of that decision-making and individualisation of PD and PL opportunities. This model differentiates different types of PL experiences and begins to look at the bigger picture of PL where there are more likely to be opportunities to enable genuine transfer of learning to, and within the classroom.

This model is titled the Ongoing Professional Enhancement Model because is encompassing of development, learning and enhancement of knowledge, skills and understandings. A performance review implies strongly that an appraisal is taking place. It implies that there is reflection, assessment and evaluation with implications of judgements about a teacher’s current performance. An assumption is that every teacher comes into the classroom with pre-
existing skills, knowledge and understandings. An “OPE plan” suggests that there are elements to consider in improving, enhancing, fine-tuning, augmenting and generally taking a look at understandings and skills in a positive, forward direction.

The OPE model implies the consistent, ongoing nature of professional learning, with the embedded options for genuine reflection by the teacher concerned but is not necessarily restricted to a particular school year. It implies a process of renewal, based on varying timelines, to identify and self-direct actions to address not just issues in teaching practices, but in directions that teacher might wish to take as a career move. That may be Terry purposely attending conferences specific to her Languages specialisation as part of her Practice-based PL, or Tally who identified the need for more information and skills in offering a perceptual motor program to her younger students as part of a school based focus group initiative. It is unknown whether these were school priorities, but an ongoing performance enhancement plan validates the teacher’s decision to plan at least a degree of her own professional learning, based on her own needs at the current time. This model does not imply that teachers will engage in PL in every single category; the needs of the teacher would

Figure 8.1: Ongoing Professional Enhancement (OPE) Model

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 302
dictate the specific areas where improvement of skills would occur.

There are both mandatory and negotiated initiatives at departmental and school levels. For example, there may be instances when the dissemination of critical information, about deadlines, scheduling changes, new library protocols and so on, where mandatory attendance is required of teachers. There may be options to negotiate teacher attendance and involvement in projects negotiated through the department and school, whereby there are elements of both negotiated and mandatory attendance. There may be a link to a Practice Based PL, designed by an individual teacher, which complies with departmental and school initiatives. It is for those reasons that Department Negotiated PL, Whole School PL and Practice Based PL (Teacher Priorities) all have an asterisk are marked in red and may be linked.

The OPE Model embeds reflection and is needs-oriented for the school, the teacher and the students. No doubt there will continue to be decisions made in the hierarchical process which prescribe mandatory involvement in specific initiatives, whether at a departmental or school level. By offering choices in terms of differentiating some of the professional learning options, this becomes more a process of reflection, negotiation and discerning needs. It assumes that teachers may need information at times, and are interested in long-term development. The practical reality of this model is that the performance review cycle may need to be three years, so it becomes more of an Ongoing Performance Enhancement (OPE), with opportunities for genuine shared governance and increased teacher ownership of both the OPE and the allied professional learning plan. The point remains that it is an open-ended model and the particular aspects of it would be in negotiation with each teacher. Some teachers might be involved in three year implementation plans of Leadership training, for example, while another teacher might be in a short-term mentoring situation receiving immediate assistance in educational software use. I deliberately use the phrase performance enhancement as each teacher is enhancing a repertoire of professional skills, even if starting the school cycle as a neophyte teacher.

At its heart, the Ongoing Professional Enhancement Model has an underpinning assumption that teachers can enhance their knowledge, skills and expertise as teachers but that self-directed action (professional agency) is necessary to accomplish this. There may be times when initial learning is required but there may also be teachers who have Behaviour Management skills, for example, but are focusing on tweaking or enhancing those skills in an
action learning cycle. By teachers owning their ongoing learning through active engagement at a personal, school and departmental perspective, teachers have a greater voice and agency in their decisions. There is acknowledgement of the teacher as a professional. Modes of delivery of the professional learning might be varied and link to options within the school as well as off-site. Evan’s (2011) outlines robust demands for behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual components for genuine change. Teachers have choice to engage in some OPE activities, but with more choice, more voice and more agency, teachers can position themselves for genuine change across the domains identified by Evans. Maximising the capability of students through an improvement in teaching practice is achievable through a variety of routes. Acknowledging the importance of teachers in the processes of improving student outcomes, and maximising their capability through ownership, shared governance and provision of opportunities for reflection and self-directed action in their professional learning practices is achievable.

This model has some underpinning principles:

1. My revised definition of PD links with this model of OPE and has a focus on the teacher. While there is still a focus on an improvement in student learning, the underlying premise is that if the teacher continues to develop, learning, grow and enhance skills, knowledge and understandings, the student will benefit. This concept ties into the narratives from the teachers where PD is not always just about students, but must also have a focus on improvement and enhancement of teacher skills in order to gain that enhanced student experience. While student achievement is still an important aim of PD in the new definition, it is not the sole aim.

2. It ties in with current state/territory jurisdictional / departmental thinking in that most states and territories around Australia have components such as professional engagement, knowledge and practice / skills (or words to that effect) as part of their PD / PL agenda and teachers are part of this broad agenda.

3. It is a negotiated and needs-oriented model. Teachers should have the opportunity to negotiate the support they need and how they might show evidence of the impact of different professional learning experiences. PL is differentiated and individual to the teacher for at least a section of their professional learning. While a variety of PL experiences may be included, support is negotiated within the school. For example,
opportunities may be created to visit other schools, engage with a focus group of other teachers or to engage in online learning. It allows for differentiation of teacher learning, individualising outcomes for each teacher. It is based on the teacher understanding her needs with regards to her professional practices, whether that is a negotiated involvement in a mentoring program, or an updating of skills in behaviour management.

4. It has a teacher-centred focus in that the teacher can identify needs through reflection and engage in this model at a variety of levels.

5. The model is student-centred in that the ultimate aim is still the improvement of student outcomes, but with greater links to the school community in terms of relevance and expectations both for teachers and the broader school community.

6. It is data-driven. The action research at its foundation is one where there are overarching outcomes, key indicators and describable and measurable outputs, at least by the teachers concerned. The reason that action research is chosen for the core of the OPE model is that action research suggests an end date, a solution to a problem, a time of satisfaction and accomplishment. Teachers are comfortable with action research but in this iteration, teachers would be responsible for maintaining their individual learning plans over time, regardless of external changes such as changing schools, or change of staff within a school.

There are many teachers like Tally and Terry who take control of their own learning and whether it is part of the school vision and ethos, they have determined the steps they need to improve their individual teaching practices. This should be included in any genuine evaluation of a teacher’s performance. While those options might not fall immediately into the identified strategic plan or directions of either department or school, there is no way of forecasting what the educational landscape will look like in three, five or seven years. These are the teachers of tomorrow, and they too have ideas about their own strengths, and directions they wish to take.

8.5 Implications of This Research

In the introduction to this research, I described the vignettes of teachers in classrooms with questions about their PD experiences. This research study began with concerns about the
delivery and implementation of professional development and learning for, with and by teachers – and that concern is still there.

This research analysis began with seven teachers and examined their views about their PD and PL experiences, but there is so much more scope for extending this study significantly. Seven teachers with their frank and honest views do not necessarily represent the wider views of their peer professionals in the field and scattered across the NT. Seven urban teachers do not necessarily represent remote teachers with their own set of issues and concerns about their PD. These seven teachers do not represent the cultural diversity of the NT, so this research inquiry is only the beginning of a discussion regarding PD and PL delivery, not just in the NT but also in other areas of the country.

One of the issues that arose was about their disempowerment and disenfranchisement from the processes governing PD and PL in schools. This may be an issue for the wider teaching community and the size of this study precludes a generalised conclusion on this issue. This points the way to further study in this area, seeking the genuine viewpoints of a greater number of teachers about not just their individual experiences but also their involvement in the planning, coordinating and delivery of PL.

While there may be a push towards schools managing their own PL programs in the NT, there does not appear to be a simultaneous push for the consistent delivery of quality PD and the resourcing to accomplish that aim effectively. There does not appear to be wide-spread inclusion of teachers assessing the appropriateness, validity and long term benefits of PD at a time when, for example, teachers are being held accountable for national literacy and numeracy student achievements. This is an area where study is warranted, where teachers have an opportunity to voice their concerns about this current direction and possibly develop guidelines to assist in the valid assessment of PD. The implications for teachers are immense. If they do not wish to be viewed as docile teachers (Bourke, 2011), then it may be time to create those opportunities to have a say in future PL, and this may require jurisdictional direction, negotiation within school leadership teams and a move towards a genuine collaboration. Adoption of my Ongoing Professional Enhancement Model may be the start of such professional dialogue. This empowerment of and by teachers themselves may be through joint actions by stakeholder bodies and teachers gaining a far greater understanding about the viewpoints of a greater sampling of teachers, and then acting on that information.
There is certainly scope for revision of policy in Australia about the professional
development and enhancement of a quality teaching workforce. The interchangeable use of
PD and PL indicates an ongoing degree of ambivalence about what is on offer to teachers and
the role that both PD and PL play in the enhancement of teacher skills. One issue related to
that concept was the nebulous nature of PD; no one definition seemed to apply to the seven
teachers, even the NTDE definition in policy and support documents. There was implied
commitment to PD in those documents but this was not reflected by all of the teachers. The
teachers did not know if they were being professionally developed, enhanced or engaging in
ongoing learning. None of the teachers linked their PD to their school’s long-term strategic
plan. The implication for work in this area is to examine those links and whether that level of
confusion is wide-spread. That is, whether the wider educational community see PD as the
destination or whether they view their PL as the journey.

There is scope for a future investigation into alternative modes of PD delivery, using my
revised definition as a basis for that examination. Tally indicated her use of the internet to
give her good ideas for teaching and as her preferred mode of PD engagement. The teachers
in this study characterised their valued PD, and an inquiry examining how those
characteristics could impact on a variety of PD options, including those delivered using IT,
would be valuable.

There is scope for future study about PL where teachers move between their university
training and their positions in schools. In an era where universities are under immense
pressure about the adequacy of teacher preparation, the question must be asked about the
appropriateness of the PL in the lives of these new teachers. The debate about the support of
teachers in their first years in the workplace, and the sense of their ongoing learning is
critical. When many students view their graduation from their years of study as a destination,
there is scope to examine the professional journey and how university education and
workforce responsibilities intersect. While there are already many studies examining those
links between training and workplace in a number of areas, there is no greater impetus than
now, when the calibre of teacher training and teachers in the workplace are so questioned. A
valid direction may be the analysis of both the role and characteristics of effective, targeted
and focused PL prior to and after graduation as a teacher.
This research study involved seven active and articulate classroom teachers. It used the words from those seven as the data to analyse PD / PL practices with a view to gaining valid insight into the perceptions and viewpoints of teachers from across their career spans. Currently, while jurisdictions around the country try to gain genuine and valid compliance by teachers to engage in PD, PL and professional enhancement (PE), it was essential to explore the viewpoints of teachers to see if they are as cognisant and compliant with those aims. There is no doubt that these seven teachers have all committed to learning and the idea of ongoing PD, but their accounts of professionality have not necessarily embraced the idea of the reflective and agentic professional.

This was not the first part of this saga. This narrative only tells the tale and paints the picture of this part of the PD and PL discussion at this point in time. The last word should go to the seven teachers however. I offer the following vignettes, which might start someone else on their own professional development quest.

In 2013 and 2014, seven NT-based teachers volunteered to be a part of a research study analysing their PD experiences. Their peers from seven years previously had raised some questions about PD that spurred the researcher to query what teachers believed about their own PD.

Eliza, a classroom teacher had experienced significant PD which she valued, but she questioned PD where her engagement had not been negotiated. She believed that she had engaged in effective PD that had played a role in changing her teaching and learning practices.

Mark was in the process of moving into senior management positions. He attended leadership training seminars, but still considered himself a classroom teacher. He was engaged in the decision-making aspects of planning and coordinating PD within his school, but held some concerns about the funding arrangements and school coordination difficulties as PD increasingly became a school responsibility.

Jeanne, an EC teacher initially, preferred teaching in the Secondary stage of schooling. An enthusiastic Science teacher, she raised issues of support when she was a neophyte.
Secondary teacher, albeit an experienced Primary and EC teacher. She raised issues about decision-making and consistent quality PD.

Olivia, an experienced Secondary teacher who moved to the Primary stage of schooling, had translated her credibility and successful teaching career into private employment, particularly with students with learning difficulties and home-schooled students. She was concerned about the moribund education system if cross-fertilisation and pollination did not occur through effective PD delivery and implementation.

Tally, an EC teacher embraced the concept of PL. She was accepting of the school program but was engaging in online modules to further her own understandings. An enthusiastic teacher, she understood the concepts of PD, PL and PE but acknowledged that perhaps others did not.

Terry, a Primary teacher, has a passion for Indonesia and eventually became a teacher of Languages in her Primary school, later transferring to the local high school. Her biggest issue was the level of specialisation and the lack of genuine PD opportunities for her to improve her skills in her chosen area.

Samantha, an older teacher approaching retirement, noted that her performance review was not linked in any way to PD on offer to her. While she had nominated her IT skills for improvement, she also noted that there was limited support for her to engage in this PD. She reflected on her PD and what quality PD meant to her.

It was Olivia who summed up this research study by saying “we (teachers) deserve quality PD.” The best people to decide on the calibre and interconnectedness of their PD and PL experiences are the teachers who are involved in the application of those newer skills, knowledge and understandings in their classroom contexts. They should be trusted as capable professionals who can identify and negotiate potential needs, implement new ideas into their practice, reflect and gather evidence of their effectiveness, and develop a new plan of action for future practice.
This photo depicts Darwin at sunset, and was taken from a vantage point overlooking the city. The colours of the sunset sky are indicative of Darwin in the Dry season.

Figure 8.2: Darwin City and Harbour at Sunset.
Photo: With permission of Tracey Batenburg
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Early Childhood (stage of schooling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EY</td>
<td>Early Years (EC stage of schooling in the NT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALT</td>
<td>Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>The National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTDE</td>
<td>Northern Territory Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTDET</td>
<td>Northern Territory Department of Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT DEET</td>
<td>Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Professional Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUT</td>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Social Constructivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRB</td>
<td>Teacher Registration Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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</table>
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Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 328


Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 332


Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 335


Telling Tales and Painting Pictures  336


APPENDIX A:
Sample of Interview and Coding (Eliza)

Please note: This is a sample taken directly from Eliza’s 2 hour narrative interview. Emerging themes were identified, initially grouped, regrouped several times (with reference to the literature review), categorised into larger themes and then discussed in Chapter 7. Other participants have transcripts which were transcribed, coded, summarised and linked to research.

Eliza

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Asked</th>
<th>Emerging Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How important is Professional Development to you as an educator?</strong></td>
<td>PD / Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very very important as I personally love to update my skills and knowledge and</td>
<td>Bredeson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to know what’s available outside the classroom or outside the school. &lt;pause&gt;</td>
<td>Definition PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or what senior teachers have – instead of being informed by senior teachers,</td>
<td>Disempowerment / Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to find out myself and it also enriches my knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>Disempowerment – reward system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you mean?What do you mean ‘what senior teachers have’?</strong></td>
<td>/agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mean the skills that senior teachers have that others might need, so like</td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when the senior teacher did some BM PD outside the school, it might have been</td>
<td>Definition PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good for that to be offered to other teachers too, not just her.</td>
<td>Evans 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you mean by that?</strong></td>
<td>PL – teacher focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think sometimes PD is scattered and used as a reward system rather than</td>
<td>Disempowerment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>given to people who might need it more. I love being a classroom teacher, I</td>
<td>Links to teaching practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have been offered senior teacher twice and I refuse to do it. I can’t see the</td>
<td>Overcrowded curriculum /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>value of being a senior teacher other than pushing people.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>But I think PD is important and I think I personally need to do regular PD</td>
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<tr>
<td>to keep my teaching fresh. It isn’t just about improving things for the kids.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think sometimes there are just things that teachers need to learn without</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>there being an end point that always focusses on the kids.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;pause&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>So are you thinking that there are some ‘teacher’ PD topics that are</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>just really more related to the ‘professional in professional</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>development?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know really.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mean that there is always the focus on improving outcomes and I understand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that, but teaching is a lot bigger than just the stuff we teach the kids. There</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is so much happening behind the scenes – you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
know what I mean? Like there are the computer things we have to know and understand to help the kids learn, but then there is all the IT things we need to know for us professionally. We have to put comments and ratings in for assessment, and attendance and all sorts of other things, the things that are just ours to let us do our jobs.

2nd interview / added comments: I think I mean by that, that sometimes it is all so focused on the kids but sometimes you just need to do stuff because you are a teacher and there is teacher stuff to learn. But sometimes it’s used for the wrong reasons. Sometimes it isn’t directly linked to literacy or numeracy, but might be something like learning the new library set up or something like that. So it’s still PD but it’s stuff for teachers and their knowledge, not just for the kids. But then it’s sort of not valued or respected. You have to ask if the hour session on the library set up is Ok to put on your PD log for registration so it all sort of seems vague. It isn’t how I view the PD but how those higher ups view the necessity of the PD that counts.

Yeah I am sort of mixed about PD. Like what is for the kids and what is for the teachers and where is the mix? I don’t think they should be the same sorts of PD. But it all gets sort of mixed up in what we are expected to do and I have friends in other schools where anything personal or anything not directly linked to the kids is not as important, or not as valued or not as ….. not as respectful somehow.

I don’t think even our system is clear about it. They keep talking about those stupid outcomes and key performance indicators but what they really mean is that the kids’ results should be better and nothing else matters. The talks that we all get to work harder to get those results up, to make sure the kids succeed so you sort of feel guilty if you think you want to do a software PD just because it is your own personal interest. Sometimes I just want to sit back and enjoy my PD because it is something that might at some stage show up in my teaching but maybe not today and maybe not as a trial and maybe not as something I even want or need today to improve those results.

_Wow! Them’s strong words!_

Yeah, I think I have PD rage at times like when they waste my time. Nanc? I am over PD when it is stupid.
emotional *(problems)* and being abused, those sorts of problems. Low social skills interaction and special needs as in low developmental – not being able to remember things – both cognitive and intellectual needs.

*I like to create my classroom as a big family who can work in a team, and harmonious. I model them as ‘we need to get along’ and accept everyone’s differences. That’s through hard work, lots of modelling, lots of talking to the children about what’s right and how to behave socially and interact with each other in the classroom.*

*I do a lot of hands-on activities, lots of visual cues and lots of visual aides. I teach the children from bottom to top experiences, through lots of hands-on experiences and then we go to the theory. At the moment, we do a lot of gardening and we harvest from the garden to cooking and our cooking lessons and then to our writing. And hard work…*

Professional Context / links to PD questions: *How do you define your role within your classroom?*

As a facilitator rather than a teacher due to many students with lots of low ability, so I facilitate them according to their needs, their individual needs. That’s where I have a Small Steps Program – it’s a program which is designed for five weeks with very specific goals for literacy and numeracy. I get the tutor to do it intensively – half an hour each day for literacy and another half hour for numeracy. Very intensively and I also use the tutors to read with every single child in the classroom, regardless of whether they bring their readers or not. I monitor the reading very closely by using the PM benchmark reading and Oxford words to improve their spelling.

**How do you facilitate?**

I facilitate their learning through individual ways, sometimes in group work or a buddy way, with a high level kid working with a low level, so both kids will benefit from each other. With the children with special needs, they get to work with the tutor in a group. I go around and make sure that I work with individuals, and that’s my close monitoring and observation.

With Small Steps, there is revision every five weeks and if they make an improvement, a small improvement, then I replace with a new goal for them to achieve. If they don’t, then they go back and have another two weeks and if they don’t, then we just have to move on.

2nd Interview / added comments: *I like to collaborate. You remember when we did First Steps? Remember how we talked about class groupings and stuff? I like to play with groupings and put kids*
together who are going to help each other to learn. Sometimes it works but other times I have to keep changing some kids around. There are other things happening like if they are hungry or something and that was never part of my teacher training. I just like kids to be doing active things to learn rather than sitting around and waiting for me to give information to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Values / Context:</th>
<th>links to research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a professional in a classroom, what is important to you about teaching and learning?</td>
<td>Quality teaching and learning strategies – links to characteristics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching and learning is a lifetime education. I learn from the children as well because every year, every semester, I might have new students and I need to open my mind. I can’t just stick on one way, or one skill or focus on one theory. I have to find out all the time how to cater for each child so he or she can learn – so that is very important to leave it open and have as many skills and knowledge as you can.

**So what’s important to you about teaching and learning?**

I think learning is important to kids too. That’s why they are at school but there are so many kids who don’t know why they are there, and the parents don’t care. I work really hard to try and make learning important but sometimes there are so many things that just stop them from learning.

<pause>

**What do you mean? What should they be learning about and what shouldn’t they?**

hmmm (sigh)

I think learning is all about their future but the teaching is up to us and we have to do a good job. There are too many things to learn though. Almost everyone wants us to teach their stuff and I think the kids should just be learning the important things, not everything.

**How are you using PD in your teaching and learning?**

Well, English and Maths is really important, and it is silly that there has to be rules now about how much in each day that you do. It isn’t fair that someone somewhere in an office is deciding that the kids need to learn about history and religion and languages when they really need to learn how to read and write. That’s what Small Steps is about. You look at small goals and work really intensively to get those done, but sometimes when you have a large class, and are trying to juggle so much stuff, it makes it hard.

<laughter>

**What do you mean? Why do you attend the PD that you do?**

Because it is cheap and free.
| I use the PD that I need to because it is in the school and I don’t have to do anything. They don’t like to pay for anything outside of school so I don’t either. I don’t know if that makes me a bad teacher but if you want anything out of school, then you have to pay for it. So I use the PD that I need to, but I don’t think I will be doing too much outside of school now. | links to current policy
Bredeson – PD categories / links |
APPENDIX B:
Research Participant Information, Consent Form and Consent Withdrawal and Approvals to engage in research in the NT and Queensland

Participant Information

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

–Face to Face Interview–

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures:

A narrative inquiry into the professional learning of primary teachers

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1200000012 and Northern Territory Department of Education and Training Approval Number XXX

RESEARCH TEAM

Principal Researcher: Nancy Batenburg, PhD candidate, QUT

Associate Researcher: Professor Stephen M. Ritchie

DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of PhD for Nancy Batenburg

The purpose of this project is to explore a range of teacher’s personal and professional viewpoints about professional development. You are invited to participate in this project because you are a qualified, registered Northern Territory classroom teacher who has engaged in professional development and is prepared to reflect on your experiences.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty. If you withdraw, on request, any identifiable information already obtained from you will be destroyed. Your decision to participate or not participate, will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or with the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Your participation will involve use of online survey information (10 – 15 minutes), an audio or video recorded individual interview (60 - 90 minutes), and a possible second audio / video / Skype / telephone interview (15 - 30 minutes) to clarify or explain key factors from your first interview. Questions will include:
1. Online Survey: Personal information such as your qualifications, years of teaching, stage of schooling (preferred and current), general locality of your school (urban, remote, rural) and a general idea of the extent of professional development that you have experienced;

Please note: Completion of the survey will be seen as consent to participate in the survey component only, and written consent will be obtained as part of the face-to-face interview section of this research project. As only 10 research participants are required, not all online survey participants will be required for interview (see below).

You may contribute to the survey only, and choose not to go forward to the interview phase of this research.

2. Interview questions: Contextual descriptions (non-identifiable) of your school’s capability, determination and willingness to engage in school professional development, the extent and types of your professional development experiences, pertinent descriptions and explanations about the quality of your professional development experiences, and implications for you personally and professionally of those experiences.

   a. Each teacher interviewed has the choice of video or audio recording their information. While video recording is preferable, each teacher has an option to choose either video or audio recording of responses to the interview questions.

3. Return Interview (method negotiated): questions will be directly related to your first interview and will be about gaining further explanations or descriptions of professional development

4. An optional focus group will be planned with research participants.

5. Debrief: A debrief session will be negotiated with research participants.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

While there are no direct benefits for you, this project may benefit participants indirectly through useful reflection on your professional development (PD) experiences and forward planning of your PD needs.

However, it may benefit the professional education community in the Northern Territory, by providing a ‘voice’ about quality professional development and future planning of professional development experiences for NT teachers.

RISKS

There are no significant risks associated with your participation in this project and this research has been approved through Queensland University of Technology and the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially.

As this project involves audio and/or video recording of an interview for transcription purposes, negotiation with research participants will occur to ensure that you have an opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion. Upon completion of this research project, anticipated in August 2012, the audio / video recording will be destroyed.

The only person who will have access to the initial audio/video recording of the individual interview will be me, and this audio/video recording will be stored in a secure, locked location and temporarily (during transcription) in a secure, password protected section of my computer and back up drive. No other person will have access to any identifiable information about you the actual audio/video recording and/or the transcription in its entirety.

Upon completion of this project, a script will be developed and a DVD creating, using actors to express the information, comments and phrases used by NT teachers to describe their PD experiences. This DVD will be made available to you, for use in future conferences or information purposes and to
share with key stakeholders, particularly those interested in the views of NT teachers in the development of quality PD experiences.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Submitting the completed online questionnaire is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project. However, prior to participating in the face-to-face interview, further written permission is sought from you.

QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

If have any questions or require any further information about the project please contact one of the research team members below.

Nancy Batenburg
PhD Candidate
Queensland University of Technology
Phone (08) 8985 4370
Email n.batenburg@student.qut.edu.au

Professor Stephen M. Ritchie
School of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
Queensland University of Technology
Telephone: (07) 3138 3332
Mobile: 0408 814 918
E-mail: s.ritchie@qut.edu.au

CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on (07) 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.
Approval to engage in research from QUT

University Human Research Ethics Committee

HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

NHMRC Registered Committee Number EC00171

Date of Issue: 9/1/12 (supersedes all previously issued certificates)

Dear Ms Nancy Batenburg

A UHREC should clearly communicate its decisions about a research proposal to the researcher and the final decision to approve or reject a proposal should be communicated to the researcher in writing. This Approval Certificate serves as your written notice that the proposal has met the requirements of the National Statement on Research Involving Human Participation and has been approved on that basis. You are therefore authorised to commence activities as outlined in your proposal application, subject to any specific and standard conditions detailed in this document.

Within this Approval Certificate are:

* Project Details
* Participant Details
* Conditions of Approval (Specific and Standard)

Researchers should report to the UHREC, via the Research Ethics Coordinator, events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project, including, but not limited to:

(a) serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants; and
(b) proposed significant changes in the conduct, the participant profile or the risks of the proposed research.

Further information regarding your ongoing obligations regarding human based research can be found via the Research Ethics website http://www.research.qut.edu.au/ethics/ or by contacting the Research Ethics Coordinator on 07 3138 2991 or ethicscontact@qut.edu.au

If any details within this Approval Certificate are incorrect please advise the Research Ethics Unit within 10 days of receipt of this certificate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Approval:</th>
<th>Human non-HREC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved From:</td>
<td>6/01/2011</td>
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<td>Approval Number:</td>
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<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Telling tales and painting pictures: A narrative inquiry into the professional learning of primary teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiment Summary:</td>
<td>Explore teacher's viewpoints about professional development.</td>
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<td>Investigator Details:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Investigator:</td>
<td>Ms Nancy Batenburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Staff/Students:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator Name</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Stephen Ritchie</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Mary Ryan</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Participant Details: |
| Participants:        | Approximately 10 |
| Location/s of the Work: | Northern Territory |
Conditions of Approval

Specific Conditions of Approval:
No special conditions placed on approval by the UHREC. Standard conditions apply.

Standard Conditions of Approval:
The University’s standard conditions of approval require the research team to:

1. Conduct the project in accordance with University policy, NHMRC / AVCC guidelines and regulations, and the provisions of any relevant State / Territory or Commonwealth regulations or legislation;

2. Respond to the requests and instructions of the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC);

3. Advise the Research Ethics Coordinator immediately if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, in relation to the project;

4. Suspend or modify the project if the risks to participants are found to be disproportionate to the benefits, and immediately advise the Research Ethics Coordinator of this action;

5. Stop any involvement of any participant if continuation of the research may be harmful to that person, and immediately advise the Research Ethics Coordinator of this action;

6. Advise the Research Ethics Coordinator of any unforeseen development or events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project;

7. Report on the progress of the approved project at least annually, or at intervals determined by the Committee;

8. (Where the research is publicly or privately funded) publish the results of the project is such a way to permit scrutiny and contribute to public knowledge; and

9. Ensure that the results of the research are made available to the participants.

Modifying your Ethical Clearance:
Requests for variations must be made via submission of a Request for Variation to Existing Clearance Form (http://www.research.qut.edu.au/ethics/forms/hum/vari/ver.jsp) to the Research Ethics Coordinator. Minor changes will be assessed on a case by case basis.

It generally takes 7-14 days to process and notify the Chief Investigator of the outcome of a request for a variation.

Major changes, depending upon the nature of your request, may require submission of a new application.

Audits:
All active ethical clearances are subject to random audit by the UHREC, which will include the review of the signed consent forms for participants, whether any modifications / variations to the project have been approved, and the data storage arrangements.

End of Document
Dear Nancy

RE: RESEARCH APPLICATION: "Telling Tales and Painting Pictures: A narrative inquiry into the professional learning of primary teachers"

I am pleased to advise that your application to conduct the above research is approved.

Please note that the decision to participate in this project will be at the discretion of the respective school principals and relevant individuals. I advise that you liaise with the principals to reach a mutually convenient time for conducting the research so that disruption to students' learning is minimised.

I advise that it is mandatory for people who have contact or potential contact with children in certain specified areas of employment to hold a Working with Children Clearance Notice. Please ensure that you satisfy this requirement as per http://www.workingwithchildren.nt.gov.au/

The Department is interested in the findings of the research and as such I look forward to receiving a copy of the final report. If you require any further assistance you may contact James Carlos on 8999 5721. I wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

Pascal Tremblay

Manager, Strategic Research and Evaluation
27 February 2012
CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT
– Face to Face Interview_ Telling Tales and Painting Pictures:
A narrative inquiry into the professional learning of primary teachers
QUT Ethics Approval Number 1200000012 and Northern Territory Department of Education and Training Approval Number XXX

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS
Nancy Batenburg
PhD Candidate
Queensland University of Technology
Phone (08) 8985 4370
Email n.batenburg@student.qut.edu.au

Professor Stephen M. Ritchie
School of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
Queensland University of Technology
Telephone: (07) 3138 3332
Mobile: 0408 814 918
E-mail: s.ritchie@qut.edu.au
http://education.qut.edu.au/~ritchies

STATEMENT OF CONSENT
By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the key researcher or her supervisor
- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that your responses to interview questions may be either video or audio recorded (your preference)
- understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on (07) 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- understand that non-identifiable data collected in this project may be used in future projects
- understand that words, phrases and information provided by you as part of this project will be used to create a script for production of a DVD using actors, and that no identifying information about you or your current school context will be used
- agree to participate in the project

Please tick the relevant box below:

☐ I agree to take part in an audio recorded Interview.

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures 349
☐ I agree to take part in a video recorded interview.
☐ I agree to information, phrases and words used by me during the interview process being used in the creation of a script, and using actors, for production into a DVD.
☐ I do not agree to information, phrases and words used by me during the interview process to be used in the creation of a script, and using actors, for production into a DVD.

Consent of Principal: Yes/No Name: Date of Approval:

Name:  

Signature:  

Date:  

MEDIA RELEASE PROMOTIONS
From time to time, we may like to promote our research to the general public through, for example, newspaper articles. Would you be willing to be contacted by QUT Media and Communications for possible inclusion in such stories? By ticking this box, it only means you are choosing to be contacted – you can still decide at the time not to be involved in any promotions.

☐ Yes, you may contact me about inclusion in promotions
☐ No, I do not wish to be contacted about inclusion in promotions

*Please return this sheet to the investigator.*
WITHDRAWAL OF CONSENT FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

Telling Tales and Painting Pictures:

A narrative inquiry into the professional learning of primary teachers

QUT Ethics Approval Number 120000012 and Northern Territory Department of Education and Training Approval Number XXX

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

Nancy Batenburg  Professor Stephen M. Ritchie
PhD Candidate
Queensland University of Technology
School of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
Queensland University of Technology

Phone  08 8985 4370
Telephone:  (07) 3138 3332
Mobile:  0408 814 918
E-mail  n.batenburg@student.qut.edu.au
E-mail:  s.ritchie@qut.edu.au
http://education.qut.edu.au/~ritchies

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the research project named above.
I understand that this withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Queensland University of Technology.

Name

Signature

Date