

How Educators Collectively Made Sense of Instructional Leadership
During Situated Professional Development

by

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B.A. (Honours), Trent University, 1988

B.Ed., University of Toronto, 1989

M.Ed., University of Victoria, 2000

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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University of Victoria

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Public education is in the ongoing process of developing student-focused and personalized learning approaches. This transformation effort requires school staffs to shift cultures toward collaboration and continuous professional development in pursuit of meaningful and equitable learning success for all students. In order to address this need, close examination of social interactions during recurring professional discussions is required. The purpose of this sociocultural study was to investigate how a group of educators collectively made sense of pedagogical practices and beliefs over time, and to identify practices conducive to their professional learning in a situated series focused on instructional leadership within a British Columbia school district. Participants were 10 newly appointed vice-principals and vice-principal candidates, one assistant superintendent, and myself as the researcher and series facilitator. Data collection included audiotaping of five 3-hour sessions across a three-month period, participant reflections written during sessions and in blog posts between sessions, and associated artefact and macro-Discourse data. Transcriptions provided the primary data source for the critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011a) and sociocultural discourse analysis (Mercer, 2008, 2010) methods. Findings indicated shifts in the nature of participation for the group

of educators across sessions, including the development of sense of community, collective familiarization with and application of productive discursive interactions, and the co-construction of common pedagogical knowledge. The findings extend the literature on educational leadership and professional development, as I elaborate how these shifts emerged as a collective endeavour over time and discuss noteworthy supportive conditions.

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Dedication

To my sons, and to all children and youth in our communities:

Every day you inspire my passion for this purposeful work,
reminding me that the pursuit of meaningful and joyful learning
for ALL students is critical.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Globally, educators are experiencing a novel challenge and potentially exciting opportunity in education. The future is unforeseeable, yet educators must prepare students for lifelong learning. This novelty entails a reconsideration of the culture of public education and its “habits of the institution and the habitats that they occupy” (Robinson, 2010, 11:02) to effectively move learning forward. Within this broader challenge, pursuing changes in pedagogy that apply “the principles of learning” (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2010), including a focus on learner-centred and personalized learning approaches, necessarily requires on-going capacity building for all educators throughout the system. In rethinking teaching and learning in schools, how to shift education cultures and find ways to advance capacity building among teachers continues to be of consequential interest for all stakeholders.

For many years I have been working in the field of professional development for educators and have been immersed in professional conversations and activities about pedagogy, both as facilitator and co-learner. Throughout this work, I have experienced occasions where professional learning experiences appeared to be transformational, in that participants seemed to shift in their beliefs about what is possible for student learning and their commitment to developing practices in support of this possibility. When this type of beneficial professional learning occurred, a collective movement forward appeared to happen, expanding beyond collegiality toward the development of collaborative culture among participants. I was intrigued by this phenomenon, wondering

in what ways these particular experiences were distinctive from other experiences that failed to be transformative.

I am a member of several networks of educators who focus on capacity building within public education. Reflecting together on our experiences and sharing practices that seem to foster worthwhile professional learning for teachers supports our mutual progress in this field. Two well-supported general approaches in the literature are the notion of the development of professional community (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017; Whitehead, 2010; Wenger, 1998) and the need to develop practice over time, rather than through isolated workshops (Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016; Laster, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Strahan & Hedt, 2009). These general professional learning conditions seem sometimes to encourage transformational experiences for educators. At other times, however, transformation does not appear to take place, suggesting that other conditions, such as social dynamics may be at play that call for a more refined examination of situated teacher professional learning over time. I speculated that a deliberate consideration of how educators make sense of pedagogy and about the nature of their social interactions during continuous professional learning experiences may provide further insights into this cultural phenomenon. Resultant findings could inform capacity-building efforts to transform the culture of public education systems in support of innovation. In addition, scholarship in educational leadership and teacher education might be further enhanced by findings. As such, I decided to pursue a qualitative study within this research space, examining closely teachers' collective sense-making and social interactions during situated continuous professional learning experiences.

Situating the Study in Provincial Context

Within British Columbia (BC), the Ministry of Education is pursuing progressive educational change through a transformation of the provincial curriculum (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca>), ideally encouraging implementation of learning innovation and increased personalization for students. Within this aforementioned redesigned curriculum, emphasis is moving toward developing students' personal and social responsibility, their critical and creative thinking, and their communication competencies across all disciplines and grade levels. Additionally, Aboriginal perspectives and approaches to learning are integrated throughout, promoting cultural sensitivity and acknowledgement of Aboriginal ways of knowing. Expanding formative assessment practices to include a focus on student self- and peer-assessment is also part of this transformation effort. Although provincial teams of teachers have worked on and are continuing to work on curriculum revisions, implementation efforts become the responsibility of educators at local district levels as they are actualized. Educational leaders at both the school and district levels are engaged in on-going pursuit of approaches to effectively realize the corresponding capacity building requirements, including supporting teachers in being “prepared to take risks, to make mistakes, and to learn from their mistakes” (Boyer & Crippen, 2014, p. 353). For example, teachers will need to continue to develop their practices in literacy and numeracy instruction while simultaneously exploring and experimenting with other student-centred and competency-based learning models such as project-based learning and student inquiry.

In addition to a focus on the aforementioned instructional approaches, diversity of learners within the classroom continues to be a significant capacity building challenge in

transforming public education. Although this challenge is situated within a larger societal change movement to improve equity and quality of life for all (Government of Canada, 2014), implementation of inclusive practices in schools continues to be incoherent (Canadian Education Association, 2013). School-based strategies are not yet necessarily sufficiently flexible and responsive to support effective personalization for all learners. Student diversity challenges continue to be hampered by uncertainty and limited understandings among educators about how to imagine teaching and learning differently (Ashton, 2016; Madigan, 2007). As such, developing teacher practices that attend to student diversity continues to dominate current teacher professional learning activities. Professional conversations on how to differentiate instruction and assessment so that all students can readily access learning and emphasizing continued development of student self-regulation and metacognition are ongoing. While implementing curriculum redesign expectations, school staffs must also continue to work at improving equity in learning for all of their students. Optimistically these endeavours are not mutually exclusive, yet both require considerable reconsideration of how teaching and learning are enacted in public schools.

Situating the Study in Political Context

During the time of the professional learning series examined within the present study, March to May 2011, the BC education system was experiencing an especially tumultuous political conflict that eventually led to an unprecedented seven-month job action. This issue was but another during the ongoing contentious relationship between the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and the provincial government. Since the late 1980's the province has experienced "52 strikes, a series of controversial

legislation, bitter court battles and only a single new contract signed without the aid of strikes or legislation” (Giovannetti, 2014, para. 5). During this particular time period, union Discourse (Gee, 2011a) was marked by challenges to the government’s collection of student achievement data through standardized testing mandates: “This approach is typical of this government’s drive to standardize education and not recognize the uniqueness of each learner” (British Columbia Teachers’ Federation, 2010, para. 7). Reports from the Fraser Institute, a politically conservative think tank, likely furthered this contrary view. In its use of achievement data to rank schools, the Fraser Institute seemed to encourage simplistic judgments within the public eye, making “comparisons easy...[about] more effective academic programs” (Cowley, Easton, & Thomas, 2012, p. 3).

On the other hand, the government was actively challenging teacher union influence, specifically as it related to its control over the BC Teachers’ College, the professional regulatory body. The government called into question the efficacy of this teacher regulation branch’s ability to uphold professional standards as well as the interests of public education by pointing to union interference that, they claimed: “overtly ... limit[ed] the scope of authority exercised by the College and has done so in a manner that has impaired the capacity of the College to be seen as an entity exercising authority independent from the Federation” (Avison, 2010, p. 32). As such, the Minister of Education was reviewing alternatives for regulating the education profession during the time of the research, challenging the union’s perspective on professional accountability and autonomy. Needless to say, this tension between the teachers’ union and the

provincial government likely prompted emotionally charged interactions in schools as well. Its influence was clearly evident in early sessions within the research.

Situating the Study as an Educational Leadership Consideration

The aforementioned transformation of education in public schooling has been and will be a long-term endeavour. Teacher capacity-building and cultural shifts in school organizations are critical to this change. Promising and sustainable transformation will require professional learning experiences that become more and more embedded in the everyday workplace through on-going conversations about student learning and opportunities to explore and apply new approaches. Principals and vice principals are formally tasked to carry out this cultural transformation, encouraged to develop supportive social structures such as professional learning communities (Fullan, Hill, & Crevola, 2006; Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2008; Kaser & Halbert, 2009; Sagor, 2010) and to continuously engage staffs in conversations and feedback that focus and re-focus on student learning throughout the day (British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, 2015).

Many professional institutions, resources, and learning opportunities provide these leaders with valuable information on how to do this work at their schools. For example, educational leadership frameworks offer valuable coaching advice (Lipton, Wellman, & Humbard, 2001; Kise, 2006) and distributed leadership models that foster school cultural change (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Wiseman, 2010) to encourage teachers in transforming their practices in support of improving student learning. What requires more elaboration in the literature is how to support educator communities in developing, enhancing, and sustaining continuous professional learning efforts over time.

Framing the Study

In pursuit of further insights within this research space, the following are relevant considerations. First, a study into situated professional development must attend to the nature of educators' thinking about teaching practices and student learning and how their thinking may shift over time. Next, a closer examination of social interactions among participants as they relate to the co-construction of practitioner knowledge and sense-making throughout professional learning experiences is needed. Additionally, selected activities that emerge as particularly beneficial to professional development during such an investigation must be carefully interpreted. A sociocultural lens is well suited to the aforementioned research interests especially as they pertain to professional learning communities. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the significant role of social interactions on thinking and learning development (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). As such, a sociocultural perspective is an appropriate interpretive lens.

Further, from a sociocultural perspective, language and thought are inherently interrelated and culturally informed (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). As a tool for both communication and the development of thought, language plays an influential role in how beliefs and knowledge are represented (Gee, 2012; Mumby & Mease, 2011; van Dijk, 2011) and how talk-in-interaction emerges as a way to achieve collective sense-making within groups (Littleton & Mercer, 2013; Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011). In this way, "discourse is of central importance in constructing the ideas, social processes, and phenomena that make up our social world" (Nikander, 2008, p. 413). The world of situated professional development for educators may be considered in a similar light. Discussions with colleagues and written reflections about new learning are typical

means through which educators pursue their professional development experiences. Both of these professional learning discourse formats point to a potentially rich data source for interpretative analysis of the aforementioned research considerations. Taking into account the nature of this data, discourse analysis was chosen as a relevant method for its systematic examination. Specifically, I drew on aspects of critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011a) to reveal how meaning and knowledge were co-constructed throughout discursive interactions and what social purposes this collective discourse may have served. Additionally, I applied the sociocultural discourse analysis lens of temporal interpretation (Mercer, 2008) to discern what appeared to be shifts in collective discourse and discursive interactions across sessions over several months.

The Focus of the Study

Educational leadership that can promote and support thriving professional learning communities where developing instructional practice is commonly accepted and habitually enacted in schools is required. The purpose of this study was to gain deeper insights into what happens collectively for educators during and across professional development experiences to better inform the field about the realization of beneficial professional learning communities. Qualitative research on the social dynamics of a situated professional learning community within public education during curriculum change is ideal. The study was a formalized investigation into the collective discourse and social interactions of educators during such a situated professional development series over time. As previously discussed, the study was initiated by my interest in enhancing understanding about what happens for educators as they make sense of pedagogy during professional learning experiences, as well as what may be activities that

encourage beneficial development trajectories for professional learning communities.

Specifically, the following research questions informed this present discourse analysis:

- What is the nature of educator discourse during professional learning experiences over time?
- How do educators make sense of pedagogical practices and beliefs during professional learning experiences?
- Which practices are conducive to beneficial professional learning for educators?

The professional learning series from which the discourse data were collected for this study included 5 three-hour sessions. Although the findings from the discourse analysis of the data are necessarily context specific, they may offer insights that enhance understandings about the social dynamics of other professional learning communities and inform the work of other staff developers and scholars within the field of long-term teacher capacity building efforts.

Chapter Summary and Preview of Chapter 2

In this chapter I discuss the context and importance of my study, and present its research questions. In sum, the impetus for significant transformation of teaching and learning in schools requires better understandings of how to encourage effective ongoing capacity building for educators. Determining ways to develop and sustain beneficial professional learning communities in the education system is paramount. Closer examination of the social dynamics within these communities can inform the work of practitioners in the field and scholarly literature in this research space. In Chapter 2 I situate the study within the sociocultural theoretical framework, elaborating Vygotskian perspectives and related views on culture, language, and learning.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

“speech plays an essential role in the organization of higher psychological functions”

- Lev S. Vygotsky (1978, p. 23)

For many years, in North American education, psychological studies and philosophical perspectives have emphasized the individual and his or her personal development and learning. More recently, there has been an increased interest in sociocultural theoretical perspectives that presume the social nature of learning (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2009; Roger & Wetzal, 2014; Wenger, 2010). These perspectives show promise for a reconsideration of how to approach the transformation of education in British Columbia (BC), by honing in on cultural and social dynamics as supportive conditions that influence learning experiences.

In a broad sense, the impetus to transform education in BC’s public schooling is a long-term and continuing challenge that requires on-going revision of teacher cultures within professional learning communities. These efforts likely necessitate reconstructing collective understandings of learning, as well as rethinking teacher practices. From a sociocultural perspective, these professional understandings are co-constructed during participation in everyday work activities (Coburn, 2005; Horn & Little, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991), including participating in professional development sessions. A sociocultural orientation is an ideal lens to examine the social learning nature of professional conversations where collective sense-making of pedagogy and co-construction of workplace knowledge emerges. In this chapter, I provide an overview of

noteworthy scholarship in the area of sociocultural theory, the theoretical framework that informed this dissertation study. Additionally, I discuss sociocultural views on culture, language, and learning, as well as discourse analysis.

Sociocultural theory is premised on the Vygotskian perspective (1978, 1986) that the essence of each individual's thinking finds its origins in and is shaped continuously by the social world. As such, consideration of educators' understandings and beliefs necessitates attention to the sociocultural context from which they emerge. Additionally, various strands of sociocultural theory "share a view of human action as mediated by language and other symbolic systems within particular cultural contexts" (Lewis et al., 2009, p 5). Within this view, researchers (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2011a; Mercer, 2010; Moje & Lewis, 2009; Potter, 2012; Rogers & Wetzel, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010; van Dijk, 2011; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) presume that language "plays an essential role in the organization of higher psychological functions" (Vygotsky, 1978 p. 23). Herein discourse is a cultural resource that facilitates sense-making and co-construction of common ways of knowing. Scholarly interests within a sociocultural framework range from explorations into how language functions as cultural tool to develop intellectual capacity (Mercer, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) to how discourse enables collective knowledge and ideology (van Dijk, 2011). A survey of scholarly literature that informed the study's sociocultural theoretical framework begins with foundational tenets about the synergy of language, thought, and learning according to Vygotsky (1978, 1986), followed by scholarly perspectives on discourse as social interaction and learning as social transformation.

Vygotsky's Foundational Perspectives on Thought, Language, and Learning

Vygotsky's insights into psychological development within culture (1978, 1986) are foundational to sociocultural scholarship about learning and discourse. Although Vygotsky focused specifically on the intellectual development of children in his writings, sociocultural scholars have since applied his insights more broadly to other contexts, ranging from the exploration of how adults learn within their work communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to a study on how student teachers adopt the prosody of their mentor teachers (Roth & Hsu, 2010). Elaboration of more recent sociocultural theory requires consideration of relevant, underpinning Vygotskian insights, including the notion that abstract thought emanates from the social world and that language as cultural tool plays an essential role in learning and thinking.

Abstract thinking originates in the sociocultural world. Vygotsky's investigations (1978, 1986) into higher order thinking elaborate the dialectical interrelationship between the external structures of the social world and the internal structures of the mind. Within this view, an individual's thinking is shaped by external resources, initially through experiential engagement within the objective world, then expanding to incorporate complete immersion within the sociocultural world. In terms of intellectual development, the external resources accessed from situated contexts become internalized into the higher order thoughts of individuals: "the true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 36). According to Vygotsky, while engagement in activity can build practical abilities, it is social interaction with others that generates and facilitates the development of abstract thinking over time. Further, language becomes the cultural tool that mediates

this intellectual development, facilitating the evolution of shared thoughts, ideas, knowledge, and beliefs. Thus, “speech plays an essential role in the organization of higher psychological functions” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 23), informing the prospect and trajectory of collective intellectual endeavours generally.

Drawing from the aforementioned Vygotskian perspective, a foundational presumption of sociocultural theory is that cultural immersion and language use play central and generative roles in intellectual learning and potential. As such, one cannot conceive of thinking and learning of individuals without the consideration of the social/cultural community within which they emerge. Based on this distinctive Vygotskian worldview, sociocultural theory emphasizes learning as emergent from and integral to interpersonal experiences with others. This notion was of particular relevance in the present study, wherein a contrastive sociocultural lens in the examination of a professional’s expressed beliefs was selected, requiring careful consideration that focused on collective and communal aspects of learning rather than on autonomous professional learners. Through this sociocultural lens, I deliberately reconsidered the participants and myself as researcher-participant in terms of heteronomous learners within a professional community in order to strive for the intended cutting-edge insights about professional development within public education.

Meaning as the convergence of thought and language. Within this aforementioned perspective on learning experiences, language plays a key mediation role that enables collective sense-making and co-construction of knowledge. According to Vygotsky (1986), the relationship between language and thought is dialectic: two contrasting aspects of one functional unit known as meaning. He explained that speech and thought

develop according to their own progressions however it is in the emergent realization of an interrelationship between the two that leads to the creation of a meaning unit, which carries a significative function. From a sociocultural perspective, this dialectical interrelationship between language and thought makes communications about ideas and intellectual growth possible. In terms of professional development, language as a way to represent the abstract mediates a community's capacity to collectively consider and reconsider their understandings and insights with one another about work-related concepts.

Furthermore, language, as a means to access and create meanings, enables collective sense-making and learning from experience: "the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity...converge" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 24). From this perspective, language is a tool that functions as a means to account for, attend to, and make sense of experiences generally, and within professional contexts specifically. For example, in reflecting on the significance of workplace experiences and observations, language both facilitates and shapes people's actualized professional meanings and what the professional community learns from them. In this way, deepening collective understandings and developing professional concepts becomes possible via discursive activities such as discussions, shared readings, and writing reflections about workplace practices and interpreting the underlying reasons for doing them. From this perspective, verbalized thoughts as professional development become the means by which the external reality of the lived workplace is collectively viewed, shared, understood, and explored.

Language as a way to rehearse and anticipate. Vygotsky (1978, 1986) theorized that this verbalized thinking among young children as they play serves a cognitive functional role that bridges experiences in the social world toward the abstract thought of the individual. Egocentric speech “emerges when the child transfers social, collaborative forms of behaviour to the sphere of inner-personal psychic functions” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 35) and eventually becomes “an agent of realistic thinking” (p. 33). He asserts that egocentric speech eventually demonstrates processes like problem-solving and strategic planning, and, generally speaking, this self-talk becomes an opportunity to experiment with the application of what one has heard and seen others do in similar situations. In a similar way, situated learning contexts may also entail comparable rehearsal and adoption trajectories through legitimate peripheral participation within professional discourse communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991), as further elaborated later in this chapter.

Interestingly, Vygotsky (1986) suggested that egocentric speech remains within adults, having evolved into an inner speech, continuing to serve its higher order thinking functions. From this perspective, the distinction between speaking with others and speaking to self as a child eventually becomes speaking aloud to others and speaking to self within the mind or, in other words, thinking to oneself. Similarly, according to Vygotsky, as adults, this sort of self-talk is verbalized aloud at times, in situations of added stress or in need of more intense problem-solving. This implication is of significance in my study, where experiences and wonderings were articulated and explored to address questions and challenges within the workplace.

Language as a means to conceptual development. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1986) proposed that learning new concepts originates as external experience and then, over

time, becomes internalized through language use with more experienced others. Within this framework, Vygotsky distinguished between the conceptual understanding of a child and that of an adult. Although a child is using words in a similar fashion to that of the adult, the conceptual meaning between the two differs enormously. A child uses words functionally to engage in communication as an adult does, yet the content and structure of the concept represented by these words is significantly different from an adult's further developed meanings. From this perspective, the use of words to represent abstract concepts in conversations with more experienced adults or peers facilitates the gradual internalization of these concepts and deepens their situated meanings over time.

In his elaborations of human intellectual development, Vygotsky distinguished between two types of concepts: "spontaneous" and "scientific" (Vygotsky, 1986). Spontaneous concepts arise out of practical experiences and social structures and initially develop without awareness. In contrast, scientific concepts refer to abstract academic or specialized technical concepts that develop consciously through instructional practices and enable higher order thinking processes. Although their origins are different, both types of concepts interrelate and influence each other. For example, spontaneous concepts can help one to make links between what is known from experience and related scientific concepts, thus facilitating the further development of abstract knowledge. Conversely, the conscious awareness inherent to developing scientific concepts may encourage closer examination of the nature of one's spontaneous or experientially developed conceptual understandings, and help to reconsider their meanings.

From a Vygotskian perspective, the deepening of conceptual understanding in learning relies on sharing meanings through language-in-use. As such, it is in talking with

one another about concepts generally that collective understandings and knowledge is both enabled and developed. Overall, Vygotsky (1986) suggested that concept development is a continuous process that takes much time, where words used to mediate conceptual understandings continue to evolve in their meanings dynamically through ongoing interactions with others. This perspective on conceptual development through discursive interactions within collective sense-making and common knowledge construction activities emerged as relevant to the professional development examined within the study.

Learning in the zone. Perhaps the most influential of all Vygotskian learning frameworks within present-day education is that of the “zone of proximal development” (1978, 1986). Rather than attending solely to what students can do independently, Vygotsky discovered, through his own work with school-aged children, that intellectual development occurs when educators focus their instruction on what children can do with the guidance of someone with more expertise. He defined the zone of proximal development as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Within this framework, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that effective instruction, as in “properly organized learning [that] results in mental development” (p. 90), necessitates social interaction between the teacher or adept peers and novice learners so that they can eventually internalize the targeted abstract thinking processes, and this formalized learning and teaching interaction is largely discursive in nature. Similarly, within sociocultural theory, the influence of more adept and/or

influential members of a community on its sense-making and knowledge/ideological trajectory is a presumption, and is primarily mediated through its discourse (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2011a; van Dijk, 2011; Wenger, 2010). More recent sociocultural considerations of this zone of development refer to intersubjectivity (Billett, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010; Rowe, 2011; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) as elaborated later in this chapter, where language-in-use makes joint attention about the abstract possible, and thus facilitates the growth of shared understandings and knowledge co-construction.

Additionally, Vygotsky pointed to the significant emotional bond that underpins the effectiveness of this intersubjective space in the learning process. From this perspective, learning experiences “originate as actual relationships between individuals” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57) generally in terms of the aforementioned participation in the social world. Yet in terms of the zone of proximal development specifically, where the ideal conditions for learning take place, the “intellect and affect are fused in a unified whole” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 373). From this perspective, favourable learning encompasses both social-emotional and intellectual engagement. The nature of relationships and intersubjectivity as conducive to how productive learning can occur was relevant to my study as well.

Summary. In sum, Vygotsky (1978, 1986) stressed the dialectical interrelationships between society and the individual, as well as between language and thought. The essential influence that external social structures have on the thoughts of individuals and the mediating function that language plays in intellectual development are significant Vygotskian tenets that underpin sociocultural theory. His insights on egocentric and inner speech, concept development, and the zone of proximal development point to the social nature of human learning and thought. Building on the aforementioned tenets,

sociocultural scholars acknowledge the dominant influences of society, community, and culture over the origins of abstract thinking and its development as individuals.

Additionally, the tenets of sociocultural theory highlight the significant synergetic relationship between language and thought, a presumption that stimulates a notable research interest in the close examination of discourse and what it may reveal about abstract thinking in terms of ideology, knowledge construction, sense-making, and learning. How talk-in-interaction during professional learning creates intersubjective spaces for meaning-making was especially relevant to my research.

Recent Views of Language and Social Interaction

Further to the aforementioned Vygotskian insights, more contemporary sociocultural scholars have been exploring language in terms of its use within context and as social interaction (Potter, 2012; Rogers & Wetzel, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010). As such, it is presumed that all activity that entails language, including research itself, must acknowledge its inherent social and cultural orientation. In the following section, I provide an overview of sociocultural theory that explores the inherent interactive nature of language, an orientation that is of primary relevance to how language was used by participants during my study.

Communications are normative interactions. Among discourse studies, many approaches based on ethnomethodology, critical discourse analysis, and discursive psychology, examine the social, cultural, and political influences at play within language as a social interaction (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 2012; Rogers & Wetzel, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010). These methodologies integrate post-modernist views within many disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Research

within this theoretical space “shares the assumption that language is a social practice and because social practices are not created nor treated equally, all analyses of language are inherently critical” (Rogers & Wetzel, 2014, p. 11). From this perspective, researchers need to call to question any tendency to take language use at face value rather than recognize the underlying social, cultural, and political expectations that also shape communications. This view presumes that “the central role of communication is the production of culture and social institutions” (Roth & Hsu, 2010, p. 5) and thus discourse is inherently and inextricably entangled with the culture and society from which it emerges. Within this research space, discourse itself becomes the object of study as researchers seek to reveal the taken-for-granted social and cultural norms that underpin what appear to be straightforward discursive interactions.

According to Potter (2012), the ways in which communications unfold serve many social functions beyond simply accounting and recounting. Discursive psychological theory points to the significant influence of social expectation on talk-in-interaction, including its effect on discursive behaviours. As such, the consideration of language-in-use starts “with practices; that is, people interacting with one another” (Potter, 2012, p. 438), rather than starting with the content of expressed thoughts in and of themselves. From this perspective, “it is not that discursive psychologists do not consider thinking, cognition, mind, feelings and so on, but this is not something...they see as the causal underpinning of social behaviour” (Potter, 2012, p. 438), including the various ways of communicating. Potter suggests that during an interview, for example, there is a common tendency toward the familiar and preferred organization of interaction in how to talk with one another, the question and answer pattern. People co-construct this predicable and

tractable “normative order of interaction” (Potter, 2012, p. 442) by participating within the role of interviewer or interviewee to enact a recognisable, cultural activity called an interview. As such, statements expressed by an interviewee, as they emerge during this type of normative social interaction, may include social traces that are other than the taken-for-granted contents of the words. As a familiar form of social behaviour, what is said during an interview is likely shaped by how this activity is expected to unfold; “interviewees’ responses are closely associated with interviewers’ questions or social interaction in interview...[and] do not [necessarily] reflect what they have in mind but are interactive results of the interview as a whole” (Roth & Hsu, 2010, p. 124). In this way, language also emerges as a function of normative social behaviour. Thus, building on Vygotskian insights into the inherently social nature of language, how discourse is used to serve social ends is another contextual consideration within sociocultural theory and informed my study.

Discursive patterns facilitate co-construction. Discourse studies have revealed iterative patterns that people draw on in their communications with one another and that these commonly used discursive resources offer insights into sociocultural reality. These discursive patterns or interpretive repertoires (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 2012; Roth & Hsu, 2010) are resources used to construct coherent and cohesive accounts of phenomenon as well as to represent oneself to others. Discourse studies have revealed that there are multitudes of such interpretive repertoires, including positioning and rhetorical devices. For example, a scientist may position him/herself favourably through accounts that portray him/herself as expert, objective, and passionate during an interview (Lee & Roth, 2004). The scientist makes use of rhetorical devices to present him/herself

as a scholar to the interviewer and, through their talk-in-interview practices; they co-construct this scientist identity together.

Furthermore, within the aforementioned example, the anticipation of a broader audience of readers who will read about this interview also influences how the interaction unfolds. In this sense, the accountability of an interview as social interaction goes beyond its co-construction between two people, to an accountability to the general public at large, and as such, the interviewee's emergent identity is shaped by and for many potential interlocutors and their expectations about what makes a good scientist. This view of communications points to the notion that the portrayals represented within discursive interactions additionally reflect socially accepted norms beyond individuals' expressed thoughts and feelings.

In a similar way, perspectives grounded in anthropological views of culture contend that familiar story structures frame how people account for their experiences and understandings of phenomenon (Bruner, 1991; Quinn, 2005) within their discourse. From this perspective, over time humanity has developed a tendency toward constructing abstract worldviews in terms of more easily understood narrative structures. Drawing from recurrent narrative features as a frame of reference, speakers/writers and listeners/readers make sense of complex phenomenon for and with one another. This human tendency within communications is folk psychology (Bruner, 1991) or schema (Quinn, 2005) that is used to collectively construct accessible interpretations of reality. In order to more readily make collective sense of what is happening in the world, people ascribe intentionality and motivations to their accounts of actions, events, and phenomena in a similar way to how they portray characters in storytelling (Bruner, 1991).

Additionally, speakers place emphasis on important parts of narrative accounts by drawing on familiar culturally constructed metaphorical phrases to facilitate comprehension efforts (Quinn, 2005). From this perspective, the use of familiar narrative features in talk and writing is a universal human tendency that seems to be a mechanism for collective sense-making and co-construction of shared worldviews. The notion that recognizable discursive patterns can act as resources to draw upon in order to more readily communicate with others and collectively make sense of phenomenon is a sociocultural view that was evident in the dissertation study.

Summary. From a sociocultural perspective, language inevitably implies social interaction with others. In whatever form language takes, it is designed for and is influenced by an audience, both immediate and across time and space. In addition, language, as a communal resource and culturally normative interaction, reveals much more than the mere lexical meanings of any one individual's words. Language use mediates ability to collectively make sense of the world and facilitates the co-construction of shared worldviews. Sociocultural theory attends to the aforementioned socially interactive nature of language, with its dependence on audience and familiar patterns to access collective understandings.

Recent Perspectives on the Influence of Community

As previously elaborated, the communicative nature of language extends beyond the individual to encompass the sociocultural world. This sociocultural world includes continuous immersion within various communities, each one influencing social interactions, meaning-making experiences, and communications with others. Building on the aforementioned Vygotskian insights, in the following section I provide an overview

of recent sociocultural perspectives about the influence of community on language and learning.

Influence of immersion within community. Through participation in joint activity with others, people adopt the common language habits, modes of thinking, and ideologies appropriate to the communities of which they are members (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2011a; Mumby & Mease, 2011; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). From this sociocultural perspective, communities are comprised of people who share common discursive norms that reflect as well as shape their collective practices, histories, and ideologies (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2011a; Gunnarsson, 2009; Mumby & Mease, 2011; van Dijk, 2011; Wenger, 2010). In this way, membership within many discourse communities supports and limits language use, interactions, and learning trajectories. For example, one can engage in both private and professional discourse communities, where the private encompasses everyday lay language that belongs to all and the professional entails domain-specific specialized language that emerges to pursue work-life purposes (Gunnarsson, 2009; Mumby & Mease, 2011; Wenger et al., 2002). Additionally, discursive constructions are not only representative of and constrained by the communities from which they emerge. Discourse serves a constitutive function in reproducing social organization, wherein “members collectively construct social realities and institutional structures” (Mumby & Mease, 2011, p. 283) as part of their everyday practices. In a similar way, many educational researchers have focused on the classroom community and its discursive practices, investigating how language use reproduces schooling as social institution and influences student learning (Cazden, 2001; Heath, 1983; Moje & Lewis, 2009).

Additionally, the language that is appropriate within a specific discourse community conveys multiple layers of meaning about various sociocultural aspects of the group, including how members define themselves and the makeup of their collective thoughts, beliefs, and values (Gee, 2011a; Mumby & Mease, 2011). In this way, the language one uses as a discourse community member reveals social complexity beyond simple lexical interpretations of the words themselves, including what may be considered sanctioned ideology. This ideology of a community is made available to and reproduced by its members via discourse. From this perspective, discourse becomes both a resource from which one can “draw on to produce social realities, and... a sedimented structure... that shapes and constrains what is considered legitimate action” (Mumby & Mease, 2011, p. 285). In the case of a professional discourse community or “community of practice” (Wenger et al., 2002), for example, the discourse may reflect the predominant, specialized ideology developed through common academic preparation, collective participation in institutional activity, and everyday social interactions with immediate colleagues within each situated worksite (Gunnarsson, 2009; Wenger et al., 2002). From this perspective, membership within professional discourse communities has significant influence on how communications unfold among members, as well as on what topics are deemed as relevant and consequential for consideration.

Considering the significant influence that community membership has on discourse and ideology, it is not surprising that identity is also an area of interest to sociocultural scholars. As members are immersed in, relate to, and shape the social norms of their particular discourse communities, their identities also emerge through participation within these communities (Gee, 2011a; Moje & Lewis, 2009; Mumby & Mease, 2011;

Wenger, 2010). From this sociocultural perspective, identity is viewed in terms of “a fluid, socially and linguistically mediated construct” (Lewis et al., 2009, p. 4) that one can enact within particular community settings. Additionally, the identities that one adopts are socially and politically variable, affording more power of agency to some members over others. For example, members of status within any discourse community may have the capacity to acknowledge or deny the discourse of others within the group. Therefore discourse can be used as a tool for social agency and positioning within community groups:

When I utter words in a conversation, I do more than *talk*, I also *act*. By uttering words, I can accomplish various actions such as asserting, promising, apologizing, inviting, forgiving, offering, agreeing, rejecting, or denying, and many others. All of these, and many more, are called ‘acts’, actions performed by uttering words. (Gee, 1990, p. 95)

In this way, discourse is active in nature and speech acts function as discursive tools to convey socio-political meaning for many purposes, including messages about status, agency, and competency as community members. From a sociocultural perspective, these discursively produced constructs are constitutive of the various identities that one can enact as members of various communities. Additionally, this social reality gives discourse the potential to be a powerful agent in the realm of epistemology, in the sense that it has the potential to determine what constitutes knowledge, how knowledge can be appropriately generated, and who can engage among the knowers. This notion is of special interest to this study, where the critical analysis of discursive practices within a

professional community situated within the institutionalized setting of education was the focus.

Language in terms of discourse and Discourse. Building on the notion of membership within various discourse communities, Gee (2011a) also points out that the meanings represented by language may draw from multiple communities at any given time. Meaning can emerge from its use within situated context while simultaneously being drawn from the macro-context of society. Gee terms discourse (with a lower case *d*) as language meaning that is influenced by its enacted use, while Discourse (with an upper case *D*) as language meaning situated more broadly across larger cultural groups and institutions. From this perspective, discourse refers to “‘language-in-use’ or stretches of oral or written language” (Gee, 2011a, p. 177), where localized factors such as who happens to be speaking or where a passage is embedded may impact meaning. Contrasting this notion, Gee (2011a) differentiates Discourse as shaping language meaning in a broad cultural sense, wherein understandings develop according to “shared conventions on how to use and interpret language” (p. 176) as expected among the many social groups to which one belongs including “ethnic groups; professions..., academic disciplines; interest-driven groups...; and organizations” (p. 176). Thus, communications promote meanings through their immediate use as well as from broader social understandings. From this sociocultural perspective, both the micro-level and macro-level contexts play a role in sense-making during communication activities. This notion is significant to the present study, where both the localized context of the social interactions and the broader discourses about pedagogy and professionalism played influential roles in the nature of expressed opinions and shared understandings.

Recent Perspectives on Learning as Social Transformation

Further to the aforementioned views on social interaction and community membership, recent sociocultural theorists (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2012; Moje & Lewis, 2009; Wenger, 2010) examine learning in terms of social transformation. Herein learning is considered as a process of changing practices through engagement with the social world. This view of learning or social transformation emerges through using language as semiotic tool while engaging in common joint activity with others. Although learning is often initiated by interactions afforded through language-in-use, it is characterised by the continuity, development, and retention of new social practices, as demonstrated through “new ways of acting, relating, being, and intervening in the material world” (Fairclough, 2011, p. 124). In this way, ‘learning’ as prompted through engagement in discursive interactions during educational activity may lead to adopting significant changes in social functioning. Within a typical public school setting for example, such changes entail adapting social capacity to take on literate practices highly valued by the dominant culture, such as reading, writing, and doing mathematics. From this perspective, literacy as learning is a social construct, wherein the notion of the ability to read, write, and do mathematics, for example, cannot be decontextualized from the normative practices of the institution/community from which it emerges. In this way, learning is highlighted as “the social practices into which people are apprenticed as part of a social group” (Gee, 2012, p. 76), inseparable from membership within community. Learning as social transformation manifests itself in many ways, including shifts in how material artefacts are produced, how relationships are enacted, as well as in how attitudes and beliefs are expressed with one another.

Within this view of learning as social transformation, any institution, as a form of community, has the potential to both limit and shift the social practices of its members. An institution's contextual structures and everyday social interactions and practices, including its discourse, as well as its degree of openness to difference and to dialogicality, are likely factors in its potentiality for learning as social transformation (Fairclough, 2011). Sociocultural aspects of an organization as a community or, in other words, its institutional culture, determine to a significant extent whether learning as social transformation will occur for its members.

Similar to this view, learning may be considered in terms of changes that occur in the nature of participation and the degree of participation within various social practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2010; Wenger et al., 2002). From this perspective, learning occurs as part of the larger context of belonging to and engagement within a given community. This type of learning is situated within what is termed communities of practice, "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4). Within a community of practice, shared activity with one another to achieve common professional purposes or goals is the norm. These common activities may include, for example, conversations about how to do the job well. In this view of professional learning, there is a shift "from the individual as learner to learning as participation in the social world, and from the concept of cognitive process to the more encompassing view of social practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 43). Within this sociocultural theory of learning, the professional novice as learner participates on the periphery of an unfamiliar work activity, potentially "gaining access to sources for

understanding through growing involvement” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 37) over time. This view of situated learning presumes a broad definition of professional knowledge, including “the head, the heart, and the hand; inquiry interactions, and craft...[as well as] identity, relationships, and competence; meaningfulness, belonging, and action” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 45). In other words, professional learning encompasses practical and theoretical knowledge, as well as social-emotional aspects and community membership. The degree of participation for professional learners within a particular community of practice depends on various social factors including the levels of experience, expertise, motivations, and interests of members.

Within this view of learning, the expert learner is a member who fully participates in practices to high standards as determined by and within the particular community of practice. Part of this notion of situated workplace learning is that professionals with job-related expertise and experience as well as those with leadership competency support the increased active participation of the lesser-experienced members in the organization through a process of enculturation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This embedded workplace learning experience includes the relational nature of learning and meaning making, emphasizing “comprehensive understanding involving the whole person rather than ‘receiving’ a body of factual knowledge about the world; on activity in and with the world; and on that view that agent, activity, and the world mutually constitute each other” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 33). This sociocultural view of knowledge acknowledges the cognitive aspect of learning, as well as its integral relational, practical, ideological, and communal aspects. In this way, professional learning incorporates making sense of daily

workplace practices, as it relates to authentic and embedded activity, with colleagues who also regularly engage in these practices.

Within this situated learning context, new career learners engage in legitimate peripheral participation, “the actual practice of an expert, but only to a limited degree and with limited responsibility” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 14) supported by the more experienced practitioners in the workplace. This legitimate peripheral participation may be thought of as a professional learning space wherein people can gain access to new knowledge and understandings from other more influential members within the organization’s community of practice. The level of participation within a community of practice and its inherent impact on contributions to the continuous codification of communal discourse and knowledge changes and evolves over time. The degree of participation implicates notions of social capital and professional identity as a member within a community of practice, thus emphasizing how learning entails complexities of relationships and power dynamics. Thus, the challenge inherent to professional learning within an organization as community of practice is its potential for stagnation and power struggles. Unfortunately, influential members can “hoard knowledge, limit innovation, and hold others hostage to their expertise” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 139) rather than support their colleagues in increased engagement and capacity building of valued professional practices. From a sociocultural perspective, as with any human institution as social structure, the potential for beneficial and productive professional learning or for unfavourable and fruitless professional learning is subject to the nature of the particular community’s culture and its corresponding modes of social relationships and interactions.

Contrasting this view, Moje and Lewis (2009) contend that learning is always situated as participation in community, however they caution against a stance that presumes all learners within a community, such as a school community for example, have readily available access to and control of its cultural resources. They critique Lave and Wenger's (1991) characterization of learning, pointing out that "access or control is not only an artefact of expertise [as Lave and Wenger suggest]...but also of qualities of difference such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status" (Moje & Lewis, 2009, p. 17). From this perspective, some learners are constrained within a position of marginalization, rather than one of legitimate peripheral participation. This broader socially induced marginalization may prevent access to the discourses, knowledge, thinking, beliefs, and practices that are sanctioned by any given community of practice, including those of schools. In this way, the capacity to learn can be reconsidered in terms of who has the societal power to fully participate. Additionally, this ability to participate or agency as learners has a significant impact on one's capacity to identify, or not, with the community (Moje & Lewis, 2009). Within the dissertation study, learning as social transformation in terms of the nature of participation and the shift in how participants accessed shared resources developed within the professional learning community.

Accessing intersubjectivity to learn. Further building on the aforementioned sociocultural views of learning, some theorists emphasize the significant role that accessing intersubjective space plays in a group's ability to make sense of socially constructed practices (Roth & Hsu, 2010; Rowe, 2011; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011). Within this view, in striving to make sense of experiences, groups generate intersubjective space through their talk-in-interactions, where meaning and understanding are mutually co-

constructed. This space is “a temporarily shared version of the social” (Rowe, 2011, p. 264), where what is said and how it is said makes sense to all of those involved within the situated interaction. This intersubjectivity requires interpretations of social cues and meanings in the immediate context, relying on familiarity with the norms of a particular community.

Additionally, as previously alluded to by Vygotsky, language seems to play a primary function in developing collective intersubjectivity to talk about experiences, and thus, affords the possibility for learning (Roth & Hsu, 2010). In this way, language affords the possibility for intersubjectivity where learning can take place. Aligning with Vygotskian notions of the zone of proximal development and how language affords conceptual development, Wertsch and Kazak (2011) contend “it is possible to create initial levels of intersubjectivity when interlocutors have much different levels of understanding” (p. 164) by using the specialized language that represents the concepts needed to learn a body of knowledge. Wertsch and Kazak (2011) suggest that, as an instructional consideration, this basic form of intersubjectivity afforded through talk is a desirable learning space, even when the novices do not seem to know exactly what they are talking about with the more expert participant. From this perspective, having novices do and say things that are beyond their apparent capacity, under the guidance of someone with more expertise, is exactly what is needed for learning as deeper understanding to occur. Similar to perspectives on situated learning in a community of practice, Wertsch and Kazak suggest that immediate engagement with authentic cultural tools, including specialized language, from the outset is preferred. They also stress that this engagement requires the involvement of a more expert participant in order to ensure the meaning-

making processes within the co-created intersubjective space created by dialogue are headed in a trajectory that will lead to relevant use of these tools/words, rather than assuming that novices will be able to discover this relevant use on their own.

Within healthcare contexts, consideration of how intersubjectivity among professionals can influence workplace practices indicates the interrelationship between affordances and engagement (Billett, 2014). This view of intersubjectivity in the workplace aligns with the aforementioned elaborations on community of practice:

Affordances refer to the degree by which individuals are invited to participate and learn in a social setting. That is, granted the access to, engagement in and support when engaging in work activities and interactions. Affordances can be high, with individuals being included, guided and supported in their learning and provided with opportunities to learn new knowledge, and reinforce and hone what they have learnt through opportunities to practice and engage with more informed partners. (Billett, 2014, p. 208)

This perspective on workplace learning also reflects Vygotskian perspectives of learning as apprenticeship into the culture and language of the social world. Access to intersubjectivity that focused on pedagogy and its related affordances, such as specialized language, emerged as noteworthy to professional learning during my study.

Interthinking to learn. Contrasting views on intersubjectivity, Littleton and Mercer (2013) refer to effective learning in terms of interthinking, where dialogue during joint activity is highlighted. Within dialogic space, groups of learners monitor and adjust one another's trajectory of understanding and knowledge construction through shifts in their talk-in-interaction. From this perspective, effective learning is developing productive

dialogic practices in social interaction, where proficiency in how to use language as a beneficial tool to engage in intellectual activity or make sense of the world is the goal. Exploratory talk (Barnes, 2008), where talk-in-interaction includes openness to new ideas, building on contributions, and ensuring safety to challenge ideas, is conducive to learning as transformation. In this type of discourse, “the views of all participants are sought and considered...proposals are clearly stated and evaluated, and explicit agreement precedes any group decisions and actions” (Littleton & Mercer, 2013, p. 21), thus promoting more ownership and self-regulation of learning activities. In my study, exploratory talk emerged as a feature of professional learning discourse.

Summary. According to sociocultural theory, immersion in community has a significant influence on the learning of its members. From this sociocultural perspective, professional community membership informs learning, including how and what to talk about in pedagogy as well as how to practice the profession appropriately. Professional learning as social transformation entails shifting social practices, such as educational discourse, and adopting new social structures, such as changing the nature of interactions within workplace cultures. How discourse during professional learning can create intersubjective space for collective meaning making about pedagogy or support productive exploratory talk was especially relevant to my research. Additionally, notions of situated learning in community of practice and its related sociocultural features were pertinent in the study.

Shared Ideology as Common Knowledge

Building on the aforementioned sociocultural perspectives surrounding learning as social transformation and as immersed within discourse community/community of

practice, the question of ideology and its relationship to social groups, their knowledge base, and their discourse is also of interest to the dissertation study. According to van Dijk (2011), ideologies are general systems of beliefs shared by a community that represent, reproduce, and influence its norms and values. He also contends that people identify ideology as knowledge “when the social practices, and hence all public discourse, of the members of the community presuppose...beliefs as being true-for-them” (van Dijk, 2011, p. 385). Within this frame of reference, taken-for-granted shared beliefs are knowledge and common sense. Thus, knowledge or common sense is relative, representing currently accepted ideology according to “criteria that may vary culturally, historically and socially” across contexts (van Dijk, 2011, pp. 384-385). It is through a particular community’s cultural artefacts and practices, such as its discourse and its social interactions that sociocultural researchers are able to examine the common knowledge as ideology that is accepted within a particular community.

Working from the assumption that shared ideology and knowledge are largely developed, reiterated, and shifted through a community’s public discourse and social interactions, it is informative to examine more closely the discursive practices as they relate to collective belief systems and knowledge construction. As Van Dijk (2011) notes, “although there has been a long tradition of philosophical and political dialogue about the nature of ideologies, little attention has been paid to the precise nature...[of its] discursive reproduction” (p. 385). Following from the premise that collective beliefs influence what is considered suitable practice within a particular community, closer examination of the discourse that reproduces ideology may be significant for further educational scholarly exploration on how beliefs about pedagogy and the co-construction

of shared professional knowledge emerge and possibly shift among educators throughout professional learning activity.

Discourse, ideology, and power. In addition, the presumption is that shared ideology as knowledge is afforded and constrained by the sociocultural contextual features inherent to community dynamics, including its members' shared histories, power structures, interests, and values. Within sociocultural theory, ideology as common knowledge is revealed throughout public discourse and emerges within discursive interactions as meaning is negotiated with one another. It is important to note that this negotiation of common knowledge as ideology is inherently influenced by the social power dynamics of any particular community. Within critical discourse analysis ideologies may be considered

as primarily representations of aspects of the world that can be shown to contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, dominations, exploitation – *primarily* because such representations can be enacted in ways of interacting socially and inculcated in ways of being in people's identities. (Fairclough, 2011, p. 123)

In this way, a professional learning community is also subject to these potential social dynamics.

Additionally, discourse and the social world are constitutive of each other, and both factor in how a particular community constructs common knowledge and belief systems as well as constrains and affords its trajectory and/or transformation. From a sociocultural perspective, what “meanings we give to words are based on knowledge we acquire and choices we make, as well as values and beliefs... Words are consequential. They matter. Words and the world are married” (Gee, 2012, p. 25), allowing the possibility to sustain

and/or develop community cultures. In this way, professional discourse is a powerful cultural resource that can inform how pedagogical work is framed, how students and learning are portrayed, as well as how choices are made to enact teaching practices. All of these aspects were of relevance to my research.

Chapter Summary and Preview of Chapter 3

In this chapter, I elaborated the theoretical orientation that framed my study. A review of relevant literature on sociocultural scholarship about discourse and learning included the following: Vygotskian insights into language and learning as informed by the social world, the inherently normative nature of social interaction, the influence of community on its membership, learning as social transformation, intersubjectivity and co-construction of meaning, and the connection between common knowledge and ideology. In Chapter 3, I provide a survey of relevant literature and research studies in the areas of school culture, teacher professional development, and discourse in the classroom and in professional contexts.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the theory and research in education that are relevant to the present study. This chapter includes discussion of the following fields: the influence of classroom discourse on learning, the nature of school cultures, and the qualities of teacher professional development. First, I present how researchers have investigated how teacher discourse influences student self-perceptions and learning. In this field of study, findings reveal the significant role that teachers play in discursive interactions and in how students engage in the classroom community. Second, I discuss scholarly perspectives on school cultures and their characteristic social interactions. Theorists contend that increased collaboration and competent school-based leadership is needed for educational transformation, however research findings expose the complexity of this change effort. Finally, I share how educational researchers are investigating ways to facilitate teacher development to improve student achievement. Study foci include how to change pedagogical practices and belief systems, and how teacher discourse relates to professional learning potential.

Scholarship on Classroom Discourse

As explicated in Chapter 2, language serves a significant function in the development of abstract thinking and within social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). It is not surprising therefore that classroom discourse has been an emphasis in educational research. From a sociocultural perspective, the classroom is another discourse community where teachers can create environments that immerse and apprentice students into the many social practices that encompass intellectual activity, including its discursive norms.

Researchers are finding that teachers can use classroom discourse as a means to facilitate student success at school. Teachers, as influential members of the classroom community, can use discourse as a means to both encourage and inhibit learning possibilities. How teachers speak to and with their students can frame participation within the classroom community, informing understandings of what it means to be learners. In this way, teacher discourse can shape how students self-identify, perceive their capacity as learners, and encourage their learning success. In contrast, findings also indicate that the use of traditional classroom discourse may inhibit efforts at advancing progressive and inclusive education. In the following section, I elaborate findings about how teacher discourse influences learning potential.

Perpetuating deficit views. Madigan's study (2007) contrasted the instructional practices of two teachers and revealed how their discourses affected student views of competence as writers. In this case study and discourse analysis, Madigan examined the nature of discourse in the context of two secondary level writing support classrooms for students with dyslexia. He investigated and contrasted the writing instruction for both teachers through multiple data sources, including transcribed interviews with teachers and students, transcribed videotaped classroom observations, school-based documents, student assignments, and field notes.

Madigan (2007) contended that, although these teacher-participants differed in their teaching methods, each emphasized written structures and de-emphasized student ideas and creativity, thus re-affirming a sense of helplessness and inferiority felt by the students. Both teachers' discourse encouraged a formulaic view of the writing process as represented in the five-paragraph essay. Neither instructed students in effective writing

strategies that could have prompted the development of an “inner speech applicable to the discourse of good writing” (Madigan, 2007, p. 398). Madigan suggested that, as a result, oversimplified teacher discourse about writing failed to help these student-participants learn how to improve their own compositions and to feel successful as writers. Comments from the students revealed their self-perceptions as people who required assistance in order to be successful writers, rather than those who were capable of becoming legitimate writers. As one student said, “Ah, I think he [the teacher] influences us a lot. Um, helps us fine tune our writing and enables us to work harder” (Madigan, 2007, p. 396). Similarly, throughout the study, both the students and teachers linked any student successes directly to the accomplishments of the teacher. Madigan suggested that if this type of classroom discourse dominates most of time, it could perpetuate an already established academic self-concept of incompetence among students with dyslexia. Even though one of these two teachers seemed to be trying to support the development of a positive self-concept within his students, he had yet to develop their competency and identity as writers specifically.

Similarly, a recent study (Ashton, 2016) found that even when teachers set out to pursue models of inclusive instruction, such as collaborative teaching, they might nevertheless unwittingly marginalize their students with disabilities. In this case study, the researcher examined the classroom interactions of two middle school co-teachers, a general education math teacher and a special education teacher, with their 24 students, 12 of whom had identified disabilities. Data included 10 hour-long videotaped co-teaching lessons on geometry over a one-month time period, four hour-long semi-structured interviews and two hour-long team meetings, as well as field notes. Transcriptions were

coded using a constant comparative method and social interactions were examined through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Ashton (2016) found both teachers demonstrated deficit-orientated discourse, reflecting traditional special education views of lowered expectations and marginalization for students with special needs, which seemed to inform their overall teaching practice. Even though the class in this study had been intended as an inclusive learning experience with the added instructional support of two co-teachers, the math teacher referred to it as the “special ed class” (Ashton, 2016, p. 11) and “his belief translated into...lowering the standards for the whole class” (p. 11) instead of implementing strategies such as differentiated teaching and effective co-teaching approaches. Both teachers’ discourse emphasized the importance of ensuring the students with disabilities did not slow down the progress of other students, rather than demonstrating a welcoming perspective in support of diversity. The math teacher did not appear to be aware of how his students with disabilities were progressing in their learning and the special educator covertly, and at times frantically, worked at making sure these students were not falling behind in their assignments. Overall, the teachers did not collaborate and were hindered by traditional views of teaching roles and student success, thus privileging the pace of a standardized general curriculum, resulting in further inequity and marginalization of students.

Both studies (Ashton, 2016; Madigan, 2007) point to how deficit frames of student potential can underpin teacher discourses and compromise efforts at equitable learning opportunity for all students. On the other hand, teacher feedback focused on student effort has demonstrated significant gains in building student confidence as learners.

Influence of teacher feedback. The findings from a meta-analysis of 145 primary

studies of interventions for children (O'Mara, Marsh, Craven & Debus, 2006) indicated that the nature of teacher feedback plays a notable role in self-concept development for students, especially for those who have been struggling at school. Researchers reviewed intervention studies that reported self-concept development findings. These studies included various types of interventions: those that targeted self-concept development, those that focused primarily on other learning constructs and self-concept indirectly, or those that resulted in incidental findings related to self-concept development. Of all types reviewed in the analysis, the 27 interventions that used primarily feedback strategies “contingent upon performance that is attributional in nature and goal-relevant” (O'Mara et al., 2006, p. 200) yielded the highest mean effect sizes (fixed effects $d = 1.09$, random effects $d = 1.13$). Additionally, it seemed that gains made by students in their self-perceptions of learning efficacy during these interventions maintained over time.

Although studies have indicated the positive potential for goal-oriented feedback in support of student growth, teachers may continue to use other traditional forms of feedback unless they have the support of professional development. In their sociocultural qualitative study, Chafi and Elkhouzai (2016) analyzed the feedback discourse of 22 primary teachers in large classrooms of 30 to 45 students across five Moroccan schools, representative of rural and urban contexts. Over a two-month period, the researchers observed classrooms for eight to twelve hours and transcribed four to six hours of daily audiotapes. Their discourse analysis sought to identify types of feedback used by focusing on “the effect of feedback utterances on subsequent ones and to what extent teachers' feedback influenced what students contributed and whether they triggered further thinking” (Chafi & Elkhouzai, 2016, p. 287). Their data analysis pointed to four

types of feedback: 1. Evaluative that judged student performance through praise or repeating and recasting student answers, 2. Interactive that extended students' responses, 3. Corrective that fixed student errors and 4. Descriptive that provided precise information on how students could improve throughout the learning process.

Chafi and Elkhouzai (2016) found that the majority of feedback within the teachers' discourse was evaluative (72%), followed by corrective (21%), interactive (4%) and descriptive (3%), thus prompting student dependency on teacher approval and limiting their potential for growth and ownership of learning. The researchers suggested that "demands placed on the teacher to maintain classroom order and to keep the class moving onward all the way through the curriculum" (Chafi & Elkhouzai, 2016, p. 293) and other traditional views of their teaching roles, such as "it is the teachers' task to tell the learners how to learn" (p. 295) likely fostered how they approached feedback. Chafi and Elkhouzai (2016) pointed to the importance of capacity building in how to "incorporate students' contributions and to act in response to students' thinking in an impartial rather than evaluative way" (p. 296) as necessary to encourage increased cognitive engagement of students. In spite of the significant potential for teacher feedback (O'Mara et al., 2006), the study by Chafi and Elkhouzai (2016) underscores the importance of continued efforts in capacity building that addresses traditional views about pedagogy as well.

Classroom discourse may contradict progressive practices. In spite of teacher attempts at progressive practices, traditional classroom interactions may undermine their efforts. For example, in a qualitative case study, Thornberg (2010) investigated the social interactions and conversation patterns during classroom democratic meetings in a Swedish primary school. Participants included six teachers and students from four

primary and pre-school classes (of 22-26 students each) who were from lower and middle economic backgrounds. The researcher used a mixed constructivist grounded theory approach to coding discursive exchanges among participants. In this analysis specifically, the data consisted of five classroom meeting observations, recorded in audiotape and field notes. The researcher then compared these data with observations of other everyday classroom interactions and with interview data.

In this study, Thornberg (2010) pointed to the dilemma that arises when engaging in progressive activities, such as class democratic meetings, while still using traditional classroom discourse. Thornberg (2010) referred to traditional discourse in terms of initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) patterns for teacher-student interaction, where “teachers typically ask questions in order to evaluate pupils' knowledge, not to give pupils opportunities to think aloud, formulate ideas, make suggestions, or have a say” (p. 930). In this study specifically, the IRE pattern for teacher-student interaction continued to dominate classroom discourse, even though teachers were intentionally working on implementing more progressive learning activities such as democratic meetings with their students. Thornberg described this paradox as a missing shift in classroom discourse from the control of student responses to that of a more open-ended discourse generally. He suggested this challenge might require intentional development of “professional language regarding school democracy and pupil participation” (Thornberg, 2010, p. 929) that encourages deliberative communication and critical thinking among students. According to Thornberg, there is a detrimental effect on learners who believe they are practising democratic principles, when, in reality, they are only complying with teacher directives. In turn, the teachers in this study said they were merely guiding their students who they

perceived as not yet 'ready' for the responsibility of democratic experiences. In contrast, Thornberg stated no real apprenticeship and gradual release of responsibility (Pearson and Gallagher, 1983) were revealed through these teachers' practices or their use of discourse to justify this perception. Thornberg further asserted that teachers are just as influenced by the embedded social norms, expectations, and power dynamics of the traditional school culture as their students are, and that this influence continues to shape the nature of classroom discourse.

Teacher discourse that positions student contributions. By incorporating student contributions, Berry's study (2006) demonstrated how teachers can change traditional power dynamics in the classroom and scaffold learners into reconsidering themselves as competent learners. Berry analyzed the discourse of two different urban elementary classroom lessons. Participants included two classroom teachers and 67 students, of whom 23 had learning disabilities. In this discourse analysis, the researcher transcribed and coded selected writing lessons, focusing on three main discursive strategies used by the teacher-participants: procedural, discussion, and involvement strategies. Specifically, involvement strategies were those that promoted the inclusion of all student voices.

Findings indicated that teachers can encourage their students who are reluctant to participate while also promoting their sense of self-efficacy (Berry, 2006). Specifically, involvement strategies facilitated access to classroom discussion for students who had not responded to traditional instructional repertoires. For example, teachers rephrased the ideas of students who were hesitant in such a way as to reinforce their contributions, while simultaneously adding clarity to their ideas and maintaining the coherence and pacing of class discussion: "What Angie's saying, I think, and tell me if I'm wrong..."

(Berry, 2006, p. 220). In this way, the teacher positively positioned the student in relationship to the curriculum and to her peers. According to Berry, through purposeful use of involvement strategies, teachers can highlight the ideas of typically marginalized students and prompt the development of a competent self-concept, and their peers may begin to view and include them as competent members of the classroom's learning community. However, the use of involvement strategies must be genuine and embedded within the context of regular classroom discursive routines.

Responsive teaching for high expectations. In a recent article about teacher expectations and student literacy, Pantaleo (2016) drew attention to the many factors at play in ensuring learning activities are simultaneously challenging and developmentally appropriate for students. The researcher discussed a case study in which she taught knowledge and appreciation of artwork, design, and various narrative structures in picture books with a Grade 2/3 classroom teacher and his 21 students, including many students who required accommodations for special needs. Data included students' work and interview transcripts and the researcher pursued content analysis of both text and images for narrative structure in the students' stories.

According to Pantaleo (2016), the students initially lacked confidence in pursuing open-ended tasks independently. However, over the course of the unit of study, for nine weeks of approximately 90 minutes of instruction each day, the students were able to meet the requirements of a culminating story-writing activity, incorporating interesting metaleptic techniques as well as humour. Pantaleo suggested the students were able to accomplish this learning as a result of many supportive conditions within the learning environment, including teacher discourse that positioned students as capable, ensuring

instruction was in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), providing multiple opportunities to read and respond to exemplar mentor texts, providing constructive feedback to students during conferences, and celebrating student authorship. The researcher pointed out how limited time for this unit of study still resulted in student engagement and success because learning was “supportive, responsive and delivered by teachers with deep pedagogical content knowledge and high expectations” (Pantaleo, 2016, p. 90). In this way, by having high expectations for all learners and enacting responsive instruction and encouraging discourse, teachers can create equitable and successful classroom communities.

Apprenticing students into disciplinary discourse community. Similarly, teachers can use purposeful disciplinary discourse to encourage students in developing their academic identities. As part of a broader ethnographic study, Brown and Spang (2007) coded the transcripts of two 90-minute science lessons in a Grade 5 classroom. Through this discourse analysis, researchers identified the teacher’s use of what they termed double talk to promote scientific literacy development with her students who were considered disadvantaged. Double talk refers to “parenthetical speaking” (Brown & Spang, 2007, p. 710), where a teacher presents ideas using a hybrid-type language for learning purposes. In this study specifically, the teacher frequently blended disciplinary and everyday discourses, such as scientific terms followed by vernacular explanations: “When you classify, you’re sorting things out” (Brown & Spang, 2007, p. 722). This hybridized scientific and vernacular discourse seemed to scaffold the learning of scientific discourse, providing on-going embedded supports to students in understanding unfamiliar disciplinary expressions. Brown and Spang (2007) suggested that through this

type of purposeful teacher discourse, students were able to experience scientific competency in spite of their limited familiarity with scientific terminology. Interestingly, the researchers also observed how the students themselves began to use this double talk to elaborate on scientific ideas with their peers, suggesting the development of a scientific discourse community in the classroom.

Similarly, Forman, Ramirez-DelToro, Brown, and Passmore (2016) found that teacher discursive moves could scaffold student appropriation of scientific argumentation discourse. In this ethnographic case study in Midwestern United States, the research team investigated five 55-minute videotaped classroom lessons recorded in a high school biology course comprised of 12 female and 13 male students aged 16-18 years and their teacher, who held a PhD in science education. The data set also included field notes. The team identified instances where the teacher scaffolded learning for students, applying the principles of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) in her teaching. Analysis included examination of discursive moves in transcripts, non-verbal communication observed, and participation structures for teachers and students over time. Forman et al. reported how the study's findings indicated changes in the participation structures across lessons. In the first lesson, the teacher stood mostly at the front of the class, classroom discourse followed a primarily I-R-E/F (initiation, response, evaluation/follow-up) structure with teacher prompts, and students spoke about 50% of the time. In the second and third lessons, the teacher moved in and out of student circles, the predominant participation structure included increased responses and student talk comprised 86% and 90% of the total discourse. By lessons 4 and 5 students continued to do most of the talking, 91% and 82%, and more students were actively participating, 24

out the 25 students. Forman et al. found that the classroom culture changed over the course of the lessons and the teacher's role shifted from that of mentor to partner with students within this classroom community. The researchers suggested that this teacher's discursive prompts scaffolded the students' argumentation discourse throughout the first three lessons and during lessons 2 and 3 students increasingly appropriated this discourse. These studies (Brown & Spang, 2007; Forman et al., 2016) point to how teacher discourse can be a means to apprentice students into the disciplinary norms of the classroom community and, in doing so, can be responsive and changeable to student needs in support of their academic success across lessons. In a similar way, facilitator discourse seems to encourage apprenticeship into professional discourse during situated learning experiences as was the case in my study.

Summary. Many educational researchers are interested in studying teacher discourse and how it influences students' self-perceptions as learners and their learning progress in the classroom. Some researchers have revealed discourse that is underpinned by traditional views of student capacity and learning that encourage reliance on teacher direction rather than development towards independence (Ashton, 2016; Chafi & Elkhouzai, 2016; Madigan, 2007; Thornberg, 2010). Others have highlighted discursive strategies that are conducive to learning, including descriptive and goal-oriented feedback (Chafi & Elkhouzai, 2016; O'Mara et al., 2006), involvement strategies (Berry, 2006), and scaffolding student competence (Brown & Spang, 2007; Forman et al., 2016; Pantaleo, 2016). Overall teacher discourse has the potential be a significant empowerment and learning tool for students; however, addressing traditional beliefs and practices about pedagogy continues to be needed. In the following section, I discuss the

literature on school culture and some of its implications for educational leadership.

Scholarly Perspectives on School Culture

School culture is a significant topic of interest within educational leadership literature, particularly in light of the assumption that school culture may underpin how teachers approach implementing changes to classroom practices (Flores, 2007; Hargreaves, 2010; Henstrand, 2006; Jurasaitė-Harbison & Rex, 2010). Below I survey some relevant perspectives and research findings about school cultures and related educational leadership topics.

Collaborative culture is the preferred school culture. Hargreaves' (n.d.) frequently cited framework of different types of cultures identifies and describes common teacher cultures observed in school settings. Within this framework, the balkanized school culture is characterized by sub-groups of teacher alliances that represent competing agendas, each vying for power and resources. This type of school culture is detrimental to educational transformation efforts, as a great deal of professional activity is expended on this on-going political power dynamic and little is spent on efforts to focus on student learning and improving practices.

Hargreaves (n.d) also describes a school culture that contrasts this balkanized culture, one that is collaborative and founded on a sense of mutual support among teaching staff. Within this type of culture, teachers are comfortable approaching one another both formally and informally with student-related and instructional concerns. They share a broad vision of education, yet allow for differences of opinion on how to work toward this common vision. Educational leadership literature continues to suggest

that this type of culture is a crucial foundation for successful educational transformation within public schooling.

For example, the two-year ethnographic study conducted by [Jurasaitė-Harbison and Rex \(2010\)](#) found that a collaborative culture is the more favourable. The researchers constructed school case studies from an in-depth investigation into how teachers see themselves as learners and how informal professional learning opportunities were afforded by each of their very different school cultures: one secondary school in Lithuania, two Russian elementary schools in Lithuania, and one elementary school in the United States. Observations at each school site and corresponding data included field notes, video recordings and photographs, interviews with teachers and administrators, and school documents. In a later targeted discourse analysis of the school cases, the researchers foregrounded 78 hours of semi-structured interviews with 11 teachers. Among the findings, the one school case that demonstrated “the attributes of a culture of collaboration (valuing individuals, interdependence, openness and trust)” ([Jurasaitė-Harbison & Rex, 2010, p. 275](#)) enabled teacher empowerment and expectations for continuous development of practice. The other school cases that did not include collaborative conditions proved to be less productive. These findings align with Hargreaves’s assertions about the importance of collaborative cultures in supporting transformation efforts.

Hargreaves (2010) acknowledged how his views of the current state of school cultures were underpinned by Lortie’s earlier writings (1975/2002), where the teaching profession was characterized as immersed in a mindset of individualism, presentism, and conservatism. Lortie (1975/2002) described teaching as a profession unlike others,

lacking a common technical discourse and body of knowledge to share with colleagues and teachers were left to their own devices to “laboriously construct ways of perceiving and interpreting what is significant” (p. 73) to teaching and learning practices. Further, the aforementioned mindset appeared to be preventing teachers from seeking on-going collective improvement of practice, and thus, impeding efforts to re-culture schools and transform education generally.

Contrasting the aforementioned views of school culture, Crippen (2012) elaborated the servant-leadership perspective, discussing relationships among school staff members in terms of an authentic leadership and followership dynamic. Honing in on the interplay between leadership and followership, Crippen highlighted collaboration as working toward mutually held goals that benefit all members of the school community. Herein, all voices are valued and educators assume the changeable role of a leader or follower depending on the needs of the school community and the strengths of its individual members. Crippen (2012) also pointed to the importance of encouraging students to learn how to both follow the beneficial contributions of diverse voices among their peers and to take on leadership roles with “fellow students inside and outside the classroom as a model, or mentor, or even an advocate” (p. 197). According to Crippen (2012), collaborative relationships among all members of the school community include “moving back and forth on the continuum” of leadership and followership (p. 198) in service of the common good.

Transformative leadership. The culture of public schooling can be considered in terms of furthering the public good generally as well, where all students can pursue meaningful learning opportunities and develop into citizens who will participate in and

contribute to a more beneficial world. In her chapter on leadership for social justice education, Shields (2014) emphasized the “need to create schools that are equitable and inclusive, as well as to provide learning experiences that teach students about, and prepare them for life in, the wider global community” (p. 332), no matter their backgrounds. Diversity and complexity in today’s schools continue to expand, including students who have various strengths and needs, differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and a range of familial circumstances. These challenges or opportunities require school leaders who are able to promote and sustain school communities that are equitable and inclusive for all students.

Shields (2014) elaborated a transformative leadership approach, highlighting its critical tenets including “a focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice” (p. 333) and “the need to address inequitable distribution of power” (p. 333) within school cultures. This approach necessitates a clear sense of purpose to pursue “deep and equitable change” (Shields, p. 333) and the “moral courage” (p. 333) to confront and address well-established institutional and societal structures that are at odds with what is beneficial to all students. Additionally, effective principals possess political acumen in how to navigate “having ‘one foot in the dominant structures of power and authority’ even as they [are] attempting to change them” (Shields, 2014, p. 336). Particularly pertinent to school culture development in support of student learning is “the need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice” (p. 333) among staff members. From this perspective, capacity building efforts call for more than “tinker[ing] with lesser reforms” (p. 325), and require addressing teachers’ mindsets about student potential. For example, leadership may need to work at

transforming a traditional tendency toward “deficit thinking” (Shields, 2014, p. 333) into a learner-centred perspective that focuses on ways to build on the strengths that “multiple forms of cultural capital...children from diverse backgrounds bring into the school” (p. 333). In this way, a transformative perspective includes recognition of how re-enculturation of schools is also underpinned by a significant societal imperative.

Leadership’s pedagogical knowledge influences school culture. It seems that principals also play a key role in how pedagogical change efforts unfold in schools, thus pointing to their significant role as instructional leaders. Coburn (2005) used across-case analysis, drawing on sociologic theories of sense-making to examine how principals influenced teacher learning about and implementation of reading policy. An in-depth investigation of the interactions between the principals and teachers at two elementary schools in California were contrasted in this study. The data sources were comprised of 86 interviews with teachers, seven interviews with principals, 210 hours of classroom observation, and 150 hours of observing conversations between principal and teachers and among teachers during professional development activities, meetings, and informal interactions. Coburn developed codes inductively through iterative coding of observations and interviews with the support of qualitative data analysis software.

Findings indicated that the contrasting views on reading and learning (one behaviourist and the other constructivist) of the two principals influenced how instruction in reading was understood and implemented within each school (Coburn, 2005). Many specific examples were provided that demonstrated how the principals used their pre-existing understandings of student and adult learning to interpret and then enact state reading policy into contrasting school-based cultures. Their views framed how they

determined appropriate teaching approaches, student resources, and professional development for teachers. The two principals shaped conditions for learning and the opportunities for and topics of professional conversations, providing the interpretive frames used by staff, that were later evidenced in teacher discourse and teaching practices in classrooms. Coburn's findings revealed how principals can influence how mandates are implemented, and how they require current knowledge domains on effective instruction in order to encourage appropriate changes for equitable learning within school contexts.

Schools as communities of practice. Views of situated learning also consider the potential for individual school contexts to realize change efforts (Wenger, 1998). "Even when a community's actions conforms to an external mandate, it is the community-not the mandate-that produces the practice. In this sense, communities of practice are fundamentally self-organizing systems" (p.2) that are empowered to transform education through their everyday professional interactions and practices. From this perspective, the potential of communities of practice provides a cultural model that highlights collective identity and agency that both empowers and is accountable at the local level of the school community. Ideally, these communities emerge among professionals who share a common passion for the work they do, and this passion drives them to learn how to do it better together. Such communities are characterized by joint work-related activity, the development of shared professional resources and practices, and situated flexibility. They can be initiated formally or unintentionally, including a spectrum of social sub-groups, from those with a common specialized interest to those initiated within the larger educational institution (Wenger et al., 2002). Adopting this more self-deterministic view

of culture may be useful as a micro-lens to frame school communities, as it allows for a localized capacity to transform education regardless of larger societal and/or political influences.

Enculturation of new career teachers. As elaborated above, school communities are not necessarily supportive of reciprocal professional relationships and collaborative cultures. A year-long ethnographic inquiry by Flores (2007) into how four new career teachers adjusted to the school cultures of their first positions revealed the complexities of the daily realities of trying to improve learning conditions for students. In this study, the researcher spent one day per week in each participant's classroom for six months, and then one day per month for the remainder of the school year. Data were analyzed using grounded theory methodology and included multiple sources: observation and interaction field notes, teacher and student work samples, three formal 90-minute audio-taped interviews with each teacher, and audio-taped interviews with select school colleagues, principals, and 10 students in each class.

Common among these new career teachers were their committed beliefs about student advocacy and use of progressive instructional practices to carry out these beliefs. Flores (2007) reported how these teacher-participants eventually became disappointed and exhausted by the lack of understanding and support among their more experienced teaching colleagues. They noticed the continuous focus on managing student behaviour and remediation as cultural norms within their schools. One of the new teachers acknowledged that his more experienced colleagues probably lacked the background knowledge to understand his approach with students, yet as a newcomer he did not know how to address this concern effectively with them. Another new teacher admitted that she

dealt with this overwhelming cultural dilemma by avoiding interactions with other teachers. Her strategy was to remain silent and continue to teach progressively within her own classroom, however she was careful not to let others know about her instructional practice.

Encouragingly, in spite of these trying cultural experiences, these teachers persevered as student advocates, at least within their own classrooms. Such resiliency among new teachers is not always the case and would be an interesting avenue for sociocultural research. Unfortunately, the social interactions among new and experienced teachers represented within this ethnography are likely common cultural occurrences within many schools.

Cultural dynamics in schools are complex. Efforts to transform school cultures require addressing the unique complexities of school cultures. Henstrand's ethnographic case study (2006) of a school culture during educational reform provided an interesting insider's view into this problematic. From a cognitive anthropological orientation using "Ward Goodenough's framework [as] the major influence" (Henstrand, 2006, p. 8), Henstrand strived to construct thick descriptions to interpret the change process during a school year in an American secondary school. Multiple data sources included informal and formal interviews, field notes of observations, key informants on staff, and surveys and questionnaires.

Within this one-year study, Henstrand (2006) was simultaneously researcher of the school's culture and a teacher on its staff. Rather than having to take on the role of participant observer, she was a native, immersed in the culture under observation. Henstrand elaborated how she strove to maintain ethnographic integrity by distancing

herself from personal conflicts that arose on the job throughout the study and approached her field note descriptions through a predetermined interpretive theoretical lens. What is particularly interesting about this ethnography is how the combination of in-depth cultural immersion afforded by Henstrand's position on staff and the recursive reflexivity of her researcher stance provided informative nuances into the obstacles that emerged from the many teaching sub-groups that had formed during the educational change efforts at her school.

Although the reform effort appeared successful on the outside to the public, Henstrand's (2006) socioculturally framed findings revealed these changes as only superficial, not adequately addressing real change in teacher beliefs about students and teaching. As an aside, one may interpret her description to be a form of the contrived collegiality that Hargreaves (n.d.) warns against, as some sub-groups were invited to take initiative in the reform effort, while others were not encouraged to participate in some of the related activities and/or resisted participation in them. Specifically, Henstrand detailed an important cultural obstacle: the administration and teaching staff found it challenging to achieve common understandings. For example, the principal and vice principal dealt with student discipline matters from a macro-perspective. As they were trying to advocate for students within a broader sense, they sent students back to class as soon as possible, as class was the preferred place for students to be to ensure continued learning generally. Teachers viewed these student concerns from a micro-level, feeling disrespected by administration because students were returned to class to further continue their disruption of the immediate classroom environment. Henstrand described how this type of discrepancy between macro- and micro-perspectives led to other cultural effects

that worked to undermine successful reform, including teachers disregarding facts presented by the principal in favour of beliefs promoted by powerful teachers.

Furthermore, her study's findings point to how intensely reform efforts can influence teachers and their workload.

Summary. Scholarly work on school cultures clearly indicates that teacher cultures have a significant influence on the potentiality of changing teacher practices and thus, transforming education. Collaborative cultures appear to be the most conducive to this end; however, after decades of working toward this type of culture, it continues to be a rare occurrence within school contexts. Findings from ethnographic studies have revealed the complexities of everyday social dynamics found within teacher cultures and their influence on change in practices. Framing school cultures in terms of communities of practice may afford a more flexible and locally agentive mindset toward addressing reform mandates. Additionally, it seems that the instructional knowledge, relational capacity, and sense of social justice of school-based leadership play a role in how staffs take up improving learning conditions for students. In the following section, I provide a survey of relevant research on teacher professional development, focusing on studies that refer to changes in teacher beliefs and practices.

Relevant Findings on Teacher Professional Development

From a sociocultural perspective, teacher professional development is more likely to lead to transformation of pedagogical beliefs and practices when cultural aspects of the school community are supportive and the learning is applicable in the work context. Additionally, findings from the literature indicate that many successful initiatives involve the facilitation of a coach or mentor with expertise in the area of interest and on-going

discussions with colleagues over time. More recently, researchers have been focusing on teacher discourse as an additional noteworthy aspect of professional development. I elaborate the aforementioned in the following survey of professional development literature.

Key conditions for effective teacher professional development. Researchers who conducted a meta-analysis of professional development studies that indicated findings related to student outcomes (Timperley et al., 2007) emphasized developing teachers' understanding of pedagogy while attending to teachers' beliefs, understandings, values, and goals; otherwise teachers will rely on pre-existing theories to inform how they perceive new instructional practices. Timperley et al. (2007) pursued the question of "What are the qualities of the professional learning opportunities that lead teachers to interpret and utilise the available understandings and skills in ways that lead to positive student outcomes?" (p. 22) to inform their search for and selection of 97 studies and groups of studies for the meta-analysis. They conducted this search in several international databases and by contacting individual researchers. Selected studies for further analysis included those that addressed student outcomes in multiple learning areas, including personal, social, and academic. The researchers constructed a theoretical framework that included 84 features of professional development that would likely result in student improvements and used it to analyze the studies. The research team included studies of interventions with both highly successful and less successful outcomes, in order to contrast studies and identify key aspects of effective professional development. Criteria for assessing effects sizes in categorizing studies included examination of their "adequacy of methodology in documenting student outcomes" (Timperley et al., 2007, p.

330). For example, in considering qualitative approaches, in order to be included in the high effect on student outcomes rating category, the study needed to include a “sample taken from a population is [*sic*] both representative and of an adequate size” (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 269), and “appropriate controlling measures [that] were carefully adopted and their rationale clearly reported” (p. 269) among other criteria.

Overall findings indicated how providing opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning can have a significant influence on student learning. Timperley et al. (2007) suggested teachers need to understand theoretical foundations underlying new practices in order to successfully apply and adapt them, benefit from the use of assessment tools to provide the impetus to improve student achievement, and require extended time and repeated opportunities to revisit and refine their learning. Additionally, professional learning communities that invited input from outside expertise, determined common goals, and focused on students with similar needs experienced success.

Similarly, Whitehead (2010) conducted a thematic analysis focused on the sustainability of gains made through teacher professional development. In this qualitative study, two of 60 schools that had participated in a three-year literacy professional development initiative were selected, as they possessed the characteristics that would likely sustain instructional gains post-initiative. These characteristics included having “critical conceptions of literacy...[a] focus on developing independent literate learners and ... knowledgeable internal change agents and systems for the collection and examination of student literacy data” (Whitehead, 2010, p. 135). Data sources included transcribed interviews with principals, faculty, teacher leaders, and teachers. Whitehead also triangulated information gleaned from interviews with data from artefacts (such as

resources and policies) and classroom observations, and conducted a comparative analysis of data from the results of a nationally standardized literacy assessment. The analysis indicated that these two schools were able to sustain the benefits gained through the aforementioned initiative.

Whitehead (2010) pointed to the need for school communities to have a clearly articulated vision that aligns with the focus of the development in order to sustain gains made by staff and students. Additionally, teacher theoretical knowledge as well as procedural knowledge through on-going conversations with colleagues over time was highlighted as crucial. Furthermore, he noted how key change agents, including principals, department heads, and external peer coaches need to develop positive, enduring relationships with teachers and to provide them with strong leadership and mentorship. According to Whitehead, peer coaches can develop credibility with teachers by modeling the pedagogical strategies they talk about, providing descriptive feedback on observations in classrooms, and working with teachers within an inquiry cycle. Additionally, Whitehead's findings indicated that teachers should be encouraged to identify issues, plan to address them in their classes, reflect on effects, and adjust instructional practices accordingly.

Most recently, a study by Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) linked the aspects of higher functioning professional learning communities (PLC) to teachers' sense of collective efficacy. Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) defined teacher collective efficacy as "shared beliefs of teachers within a school that they can collectively, significantly, and positively influence student learning" (p. 2) and identified this construct "as critical to improved student outcomes" (p. 2). The researchers drew on data collected from within a PLC

implementation process in a Californian school district. This process included developing shared vision and goals, collaborative inquiry into effective practices focused on learning, and commitment to continuous improvement. Principals and teacher teams from every school attended a three-day PLC training series and then teams were expected to train their school-based colleagues. School teams were provided regular release time to meet and team leaders were provided professional development on how to facilitate the analysis of student work, develop common assessments, and design instructional practices. The school district encompassed 19 schools within urban, suburban, and rural communities with a total student population of approximately 10,200 students from diverse backgrounds, including 69% who were Hispanic or Latino, 70% receiving free or reduced-price lunches, and 29% designated as having limited proficiency in English. The PLC implementation process resulted in increased student proficiency in English Language Arts from 29% to 55.3% and in math scores from 60% to 75% over five years according to the state's academic performance index.

Completion of an end-of-study survey was voluntary and included 310 teachers and principals from 16 of the schools, representing K-12. The survey included a total of 34 questions, 9 demographic, 13 PLC, and 12 teacher collective efficacy questions. In the design of the survey, questions were adapted from previously used surveys (Goddard, 2002; Grider, 2008), field tested by a cohort of participants first for feedback, and included a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never to always when appropriate.

Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) focused their statistical analysis on determining teaching group competence and teacher perceptions of their efficacy in addressing needs of students in challenging circumstances. Findings from the study indicated a high,

positive correlation between professional learning community implementation and teacher collective efficacy. Specifically, Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) found that PLC activities of “setting collective goals and focusing on results [and] analyzing data and using it to see strengths and weaknesses in practices and develop interventions” were significant predictors of higher group competency.

The findings in the aforementioned studies (Timperley et al., 2007; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017; Whitehead, 2010) indicate the following key conditions for effective professional development in education: on-going professional discussions with colleagues that focus on improving student learning and determine common goals, connecting theoretical knowledge to practice, and the support of lead colleagues with added expertise. Similar findings have been revealed in smaller scale studies as well.

Peer coaching. In a case study by Strahan and Hedt (2009), they examined two middle school teachers as they worked with a literacy coach over a three-year period. The researchers acted as participant observers and recorded narrative field notes of meetings, lessons, and group sessions with students. Additionally, research assistants conducted formal interviews. The researchers then constructed a case study for each participant through analysis of the interview transcripts, observations, field notes, and student work samples.

Strahan and Hedt (2009) observed how noteworthy improvements in pedagogical practices had occurred for both teachers. In this study, they described the professional development initiative in terms of a ‘spiral of growth’, where discussions between the classroom teacher and literacy coach, sharing among colleagues, and analysis of student assessment information became increasingly sophisticated over time. Coaching sessions

began by emphasizing instructional practice and student performance, informed by professional readings. The classroom teachers later focused more specifically on their own students' learning progress and how instruction influenced students' understanding.

Strahan and Hedt (2009) included direct excerpts that portrayed how the teachers' discourse about their instruction and students evolved throughout the study. Specifically, one teacher improved in his ability to make sense of student performance evidence and to incorporate literacy and vocabulary strategies into his classroom practice. The other teacher made significant changes in her practice, integrating literature circles, explicit reading instruction, and strategy journals into her lessons. According to their coach, these particular teachers' students made the greatest gains on achievement tests as compared to all of the school's other interdisciplinary teams. The findings from this study provide a closer look at shifts in teacher discourse about pedagogy over time during professional growth, and highlight the likely impact that peer coaching and collaboration with colleagues had on this growth.

Situated coursework in the workplace. Laster (2008) reported how providing university courses situated within a school worksite resulted in demonstrated growth in teachers' knowledge of literacy practices and sense of efficacy. Within this study, the faculty instructors came regularly to the school at the staff's request and taught courses based on general input from the school's director. Participants were secondary content area teachers who wanted to learn more about how to help their students with literacy. This professional development experience provided teachers with two graduate level courses: a reading across the curriculum course delivered by an outside instructor and a second course developed by the researcher with on-going input from the teacher-

participants. Laster's descriptive study focused on the second course and emphasized the knowledge that emerged through a narrative she constructed from an emic perspective. This narrative included descriptions of the school context, teacher participants, student participants ranging from 12 to 21 years of age and most with special needs, and the professional learning/course work activities.

Within the second course, Laster (2008), the researcher-instructor, modeled teaching and learning strategies, and then the teachers practiced them in pairs and small groups. Course reading assignments were based on modeled strategies. Teachers were asked to implement these strategies with their students between the coursework sessions. A case method approach, in which real student cases were discussed, was also part of this coursework model. In this way, the teachers were able to benefit from the theoretical expertise of their instructor and practice new teaching approaches under her guidance, while also being able to apply what they knew in their own classes and discuss their student challenges within their own school community.

Laster (2008) found that this professional development model encouraged teachers' transition into more progressive approaches to teaching and learning. Specifically teachers developed assessment expertise, and the capacity to design and apply reading strategy interventions. Additionally they incorporated more opportunities for student choice of reading materials and authentic writing activities. Laster suggested that the teachers began to view their students' literacy learning in terms of development rather than emphasizing deficiencies.

Previous schooling frames understandings of learning. One of the challenges to transitioning into new pedagogical approaches is the educational apprenticeship that

teachers have previously experienced as students in their Kindergarten to Grade 12 public schooling years. For example, Wells and Ball (2008) detailed a case study of their inquiry-based learning approach to teaching an undergraduate education course at the University of California. During the course, they encouraged teacher-candidates to adopt a reflective stance in examining and challenging their assumptions and practices, scheduled regular small group collaborative talk seminars with and without assistance, and generated activities to provoke social construction of knowledge. Interestingly, Wells and Ball (2008) discovered that many of the teacher candidates experienced what they termed “culture shock” (p. 16) when they were faced with having to pursue their own self-directed inquiries instead of the professor’s interests and questions.

This teacher candidate experience was not necessarily surprising, when considering a sociocultural view of learning. These adult learners were familiar with a transmission approach to knowledge acquisition that positioned them passively from their previous schooling experiences, explaining they were “disoriented by the unfamiliarity of the new approach that they were suddenly expected to adopt” (Wells & Ball, 2008, p. 16). In this way, they did not seem to trust in their capacity to co-construct meaning with one another without more direction from someone positioned as the expert.

This finding led Wells and Ball (2008) to approach future teacher candidate groups with a more scaffolded introduction to inquiry-based learning, in which explicit structures were put in place to support a social transformation process from being a passive learner toward becoming an agentive learner. This idea of a supported transitional space for teacher learners to gradually and safely shift how they make sense of the learning process

is a noteworthy sociocultural consideration for professional development and the potential to effectively transform instructional practices.

Experiential learning in professional development. In supporting secondary teachers in transitioning into a more flexible and personalized Information and Communications Technology curriculum in Ireland, a professional development initiative incorporated experiential learning. Girvan et al. (2016) investigated the beliefs and experiences of 38 teachers from various disciplines with diverse backgrounds in teaching and technology use and who participated in a year-long professional development opportunity that spanned 12 schools. The professional development included three phases for participating teachers. The first experiential activity included a brief overview of the instructional model, followed by observation of an experienced instructor teaching students while participants completed structured observation protocols for two students of their choice and instructional strategies used. The second experiential activity required the teachers to be the learners in a 2-3 hour lesson with similar instruction and expectations as they observed for their students, including collaborative groupings and scaffolded reflections. Finally the teachers engaged in ongoing planning, action, and reflection at their schools, with autonomy to choose how to implement, freedom to meet with school teams, and support from the implementation team. At a year-end event, participants were invited to share and discuss their experiences with one another. The primary data sources included all of the teachers' written reflections from the first activity and informal interviews at the end of the process with 16 of the teachers. Researcher notes from the year-end event discussions and student focus group sessions were used as secondary data to support or refute initial findings. Data were coded using a

constant comparative approach of grounded theory.

The strongest themes that emerged from the findings described by Girvan et al. (2016) were participants' perceptions about the change in their teaching roles, followed by the challenges to change and the support structures needed to support change in practice. Teachers highlighted that the first two experiential activities were key to encouraging change in practice. Initial resistance about the perceived inability of their students to engage in group and self-directed activities was addressed by the observation activity, and participating as learners "appeared to provide an important source of support and encouragement" (Girvan et al., 2016, p. 136) from their colleagues, that later continued at the school for many. During the final phase of implementation, three characteristics of support for ongoing development were identified: openness and collaboration among staff, availability of time, and guidelines on how to work as a team. The research team also noted that as the teachers' sense of self-efficacy with the innovative approach developed, their use of the approach with students increased, pointing to the need for access to ongoing supportive conditions to further and sustain implementation.

Summary. Findings from studies of teacher professional development point to the importance of addressing teacher pedagogical beliefs as well as practices. Focusing on student learning, applying theory to practice, and accessing the support of a community of colleagues or a coach or mentor with expertise appear to be critical to teacher professional development. Additionally, models of teacher inquiry and experiential learning are components of some professional development initiatives. What remains unclear is how teachers make sense of pedagogical beliefs and practices during successful

professional learning opportunities. As discussed below, recent studies that focus on the nature of teacher discourse are attending to this emergent sense-making problematic.

Research Focused on Teacher Discourse

In the field of education, scholars have also begun to take a closer look at teacher discourse during professional discussions outside of the classroom. Broadening this discourse studies research space appears to be a cutting-edge area of research within education. In the following section I elaborate the findings of recent discourse studies that examine teacher conversations about pedagogical beliefs and practices.

Contrastive ways to talk about challenges. More fine-grained study of situated interactions among educators, such as their everyday discourse, may be needed to enhance understandings of how to encourage the development of collaborative professional communities within schools. For example, in a study by Horn and Little (2010) of workplace discourse among secondary teachers, conversational routines emerged that either afforded or constrained opportunities for professional growth and collaboration. Two of the researchers in this intensive case study assumed participant observer roles in different teacher groups that were improving their practice at two school sites, one as a Math teacher and the other as an English teacher. The research team analyzed transcribed audiotaped and videotaped records of the weekly teacher group meetings of 90 minutes each as their primary data source. Other data sources such interviews with teachers and administrators and observations in various workplace settings aided the researchers in accounting for the differences that emerged in practices between the two teacher groups.

Horn and Little (2010) reported a recurring common discursive pattern among the

two groups, that of normalizing problems or challenges of the classroom. The function of this conversational routine seemed to be as a supportive move as well as a way of encouraging solidarity within the groups. However, each group dynamic tended to make use of this resource differently with respect to the possibility of teachers learning from the problem presented. In one group, when teachers brought problems forward, the normalization pattern alluded to how these challenges were representative of a larger educational picture they all experienced. Additionally, members of this first group presented ideas and suggestions to their colleagues that they could reject, adopt, or adapt, thus still possessing agency in addressing their own concern. According to Horn and Little, this group's approach to talking about challenges allowed for everyone in the group to learn from one another about how to address familiar professional challenges.

Contrasting this approach, the other group focused on presented problems as solely owned by the one teacher and conversations led to others advising what this teacher should do (Horn & Little, 2010). In this group, the teacher became a passive recipient of another's knowledge and the group members did not benefit from hearing about one another's ideas about possibilities to address professional challenges. Interestingly, both teacher groups believed themselves to be supportive of one another and demonstrated this notion in their own ways; however, in terms of potential for professional learning, the first group was reaping the learning benefits afforded to them by their version of this conversation routine. Horn and Little suggested that moving toward learning how to have professional conversations that are more fruitful for all group members may be a beneficial avenue for next steps toward transforming the cultures of school communities. In order to do so, however, much still needs to be discovered about how teacher discourse

during professional conversations unfolds and which discursive patterns are the most conducive to adult learning within an educational context.

Interpretive repertoires in teacher discourse. A discourse analytic study conducted by Barker and Rossi (2011) revealed some preliminary insights into how teachers draw on readily available interpretive repertoires to make sense of their work and beliefs about pedagogy. Within this analysis, Barker and Rossi examined how five Physical Education (PE) teachers from a secondary school in Brisbane, Australia constructed the concept of teamwork, a frequently used term found in state pedagogical documents, as a valued aspect of their professional worldview. Through the discourse analysis of semi-structured interviews with participants, the following three primary interpretive repertoires emerged as discursive resources for these teachers when making sense of teamwork. These repertoires represented the following: 1) humanist: highlighting stories about supporting students and altruism; 2) functionalist: referencing constructs like purposes and goals; and 3) strengths and weaknesses: focusing on the need to strategically consider competencies of players and how they can work together for team game success. Barker and Rossi suggested that the continuation of teacher discourse analysis may provide further insights into how educators make sense of pedagogy at the micro-level context by drawing on the professional Discourses at the macro-level of the education system.

Changing teacher discourse effects student discourse. In their professional development study, Sedova, Sedlacek, and Svaricek (2016) found that by enhancing teacher communication behaviours, student discourse in the classroom changed over time. The initiative investigated in this study focused on developing dialogic teaching to

encourage higher order thinking among students, including open-ended questioning, building on student ideas, providing elaborated feedback on student responses, and prompting open discussions among students.

The study participants were eight Czech secondary teachers who took part in the action research over a one-year period. Data sources included transcriptions of audio recording of professional development workshops and discussions, of video recordings of participants' lessons in classrooms, of audio recordings of reflective interviews with teachers, as well as pre- and post-student questionnaires and tests. A comparative analysis of the discourse in the transcribed video recordings before and after the professional development initiative demonstrated a change in classroom discourse and an increase in student talk that was "accompanied by reasoning and argumentation" (Sedova et al., 2016, p. 17). According to Sedova et al. (2016), this change was due to inclusion of dialogic teaching in teacher-participants' communication behaviours in the classroom. The authors did not explain how teacher discourse changed throughout this professional learning experience; however, they suggested that the shift may have been encouraged by "the longer duration of interaction between a researcher and a teacher and on joint attention on the video recordings of teachers' own teaching" (Sedova et al., 2016, p. 22), as well as the connections made between conceptual and practical tools throughout the experience.

Creating dialogic space in teacher discourse. An investigation by Warwick, Vrikki, Vermunt, Mercer, and van Halem (2016) into how teachers can create dialogic space during professional development conversations revealed discursive moves and features that encouraged a productive learning environment. In this study, data were

drawn from a broader two-year large-scale research project, a partnership between a British university and school district that focused on how primary and secondary mathematics teachers learn during professional development. The specific data source herein included transcribed video-recordings of the teacher-participants engaged in lesson study planning and reflection sessions that were conducted at each of the participating schools. This professional development initiative included lesson study conference days where all participants shared their teaching experiences, the use of a common workbook with guidelines for the planning, teaching, and reflection cycle, as well as training in productive use of dialogue and professional interactions.

Drawing on sociocultural discourse analysis and conversation analysis, Warwick et al. (2016) investigated how shared information about student progress could be a mediating artefact for developing common knowledge among teachers. They focused on selected pedagogic intentions as professional learning outcomes, and considered the use of language among participants as they worked toward common goals. The research team's collaborative discourse analysis of the video and documents focused on the following key elements: characteristics of teacher discourse, content of their discussions, and the nature of their learning. Analysis of nine videotaped sessions revealed moves and features in teacher discourse that were conducive in creating dialogic space, a space where productive professional learning was indicated. These researchers defined dialogic space as instances of reflective discussions that demonstrated "joint commitment to a shared goal, reciprocity, mutuality, and the continual renegotiation of meaning" (Warwick et al., 2016, p. 557), and where teachers collaborated to "construct and maintain a shared conception of the problems they [were] solving" (p. 557). Only a small

part of the overall teacher-participant discussions included this productive dialogic space, however these instances seemed to facilitate collaboration in the development of pedagogy that addressed student needs and led to significant professional learning.

According to Warwick et al. (2016), the examination of instances of dialogic space resulted in findings that included identification of the following five discursive moves for efficacy of teacher dialogue: 1) questioning; 2) building on each other's ideas; 3) coming to some sort of agreement; 4) providing evidence or reasoning; and 5) challenging ideas or refocusing talk. Additionally, research findings indicated two levels of conducive, dialogic features overall: dialogic moves, where participant contributions advanced collaborative learning experiences; and supportive moves, where interactional cues indicated support for others' views, such as nodding and encouraging comments.

Warwick et al. reminded readers that the scope of their study provided evidence about pedagogical intentions within reflective discussions during professional development sessions, but did not include consideration of possible changes in practice within the classroom.

Dimensions of teacher discourse: Knowledge and inquiry. In analyzing the discourse patterns of special educators participating in collaborative learning groups, Leko et al. (2015) found two noteworthy dimensions to characterize professional discussions: knowledge and inquiry. The professional development initiative examined in this study involved two cohorts of special education teachers who were seeking to improve the reading ability of their Grade 3 to 5 students with learning disabilities. The researchers facilitated the professional development sessions, focusing on word study and fluency instruction as content. This initiative included a two-day institute followed by

monthly cohort meetings to discuss progress with implementation, many opportunities for teacher-participants to collaborate with each other and the facilitators, a book study, coaching sessions, and the support of an on-line community. Researchers videotaped and transcribed teachers' instruction and cohort meetings on a monthly basis, and interviewed the teachers about their professional development experiences at the end of the series. The primary data set for this article was comprised of eight transcribed cohort meetings. Meeting artefacts, such as lesson plans and facilitator notes, were also considered as supporting evidence. Critical discourse analysis as methodology focused on instances where multiple participants were discussing instruction or student learning.

Leko et al. (2015) represented their findings as a "Learning Facilitation Discourse Model" (p. 144), synthesizing their research into four distinctive quadrants as combinations of two dimensions of discourse: knowledge and inquiry. The first dimension referred to content and pedagogical knowledge characterized according to the features of integrated, implementation, and low. Discourse that demonstrated integrated knowledge "combined information from professional development and other sources of knowledge" (Leko et al., 2015, p. 143) such as observations of student learning. Contrasting integrated knowledge, implementation knowledge revealed an understanding of the professional development topics but lacked integration with practices and low knowledge indicated a lack of content understanding generally. The second dimension of inquiry was elaborated as either high or low, where high referred to the teachers' openness to "learn more about the content and apply it" (Leko et al., 2015, p. 144) in their classroom practice, and low inquiry indicated a lack of this openness.

Overall, Leko et al. (2015) argued that teacher discourse patterns can either "promote

or inhibit learning opportunities” (p. 153) during professional discussions. Teacher discourse that demonstrated both integrated knowledge and high inquiry encouraged the most sophisticated professional learning opportunities for the group. In contrast to this finding, low knowledge combined with low inquiry discourse “often derailed the group, thus limiting teachers’ opportunities to discuss” (Leko et al., 2015, pp. 144-145) and their ability to focus on the professional learning content. Within this study, all participants engaged in this type of less productive discourse at some point or another, seemingly in correspondence to frustrations about school policies and barriers. In contrast however, this type of unproductive discourse also emerged during the confident talk about “misunderstandings or ineffective practice” (Leko et al., 2015, p. 152) of a few of the teacher-participants.

Leko et al. (2015) suggested that their model can be viewed as a “taxonomy for the kinds of discourse teachers produce, and a way of thinking about some meaningful differences” (p. 154) in how they contribute to professional conversations. These researchers briefly discussed possible ways that group facilitators may use this model to inform their professional development practice to encourage productive discourse. Although throughout the reporting of the study’s findings allusions to the role of the facilitator within the discursive interactions with participants are evident, this aspect was not elaborated by the researchers. My study addressed both facilitator discourse and the nature of productive professional conversations through discourse analysis that also used selected building tasks (Gee, 2011a) as a frame of reference.

Summary. The fledgling research that has examined teacher discourse during professional development shows promise for refining understandings of how to develop

collaborative school cultures and support transformation efforts in public education. Findings from recent studies have revealed discursive repertoires and moves that teachers use to make sense of teaching and learning during their professional discussions. How they talk about their workplace challenges with one another can influence whether or not their conversations develop into collective professional learning experiences. Additionally, it seems that teachers are able to encourage professional learning by accessing dialogic space and leveraging the dimensions of knowledge and inquiry in their discussions. More study into the nature of how teachers make sense of pedagogy during professional development and how changes in teacher discourse occur over time has yet to be investigated. My study addressed these areas of research.

Chapter Summary and Preview of Chapter 4

In this chapter, I situated my study within the current body of relevant scholarly work and research, presenting a review of the literature on classroom discourse studies, school cultures and related leadership considerations, teacher professional development, and teacher discourse studies. Much has been learned about how teacher talk impacts students and their learning, and about key aspects of effective professional development initiatives. More study into how to encourage and sustain collaborative school communities and to normalize productive professional conversations among teachers is needed to inform continued improvements for student learning and transformation of public education. Review of the literature revealed gaps in educational research regarding the nature of and possible shifts in educator discourse and sense-making about pedagogy during professional development experiences over time. My research sought to address these gaps in the research. In Chapter 4, I explain the research design, methods, and data

analysis used for my study that explored the nature of educator discourse and sense-making during a professional development series.

Chapter 4

Methodology

The challenge undertaken in this study was to investigate how educators make sense of pedagogical practices and beliefs during professional development experiences. Specifically, my research questions were as follows: 1. What is the nature of educator discourse during professional learning experiences over time? 2. How do educators make sense of pedagogical practices and beliefs during professional learning experiences? 3. Which practices are conducive to effective professional learning for educators? These questions required a qualitative research design that would enable the examination of complex social interactions. Additionally, an epistemological presumption of social constructionism, wherein the meanings of knowledge and ideology are co-constructed by and within social groups and are understood within their situated context of usage, informed my methodological choices. Furthermore, I applied sociocultural theory (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2011a; Mercer, 2010; Moje & Lewis, 2009; Potter, 2012; Rogers & Wetzell, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010; van Dijk, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011), accepting the significant role that situated language-in-interaction plays in the co-construction of professional knowledge and ideology. Stemming from this theoretical stance, I selected discourse analysis as the methodology to pursue the aforementioned research questions. I drew on the frameworks for critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011a) and sociocultural discourse analysis (Mercer, 2008, 2010) to guide my interpretive process. In this chapter, I discuss the aforementioned in further detail. I also consider the dependability, transferability, and catalytic validity of the present study.

A Qualitative Research Design

As discussed in Chapter 2, sociocultural theory framed this qualitative research design, in that “researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). Specifically, I sought to examine how participants made sense of and co-constructed knowledge about pedagogy during a situated professional development series. A qualitative research design afforded my focus on “exploring and understanding the meaning...[that this group of participants] ascribe[d] to a social...problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4), that of how to approach success at school for all students. I collected data from a group of participants who “live[d] and work[ed] in [the distinguishable] historical and cultural setting” (Creswell, 2014, p.4) of a school district workplace context. The research data resulted in a representation of how a community of educators made sense of their professional practice. I further investigated “the meanings [that the participant group had] about the world” (Creswell, 2014, p. 25) of contemporary public education. In sum, I selected a qualitative research design to deeply and suitably examine and interpret participants’ sense-making during their shared professional development experience, and thus to adequately address my research questions.

Discourse Analysis as Methodology

Although the intent of this qualitative study was to be sufficiently open-ended as to appropriately explore data about pedagogical knowledge and ideology as it emerged, it was also necessary to pay particular attention to the data that answered the research questions. According to the sociocultural theoretical perspective that framed this study, I recognized language as a consequential tool in participants’ collective meaning making. As Mercer (2010), a sociocultural discourse analyst, points out:

Sociocultural researchers commonly emphasize that language is a cultural and psychological tool which (in Vygotskian terms) links the *intermental* and *intramental* - so, for example, classroom dialogue could have an important influence on the development of children's reasoning. They also typically emphasize that knowledge and understanding are jointly created, that talk allows reciprocity and mutuality to be developed through the continuing negotiation of meaning, and that education depends upon the creation and maintenance of intersubjectivity or 'common knowledge'. (p. 2)

Mindful of the significant function that language plays in the mediation of collective sense-making and knowledge co-construction, a close examination of participant discourse was warranted to address the research questions. Language-in-use as a means for participants to jointly make sense of and negotiate understandings was key to the selection of discourse analysis as methodology. This methodology provided me with a systematic way to interpret “how knowledge, meaning, identities, and social goods [were] negotiated and constructed through language-in-use” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1374) by the participant group. Through discourse analysis, I was able to identify “pattern and order in how...[participant] talk [was] organized and for how intersubjective understanding, social life, and a variety of institutional practices [were] accomplished, constructed, and reproduced” (Nikander, 2008, p. 415) during and across the professional development sessions.

Additionally, participant discourse was considered as a shared cultural resource for the group that “both mediate[d] and construct[ed]...understanding of reality” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1374) about teaching and learning. It is essential to highlight that a

presumption of discourse as a collective resource informed my analysis process. Working from the sociocultural assumption that humans tend toward discursive interactions so that they “can think collectively in order to pursue common goals” (Littleton & Mercer, 2013, p. 140), I approached the discourse data as representative of a shared undertaking in professional development. In other words, I sought to uncover discursive trends and norms for the group, as a collective of participants, to better pinpoint insights directly related to notions of teacher culture in addressing the research questions. When pursuing complex sociocultural studies such as this one, the analyst requires repeated instances of discursive patterns among various participants in order to draw conclusions about collective meanings and representations. “When one is able to reconstruct the same structure from the talk of different people, then this is evidence that they share the understandings embodied in that structure—that these understandings are cultural” (Quinn, 2005, p. 47). As such, the main findings that I discuss in Chapter 5 were drawn from what I distinguished as collective discourse data, discourse represented by means of multiple participant voices within the transcriptions (at least three voices, however in most cases more than three) in order to reasonably portray commonly shared tendencies. In this way, I focused my inquiry on how the group of participants collectively made use of discourse to make sense of and co-construct pedagogy in their discussions, rather than honing in on any one individual participant’s discourse content and patterns. As my facilitator utterances frequently emerged as contrastive to that of the other participants in the study, I substantiated interpretations about tendencies in my discourse through the identification of multiple instances. In using the aforementioned discourse analytic guidelines to address the data source, I was better prepared to attend deliberately to the

collective co-construction of common pedagogical knowledge and beliefs. This focus was in keeping with the overarching sociocultural theoretical framework of the study and its purpose to shed further light on how culture in educational contexts is enacted within professional development among teachers.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the analysis of data collected during the study reflected that of discourse as social interactive practice. From this sociocultural perspective, an examination of language-in-use as uninterrupted exchanges among speakers and listeners, as constituting the participant groups' discourse as a whole, is apropos.

In such cases, and generally from the point of view of analyzing how discourse contributes to group activity, it makes more sense to treat any uninterrupted stretch of speaking activity as one utterance even if it is distributed among multiple speakers. (Rowe, 2011, p. 234)

This view of discourse also acknowledges the significant role that interaction plays in how meaning making and co-construction of knowledge and ideology emerge as communal experience within group activity. From this perspective, the discourse analyst should interpret meanings by attending to the interchanges of communications among participants, as "each utterance is understood by at least preceding and following utterances" (McMullen, 2011, p. 306). As such, I endeavoured to interpret discourse in terms of social interaction and interplay among participants to preserve the integrity of the totality of collective sense-making during discussions.

In addition, through discourse analysis methodology I was able to interpret how notions of teaching and learning were "talked into being" (Nikander, 2008, p. 415) by

participants as well as to elaborate “not just *what* happen[ed during discussions] but *how* and *why* it happen[ed]” (Roth & Hsu, 2010, p. 266). I investigated participant discourse from the point of view of its content and meanings, as well as its implications and effects in the co-construction of situated professional knowledge and ideology (Talja, 1999; van Dijk, 2011). Among the potential discourse analysis approaches, I elected to integrate two that were well suited to the particular purposes of the present study: critical discourse analysis and sociocultural discourse analysis. I elaborate on these approaches below.

Critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis aids the researcher in interrogating taken-for-granted meanings in discursive interactions, surfacing the underlying social and political influences that shape communications. This process requires “making the familiar strange...[and]...developing a constructionist analytic eye” (Nikander, 2008, p. 416). In addition to investigating how discourse constructs meaning, critical discourse analysis guides the analyst in observing how social interactions serve less conspicuous agentive purposes. This critical examination includes uncovering how participants “use language to build and destroy” (Gee, 2011b, p. 31) social constructs and mindsets as well as revealing the nature of relationships and distribution of power. For example, an analyst may observe how language-in-use positions people “as acceptable, normal, important, respected, an *insider* or [as] an *outsider*” (Gee, 2011b, pp. 31-32) within social dynamics. This approach to interpretative analysis presupposes social and political implications inherent to communications, and seeks to “understand what people are doing with their language in a given situation” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1376) to serve these functions. There are various perspectives on what constitutes critical discourse analysis in education (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui & Joseph,

2005). My study applied Gee's view that discourse analysis is "inherently 'critical' in the sense of asserting that all discourses are social and thus ideological, and that some discourses are valued more than others" (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 370). In applying his critical methodological inquiry tools (Gee, 2011a), I was able to discern how participants constructed portrayals of teaching and learning through their discourse and investigate how these constructions served various social and political functions, as well as to observe the shift in participation across sessions, from that of talking like teachers preparing for job action toward that of leaders developing the confidence to work for change in public education.

There are various perspectives on what constitutes critical discourse analysis in education (Rogers, 2005). My study applied "Gee's theory [of discourse analysis as] inherently 'critical' in the sense of asserting that all discourses are social and thus ideological, and that some discourses are valued more than others" (Rogers, 2005, p. 370). Gee (2011b) underscores that "language-in-use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power" (2011b, p. 28). In my analysis,

Critical discourse analysis requires the researcher to systematically question the data in such a way as to reveal social and political functions of language-in-use that are not necessarily readily observable during initial coding. In my study, I selected relevant building tasks from Gee's approach to critical discourse analysis (2011a) as the guiding questions that informed this interrogation process, as I discuss below.

Building tasks to inform critical analysis. Gee's tool kit (2011a) for discourse analysis is comprised of building tasks or ways in which to critically examine discourse as data source. From this perspective, building tasks are identified as tools that the researcher may draw upon in striving for a meticulous and rigorous discourse analysis. Essentially these tools are targeted questions to ask of the data and help the researcher to hone the discourse analysis process toward key aspects of oral and written communications. Within this interpretive framework, using the building task questions to guide examination of discourse data allows the analyst to methodically scrutinize "what speakers or writers mean, intend, and seek to do and accomplish in the world by the way in which they have used language" (Gee, 2011a, p. x) in their social interactions. In using these building task questions, the analyst is able to generate sociocultural insights from the data.

Gee's toolkit (2011a) offers many building tasks to address a multitude of possible areas for analysis. The nature of a particular inquiry, as well as that of the specific discourse and its context, helps the analyst determine which of these building tasks are pertinent (Gee, 2011a; Rogers & Wetzel, 2014). In the case of my research, I selected the building tasks that would guide my analysis toward examining and uncovering the what, how, and why of a group of educators making sense of and co-constructing pedagogy through their use of discourse during professional development. I selected the building tasks that were designed to identify and scrutinize social and cultural assumptions, contexts, and purposes related to sense-making and knowledge construction activities. Specifically, the tools I used to inform my analysis were: Making Strange, Frame the Problem, Sign Systems and Knowledge Building, Situated Meaning, Social Languages,

Intertextuality, Figured Worlds, and Big “D” Discourse Tools (Gee, 2011a). Although these building tasks are highly interconnected and overlap at times, I differentiated them to facilitate their use during the analysis process. Below I provide a table to orient the reader on how these selected building tasks aided in the discourse analysis. Then I further illuminate each of these analyst tools with an example from the analysis process.

Table 1

Building Task Tools (Gee, 2011a) Used to Inform This Analysis

Building task tool	Brief descriptor of how analyst used this tool
Making strange tool	Surfaced speakers’ underlying assumptions, intentions and/or goals within their communications
Frame the problem tool	Encouraged continuous reconsideration of context; widening what was believed to be relevant to situation for even further analysis
Sign systems and knowledge building tool	Uncovered ways of knowing and believing that were being privileged or de-privileged within discourse
Situated meaning tool	Attended to previous and/or shared assumptions, experiences, knowledge that speakers drew on to make sense of communications in the moment
Social languages tool	Recognized which specific socially situated identities speakers were seeking to enact through language; also how speakers accomplished specific actions and activities through discourse
Intertextuality tool	Asked how words and structures referred to or alluded to other texts, styles, or voices
Figured worlds tool	Identified cultural models and/or frames that suggested particular assumptions about norms for interacting, institutions, values
Big “D” Discourse tool	Discerned broader Discourse that emerged within the situated conversations that pointed to recognizable ways of interacting, believing, and/or valuing from beyond the immediate

The Making Strange and Frame the Problem Tools are designed to support the analyst in surfacing assumptions in meaning making that are influenced by the immediate context. Specifically, the Making Strange Tool guides the researcher in the close examination of shared cultural knowledge and in questioning the assumption that cultural ‘insiders’ would take for granted. In using this tool during the analysis, I viewed the discourse data through the contrastive lens of an outsider, at a reflexive distance from the

field of my participant view, to a marginal position from where I could observe the discourse data in a critical manner. As a researcher-participant, this outsider lens became a crucial component in problematizing the familiar social interactions and dynamics of relationships and activities, affording me the ability to examine these with increased open-mindedness.

Similarly, the Frame the Problem Tool requires the analyst to consider and reconsider possible contextual features that could be influencing the meanings of the discourse. Within this frame, analyst must “always be willing to push context further than we would in everyday life to see if we can falsify our claims about meaning” (Gee, 2011a, p. 32). By habitually re-questioning the meanings I had drawn about the discourse data as I tried to find other possible contextual factors at play throughout this analysis process, I was better able to rethink and/or refine interpretations. This building task proved to be especially helpful in revealing the likely underpinnings for the political nature of participant discourse in Session 1, as discussed later in the findings.

The Sign Systems and Knowledge Building, Situated Meaning, Social Languages, and Intertextuality Tools were selected for the present analysis as they were designed to interrogate language use as it relates to knowledge, beliefs, and meanings, all of which were relevant to answering the research questions. The Signs and Knowledge Building Tool entails observing how discourse can highlight certain views and portrayals (Gee, 2011a, p. 139), thus potentially ignoring or denying other possibilities. In this analysis, for example, distinctive portrayals of students and teaching practice emerged as noteworthy aspects of participant discourse. Use of the Situated Meaning Tool reminds the analyst to consider and re-consider the meanings of communications in reference to

the situation and the participants as they occur. In other words, how the meanings in discourse are shaped and collectively understood depends on the shared histories and backgrounds of participants in context. This notion proved to be of significance to the interpretation process in terms of how participants were able to draw on shared professional development experiences to co-construct their common pedagogical knowledge, as I elaborate further in the findings. The Social Languages Tool enables the analyst to identify socially situated identities enacted through discourse. This circumstance, for example, became a notable finding in terms of the development of the group's sense of instructional leadership identity across sessions. The Intertextuality Tool requires the analyst to attend to instances where participants "allude to what others have said" (Gee, 2011a, p. 165) and/or to make reference to other discourses. In using this particular building task, I was able to glean insights into how participants drew on the pedagogical terms introduced through readings and discussions to make meaning about teaching and learning. Use of these four tools allowed me to discern pedagogical common knowledge co-construction and sense making within the discourse.

The Figured Worlds and Big "D" Discourse Tools help the analyst to consider language use as it pertains to social norms and identification with particular social groups. The Figured Worlds Tool can be used to critically examine what are considered to be common sense views about the world and to identify instances where these reveal themselves in communications (Gee, 2011a, p. 169). For example, this tool helped me to identify shifts in how participants discussed teacher practices in their professional development conversations, which, in turn, represented their work worldviews. On the other hand, use of the Big "D" Discourse Tool prompts the analyst to explore how

language can be associated with broader values and beliefs. For example, through this critical lens, I was able to examine how participants were accessing broader Discourses to portray teaching practices and student learning in their conversations, and how this phenomenon shifted across sessions. Through the aforementioned building tasks as guiding critical questions during the analysis process, I was able to uncover noteworthy insights about the nature of educators' discourse and sense-making during the situated professional learning experience.

Sociocultural discourse analysis. In addition to the critical discourse analysis approach discussed above, I used sociocultural discourse analysis. Sociocultural discourse analysis “attempts to capture the constructed meaning of talk for participants, placing more emphasis on the developing common knowledge that emerges through the interaction and the social and cultural context of the talk” (Warwick et al., 2016, p. 560) in learning contexts. Herein learning was considered in terms of a “temporal, discursive, dialogic process” (Mercer, 2008, p. 38) and this methodological approach helped me attend to changes in collective meaning making over time (Mercer, 2008, 2010). I focused on the way the participants were able to “stay attuned to one another’s changing states of knowledge and understanding over the course” (Mercer, 2008, p. 38) of this professional learning experience.

Attending to the learning trajectory. Sociocultural discourse analysis as method contrasts with critical discourse analysis in that it affords the consideration of temporality across a series of learning events needed to address development over time. All discourse is situated within time as space, in terms of its place within historical contexts and its internal interactional dynamic (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2011a; Potter, 2012; Rogers &

Wetzel, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010; van Dijk, 2011). As such, discourse analysis necessarily incorporates these particular temporal aspects within its interpretive methodologies. However, within research about professional development specifically, an analytic approach that also provides for systematic deliberation of possible changes in discourse about practices and beliefs over extended periods of time was required in order to reveal potential learning phenomenon. “As learning is a process that happens over time, and learning is mediated through dialogue, we need to study dialogue over time to understand how learning happens and why certain learning outcomes result” (Mercer, 2008, p. 35). Generally speaking researchers in professional development inquire into aspects related to growth among its participants (Horn & Little, 2010; Jurasaitė-Harbišon & Rex, 2010; Laster, 2008; Sedova et al., 2016; Strahan and Hedt, 2009; Timperley et al., 2007; Whitehead, 2010). Contrasting these studies however, I sought to examine the nature of the professional growth trajectory itself.

From this perspective, researchers ideally collect discourse data from several connected learning events among the same group of participants over time in order to account for learning as a “dialogic trajectory” (Mercer, 2008, p. 39). Within the discourse that emerges across a succession of learning events, the analyst “may want to see if a technical term introduced by a teacher is taken up by students later in their group-based activity” (Mercer, 2010, p. 6), for example. In order to track the dialogic trajectory as potential learning, the sociocultural discourse analyst surveys the data for instances of key expressions and interactions related to the research question and ascertains what developments are evidenced within events and across events for a particular community of participants. This temporal analytic approach (Mercer, 2008) was pertinent to my

study, as I strove to reveal potential shifts in the discursive practices and expressed beliefs of this group of educators over the course of several professional learning sessions.

Specifically, I investigated how the participants moved “together through a series of related interactions within the same institution” (Mercer, 2008, p. 39), attending to shifts in their collective discourse related to pedagogy and instructional leadership, the intended professional development goals. Specifically, I analyzed the data by searching for instances of uptake in discourse about pedagogy that drew on resources made available during the immediate and previous sessions, for references to shared experiences in previous sessions, and to the group’s common knowledge construction across sessions. Additionally, I scrutinized instances across sessions where “the dynamics of joint educational activity action and...the way that talk [was] used to maintain intersubjectivity and pursue common purposes” (Mercer, 2008, p. 39) emerged in collective discourse. This focus facilitated my examination of shifts in the participant group’s knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning across the professional learning series, as well as identification of changes in the nature of participants’ discursive interactions. In using this sociocultural temporal analytic frame to examine participant discourse across sessions, I was able to identify three salient shifts that I discuss in Chapter 5.

In this way, I integrated the relevant temporal aspect of sociocultural discourse analysis with critical discourse analysis building tasks (Gee, 2011a). I interpreted the discourse data through the critical lens of the aforementioned building task tools and examined what it revealed about the dialogic trajectory of the participant group across sessions.

Iterative and recursive analysis process. As with other qualitative research methodologies, discourse analysis requires a systematic process of questioning and reconsidering one's interpretations throughout the analysis. This data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2014) is a continuous cyclical feedback loop between reviewing theoretical knowledge and re-examining and re-considering the data. Using this approach, discourse analysts consider language-in-use more deeply and question underpinning assumptions that influence inferences drawn through this interpretive process (Heath & Street, 2008; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Roth & Hsu, 2010). As such, I tested tentative inferences drawn from the data repeatedly throughout the discourse analysis process.

Firstly, I analyzed the entire data set of transcriptions and written reflections, revisiting, revising, refining and altering interpretations. Upon familiarization with the whole of the data, I surveyed this data source for discourse extracts that demonstrated appreciable accounts and/or explorations of teaching practices and learning as a way to deconstruct this "large body of discourse into manageable chunks" (Roth & Hsu, 2010, p. 69) for refined analysis. I determined noteworthy passages as those that demonstrated instances of sense-making and knowledge construction related specifically to pedagogical and instructional leadership topics, portrayals, and ideology. Selected extracts included multiple participant voices and/or representational repeated instances in the data to adequately indicate tendencies. Also, as previously mentioned, "from the point of view of analyzing how discourse contribute[d] to group activity, [I] treat[ed] any uninterrupted stretch of speaking activity as one utterance even if it [was] distributed among multiple speakers" (Rowe, 2011, p. 234). It is important to note that I endeavoured to approach the analysis of selected discourse extracts from a holistic standpoint, wherein they were

continually interpreted as interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole of the discourse data. In this way, I sought to reveal the nature of the group's discourse about pedagogy for each of the sessions as distinct cases.

Secondly, I analyzed the discourse data across sessions, seeking to discern potential shifts. Initially I noticed considerable differences between the discourses in the transcriptions of the first and final sessions (Session 1 and 5). I invited a critical friend, a fellow PhD candidate, to read the transcriptions for these two sessions and she too observed a striking contrast between them with respect to how the content topics were portrayed and the nature of the interactions. I then pursued a more refined analysis across sessions to examine the trajectory of the discourse across sessions over the three-month period. During this 'cross session' analysis, I once again re-visited discourse extracts that were relevant to the research questions, including pedagogical content and types of interactions. For example, I looked for talk extracts in the data that seemed to serve the function of "sustain[ing] mutual engagement in action" (Wenger, 1998, p. 5), as possible instances of intersubjectivity for the participant group, and compared those instances across sessions. This particular pursuit revealed how participants became more productive during their conversations over time.

In order to organize and manage my large discourse data set, I developed a coding template as follows: left-hand column included the data source of transcriptions or participant reflections, right-hand column was where I recorded my coding notes, and in the header of all pages I noted all of the building tasks with a brief descriptor in order to keep these guiding questions at the forefront throughout. Below is a brief overview of my analysis procedure:

1. During my first read through of the transcribed data, I noted my general impressions about ideas, concepts, actions, relationships, meanings, etc. that related to my research questions and teaching and learning generally. When I came across something that I was confused or intrigued about, I asked myself, “What was really happening here?” I would then refer to the building tasks in the header to help me interrogate the data for less conspicuous possibilities. For example, during this phase of analysis, I noted how my discourse and participant discourse represented teacher practices in contrastive ways, and I noticed that some sort of change had occurred in participant discourse across sessions; however, I had not yet made sense this change.
2. During the second and third readings of the transcribed data, I was able to refine my initial impressions, discern more tendencies, test my speculations, and expand my view of what might really be happening from a social and political perspective. Continuously checking and rechecking the discourse data against the building tasks throughout became my habit of mind for interpreting. For example, during this phase of the analysis I was able to recognize that drawing on macro-contextual Discourse to make sense of education was a noteworthy tendency, initially political Discourse and then pedagogical Discourse. I also began to observe more specificity in discursive tendencies such as how I was using encouraging backchannels to highlight instructional portions of participant accounts and participants were experimenting with introduced technical language as a way to make sense of pedagogy.

3. I then coded the written reflections and blog posts as a secondary data source to cross check with interpretations that I had made about collective discourse data to this point. For example, one of the participants shared with me that he did not feel that he was able to clearly articulate his thoughts when he was speaking in front of the group, yet his written reflections demonstrated more clarity. As such, I took this added information into account, when I included his articulations as part of the utterance units representing collective tendencies.
4. To better make sense of the changes I was noticing in discourse, I contrasted the transcriptions and my coding notes from Sessions 1 and 5, the first and last sessions of the series. This procedure proved to be helpful as these bookend sessions were extremely contrastive and I could more readily identify distinctive differences in the discourse, including how participants interacted and how we approached pedagogical and controversial topics. I was then able to re-examine the data and my interpretations with these contrastive aspects in mind, to better identify how these shifts had happened over time. In this way, I pursued a more refined sociocultural discourse analysis across sessions, considering uptake and participation in terms of a development trajectory.

Summary. For my research, I used discourse analysis as the methodology to investigate the ways in which participants used discourse to collectively make sense of pedagogy and co-construct common knowledge and beliefs. In using selected building task tools from critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011a), I interrogated the discourse as a social practice and discovered how participants used language as a tool to represent understandings of teacher and learning and to pursue less conspicuous agentive purposes.

Through sociocultural discourse analysis (Mercer, 2008, 2010), I attended to the temporality of learning, examining the group's development trajectory across sessions in the professional development series, discerning shifts in discourse content and discursive interactions.

Study Participants

Twelve participants provided the discourse data examined in the study: four newly appointed vice principals, six vice principal candidates, the assistant superintendent, and myself as the facilitator. The assistant superintendent dropped in and participated in only the final session, and is included in that portion of the transcribed audiotaped discourse data. All participants were experienced educators, each having taught for eight or more years. Two participants in the series had elementary teaching backgrounds, four had both middle years and secondary backgrounds, and four secondary. At the time of the professional development series, I had experience teaching at all three levels, and was a secondary school vice principal. All participants worked in the same suburban school district within the public school system in British Columbia, Canada.

Recruitment context. Initiated by the school district's leadership succession needs, the assistant superintendent asked me to facilitate a professional development series for vice principal candidates and newly appointed vice principals in the area of instructional leadership, with an emphasis on how to support learners who struggle at school. I was asked to take on this work because of my experience, background, and interest in staff development and literacy and learning. I prepared an outline for the professional development series and sent out an invitation to colleagues to engage in this opportunity. (See Appendix C for the information flyer.) The 10 aforementioned vice principals and

vice principal candidates registered and then participated in the professional development series. These educators became the pool from which I invited participation in the study.

The purpose of developing instructional leadership and learning how to encourage literacy success for all learners had been clearly articulated by me to all participants before beginning the professional learning series. Thus, participants were aware that an instructional and transformative leadership orientation would frame the activities within sessions. Additionally, it is important to note that the majority of participants within this professional learning series were already very familiar with one another and myself from other workplace contexts within the school district. This familiarity ranged from having worked together on the same staff, to regularly seeing one another at meetings and/or functions, to personal friendships. This pre-established relational familiarity may have afforded a speedier movement into active participation and public sharing than would have been the case for contrastive groups composed of strangers.

Ethical considerations. Recruitment was strictly voluntary and the educators could choose to engage in the professional development with or without participating in the study itself. It is important to point out that the facilitation of the professional development series was part of my regular work as outlined above and would have taken place regardless of the formalized study. In order to address potential issues of power over and to assure the protection of these educators, voluntary participation in the study was assured. A neutral third party, a district office secretary volunteer, collected and secured all completed research consent forms on my behalf. Complete anonymity about whether or not participants had given consent to use their contributions as research data was maintained until after the professional learning sessions had been completed. In the

end, all 10 educators and the assistant superintendent provided full consent to use all data collected for the study. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of participants:

Alison, Ben, Beth, Bob, Henry, Janice, John, Linda, Lisa, Mary, and Tom. In this way, I have ensured the anonymity of participants and preserved the confidentiality of their data

Collective discourse as the object of study. It is important to remind the reader that the way in which educators make sense of pedagogical knowledge and ideology as a collective body underpins this sociocultural study. From this perspective, any roles or portrayals that individual participants chose to draw upon as they engaged in discussions were considered in terms of cultural resources (Roth & Hsu, 2010) that are likely available to all educators. To reiterate, individuals and their personal choices were not the focus of the study and therefore are not represented in the findings in any way. On the other hand, institutional roles and expressions as cultural resources that these educators tended to draw upon as a group emerged as relevant and are included in the findings

Data Collection

As “qualitative research occurs in natural settings, where human behaviour and events occur” (Creswell, 2014, p. 255), data to address the research questions of this study were collected from a situated professional development series within a public education context. Collection methods included audiotaping participant discourse during professional learning sessions, participants writing reflections during the sessions and between sessions in a blog forum, and my recording of field notes.

Situating the data. The professional development series was comprised of five 3-hour afternoon sessions, with 2 to 3 weeks between sessions, over a three-month period.

Release time was provided so that educators involved could participate during the workday while school was in session.

A professional study group structure framed these sessions, in which selected readings were provided based on strategic instruction in reading and the district's instructional leadership goals, as well as informed by the questions provided by participants during the first session. The primary readings were *Mosaic of Thought: The Power of Comprehension Strategy Instruction* (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007) and *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning* (Johnston, 2004) and were selected for the following reasons: their focus on inclusive literacy practices, their relevance to instruction in multiple disciplines and at multiple grade levels, their approachable writing style for practitioners, and their examples of applied research in the classroom. Throughout the series, I provided frequent opportunities for the group to interact within the Think, Pair, Share (Lyman, 1981) discursive routine to discuss pedagogical topics building on the readings. For example, participants discussed their homework readings and reflections about reading comprehension strategy instruction (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007) in Session 2. This professional resource was underpinned by teaching metacognition as a way for students to monitor their own reading comprehension, as in "thinking about your thinking when you read, being aware of when you're understanding and when you're not" (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007, p. 50) and the Think, Pair, Share routine enabled multiple opportunities to reflect (both individually and collectively) on newly introduced pedagogical concepts such as metacognition.

Sessions also included the following professional learning activities: professional book study; lesson study; role-plays; modeled instructional practices (by myself as the

facilitator and through videotaped classroom teaching examples); discussions about teaching and learning; and participant reflections. Between sessions, participants read and viewed suggested readings and videos, as well as responded to blog prompts. The pedagogical topics that were explored throughout the sessions included reading comprehension across the curriculum, the gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), formative assessment and descriptive feedback, metacognition, and the connections between teacher practices and student learning.

In Table 2 below, I provide an overview of research procedures and data collection during the professional development series.

Table 2

Research Procedures During Professional Development Series

Session No.	Procedures	Data Collected
Session 1	<p>I, as researcher-facilitator, provided brief overview of research study.</p> <p>Participants wrote reflections based on guiding questions about educational philosophy and perspectives and discussed with partners and then whole group (See Appendix E).</p> <p>Collective reflection activity: Whole group discussion about what participants hoped to learn together during the series. I recorded co-constructed questions and used them as learning intentions to inform activities for subsequent sessions.</p> <p>Classroom simulation activities: Participants role-played as learners who struggled and I played part of teacher using traditional practices, followed by debrief of participant experiences from a student's perspective. Participants wrote reflections about this activity.</p>	<p>Audiotape of session</p> <p>Group artefact: Co-constructed questions (See Appendix F)</p> <p>Participants' written reflections</p>
Between Sessions 1 and 2	<p>Homework:</p> <p>A) Read chapters 1 to 6 in <i>Mosaic of Thought</i> (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007) to discuss at Session 2.</p> <p>B) Read over <i>Instructional Leadership</i> section in <i>The Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in BC</i> (British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, 2007).</p> <p>C) Blog prompt: "After reading through the section on <i>Instructional Leadership in The Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in BC</i>, please share your thoughts" (Me). Participants posted responses on blog.</p>	Participants' blog posts

Session 2	<p>Participants engaged in partner conversations and whole group discussion about assigned readings.</p> <p>I presented information about reading comprehension strategy instruction, metacognition, the gradual release of responsibility model, and formative assessment interspersed with whole group discussions on these topics. Handouts that provided brief overviews of these topics were provided.</p> <p>Whole group viewing and debrief discussion of videotaped lesson, where the teacher modeled for and used shared practice approach with her students on how to ask questions about and reflect as they read.</p> <p>Participants wrote a reflection about their choice of one of two of the co-constructed learning intention questions.</p>	<p>Audiotape of session</p> <p>Participants' written reflections</p>
Between Sessions 2 and 3	<p>Homework:</p> <p>A) Read remaining chapters in <i>Mosaic of thought</i> (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007) and wrote at least 3 reflections to discuss at Session 3.</p> <p>B) Viewed presentation on <i>Effective Literacy Instruction</i> (BC Ministry of Education, 2004).</p> <p>C) Blog prompt: "After viewing the Ministry of Education's webcast on <i>Effective Literacy Instruction</i> with Faye Brownlie, please share with us something that struck you as interesting." Participants posted their responses on the blog.</p>	<p>Participants' blog posts</p>
Session 3	<p>Participants engaged in partner conversations and whole group discussion about assigned readings.</p> <p>Simulation activity: Participants tried formative assessment by identifying reading comprehension strategies in their own reflection responses, followed by a debrief conversation and discussion about assessment of reading process.</p> <p>Simulation activity: Participants engaged in a reading comprehension activity that included taking on differing reader perspectives, followed by a debrief conversation and discussion about reading comprehension.</p> <p>I presented information about literacy, differentiation, assessment, school-wide implementation, and collaboration, interspersed with whole group discussions on these topics.</p> <p>Whole group viewing and debrief discussion of videotaped guided reading lesson with a small group of students who had been identified as readers who were struggling, followed by discussion about effective instruction and student learning.</p> <p>Participants wrote a reflection about their choice of any of the learning intentions questions.</p>	<p>Audiotape of session</p> <p>Participants' written reflections</p>

<p>Between Sessions 3 and 4</p>	<p>Homework: A) Read <i>Choice Words</i> (Johnston, 2004) and write reflections to discuss in Session 4. B) Viewed brief video about a teacher collaborative inquiry on students as peer coaches. C) Blog prompt: “After viewing the video about a teacher collaborative inquiry on students as peer coaches called <i>Glenview Elementary: Learners in the Lead Part 1</i> (Networks of Inquiry and Innovation, 2007), please share with us something that struck you as interesting.” (Me). Participants posted their responses on the blog.</p>	<p>Participants’ blog posts</p>
<p>Session 4</p>	<p>Whole group discussion informed by video on student peer coaching from homework.</p> <p>Participants engaged in partner conversations and whole group discussion about assigned readings.</p> <p>Participants shared what comprehension strategies they had used in their reflection responses.</p> <p>Whole group viewing and debrief discussion of videotaped lesson of a literature circle with group of students who have been identified as readers who struggle in a high school setting.</p> <p>Whole group discussion about interrelationship among formative assessment, metacognition, and descriptive feedback.</p> <p>Participants wrote a reflection in reference to their own experiences of working with a peer throughout this professional learning series.</p>	<p>Audiotape of session Participants’ written reflections</p>
<p>Between Sessions 4 and 5</p>	<p>Homework: A) Read 2 articles to discuss - <i>Formative Assessment and Self-Regulated Learning: A Model and Seven Principles of Good Feedback</i> (Nichol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006) and choice of <i>Shaping Teacher Sensemaking</i> (Coburn, 2005) or <i>The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes</i> (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). B) Blog prompt: “Please share a key learning for you from our sessions together.” (Me) Participants posted reflections about their own learning throughout this series and what it was like to post on a blog between sessions.</p>	<p>Participants’ blog posts</p>
<p>Session 5</p>	<p>Whole group discussion about topics in assigned readings, including school-based leadership’s influence on how teaching and learning unfold in schools.</p> <p>Collective reflection activity: Whole group discussion about how principals can facilitate a school-wide focus on student learning. Topics of teacher capacity building, collaboration, and communication were prominent. I recorded co-constructed responses.</p>	<p>Audiotape of session Group artefact: Co-constructed strategies for principals to facilitate effective school-wide focus on learning (See Appendix G) Group artefact: Co-</p>

Session 5 (continued)	Simulation activity: Whole group discussion where everyone adopted the roles of principals and designed a 3 to 5 year school plan to address a student learning goal. One of the participants adopted the role of facilitator for this activity and recorded the group's co-constructed responses.	constructed school-wide plan (See Appendix H) Participants' written reflections
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Transcribed audiotapes of sessions. In discourse analysis, transcripts “provide a highly detailed and accessible representation of social action...bring[ing] immediacy and transparency to the phenomenon under study” (Nikander, 2008, p. 423). The primary data for the present study consisted of approximately 15 hours of transcribed audiotape collected from all five sessions in the aforementioned professional learning series. Transcriptions provided substantial and rich data required by the cultural complexity of the research questions. It is important to note that I performed the transcription process myself, thus familiarizing myself intimately with this data source.

As the focus of the study was on participant sense-making and the co-construction knowledge, rather than on linguistic considerations, I selected a method that more closely corresponds with “naturalized transcriptions in which the text conforms to written discourse conventions” (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1439). I represented “the speaker’s talk as if it [was] prose, using commas to help the reader understand the speaker’s meaning, and periods to mark the end of a thought” (Rogers & Wetzel, 2014, p. 111). Certainly, as with any transcription process, there is an element of interpretation involved in representing the spoken discourse of a group as a written discourse. Acknowledging this challenge, I laboured to mindfully adhere to the words as they were spoken so as to maintain the integrity of participant discourse within this natural setting as much as possible. As such, I also indicated other speech-related tendencies, such as short and long pauses, partially formed words, and non-word utterances such as ‘hmmm’ and ‘aha’ as they too may

“serve a communicative function (for example to show surprise, agreement, or to extend a speaker’s turn in the face of possible interruptions)” (Littleton & Mercer, 2013, p. ix). Additionally, my comments about what speakers were doing as they spoke were included at times in the transcripts to further clarify utterances, such as ‘she is recording their responses on chart paper’. Instances where words were unintelligible or a speaker was unidentifiable were also indicated within the transcriptions; however, fortunately, the sound quality was usually clear and consistent so such instances occurred only rarely.

My intention in the transcriptions was to capture the nature of educator discourse during situated professional learning and I believe that the transcriptions are true to this intention. Where direct quotes extracted from transcriptions are included in the findings, I did not alter the tense, grammar, or word choice of the speakers. In addition, all references to participant names are pseudonyms and I identify myself as the facilitator.

Participant written reflections. The written discourse provided by participant reflections during the sessions, as well as participant comments posted on the interactive blog between sessions, were other data sources in the study. These commonly used and embedded professional learning artefacts provided supplementary and contrasting information to that of the transcribed participant discourse that emerged during session discussions. Thus, I also interpreted this data source within the present discourse analysis, supporting triangulation of data from a different source and from different occasions than that of the primary data source (Creswell, 2014).

Researcher notes. I wrote field notes throughout the study, including during the data collection and transcription phases. Note entries include observations, suppositions, questions, and assumptions, thus documenting my thinking throughout the study. These

notes provide me with insight into my own trajectory of sense making (Roth & Hsu, 2010) as part of the iterative and recursive process discussed above and helped me to reconsider interpretations throughout the data analysis.

Researcher Stance

In qualitative research, “the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection” (Creswell, 2014, p. 255) and his/her interpretative analysis process “relies on the utilization of tacit knowledge” (p. 255). Thus I am aware that my own experiences, knowledge, perspectives, and assumptions influenced the research and discourse analysis processes in this study beyond the theoretical perspectives already discussed. As such, I briefly elaborate my background here. I have worked in education for 28 years, as a teacher, vice principal, principal, and district principal. These work experiences have included multiple contexts including independent and public schools, elementary, middle, and secondary levels, as well as alternative settings such as literacy and numeracy intervention programs and Montessori multi-aged classes. I have also facilitated professional development for educators for 13 years, as a literacy coach, principal of the district’s staff development team, and as an instructor in a local Faculty of Education special education program. These varied experiences have influenced my perspectives on what is possible in education and have encouraged me toward an optimistic outlook on transformation efforts toward progressivism. Additionally, as a parent, I have a child with significant challenges in learning due to autism and Down syndrome, which undoubtedly underpins my advocacy for improving teacher practices to support student diversity and to address the success of all students at school. Overall, my views on learning tend toward constructivism and social cognition.

As both researcher and participant within the study, I was a cultural native, immersed within the professional community and context from which the data were collected. One might consider this dual role as an advantage, as I already know public school culture in B.C. as an insider, thus I could readily appropriate the participants' situated interactions and was better enabled to pursue richer interpretations of the inconspicuous underpinnings of the discursive interactions (Roth & Hsu, 2010). On the other hand, I also acknowledge the importance of self-identifying in this dual role and actively engaged in reflexivity to maintain scholarly integrity within the interpretation process.

Additionally, upon analysis of the discourse data, I recognize and acknowledge my positioning as a leader-participant in the study. I was appointed as the facilitator for the participant group by the district, and power was inherent to this leadership role. As such, I likely influenced how fellow participants engaged in the professional development activities and instructional leadership norms that I promoted in this context.

Further, due to my passionate advocacy for students who struggle at school, I feel that educational leadership has a duty to focus on improving learning opportunities for all learners. In seeking to carry out this assigned facilitation duty to the best of my ability, I strove to encourage an instructional leadership stance that aligned with the aforementioned student advocacy goal. For example, it is important to note that this intention underpinned my decision to move into a more directive stance with fellow participants than I had originally envisioned at the outset of the professional development series, in response to the prolonged cynical and political discourse that emerged in Session 1. As I elaborate in the findings, I adopted a lecture-style discourse to build background knowledge in strategic instruction in Sessions 2 and 3, thus promoting this

pedagogy as a dominant discourse for the group, moving our discussions back toward a focus on to how to ensure success for vulnerable learners at school and a more optimistic outlook for what is possible in public education.

Herein, I acknowledge and have reflected on my presence, behaviour, and beliefs as an influence in the study (Heath & Street, 2008; Roth & Hsu, 2010). I engaged in a continuous bracketing process (Ahern, 1999) throughout, identifying and clarifying my personal values and perspectives as they related to observations and analysis (Ahern, 1999; Heath & Street, 2008; Roth & Hsu, 2010; Parker, 2013). I was mindful to continuously reference the aforementioned methodological tools to consider and then reconsider observations, analysis, and interpretations throughout the study. In this way, I endeavoured to surface and address my personal and professional presumptions and pursue this study with scholarly intent.

Additionally, in discourse analysis, the researcher acknowledges the noteworthy role that perspective plays in the interpretive analysis process and the professional academic discourse used in the write-up that represents his/her thinking, as well as the discourse data (Finlay, 2002). Thus, I discussed in depth the sociocultural theoretical framework that was used to inform the study and the specific aspects of the two discourse analysis methodologies that were used as the analytic tools and provided examples from the analysis process for further clarification. In so doing, I believe I have situated this discourse analysis in such a way so that the reader can consider the findings with a clear understanding of the analyst's perspective in mind.

It was through a critical discourse analytic lens that I was better able to scrutinize the data beyond the taken-for-granted meanings (Gee, 2011a; Rogers & Wetzel, 2014; Roth

& Hsu, 2010) of the content topics and social interactions as I had experienced them as the facilitator during the professional development series. I believe that this critical lens was especially beneficial as a researcher-participant and appreciated how it enabled me to pursue the data analysis process with suitable academic rigor.

Dependability

Discourse analysis is an interpretive methodology, where the dependability of findings hinges on the researcher's ability to account for his/her findings in direct reference to the discourse data under examination. From this perspective, the analyst must elucidate interpretations that are consistent and identifiable with the data source. For this reason, "text extracts are a necessary basis for the researcher's argumentation in the research report, and they also provide the linguistic evidence for the researcher's interpretations" (Talja, 1999, p.13). Additionally, the analysis itself needs to be readily "traceable and repeatable for others" (Roth & Hsu, 2010, p. 212), thus establishing a defensible reliability for the findings as an interpretation. Overall,

analytic credibility depends on the coherence of the argument: Readers will judge the trustworthiness of the process by how the analyst uses evidence from the [discourse] to support the main points and whether the building tasks of language converge toward a convincing explanation. (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1376)

In order to better ensure dependability within the present study, I checked and rechecked recursively each tentative hypothesis about the discourse against the aforementioned deliberative tools and guidelines (Gee, 2011a; Mercer, 2008) throughout the analysis. In addition, I clearly elaborated findings and their connections to the discourse analyzed so that readers would be well informed about the basis for interpretations.

Transferability

It is anticipated that the findings of the discourse analysis of the research will be transferable, as new understandings that emerged from this situated study may provide for further insights that can be applied to other similar contexts of teacher professional learning (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Roth & Hsu, 2010). It is important to note that as qualitative researchers, “what we research and what we report is that which is general, applicable to other situations and therefore of interest to other people rather than the particular in and of itself” (Roth & Hsu, 2010, p. 184). Throughout the analysis process, I was heedful of the broader scholarly and educational leadership literature to inform my decisions. In other words, in addition to pursuing my research questions through a sociocultural lens, the study was also guided by my genuine interest in making a contribution to this field of research specifically as well as to public education in general. Indeed I pursued answers to the research questions that could potentially inform improving school culture and professional practice. Although my study’s findings are inherently unique as situated, others will be able to recognize many similarities that speak to their own contexts and will adapt them accordingly. Because of its potential for transferability, the study is of significant import to future educational leadership practice, as well as scholarly knowledge construction in the fields of professional and adult learning.

Catalytic Validity

Catalytic validity refers to the degree of impact that practitioner research in professional settings can have on reorienting the researcher’s and participants’ view of reality and their role in support of beneficial change (Herr & Anderson, 2005). As

indicated by the feedback about their professional development experiences in the study, participants re-oriented their perspectives about what is possible through instructional practices in support of student engagement and success and their understandings about provincial educational directions. As a researcher-participant, I learned a great deal about how to improve my practice as a school district leader and this knowledge informs how I now approach school culture, professional learning, and instructional leadership development in the school district. I believe the staff with whom I work and the students in their classrooms and schools are experiencing the advantages of this applied research as well. I look forward to sharing the findings of the study with educators in my district, and with teacher leaders and principals throughout the education system provincially, hoping for a broader impact in understandings of and actions in developing collaborative school cultures.

Chapter Summary and Preview of Chapter 5

In Chapter 4 I have outlined the rationale for qualitative research design. In recognizing that language-in-use serves the function of collective sense-making and co-construction of knowledge, I selected discourse analysis as the methodology for the study. Specifically, I used selected building task tools from critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011a) to investigate representations and less noticeable agentive purposes in participant discourse and sociocultural discourse analysis (Mercer, 2008, 2010) to discern the participant group's development trajectory during a situated professional development phenomenon. In this chapter, I also elaborated the data collection and analysis, participant recruitment processes, as well as the researcher's stance. Additionally, I discussed the dependability, transferability, and catalytic validity of the

study. In Chapter 5 I present the main findings for each of the five sessions within the professional development series and then the main findings across all sessions.

Chapter 5

Findings

The purpose of my study was to examine how educators make sense of effective pedagogy during professional learning over time, to investigate the nature of their discourse during professional learning activity, and to reveal practices that are conducive to this type of workplace learning. In this chapter, I elaborate the main findings for each of the five sessions. I then address the main findings across sessions, discussing the shifts in discourse over the duration of the professional learning series.

Situating the Findings of this Study

The findings emerged from the collective discourse of eleven educators and me, as the facilitator, and are illustrated by means of multiple participant voices (at least three, however in most cases more). Additionally, main findings arose from analyses of participant written reflections during sessions and blog posts between sessions, and from artefacts and other examples of discourse accessed by participants, such as macro-contextual Discourse and assigned readings. Note that all references to participant names are pseudonyms (Alison, Ben, Beth, Bob, Henry, Janice, John, Linda, Lisa, Mary, and Tom) and I am the facilitator. Additionally, where direct quotations extracted from transcriptions are included in the findings, verb tense, grammar, and word choice in discourse remain as spoken and excerpts included in each session occurred during that particular session.

As discussed in the previous chapter, I used critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011a) to guide my examination of the social, cultural, and political actions that underpinned the interactions within the data. Sociocultural discourse analysis (Mercer, 2008, 2010) helped

me determine shifts in the developmental trajectory of the group across sessions. The overall interpretive analysis included an extensive iterative and recursive process characteristic of qualitative design. Below I elaborate the main findings by each of the five sessions. Note that a brief overview table of the main findings by session may orient the reader as needed (See Appendix I).

Main Findings from Session 1

In the following section, I elaborate the main findings from Session 1. I begin with an examination of the predominance of concurrent political Discourse and how it characterized the locus of control in the classroom and portrayal of students. Then, I discuss the way in which participant discourse emerged to consider pedagogical knowledge and student perspective-taking. Additionally, I consider how my facilitator discourse seemed to encourage an inquiry stance amongst participants.

Influence of macro-contextual political Discourse on participant discourse. This professional learning session started with a Think, Pair, Share (Lyman, 1981) activity structure where individuals first wrote down their reflections in response to prompting questions (see Appendix E), articulated some of their thinking verbally with a partner, and then were encouraged to share thoughts within the forum of the whole group. What I had intended as a brief icebreaker activity to get the group reflecting together around instructional leadership, as well as to establish collective reflection routines for discursive interactions, evolved into persuasive speech-like exchanges that dwelled on the infeasibility of success for all students at school and cynical comments about the future of public education. Participants seemed to be drawing from the macro-contextual Discourse of the concurrent political landscape. Although this professional learning

experience was literally located at the school board office away from schools, ongoing political conversations and strike talk from participants' work sites was infused throughout their discourse in this session.

Nature of the political Discourse at the macro-contextual level. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, at the time of the research the concurrent educational macro-contextual landscape was characterized by entrenched discord between the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and the provincial government. Participant discourse in Session 1 reiterated the political Discourse from the BCTF, wherein governmental control and standardized testing were aligned with professional issues of accountability and autonomy. This political Discourse was emotionally charged. As such, it was perhaps not too surprising that participant discourse during this session seemed to draw from this discursive resource to talk about educational topics even though it was not the intended instructional leadership focus of the series.

How this political Discourse emerged in participant discourse. At times, participants referred directly to political Discourse. For example, perceived governmental surveillance of teachers through mandated exams was articulated by John, "Even though it's required, we're measured against it", and Lisa, "teachers are judged on the results," while Alison alluded to the BCTF's campaign to challenge this perceived control, as "we write our letters" to governmental officials. These macro-contextual references seemed to function "in the service of enacting specific socially recognizable identities" (Gee, 2011a, p. 177) affiliated with the BCTF and were explicitly aligned with concurrent strike talk. Prevalent in participant discourse during were subtle allusions to political Discourse

topics of teacher professional autonomy and accountability, as well as to the challenges of student diversity in the classroom.

External locus of control over teaching and learning. Participants intimated political Discourse by constructing public education as largely controlled by external influences beyond the school context. These influences included societal expectations in general, as Henry stated, “You know our society forces this...this, this, this, this, you know, education, the need to educate ‘all students’” and Linda pointed to related family expectations more specifically, “there's also pressure from students and parents ... because they want to attain those grades to be within certain scholarships, to get into certain schools.” In this way, participant discourse highlighted what was happening for students outside of school as an impediment to their ability to learn in school. In addition, parents were portrayed as hampering progressive teaching practices as their notions of a good education were based on “traditional systems so they get frightened and they start questioning the weird English teacher is doing, what's that called? Formative assessment, what is that?” (Janice).

Similarly, participant discourse positioned the government as an autocratic and obstructive system, distinct from teachers and disassociated from sound educational practice. The following participant speech illustrates an example of how this portrayal unfolded:

It's difficult to operate in a system as educators that was not created by educators. Often the government whose mandates these things for, don't have a background in education...so we're sort of forced to work within the system and try to make the best of it that we can. And...kids are asked to that too, right? and you're in a

system that may not fit you the best, that may not value the way you learn the best, but we're doing the best we can within that system. So, I think until...we're at a point where we can make more of the decisions, and...get to...the policy makers, we're always going to find ourselves at a bit of a deficit that way.

(Alison)

In this discursive turn, Alison portrayed public education as “the system”, a monolithic bureaucracy that contrasted with teachers’ values, as in “not created by educators.” The unfavourable reference to “statistics and other things” aligned with the BCTF’s disagreement with publicly reported achievement data that was largely derived from mandated provincial assessment results. Here, this “system” was characterized as an obstacle to student success, as it “may not value the way you learn,” and suggested an oppressive influence on everyday teacher practice, as “we’re forced to work within” it. Especially interesting was how “the (education) system” was constructed here as an institution that was distinct from the teachers and students who participated within it. In other words, the implication was that staff and students had inconsequential control over what happened in schools. This discourse implied a sense of resignation about why improvements in education were unrealistic, as in “we're always going to find ourselves at a bit of a deficit that way,” suggesting that agency to make “decisions” about teaching and learning was in the hands of the “policy makers.”

Correspondingly, “standardized testing” surfaced frequently as a primary means of governmental control, where provincial exams prevented students from reaching their potential as “independent thinkers and have a sense of themselves and the world and the values and how they learn best” (Tom). Participants portrayed exams as the consequential

driver behind less-than-desirable teacher practices, as Lisa asked, “Do you want to be teaching to the test?” and Janice personified them as preventing progressive pedagogies: “standardized testing does not value the process of learning...It values the end product.” In this way, participant discourse suggested that what happened in the classroom was determined by the government and that teachers and students had little control.

A focus on student deficit. Another tendency of participant discourse was an overemphasis on student deficit. Discourse about learners who struggle at school highlighted their lack of capacity. For example, Janice faulted students for selecting inappropriate learning options beyond their capacity, choosing to take “English 12, [when they] probably should have been doing Communications 12” and Alison suggested that when “students...don't fit into the academic...program” they should be “following mechanics or...woodworking or something else to kind of find their place so that they can excel or they have their niche.” Student underachievement was collectively expressed as resulting from unrecognized disabilities, they “should have designations” (Henry), and they were characterized as “responsible for their own learning” (Henry) and could “advocate for themselves” (Alison) even when they were struggling at school. However, the group never addressed exactly how all students could equitably take on this type of self-regulatory challenge.

Examination of teacher practice was conspicuously absent. In contrast, the work of teachers and their instructional practices were limited to vague references, such as “somebody throws a zero in the grade book” (Lisa), “so you have a group of kids, you're teaching them” (Tom) and “you can kinda set goals and work towards them” (Mary). Acknowledgement of a connection between teaching practice and student learning was

conspicuously absent. Instead, at times, participant discourse placed the teacher at the margins of what was happening in schools, such as in describing how students with special needs were supported in school:

Hypothetically, what's supposed to happen, the IEP is supposed to be in place with a set of adaptations that follow that student through, so that that teacher follows, so if the student that can't read, but they can understand everything if they hear it orally so they always have books on tape. (Alison)

Here, Alison portrayed the “teacher” as a peripheral participant in how an IEP would be enacted for the student and emphasis was placed on “books on tape” as learning support, and yet instructional practice, such as teaching the student how to read, was notably absent. The use of the word “hypothetically” alluded to conditions of poorly supported classrooms for students with special needs, suggesting again alignment with the aforementioned political Discourse. In this way, participants seemed to avoid specific references to teacher practices throughout Session 1.

Student diversity as strain on teaching and learning. Political Discourse around topics of student diversity in the classroom surfaced in participant discourse as well. At this time, the BCTF and the government were awaiting a provincial Supreme Court ruling around class-size and composition language that the government had previously removed from the collective agreement. The teachers’ union linked this removal with reductions in resource teacher staffing and characterized it as the reason for “deteriorating teaching and learning conditions in our schools” (BCTF, 2011, para. 4) and for “students who have learning problems and need extra help” (para. 2). Although participants acknowledged that differentiation was the preferred teaching approach to address student diversity in the

classroom, their discourse simultaneously constructed differentiation as an impractical pedagogy, aligning with BCTF Discourse. For example, the extract below, occurred during a discussion about the prompting questions I had provided (see Appendix E), illustrating this contradiction.

We both struggled with question number 4: ‘What do you feel are the best ways to address diversity?’ And so I said differentiation. John described differentiation so we're both saying this is a great approach, but...if I am constantly differentiating for the student, when and how do they become cognizant of what strategies work for them, when...it's being done to them rather than them figuring out for themselves?
(Janice)

Here Janice acknowledged “differentiation” as “a great approach” to address diversity among students, likely a cautious opening to soften the anticipated reactions to her later contrary assertion, wherein Janice then contradicted this view. She explained why a teacher should not differentiate, suggesting that it may even be detrimental to student learning, implying a dominating influence over students, where “it’s being done to them.” In this manner, participant discourse portrayed student diversity in a defeatist way and differentiation as an infeasible teacher practice.

At first blush, this type of discourse seemed to function as a means to rationalize why teacher practices did not need to change. Through the reiterative analysis process of the whole of the data, I later re-interpreted this tendency to be the result of a lack of confidence and experience with an instructional leadership stance among participants. It seems likely that participants were trying to portray themselves as knowledgeable about instructional topics, a perceived expectation for this novice group of educational leaders.

As previously mentioned, although the participants already knew me and knew one another, this particular context was an unfamiliar forum of leadership, and participants probably felt a level of vulnerability that encouraged their tendency toward defensive and persuasive discourse. In the above extract, for example, this participant positioned herself with a partner, “we both,” as well as qualified her assertion, “we sort of concluded,” seeming to access a less risky intersubjective space to talk about instructional topics at this early stage of the series. This phenomenon may have been illustrative of “legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where these novice instructional leaders were trying to figure out how to interact within this new work context. Likewise, participants struggled with how to elaborate on pedagogy during this session, as I discuss in the next section.

Baseline pedagogical knowledge in participant discourse. Another salient aspect of participant discourse was the frequency with which participants used the term “process” in reference to learning in the classroom, however it was a nebulous portrayal. For example, below John referred to “process” in describing how students might read articles in class:

So it doesn't matter that, that my depth of understanding of what I am able to draw out from that article is, is, is more substantial. That's not important here. I think it's as much about the fact you went through a process and you learned something about that process, right?

Particularly noteworthy was how participants struggled with articulating the specifics of what students would actually be doing during this “process” of learning, as in the above case. My analysis indicated that participants may not have had access to sufficient

pedagogical terminology to articulate specifics about their experiences with learning, nor had this group yet developed a common pedagogical knowledge base from which to work collectively through a more in-depth exploration of this “process.” Finding a way to move away from emphasizing the end result or “product” and its implied ranking of performances and students toward the valuing of learning progress or “process” was of great interest to this particular participant group and continued to be reiterated throughout this session.

Initial movement toward an inquiry stance. Throughout Session 1, participants did not readily respond to my gentle interjectory attempts at redirection toward instructional leadership discourse and much of my facilitator efforts seemed intent on sustaining rapport with participants, in spite of our misaligned discourse. It was not until Beth started to challenge expressed assumptions about grading practices where “we give out very few A's in our district according to the Ministry...and so we're quite hard on our kids and maybe we don't always need to be,” that there was a slight shift out of the predominant political Discourse. Other participants responded favourably by briefly considering the implications of teacher culture, and at the end of this exchange, Janice added, “That's a good question,” so the potential for an inquiry stance revealed itself. I recognized this break in participant discourse and tried to leverage this opening to move into more of an inquiry trajectory:

You guys are bringing up a lot of good questions...what is assessment? What is, how do we determine grades? What's process, what's product?...these are all really good questions... And what I wanted to do right now is...get from the group...What are you wondering about? What are you hoping for, from these sessions? (Me)

In this way, I reiterated the actual and implied approximation of instructional leadership questions from participant discourse that had emerged so far, hoping to highlight their contributions as possible lines of inquiry as well as trying to shift toward the intended object of study. At this point, I encouraged participants to consider “What are you hoping to get out of these, these sessions?” and prompted them with statements such as “I hear a question...in there somewhere,” working hard to sustain an inquiry stance in discussions. I recorded their co-constructed questions, such as “How do I (principals and vice principals) facilitate a school-wide/system-wide focus on student learning?” and “How do we shift toward engaging/meaningful learning activities?” on chart paper (see Appendix F) for all to see, and posted these questions as a reminder of professional learning intentions throughout subsequent sessions, thus reinforcing an inquiry norm for this context.

Accessing pedagogical understanding by adopting student perspective. Perhaps the most salient shift in participant discourse during this session occurred in the final activity, where participants role-played what it would be like to be a student who struggles with learning in traditional classrooms. The group worked through a few classroom simulations where I played the role of teacher and assigned them typical tasks that were difficult to accomplish. During the debrief discussion, participants seemed to empathize with students, as they described their experiences. For example, Alison noticed, “there isn't any interest at all. There's no motivation.” Beth shared, “don't ask me about what we just talked about” and Janice pointed out, “we'll only know it long enough to regurgitate it and then it'll be gone.” Taking on the role of students seemed to help the

group move away from the tendency toward cynical discourse about learning that had previously predominated.

My immediate impressions as facilitator. In the immediate experience of Session 1, I felt quite surprised and disappointed at the nature of participant discourse overall. I had not expected such a preponderance of cynical characterizations of students, implied lack of sense of practitioner responsibility, and negativity about public education among participants. At the time, I was quite confused by this talk, as I knew these educators to be caring and dedicated, yet their discourse did not reflect these qualities. Neither did this cynical discourse reflect that of what I would have expected from formal school leaders, as they now were.

In reflecting about the session afterwards, I was quite concerned about how difficult it had been to redirect the discussions toward a more optimistic and positive discourse. My gentle attempts to doing so during this session had had little impact. In response, I became more directive in my planning for Session 2 and took on a more active role in managing how the activities would unfold so that the focus of our time would be on the topic of pedagogy and supporting learners who struggle and routines that required increased turn-taking and active listening in conversations. In this way, I hoped that I could move the group away from continued dwelling in cynicism and back toward an instructional leadership development trajectory. It was not until I began the discourse analysis process that I was able to discern the influence of macro-contextual Discourse of the provincial, political conflict on immediate cynical discourse and that I could make sense of this contradiction from a researcher stance.

Session 1 Summary

In sum, participant discourse throughout Session 1 emerged as contrary to the intended object of instructional leadership, and seemed to have been drawn from the concurrent, political Discourse of the macro-context. Although participants began to articulate more of an inquiry stance when the group co-developed questions about what they wanted to learn, encouraged by my facilitation efforts, it was not until participants adopted student perspectives that a shift occurred toward a genuine consideration of learning in the classroom. Overall, at this point in the series, participant discourse seemed to indicate the peripheral participation of novice leaders and their uncertainty about instructional leadership norms.

Main Findings from Session 2

In the following section, I expand on the main findings from Session 2. I elaborate the way in which participants began to make sense of learning and how my facilitator discourse worked to build background knowledge in pedagogy and highlight an interrelationship between teacher practice and student learning. Throughout Session 2, participants were also more actively engaged in Think, Pair, Share interactions.

Emerging discourse about pedagogy. Using the reading about metacognition (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007) as the object of joint attention seemed to propel participant conversations more readily toward instructional practice and student learning. Unlike the previous session, analysis of the data also indicated increased instances of positive and optimistic turns about student learning within participant discourse. For example, Mary emphasized what students were able to do, “Kids read, they talk, they discuss...and then they reflect,” and Beth accessed a student perspective to make sense of the learning

process, “I’m just imagining that same struggling reader reading this book and suddenly there’s this...chart in the middle.” In these conversations, participants drew on ideas represented in the professional readings to discuss student learning and this phenomenon recurred throughout the session.

Artefacts as resource to support pedagogical discourse. Participant discourse became oriented toward an exploration of pedagogy, notably supported by the artefacts I provided: the readings, handouts, and videotaped lesson. Participants articulated specific examples that connected instruction to student learning and experimented with literacy terminology. For example, during a discussion about the gradual release of responsibility model of instruction, where explicit instruction, guided practice, and independent practice frame how to teach students reading comprehension strategies over time (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007), Lisa related her experiences with teaching practice to a diagram that represented this model of teaching (see Appendix I): “The part that most classes in my experience leave out is the students now do it in groups as the teacher walks around and checks in on people, which I think should be more emphasized in this diagram.” Similarly, Janice made connections to specific teaching application when trying to make sense of this diagram: “I would go as far as to say that lit circles would be one example...of guided practice.”

Additionally, participant discourse about learning contrasted the vague references to “process” in Session 1, reiterating this term herein with increased clarity. For example, Ben tried to elaborate the learning “process” by critiquing the aforementioned representation in this way: “it’s very linear...so whether it’s meant to be that way or not, this process starts with the teacher, and ends with the student...and there is probably a

whole lot of other stuff going on here in reality but that's what the graphic looks like to me." As he struggled to articulate what was missing from the graphic, John built on this notion by specifying "there's no opportunity for feedback", suggesting the responsive aspect of the teacher-student relationship, as well as implying the cyclical characteristic of assessment, instruction, and practice. Interpreting this artefact seemed to encourage more elaborated descriptions of what these educators knew about teaching and learning. My analysis indicated that introduced artefacts may have supported the group's ability to engage in joint attention around a common object for discussion and facilitated a space for collective sense making about pedagogy generally. In Session 2, this phenomenon seemed to be the early work in constructing a common pedagogical knowledge for the group.

Similarly, participant written reflections indicated that readings and discussions about reading comprehension enabled provisional reconsiderations of what the learning process could entail. For example, Linda wrote: "It seems that the attainment of reading comprehension skills is a very deliberate process. In order for readers to gain these skills, they truly need to be shown and be a part of the process." This reflection demonstrated a contrastive view of teaching and learning to that of Session 1, and pointed to an emerging pedagogical awareness around the potential for instructional practice within the learning process. John also had this conditional view of the learning process, and drew on previous discussions about strategic instruction and teacher feedback to develop metacognition:

Comprehension can be conceived of as a process which can be broken down into discrete strategies. This actually provides a mechanism by which we can assess the complexity of comprehension. The role of the teacher as a model is paramount.

Here, a contrastive view of the teacher as a central and “paramount” agent in student learning referred directly to portrayals from the readings, and indicated a clear shift from the oblique references to teachers that had emerged in Session 1. Similarly, Ben wrote about this emerging acknowledgement of teacher agency, as he referred to his own lack of experience with the introduced teaching strategies and shared how he looked forward to using them with his own students. Ben added that there was potential for differentiation in this type of learning process: “I can see the power of these methods to address a wide diversity of learners and engage them in the process that will benefit their personal learning.” This articulation suggested increased optimism about the potential for addressing student diversity in the classroom, also contrastive to the political Discourse from Session 1 on this topic. In this way, during Session 2, participants seemed to be experimenting with the ideas from the introduced pedagogical resources to expand on their understandings of “process” of learning. Their discourse revealed a tentative and detached elaboration of pedagogy through their use of phrases like “it seems that,” “can be conceived of,” and “I can see” in their reflections, suggesting a less than convinced acceptance of the introduced instructional practices. My analysis indicated this tendency in participant discourse at this point in the series may have been more about playing with the ideas and humouring my expectations than about participant commitment to notions of strategic instruction. Interestingly, the analysis indicated this type of discourse was likely how the group started to develop in-common ways to enhance their talk about the

learning “process” as pedagogy and was foundational to later development of ideology about the potentiality for instruction as a means to actively promote student learning. My facilitator discourse that worked at building background knowledge also seemed to encourage the emergence of a common pedagogical discourse, as I discuss below.

Building pedagogical knowledge. At times, I adopted a lecture-style of discourse during Session 2, responding to questions and confusions among participants with lengthy explanations and providing the learning rationales behind instructional practices discussed. This facilitator discourse seemed to serve the purpose of building background knowledge about pedagogy as well as promoting the assumption of an interconnection between instructional practices and student learning. My analysis indicated that I was also responding to the oblique references to teaching practice and political discourse that had emerged in participant discourse in the previous session. Through this lecture-style of discourse, I seemed to be encouraging the development of an alternative pedagogical Discourse (Gee, 2011a) for the group to use, one more aligned with an instructional leadership perspective. The following extract is demonstrative of this type of discourse:

We have learned through the research of leading educators in the field, particularly David Pearson, that comprehension has many strategies and sub skills that can be taught. OK? Now the exciting part for us as educators is that you actually can teach this, right? It can be done...teachers model comprehension. And how do they do that? They think out loud. Right? Um, when they're reading, they pause and they say what they're thinking.

Here I worked to convince participants of the connection between teaching practice and student learning by drawing on the broader macro-contextual Discourse of research as

authority. I then reiterated the approach to instruction as outlined in the professional resource, highlighting the emerging common pedagogical resource for the group. In this way, I made use of a lecture-type discourse to encourage a strategic instruction view of pedagogy, as well as to underscore the interconnection between instruction and learning, a key instructional leadership assumption. Interestingly, all of the participants were especially accommodating of this lecture-style discourse at this point in the series, as indicated by their attentiveness and active listening responses throughout. This type of participation, a plausible form of “legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), was likely due to a genuine interest in trying to make sense of this introduced pedagogical theory, and was also indicated by their active participation throughout the many partner talk opportunities.

Encouraging a focus on instructional practice. Throughout Session 2, I actively encouraged participant contributions related to instructional practice. For example, as Mary narrated her experience with professional learning, whenever she paused in her talk in reference to pedagogy, I prompted her to continue in this trajectory, using verbal cues, such as “Tell us more about that.” “Why? What's going on?” and “So what do you notice is the difference then?” In response to these prompts, Mary’s story included highlights about the importance of teachers keeping an open mind and trying new teaching strategies, as well as noticing how her students’ thinking had changed. Fostered by these types of discursive moves, participant accounts about their teaching experiences became more focused on details closely aligned with instructional leadership discourse.

Learning how to observe and talk about instructional practice. The group viewed a videotaped lesson that demonstrated the teaching practices that were discussed in the

readings. In introducing this activity, I explicitly asked participants to notice and record teacher practices and student learning behaviours, further reinforcing the assumption of a connection between instruction and learning. I also made direct references to key pedagogical concepts that had been discussed, such as gradual release of responsibility, modelling, and guided practice in framing what to observe about the teacher's practice. I seemed to be encouraging the adoption of an instructional leadership lens by orienting participant viewing in this way. This phenomenon, wherein I actively guided participants in what should be the object of our joint attention, may have been illustrative of how newcomers gain "access to arenas of mature practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 110) in ways that are supported by a more experienced colleague and are more likely to result in fruitful results that are relatively risk-free.

A range of observations emerged from participants during the post viewing discussion. For example, Tom articulated straightforward examples that drew from previous conversations: the teacher in the video "sort of modeled but also directed how to approach the article by having them all look at the pictures, and look at the titles...and then also connect that to some of their knowledge of the environment..." Other participants referred to and then built on ideas from earlier in the session. For example, Lisa reiterated the technical language drawn from the professional book and previous conversations about metacognition, and explained how learning in the classroom would connect over time, across lessons:

And well I think that she's activating some, when she's talking about remember how, how you guys care about the environment, and this and that, she's activating background knowledge...from previous classes. Making sure that that lesson is

connected back to the learning. It's not just a one off this is what we're doing, when it's over, it's done.

Here, Lisa further elaborated her observations by accessing what she knew from her own teaching experiences to infer that this lesson was situated among many others. By connecting the introduced pedagogical theory with her experiential knowledge as a practitioner, she seemed to be demonstrating a deeper understanding of what might be happening in this observed classroom. My analysis indicated that having a concrete referent, in this case the videotaped lesson, to collectively consider and discuss likely encouraged this possibility.

Specific guidelines for viewing also seemed to facilitate a sustained joint attention on the topic of instruction that further enabled a more sophisticated consideration of pedagogy. This phenomenon is similar to findings about promoting intersubjectivity as a space where collective thinking and meaning making can occur (Mercer, 2002; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Roth & Hsu, 2010; Rowe, 2011; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) to enhance learning in the workplace, such as the benefits of professional development “through engaging in goal-directed work activities and interactions” (Billett, 2014, p. 208). In this case specifically, post-viewing participant discourse indicated productive activity from the perspective of encouraging sustained intersubjectivity in support of the development of common pedagogical knowledge for the group.

Connecting shared experiences to new pedagogical understandings. As the facilitator, I leveraged opportunities to construct a causal relationship between teaching practice and student learning by using shared activity experiences as analogy. For example, I prompted participants to reflect back on their own experiences in learning

during the many partner-talk opportunities within the session and consider how these related to the topic of discussion as conducive to student learning. In doing so, I frequently reiterated the term “process” which had now become a shared term for learning in the group; however, I elaborated its meaning, using it to refer to how people were engaging in partner talk conversations to learn more about instruction. This phenomenon may have been illustrative of how “spontaneous” (Vygotsky, 1986) conceptual understandings, as in those related to everyday experiences, can be used to strengthen “scientific” (Vygotsky, 1986) conceptual understandings, as in specialized discourse designed to deepen the group’s professional knowledge and practice.

Particularly insightful discourse about teaching and learning emerged as participants reflected on their own experiences as learners during this activity. The safety of talking with a partner about ideas, before having to risk sharing with the larger group and the teacher, was recognized in participant discourse, as illustrated by Ben’s comment: “you got a little bit of comfort. You tested your idea on somebody else. And, and, uh, get their feedback and see if it, if what you are trying to tell them is clear.” Linda added that sharing with a partner first “allows you to...build on an idea that you had because you may not have thought of a particular aspect and your partner could contribute to that,” elaborating learning as a meaning-making process, where co-construction and evolution of thinking was made possible through talk with peers. In reflecting on shared experiences in their own professional learning and connecting them to what had been discussed about pedagogy throughout the session, participants appeared to be furthering their awareness about the potential for learning as a “process.” Additionally, the

beginnings of a shared recognition for the potential of teaching and learning became apparent.

Initial demonstrations of instructional leadership. At this point, participants were beginning to delve more deeply into the notion of an interrelationship between instruction and student learning. Within this fledgling instructional leadership community, discourse revealed that a few participants were beginning to experiment with the notion of what it might be like to apply what they were learning to their own teaching practice. Still others were beginning to think about instruction from a leadership stance, wondering about implications for implementing effective teacher practices school-wide. For example, Alison wrote about possibilities for teacher capacity building and seemed to be on the verge of grasping the potentiality of teacher collaboration as it related to improving instruction.

Thoughts that remain with me are the most feasible methods of introducing these strategies into a school-wide practice that would facilitate active and enthusiastic teacher participation. Some thoughts are modeling lessons to teachers in their classroom, group discussions during staff meetings, Pro D opportunities...I suppose that it could be viable to shift instruction in a school-wide manner if improving literacy was an agreed upon goal decided upon by staff.

Interestingly, this discourse pointed to teacher agency, when Alison said “active and enthusiastic participation” alluding to the influence of teacher culture on the successful implementation of instructional practices, as in the “agreed upon goal decided by staff.” Herein, she recognized control over practice as an internal influence within the school and among staff members, a significant contrast to participant discourse in Session 1.

Along similar lines and worthy of mention, a few participants began to cautiously approach the question of teacher capacity in their discourse. Janice broached the question of educational background, “Trained as a secondary teacher, you were never given those tools when you were going through teacher training, right?” and Lisa alluded to traditional, transmission approaches, “the other thing I hear from a lot of teachers is how on Earth can I take the time to model...and teach these strategies. I have a curriculum...to cover.” These two comments were the only discursive turns that referenced concerns about teacher instructional practices at this point in the group’s professional learning journey. It was likely that this topic was still a delicate, and thus risky one for the group to examine, especially in light of the continuing political turmoil all were experiencing at their worksites.

Session 2 Summary

In sum, overall discourse in Session 2 was oriented toward building background knowledge in pedagogy and making sense of the interrelationship between instruction and student learning. Participants were more actively engaged in turn-taking conversations, when contrasted with the previous session, and frequently used provided pedagogical artefacts as supports in elaborating their conversations about the learning process. As the facilitator, I adopted a lecture-style discourse at times, explaining and clarifying pedagogical concepts, actively encouraged participants to elaborate pedagogical aspects of their accounts, and to observe classroom behaviours from an instructional leadership lens. Participants also reflected on how their shared professional learning experiences within the sessions related to the developing understandings of pedagogical theory.

Main Findings from Session 3

In this section, I discuss the main findings from Session 3. I expand on how participant discourse continued to develop understandings about the potential for instruction, and how I encouraged further participant contributions about pedagogy and noticing the influence of teacher practice on student learning.

Emerging commitment to productive discourse. In Session 3, participants increased turn-taking during discussions. They were likely becoming more familiar and comfortable with one another in this context; however, a group commitment to make more sense of pedagogy seemed to emerge as well. Generally, participants appeared to be more disposed toward professional learning discourse about instruction and learning.

As a group, participants also engaged in more instances of interactive discourse that encouraged collective negotiation of common understandings. For example, negotiation occurred during a discussion about student engagement, one of the key pedagogical concepts that the group was considering. Just previously, I had been advocating for student choice of text in literacy learning, and at this point, Janice was not convinced that allowing for choice in a secondary classroom was realistic.

JANICE: So, you have to kind of limit their choices because you have to expose them to the type of literature that they're going to be faced with on the exam.

FACILITATOR: Yeah.

JANICE: So, I didn't give a lot of freedom when it came to, I don't know.

FACILITATOR: Yeah, I hear what you're saying.

HENRY: Now how does that, how does that promote literacy in, you know what I mean? It's almost like a double-edged sword. Linda and I were talking about that,

that there's too much choice. A lot of the times there's too much choice in terms of what kids have to read and what they can read.

FACILITATOR: Yeah, definitely, and they need to do both.

In this extract, Janice drew once again on the standardized testing topic from previous conversations, implying pressure “to kind of limit their choices” given that she felt the “type of literature” she could teach was predetermined by this exam. As the facilitator, I interjected, using the backchannel “yeah” a couple of times to communicate actively listening, yet not necessarily agreeing with her assertion as implied in the statement: “Yeah, I hear what you're saying.” In other words, I was following her thinking, but was not necessarily of the same opinion. What is particularly salient about this illustration was how Henry gently challenged Janice's opinion with a question that focused the group back onto the relevant object of study, student learning: “How does that promote literacy?” This type of sporadic intervention from participants to redirect the discourse trajectory was a noteworthy contrast to previous sessions. In this case specifically, an anticipated cynical dwelling on standardized testing once again by the group was avoided and pedagogical knowledge building conversations continued. Interestingly, Henry worked to acknowledge both Janice's and my contrasting opinions through his use of the metaphor “double-edged sword” and reference to both “what kids have to read” and “what they can read.” This type of intervention seemed to function effectively as a way to reconcile contrastive views in a friendly manner that was readily accepted by group members, and integrated multiple perspectives into an enhanced negotiated meaning that would be in common and accessible as knowledge resource to all community members. In this manner, more active commitment to working together within pedagogical

discourse was emerging among participants, seeming to better enable an “ongoing process through which similarities, commonalities and distinctive conceptions of knowledge and knowing” (Billet, 2014, p. 207) could occur and facilitate constructive professional learning conversations.

Acknowledgement of interrelationship between instruction and learning. As discussions continued about pedagogy, a range of participant perspectives emerged around the interrelationship between instruction and learning. Some participant discourse unfolded as a dubious acknowledgement of what was possible for teachers to accomplish through their instruction, as in Tom’s comment “I think the think aloud could work really, really well sometimes, but you have to be incredibly well prepared for that and know your audience and know what you're going to connect with them.” Other participants made sense of conversations about instruction by relating it to their own teaching, such as how Ben explained, “I deal with a lot of kids like that and what am I going to do differently in Grade 9 science...allows me to teach them how to read the book.” Some made indirect connections between the approaches discussed and tried to make sense of them by relating to approximate variations from their own practice, as in how Lisa related strategic instruction to teaching students how to write multiple choice exams, by “going through all the different strategies to find the right answer.” In this case, the purpose of strategic instruction as a way to develop thoughtfulness in students was missed; however, the specific practice was recognized. Still others seemed to be grappling with the notion of strategic instruction from a space of deeper understanding, recognizing potential for learning about metacognition: “unconsciously creating the edge of my brain with writing, how do you, how do you help a student who struggles, make

them cognizant of the images they have?” (Janice). Although participant discourse represented varying degrees of conceptual understanding in terms of what was possible as instruction, they all revealed making sense of how teacher practices could purposefully impact student learning, a notable contrast from previous sessions. Some participants, in connecting strategic instruction to approximations of practices from their own teaching experiences, may have been working to internalize an externally introduced cultural assumption (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Overall, this emerging acknowledgement of an interrelationship between instruction and student learning by the group appeared to be setting a foundation for an instructional leadership stance.

Explanatory discourse predominated my facilitator talk. At times during this session, my facilitator discourse included lengthy turns that were explanatory in nature, elaborating instructional practices and concepts when participants seemed to require support in making sense of the pedagogical theory discussed. For example, I clarified how to prepare a think aloud, in response to Tom’s questions about how to demonstrate complex thinking in a way that students could understand.

You probably don’t want to share every thought that comes in your head because there will be lots of them and for teaching purposes that's not very practical. You probably want to, to focus on one strategy at a time and you would be anticipating where you think the break down in understanding would happen for your audience...you’d have to bring your thinking down to a level that makes sense, and that's where the part of the gradual release of responsibility is around scaffolding the learning...starting...from where the kids are and then moving them ahead.

In this turn, I walked participants through the background thinking of a teacher planning for instruction, reiterating pedagogical terminology such as gradual release of responsibility to encourage continued development of conceptual understanding. I implied progressive ideology that was student-centered, where the needs and interests of students inform instruction. In this way, I reinforced prior discussions about purposeful instruction that leads to successful learning. This phenomenon may exemplify a workplace version of Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" (p. 86), where a more experienced facilitator attends to where colleagues are in their understandings and responds in support of further conceptual development. Participants seemed to be very receptive during these explanations that interrupted the interactive rhythms of their conversations, suggesting willingness to further refine their understandings.

Applying developing technical language to make sense of pedagogy. Participant discourse indicated they were becoming increasingly familiar with introduced pedagogical technical language encouraged by the multiple cultural artefacts and previous discussions. For example, I asked participants to reread their reflection responses from the homework and to identify the reading comprehension strategies they had used within that thinking, thus encouraging them to apply this specialized language in a familiar context. Below Linda's explanation to her partner is illustrative of how participants were experimenting with technical language throughout this session:

My response was to show, teach children how to reflect on their reading and learning. So, I would think that would be a connection, I would think. Uh, each will decide what is most important as seen from their own schema, so I think almost

that's an inference, um and then I'll have to combine that info gleaned from the reading and the relevant prior knowledge.

In this turn, Linda tentatively applied the introduced strategic instruction terms of connection, schema, inference, and prior knowledge, pointing to the newness of using this language to describe her observations. She used the conditional tense twice in the phrase "I would think" in reference to connection and expressed her hesitancy in the phrase "I think almost" in reference to inference. On the other hand, Linda seemed confident in her identification and use of schema and prior knowledge, perhaps terms with which she was more familiar.

This tentative use of this technical language was predominant among participant discourse during Session 3. This phenomenon may be illustrative of the relative novice utilizing specialized tools to make sense of and further develop understandings (Wertsch & Kazak, 2011), in this case using reading comprehension strategy terms to help spell out what happens during the abstract activity of reflection. It is likely that these words in and of themselves were not necessarily or completely new to these participants; however, it seemed that the way in which they had become a means to identify specific abstract pedagogical concepts and to communicate observations with colleagues gave these terms a novice level of functionality. Additionally, in becoming familiar with the appropriate use of this technical language, it is plausible that participants were encouraged to notice what might be relevant to pedagogical conversations and observations (Mercer, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) from an instructional leadership stance. In this way, through their discourse, participants appeared to be practicing how to enact

this type of social institution (Gunnarsson, 2009; Mumby & Mease, 2011; Roth & Hsu, 2010; Wenger et al., 2002), a professional learning community focused on instruction.

Role-playing the work of instructional leadership. In Session 3, participants once again viewed a videotaped lesson; however, this time I guided the viewing and the following discussion by encouraging participants to adopt the lens of supervision of learning. I asked them to observe as if they were going to give this teacher descriptive feedback about his lesson. I framed the activity for success by being explicit in the relevant expectations for this type of observation work, connecting it to previous discussions about how to provide supportive descriptive feedback from a strengths-based approach, such as starting by “giving lots of feedback about what’s going right.” In this activity, participants applied the pedagogical theory to a realistic responsibility of school-based vice-principals from an instructional leadership standpoint in a relatively low-risk and supported context. I seemed to be prompting increased participation among these novice leaders, moving them beyond legitimate peripheral participation (Wenger et al., 2002) toward an adoption of instructional leadership responsibility.

Supporting tentative pedagogical contributions. During the debrief, I continued to support participant efforts at identifying the interrelationship between teacher practices and student learning, frequently interjecting supportive active listening backchannels such as “yes” and “right.” I used this type of facilitator discursive tactic regularly throughout Session 3 and it seemed to function as confirmation to encourage participants when they seemed tentative in sharing their ideas about pedagogy. Interestingly, throughout this session, participants seemed to be seeking out this support from me as they tested their ideas with the group and they responded favourably to this sort

encouragement. This phenomenon suggested an intersubjective space where a more experienced colleague acted as a readily available resource that could respond immediately as confirmation for less experienced participants (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011). These types of supportive backchannels in response to tentative participant contributions about pedagogy likely fostered the development of increased fluency in and confidence with pedagogical discourse among participants, as evidenced in subsequent sessions.

Recognizing instruction in teacher practice. Additionally, during this video debriefing discussion, many turns in participant discourse suggested more developed pedagogical understandings when contrasted with Sessions 1 and 2. For example, in reference to how teacher practice can encourage students who struggle to meet high expectations, Janice noted, “he challenges them to articulate what they’re thinking.” Lisa expressed appreciation for how “he had the students generating their own questions...so like you could go back to that later because that’s what they’re interested in, that’s what they want to know from the article,” and Henry pointed to how “he came back to the, their original questions...To make sure they were answered.” Throughout this discussion, participant discourse demonstrated application of ideas from previous readings, discussions, and activities to recognize and expand on how teacher practice could influence student engagement in learning.

Similarly, other comments indicated that participants were making deeper sense of the pedagogical concept of instruction as teacher practice, noticing subtleties. For example, Beth observed the following:

And so he facilitated that really well. So, I don't get that the blonde girl ever felt that she was wrong. Just it's just like a discussion as opposed to a, um, direct yes, no or right, wrong...and his skill is in NOT saying hmm I think you're wrong. He's not, he's letting them discover this all on their own.

Here, Beth noticed how the observed teacher managed a mistake made by one of the students who clearly struggled greatly in comprehending the reading during the lesson. Rather than pointing out her error, he directed a question to the group that reframed the problem in such a way that the student could safely change her thinking by drawing on the ideas of her peers. One had the sense that the teacher in the video had already established a routine of risk-taking and making it acceptable for these students to change their minds. These nuances of pedagogical intentionality to explain what was behind observations of teacher behaviour and how it influenced student behaviour seemed to draw on previous conversations and readings about guided practice and gradual release of responsibility, as cultural resources. In a similar way, Tom referred to previous work done together to explain observed teacher practice in this way: "he is very active in his guidance ... He's not letting the conversation meander any old place ... He's keeping it very focused even though he's allowing" the students to act as the primary contributors to their group discussion. Tom made sense of subtle teacher practice by alluding to previous conversations about how skilled instruction included directing the orientation of learning toward particular goals while sustaining student engagement and ownership of the learning. Participants' discernment of this less overt teacher facilitation and guidance demonstrated a noteworthy development in sophistication in how these participants approached discussions about pedagogy when contrasted with previous sessions. In

addition, participants began to express increased enthusiasm in sharing their observations, perhaps indicating an emerging appreciation for the potential of expertise in teacher practice as well as their developing confidence in making sense of pedagogy.

Emerging common pedagogical knowledge. In their written reflections during Session 3, participants began to articulate what seemed to be an emerging common pedagogical knowledge specific to this developing professional learning community. This knowledge seemed to draw on the collectively accessible resources of their shared history within this professional learning series as well as the aforementioned cultural artefacts about pedagogy. Beth's written reflection illustrates this phenomenon.

Making the shift to meaningful learning includes opening up opportunities for all students, regardless of ability, to succeed. Learning to pause and reflect, to consider multiple texts and to present understanding using your strengths. Presenting using what you know, from multiple sources and questioning based on passion, visual, written, artistic, dramatic allows for choice and ability to show when you have met the learning outcomes.

Here, Beth referred back to strategic instructional practices we had explored such as the think aloud strategy, "learning to pause and reflect," and providing readings of differing levels so that all students could access learning, "consider multiple texts." This response also drew on discussions about formative assessment from a strengths-based perspective, "present understanding using your strengths", and reiterated shared ideas about student engagement in her selection of the words "passion" and "choice". What is especially interesting about this particular reflection is how, in consolidating many of the pedagogical concepts discussed throughout this series so far, it represented a brief

synthesis of the pedagogical concept of differentiation. The reflection also demonstrated a greater depth of pedagogical understanding than was indicated by the non-specific descriptions and simplistic references to teaching and learning in participant discourse from previous sessions. Temporal analysis (Mercer, 2007, 2008) of discourse across sessions suggested that participants were developing an increased sophistication and specificity in their articulation of pedagogical topics, as this reflection demonstrated. This phenomenon may have been an example of how participants were mediating internalization of conceptual understanding through shared experiences with common cultural resources (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) within this professional learning context. In this way, this community of educators seemed to be appropriating the discourse of an emerging common pedagogical knowledge that made sense to them and was distinguishable to this context.

Session 3 Summary

In sum, Session 3 participant discourse showed development of common pedagogical understandings enabled by collective access to shared professional learning experiences and cultural resources. Discourse featured increased interaction that was constructive for pedagogical meaning making. As the facilitator, I continued to encourage participants to elaborate their thinking about the interrelationship between instruction and student learning. Overall, the increased interactive and constructive efforts in participant discourse that focused on pedagogy specifically seemed to foster instances of collective thinking and the co-construction of common pedagogical knowledge for this community.

Main Findings from Session 4

In the following section I discuss the main findings from Session 4. I elaborate how this session emerged as a turning point in this community's overall professional learning trajectory, including a noteworthy increase in participant confidence with and commitment to pedagogical sense-making and knowledge development.

Increased fluency with pedagogical discourse among participants. In Session 4, participants demonstrated increased fluency with introduced technical terminology in their discourse about pedagogy, suggesting a corresponding deepening of their collective understanding. In contrast to Session 1, where references to learning emerged as nebulous articulations about process, participants now readily shared their pedagogical knowledge with greater clarity and specificity. Additionally, they did so with much less active facilitation from me when compared to Sessions 2 and 3. Collective confidence with pedagogical discourse was especially apparent during a debrief viewing of a videotaped lesson, where participants perceived and described the teacher's subtle practices in terms of actively guiding student ownership of learning among disenfranchised youth with much insight. For example, Lisa noted that the teacher was "strategically...get[ting] students to explain their thinking," Tom added how she was "sharing her own discomfort," and Janice noticed how she was "normalizing the challenge." Participants inferred that there were underlying instructional purposes to the teacher's actions, pointing out that her practices were encouraging students to believe "that they can be critical thinkers" (Beth). Similarly, Lisa recognized the approach of being "really explicit about teaching how we sit in the circle, how we, how we talk, how we respect each other" as a response to helping students learn how to engage in this type of academic activity.

Interestingly, this participant discourse was in direct contrast with student deficit discourse from early sessions, suggesting a shift in how learners were now perceived and how teacher responsibility to students who struggle had emerged. It is important to note that it is unlikely that participants would have recognized an interrelationship between teacher practice and student engagement in this way, especially for learners who struggle, during early sessions as they did not have this same level of access to cultural resources about teacher practice that could enable this potentiality.

Continuous development of common pedagogical knowledge. The development of this group's common pedagogical knowledge was ongoing as revealed by instances where discord emerged between understandings. For example, some participants continued to grapple with the pedagogical concept of student-centredness. In reference to her observations from the videotaped lesson, Janice misinterpreted the teacher's practice in this way: "But she was talking a lot, right? And in some cases ... from a critical perspective, when you talk about student-centred versus teacher-centred, this is very teacher-centred ... for that particular ... learning event." This turn pointed to how the pedagogical concept of student-centered was narrowly conceptualized in terms of who was doing more of the talking within a lesson, rather than in terms of how the specific developmental needs of these learners were being addressed (Vygotsky, 1978). The ensuing conversation indicated that some participants, in spite of previous conversations about assessment to inform instruction, had not yet connected these to how student-centered necessitated consideration of student learning needs and interests. This particular participant observation triggered a lengthy discussion about this complex pedagogical concept, supported by my in-depth explanations. This situation may have

been indicative of how, even though the understanding of the term student-centred represented differing depths among members of the group, it had still served to function as a means to continue conversations and sense-making about pedagogy generally (Wertsch & Kazak, 2011). In addition, the ensuing conversation emerged as a growth opportunity to further deepen the community's common pedagogical knowledge, where members worked toward a more sophisticated collective understanding of this key concept.

Reconsidering teacher influence in the classroom. In Session 4, participants seemed particularly interested in making sense of the influential role of other teachers from their own schools in how student learning unfolded. Discussions began to move more constructively into teacher capacity building as an aspect of instructional leadership. In noteworthy contrast to the oblique characterizations of teacher practice in Session 1, during Session 4, teachers were clearly portrayed as the primary influence on what happened for students in classrooms and in schools. Participants were also applying this community's developing common pedagogical knowledge to their accounts about immediate experiences with teachers. On the other hand, at times, they appeared to approach more controversial topics by pointing to teacher practices at a less risky arm's-length manner by referring to those in the readings and videos. This phenomenon may have been illustrative of how these novice instructional leaders were transitioning into more active participation, developing increased confidence within this community of practice and embodying "its characteristic biographies/trajectories, relationships and practices" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 55).

Interestingly, it seemed that this apparent shift in participation toward instructional leadership encouraged a reconsideration of how participants accounted their school-based experiences, such as how teacher practices influence student engagement. For example, in elaborating the topic of student boredom, Lisa explained, “if I’m not interested and engaged in what I’m teaching, the kids are going to pick up on it so quickly ... And if I’m not interested, why should they be?” Similarly, in conversations about effective instruction in the classroom, Henry pointed to the need for “kids [who] are ... clearly engaged” and Janice noted that expert teachers “very cleverly related” learning tasks to their students’ interests. This reconsideration of student engagement as tied to teacher practice was a noteworthy contrast to participant discourse in early sessions, where challenges like student boredom were portrayed as inevitable realities of the classroom.

Generally, in Session 4, a shift in participant discourse had occurred, indicating the assumption that teacher practices were instrumental to student learning in the classroom. This phenomenon likely followed that of collective agreement for this group, encouraged by shared experiences throughout this series around what had become “true-for-them” (van Dijk, 2011, p. 385) about pedagogy, and participants were now working on this assumption to make sense of their educational experiences. This reconsidered collective assumption about teacher influence over learning seemed to indicate a shift in “beliefs...as knowledge in [this] community ... [and its] public discourse” (van Dijk, 2011, p. 385) that was plausibly fostered by the shared history of discussions and activities focused on instruction during Sessions 2 and 3.

Shifts in my facilitator role. In Session 4, data analysis revealed a notable shift in my facilitator role; my discourse was more integrated with that of participants,

contrasting the lecture-type and explanatory discourse of previous sessions. Generally, participant discourse and my discourse had become more aligned, as indicated through the use of similar specialized terminology, increased active listening and turn-taking to build on one another's thinking, and collective commitment to jointly attend to relevant pedagogical topics throughout the session. At times, I continued to work at facilitating discussions through the use of interjections to encourage conversations to go deeper into collective sense-making. These interjections, such as "Anything else?", "And why is that?", "I think the whole thing is just a symptom of a bigger assumption" and "What is the, what is the message?" functioned to prompt further elaboration about instruction and learning from participants. In contrast to previous sessions, participants now seemed to recognize these types of facilitative prompts and responded by moving more readily into complex considerations of indicated topics. Conversely, I appeared to be responding to the group's increased confidence with how to talk about pedagogy by interjecting only when conversations became mired in details or were repetitive.

Participants' increasingly self-regulated conversations. Participant discourse during Session 4 indicated increased collective self-regulation that supported more frequent opportunities for intersubjective space to discuss topics relevant to instructional leadership. This discourse suggested a collective interest in investigating more deeply the underlying complexities and challenges inherent to school contexts as well as an openness to test possible solutions with one another and imagining what other possibilities could be. A perceived atmosphere of safety within this more established professional community may have afforded more open talk about potentially contentious

and politically charged topics, such as the closer examination of teacher practice and concerns.

Additionally, my analysis pointed to the way in which all members of this community interacted discursively during discussions in Session 4. For example, in one discussion, participants shared their contrasting accounts about a school-based challenge where some teachers were refusing students entry when arriving late to class. Herein, they actively listened to and built on one another's discursive turns and sought out and considered the insights of their colleagues. Unlike previous sessions, they responded to one another's expressed thoughts and then added their own thinking more frequently. For example, Lisa accounted how she talked with a teacher about his approach by pointing out the unintended message he was conveying to his students. In response to this idea, Linda explicitly acknowledged her contribution and then considered how she could apply it to her own school's context.

LISA: I really like your question. Like one, one of the things which is going through my mind if you want to bring sort of specific examples is the message that's going out to kids with those signs that are on so many classes as you walk into (name of school) that said if you're reading this sign the door is locked. Knock once. I will come and let you in. When I feel like it and the number of kids that are sitting out in the hall. It's, it's...

LINDA: Or the number that get tired of waiting

LISA: Or get tired of waiting.

This extract illustrates how this community had become supportive of one another through explicit acknowledgements of colleague contributions as well as implicit

recognition through their application of their ideas in subsequent discourse. In this way, how participants were purposefully seeking to incorporate one another's thinking had emerged as an interaction norm. In addition, Linda explained how some students would be feeling in this case, and in response, Lisa indicated acceptance to this addition to her thought by repeating these offered words, signifying appreciation for this further insight. My analysis indicated the emergence of these types of talk turns among participants was likely an increased adoption of discursive norms that I had been modeling and encouraging throughout previous sessions. The frequency of these interactive norms encouraged longer durations of intersubjective space within conversations, thus supporting sustained collective sense-making around instructional leadership topics. This discursive activity may have been a preliminary move toward what Littleton and Mercer (2013) refer to as "interthinking," where community members use discourse as a means to think collectively and to negotiate common understandings.

Similarly, participants seemed more comfortable reflecting back to the group about ideas offered by others, actively following collective train of thought and then discerning and sharing a meaningful pattern that might move the community's thinking forward. For example, in synthesizing the various ideas that many had put forward, Beth prompted the group to contemplate another perspective: "But I'm hearing too that the two different sides that even in your own argument you say to yourself when I was a teacher, here's how I felt. Now that I'm in the office, it's a different feeling." Her comment was a reminder to attend to the teacher perspective in situations of frequent interruptions to the classroom, and to consider how it would be different than current experiences as vice principals, thus moving the group's thinking toward an additional and broader insight.

Interestingly, the language used by Beth pointed to a perception of collective identity in the way she used the pronoun “you” as a general term to refer to all in the group, referencing the commonality of being both teachers and vice principals.

Especially salient about this particular discussion was how participants drew on an inquiry stance to explore this topic, expressing increased curiosity and openness to possibility. For example, this inquiry stance was explicitly evident in the use of the word “wonder” by participants: “I wonder if people realize, if I’m only locking out three kids, but with the draw, how many teachers are all locking out three kids? Imagine the number of kids that are not being educated for five minutes each” (Beth), “I’m just wondering how you, how one would get a more of a school-wide values cultural decision around that? Because there are some schools where every door isn’t locked” (Lisa), and “I wonder if there’s room even to have a little more leeway” (Alison). In this discussion, the use of the word “wonder” seemed to foster a safe intersubjective space to collectively make sense of this complex and controversial topic, making room to question the status quo, allowing polite challenges to preceding participant ideas, and representing provisional language to test insights with others. Unlike previous sessions, in Session 4 this inquiry stance emerged at times in participant discourse without my active facilitation.

The notable increase in exploratory discourse underscored how Session 4 emerged as the turning point for this group’s professional learning trajectory. This discourse enabled collective sense-making about instructional leadership topics, and indicated increased intention and confidence to sustain joint attention on teacher practice and student learning. This exploratory talk was plausibly more readily accessible to the professional

community at this point in the series, now that members had substantial access to common pedagogical understandings, as well as more developed cohesion in group dynamics, thus forming a familiar and safe intersubjective space to more fully participate in instructional leadership discussions.

Session 4 Summary

In sum, Session 4 emerged as a turning point for this professional learning community due to a consolidation of many cultural aspects, including collective access to a common pedagogical knowledge and its accompanying technical language, increased adoption of exploratory discourse among participants, as well as a more developed collective responsibility for interactions that were conducive to collective sense-making. As such, community members seemed to be aligned in the common purpose of further developing as instructional leaders. This phenomenon may have been the beginning of a social transformation (Fairclough, 2011; Gee, 2012; Moje & Lewis, 2009; Wenger, 2010) toward a sense of community as instructional leaders and its inherent social norms.

Main Findings from Session 5

In the following section, I expand on the main findings from Session 5. In this session, members of the professional learning community continued to develop their capacity to pursue constructive and fruitful conversations about teacher practices and student learning, as well as began to explore more deeply the complexities of instructional leadership.

Emerging awareness of instructional leadership potential. In Session 5, a collective awareness for the potential impact of school-based leaders' actions and interactions on how student learning could unfold in schools seemed to engender a sense

of collective responsibility and initiative in participant discourse. This recognition among participants about the potential for principals to embody instructional leadership in their own school contexts seemed to unnerve participants slightly, perhaps because of a heightened awareness of self in a new role. For example, after he had reflected on how to implement a school-wide goal with staff and students, Henry summed up how he felt about this possibility as “pretty daunting” to which others readily agreed. Nonetheless, participants actively engaged in these discussions, indicating sufficiently established feelings of safety within the professional learning community to grapple with the challenging leadership topics of teacher capacity and culture.

Recognizing leadership responsibility in change efforts. The impetus to collectively make sense of leadership’s responsibility for school-wide changes surfaced, likely initiated by the readings, and was clearly indicated by active and interactive participation by everyone. Topics included finding ways to implement policies in ways that were collaborative and in support of student learning; for example, Mary noted how “it’s up to a principal to model [assessment policy] and to bring the team on board.” Similarly, Lisa highlighted the example of a principal who interacted proactively and constructively with teachers on staff: “she was very with them, with their team ... and she was more open to ideas ... more collaborative ... and more successful.” Throughout this lengthy discussion, participants explored how principals might approach translating policy into changing practices that would lead to improvements for students. Linda asserted that sometimes policies would be easier for school-based leadership to address and at other times, it would mean having to initiate a collaborative process: “If I can change it, I will. If I can’t, then how can we make it work?” The assumption communicated was that, either way, the

principal would be responsible to ensure that policy changes were implemented. This discourse was in contrast with earlier sessions, where Ministry directions were characterized as oppressive and unrealizable. Also notable in this turn was how the use of first person and present tense appeared to afford a provisional adoption of instructional leadership identity, perhaps allowing for experimentation with what this role might sound like and feel like for participants.

As everyone collectively reflected on the challenges inherent to teacher culture, participants seemed to recognize the complexities in this leadership work, acknowledging the existence of duties in support of student learning that would not always be straightforward. Janice described her own experience in challenging teacher decisions about student grades in advocating for students, yet admitted that it was a delicate and continuous “conundrum” for her to ask questions in a way that would not be interpreted as judgmental. Participants also considered how changing teacher practices might mean helping some staff to reconsider their educational philosophies and move “away from that [traditional] belief system” (Tom). Beth speculated that “the challenge would probably be with how that’s presented” to them.

Admitting the need to address teacher capacity. The importance of teacher capacity building in the area of formative assessment emerged as a central topic during this discussion. Participants stated that schools should and could implement this practice in support of student learning and that principals had an influential role to play in this duty. This discourse contrasted with that in earlier sessions where participant discourse constructed external factors such as the Ministry and parental expectations as obstacles preventing teachers from practicing assessment that would foster improvements in

student learning. Here, participant contributions like “the criteria could be stuff you create yourself with kids ... who cares about exactly what the Ministry hoops are?” (Janice) and “the mark didn't really matter anymore ... the kids just wanted the feedback” (Beth) demonstrated a reconsidered view of formative assessment practices as well as a shift toward internalized locus of control within the school community. In order to develop teacher capacity in assessment practices, Linda stated that teachers needed “permission to know that it’s OK to do that, and in fact, it’s more, um, valuable” and that it was the principal’s responsibility to communicate and foster this message. Janice connected student learning to teacher learning and drew on previous conversations to highlight the possibility of teachers coaching one another: “If you could get teachers giving each other feedback on ... their different assessment practices ... they [would] choose to start actually using formative assessment.”

In a similar way, principals were portrayed as models for change efforts: “if a ... teacher can impact that change in a classroom, an administrator can impact that change with their staff” (Beth), and “the way to move staff ... is for the administration to not only promote professional development, but to be actually in there participating ... in the same professional learning that their staff is in” (Lisa). Participant discourse also connected capacity building with school culture, as Mary recognized how teachers “need to build relationships [with] people that they trust” in order to benefit from strategies like “co-teaching ... as a great collaboration” (Beth) and that principals played an influential role in this interrelationship endeavour within the school context. In this way, this professional learning community grappled with how principals could approach instructional leadership in their schools and influence school-wide changes in support of

student learning. Although the readings acted as a resource from which ideas were drawn, participant discourse actively sustained joint attention on this particular topic for an extended period, suggesting an emerging collective commitment to making sense of this leadership identity.

Reconsideration of experiences and portrayals. During this session, participant discourse drew on shared cultural resources, including discussions, articles, and videos, as well as their personal experiences as teachers to reconsider students' potential within schools. For example, Beth reminded everyone of the video from the homework to support her account of how to encourage a sense of community and ownership in schools, where older students "were mentoring ... and reading with their little buddies" to help teach reading. Similarly, Janice remembered successes she had experienced with a program that "set up the kids together with peer tutors" in order to get extra help with their studies when needed, while Mary accounted her experiences with a buddy program between secondary and elementary schools as "very powerful too." This reconsidered view of students seemed to underpin later discussions in this session, when the topic of how to "empower staff and students" (Janice) emerged as an important consideration in changing schools that was readily and enthusiastically received by the whole group. For example, participants suggested that assessment could be a process of "the teachers...negotiat[ing]" (Janice) with students about how to demonstrate their learning and then "hav[ing] a conversation about it" (Lisa) to figure out next steps. In this way, participants seemed to be drawing from discussions about a strengths-based approach to assessment and a growth mindset in learning to reconsider students as productive contributors within the learning process, a notable contrast to the emphasis on student

deficits in participant discourse from Session 1. This phenomenon of rethinking school experiences and teacher and student portrayals of agency may have been indicative of how participants were “shifting location as they move[d] centripetally through a complex form of practice that create[d] [new] possibilities for understanding the world as experienced” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 122-123), in this case to that which more closely resembled an instructional leadership view.

Navigating teacher culture as an instructional leader. I introduced an activity that prompted this community to collectively reflect on how principals and vice principals might approach a school-wide focus on student learning. Although capacity building, collaboration, and communication emerged as key topics, teacher culture in schools and how to navigate this group dynamic predominated during this activity. (See Appendix G for list of co-constructed ideas from the group that I recorded during this activity.) For example, principals would require acumen in how to be “strategic from a political point of view” (Janice) and need to avoid a top down approach by being “persistent without being bossy” (Mary). Somehow principals needed to “honour...what already exists [even though] you run a risk sometimes of...re-affirming some bad habits and practices, [however you would need to] tease out the...parts that we wanted to focus on” (Janice) and appreciate that changing teacher practices would take “a long time to [shift] our cultural ways and get other teachers on board” (Henry). In this way, participant discourse acknowledged the aforementioned political realities of teacher union culture, while also exploring how to address this challenge optimistically and productively. Here, participant discourse approached the concurrent political landscape differently than in earlier sessions, seeking to problem-solve and navigate this challenge in pursuit of student

success, rather than moving into cynicism. In productively making sense of the complexity of teacher culture, this community was applying its developed sophistication and confidence with pedagogical topics, aligning with instructional leadership.

Increasing collaboration through discursive interaction. Within Session 5, the more frequent instances of collaborative discourse among community members were in contrast to discursive interactions of earlier sessions. The now more fully developed fluency with productive interactive norms that could adequately sustain intersubjective space seemed to foster this collaboration possibility. The extract below from such a conversation about visioning illustrates this type of interaction.

BETH: And you're going to set up a mission statement or a vision for the school because even though it takes time, and it would be dangerous to go in uh with everybody, with no clear plan. So...

MARY: But that's dangerous too. The mission and vision of the school comes out when everybody participates.

BETH: But there are lots of schools that have no vision or mission.

JANICE: Yeah.

BETH: And that's what I...

MARY: About vision, you, you can't say there's a certain vision.

HENRY: I think, I think it progresses through time, right?

MARY: Yeah.

HENRY: And you've got to set the tone and, and people, people are gonna sit back and watch and see what, what unfolds over the next little bit. I don't think it's, I don't think it's gonna happen immediately at all.

MARY: Yeah

HENRY: It takes uh two or three years and get that tone and teachers on side and get that happening.

JANICE: You have to work with relationships first.

HENRY: Yeah.

JANICE: But I, I, I hear what you're saying. There has to be an overall goal, right?

This excerpt reveals how participants demonstrated a sense of teamwork as they worked together with a clear sense of common purpose, figuring out this leadership task. This discursive interaction accomplished cooperation as they built on one another's ideas and contributed contrastive perspectives. Participants were inclusive through supportive backchannel turns such as "yeah" and "I hear what you're saying," demonstrating active listening and acknowledgement of contributions. In addition, the consolidation statements synthesized multiple contributions into a collective insight for the group: "you have to work with relationships first" and "there has to be an overall goal." In this way, members of the professional community were indicating growth in their capacity to engage in collaborative discourse that further enabled their collective instructional leadership development.

Increasing distribution of community participation. Throughout Session 5, an increase in number of instances of distributed participation within discussions was also notable, and my participation had become more frequently that of a co-contributor when contrasted with previous sessions. Especially interesting was how one of the participants adopted the role of facilitator for the group during the final activity, where we worked at co-designing a long-term school plan. Initially this participant seemed a bit nervous and

reluctant in the facilitation role even though she had volunteered for this role; however, I encouraged her to continue. For example, when this participant referred initial questions directly to me, seeming to seek confirmation, I responded by suggesting that she consider “whatever the group wants” instead. In this way, I promoted further ownership of this professional learning work to the group, a shift that appeared to be in response to their suggested readiness to take on this endeavour in that moment, albeit in a very tentative way at first. From a situated learning perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the overall active participation of group members in this activity had increased and became very much a shared endeavour. I participated primarily as an active listener and fellow contributor, and correspondingly, my discourse accounted for about only 6% of the whole of the collective discourse within this particular discussion.

A few instances occurred where I interjected with encouraging turns: “Here’s your criteria, by the way” in response to the group trying to figure out where to start and “so what would the structures in this school be to address struggling learners?” as a reminder of the underlying point of this instructional leadership activity. During this final activity and as the end of this professional learning series was approaching, participants appeared to be “moving toward full participation in practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 111), demonstrating commitment and effort at sustaining relevant and productive instructional leadership discourse that was minimally reliant on my facilitator support. From the perspective of learning as social transformation (Gee, 2012; Moje & Lewis, 2009; Wenger, 2010; Fairclough, 2011), this increased collective self-regulation to sustain productive intersubjective space in discursive interactions may have been illustrative of

community members actively working toward the common goal of becoming instructional leaders.

Exploring the potential for progressive education. During this discussion, the optimistic and productive way in which public education was reconsidered highlighted a noteworthy contrast to the cynicism of participant discourse during Session 1. Collective discourse unfolded in such a way as to co-construct a promising, yet practical, exploration of what could be accomplished in support of student learning. This discourse tended toward more of an inquiry stance, encouraging an intersubjective space for exploration about innovation and possibility. Increased use of open-ended questions and conditional tense with the word “would” further provided the means to collective openness to and exploration of possibility, as in asking questions that pursued broader progressive reforms such as, “How would we do personalized learning?” (Janice), suggesting peer coaching structures that would address teacher culture and capacity building, “it would maybe...work as a mentoring like we do with student teachers” (Beth), and ensuring that teachers knew their students well “would be the top priority” (Mary). Interestingly, many contributions that aligned with concurrent Ministry of Education directions emerged in this discussion as well. (See Appendix H for co-constructed school plan recorded by the participant-facilitator of this activity.)

Recognizing shift toward an instructional leadership ideology. Throughout Session 5, collective discourse demonstrated a shift toward instructional leadership, underpinned by the assumption of an interrelationship between teacher practice and student learning and where students’ best interests were at the forefront. This shift in discourse seemed to indicate the adoption of a common set of beliefs about teaching and

learning that had become true for this group in this context, and thus suggested a potential shift in ideology (van Dijk, 2011) that was consistently being used to interpret pedagogy and its related topics. From this perspective, this contextualized ideology plausibly emerged as a result of joint participation within this situated workplace experience over time (Gunnarsson, 2009; Wenger et al., 2002). Especially salient was participants' self-awareness of this shift during the final school plan activity as demonstrated in the extract below.

JANICE: And I think in the “structures” comment, competency-based system rather than a credit-based system?

BETH: Sure.

FACILITATOR: Sure. (giggles)

BETH: Are we working at the Ministry?

FACILITATOR: (laughs)

BETH: I like it. (A few other participants laugh too.) We are really getting it.

In this extract Janice summarized a few contributions into an integrated idea as a “competency-based system, rather than a credit-based system” to be recorded. This comment was especially interesting as it aligned directly with concurrent Ministry of Education directions, and was another contentious and political topic related to tensions between government and the BCTF at the macro-level. It seemed that as a result of this shift in ideology, the group readily accepted this summarization, both Beth and I verbally supported it, at which point I giggled because I recognized this alignment with Ministry directions and the ironic contrast to participant political Discourse in earlier sessions. Beth also picked up on this humorous turn of events and asked the question that indicated

that she was likely in the same intersubjective space of this shared realization. This humorous turn of events was recognized by more intense laughter from me and then others in the group and then reinforced by Beth's support of "I like it." She then spoke for the group, recognizing its collective growth in instructional leadership, summing it up with "we are really getting it." Thus, it seemed that this community recognized its shift in beliefs and how this renewed perspective was supporting them in beginning consistently to adopt instructional leadership identity. In this way, the professional community ended its learning journey within this series with what seemed to be an emergent stage of instructional leadership identity development, readily equipped and motivated to accomplish constructive, optimistic, and solution-focused discussions about how to support student success in schools. This social transformation now seemed to be underway.

Session 5 Summary

In Session 5, analysis of the collective discourse demonstrated a commitment among participants to make sense of their potential roles as instructional leaders in schools, and to grapple with the leadership challenges of teacher capacity building and culture. Building on their shared history of experiences and common pedagogical knowledge, this community of emerging instructional leaders recognized a shift in their educational ideology toward one that aligned with that of the concurrent provincial education directions. By the end of the professional development series, the community had developed its collective capacity to engage in productive collaborative discourse that focused on relevant instructional leadership topics and could encourage meaningful insights.

Chapter Summary and Preview of Chapter 6

In this chapter I provided the main findings of my analysis of educator discourse within each of five sessions during a professional learning series. For the purposes of understanding how educators make sense of pedagogy within this type of workplace learning experience, I elaborated how newcomer participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) across this series shifted over time, including the development of sense of community, increased engagement in productive discursive interactions, and the co-construction of common pedagogical knowledge.

Overall, establishing a sense of community supported these educators in more actively adopting the norms of instructional leadership. During Session 1, participants avoided potentially contentious instructional topics such as the need to change teacher practices in support of student learning. Throughout Sessions 2 and 3, certain conditions seemed to facilitate safety for participants, including opportunities for partner talk before whole group discussions, active facilitator responsiveness, and the relatively risk-free design of role-play activities. In Session 4 participants demonstrated sufficient trust with one another to discuss openly controversial topics related to teacher practices, indicating a sense of community had been established among all members at this point. In Session 5, participants recognized they were experiencing similar challenges in transitioning into school-based leadership roles and actively cooperated and supported one another in approaching these challenges.

Additionally, discursive interactions across sessions became increasingly productive. Participants' and my facilitator discourse were initially contrastive. In Session 1, participants moved into persuasive speech-like discourse, while I tried to encourage an

inquiry stance. Then, during Sessions 2 and 3, participants engaged in more partner talk and turn-taking conversations, and I adopted a lecture-style explanatory discourse to build background knowledge and clarify understandings. By Session 4, participant discourse became markedly aligned with my discourse in its structure and focus, and the frequency of constructive interactions sustained substantial and productive intersubjectivity. In Session 5, collective discourse became increasingly collaborative and exploratory, promoting further collective sense-making and knowledge co-construction.

Furthermore, participants worked on building a common pedagogical knowledge across sessions. Initially, in Session 1, participants represented pedagogy in a nebulous way. The use of cultural resources, such as readings and introduced technical language about instruction, appeared to enable participant elaborations of pedagogy during subsequent sessions. Guided viewings of lessons, role-play activities, and connecting teaching experiences to theory seemed to facilitate collective sense-making of key pedagogical concepts. By Sessions 4 and 5, collective discourse indicated an assumption of the interrelationship between teacher practice and student learning and the belief that student needs and interests were central to education.

In this way, the group of educators seemed to move toward the adoption of instructional leadership norms. In the following chapter, I explore the significance and implications of these findings within the context of sociocultural literature, future research, and professional development practices in education.

Chapter 6

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

In an effort to further understandings about beneficial capacity building that pursues improved learning for all students, I examined how educators engage in social interactions and make collective sense of pedagogy during a situated professional development experience over time. Specifically, through critical and sociocultural discourse analysis, I pursued the following research questions: What is the nature of educator discourse during professional learning activity? How do educators make sense of pedagogical practices and beliefs during professional learning experiences? Which discursive practices are conducive to professional learning?

In Chapter 5, I presented the main findings about how study participants collectively approached instructional leadership development across five sessions within a professional learning series over a three-month period. In my analysis, three salient shifts in the nature of this group's participation emerged across sessions, indicating the development of sense of community, increased engagement in productive discursive interactions, and the co-construction of common pedagogical knowledge. It is important to note that these three participation shifts were interrelated aspects of a holistic phenomenon for this group's professional development experience. My analysis indicated that any one of these participation aspects and its constituent elements could not adequately characterize the whole of this professional development experience. Continuous overlap and interplay among all aspects and their constituent elements were evident throughout this experience.

In Figure 1, I provide an overview representation of this interrelated participation development experience.

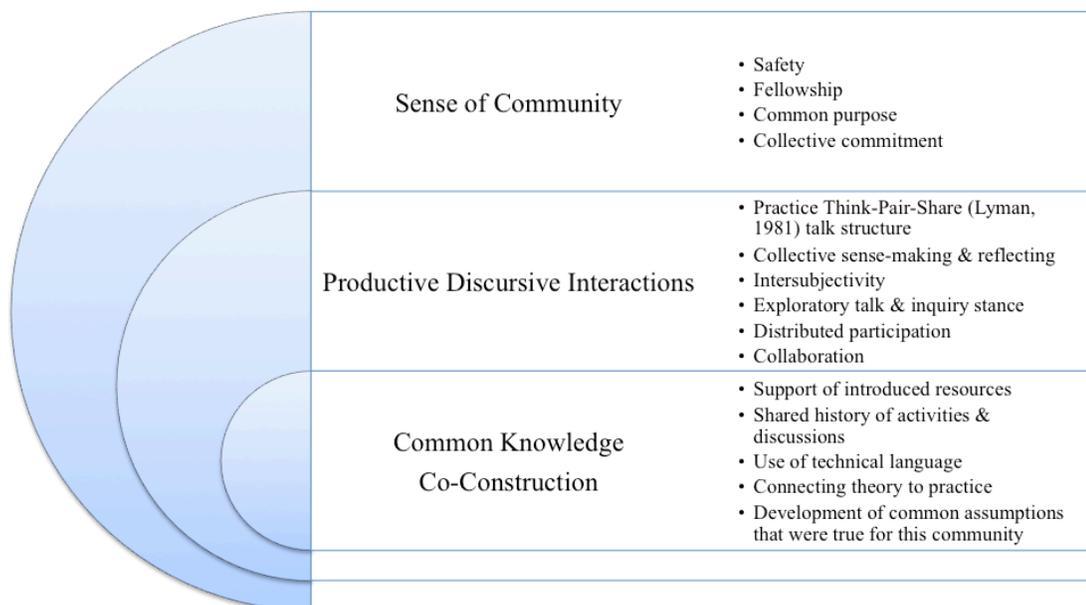


Figure 1. Holistic view of the integrated participation aspects and their constituent elements that indicated shifts in this group's participation across the situated professional development series.

For the purposes of facilitating discussion as relevant to my research questions, the findings are called constituent elements in this chapter; however, I caution the reader to bear in mind the aforementioned underpinning interrelationship for a holistic appreciation of this participation experience. In this chapter, I extend the study's findings by considering their significance within the context of other relevant research. I conclude with implications for research and professional development practices.

Findings Related to Previous Literature

The findings of my study indicate the norms and affordances of the immediate professional learning community encourage how teacher discourse about teaching and

learning will likely emerge, and that the nature of teacher discourse can shift over time as members adopt the norms that align with those of their community. These phenomena appear to be underpinned by the development of a sense of community and its inherent characteristics, such as mutual trust and shared experiences. In the following section, I consider the study's main findings in relationship to the literature within this educational research space.

Nature of educator discourse about teaching and learning. As I elaborated in Chapter 3, educational research into the nature of educator discourse has revealed interpretive repertoires that draw on Discourse from societal ideologies and state policy and documents (Barker & Rossi, 2011) and particular dialogic moves that encourage efficacious discussions (Warwick et al., 2016). Findings from the study by Sedova et al. (2016) indicated that teachers who learn how to adopt a dialogic approach as part of their professional development can encourage changes in student discourse within their classrooms. Based on their analysis of individual teacher talk during professional development discussions, Leko et al. (2015) discussed distinctive teacher discourse categories, indicating levels of pedagogical knowledge and inquiry. Additionally, ethnographic studies in school settings (Flores, 2007; Henstrand, 2006) have provided relevant insights into the dynamics of teacher interactions.

Findings from my study indicated the nature of collective educator discourse during professional discussions is dynamic and can shift over time. This discourse also seemed to be shaped by the norms of the immediate micro-context within which it emerged. In the following section, I elaborate the findings about the nature of educator discourse in relationship to the relevant literature.

Influence of Discourse on teacher discourse. In their constructionist approach to discourse analysis of interviews about teamwork with Physical Education teachers, Barker and Rossi (2011) detected interpretive repertoires that drew from macro-contextual Discourse (Gee, 2011a) frameworks, including humanism, functionalism, and perceptions of students' ability in terms of strength and weakness, as well as from state policies. Correspondingly, the findings in this study indicated a noteworthy emergence of macro-contextual Discourse within professional discussions. Additionally, similar to Barker and Rossi's (2011) suggestions, participant discourse in my analysis pointed to particular assumptions and beliefs about relationships and human potential, about what was possible for teaching and learning in the classroom, including how students were portrayed and how instruction was elaborated.

However, building on the findings of Barker and Rossi (2011), my study also indicated that participants' choice of primary Discourse resources shifted across sessions, thus highlighting the dynamic nature of this phenomenon. Initially, participant discourse emerged as iterations of the concurrent political Discourse, or strike talk, that was prevalent in the macro-context and simultaneously at odds with the object of study for this professional development series on educational leadership. Specifically, for example, participant discourse seemed to draw initially on Discourse that over-represented student deficit and under-represented teacher agency in the classroom. Temporal analysis indicated that participants increasingly drew from the Discourse of strategic instruction that I introduced, and later referenced student-centered ideology in their talk and became more comfortable with the exploration of controversial topics such as the influence of teacher culture on students in later sessions. In this way, by drawing on the introduced

student-centred instructional Discourse that I promoted, participants appeared to be better enabled to move away from their initial strike talk toward the development of a leadership disposition. This finding points to how the norms of immediate professional community likely influenced collective decisions about which macro-contextual Discourses to draw from in discussions. As such, this finding also reveals how the nature of educator discourse appears to be changeable within and adaptive to the immediate context. This phenomenon aligns with findings from ethnographic studies in educational settings (Flores, 2007; Henstrand, 2006), where the social conditions at the micro-contextual level played a prominent role in how teachers acted and interacted within their workplace. My findings revealed the need to be particularly mindful of the dynamic nature of educator discourse and how it seems to be shaped by the conditions of the micro-context. As such, even decisions about which macro-Discourse resources to draw on in collective discourse to represent ideas about pedagogy may be based on the immediate workplace norms.

Influence of workplace expectations. In consideration of this immediate cultural immersion, it is also important to acknowledge the less conspicuous cultural factors that plausibly influence situated professional learning community participation generally, including workplace expectations for example. In my study, as the assistant superintendent provided funding for dedicated release time and resources for this professional development series, participants likely perceived and acted on school district senior executive expectations to attend to my facilitator discourse and to commit to the norms of instructional leadership being practiced. Additionally, the norms for principals and vice principals articulated in the provincial association's standards (British Columbia

Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, 2007), which I encouraged participants to reflect on and discuss, likely also encouraged participants' collective drive to pursue the norms of this identity. Having acknowledged the potential influences over participation found in workplace contexts, it is also critical to recognize that the development of educational leaders is not altogether agenda-free, nor can it be. The aforementioned observed group shift toward more active participation as educational leaders in this study was demonstrative of the emergence of a transformative leadership stance (Shields, 2014) that requires "rejection of deficit thinking" (p. 333) and "to take a stand that is not particularly popular" (p. 336) as initial steps toward truly "ensur[ing] that all students in school reach their potential" (p. 326). "Schools are about service to students" (Crippen, 2012, p. 193) and principals need to play a significant role in strengthening relationships to "effect deep and equitable change" (Shields, 2014, p. 333) and, as such, this participant group's shift toward this leadership stance was a necessary development impetus. Additionally, the demand for school-based leaders to have an informed background in beneficial pedagogical practices to draw on as they "interact with teachers in ways that enable them to grapple productively with instructional policy focused on changing classroom practice" (Coburn, 2005, p. 503) is necessary. My transparency about the importance of these leadership expectations was, of course, imperative. I clearly articulated this leadership intention and I responsively supported participants throughout the professional learning series in practicing these expectations. Participants recognized and appreciated this shift as part of their professional learning journey as noted by Beth's statement, "we are really getting it" (Session 5).

Considering knowledge and inquiry in educator discourse. In addition to drawing on Discourses aligned with the norms of the micro-context, educator discourse seems to demonstrate levels of knowledge and inquiry. In Leko et al.'s study (2015) individual teacher talk within professional conversations was categorized into a "Learning Facilitation Discourse Model" (p. 144) framework. For example, conversations where participants voiced their frustrations and complaints, temporarily "derail[ing] the group's focus on how to use ideas" (p. 152) were labeled as "Low Knowledge and Low Inquiry" (p. 151). Similarly, my research participants initially demonstrated a tendency toward unproductive low knowledge and low inquiry discourse, including nebulous references to the learning process and oblique portrayals of teacher practices, and where movement into an inquiry stance required my active facilitation. Another category of teacher discourse described by Leko et al. (2015) was that of "Integrated Knowledge and High Inquiry" (p. 145) discourse, which demonstrated "language that was grounded" (p. 145) in the introduced professional development content and included participants asking questions and reflecting on practice. In a like manner, participant interactions by the end of the series in my study included discourse that was consolidating common pedagogical knowledge, a tendency toward exploratory talk, and openness to reflection on practice.

Providing additional knowledge to the aforementioned discourse framework, I examined teacher discourse from the perspective of a collective effort rather than individual teacher talk. Thus, where Leko et al. (2015) suggest that their framework provides a means to consider "how the discourse patterns of individual teachers promote or inhibit learning opportunities" (p. 153), my discourse analysis also calls attention to the highly socially mediated nature of educator talk. How teachers can collectively

develop discourse over time that constructs more sophisticated pedagogical knowledge and facilitates an inquiry stance seems to also be dependent upon the supportive and conducive conditions of their professional learning community. My findings indicated these conditions included the participants encouraging me as the facilitator with increasing collective attention and participation, the development of trust among community members, common access to the introduced instructional resources, and shared history of professional learning experiences.

As I elaborated in the previous chapter, collective capacity for pedagogical elaboration and inquiry in professional discourse for this study's group of educators shifted across sessions. This shift demonstrated increased collective confidence in how to engage in instructional leadership discussions, likely encouraged by the introduction of resources about instruction, such as readings, hand-outs, and videos. The change was further supported by interactions with a responsive, more experienced colleague, and the development of a sense of community through shared collective experiences and activities. Participants collectively became more sophisticated and confident in elaborating pedagogy, increasingly referencing introduced pedagogical artefacts and shared professional conversations and experiences about the topic of instruction, thus identifying themselves as instructional leaders. In addition, participants more readily availed themselves of the productive discursive interactions I encouraged and supported within this community context, becoming more practiced in how to leverage exploratory talk interactions. From this perspective, consideration of individual teacher talk within discussions may also benefit from re-consideration of how this talk can change over time through the development of collective discourse competence and confidence with access

to common supportive resources and trust within the professional learning community.

As previously discussed, these findings correspond with the tenets of sociocultural theory that emphasizes learning generally as social transformation (Fairclough, 2011; Lave & Wenger, 1991), where behaviours and values, such as social interactions and discourse topics, are internalized and appropriated through the social mediation of increasing active participation within a situated community. In my research specifically, over time the participants increasingly elaborated pedagogical knowledge and made use of inquiry-type interactions in their discourse, encouraged by the supportive community conditions. This finding indicates that classifications of individual teacher discourse (Leko et al., 2015) also require careful consideration of how they are interrelated with the collective discourse potential of the community as a whole.

Additionally, my study's findings point to the potential for productive teacher discourse to develop over time. For example, the collective participant discourse in this research shifted from cynical representations of public education, such as "it's difficult to operate in [this] system as educators" (Alison, Session 1), toward openness to exploration of possibilities in education, such as "How would we do personalized learning?" (Janice, Session 5). This development required my active facilitator support initially, continuous practice with discursive interactions throughout, common access to instructional resources, shared experiences, and technical language tools, and community trust. In this way, the participants learned how to engage collectively in productive instructional leadership conversations. From this perspective, unproductive teacher discourse, such as that which indicates low knowledge and low inquiry (Leko et al., 2015) for example, may also relate to uncertainty about and/or being unpracticed in how to talk effectively about

pedagogy within a particular context, as well as having limited access to the relevant community knowledge resources to draw upon. Furthermore, my findings indicated that a lack of inquiry stance, where practitioners were not reflecting on their own instructional practices for example, could be indicative of an undeveloped sense of community trust and the risk-taking that this condition would foster. From this perspective, more active participation in critical and reflective conversations about professional practice for the individual teacher seems to require the social affordance of trusting relationships and shared experiences with colleagues over time within a particular community (Fairclough, 2011; Jurasaitė-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thus, my study expands on current educational research about the nature of individual teacher discourse by pointing to its developmental potential as interrelated with the collective growth trajectory of the situated professional learning community and its commonly accessed resources.

In sum, findings from my research contribute a number of understandings about the nature of teacher discourse during professional development: 1. The norms and affordances of a particular professional learning community shape how educator discourse about teaching and learning will likely emerge, including informing the choices about which macro-contextual Discourses and other cultural resources to draw upon and a tendency toward an inquiry stance within discussions; 2. The nature of teacher discourse about teaching and learning, including which assumptions to represent within it, can shift over time as teachers work at adopting the social practices that align with those of their micro-contextual discourse communities. These phenomena appear to be supported by the development of a sense of community and its inherent characteristics,

such as mutual trust and shared experiences. Thus, it is important to pay particular attention to the conditions of the immediate professional learning community when considering the nature of educator discourse, as it plausibly plays a highly supportive role in how teachers will elaborate their thinking about teaching and learning and could inform the development trajectory of their discourse over time.

Making sense of pedagogical practices and beliefs. Several interconnected cultural factors that were evidenced as noteworthy affordances to how sense-making about pedagogy emerged in my study. Additionally, how this group of participants collectively made sense of teaching and learning practices and beliefs shifted across sessions. I discuss these factors and how they relate to the literature in the following section, including improved access to sustained intersubjectivity, development of common pedagogical knowledge, connecting theory to practice, and increasing fluency with technical language.

Intersubjectivity facilitates sense-making. According to sociocultural theory, learning is a social process of meaning making facilitated by working in the “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) and intersubjective space (Billett, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010; Rowe, 2011; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011). In striving to collectively make sense of experiences, groups can generate intersubjectivity through their discursive interactions, where language mediates temporary joint attention to collectively grapple with and explore abstract concepts. This shared communicative space forms a common ground for collective awareness and understanding. In my study, it appeared that sense-making about pedagogy was facilitated by this type of intersubjective space, where co-construction of meaning was realizable. As discussed in the previous chapter, instances of

sustained intersubjectivity played a significant facilitative role in the participant group's trajectory of sense-making about instruction and leadership to improve learning.

Additionally, as Billett (2014) asserts in his discussion about the potential for intersubjectivity in healthcare settings, this space would also ideally include “shared procedural capacities and...values (i.e. shared ways of undertaking tasks and achieving common goals) [and] need[s] to be complemented by shared procedures (i.e. how to do things) and dispositions (i.e. values, beliefs, interest)” (p. 207). By Sessions 4 and 5, participants were able to realize instances of this potential, demonstrating shared commitment to leadership development, cooperative interactions, and common assumptions about pedagogy. During the research, these instances of intensified and sustained intersubjectivity were more readily accessed by means of common pedagogical knowledge as collective resource, through technical language as an efficient communication tool, by connecting introduced theory to experienced practices, and through collective efforts at productive discursive interactions. In the following section I elaborate these elements.

Developing common background knowledge. Participant discourse about pedagogy in the present study developed in its sophistication over time, including increased specificity about instructional practices and the learning process, as well as demonstrations of further depth of understanding for key pedagogical concepts, such as the meaning of student-centered practice. Analysis of participant discourse indicated that, over time, this group developed a common pedagogical knowledge that made collective sense within this situated context. In other words, it seemed that participants were co-constructing a pedagogical knowledge reservoir that was true for them and from which

they could draw in their conversations, recognizing that it would make sense to all members of this professional community. Additionally, this common knowledge construction phenomenon eventually shifted how their pedagogical beliefs were represented in discourse, indicating a presumption of the interrelationship between teacher practice and student learning. Interestingly, participants seemed to enact two functions simultaneously within this phenomenon: the development of a common pedagogical knowledge as they grappled with understanding instructional practices and tapping into the developing common pedagogical knowledge resource to share their ideas with other participants.

Elaborations and clarifications by the facilitator in reference to supportive resources, or cultural artefacts, as well as the exploration of this represented knowledge by means of numerous conversations and related activities seemed to further shared meanings of pedagogy. The use of these resources seemed to be a means for the group to more readily move into an intersubjective space where instruction became the object of joint attention. From this perspective, it seemed that resources emerged as a critical affordance to the development of this community's common pedagogical knowledge and its inherent shared understandings and beliefs. As such, this finding points to cultural artefacts as a key feature of sense-making for these educators.

This finding about sense-making for educators aligns with findings from other related educational studies, although introduced professional resources and samples that are central to teacher discussions are not necessarily acknowledged specifically as cultural artefacts within the literature. For example, Laster (2008) noted that "talking about the profiles of real students" (p. 102) during professional conversations is key to

educator's development of pedagogical concepts, such as authentic assessment, and to "assimilat[ing] a new body of professional knowledge" (p. 102). Similarly, Strahn and Hedt (2009) found that the "interpretation of data from students" (p. 13) became increasingly sophisticated over time when it was used as the object for discussion under the guidance of a peer coach across years of sessions. Thibodeau (2008) also found that secondary teachers changed their teaching practices and beliefs about student learning potential by means of a collaborative professional development series that included discussions around a "central instructional text" (p. 57) facilitated by a peer coach with literacy instruction expertise. These studies, using the lens of sociocultural theory, would suggest that having a relevant cultural artefact as an object that enables joint attention for sense-making conversations about pedagogical practices and beliefs is a common strategy for effective professional development. Additionally, this type of sense-making frequently includes interpretive support from a more experienced peer. The findings of my research are in agreement with both of these propositions.

Connecting theory to practice. Another way my teacher-participants made sense of pedagogical practices and beliefs entailed connecting introduced pedagogical theory to lived teaching experiences. Sense-making, whereby practitioner experiences are re-interpreted and recognized in terms of pedagogical practices, seemed a mediatory process of common meaning-making about instruction. Participants created narratives on linkages between theory and practice, initially in relationship to hypothetical teachers, and then later in reference to their own personal teaching experiences. This shift in narratives from third person unknown teacher entities toward self in the first person appeared to correspond with increasing sense of community and safety for risk-taking reflective

conversations. This finding corresponds with many other professional development initiatives, as indicated by the meta-analysis (Timperley et al, 2007) that highlights the need for “repeated opportunities for teachers to encounter, understand, translate, and refine new theories and related practices” (p. 154). As such, my study’s findings further support this body of research, suggesting teachers tend toward collective sense-making of pedagogy by connecting learned theory to experienced practices in the classroom, especially when they are given sufficient encouragement and time to do so within their professional communities. Similarly, access to a common pedagogical language seemed to enable further elaboration about teaching and learning.

Use of technical language to facilitate teachers’ sense-making. Sociocultural theorists (Gee, 2011a; Fairclough, 2011; Mercer, 2010; Moje & Lewis, 2009; Potter, 2012; Rogers & Wetzel, 2014; Roth & Hsu, 2010; van Dijk, 2011; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) share a common presumption that language functions as a tool to mediate sense-making generally. According to Vygotsky (1978), “learning to direct one’s own mental processes with the aid of words or signs is an integral part of the process of concept formation” (p. 108), facilitating internalization and enabling knowledge co-construction. As such, it can also function as a framework that facilitates educators in making sense of their workplace teaching experiences in the classroom and at school. Although technical language is a feature of teacher discussions, its role is not elaborated in the findings of other studies that have focused on professional development in education (Girvan et al., 2016; Horn & Little, 2010; Leko et al., 2015; Sedova et al., 2016; Strahan & Hedt, 2009; Timperley et al., 2007; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017; Warwick et al., 2016; Whitehead, 2010), yet this feature has emerged as a significant finding within my research.

Interestingly, Thornberg's study (2010) pointed to a "lack of a professional language regarding school democracy and pupil participation...as contribut[ing] to the absence of deliberative democratic discourse" (p. 929) during teachers' discussions, and perhaps this absence impeded meaningful implementation of innovative approaches in the classroom.

As previously discussed, during my study the adoption of technical pedagogical language into participant discourse appeared to function as a collective tool to more readily communicate about instruction and further develop shared understandings. Additionally, this specialized language seemed to facilitate access to a sustained intersubjectivity that focused on pedagogy. Interestingly, Hargreaves (2010) contended that earlier researchers have previously noted how professional language used by teachers in their workplace is "more technically simple" (p. 145) than that of other professions. This assertion is especially relevant to my data analysis as participants needed to move beyond nebulous articulations about process in order to further their collective sense-making about teaching and learning. Introduced specialized language about strategic instruction, such as metacognition and reading strategies, seemed to function as a vehicle to elaborate and refine their thinking about pedagogy. Additionally, participant use of technical language revealed how this tool enabled conceptual development over time, as in how the use of the term student-centered shifted from a meaning about students doing most of the talking in class to ensuring that teacher practices addressed the learning needs and interests of students. Similarly, the supported introduction of scientific terms into elementary school discourse facilitates access to concept development (Brown & Spang, 2007). Technical words create initial levels of intersubjectivity where the teacher and students have much different levels of understanding, but can explore and develop further

understandings (Roth & Hsu, 2010; Wertsch & Kazak, 2011). Although these examples refer to classroom contexts, my findings indicate this phenomenon can occur in professional learning contexts with adults as well. The use of technical pedagogical language, as a common metalanguage tool, efficiently moved participants into and sustained professional sense-making conversations about abstract theoretical constructs related to teacher practices and the process of learning. Thus, this finding is noteworthy for situated professional development in education workplaces. Although collaboration among educators is widely acknowledged as a preferred mode of social interaction within professional learning communities theoretically (Hargreaves, n.d.; Jurasaitė-Harbišon & Rex, 2010; Leko et al., 2015; Warwick et al., 2016), practically speaking it may be difficult to move conversations beyond collegiality toward deeper consideration of teacher practice and student learning without a common specialized pedagogical language. From this perspective, educators may benefit from language to collectively reflect on instructional practices in meaningful ways, to further co-construct common pedagogical knowledge, and to deepen their sense-making efforts about the learning process over time. Similarly, learning how to engage in and sustain productive professional discussions is another important consideration for workplace learning.

Productive discursive interactions. In my research, participants grew in their capacity to make use of productive discursive interactions. I use the term ‘productive’ to refer to their development as instructional leaders. Additionally, from a sociocultural perspective, the notion of ‘productive’ also encompasses the development trajectory of this professional learning community. Participants began by increasing their turn-taking interactions and active listening behaviours, likely encouraged by the introduction of talk

routines, such as “Think, Pair, Share” (Lyman, 1981), and supported by my frequent encouragement cues. In later sessions, participants demonstrated increased fluency with productive discursive interactions, continuing to use these for collective meaning-making around pedagogy, as well as to engage in more instances of exploratory talk, such as “I am just wondering how” (Lisa, Session 4) by the end of the professional development series. Increased collective competence and self-regulation in initiating and sustaining productive discursive interactions extended as well to efforts at distributed sense-making interactions and openness to possibility inherent to an inquiry stance.

This finding is similar to those from the large-scale study of mathematics teacher discourse during a two-year period (Warwick et al., 2016), where “dialogic space” (p. 557), as in a space where teachers can understand one another’s perspectives about pedagogy, was more readily encouraged by particular discursive moves: “dialogic moves” (p. 562) and “supportive moves” (p. 562). The specific dialogic moves of “questioning, negotiating meaning, building on each other’s ideas, [and] coming to some agreement” (Warwick et al., 2016, p. 566) were also evidenced in the productive discursive interactions of my study.

Additionally, Warwick et al.’s (2016) assertion that “dialogic moves are accepted within groups because they [are] accompanied by supportive interactional cues” (p. 566) aligns with my findings. Both the encouraging backchannels of the facilitator and the development of a supportive community likely underpinned the group’s sense of trust and commitment in pursuing the necessary collective effort at productive discursive interactions. Recent discourse analysis studies (Sedova et al., 2016; Warwick et al., 2016) into teacher professional development indicate that these types of productive discourse

interactions can be learned and sustained over time, as is also suggested by my research findings. This type of interaction can and should be effectively supported and developed within professional learning communities.

In sum, the findings about how educators make sense of pedagogy during professional learning highlight the interrelated features that facilitate sustained intersubjectivity in support of learning. Participants were enabled to co-construct relevant common knowledge, access its shared understandings, leverage cultural artefacts about instruction to focus their discussions, connect introduced theory to lived practice, and increase their productive discursive interactions. These findings align in many ways with aspects of previous research; however, my study provides a window into the intricacies of these features. An added contribution to the literature is the finding about the extent to which these educators made use of specialized language in their discourse to elaborate their pedagogical thinking and to further the development of their shared understandings about pedagogy, thus pointing to the potential for the purposeful use of technical language in enhancing professional development efforts in education. In addition, certain activities in this study stood out as ways to foster particularly fruitful insights among participants.

Discursive activities conducive to professional learning. Particular activities throughout the study seemed to support participants in achieving moments of productive pedagogical insights and furthered active participation, by encouraging student perspective-taking and practice in the work of instructional leadership. The activities were role-play type opportunities, where participants temporarily embodied someone other than themselves, such as a student, to imagine different learning possibilities. This

phenomenon is reminiscent of Vygotsky's (1978) views of play, where such activity "contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development" (p. 102) within the learning process.

Taking on the perspective of students. As discussed in Chapter 5, participants considered the perspective of students at times throughout this professional learning series. In the first session for example, it was not until participants role-played students who struggle with traditional learning activities at school that a notable interruption occurred in the cynical political Discourse that had dominated to that point. During the debrief of this role-play activity, participant discourse demonstrated empathy for students, recognizing what it must feel like to not understand, and began to acknowledge the futility for many students of certain taken-for-granted teacher practices, such as assigning readings without first activating prior knowledge. Similarly, the professional readings prompted participants to take up student perspectives, as in considerations of the metacognitive thought processes for those learners who are frequently confused as they read text for which they have little background knowledge. In the second session, more specific articulations about students' potential struggles with reading difficult text emerged in participant discourse, drawing from ideas introduced in their professional readings. In later sessions participants portrayed students in a positive light and this shift may have been encouraged by these shared experiences in student perspective-taking.

In the research completed by Girvan et al. (2016) the benefits of comparable experiential learning experiences during teacher professional development were highlighted, including how teachers thought participating as learners in a collaborative group activity similar to the one they observed in a lesson taught to their students helped

them overcome “initial barriers to change, making the new approach more acceptable” (p. 136). Although findings from other studies on professional development have highlighted activities that may have also encouraged similar student perspective-taking opportunities, such as what might have been encouraged as a result of professional readings (Strahan & Hedt, 2009) or the examination of student profiles (Laster, 2008), this phenomenon is not explicitly elaborated. On the other hand, researchers who focused on how teachers can unintentionally marginalize their students (Ashton, 2016; Madigan 2007) certainly alluded to the need for this type of learning in teacher professional development. A question that arises from my research is whether or not student perspective-taking experiences may have also encouraged a reconsideration of student-centeredness.

Role-playing instructional leadership identity. Participants also participated in activities that enabled them to adopt instructional leadership identities. For example, in Session 3 participants role-played principals engaging in a supervision of learning task by viewing a video-taped lesson and developing constructive feedback for the teacher, applying their developing common pedagogical knowledge. It was a relatively risk-free way to play at a real-life leadership expectation. Additionally, the collective reflections about this experience provided a space for talking through challenges in how to approach this type of work.

In a similar activity in Session 5, the whole group adopted the roles of principals and worked together in developing a long-term school plan. This simulation activity afforded participants the opportunity to safely adopt an instructional leadership identity and role-play at another challenging workplace expectation, having the supportive space to talk through potential pitfalls with colleagues and to collectively problem-solve. It seems

likely that these role-play activities further supported this particular community's development trajectory toward instructional leadership identity.

Other relevant considerations for situated professional learning. According to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, access to the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (p. 86), the space where learners are challenged at a level slightly higher than their current capacity under the guidance of a more competent teacher or peer, facilitates optimal learning experiences. Additionally, the supportive relationships among learners and the teacher or facilitator are key to fruitful learning. Below I elaborate on two noteworthy considerations in the findings, the active guidance and responsiveness of my facilitation and the development of a sense of community among participants, and how they relate to the literature.

Responsive facilitation. Findings from studies that have explored professional development for teachers point to the importance of having a more experienced coach or facilitator to guide conversations and to support relevant observations (Laster, 2008; Strahan & Hedt, 2009; Timperley et al., 2007; Whitehead, 2010). My facilitator actions informed the trajectory of the series and encouraged the continuous focus on instructional leadership development, which was particularly active in Sessions 1 to 3. I directed much of my energy to supporting the participants in adhering to topics and practices that were relevant to instructional leadership. Considering the nature of situated learning, the need for responsive facilitation was not surprising.

In situated learning, experienced practitioners can apprentice novice colleagues into the ways of knowing and practices in the workplace (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and this view of learning is comparable to similar scaffolded learning observations made in

classroom contexts between teacher and students (Forman et al., 2016; Pantaleo, 2016). In consideration of newcomers to leadership roles specifically, my cross session analyses indicated that this zone of situated learning for participants required my response as a more experienced colleague to facilitate movement from legitimate peripheral participation to guided participation toward the beginnings of full participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). For example, I changed my intended plans for Session 2 based on my perceptions that participants required much more background on instruction and more frequent application of turn-taking interaction routines about instructional topics to discourage further diversions into cynical speeches about education.

This alteration of the Session 2 plan resulted in a more lecture-style discourse focused on strategic instruction and elaboration of the interrelationship between teacher practices and student learning. I connected this lecture to how students in classrooms benefit from scaffolded instruction, exemplars, and expectations that address their initial “lack of confidence to proceed independently on tasks, especially those that were open-ended in nature” (Pantaleo, 2016, p. 85). In Session 2, I also ensured frequent opportunities for participants to engage in the Think, Pair, Share routine and actively encouraged participants to elaborate pedagogical aspects of their accounts while simultaneously highlighting their contributions to the whole group by using invitations such as “tell us more about that” (Facilitator, Session 2). These types of facilitative moves are comparable to teacher moves that encourage particular ways to approach classroom discourse, such as involvement strategies (Berry, 2006), developing scientific discourse (Brown & Spang, 2007), and appropriating scientific argumentation (Forman et al., 2016). Similarly, my frequent supportive active listening backchannels such as “yes”

and “right” during Session 3 encouraged continuation of participant accounts related to the interrelationship between instruction and learning, comparable to what Chafi and Elkhouzai (2016) term interactive teacher feedback that functions to extend and transform student observations and thinking in the classroom and the impactful goal-oriented teacher feedback discussed in the meta-analysis of 27 classroom studies by O’Mara et al. (2006).

Even though the classroom and workplace context of my study differ and represent learners of differing ages, from a sociocultural perspective all of these situations are perhaps indicative of a general human condition for situated learning. This condition points to effective facilitation as being responsive to the evolving and immediate needs and interests of learners toward full and independent participation according to what is valued within a particular discourse community. In addition, the nature of the relationships and interactions within the community are key to collective learning experiences.

Belonging to the professional learning community. Overall the discourse within the professional community featured in my research indicated collegiality and respectful relations among all participants, including me as facilitator, right from the beginning of the series. By Session 4 we had established sufficient fellowship, confidence, trust, and collective sense of responsibility to move into riskier conversations that afforded genuine considerations of instructional challenges and leadership complexity. This sense of community required significant interactions and shared experiences. This finding points to professional relationship building targeted at a common goal in order to arrive at a point where professional learning community members can effectively approach

workplace challenges as a collective responsibility, rather than solely as an individual one (Horn & Little, 2010). Additionally, this finding corresponds with Voelkel and Chrispeels's (2017) suggestion that "there is most likely a reciprocal relationship between the...two constructs" (p. 17) of professional learning community and teacher collective efficacy. Over time, study participants were able to develop the necessary collective confidence to explore instructional leadership topics within Sessions 4 and 5. Time is needed to attentively and purposefully encourage this collective development.

Limitations of the Study

As a qualitative researcher, I acknowledge that the findings of my study represent my interpretations of the data. I sought to describe a cultural phenomenon, yet recognize there is always the possibility that more could be unearthed and analyzed beyond what I found in my study. The incorporation and analysis of other data sources, such as videotapes of sessions for example, may have revealed other findings.

Second, the findings of my analysis are based exclusively on the discursive interactions of 12 educators within a situated professional development experience over a short timeframe of three months and are not intended as a representation of discourse during all teacher interactions in general. The purpose of my discourse analysis was not to generalize findings, but to uncover another possibility of how language-in-use among teachers during professional development activities may support sense-making about pedagogy and in what ways their discourse could shift over time. Although my study's small sample size and limited timeframe afforded the opportunity to analyze this group's discourse in an in-depth manner, it has also meant that the findings cannot be generalized to wider populations and other contexts.

Third, the focus of this interpretive analysis was on collective discourse trends related to pedagogy and the corresponding implied characterizations of teaching. In this way, my research is an examination of culture and its inherent features. As such, it is not intended as a portrayal of any individual educator's personal character, opinions, nor beliefs.

Finally, I was both researcher and facilitator-participant in my study. The research design afforded me a rich emic perspective, however I was solely responsible for the discourse analysis. Although a fellow doctoral candidate read the transcripts for the first and last sessions and offered helpful insights into possible shifts within its represented discourse, ultimately I coded the data on my own and determined salient phenomenon to include within the main findings. As such, although a systematic approach to data analysis was followed, the potential for researcher bias is inevitable.

Implications for Professional Development Practices in Education

The importance of professional learning communities and collaborative cultures to educators' professional learning is well supported and reflects the findings of my research. Adding to this body of knowledge, the findings from the study highlighted the interrelationship among several cultural features noteworthy to the whole of professional development experience, as well as to the developmental trajectory of this particular group over time. These interrelated cultural features included how the participating educators drew on multiple resources in their discourse about pedagogy, including macro-contextual Discourses; introduced cultural artefacts; and shared professional learning experiences. They seemed to make collective sense of teaching and learning by co-constructing common knowledge, applying theory to lived teaching experiences, and

using technical pedagogical language to deepen conceptual understanding. Their discourse shifted over time, where the nature of their discursive interactions became increasingly productive and inclusive; their portrayals of students, teacher practices, and the process of learning changed; and their expressed assumptions about the interrelationship between instruction and learning potential emerged. Increasingly active participation, facilitation, and the development of sense of community seemed to support this transformation. Needless to say teacher professional development in this case was a complex and intricate phenomenon.

With regard to implications for professional learning for educators beyond this study, the complex nature of professional development phenomenon as a whole should not be underestimated. Depending on the intended learning goals of any particular professional development endeavour and the identity being pursued by those involved, careful consideration of all of the aforementioned cultural features and their interplay is warranted. For example, decisions about which cultural artefacts to introduce will likely promote particular technical language use in professional discussions that, in turn, will inform the trajectory of collective discourse and pedagogical conceptual development. Similarly, encouraging productive discursive interactions and activities includes the selection of a facilitator who can effectively support collaborative routines and is responsive to targeted knowledge co-construction, while also providing the needed time and space to develop a sense of familiarity and safety among community members. Indeed, the thoughtful consideration of this interrelationship appears to be key to developing successful professional learning communities. Although not all professional learning communities are equally productive in their pursuits, optimistically, it seems

these communities are changeable and have the potential to shift when the appropriate supportive conditions are enacted.

Implications for Research

Research into effective professional learning practices for educators has grown over the years, yet the need continues for further study into encouraging the development trajectory of teacher cultures toward collective sense of responsibility and productive collaboration for student success in schools. My research has shed some light on this body of research, however it also raises other questions for consideration. More investigation into how to determine and then develop supportive conditions that suit particular workplace settings would be helpful. As each situated professional learning community will have differing variations of interrelated features, finding a way to assess specific cultural elements in need of further support and/or development, as well as suggestions on how to improve the identified elements to benefit the whole of professional development experience, would be useful and likely advantageous.

Additionally, further investigation is needed into how technical language use can further deepen collective pedagogical knowledge and understanding for professional learning communities. Similarly, if collaboration within education workplaces entails discussing ways to address pedagogical challenges, then further research into how specialized professional language can enhance this linguistically mediated process seems warranted.

Finally, as indicated by the findings of this study, it seems that considering professional learning communities through the lens of a situated community of practice is fruitful. More research into how professional identities that foster collective

responsibility in pursuit of improved instructional practices and learning conditions among educators is needed within the public school system. The advantage of research situated in sociocultural perspectives is that it presumes an influence of the collective, and thus may lead to findings that work to address the unique challenges inherent to the workplace of school settings, such as teacher isolation and aloneness.

Conclusion

Actualizing pedagogy that is truly learner-centered and beneficial for all students in public education requires leadership that can shift the norms of school cultures and advance continuous capacity building among teachers. The findings of my research emphasize how consideration of collective actions and beliefs is an advantageous pursuit for research into this transformation challenge; as Vygotsky (1986) pointed out, “the true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual” (p. 36). My investigation into how a group of educators collectively made sense of pedagogy and developed as instructional leaders during a situated professional development experience has extended understandings about the complexities of productive cultural and learning shifts in public education contexts. What has become clear is that it is possible to transform public education toward increasingly progressive and inclusive norms in service of student learning; however, this transformation requires significant and sustained effort that addresses the multiple cultural aspects of everyday education work contexts. Leadership that enables development of sense of community and collective responsibility, ongoing productive discursive interactions, and active facilitation for intersubjectivity focused on student learning is needed. My findings indicated how these cultural aspects are neither linear,

nor isolated; this transformation must be an integrated and continuous way of operating in the public education work world. Committed leadership grounded in a sense of moral courage and purpose, and that demonstrates competence in collaborative social dynamics and effective instructional practices among both principals and lead teachers is paramount. I look forward to sharing the insights gleaned from my research with other lead educators, and to applying them in continued service for all students' success during my own daily work with educator communities and provincial networks.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval



University
of Victoria

Human Research Ethics Board

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Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vivian Collyer	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11-075
UVic STATUS: Ph.D. Student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 03-Mar-11
UVic DEPARTMENT: EDCI	APPROVED ON: 03-Mar-11
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Deborah Begoray	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 02-Mar-12
PROJECT TITLE: Study of shifts in teacher expressed beliefs about learning	
RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: None	
DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None	
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL	
<p>This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.</p> <p>Modifications To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.</p> <p>Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.</p> <p>Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.</p>	
Certification	
<p>This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ Dr. Rachael Scarth Acting Associate Vice-President, Research</p>	

11-075 Collyer, Vivian

Certificate Issued On: 04-Mar-11

Appendix B

Renewed Approval



Human Research Ethics Board
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Certificate of Renewed Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vivian Collyer	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11-075
UVic STATUS: Ph.D. Student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 03-Mar-11
UVic DEPARTMENT: EDCI	RENEWED ON: 20-Feb-12
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Deborah Begoray	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 02-Mar-13
PROJECT TITLE: Study of shifts in teacher expressed beliefs about learning	
RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: None	
DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None	
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL	
<p>This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.</p> <p>Modifications To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.</p> <p>Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.</p> <p>Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.</p>	
Certification	
<p>This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.</p>	
<p>_____ Dr. Rachael Scarth Associate Vice-President, Research</p>	

Certificate Issued On: 20-Feb-12

11-075 Collyer, Vivian

Appendix C

Information Flyer for Professional Development Series

Literacy and Learning: Foundations for Instructional Leadership

Participants will survey educational approaches to reading across the curriculum (K-12), focusing on how to encourage students who struggle at school. Sessions will include an exploration of the cognitive strategies involved in the reading process, assessment practices that support student learning, and frameworks for differentiated instruction. Service delivery models for student support and intervention will be discussed as well. Participants will reflect on personal growth in understanding and explore a repertoire of effective instructional strategies to improve student literacy and learning. The questions, concerns, and interests of participants will inform the progression of topics and our learning experiences.

- Facilitator: XXX
- Phone: XXX-XXXX
- Time: 5 afternoon sessions in March-May
- Location: School Board Office and Staff Development Room

Participants will...

- read two professional resources and articles provided.
- participate in discussions and simulations.
- contribute thoughts on our interactive blog between sessions.
- explore possibilities for instructional leadership
- write and share reflections on readings, discussions, learning activities, professional experiences, and growth in understanding and practice.

Professional resources:

- Keene, E. O. & Zimmernan, S. (2007) Mosaic of Thought: The Power of Comprehension Instruction. (2nd ed.) Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Johnston, P. H. (2004). Choice Words. Portland, MN: Stenhouse Publishers.

Appendix D

Participant Consent Form

1



Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Study of Shifts in Teacher Expressed Beliefs about Learning

Researcher: Vivian Collyer, Graduate Student, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria.

Supervisor: Dr. Deborah Begoray, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria

Purpose and Objectives of the Research:

The purpose of this research project is to investigate in what ways educators' expressed beliefs about learning change over the course of a professional learning series. The research questions are:

- In what ways do educators' expressed beliefs about *teaching, learning, and struggling learners* shift over the course of professional learning?
- How do educator participants and the facilitator co-construct and make sense of *teaching, learning, and struggling learners* during professional development activities?
- Do particular learning experiences catalyze changes in educator discourse about *teaching, learning and struggling learners*?

Importance of this Research:

This type of research is important because findings will facilitate further improvements in professional learning for educators, particularly in addressing the challenge of student diversity within public schooling.

Participation:

You are being asked for your permission to allow me to use components from your professional learning series as research data because you are an educator who will be participating in a professional learning series. Your consent is entirely voluntary. Whether you choose to grant me consent to use this information will have no effect on your position or how you will be treated.

What is involved:

Since I am gathering data in a number of ways, you have the opportunity to indicate how you would like to participate in the study. Your participation in the study could include observations of group participation in professional learning activities recorded by myself in field notes, allowing me to use the pre- and post questionnaire that you will fill out and journal entries and blog comments that you will write as data sources, allowing me to use the transcripts from audiotapes of our sessions for analysis, and/or participating in a follow-up interview after the professional learning sessions have been completed.

Duration: Study participation will last for the duration of the professional learning series, approximately 10 weeks.

Location: School District

Inconvenience: Inconvenience is minimal to non-existent. There will be no extra time required of study participants beyond the time expectations required for regular participation within the professional learning series. If you choose to and are selected for a follow-up interview, you will participate in a discussion with me for about an hour beyond the expectations of this professional learning series.

Benefits:

It is anticipated that the findings from this study will be transferable and beneficial to other professional learning contexts for educators. Findings will also contribute to scholarly knowledge in the areas of professional and adult learning. You may personally benefit by making connections between your own experiences throughout the sessions and the findings of this study.

Risks:

There are no known or anticipated risks posed to you through your participation in this research project.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants:

I, the researcher, have a relationship with you as a colleague and/or as a supervisor. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken: 1. You have been informed that your decision to participate in this study in no way impacts your professional and/or personal relationship with me, at present or in the future, 2. I will not know who has or has not consented to participate in this study for the duration of the professional learning series. These consent forms will be collected and secured by Janice Foulger, Executive Assistant, until after the final session of the professional development series.

On-going Consent:

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will provide you with my e-mail and phone number contact information so that you can request removal of your data after the professional learning sessions are completed. Furthermore, I will remind you of your right to withdraw from the study, prior to using the data for research purposes.

Anonymity:

Please be aware that it may be possible to identify individual participants because of the small cohort size of this group. In addition, during the professional learning series, you will participate in an interactive blog, where you will be identifiable to other members of our cohort. As a professional courtesy, we must not share one another's session comments and posted comments beyond our cohort group. In order to protect your anonymity within this research study, all data drawn from this professional learning series will refer to pseudonyms and any identifying information will be removed during the dissemination of results.

Confidentiality:

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by storing all hard copies of data in a locked filing cabinet and all electronic copies of data in a password protected location on my computer. The interactive blog will be secured on Moodle. The only people who will have access to this blog will be myself and this cohort of professional learning series participants. Upon completion of the research period, this blog will be taken down.

Dissemination of Results:

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: dissertation thesis and defense, presentations at scholarly meetings, published articles, and/or information session(s) to participants and/or groups involved with the study.

Questions or Concerns?

- Contact the researcher, Vivian Collyer, using the information at the top of page 1;
- Contact the Human Research Ethics Office, University of Victoria.

Consent to use professional learning series activities for research study:

Since I will be gathering data in multiple ways, you have the opportunity to indicate here how you would like to participate in the study. If you would like to participate in this study, please initial **all** of the "yes" options that apply to you and then sign the form at the bottom. Please note that you can choose **multiple options** from the consent choices described below. If you do not wish to participate in this study at all, then please initial the "no" option and sign the form at the bottom.

Initial: _____ Yes, I consent to being observed during the professional learning sessions.

Initial: _____ Yes, I consent to having my photocopied pre- and post questionnaires on learning used.

Initial: _____ Yes, I consent to having my photocopied journal reflections used.

Initial: _____ Yes, I consent to my blog comments being used.

Initial: _____ Yes, I consent to the use of transcriptions of audiotape that include what I say during the professional learning sessions.

Initial: _____ No, I do not wish to consent for my professional learning series activities to be used as research data.

Consent for a follow-up interview:

After you have completed the professional learning series workshop, you are invited to participate in an individual interview about your professional learning experience during the series. These interviews will take approximately one hour and will seek to clarify and refine analysis as required. The interview data will be used only for the research. As such, participating in an interview will be completely voluntary and outside your professional duties. Please indicate below if you are interested in being contacted for an interview. Be assured that you may change your mind later and that your consent will be affirmed at the time of the interview.

Initial: _____ Yes, I consent to participate in a one-hour follow-up interview about my professional learning experience.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Initial: _____ **Your initials here indicate that following the conclusion of this study outlined above you hereby consent to the use of your data for future analysis, publication, and/or reproduction.**

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken in by Janice Foulger, to be given to the researcher after the completion of the professional learning series.

Appendix E

Reflection and Discussion Questions

1. Describe your educational philosophy. (Possible prompts: What do you feel are the most important goals of education? What is your vision of an ideal school? What do you value most about the teaching profession?)
2. Describe what it is like for students with whom you work/have worked who struggle at school.
3. Describe what you feel are the most significant challenges of teaching in a class where the range of student ability is diverse.
4. What do you feel are the best ways for teachers to address this type of diversity?
5. What are some of the ways that a school could address the educational challenges of student diversity?

Appendix F

Co-constructed Questions: Learning Intentions to Guide Sessions

How do I (PVP's) apply what I am learning about reading comprehension?

How do I (PVP's) facilitate a school-wide/system-wide focus on student learning?

How do we shift toward engaging /meaningful learning activities?

How do we get staff/students/parents/the community on board?

How do we facilitate intervention as PVP's?

How do we support "flow" (transitions) across grades and schools?

How does the culture of a school effect learning?

How do we value different ways of learning balanced with criteria?

What is comprehension and how do we measure it?

Appendix G

Characteristics of Effective School-wide Change

- Principal is participating in professional learning with staff
- Principal values and acknowledges staff's knowledge
- Language effects learning. Leaders need to model discourse...Use it and stick with it!
- Leaders provide for time over time; have a long term plan
- Leaders need persistence
- Inquiry projects for teacher learning
- Principal communicates with parents about what is going on
- Leaders model the desired changes
- PVP's need to make public statements about and support with the changes
- Communicate with students too, using the language and explicit criteria
- PVP's need to be strategic around political perspectives
- Principal needs a clear sense of direction and sense of urgency
- Focus on one or two research-based strategies at a time

Appendix H

3-5 year School Plan to Improve Student Achievement

- Data collection and base-line identification is an important start; knowing what to work on
- Determine students' needs and that will guide staff development, professional development, and in-service
- Identify strong, effective teachers (leaders)
 - modeling
 - expert teachers rather than dept. heads
 - teacher feedback loop; have mechanism to formalize mentoring
 - teacher leader is facilitator
- Vision, plan, mission has to be collaboratively built
 - establishing goals for and by the community
 - beliefs, morals, ethics need to be articulated and modeled by leadership
- Empowering staff and students, engendering self-agency through modeling communication and collaboration

Structures:

- Homerooms (connectedness)
 - cross-graded (student mentoring)
 - team approach

Note: scheduling would be a primary consideration
- Allow for cross-curricular, teacher partnering, and flexibility for student groupings based on student needs and passions
 - Personalized learning!
 - Competency-based rather than credit-based system

Appendix I

Process Events and Main Findings within the Professional Learning Series

Session	Main Findings
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Generally, much of participant discourse in Session 1 unfolded in a manner that was contrary to the intended professional learning object of study: to develop instructional leadership. Facilitator efforts to interject and redirect the trajectory of these discussions were frequently unsuccessful. b. Facilitator introduced <i>Think, Pair, Share</i> conversational structure, however participants moved into persuasive type speeches that were cynical in tone about the topic of public education. A noteworthy influence of the political macro-contextual <u>D</u>iscourse emerged in participant discourse. c. Participant discourse indicated ambiguity about pedagogy with frequent use of the word “process” when referring to student learning. d. The facilitator seemed to endeavour to encourage an inquiry stance among participants, encouraging them to reflect on what questions they had that could inform more specifics about what they wanted to learn throughout this series. e. During the final activity of this session, when participants role-played being students who found it difficult to learn in the classroom, there seemed to be a brief interruption in their tendency toward the aforementioned political <u>D</u>iscourse. Participant discourse at this point demonstrated student perspective-taking and empathy for how they might feel when they struggle to understand in the classroom.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The discourse in Session 2 was in contrast to that of Session 1. Participants increased their engagement in turn-taking discursive interactions. b. Facilitator discourse emerged as longer stretches of lecture-type talk that appeared to be functioning as a way to build pedagogical background knowledge and actively encouraging participants to recognize an interrelationship between instruction and student learning. c. Cultural artefacts, including readings, videos, and handouts, were a resource that supported discussions focused on the intended object of study, instructional leadership. d. The facilitator encouraged participants to observe teaching and learning from an instructional leadership perspective, as she guided participant viewing and debriefing of observations of a videotaped lesson by asking them to focus on teaching practice and student learning behaviours. e. During discussions, the facilitator supported participants in focusing on topics relevant to an instructional leader by encouraging them to elaborate on aspects related to teaching practice and its effects on student learning in their accounts. f. In addition, the facilitator assisted participants in connecting their present shared professional learning experiences to the previously discussed pedagogical theory.

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. During Session 3, participants seemed more familiar with the introduced discursive norms for the professional learning context and demonstrated increased participation in turn-taking interactions, where active listening and negotiating meaning were more prevalent than in previous sessions. b. Participants demonstrated more commitment to focus on pedagogy in their conversations and a noteworthy increase in the sophistication of discourse about teaching and learning among participants, frequently drawing on the readings, video viewings, and our previous discussions as support was evident. c. Explanatory discourse predominated facilitator talk, elaborating instructional practices and providing clarifications. d. During discussions, the facilitator used discursive cues, or backchannels, with great frequency to encourage participants to continue in articulations related to their pedagogical thinking. e. The facilitator prompted participants to adopt an instructional leadership perspective during the viewing of a videotaped lesson and participant discourse revealed recognition of instructional practices that had been discussed in their observations. f. The discourse in participant written reflections suggested this group was developing a common pedagogical knowledge that made collective sense within this situated context.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Session 4 emerged as a turning point for the professional learning community, where there seemed to be a consolidation of many cultural aspects, including collective access to a common pedagogical knowledge and its accompanying technical language, increased adoption of exploratory discourse among participants, as well as what seemed to be an increased sense of trust and safety for risk-taking among the group. b. Throughout this session, conversational-type discourse predominated, promoting intersubjective space for collective thinking. c. Participant and facilitator discourse became more aligned in structure and focus. d. Participants demonstrated an increased fluency with pedagogical technical terminology that seemed to indicate a growing understanding of corresponding pedagogical concepts. Participants were readily able to sustain extended conversations on instructional topics with less support from the facilitator and cultural artefacts. e. At times, discourse involved grappling with differing understandings of pedagogical concepts, such as student-centred, however participants were more readily able to work at negotiating common interpretations. f. A sense of community seemed to be especially prevalent in this session, when compared to previous sessions.

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The group's discourse in Session 5 seemed to reveal continued growth in collective participation as a professional learning community, where everyone readily and actively engaged in constructive conversations about <i>teaching and learning</i> together, as well as began to explore school-based leadership roles.b. Participants appeared to be recognizing their own potential for instructional leadership and began to collectively explore and practice this identity.c. Overall discourse seemed to demonstrate an increased competency in distributed discursive interaction, collective self-regulation to sustain productive intersubjective space, and tendency toward an inquiry stance that encouraged exploration of possibility, contrasting early sessions.d. Responsibility shifted: The facilitator frequently adopted the role of an active participant and, during the final activity, one of the participants assumed the role of facilitator for the group.e. Collective discourse revealed an optimistic consideration of public education and a progressive ideology that presumed a student-centred approach to teaching and learning.
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Appendix J

Gradual Release of Responsibility Graphic

