

**WHAT ARE WE LEARNING? : A CASE OF TEACHER
LEARNING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL – POST 1994**

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

In the faculty of education

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL

2010

ABSTRACT

An understanding of teachers experiences of professional development activities and its contribution to their own professional learning in the context of change was composed by asking, “What are teachers learning and how is learning taking place through professional development activities in the context of change?”

From an interpretative paradigm, the triple-lens framework enabled an understanding of what learning happened and how this learning happened. In order to do this, the study looked at once-off professional development activities (PDAs), PDAs at school sites and at self initiated PDAs. The study was able to inform us on the effectiveness of these professional development activities for practising teachers.

Drawing on data generated through individual and conversational interviews, this study found that teacher learning, within the South African context is taking place both formally (through workshops , own studies, cluster meetings) and informally, (through discussions with colleagues). Teachers have learnt more through professional development activities which are driven by themselves, as well as collaboratively, through working with each other, that is, through conversations and assistance from colleagues. A very significant part of teacher learning is also taking place informally in the classrooms, through observation, experimentation and experience. Very little learning takes place when it is mandated.

The study found that teachers learnt when they themselves were receptive to it. Demanding, or putting policies into place to direct teachers learning does not necessarily mean that teachers are going to learn. Teachers have learnt in varying contexts but most importantly, the journey of learning needs to begin with the SELF.

DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 204400462

I declare that **WHAT ARE WE LEARNING? A CASE OF TEACHER LEARNING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL – POST 1994** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

FOZIA SHERIFF-UDDIN

As a supervisor, I have agreed that this work may be submitted.

SIGNATURE

Dr. DAISY PILLAY

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to firstly thank the Almighty who makes everything possible. May He accept this work as time spent profitably.

My sincere gratitude and appreciation to:

1. Dr. Daisy Pillay, my supervisor for her invaluable guidance and support throughout the study.
2. The participants who so willingly contributed time and shared their knowledge and ideas. I am indebted to you all, for without your commitment this work would not have been realized.
3. My children Faaqiqa, Jauhara and Muhammad Sideeq who have been most supportive and encouraging.
4. My husband, Abdul Razack Sheriff Uddin for his motivation, patience, support and sacrifice.

DEDICATION

I humbly dedicate this dissertation to my loving parents. My late dad Mr Abdool Wahab Mohamed and my mum Haniffa Bee Mohamed. All my educational achievements are largely due to my dad's belief in the value of education who quoted Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) in saying "seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" and my mum for being my pillar of strength.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C2005	-	Curriculum 2005
RNCS	-	Revised National Curriculum Statement
OBE	-	Outcomes Based Education
NCS	-	National Curriculum Statements
RNCS	-	Revised National Curriculum Statements
NPF	-	National Policy Framework
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
DoE	-	Department of Education
NAPTOSA	-	National Professional Teachers Association of South Africa
CPD	-	Continuous Professional Development

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CHAPTER ONE

How often do you hear statements to the effect that the CPD of teachers is the key to school improvement? Like so many other single factor solutions to multifaceted phenomena, the general endorsement of in-service education means nothing without an accompanying understanding of the characteristic of effective as compared with ineffective in-service education efforts. Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classroom.

Fullan (1991, p.315)

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The political context

South African education has undergone tremendous change in the last two decades as it tries to address the inequities of the past. Following the democratic elections of 1994, the South African government had inherited a complex education system. It comprised 18 education departments which catered for different provinces, homelands and population groups. Most currently-serving teachers received their professional education and entered teaching when education was an integral part of the apartheid project and organised in racially and ethnically divided sub-systems. The current generation of teachers is the first to experience the new non-racial, democratic transformation of the education system. Since 1994, they have had to cope with the rationalisation of the teaching community into a single national system, the introduction of new curricula, which emphasise greater professional autonomy and require teachers to have new knowledge and applied competences, including the use of new technologies. Alongside this were radical changes in the demographic, cultural and linguistic composition of our classrooms. Due to these sweeping changes in education, specifically curriculum and diversity changes, teachers felt inadequate in their classrooms (Harley and Wedekind, 2004). These changes required teachers to undergo fundamental changes in the way in which they practised and viewed education. In order to provide the opportunity for teachers to make the necessary shifts from an era of apartheid teaching to a democratic dispensation, they were and are required to engage in ongoing learning for professional

development (PD). It can be concluded that the political context in South Africa has had a bearing on the educational context.

1.2 The educational context

1.2.1 Curriculum changes

Changes in the political system demanded curriculum changes. Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced as a means of addressing the inequities and imbalances created by the previous apartheid system. The main dimensions of C2005 were outcomes based education, integrated knowledge and learner-centredness. C2005 was phased in progressively such that it covered all sectors by 2005. Thereafter, C2005 was reviewed and replaced with the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). This curriculum incorporated the principles of OBE and C2005 but focussed on learning areas rather than discrete and separate subjects (Sayed, 2004). The latter focused on difficult terminology, which was problematic and confusing to the educators. The curriculum was further amended and was known as the NCS. The most recent change to the curriculum was the introduction to the Foundations for Learning. These curriculum changes required a shift from the rote and transmission – orientated learning approach to a more learner-focused, critical and problem-solving environment. Thus, teachers found themselves inundated with a “bewildering array of policy texts in a short span of time” (Lewin, Sayed & Samuel, 2003, p. 364).

1.2.2 Policy dictates

Curriculum transformation has made new demands on teachers. Post 1994, South Africa has seen a plethora of policy frameworks to guide educational transformation in general and the teacher education system in particular e.g. The National Policy Framework (NPF); the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education, 1998) and the South African Schools Act (Department of Education, 1996). The Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education, 1998) document

identifies the aim of teacher education as educating teachers to teach effectively within the complex South African education system.

The National Policy Framework (NPF, 2007) is underpinned by the belief that teachers are the essential drivers of a good quality education system. International evidence shows that the professional education and development of teachers works best when teachers themselves are integrally involved in it, reflecting on their own practice; when there is a strong school-based component; and when activities are well co-ordinated. The national and provincial education departments are obliged to provide an enabling environment for such preparation and development of teachers to take place. However, according to the NPF it is the responsibility of teachers themselves, guided by their own professional body, the South African Council for Educators (SACE), to take charge of their self-development by identifying the areas in which they wish to grow professionally, and to use all opportunities made available to them for this purpose, as provided for in the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS).

The department of education, National Policy Framework (NPF, 2007) provides a detailed layout of continuous professional development and training (CPTD) for the South African teacher, which this study shows an interest in. According to the NPF (2007), teachers need to be involved in professional development to increase their knowledge base. They believe “conceptual knowledge, content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are necessary for effective teaching, together with the teacher’s willingness and ability to reflect on practice and to learn from the learners’ own experience of being taught”. These attributes need to be integrated, so that teachers can confidently apply conceptual knowledge-in-practice.

The NPF suggest that all teachers need to develop their skills, not necessarily qualifications, for the delivery of the new curriculum. A great majority need to enhance their subject knowledge base, pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills. A considerable number need to develop specialist skills in areas such as health and physical education, HIV and AIDS support, diversity management, classroom management and discipline, and so on. Many need to renew their enthusiasm and commitment to their calling. For these reasons the NPF advocates a new CPD system.

1.2.2.1 A new CPTD system

According to the NPF (2007, p.17), the new CPTD system will:

- Ensure that current initiatives devoted to the professional development of teachers contribute more effectively and directly to the improvement of the quality of teaching;
- Emphasize and reinforce the professional status of teaching;
- Provide teachers with clear guidance about which Professional Development (PD) activities will contribute to their professional growth;
- Protect teachers from fraudulent providers; and
- Expand the range of activities that contribute to the professional development of teachers.

Furthermore, the new system intends that the South African Council for Educators (SACE) function as the statutory body which will have overall responsibility for the implementation and management of CPTD. The PD points method is an internationally recognised practice used by professional bodies in many fields to acknowledge their members' continuing professional development. Each teacher will be expected to earn PD points by choosing professional development activities that suit their own requirements and that have been endorsed by SACE. Thus, policies are in place which guides the PD of teachers.

The different curriculum review documents such as RNCS, NCS and the Foundations for Learning required education providers to re-skill the teachers. Even though teachers were frequenting workshops to become acquainted with these changes in education, the workshops were prescriptive and the facilitators of these workshops were ill-equipped to cascade this information. The majority of the educators had a week's training to engage with the new curriculum. Harley and Wedekind (2004) state that Outcomes Based Education (OBE) training was problematic for teachers. Jansen (2001) has concurred with this statement and has said that there was a very short period between the finalization of the curriculum and its implementation. Consequently, there was a "crash course" for teachers. The cascade model was used and owing to a lack of capacity, the training was outsourced. Teachers who were trained at the top were not sufficiently equipped to replicate the training. Educators found this transition very difficult and challenging. Hence, according to Harley and Wedekind

(2004), “symbolic display” of C2005 principles were adopted.

Lifelong learning has become a familiar term in our society. Teachers are required to pay careful and close attention to the latest developments, to foresee emerging technologies, to enhance their competences and to progress in their careers (Alejandro, 2001). In order to support and optimize teachers’ continuous development it is important to comprehend how professionals learn. Besides having to keep abreast of innovative developments in teaching, teachers within the South African context found themselves having to re-learn a new curricula. The new curriculum framework requires teachers to take on entirely new roles as curriculum developers, classroom managers and learning mediators in a system that has abolished traditional boundaries and subject disciplines. It requires them to develop these competences within an education system playing an entirely transformed social role in the ‘New South Africa’, in which previously hierarchical relationships between teachers, and between teachers and pupils, are to be replaced by collaborative ones. It requires most South African teachers to drastically reconceptualise the whole sense of teaching itself (Parker and Harley, 1999). This posed a colossal problem to teachers as they did not know what was expected of them.

Due to these sweeping changes in education, specifically curriculum and diversity changes, teachers feel inadequate in their classrooms. Hence the emphasis on continuous professional development (CPD). CPD has taken various forms in our context. Teachers within the South African context are attending workshops conducted by the education departments and certain unions. The Department of Education (DoE) workshops are compulsory, part day or day long workshops. Teachers also engage in individual learning opportunities, like enrolling in masters courses or signing up for holiday courses. Teacher unions like NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers Association of South Africa) provide opportunities for both members as well as interested non-members to attend union workshops. Full payment is necessary for non members whilst member fees are subsidised. In this regard teachers have a choice as to which of the union workshops they feel inclined to attend. There are also school-driven initiatives on professional development. Some learning also goes on in the workings of the school day, as teachers engage in conversations with colleagues, observations as they walk past teachers’ classrooms, as well as the daily experiences of the classroom. A large portion of professional development is said to lie solely in the ambit of the individual.

Professional development is a process which is well-known to every teacher. While these activities are ongoing, it is important to understand what learning happens through these professional development activities and how learning happens through these professional development activities (PDAs).

1.3 Rationale for the study

Personally, I have been participating in many activities involved with professional development and from my experience, different kinds of PDAs provide different kinds of learning opportunities. This study offers me the space to explore teacher learning within the context of PDAs. It would give me an indication of the kinds of PDAs that may lead to fundamental changes in a teacher's practice. Hence, this study will inform my personal professional initiatives.

The literature covers the different forms of professional development (PD), what knowledge a teacher needs and the latest trends in teacher learning. Studies also speak to the forms/approaches through which the PD of teachers happen. Communities of practice and networks have been espoused as being very effective for teachers' professional development (Lieberman & Mace, 2008). While the literature suggests that learning occurs through these different professional development initiatives, this study contributes towards that discourse by providing a glimpse of the ways in which teachers' professional learning is being informed in a particular case.

This brings me to the focus of my study which is to understand teacher learning. The study explores how and what practicing teachers in one school are learning from professional development activities (PDAs) in the context of change.

The following critical questions were formulated on teacher learning.

1. *What do practising teachers say that they learn from professional development activities and practices in the context of change (past 10-15 years)?*

This question will allow me to explore what practising teachers believe they are learning from PDAs. It will also permit me to understand whether PDAs are bringing about a change in the teacher.

2. How is learning taking place amongst practising teachers in the context of change ?

This question will allow me to establish how learning is taking place as a result of PDAs. I will be able to explore which kinds of PDAs are most beneficial to the practising teacher in bringing about a change in the teacher.

1.4 Methodology

The primary purpose of the case study was to find out from teachers which kinds of professional development activities (PDAs) have contributed most to their own professional learning in the context of educational change. I wish to ascertain which activities have ultimately brought about a change in the teachers' practice in the school/classroom.

The research methods used to conduct the research were as follows:

1. open-ended individual interviews
2. conversational interviews

In order to answer the key critical questions, I made use of interviews. Individual interviews allowed me to gain insight into how and what teachers were learning from PDAs. The two half-hour interviews allowed me to clear up misinterpretations and seek immediate clarity to particular issues. According to Bell (2004), a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability in terms of following up ideas, probing responses and investigating motives and feelings further.

As a variation of the individual interview, conversational interviews were held with the four participants. According to Patterson (2002), critical conversations are discussions between two or more people in which opinions may vary. The conversations that the author is referring to are the interactions that may happen to anyone. During the conversational interview, teacher participants were asked to draw educative and miseducative experiences of their PDAs. Interaction within the group allowed for rich data to emerge.

1.5 Framework

This study will make use of the triple lens framework (Fraser, 2007) as its analytical framework. It is a composite framework drawing on three different ways of understanding

CPD. Due to the complexities of CPD, one would need to take into account the range of factors impacting on CPD and I believe that this framework allowed me to do this. The framework is as follows: Bell and Gilberts' (1996) three aspects of professional learning, which can help me analyse the 'what' of teacher learning, which is reflective of the domain. Kennedy's (2005) framework for analysing models of CPD will allow me to answer the 'how' of teacher learning, which indicates the capacity for professional autonomy and transformative practice. Reid's quadrants (McKinney, 2005) for teacher learning will answer the 'where' of teacher learning, which indicates the sphere of action in which the professional learning takes place.

1.6 Chapter division

This study has six chapters which are organised as follows:

Chapter One

In this introductory chapter, the background to the study, the rationale and the focus of the research is laid out. The two critical questions which the research aims to answer are also presented. Finally, an overview of the study is provided.

Chapter Two

Chapter two provides a review of related literature in the field. It looks at the concepts of professional development, teacher learning and the latest trends in teacher learning. This chapter also deals with the contested and divergent views surrounding the trends in teacher learning.

Chapter Three

This chapter presents the theoretical framework. It begins by establishing the framework used in the study and argues for its appropriateness.

Chapter Four

Chapter four presents the research methodology. It describes and justifies the research design, that is used for the study and the procedures employed for the selection of the participants. It also describes the research paradigm, the research methods, techniques, trustworthiness, transferability and the ethical considerations. The chapter also examines issues of trustworthiness.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents the analysis and findings based around the main research questions. It seeks responses to the main quest of the study: “What and how are practising teachers learning from PDAs in the context of change?” This chapter is divided into two sections. Each section answers a key critical question.

Chapter Six

Chapter six gives a summary of the study and the main findings. The conclusions of the research are discussed.

The next chapter presents the review of the literature on the concept of teachers’ learning and professional development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to critically relate the study to the relevant literature, in order to lay a foundation for the exploration into the question posed, namely: What are teachers learning from PDAs in the context of change? Wilson & Berne (1999, p.203) have observed that stories of teacher learning have presumed that teachers learn something from PDAs. They believe that the “what” of teacher learning needs to be identified, conceptualized and & assessed (Wilson & Berne, 1999, p. 203). The literature review sheds light on the knowledge base for my study and highlights key issues that help to shape this exploration. The review attempts to show evidence that teacher learning and professional development are indeed highly complex and multidimensional phenomena, and that professional development activities need to take cognisance of this if they are to be beneficial to teacher learning.

Through the literature exploration, I attempt to make an argument for my study, as I ferret out which of the different PDAs that teachers engage in can lead to change and teacher learning. This chapter reviews mostly international literature on teacher learning as studies on teacher learning within the South African context is relatively new and examines both theoretical and empirical studies. Furthermore, this chapter also seeks to summarize some of the key issues in the vast and diverse literature on professional development and teacher learning. It supports the concepts of ‘professional development’ and ‘teacher learning’.

Firstly, this chapter begins by differentiating between and bringing clarity to key concepts, such as continuous professional development and professional development. It looks at the need for PD. The study also presents the models of professional development which are available. It goes on to provide an understanding of teacher learning. Furthermore, the link between teacher learning and professional development is offered. I go on to discuss the emergent themes on teacher learning like workplace learning. In addition, I look at the role that identity plays in teacher learning.

2.2 Examining the concepts

2.2.1 Professional development

According to Evans (2002, p.132), professional development is “the process whereby teachers’ professionalism and/or professionalism may be considered to be enhanced”. Professionalism communicates the status-related elements of teachers’ work (Hoyle, in Evans, 2002). Hoyle (in Evans, 2002, p. 130) describes professionalism as those elements of the job that constitute the knowledge, skills and procedures that teachers use in their work. Evans (2002, p.131) goes further and defines professionalism as “an ideologically-, attitudinally- and epistemologically-based stance on the part of an individual, in relation to the practice of the profession to which she/he belongs, and which influences her/ his professional practice.”

Evans (2002, p.132) discusses how within this definition the following two constituent elements of teacher development can be identified i.e. attitudinal development. This is “the process whereby teachers’ attitudes to their work are modified”. It incorporates intellectual features (increase in knowledge or in the ability to be reflective or analytical) and motivational features (e.g. teachers’ motivation towards various aspects of their work). Functional development on the other hand refers to “the process whereby teachers’ professional performance may be improved”. It constitutes two change features, namely, procedural and productive. These refer to teachers’ development in terms of the procedures that they utilize and what or how much they do at work (Evans, 2002).

Day (1999, p.4) provides a comprehensive definition of PD as:

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

For Day (1999), professional development is a lifelong process. It consists of both planned and unplanned learning experiences. As professional development is a lifelong process, it can be regarded as continuous professional development.

2.2.2 Continuous professional development

According to Gray (2005), continuous professional development (CPD) embraces the idea that individuals aim for continuous development in their professional skills and knowledge, in addition to the basic training initially required to carry out the job. In teaching, such development used to be called ‘in-service training’, or INSET, with the emphasis on delivery rather than the outcome. The change in terminology signifies a shift in emphasis away from the provider and/or employer, towards the individual. In other words, the individual is now responsible and answerable for his or her lifelong career development, under the umbrella of the school or schools that employ the teacher, which would be the DoE. Within the South African context, the NPF (2007) requires teachers to engage in CPD for lifelong learning.

Following from the above definitions, it can be concluded that professional development on an ongoing lifelong basis is referred to as CPD, and is currently used to describe the process, both formal and informal, through which teachers are expected to learn.

2.2.2.1 Why continuous professional development?

Research has shown that professional development is an essential part of improving school performance (Hargreaves, 1994). Bell and Gilbert (1994, p. 483) assert that teachers as a group are concerned about their teaching and continuously seek innovative and “new ways to improve student learning”. Frequently teachers, in their own time, at their own cost and at their own initiative – given their dedication to professional development - attend meetings and conferences, register for in-service courses or workshops, study for university qualifications, talk with colleagues, or read professional articles, in order to acquire new ideas for teaching students (Bell and Gilbert, 1994, p. 484). Knight (2002) argues that CPD is needed because initial teacher education cannot contain all of the propositional knowledge that is needed. It definitely cannot provide the procedural, ‘how to’ knowledge, which develops in practice. Development is also needed when syllabi are altered or changed

(Sayed, 2004), as was the situation within the South African context at the onset of democracy. In addition, syllabi change can be influenced by global agendas, and these needs to be appropriated at local level.

Similarly, the “ideological agendas that underpin PDAs do not exist in a vacuum” (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid & Mckinney, 2007, p. 155). Fraser acknowledges that conceptions of teaching and teachers are influenced heavily by global agendas. Porter (in Fraser, 2007) argues that there is an increased focus on schooling as a means of increasing economic prosperity - a development which has led to managerial professionalism. At this juncture, it is essential to point to two dominant discourses of professionalism. The managerialist discourse (Day and Sachs, 2004) gives rise to an entrepreneurial identity in which the market and issues of accountability, economy, efficiency and effectiveness shape how teachers individually and collectively construct their professional identities. The ideology behind this claim is that efficient management can solve any problem. Pollit (1990) notes that the image that is created is that managers should be given the room and autonomy to manage and other groups should accept their authority. This discourse has much more limited potential for teachers to contribute to change (Kennedy, 2005). Democratic discourses, which are in distinct contrast to the managerialist ones, give rise to an activist, professional identity in which collaborative cultures are an integral part of teachers’ work practices. These democratic discourses provide the conditions for the development of communities of practices (Sachs, 1999, p.5). The agenda within CPD is then either activist or compliant (Day & Sachs, 2004). Besides PD being influenced by global agendas, they are also laid down in policy frameworks.

2.2.2.2 PD as laid down in policy

According to the South African National Policy Framework (2006), the following are the professional development (PD) activities that practising teachers should engage in. These activities are classified into four types: (i) School-driven programmes; (ii) Employer-driven programmes; (iii) Qualification-driven programmes; and (iv) other programmes, offered by NGOs, teacher unions, community-based and faith-based organisations, or private companies. The policy states that some of these activities will be compulsory whilst others

can be self selected. Some of the PDAs that teachers are required to engage in may fall into specific models of professional development programmes, as described by Zeichner (1979).

2.2.3 Models of CPD

2.2.3.1 Traditional model

Within the South African perspective, the cascade model of teacher development was used to train teachers in the new curriculum, as conceptualised under C2005. The DOE seems to favour the formal, workshop approach to teacher learning which does not seem to have a positive effect on teacher learning (Chisholm, 2000). The findings in a study by Bantwini (2009) indicate that the “cascade and train” model was used to introduce teachers to the C2005, RNCS and NCS. This model has been described as cost-effective and as being able to accommodate a high participant/trainer ratio. It is commonly employed in situations where resources are limited (Kennedy, 2005). This model was severely criticized because it placed the teachers in a passive role; they were merely recipients of knowledge produced elsewhere (Wilson & Berne, 1999).

Zeichner (1983, pp.3-9) refers to this model as the “behaviouristic model”, which is the traditional “master-apprentice model” as well as the “traditional craft model”. These models construct teachers as “doers”, merely fitting into schooling environments that are stable and predictable. Within this model, the knowledge, skills and competencies to be taught are those felt to be most relevant to the teaching role as defined (Zeichner, 1979). The teacher plays little part in determining the substance and direction of their development. Zeichner (1979, p. 5) believes that this falls within the “technical manifestation of a task as it fosters the development of a skill in an actual performance of a predetermined task”.

Dadds (1997, p. 32) describes this traditional form of CPD as a delivery or empty vessel model. Her major criticism is that:

On their own they are extremely limited because they have little, if anything, to say about the crucial role of teachers’ understandings about, and experiences of, children, in the development of their work. Nor do they have anything to say about the variety

and complexity of processes which teachers undergo as they continue to learn about their professional craft; as they continue to gain new knowledge and understanding; reconstruct their attitudes, beliefs, practices; struggle with the difficulties of the change process.

2.2.3.1.1 Critics of the traditional model of CPD

“Many teachers feel a sense of frustration that even after attending an in-service course, for example, they feel unable to use the new teaching activities, the new curriculum materials, or new content knowledge to improve the learning of their students” (Bell and Gilbert, 1994, p.483). Unfortunately, it is usual for teachers to find themselves teaching in the same regular way that they have done, possibly making use of some of the new materials, but adapting them to fit long-established patterns (Briscoe in Bell and Gilbert, 1994, p.483). Bell and Gilbert (1994) believe that many teachers are aware of this pattern and feel frustrated in their attempts to change. This dissatisfaction may lead to teachers developing a cynical view towards new initiatives and not volunteering for further professional development.

The training paradigm that has prevailed over the world has come under attack. Professional development of teachers is not new and whilst it is well intentioned (Lieberman & Mace, 2008 ; Knight, 2002), its structure and delivery is being reconceptualised. Dass (1999, p.253) reports that traditional 'one-shot' approaches to professional development have been inadequate and inappropriate in the context of current educational reform efforts. They are also out of step with current research about teacher learning (Linn, 2006). Ball & Cohen (1999, p.175) indicated that professional development of teachers is "intellectually superficial, disconnected from deep issues of curriculum and learning, fragmented and non-cumulative". According to Ritchie and Wilson (2000, p. 88), conceptions of teacher education and their programmes like CPD are “depersonalized and disconnected from students lives and their gendered, racial, ethnic and social class identities. They believe that professional knowledge and personal location are inseparable. Bell and Gilbert point out that the process should involve “not only the use of new teaching activities in the classroom, *but also* the development of the beliefs and conceptions underlying the actions” (Bell and Gilbert, 1996, p.15). Professional development is often initiated in short, taught courses where new content, ideas and techniques are ‘delivered’ (Wilson & Berne, 1999, p.197). It does not provide the new ideas, support, and feedback necessary for teacher development (Hargreaves, 1992).

Fullan (1991b, p. 315) who has written a great deal on professional development states:

How often do you hear statements to the effect that the CPD of teachers is the key to school improvement? Like so many other single-factor solutions to multifaceted phenomena, the general endorsement of in-service education means nothing without an accompanying understanding of the characteristic of effective as compared with ineffective in-service education efforts. Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classroom.

Wilson and Berne (1999), in agreement with Dadds (1997), argue that the poor reputation of traditional PD workshops discourages teachers in their quest to learn.

2.2.3.2 Personalistic models

Within this model of professional development, teachers are able to exercise some degree of autonomy (Zeichner, 1979). This approach employs a metaphor of growth (Kliebard in Zeichner, 1979). According to this model of teacher development, adult development is a process of “becoming” rather than merely a process of educating someone on how to teach. Zeichner (1979) sees the problem in this model as its inability to bring about these shifts within the individual.

2.2.3.3 Inquiry-oriented model

This model focuses on the fostering of skills of critical inquiry. However, it does not mean that the technical skills are seen as unimportant (Zeichner, 1979). This model is similar to the critical reflective practice model (Morrow, 2004), which aims at developing teachers into agents of change. It does so by inculcating in them a reflective consciousness whereby systems of power and hierarchies are understood. Within these models teachers act as autonomous agents. Eisner (1992) believes that PD is about learning how to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity. It is about learning how to savour the journey. It is about inquiry and deliberation. It is about becoming critically minded and intellectually curious, and it is about learning how to frame and pursue your own educational aims.

2.2.4 Characteristics of effective PD

Abdul Haqq (1995, p.1) nominates a set of characteristics for PD to be effective. They are as follows: PD should be ongoing; it should include training, practice and feedback; is school-based and embedded in teacher work; is collaborative, providing opportunities for teachers to interact with each other; encourages and supports school-based and teacher initiatives; provides adequate time and follow-up support; incorporates constructivist approaches to teacher learning and recognises teachers as professionals and adult learners. PD organisers should take heed of the words of Marike and De Witt (2007) who quote the profound words of Confucius who states that “ *I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand*”. Besides giving consideration to these characteristics PDAs need to take cognisance of other factors.

Professional development programmes need to consider factors such as (i) the stage each participant is in their teaching career, (ii) what the qualifications are of the participant, and (iii) the existing knowledge and skills of each participant, and that they may all have an important influence on how the professional development programme is perceived (O’ Brian, 2004). Gardner (1983) stated that people learn in different ways and use different intelligences. Henze, van Driel & Verloop (2009) in agreement with Gardner (1983), states that teachers learned in qualitatively different ways, hence teacher training needs to take into consideration the differences that exist between teachers and not use a one-size-fits-all approach. Hargreaves and Fullan (1992, p. 7) stated:

Teacher development...involves more than changing teachers’ behaviour. It also involves changing the person the teacher is...Acknowledging that teacher development is also a process of personal development marks an important step forward in our improvement efforts.

According to Ball (1996), teacher development is considered especially productive when teachers are in charge of the agenda and determine the focus and nature of the programming offered. In the name of professional autonomy, it has been argued that teachers should determine the shape and course of their own development.

2.3 Teacher Learning

2.3.1 What then, is teacher learning ?

What we know about teacher learning is "puzzling" because of the "serendipitous and scattered nature of teachers' learning" (Wilson & Berne, 1999, p.173). Professional learning according to Fraser et al (2007) can be taken to represent the processes which, whether intuitive or deliberate, individual or social, result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers. Evans (2002) interprets teacher learning as that learning which brings about a change in the individual. Teachers learn from a wide variety of opportunities and experiences, both by design and by chance. The list of learning situations is almost unlimited. Isolating and identifying what and how teachers learn are, then, complex and uncertain tasks (Linn, 2006). Teachers' own personal and professional histories are thought to play an important role in determining what they learn from professional development opportunities. Schoenfeld (2000, p. 6) observes that learning has happened when "one has learned when one has developed new understanding or capacity". Therefore, teacher learning is characterized by personal and professional change, along with an increased understanding of self and the role of the educator.

2.3.2. What is the link between teacher learning and professional development?

Learning is regarded as necessary for teachers to develop professionally (Kwakman, 2003). Fraser (2007) draws a distinction and brings clarity to the concepts of professional learning and professional development. Teachers' professional learning, according to Fraser (2007,p.162), represents:

the processes that, whether intuitive or deliberate, individual or social, result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers. Teachers' professional development, on the other hand, is taken to refer to the broader changes that may take place over a longer period of time resulting in qualitative shifts in aspects of teachers' professionalism.

Evans (2002, p.167) describes professional development as “changes that would generally be categorised as learning”. Fraser (2007) extends this view to incorporate the concept of teacher change, which they see as coming about through a process of learning, which can be described in terms of transactions between teachers’ knowledge, experience and beliefs on the one hand, and their professional actions on the other. Both Fraser (2007) and Evans (2002) describe teacher learning as having taken place if it brings about change within the individual.

According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), the key change processes in the professional context of work, are ‘enactment’ and ‘reflection’. Enactment refers to the translation of the teachers’ knowledge or belief into action, rather than simply the professional action itself (Fraser, 2007). Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) believe that change in one domain will result in change in the other. Fraser et al(2007) indicates that professional change can be best understood as coming about as a process of learning wherein there are transactions between teachers’ knowledge, experience and beliefs on the one hand, and their professional actions on the other.

2.3.3 Principles of effective and enduring learning

Shulman (2004, p. 513) believes that authentic and enduring learning occurs when the teacher

- is an ‘active agent’ in the process. S/he should not be passive, just an audience, a client or a collector. Shulman (2004) believes that teacher learning becomes more active through experimentation and enquiry, through writing, dialogue as well as questioning. He believes that the school setting should provide the opportunities and support for becoming active investigators of their own teaching.
- Secondly, Shulman (2004, p. 514) believes that teachers do not learn just by doing, but they learn by thinking about what they are doing and why. He is of the opinion that teachers cannot become better teachers through experimentation and activity alone. He endorses that schools should create opportunities for teachers to become reflective about their work by way of journal writing, case conferences, video clubs etc. This kind of work would require scheduled time and substantial support.

- The third principle that Shulman (2004, p. 515) advocates is collaboration. He postulates that collaboration will lead to scaffolding and supporting another's learning. Furthermore, Shulman (2004) is of the opinion that enduring learning occurs when teachers and students share a passion for the material and are emotionally committed to the ideas, processes and activities.
- Finally, this learning would work best if supported, nurtured and legitimated in a community that values such experiences and creates opportunities for them to occur.

2.4 Emergent themes on teacher learning

2.4.1 Teachers informal learning at the workplace

Darling-Hammond, (1997) believes that teacher learning takes place in the workplace as a result of teachers' participation in everyday activities. Wilson and Berne (1999) assert that teachers learn through conversations with colleagues, passing glimpses through another teacher's classroom on the way to the photocopying machine, and tips swapped over coffee. Knight (2002) is of the opinion that informal learning is important but that its importance is insufficiently appreciated.

2.4.2 Categories of learning

Kwakman (2003) and Van Eekelen (2005) have empirically defined categories or types of learning which do not differ greatly from each other. Kwakman (2003) writes that there are four categories of professional learning. Three of these categories refer to the individual level of learning and one category refers to the collaborative level of learning. The first category has to do with *reading* (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Kwakman, 2003, Van Eekelen 2005). Kwakman (2003) states that the core responsibility of professionals is to keep abreast of new insights and developments which are currently influencing the professional field such as new subject matter, new teaching methods and manuals.

A second category is referred to as *doing* (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Kwakman, 2003 Van Eekelen 2005) as well as *experimenting* (Moore & Shaw, 2000; Henze; Van Driel & Verloop, 2009). By doing and experimenting teachers not only gain new experiences but apply new

ideas as well, so they really put effort in improving their own professional practices within the classroom.

A third category, a category often referred to, is *reflection* (King & Newmann, 2000; Henze *etal*, 2009). Nieto (2003) concurs and adds that reflection in practice is essential to a teacher's learning. Teachers need to think about what they are doing. Reflection is viewed as the cornerstone of professional development as it is a prerequisite to recognizing and changing routine behaviour (Schon,1983). Smylie (1989) found that teachers ranked direct classroom experiences as their most important site for learning.

The fourth category addresses collaboration and communities of practice.

Collaboration is a term that has become prominent in the literature on learning. The field of collaborative CPD is defined by the activities of a group of teachers working together or with professional colleagues on a sustained basis. It excludes teachers working alone and courses which require no follow-up activities or plans to build on existing practice (Cordingly et al, 2003). Hargreaves (1994) however, disagrees with Cordingly (2003), by arguing that mentoring or peer-coaching is part of collaboration, even though it is comprised of two people and does not take place on a sustained basis. The mentoring or coaching relationship can be collegiate (Kennedy, 2005). She notes that the central feature of this PD model is the importance of the one-to-one relationship, usually between two teachers, which is intended to support CPD. Coaching is more skills-based and mentoring involves an element of 'counselling and professional friendship' (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002, p. 301). Furthermore, mentoring also often implies a relationship where one partner is a novice and the other more experienced (Clutterbuck, 1991). Whilst collaboration can play a crucial role in the way a teacher learns, it also poses its own dilemmas.

Contrived collegiality is a managerial tool occasionally imposed by school leaders. It is 'not spontaneous, voluntary collaboration but predictable and organised to achieve a simple specific task' (Hargreaves, 1994, p 195). Contrived collegiality may be successful in incorrectly convincing the management and staff that existent collaborative learning is a part of the school culture even though this is far from the truth. Related to contrived collegiality, Day (1999) also suggests the term "comfortable collaboration", wherein the main concern of teachers may be to advance friendships rather than professional collaboration.

Communities of practice as learning communities

Lieberman & Mace (2008), Fraser et al (2007), Henze *et al* (2009) and many other researchers advocate social learning. While learning in isolation is seen as problematic, communities of practice engaged in a common enterprise are seen as both empowering (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.122) and knowledge generating. Lieberman and Mace (2009, p. 232) recommend that teachers become involved in learning communities. Knight (2002) has identified communities of practice as one of the most important sites for learning. They argue that teachers' professional development should be refocused on the building of learning communities. Research suggests, then, that a learning community is a group of people that acts on an ongoing basis to develop their knowledge of a common interest or passion by sharing individual resources and by engaging in critical dialogue (Wenger, 1998, p.145). In a learning community, teachers learn about teaching through daily conversations with their colleagues. Stoll & Lewis (in Lieberman and Mace 2008, p. 231) concur, by stating that "teachers learn best when they are members of a learning community". Wilson & Berne (1999), on the other hand, illuminate the problems that occur with critical dialogue. Encouraging teachers to think and talk critically about their own practice can be very painful and requires considerable energy.

Huberman (1995, p. 195) similarly argues that the "vision of a schoolhouse as a bonded community of adults and children is an unlikely one as they are brought together more by career paths and the central office than by affiliation or purpose". Others, like Bruckerhoff (1991, p.275), recall the limitation of 'cliques', and Little (1990, p.123) speaks of the 'persistence of privacy' in schools.

2.5 Does identity play a role in teacher learning?

In the last decade much research has emerged on teachers' professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004). Beijaard *et al*, saw professional identity as an ongoing process of integration of the 'personal' and the 'professional' sides of becoming and being a teacher. Teachers' identities refer to their sense of self as well as their knowledge and beliefs, dispositions, interests and orientation towards work and change (Drake in Jansen , 2001, p.

242). Goodson and Cole (1994, p. 88), perceived teachers' identity development as rooted both in the personal and the professional. They wrote:

We consider teachers as persons and professionals whose lives and work are influenced and made meaningful by factors and conditions inside and outside the classroom and school.

Similarly, Bell and Gilbert (1996) describe professional learning as comprising the personal, social and the occupational aspects which are inter-related. They suggest that the impetus for change originates within the personal aspect of professional learning. The "self" must desire the change for learning to have taken place. Ball (1996) concurs and states that what teachers bring to the process of learning to teach affects what they learn. Beijaard (2004) believes that it is important to pay attention to the personal part of a teacher's professional identity. What teachers learn from policy instruments and how they change their practice depend in part on what they already know, believe and can do (Spillane, 2000). What is found important to the profession in light of the many changes in education, may conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as good. Beijaard *et al*(2004) states that such a conflict can lead to friction in teachers' professional identity.

Wilson and Berne (1999) assert that some teachers would pursue any opportunity to learn with passion whilst others would attend workshops when mandates arrived. Antonek, McCormick, & Donato (1997) identified reflection as a key component associated with the concept of self. In other words, it is impossible to speak about the self when there is no reflection. To develop the self as a teacher, Antonek *et al*, (1997) emphasise the need to develop reflective skills. Where some authors refer to reflection, others speak about self-reflection. Through self-reflection, teachers relate experiences to their own knowledge and feelings, and are willing and able to integrate what is socially relevant into their images of themselves as teachers (Nias, 1989).

The literature review reveals that internationally some teachers developed their competences individually, by reading books, newspapers or other relevant material. Some learnt by experimenting and practising individually in the classroom (Henze *et al*, 2009). Others are learning in a social context, through collaboration and discussion.

The current context in South Africa requires us to explore how and what teachers are learning from the professional development activities available to them. Little is known about what, how or whether teachers are learning from the professional development activities that they

engage in within the South African context. To create quality programmes for in-service teachers, it is imperative that we provide empirical evidence that links key components of professional development to changes in teacher knowledge, attitude and practice.

2.6 Summary

The literature review on teacher learning highlighted the most important issues pertaining to teacher learning and professional development. It presented the models of PD. The link between teacher learning and PD was offered.

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework used in the research. It begins by discussing paradigms and locates the paradigm of this research.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework given the underpinnings of the study. It begins by establishing the framework used in the study and argues for its appropriateness.

3.2 The Framework

This study appropriates Fraser's (2007) triple lens framework to understand professional development activities and practices. Fraser (2007) argues that taking into account the complexities of professional development, professional learning and professional change, as discussed in the literature review, one would need a composite framework to understand the range of factors impacting on CPD. She makes use of :

- Bell and Gilbert's three aspects of professional learning.
- Kennedy's Framework for analysing models of CPD.
- Reid's quadrants for teacher learning.

Fraser (2007, p. 158) believes that using the triple lens framework is significant in that the "combined insights that are gained using this framework are much more significant and important than using any one of these frameworks alone".

3.2.1 Bell and Gilbert's three aspects of professional learning

Bell & Gilbert's (1994) study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm over a three year period. The research was primarily qualitative, collaborative, mutual, directed by the ethics of care and employed multiple data collection strategies (Bell & Gilbert's 1994, p.41). The teacher development activities were for the most part separate from the research activities of the data collection, using interviews, survey and classroom observations and discussions of the draft research reports. Bell & Gilbert (1994) draw attention to the

complications that teachers confront in teacher development programmes and thereby established a theory to manage teacher development programmes to support change. It is referred to as Bell & Gilbert's three aspects of professional learning.

This aspect looks at the domain of influence i.e. where the impact of the learning is felt on an individual basis. According to Bell and Gilbert (1996, p. 14), professional learning can be considered as comprising the "personal, social and the professional" aspects which are inter-related. Personal development according to Bell and Gilbert (1996, p. 15), involves "each teacher constructing, evaluating and accepting or rejecting for herself or himself the newly constructed knowledge about what it means to be a teacher". It involves "managing the feelings associated with changing their activities and beliefs", particularly if the new ideas involved go "against the grain" of accepted knowledge (Bell and Gilbert, 1996, p. 15).

Bell and Gilbert (1996, p. 16) explain the social development component of teacher development as involving "the renegotiation and reconstruction of the rules and norms of what it means to be a teacher". They indicate that teachers need to be the essential contributors to this, not in seclusion or isolation, but through social interaction. Learning in isolation is viewed as problematic. Social development recognises, firstly, that learning is a social activity and takes place through a series of interactions (Nuthall, 2002). Consequently, individual or personal change almost always takes place in a social context and will involve social interaction. This is an acknowledgement that we need each other to develop and grow. Secondly, we all live in social contexts. Therefore, we need to learn how to be more effective participants in these social contexts (Bell & Gilbert, 1996). It recognises that as we do not live in a vacuum; our behaviour and actions have an effect on other people and their actions affect us. An aspect of living effectively in social contexts is developing greater awareness of how our actions affect others and the effects that others have on us. Thirdly, it recognises that at the centre of each social context, there is a task or purpose (Timperley & Robinson, 2002).

Professional development involves shifting beliefs and concepts about education and classroom activities (Bell & Gilbert, 1994). Professional development includes teachers developing their beliefs, values and ideas about what it means to be a teacher, the teaching and learning process, and teacher development.

Thus, Bell & Gilbert (1994) found that in order for PDAs to be significant and meaningful to teacher development and learning, cognisance needs to be given to the professional, social and personal aspects in a PDA. Being knowledgeable about how something is constructed, understood and interpreted, assists in transformation and change.

3.2.2 Kennedy's Framework for analysing models of CPD

In her study, Aileen Kennedy (Kennedy, 2005) identifies 9 models of CPD which are then classified in relation to their capacity for supporting professional autonomy and transformative practice. The nine models used in her study (2005, p.236) are as follows: (i) training; (ii) award-bearing; (iii) deficit; (iv) cascade; (v) standards-based; (vi) coaching/mentoring; (vii) community of practice; (viii) action research and (ix) transformative. Each of these models were evaluated on a continuum. This study will employ this framework to analyse professional learning opportunities which can be located within a continuum of 'transmissive', 'transitional' and 'transformative' dimensions. It also views the power relationships within individual models and explores the degree to which CPD is perceived and promoted either as an individual attempt linked to accountability, or as a collaborative attempt that supports transformative practice (Kennedy, 2005).

Transmissive models of CPD relies on 'expert tuition' and is externally driven, focusing on the technical aspects of the job rather than issues relating to values, beliefs and attitudes. This model is concerned with transmission (Kennedy, 2005), but is more concerned with modifying existing practices to ensure that teachers are compliant with government change agendas. For Kennedy (2005, p. 237) this is a training model which supports:

a skill-based, technocratic view of teaching whereby CPD provides teachers with the opportunity to update their skills in order to be able to demonstrate their competence. It is generally 'delivered' to the teacher by an 'expert', with an agenda determined by the deliverer and the participant is placed in a passive role.

The transitional model (Kennedy, 2005), on the other hand, has the capacity to support either a transmissive or transformative agenda. The coaching, mentoring and communities of practice models fit into this category.

Transformative models of CPD have the ability to support professional autonomy (Fraser, 2007). Kennedy (2005, p.246) argues that “the transformative model is not a clearly definable model in itself; rather it recognises the range of different conditions required for transformative practice”. It is very much focussed on the enhancement of teachers’ content and pedagogical knowledge. One teacher wrote that “it is about learning something new, which is stimulating, applicable and *exhilarating*”. Helping them to “understand more deeply the content they teach and the ways students learn that content” is also deemed important (Guskey 2003, p.748).

Transformative professional learning suggests strong links between theory and practice (Sprinthall,1996), internalisation of concepts, reflection, construction of new knowledge and its application in different situations (Fraser, 2007). This aspect can help determine whether PDAs are transmissive, transitional or transformational. PDAs can also be located within Reid’s quadrants of teacher learning (Mckinney, 2005).

3.2.3 Reid’s quadrants for teacher learning

Through this lens, one is able to look at the sphere of action, i.e. where and how the professional learning is taking place. Fraser (2007) argues that different professional learning experiences offer varying opportunities for attitudinal development. I propose analysis of professional learning opportunities, according to Reid’s quadrants (Mckinney, 2005), comprising two dimensions: formal–informal and planned-incidental. Formal opportunities are those explicitly offered by an agent other than the teacher (e.g. taught courses), whereas informal opportunities are sought and effected by the teacher (e.g. networking).

I have appropriated Fraser’s (2007) triple lens framework to develop my analytical framework. One of the key reasons for this is the argument that teacher learning cannot be understood in a vacuum. As teacher learning is a complex activity, this framework, now my analytical framework, will allow me to look at teacher learning in a more comprehensive manner. Importantly, the framework falls well into the interpretivist paradigm.

Firstly, I believe that this framework would allow me to establish what learning has taken place. Secondly, the framework is appropriate in viewing how teacher learning is taking place and thirdly, it will allow me to ascertain whether the learning is formal, planned, informal or unplanned. I believe that this framework is appropriate to my study as it provides me with the tools with which to frame my research. The current context within South Africa, with its recent emphasis on professional development, requires us to explore professional development activities which are prevalent among teachers, in order to evaluate what learning happens at these spaces. Using this framework, the research will try to locate what professional development is taking place and how effective these professional development activities are.

3.3 Summary

This chapter provided the framework used in the study.

The next chapter presents the methodology used in the research. It discusses the research paradigm, the research methods, techniques, trustworthiness, transferability and the ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to describe the research design and methodology used in the study, which asks, “What are practising teachers learning from professional development activities in the context of change?” and “How are practising teachers learning from PDAs in the context of change?”. The previous chapter offered a discussion on teacher learning. This chapter discusses the research paradigm, the research methods, techniques, trustworthiness, transferability and the ethical considerations.

My study aims to understand teacher learning in a South African school. The purpose of the study is to explore how and what practising teachers are learning from professional development activities (PDAs) and to find out from teachers which kinds of PDAs have contributed most to their own professional learning in the context of educational change in South African schools. This study explores the different forms of professional development activities and practices which teachers attend or engage in, and attempts to determine how beneficial these professional development activities and practices are in contributing towards teacher learning.

Questions to be answered in the research

1. What do practising teachers say they learn from professional development activities and practices in the context of change?
2. How is learning taking place amongst practising teachers in the context of change?

The literature review explored definitions of teacher learning, professional development and also described some of the ways in which teachers learn. It offers the latest trends around the ways in which teachers learn. However, this literature is based on an international perspective. This research aims to look at teacher learning from a South African perspective especially since the onset of democracy.

4.2 The research design

One of the most important choices that any researcher should make in the construction of his/her study is the research design. The researcher should choose a research design which would best suit him/her to answer the research question. It is the plan or blueprint according to which data are to be collected, to investigate the research question in the most economic manner (Huysamen, 1995). Furthermore, De Vaus (in Henning 2004, p. 95) states that a “research design is just not a work plan. The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible.”

4.3 Research paradigms

Whether we are conscious of it or not, we think and act within the framework of certain paradigms. This relates to our understanding of reality, identity, knowledge, values and notions of truth. Broadly speaking, there are the positivist, interpretivist, critical, and post-structuralist paradigms of thinking about the world in which we live. In research, we are particularly self-conscious about paradigms, as the scope of the different paradigms would direct and shape the research endeavour differently.

Research has been described as a systematic investigation (Burns, 1997) or inquiry whereby data are gathered, analysed and interpreted in some way, in an effort to "understand, describe, predict or control an educational or psychological phenomenon, or to empower individuals in such contexts" (Mertens, 2005, p.2). O'Leary (2004, p.8) argues that what was fairly simple to define twenty or thirty years ago has grown to be far more multifaceted in current times with the quantity of research methods increasing considerably, "particularly in the social/applied sciences". It has been suggested that the "exact nature of the definition of

research is influenced by the researcher's theoretical framework" (Mertens, 2005, p.2), with theory being used to institute associations between or among constructs that express or describe a phenomenon by going beyond the local event and trying to connect it with similar events (Mertens, 2005, p.2).

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) refer to the research paradigm as the way of looking at the world. They argue that the paradigm intends to answer essential questions, namely, what is the nature of reality and what is there to know about it (ontological); what is the nature of knowledge and the connection between the research and the participants. In other words, encouraging a discourse between the researcher and the participants is critical, as it suggests their epistemological stance in the world. How the researcher may acquire the intended knowledge and perspective is then a methodological issue. A paradigm, they espouse can be defined as the lens or set of beliefs and assumptions through which we look at the world. Henning (2004) views paradigms as a particular stance or standpoint which governs the way an individual views a phenomenon and guides their approach in research. In broad terms, the main research paradigms are positivism, critical theory and interpretivism, in which the majority of research studies are located. While research may be done in a post-structuralist paradigm, it is usually self-questioning, self-conscious and critically self-reflective, where questions of power, among others, in society as well as in the research process are foregrounded. My research has been located within the interpretive paradigm, as the researcher is trying to understand and interpret what teachers are learning from professional development activities, from the vantage point of the participant.

4.3.1 Interpretive Paradigm

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007, p. 21) maintain that the interpretive paradigm is categorized by consideration for the individual, and the fundamental essence of this paradigm is to understand the subjective world of the human experience. They further postulate that "to retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and understand them from within". In addition, they put forward that what is significant within this paradigm is that the viewpoints of the researcher are resisted. Henze et al (2009) maintain that interpretive approaches in education inquire into the process of teaching and learning from the perspective of the participants themselves. Furthermore,

within this paradigm, McMillan & Schumacher (2001) maintain that the researcher is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants and that within this paradigm the knowledge claims are created as the researcher proceeds.

Within this paradigm, truth is not permanent; there will be differing views, opinions and interpretations of the participants. In actively searching for different views from the diverse participants (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2007), within a particular moment, context, situation and time, the qualitative, interpretivist approach is most appropriate and pertinent to this study. The choice of the paradigm influences the framework and capacity of the study.

4.4 The research methodology

As this is a qualitative study, the methodology that I chose to use is a case study. Researcher Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, p. 23). The contemporary phenomena in this study, being teacher learning, is a relatively new phenomena under scrutiny. Previous studies involved student learning. How teachers learn may differ from context to context. I believe that the case study as a methodology would be appropriate, as Feagin (1991, p.315) states that it is an “ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed”. According to Cohen, *et al* (2007, p.253), case studies provide a “unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract principles”.

Researchers need to decide between case study design types viz. single or multiple case studies. Research design links the data to be collected and conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of the study (Yin, 1994). The design type used in this study is a single case design type. This means that this study is using a single school.

Yin (1993) categorises three types of case studies viz. *exploratory*, *explanatory*, and *descriptive* case studies and provides recommendations for them. In *exploratory* case

studies, researchers can embark on fieldwork, and data collection prior to the definition of the research questions (Tellis, 1997). Stake (2005) recommended that the selection offers the opportunity to maximize what can be learned, knowing that time is limited. Hence the cases that are selected should be easy and willing subjects. *Explanatory* cases are suitable for doing causal studies. *Descriptive* cases require that the researcher begin with a descriptive theory, or face the possibility that problems will occur during the project (Yin, 1994).

Critics of the case study method believe that the study of a small number of cases can present no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Others believe that the intense exposure to study of the case biases the findings. Some dismiss case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool. Nevertheless, researchers continue to use the case study research method with success in carefully planned and crafted studies of real-life situations, issues, and problems. Research and reports using case studies are widely available in the literature. Despite these criticisms levelled against the case study approach, I believe that it is an appropriate method and most suited to answer my research questions. Since the qualitative research design is exploratory, I produced data in face -to -face situations by interacting with teacher participants in their school.

4.5 The school site

This study was carried out in a primary school (ex HOD) in a suburban area. It is an English medium public school which caters for learners from Grades R to grades seven with a roll of about 430 learners and 13 teachers on the PPN (post provisional norms). The school has an additional two teachers employed by the governing body (GB). The majority of the learners attending this school come from a poor socio-economic background. The learner population is made up of 80% Indians and 20% Blacks.

The selection of the site, unlike in other research, could have been any school within the Department of Education, as my study revolves around teacher learning. Teachers throughout the country attend workshops and engage in other professional development activities and practices. Hence any school could have been selected as my site. The main reason for the choice of this particular site was accessibility. Participants in the study were easily accessible. I took into account time constraints and the heavy workload of teachers. I found

accessibility an important factor in this study as teachers were involved in protracted industrial action during the data gathering stage. Once teachers were back at school, they tried to fit me into their tight schedules. We were able to swiftly make alternate arrangements when the participants could not keep to the scheduled times for the interviews.

The following description of the site is merely for purposes of creating an image of the school in the reader and does not imply that the context of the environment has a bearing on teacher learning in this study. Sandalwood Primary School has a principal, a deputy principal, two senior primary heads of department (HOD) and one foundation phase HOD. The principal was initially a level one teacher on the staff, and was subsequently promoted to principal twelve years ago. Two of the HOD's were also level one educators on the staff, who were later promoted to HOD's. The school acquired the third HOD due to his being excess on his staff. The deputy principal is a female who came onto the staff's PPN when the numbers warranted it.

Teachers within this hierarchical learning organization attend any PDAs offered by the Department of Education. The Department of Education (DOE) workshops are compulsory, part day or day long workshops. Teachers also attend workshops provided by certain unions. Teacher unions like NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers Association of South Africa) provide opportunities for both members as well as interested non-members to attend union workshops. The management at school regard any directive sent by the department as binding. Teachers requests to attend PDAs provided by an outside body may be turned down. It is within this context that the research is being conducted.

4.6 Selection of participants

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p.433), the selection of participants for interactive inquiry begins with a description of the desired attributes or profiles of persons who would have the same knowledge of the topic. Therefore the persons selected must share the same experience, be affected by the same set of circumstances and be involved with individuals who are daily affected by these circumstances. Teacher learning is a phenomenon which is experienced daily by teachers when they interact with each other, with their learners,

with members of management or with other stakeholders. For that reason it could be assumed that all teachers teaching at this school could be selected as participants, i.e. all teachers teaching at Sandalwood Primary School.

Participants were purposively selected as this allowed me to choose cases that “illustrate some feature or process in which he/she is interested” (Silverman, 2005, p.48). The researcher will handpick the cases on the basis of typicality and suitability of the participants to the study (Cohen et al, 2007). I chose participants from **both** the phases in the school, namely the foundation phase and the intermediate phase, in order to get a broader understanding of teacher learning. Below is a table which provides a description of the participants.

Number of teachers in the study	Disciplinary background	Years of teaching experience	Phase qualified to teach in.	Phase in school	Currently teaching
Martha	Foundation phase	4	Foundation phase	Foundation phase	Foundation phase + A.C+ L.S
Betty	Music	15	Junior Secondary	Intermediate ph.	All learning areas
Pam	Art	24	Senior primary	intermediate	All learning areas
Ben	Maths	33	Senior primary	intermediate	All learning areas

Figure 4.1 Description of participants

Since my “unit of analysis” is teachers, I selected the participants using the following criteria: Firstly, they had different qualification profiles, that is, the group comprised participants with a range of qualifications. Secondly, I selected participants whose teacher training was through correspondence and those who attended teacher training at a tertiary institution

immediately after matriculation. The rationale behind this selection was to explore whether there may exist a connection between what and how teachers learn from PDAs and their mode of teacher training. Thirdly, I selected participants whose teaching experience ranged from novice (4 years) to experienced teachers of about thirty-three years. My intention was to get an understanding of teacher learning at different points in time of teaching and how this translates into the classroom practice.

I believed four teachers to be adequate for this case study. Four participants also ensured that I could still proceed with the study in the event that a participant decided to withdraw. As the researcher is also a colleague, an insider researcher, I will have the advantage of knowing the participants. I considered the possibility of biased responses and selected participants whom I believed would be bias-free, who understood research, and with whom trust could be developed to provide reliable, genuine information.

Furthermore, as I am an inside researcher at this school, I believe that the rapport that has been established over the years with the participants allowed participants to be honest in their discussions, which allowed for rich data to emerge. Teachers spoke comfortably and without restraint at both the individual interviews and the conversational interviews. However, Martha spoke freely at the individual interviews and was a little reserved at the conversational interviews. Martha, one of the four participants, joined the staff a year ago.

The question that usually arises when one is an insider researcher is whether qualitative researchers should be members of the population they are studying. This question is understandable as researchers play such a direct and intimate role in the data gathering process and analysis. Asselin (2003) has suggested that it is best for the insider researcher to gather data with her or his “eyes open”, but imagining that she or he knows nothing about the phenomenon being studied. Although a researcher’s knowledge is always based on his or her positionality (Mullings, 1999), Dwyer (2009) sees qualitative researchers as having an appreciation for the fluidity and multi-layered complexity of human experience. Belonging to a group does not signify complete sameness within that group. Likewise, not being a member of a group does not signify complete difference. Dwyer (2009) explores the notion of the space that allows researchers to occupy the position of both insider and outsider rather than insider or outsider. This is what I sought to achieve as an insider researcher.

4.7 The researcher's role

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, I assumed a major role in ensuring that credible and dependable data is obtained. As an insider researcher in interviews, I tried to take a neutral stance, so as not to influence the thoughts, perceptions and opinions of the participants. However, this was a difficult process as I had to control my reactions to what participants said, especially at the conversational interviews. I gave the participants the freedom to speak and only interrupted them when I needed clarity on certain issues or when I needed to delve further. I tried to be as objective as possible and had to restrain myself when I wanted to comment on issues.

4.7.1 Negotiating and gaining access to the site

Before the identification of the research site and the selection of the participants, the researcher sought permission from the highest authority in the province, namely the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education. Once permission had been received, a letter requesting permission onto the research site was sent to the principal of the school. It briefly included an honest reflection of the primary purpose of the research and how the researcher intends conducting the research. Once written consent was acquired from all participants, I embarked on the research.

4.8 Data collection

Research involves the process of gathering information about the focus of the study to address the formulated research problem. Since this study is qualitative and exploratory with a view to in-depth understanding, I interacted with the participants in such a way that I ensured that reliable and valuable data is obtained.

In this study data collection implies that teachers are asked open-ended questions which required teachers to think back about their experiences of PDAs.

4.9 Research Strategies

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), interviews may be the primary data collection strategy to provide information on how individuals conceive of their world and make sense of important events in their lives. I considered that interviewing would best fit the purpose of collecting data for a deeper understanding of teacher learning. One of the major advantages of interviews is that it provides access to what is “inside the person’s head”, and as such it makes it possible to determine what the person knows, likes or dislikes and thinks (Cohen et al, 2007).

I used interviews as a data generating tool because the data required should be based on emotions, experiences, and feelings for the sake of a deep understanding. I made use of two types of interviews for the purpose of the research, viz. the individual interview and the conversational group interview.

4.9.1 The individual interview

Each participant was given an hour initially. This changed due to the unforeseen strike action. I had to eventually use two half-hour interviews due to time constraints. One-on-one unstructured interviews allowed me the opportunity to delve further, when there was a need to do so. The interview also allowed me to clear up misinterpretations and bring immediate clarity to particular issues. According to Bell (2004), a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability in terms of following up ideas, probing responses and investigating motives and feelings further.

4.9.2 Conversational group interview

I had set aside two hours to conduct a conversational interview with the group to get a collective view. According to Cohen *et al* (2007, p. 376), group discussions would allow for a “collective rather than an individual view”. However, I could not do this according to the plan, as teachers had to catch up with their work due to the strike action. Teachers allowed me an hour each over two days. Participants interacted with each other rather than with the interviewer. Interaction within the group allowed for rich data to emerge. To elaborate

further, all four participants stated that they collaborated with their colleagues. However, at the conversational interview, the discussions became more critical. Ben wanted to know what collaboration really is. “Is it what we as teachers are doing at school, or does it entail something more?” he asked. I found Martha to be really quiet during the conversational interview. She was generally in agreement with whatever the other participants were saying, or saying nothing at all. Arksey and Knight (in Cohen *et al*, 2007) suggest that individuals may be reticent in front of others, particularly if they are colleagues.

According to Patterson (2002), conversational interviews are discussions between two or more people in which opinions may vary. The conversations that the author is referring to are the interactions that may happen to anyone. Smith (in Patterson, 2002) believes that it is through these critical conversations that teachers are able to develop and sustain their own identities as teachers. A point in case was the conversation around the PDA at the school. Martha was taken aback when it came to the discussion around the cluster and subject committee meetings as well as the CPD workshops held at school. She maintained that she learnt from every type of PDA. Participants interacted with each other rather than with me. Interaction within the group allowed for rich data to emerge. During the individual interview, it was established that Martha learns from the pupils. I threw this into the conversation and it got the other participants thinking. They all began to relate little episodes of similar experiences. These conversations provided direct evidence about similarities and differences in the participants’ opinions and experiences, as opposed to reaching such conclusions from post hoc analyses of separate statements from each interview. It also served as a means of triangulation with the traditional forms of interviewing (Cohen *et al*, 2007).

Proper description and analysis of teacher learning depend on data generating strategies based on various research tools. It is also vital to gather teachers’ views stemming from their experience, by listening to their own voices. Interviews allowed me to accomplish this.

In this inquiry it was important that the normal teaching duties and responsibilities of the teachers were not disturbed. Initially, interviews with teachers were arranged such that it took place at a time suitable to both myself as the researcher and the participants. We looked at free periods which were common to both the researcher and the teacher. However, the initial interviews which were scheduled had to be postponed due to the teacher strike. It was also difficult to get teachers at a convenient time after the strike as teachers were inundated

with their own work and catch up programme. Interviews had to be rescheduled to the convenience of the participants after school. I had initially planned an individual interview to last an hour but had to accept two half-hour interviews with some of the participants. I also had to resort to telephone conversations with some of the participants as I transcribed the data.

Individual interviews took place in the teachers' classroom. I believed that the teachers would be more comfortable and at ease in a familiar environment. The decision with regards to the venue for the conversational interview was left to the participants. Participants chose the school library.

4.10 Data analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is a rigorous process, involving working with the data, organising data into manageable units, categorising, comparing, synthesising data, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learnt (Hoberg, 1999). I commenced data analysis by listening to the recordings a few times in order to get a sense of the whole. Thereafter, I began transcribing the recorded data. Next, I set about reading all the transcripts to get a feel of the data that I had captured. Moreover, I analysed the scripts closely by reading and rereading them. Furthermore, the recorded interviews of the teachers were analysed for categories and themes. Responses to the interviews generated data as to the different types of PDAs and practices that teachers were involved in. It also shed light on what teachers learnt from PDAs and practices as well as how teachers learnt. The aim was to determine which type of professional development activity or practice was most beneficial to the learning of the practising teacher.

The triple lens framework (Fraser, 2007) was used to analyse the data. This is a composite framework drawing on three different ways of understanding CPD. Due to the complexities of CPD, one would need to take into account the range of factors impacting on CPD and I believe that this framework allowed me to create the analytical framework which permitted me to analyse my data. The framework, firstly, follows Bell and Gilbert's (1996) three aspects of professional learning, which can help me analyse the 'what' of teacher learning. Then, Kennedy's (2005) Framework for analysing models of CPD allowed me to answer the

‘how’ of teacher learning, whilst Reid’s quadrants (Mckinney, 2005) for teacher learning answered the “sphere” of teacher learning.

4.11 Trustworthiness and transferability

The aim of the research was not to generalize but to achieve an extension of understanding. The pursuit was a deeper understanding of teacher learning. I needed to explore which PDA or practice had the potential to bring about a change within the individual which in turn would result in changes within the teacher.

I established and maintained good rapport with the participants. Cohen et al (2007) maintain that one needs to be clear, polite, non-threatening, personable and friendly when conducting interviews. I had taken in some sweets for the individual interviews and snacks for the conversational group interviews. These attempts were made to get the participants to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Participants shared information such that they communicated their “feelings, insights and experiences” without feeling pressured or wanting to censor what they shared (Guba & Lincoln 1994). I believe that the participants did this as they knew that I had a real interest in them. They knew me and they were comfortable with me. The emergence of rich data in this study is indicative of the rapport that was established as well as the comfort levels of the participants with me as the researcher.

Transcripts of interviews were made available to the participants for their perusal such that adjustments could be made if the participant felt that the researcher misinterpreted the data, but, participants declined to do so.

All interviews and discussions were recorded, except one. All participants had signed the consent form, after having read the letters given to them which detailed the procedure of the interview process. However, as I went in to interview Betty, she indicated that she did not want to be recorded but that I was at liberty to take down notes. I acceded to her request.

Data that was digitally recorded was transferred onto two other sources. It was immediately stored onto the laptop and the backup CD for safekeeping. This ensured that there were three sets of the same data collected in the event that data collected was erased, lost or stolen. The three sets of data were kept separately from each other.

Data collected was developed immediately rather than after the whole data gathering session. This ensured that the nuances emanating from the session are not forgotten. This also allowed me to check immediately where further probing was needed. This was done immediately over the phone as explained earlier. Collecting and analyzing data concurrently encourages a mutual interaction between what is known and what one needs to know (Morse, 1991).

Verbatim data (Cohen *et al*) has been used in the write up of the research, which should ensure trustworthiness. Cohen *et al* (2007, p.462) add that some researchers believe that it is important to keep the “flavour of the original data”, thus reporting direct phrases and sentences. Not only do they believe that verbatim data is more illuminating than the researchers words but that it is important to be faithful to the exact words used by the participants.

In order to ensure rigour, the same questions were asked in many different ways. I asked it in the individual interviews as well as in the conversational group discussions. This gave an indication if the same or similar response is given at different points in time. The use of multi-methods, that is conversational interviews, individual interviews, and the drawings, permitted the triangulation of data. Triangulation is defined as ‘the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour’ (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p. 112). Triangulation, according to Lichtman (2006, p.194), is a method of making ‘qualitative research more objective and less subjective - in other words, more scientific’. The credibility of the research can be enhanced through triangulation (Hoepfl, 1997).

4.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are very important when a research is being conducted. Prior to embarking on the research, I secured consent from the participants, assuring them that they are participating on a basis of autonomy and are at liberty to withdraw at any time. I made the purpose of the research clear and unambiguous to the participants. Participants were assured of confidentiality before, during and after the study. In order to ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were given to participants. Transcripts of the interviews were

given to participants to validate what I, as the researcher, has understood as a truth. In addition, permission was sought from the head of the institution, that is the principal.

4.13 Limitations

One of the possible limitations of the study could be in the methodological choice of the study. A case study is confined to a limited context. Interviewing teachers whilst they are at a workshop may add another dimension to the study. Teachers tend to forget the actual experience over time. It would be interesting to audio record an actual professional development programme e.g. employer-driven activities. Researching up in this manner could be problematic.

4.14 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology . In so doing, I have explored suitable methodology, the data production strategies, trustworthiness, transferability of the study and the ethical issues that I adhered to in the empirical research. In chapter five, the analysis and the presentation of the collected data will be discussed as the research findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS / ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

How teachers learn in the context of one particular school, is what I attempt to elucidate in this chapter. In the context of educational transformation within the schooling system, teachers teaching in South African schools attended and participated in several types of professional development activities. All teachers attended workshops that were provided by the DOE, whilst some teachers attended workshops provided by their union. Teachers also attended workshops and meetings on site at their school (National Policy Framework, 2007). Others were involved in self-directed learning initiatives, like taking up formal studies at universities. Drawing on data generated from individual and conversational interviews with teachers, this chapter shows what, and how learning happens in and through different PDAs

This chapter offers an analysis of the data generated in response to the main research question, ie. what are practising teachers learning from PDAs in the context of change? Employing the triple lens framework (Fraser, 2007) as my theoretical lens, I analyse the data in response to the critical questions, under the following sections:

Section A answers the research question, **what do practising teachers say they learn from professional development activities (PDAs) in the context of change?** In analysing this question, I make use of Bell and Gilbert's (1996) domain of influence of professional learning which forms the first part of the triple lens framework (Fraser, 2007). According to Bell and Gilbert (1996) professional learning is thought of as comprising the personal, social and occupational aspects which are inter-related.

Section B answers the research question, **How is learning taking place amongst practising teachers in the context of change?** In analysing this question, I employ the second part of the triple lens framework (Fraser, 2007) ie Kennedy's framework for analysing CPD, which looks at the capacity for professional autonomy and transformative practice supported by professional learning (Kennedy, 2005).

The third part of the triple lens framework (Fraser, 2007), which is Reid’s quadrants (Mckinney, 2005) of teacher learning, categorises the sphere of action in which professional learning takes place and will be used in the analysis in both section A and B.

SECTION A

In response to the first critical question - What do practising teachers learn from PDAs and practices in the context of change? - The emerging themes will be discussed within three categories of PDAs which are available:

- **Part one** looks at once–off PDAs, also called one-shot PDAs (Judith & Sachs, 2004) (e.g. workshops initiated by the Department of Education).
- **Part two** looks at PDAs at school sites (e.g. CPD workshops, cluster meetings, phase meetings) and
- **Part three** looks at self-initiated PDAs (e.g. courses at universities/ other institutions).

Below is a diagrammatic representation of the three parts that the study is going to look into.

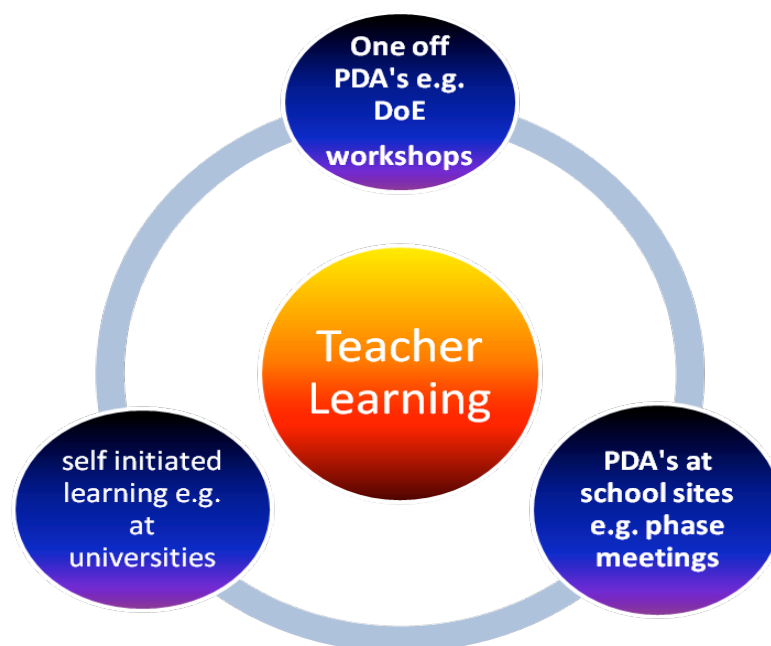


Fig.5.1 Categories of PDAs available to teachers

In order to answer the “what” of teacher learning in part one, two and three, I will use Bell and Gilbert’s (1996) framing to analyse whether the learning at PDAs is comprised of the personal, occupational and social as these components are inter-related. Simultaneously, I will look at Reid’s quadrants (McKinney, 2005), to ascertain where learning is taking place. It comprises two dimensions: formal-informal and planned–incidental (McKinney, 2005). These quadrants encompass the array of learning opportunities which teachers encounter as lifelong learners.

SECTION A - PART ONE

5.2 Learning through Once–off PDAs

What learning happens through once-off PDAs (called a one-shot PDA by Day & Sachs, 2004) will be analysed under the themes of: i) professionalism and professionalism; ii) the social space being or not being conducive to teacher learning; iii) lack of support iv) neither personal, nor professional; v) a functional responsibility and vi) a personal desire disallowed.

According to the NPF (2007), practising teachers are compelled to attend employer-driven programmes which may be at national, provincial, district or school based level. Once-off workshops became noticeable at the onset of democracy in South Africa. Teachers were called in to re-skill at the introduction of C2005, the RNCS, the NCS and the Foundations for Learning campaigns (DOE circulars). Training comprised week-long, three-day or one-day workshops.

All participants in the study attended the workshops provided by the Department of Education (DOE). These workshops can be classified as formal learning arenas which will be called once-off PDAs.

a. Operating occupationally

The words “nowhere to somewhere” captured my attention as I was speaking to Martha. I felt that these words were appropriate as it encapsulates her movement from nowhere to somewhere. Martha had entered the school context as a volunteer. She used to assist with the

covering of books, relief classes and helping in any other way that she could. Eventually, when a vacancy arose in the school, the principal allowed her to take a pre-school class. She is presently doing her B.Ed.

Martha stated that departmental workshops were helpful. Martha, who has had no initial formal training felt that workshops assisted her, and had this to say about her learning:

*“I learn from all types of professional development activities. Every opportunity is a learning opportunity for me. It was what helped me to progress from **nowhere to somewhere**. Everything at the workshops was new stuff to me. Departmental workshops were helpful, I learnt about things, about the curriculum. I learnt about how my records can be kept. I will know what they (advisors) will be looking for when they come to do the Whole School Evaluation (WSE)”.*

Without much or any initial formal teacher training, Martha was able to develop herself functionally, thus achieving and satisfying the occupational needs. The DoE workshops are helping Martha in terms of doing her professional work e.g. *record keeping and learning about the curriculum*. It is helping her to function more efficiently. Hoyle (in Evans 2002) describes the above as professionalism. It is those elements of the job that constitute the knowledge, skills and procedures that teachers use in their work. The words, “nowhere to somewhere”, encapsulates Martha’s movement in her professionalism (Hoyle, in Evans, 2002). As an unqualified, practising teacher, she found that, “*Every opportunity is a learning opportunity for me*”, in and through which she had the opportunity to change her status.

b. The social space being or not being conducive to teacher learning

While Martha in the interview excerpt above describes her desire to learn and improve her professional practice, Ben, Betty and Pam, who are professionally qualified and experienced teachers commented on the once-off workshops as inappropriate forms of teachers’ learning

According to Ben, these workshops, as learning spaces,

“leaves much to be desired. They are held without planning, are often aimless, and without the necessary support material. Just to quickly reflect on the conduct of the OBE workshops... what did we learn??.....5 school days. ABSOLUTELY ZERO. Very shoddy

presentation, indecisive presentation, goalless. Can you learn a new curriculum in 5 days? Resource material distributed was wastage of paper”.

Betty says *“DOE workshops are very boring, we learn nothing. For example in the Foundations for Learning workshop, only the requirements were explained to us”.*

Learning, according to Wenger, (1998) is a social phenomena. Once-off workshops offered outside the school were lacking in terms of planning and materials; they were de-contextualised, and restricted in terms of time. Teachers learn “absolutely zero”, is the view of Ben. The words, *“shoddy, haphazard and directionless”*, aptly describes the social space wherein teacher learning is supposedly expected to take place. Such social spaces are not conducive to teacher learning. Attendance at these workshops by experienced, qualified teachers is merely a functional exercise (Evans, 2002). Such poorly planned workshops, cannot lead to teacher change.

The words, *shoddy and indecisive presentation*, further indicate the lack of respect with which teachers are treated. Teachers are not treated as professionals within this social space. Such treatment would impact negatively on the personal domain of the teacher. Abdul-Haqq (1995) postulates that in order for PDAs to be effective, PDAs need to recognize teachers as professionals and adult learners. Teachers’ beliefs, values and attitudes (Bell & Gilbert, 1996) are important factors which are not being considered at once-off workshops.

c. Decontextualised, top-down and unsupportive

Ben had this to say about *TIME* not being used profitably at the workshops.

“The method of handing out ‘charts’ to educators to compile presentations is absolutely frivolous. This was a tactic used to KILL TIME”. The NCS conducted in recent times was shoddy, haphazard and directionless. Workshops on milestones served to confuse rather than to elucidate.”

Pam: *“at some of the workshops, the facilitators spend a lot of unnecessary time discussing the programme ... sometimes over an hour..a total waste of time..”*

Martha : *“ well .. they’re trying their best*

The facilitators did not establish a social learning space which would have allowed for the creation of learning opportunities to develop. The words, “*kill time*”, gives the impression that the facilitators had little knowledge about the PDA that they were conducting. These workshops perpetuate the notion of teachers as mere implementers of change, and PDAs as cost effective mechanisms for bringing about behaviouristic change in teachers (learning skills). It is not inquiry-oriented to allow for understanding and personal meaning for each teacher. Personal or individual change can take place in this context but needs to involve social interaction. This means that we need each other to grow and develop. The **social context** plays a key role in determining teacher learning, as learning is a social activity and takes place through a series of interactions ((Nuthall, 2002).

According to Betty, the words of the DoE officials at the workshops - “*We can’t answer this?... It’s coming from national. We’ll come back to it...*” – shows that the quality of the training leaves much to be desired.

Ben : “*They don’t have answers for us...*”

Pam : “*We need direction.. We need answers to our questions..*”

DoE workshops are de-contextualised. Most of the participants feel that the facilitators themselves were not properly equipped to address the issues that they encountered. According to Timperley & Robinson (2002), an aspect of living effectively in social contexts is developing greater awareness of how our actions affect others and the effects that others have on us. The three teachers do not look forward to these workshops, as they believe that it does not enhance their learning in anyway. There was a minimum of teacher development in the process and no in-depth engagement (Jansen, 1999). Fraser (2007) indicates that these attitudes are informed partly by prior experiences of professional experiences.

The above sentiments foreground the difficulties that these three teachers experience at departmental workshops hosted PDAs. Within this one-dimensional, top-down approach, teachers are not given the opportunity to make meaning of the new initiatives because facilitators act as deliverers of the changes, and have limited understanding - *We can’t answer this... It’s coming from national*. It clearly indicates the lack of support teachers receive from the DOE.

Within this social context, the actions of the facilitators are affecting the others at the workshops. Therefore, we need to learn how to be more effective participants in these social contexts (Bell & Gilbert, 1996). It needs to be recognised that at the centre of each social context, there is a task or purpose (Timperley & Robinson, 2002). Social development helps us towards understanding and realising that purpose. Martha and Ben had attended an arts and culture workshop this year only to find that the facilitator had not turned up. The workshops did not accomplish its purpose in developing or bringing about a change in the teacher.

d. Neither personal nor professional

Facilitators at the workshops told the teachers what was required of them.

Betty, *“They told us what records need to be kept and how they should be kept.”*

Pam: *“We had to attend with the Foundations for Learning material, and even then we were still unsure.”*

Ben: *“it served to confuse rather than to elucidate.”*

Martha: *“It helps me....there is always something that I learn... even if its a little thing..”*

The departmental workshops are addressing the occupational aspects of teacher learning. DoE workshops were not productive as it addressed the functional aspect of teacher learning. Learning at these workshops took on a very technicist format e.g. *what records and how these records need to be kept*. However, even in this mode, the teachers did not feel confident about what they were receiving. As Ben said earlier, *“it served to confuse rather than to elucidate.”* Whilst addressing the occupational aspect, Bens words - *without planning, are often aimless, and without the necessary support material* - are indicative of the weak links between theory and practice. DoE workshops seemed to appeal neither to the personal nor, more importantly, the professional aspects of the teacher’s job. Teacher development, according to Fullan (1991), is more than changing a teacher’s behaviour. It also involves changing the person. Any attempt at learning and development should acknowledge that teacher development is also a process of personal development. Martha, on the other hand, always learns something. It was difficult to decide whether Martha was afraid to speak out or she genuinely learnt something.

e. A functional responsibility

Teachers view their attendance at DOE workshops as a functional responsibility. Teachers believe that they are duty-bound to attend, as they are employed by the Department. When asked why they continue to attend these workshops if this is how they feel about them, three of the participants had the following to say:

Ben: *We go because we have to go...*

Betty: *“It is a summons from the Department. Schools look at Departmental circulars in a different light. E.g. I wanted to attend a week’s computer workshop but the management did not want to send me...as it was initiated by an outside body.”*

Pam: *We have no choice....we cannot tell our principal that we do not want to go... that it is a waste of our time.*

The DoE workshops do not appeal to the individual teacher’s personal or social domains. These formal, planned opportunities (McKinney, 2005) are mandatory. These teachers have to attend these workshops provided by the Department. Teachers are going not because they want to, but because they have to. These workshops are not bringing about any change within the teachers where one can say with confidence that learning has taken place. Professional learning, according to Fraser (2007), can be taken to represent the processes that, whether intuitive or deliberate, individual or social, result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers. It may appeal to the inexperienced teacher, as in the case of Martha. According to Wilson and Berne (1999), one cannot mandate learning, only attendance. These once-off workshops by the Department were functional, as it is addressed teachers’ development in terms of the procedures that they utilize.

f. A personal desire disallowed

Betty *wanted to attend a weeks computer workshop* but was not allowed to go.

Pam: *“management did not send me because it was not a directive from the dept.”*

Martha: *“I would have liked to learn about computers but unfortunately, I could not attend. 5 days is a long time to be away from school”.*

Betty, Pam and Martha showed a personal interest in their learning but was turned down. This computer workshop appealed to Betty, Pam and Martha on a personal level. Apart from enhancing their computer skills for their own use, there is no doubt that this would have helped them in their teaching. Dillon (2000) notes that teacher choice and control in determining engagement with learning opportunities is important. The motivating effect of interest and ownership (Bell & Gilbert, 1996) of this learning opportunity was restrained due to a lack of vision on the part of management. This refusal on the part of management demonstrates how management is being driven by managerial professionalism as opposed to democratic professionalism. As long as *it is a summons* from the DOE, teachers are expected to go whether it leads to professional learning or not.

5.2.1 Summary

It can be concluded that whilst Martha's learning through these once-off DOE workshops was enhanced functionally, the experienced teachers did not learn anything from these formal, planned events. The once-off workshops, whilst addressing the professional aspects of subject knowledge and curriculum content, neglect to address the social and personal aspects. The teachers believe that DoE workshops have nothing to offer them, be it on a personal, professional or the social level. The formal, planned once-off departmental workshops, as a platform for a learning space, did not achieve its aim to develop teachers. The formal, planned programmes mandate teachers to attend. Teachers do not have a choice. Mandating teachers to a workshop and not being able to deliver, in terms of creating opportunities which would lead to changes in attitudes and beliefs, is futile. Departmental workshops as they are, do not have the potential of contributing much to teacher change and learning. Whilst Martha learnt something, the other teachers learnt nothing.

Furthermore, the management at schools do not consider teachers' personal interests and motivations to learn. Preference is given to DOE directives regarding development, where the one-size-fits-all approach is used.

SECTION A – PART 2

5.3 PDAS AT SCHOOL

The NPF (2007) requires teachers to engage in school-driven PDAs. What learning happens through school-based PDAs, ie. phase meetings, learning area meetings, cluster meetings and CPD workshops, will be analysed under the following themes: i) workshops - a formality and ii) an administrative, technical exercise versus an intellectual exercise. Part 2, Section A, once more makes use of Bell and Gilbert's (1996) framing to analyse the data.

Teachers at this school engage in the following on site PDAs.

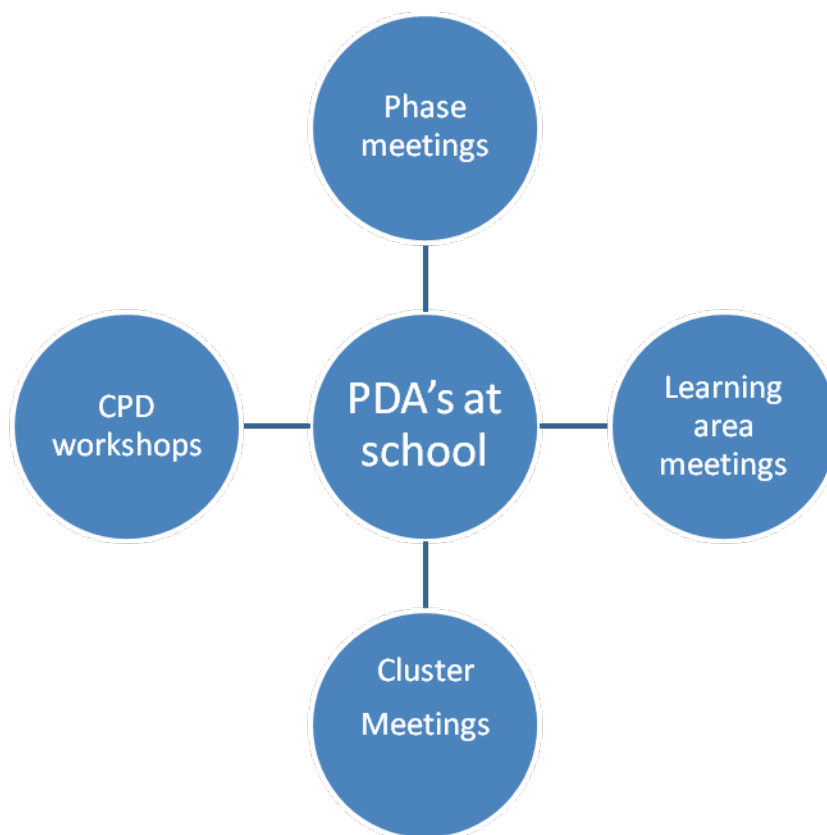


Figure 5.3 : PDAs at the school site

Figure 5.3 above is a diagrammatic representation of the PDAs at the school site. The sentiments expressed about these PDAs are presented below.

5.3.1 CPD workshops at school

Schools are required to provide professional development workshops for their teachers (NPF, 2007). At this school, every teacher on the staff is expected to conduct a workshop at least once or twice a year. Teachers could do a feedback of a workshop attended, and this could complete their quota for the year. Initially, workshops were held every Friday, until teachers began to question the validity of these workshops, especially with regard to time constraints. The teachers are attending or conducting these workshops because they are forced to. They had the following comments to make about the workshops being held at the school.

a. Workshops – a formality

Pam had the following to say:

“CPD workshops at this school are merely a formality”.

Betty *“It is done for record purposes. Teachers have very little time to prepare for these workshops as there is so much of record keeping that one needs to see to”*

Ben: *“We are forced to conduct CPD workshops under the threat of the IQMS and the 1% increase that is given to us.”*

On a personal level, the CPD workshops at this school have not appealed to the teachers. These workshops are being conducted because it is a Departmental requirement. It is mandatory, as teachers are *forced to conduct CPD workshops*. It is not something that they want to do. It is being done for *record purposes*. The threat of IQMS is being used as a bargaining tool, to compel teachers to fulfil the schools’ requirements. These CPD workshops as PDAs did not allow teachers to get into a process of self-awareness, self-management, self-acceptance and self-responsibility (Bell & Gilbert, 1996). Teachers are not given the opportunity to reflect. It merely takes care of the professional/functional side of teaching. It did nothing to bring about a change in teachers’ beliefs, values or attitudes which would have indicated that teacher learning had taken place.

b. No follow up

Betty notes that “*CPD workshops have not been successful because we have brainstormed ideas, we had lovely workshops, even on the cleanliness of the school...What has been done? We are still experiencing the same problems.*”

Pam: “*There is no follow up. My personal opinion is that it is a requirement and we are doing it just to fulfil that requirement, not for us to really succeed in educating educators*”.

Within this social space, some workshops have the potential to lead to teacher change, *we had lovely workshops, even on the cleanliness of the school.* However, in this case due to the lack of follow up, there was no take up of the suggestions made at the workshops. The absence of follow-up signals the school’s failure to sustain this PDA. Follow-up activity is important in order to reaffirm beliefs and attitudes. Abdul-Haqq (1995) and Ball (1996) state that time, reflection and follow-up activities are important, which is missing from the CPD workshops at this particular school. In subsequent workshops, the participants are confronting a totally different topic.

Ben has given feedback about PDAs that he has attended. He describes the PDAs at the school as “*tangible, administratively organized and functional.*”

Ben’s words adequately express the notion that these workshops are merely an exercise in formality. It satisfies managerial professionalism as it satisfies the dictates and requirements that the management of the school need to have in place. It is being conducted because it has to be conducted for record purposes. It is a requirement; hence it needs to be done. It perpetuates the notion that PDAs at the workplace are inconsequential. Unfortunately, CPD workshops at this school are not being conducted for the intended purpose of development and teacher learning. There is little or no learning taking place.

CPD workshops at this school are not effective as a learning opportunity as it does appeal to the three ipsative domains of teachers (Bell & Gilberts, 1996) that includes the personal, social and occupational. CPD workshops, it seems, were conducted to fulfil the managerial functions of the school and its purpose was not to bring about changes in teachers’ beliefs and attitudes.

5.3.2 Phase meetings/learning area meetings/cluster meeting

Phase and learning area (LA) meetings are held once a term. Cluster meetings are held when necessary. The phase and learning area meetings follow the staff meetings. The following excerpts indicate what teachers think of these meetings:

a. An administrative technical exercise versus an intellectual exercise

Betty makes the following observation:

“Phase meetings and learning area meetings are merely a regurgitation of what remedial measures are needed, how many failures in each learning area and the need for the number of failures to be reduced by the next term.”

Ben : *“ We all know that we must do remedial work with the weak learners. There’s nothing new at these phase meetings that is empowering us.”*

Pam: *“Term in and term out, year in and year out, it’s the same thing...”*

Phase meetings are convened by the management at the school. Teachers are not learning anything new from these meetings. These meetings have followed the same format repeatedly over the years and *are merely a regurgitation of what remedial measures are needed*. Knight (2002) believes that subject departments could be prime sites for non-predictable professional learning. However, at this school, the phase meetings are not proving to be constructive arenas for teachers’ professional learning, as there is *nothing new at these phase meetings that is empowering us*. These meetings are scheduled to satisfy the administrative functions at school, thus complying with managerial professionalism and are not being done for the purposes of development and learning. Boring, repetitive and dependant work discourages PD and growth, whereas challenging , variable and independent work encourages it (Bubb & Early, 2007, p. 82) .

b. Nothing much I can offer

Pam had the following to say about LA meetings: *“I’m the learning area convenor for NS but there is nothing much I can offer to the other teachers where I could say that the meeting convened was a useful meeting that the teachers are going to learn from.”*

As a LA convener, Pam had the opportunity to question and resist the status quo. She could have done things differently. Pam could have taken ownership of the learning area meeting by motivating and generating interest in the teachers if she really wanted to. She did not need to follow previous styles and tedious and monotonous approaches. Teachers are not moving a step further to engage intellectually at the PDAs at this school. Teachers are compliant in replicating the status quo. Teachers together with management need to change their attitudes and use the sites of PDAs intellectually. There needs to be attitudinal change within the individuals (Evans, 2002).

c. Workload is divided

Pam belongs to the cluster committee in the area and this is what she had to say:

“Clusters were formed to facilitate the planning of assessments. We meet to discuss common assessment tasks and then to set the papers. In this way there is uniformity with regards to standards and the workload is divided.”

The function of this cluster meeting or network was merely to de-intensify the teachers workload. Yet again, this was another PDA to satisfy the occupational aspect of teacher learning.

5.3.3 Summary

The formal planned opportunities i.e. the phase meetings, learning area meetings, cluster meetings and CPD workshops at the workplace neglect to develop the personal, social and occupational domains of the teacher. Teachers do not show any interest in them as they are of the opinion that these PDAs are “more of the same”. Some of the PDAs, e.g. the CPD workshops could have been used as a platform for change had there been opportunities for

follow up activities and reflection. However, this was not so. These meetings are held for record purposes, in that they are mandated. There is a top-down approach to teacher learning. Management at schools is following instructions from above and, in turn, instruct teachers on the ground. Thus learning becomes a vicious cycle of non-learning when mandated. Teachers do not want to do this due to time constraints and work overload but are forced to. This 'blanket approach' (Fraser, 2007) contributes to teacher disaffection due to lack of ownership.

Management and teachers at schools have not taken ownership of the PDAs which, if conducted for the development and the enhancement of teachers' learning, could be used as a platform to augment teachers' professional learning. These avenues, as spaces for teacher learning, seek to address the administrative and technical aspects of a teacher's work, thus complying with managerial professionalism. The managerial perspective promotes such things as accountability and compliance with policy (Kennedy, 2005). PDAs at schools do not create opportunities for questioning and reflection and teachers are orchestrated as disembodied and docile individuals.

SECTION A – PART 3

Part three looks at what learning happens through **self-initiated PDAs** and will be analysed under the broad theme of self motivated learning.

5.4 Self-initiated PDAs

Self-initiated PDAs refer to any type of learning activity initiated by the individuals themselves. As part of self-initiated learning, teachers enrol for formal programmes at the university as well as attend workshops provided by a union. The broader theme within self-initiated learning is motivated learning.

5.4.1 Self motivated learning

a. Attitudinal change

Pam and Betty have engaged in formal studies offered by the universities and have completed their B.Ed (Hons). Betty is in the process of enrolling at UKZN to begin her Masters. Ben had done his B.A a long time ago. He has not done any further studies through institutions thereafter. He has three years left to retire.

Pam has recently completed her B.ED (Hons) at UNISA. She has found that her studies have brought about a real change in her attitude. As a result of her studies, she looks at things differently. She relates an episode:

I used to be so impressed with Steel (pseudonym) and his military style, with that discipline. I used to be so impressed with the way that the children used to stand to attention, or sit and straighten up themselves that I began behaving like this in my practice. But then, now I learnt differently. Through my studies I learnt more about the barriers that learners come with.... The hardships out there... I'm more tolerant and caring now. Now, when Hopewell is late, I ask, "What happened today, Hopewell," or "How are you feeling today.....?"

This formal, planned opportunity established by the university was beneficial to Pam. For Pam, change began to take place within the personal domain as her studies compelled her to reflect on her practice. The teacher learning that has taken place in the case of Pam has been

attitudinal. Evans (2002) states that attitudinal change refers to change that is intellectual and motivational. According to Clark and Hollingsworth cited in Fraser (2007), the key change processes in the professional context are 'enactment' and 'reflection'. The term, enactment, refers to the translation of teachers' knowledge or beliefs into action rather than just action itself. It was the knowledge that she gained from her studies which changed her practice. According to Dillon (2000), teacher choice and control in determining engagement with learning opportunities is an important factor in professional learning.

Furthermore, Pam learnt *more about the barriers that learners come with.... The hardships out there*. The formal university studies benefitted Pam as it made links between theory and practice, thus creating an opportunity for change. According to Ritchie and Wilson (2000, p. 88), conceptions of teacher education and their programmes like CPD are "depersonalized and disconnected from students' lives and their gendered, racial, ethnic and social class identities. They believe that professional knowledge and personal location are inseparable.

The knowledge that Pam had socially constructed was being challenged by what she had learnt through her studies. She used to be *so impressed with Steel and his military style* to such an extent that she began behaving in a similar manner. This learning that she had socially constructed was being challenged when she *learnt differently through my studies*. Her learning brought about change as she is *more tolerant and caring now*. Personal development recognises that for change to take place, individual beliefs and social constructions of knowledge need to be challenged, renegotiated and reconstructed (Bell & Gilbert, 1996).

b. Professionalism- the motivating factor

When asked why she decided to study further, she stated:

"I was motivated by other teachers on the staff. I began doing my B.Ed (Honours) after a period of twenty years of not studying formally. Furthermore the M + 4 qualification will soon become the minimum entry level for teachers. These factors encouraged me to enrol at Unisa."

Pam's impetus to learning was initiated through professionalism. Hoyle (cited in Evans 2002), describes professionalism as the status-related (academic, professional, occupational) elements of teachers' work. A concern over her professional status brought about a change in

her professionalism (knowledge, skills and procedures). When using Bell and Gilbert's framework to read this, it could be said that whilst addressing the occupational aspect in the social space of formal studies, Pam had simultaneously addressed the personal aspect of self, the individual. Pam needed to be a part of the professional community values, as it depicts the social values within the school space.

Furthermore, Pam became aware that she is lagging behind her colleagues professionally - an indication that she is engaging in the process of "increased self-awareness". When Pam decided to further her qualifications, she engaged in the process of "self-responsibility". She then enrolled at a tertiary institution, showing signs of "self-management". Finally, once she has accomplished this, she goes through a process of "self-acceptance" (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Senge, 1992).

c. Concern for her learners- a motivating factor

Betty : *"I used to battle with the learners who were struggling in class. I used to go home every day, concerned about how best I can help them... This made me enrol at UNISA, when I saw a course on Remedial Education... My studies helped me a lot..I am more confident now..."*

Betty's concern - *"worried about"* - for her learners was the initial impetus for change. It originated in the personal aspect of professional learning. Her search for knowledge was a motivating factor which led her to taking ownership for her learning. Betty chose what she needed development in. This learning was not mandated. According to Ball (1996), teacher development is considered especially productive when teachers are in charge of the agenda and determine the focus and nature of the programming offered. In the name of professional autonomy, many argue that teachers should determine the shape and course of their own development (Ball, 1996), and this is what both Pam and Betty have done. Shulman (1997) is of the opinion that enduring learning occurs when teachers and students share a passion for the material and are emotionally committed to the ideas, processes and activities.

For Betty, this self-initiated learning through her studies satisfied the personal domain as she is *more confident now*.

5.4.2 Union workshops

Pam, Martha and Betty attended the workshops provided by a union ie. NAPTOSA. Betty does not belong to this particular union but likes to attend these workshops. Any teacher is welcome to attend. However, there are costs involved for non-members. Teachers have a choice on whether to attend or not. At the conversational interviews, it was agreed by three of the participants that the union workshops benefitted them. Pam, Betty and Martha attended the Foundations for Learning workshops provided both by the DoE and NAPTOSA. They were in a very good position to make a comparison.

a. Not a “one-size-fits-all”

This is what Pam , Betty and Martha had to say about these workshops:

They were offering training in Rem Ed, Creative Writing and Barriers to Learning. These are the problem areas in the classroom. We have so little training in effectively dealing with these things. Other unions don't focus on developing the teacher.

The union workshops appealed to the teachers on a personal level. These **formal, planned opportunities** were useful because it was relevant as it addressed topics which posed problems to teachers, such as *how to handle discipline in class and barriers to teaching*. Importantly, teachers had a choice in the PDA. The teachers chose to attend the development activities which interested them. It was not a “one-size-fits-all” workshop. Their presence at these workshops was not mandated.

Their attitude reflected a personal desire and interest to learn in a field they felt incompetent in. These teachers are taking responsibility for and are spearheading their own learning. According to Ball (1996), teacher development is considered especially productive when teachers are in charge of the agenda and determine the focus and nature of the programming offered. In the name of professional autonomy, it has been argued that teachers should determine the shape and course of their own development. Their union is providing the platform for their development. The impetus for learning originated in the personal aspect of professional learning (Bell and Gilbert, 1996).

Betty: *We came away with such good ideas....things we hadn't thought about before...*

On the occupational level, the teachers were exposed to different ideas or methods that they could use in their teaching. This is the type of professional development that the participants are seeking. PDAs in this format would benefit the participants.

b. The social space needs to be conducive to teacher learning

Betty: *At the NAPTOSA workshops, teachers are treated with so much professionalism, integrity and dignity.*

The above comments indicate that the manner in which the participants were treated appealed to the personal and social aspect of development. Teachers' comments reflect their wish to be treated with *professionalism, integrity and dignity*. They want to be respected and treated as professionals, not like the 'vessels' or 'technicians' which researchers speak about. Teachers embrace opportunities to be treated as intellectuals (Wilson & Berne, 1999). The union workshops as a social space afforded them that opportunity. These are some of the factors which may have made the teachers value this union workshop.

Martha: *The facilitators were so knowledgeable...*

On a professional level, the teachers appreciated these workshops as they had confidence in the facilitators. Facilitators at the workshops portrayed themselves as being knowledgeable. The different activities that were used to enhance teachers' learning demonstrated the wide knowledge base of the facilitators. At the centre of each social context, there is a task or purpose (Timperley & Robinson, 2002) and the facilitators were able to accomplish that task at the workshop.

5.4.3 Summary

These formal, planned self-initiated opportunities provide a useful space in bringing about change within the individual, thus ensuring teacher learning. The once – off workshops offered by Naptosa were a learning experience. As compared to once- off workshops provided by the DOE, which rarely led to learning, workshops by the union were beneficial. Learning was meaningful as teachers learnt new concepts, ideas and skills. The impetus for change originates in the personal and professional domains of learning. The individual

teachers become involved in a process of “increased self-awareness, self-management, self-acceptance and self-responsibility (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Senge, 1992), thereby initiating their own learning. The teachers sought after change, as attendance at both these PDAs was not mandated. There is “a process of change by self of self” (Waters, 1998). And as Fullan (1991, p.59) said, “The starting point for what’s worth fighting for is not system change, not change in others around us, but change in ourselves.” Personal development recognises that for change to take place, individual beliefs and social constructions of knowledge need to be challenged, renegotiated and reconstructed (Bell & Gilbert, 1996). This includes where the person is in the life-cycle, as well as their personal goals, dreams and visions.

Furthermore, the social space within these formal, planned, self-initiated learning opportunities took cognizance of the personal, social and occupational aspects, which are essential components for teacher learning to happen. The manner in which teachers are treated at workshops is also significant to teacher learning.

SECTION B

This section responds to the second critical question which reads, “How is learning taking place amongst practising teachers in the context of change?” It looks at the PDAs which practising teachers attend, through Kennedy’s (2005) framework of PDAs being transmissive, transitional or transformative. I offer an understanding of teachers and how their learning happened. I use the 3 categories of PDAs i.e. the once-off PDAs; PDAs at school and self-initiated PDAs to answer this question.

5.5 ONCE-OFF PDAS (e.g. DOE workshops)

How learning happens through once-off PDAs will be analysed under the broad theme, *prescriptive in nature*. This is further sub-divided into sub-themes of i) we sit and we are fed information ; ii) teachers as receivers of knowledge and iii) them and us.

Prescriptive in nature

a. We sit and we are fed information

Ben, Betty and Pam agreed that

“DOE workshops are very boring, we learn nothing. We sit and we are fed information. For example in the Foundations for Learning workshop, only the requirements were explained to us. There is no practical guidance or assistance that is offered at these workshops”.

“We sit and we are fed information” is describing the **transmissive** nature of the formal, planned DOE workshops. The workshops are one-sided. Workshops are transmissive, in that the facilitators are using the banking system approach. This is an approach to learning that is rooted in the notion that all participants need to do is consume the information that is fed to them, and be able to memorize and adhere to it. The participants are treated as empty bank accounts. The end result is passive learning - learning without agency. Such transmissive workshops do nothing to engage teachers to become reflective practitioners. Facilitators are not interested in what the participants are thinking or feeling about the designated workshop. “Experts” are brought in to deliver on a certain topic and that is what they do. There is no

room for discussion or deviation as teachers are *fed information*, thus making it *very boring*. Participants are regarded as jugs that need to be filled. Ironically, what is being filled does not enhance the participants' learning. They are unable to help teachers by way of explanations in areas that teachers need *assistance*. They come in to “deliver” what they know and are unable to deviate from this.

Sprinthall (1996) believes that this type of CPD does not support professional autonomy but rather encourages replication and compliance. Kwakman (2003) suggests that traditional ways of learning characterized by transmission of knowledge are bound to miss their mark. Sachs (2007) believes that the transmissive model develops a type of “controlled professionalism” where teachers can best be described as craft workers. At its worst this type of CPD is

Un-intellectual – anything redolent of the worst kind of pop psychology, jargon-filled with no explanations... 8-3 at the local club for a one-day wonder session by a visiting guru ... Mars boys are different, left brain, right brain, multiple intelligences cross-hatched with Bloom's taxonomy (Sachs, 2007, p. 4).

Within the transmissive models, teachers are de-professionalized (Whitty, 2006) and regarded as un-intellectual (Nieto, 2003). Sachs (2007) notes that teachers want to be challenged and they want opportunities to re-examine their beliefs and practices but these PDAs do not provide such opportunities.

b. Teachers as receivers of knowledge

They described departmental held workshops as “*reading sessions*”, which further augments the transmissive nature of DoE workshops. Teachers are not involved in the process of learning. Their thoughts and beliefs are not tapped into. Although teachers are now placed in groups at workshops, it is merely the seating pattern that has changed, not the delivery process. The participants believed that there was no reason for them attending these workshops as they could have “*remained in school and read these documents ourselves*.” These workshops seem to lack direction and purpose. Kennedy (2005) purports that PDAs

should indicate the fundamental purpose of the programme. Is it to provide a means of transmission or to facilitate transformative practice?

Betty, Pam and Ben are in agreement, and state that

“departmental workshops merely explain handouts already sent to us. It becomes a reading session where teachers are placed into groups where we merely follow whilst the facilitators read. We could have remained in school and read these documents ourselves.”

Bell and Gilbert (1996) note that teachers need to be the central contributors to learning initiatives, where learning happens not in isolation, but through social interaction. Professional development courses provide some opportunities, but much of the interaction in such courses is transmissive. Wills (1995, p. 3) had the following to say about professional development activities:

Teachers are viewed as technicians, purveyors of a prepared and packaged curriculum provided by a very powerful knowledge industry. Learning on the other hand is viewed from a very linear perspective, like a train racing along a railroad track. The course is determined and no detours are allowed. The only variable is the speed by which the journey is made.

These models construct teachers as “doers”, merely fitting into the schooling environments that are stable and predictable. Within this model, the knowledge, skills and competencies to be taught are those felt to be most relevant to the teaching role as currently defined (Zeichner, 1979). The teacher plays little part in determining the substance and direction of their development.

c. “them” and “us”

Pam, Betty and Ben agreed that *“they told us what was required of us. They told us what records need to be kept and how they should be kept.*

The above excerpt indicates how teachers are reduced to “the status of low-level employees or civil servants whose main function is to implement reforms decided by experts”. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 23). Teachers are not displaying any agency as they behave obediently and “dutifully carry out the dictates of others” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p.27).

Formal, planned, once-off PDAs, in this case being the DoE workshops did not contribute to teacher learning due to its transmissive nature. The transmissive model of CPD supports a skills-based, technocratic view of teaching, whereby CPD provides teachers with the opportunity to update their skills in order to be able to demonstrate their competence (Kennedy, 2005). Teachers are not given the opportunity to engage with the material as some of the PDAs are a one-sided *reading session*. This type of PDA is indicative of a lack of respect for teachers' own capacities for reflective and critical inquiry as PDAs are often initiated in short, taught courses where new content, ideas and techniques are 'delivered' (Kennedy, 2005), as was the case of OBE. These workshops do not allow for any professional autonomy. Teachers are perceived as receivers of knowledge with little capacity to think. The transmissive nature of the DoE workshops places teachers in a submissive role, as recipients of particular knowledge.

5.6 PDAs AT SCHOOL

How learning happens through PDAs at schools will be analysed below.

a. Formal, planned- a farce and fallacy

The formal, planned PDAs that teachers engage in on site at school are the phase, cluster and learning area meetings as well as the CPD workshops. A very technocratic mode dominates much of school practice (Nieto, 2003) and PDAs.

Betty notes that "*they (management) tell us that we need to have remedial measures in place*".

Pam states: "*They (management) list the number of failures in each class and tell us that it needs to be reduced by the end of the year. There is no help in place as to how this is going to be done - it must just get done.*"

Ben: "*If workshops are not followed through, evaluated, and no feedback given, what purpose do they serve??*"

The formal, planned PDAs at school i.e. the CPD workshops, phase meetings and cluster meetings are transmissive in nature. Teachers are told to *reduce their failures* but no other help and assistance is provided. Shulman (1997, p. 515) believes that authentic and enduring learning occurs when the teacher is an ‘active agent’ in the process. S/he should not be passive, just an audience, a client or a collector. In this case, teachers are told what to do and they have to abide by it. There is no engagement with the teachers. The purpose of PDAs at this school was used as a “form of accountability” (Kennedy, 2005, p.247), as these meetings are departmental requisites. These forms of PDAs have great potential in contributing towards teacher learning by bringing about a change in the teacher but not in the manner that it is conducted at this school, hence the term “farce and fallacy”. The CPD workshops had the potential of being transformational or transitional, had there been appropriate feedback and follow up. However, due to the transmissive nature of these meetings, teachers’ learning was restrained.

The following emanated from teachers about their learning:

b. Classroom experiences

Pam: *“I brainstorm ideas, I have to find simpler methods. I have to look for ways which I can **experiment** with, to make them understand. Lots of learning takes place within the classroom. For instance, when you find a problem with a child, you have to come up with innovative ways of solving that problem in the classroom. I also **read** up, look up books.”*

Betty: *“Class **experiences**, like the expression on the learner’s face will tell me that learners are finding difficulty in grasping a concept. I have to think about simpler ways of putting things across. I think back on how I could have improved certain things. I read up, I go to bookshops and browse. Some books have lovely worksheets...that I can use in my lessons...”*

Pam’s words, “*brainstorm ideas*” and Betty’s, “*think about simpler ways*”, indicate that teachers are **thinking** about their teaching. Learning at this school is productive when teachers think about the best method to have used. How can I make it simple? How could I have taught it differently? Why were they looking confused? What can I change? These questions mean that teachers are going through the process of reflection. They are reflecting on their practice. They are **learning by thinking**. Productive learning, which is taking place,

is that learning which brings about a change in one's attitude and behaviour, where learning is self-initiated.

Antonek *et al* (1997) identified reflection as a key component associated with the concept of self. He believes that it is impossible to speak about the self when there is no reflection. To develop the self as a teacher, Antonek *et al* (1997) emphasises the need to develop reflective skills. Where some authors refer to reflection, others speak about self-reflection. Through self-reflection, teachers relate experiences to their own knowledge and feelings, and are willing and able to integrate what is socially relevant into their images of themselves as teachers (Nias, 1989, Korthagen, 2001).

Ben, for his part, states: “Through **years of experience**, I have gained some idea of what approaches and methods best suit certain topics or sections. My initial years were a lot of **trial and error**.”

Ben has learnt over time about what works best with the learners. He has learnt *through years of experience*. He is not continuing with the same methods and style of teaching, which he realized was not working. Shulman (2004, p.506) talks of “**paedagogic amnesia**”. We need to learn from reflective memories and not suffer from “chronic paedagogical amnesia.” Shulman (2004) indicates that some teachers do not learn from their practice. They realize that some things do not work in class but, year after year, they continue to teach in the very same way. It is worth noting that all the teachers in this study say they have learnt from their practice.

As teachers are teaching in class, opportunities arise which allows them to “tinker” with ways that would bring about the best understanding. The participants have stated that they have learnt through experimentation and experience, that is they have *learned by doing*. They have learnt from the experiences that were created in the classroom. The participants have used these experiences to improve their practice. The term **bricolage**, by Huberman (1993, p.196), has reference. He states that the classroom teacher is essentially a ‘tinkerer’ or ‘instructional handyman’, who can put together a host of materials lying around at various stages of a construction or repair job. This is exactly what the teachers at this school are doing.

Teachers learnt in their practice whilst they were engaged in teaching. The participants agreed that a lot of their learning took place in their class, going by the “*expression on the learners’ faces*”. According to Bell and Gilbert (1994), this initial recognition, when the

participant discovered through the expression on the learners' faces and concluded that the learners did not make sense of what was being taught, would form part of the initial, personal development of the teacher. This development is usually private, having been self-initiated and sustained before the teacher engaged with further development.

The class experiences led to reflective thinking which is in direct contrast to the transmissive nature of traditional DoE workshops. Through this processes of reflexion, teachers began to transform their practice. Learning that is happening is not planned but unplanned and informal. We could say that this unplanned and informal opportunity allowed for learning to take place as it brought about change in the teachers. Informal experiences like teacher experience, experimentation, expression on pupils faces and reflection is making the participants think about what they are doing. Teachers have autonomy in their classrooms and they are using their classroom experiences to empower themselves. This is bringing about the change in teachers learning. This is what makes this learning transformational and, in my view, most likely to bring about sustained change. They are not just doing, but they are thinking about what they are doing. This is significant to learning as it brings about a change in the participants' behaviour and attitude.

c. Learning from colleagues

Peer coaching

Through constant interaction with colleagues about subject matter, one learns what works and how one can improve one's practice. A lot of the learning that took place at school was driven by the teachers themselves. If teachers had to learn about a new learning area, they had to do it themselves. They had to find ways to learn about the learning area that they were to teach.

As Pam says: *"When we have to teach a new learning area, we go to our colleagues on staff who taught the learning area previously. We use their books as guides... the different sections that need to be covered....we use their work schedules, etc."*

Martha expressed the following view: *"We learn from our colleagues. By talking to each other about what worked and what didn't. Colleagues with experience have indicated more effective methods of teaching a concept, tried and tested methods....how to record my marks."*

Collaboration is good. I learnt from observing my colleagues closely. I also have a close friend. I usually phone her. She helps me out a lot.”

Betty states: “*Our colleagues provide us with most of the support in school. We usually go to those teachers whom we are comfortable with, who have already taught the subject before... sometimes we talk about work in the staffroom, during the breaks...”*

Martha states: “*I learn by **observing** others. As I walk past teachers classes I listen and look into their classes. I quickly look at the kind of work they’re doing... gives me an indication whether I’m on the right track.”*

Martha has learnt through the process of observation. Wilson & Berne (1999) assert that teachers learn through passing glimpses of another teacher’s classroom.

The excerpts above indicate that teachers are learning from their colleagues. They usually go to those teachers who have already taught the subject before. Teachers become involved in dialogue to develop and support their own learning. Wilson & Berne (1999) assert that teachers learn through conversations with colleagues. This dialogue is mostly related to the functional sphere of learning. Teachers are working with each other. They are *showing* colleagues what *different sections need to be covered...* they are borrowing from and lending colleagues their *work schedules*. This one-on-one relationship is a key characteristic of the coaching/mentoring model and is intended to support CPD (Kennedy, 2005). Hargreaves (1994) maintains that the coaching/mentoring model is a part of collaboration. Day (1999) calls it “comfortable collaboration”. Shulman (1997, p. 515) postulates that collaboration provides scaffolding, which would, in turn, support one’s learning.

It can be concluded that transitional learning is taking place informally through peer coaching. Learning is taking place amongst colleagues as they “give and receive aid and assistance or share ideas and materials” (Hargreaves, 1994). The coaching/mentoring model emphasises the importance of the one-to-one relationship between two teachers, which is designed to support CPD (Sachs, 2007). The coaching relationship amongst the teachers is collegial, as there is no hierarchy involved. Peer coaching is a transitional model which feeds into the accountability and performance management agenda.

Within this model of professional development, teachers are able to exercise some degree of autonomy (Zeichner, 1979). This approach employs a metaphor of growth (Kliebard, in Zeichner, 1979). According to this model of teacher development, adult development is a

process of “becoming” rather than merely a process of educating someone on how to teach. Zeichner (1979).

d. Learning from learners

The participants have stated that they learn from their students. The excerpt below is an indication of how they learn.

Martha: *“I learn from the **learners** as well. Once I had a learner who was allotted to my class in the event his teacher was absent. He was making a protective face mask from a double sheet of paper. It looked like a medieval helmet. I was amazed at this. I approached him to show me how it was done. I thought that if he could teach me, I could teach others in my class”.*

Ben: *“They come up with things that we just overlooked...”*

Betty: *“We may have not thought about it at all. They sometimes look at things from a different angle... it’s refreshing.”*

Learners can be a surprise in the classroom. We could say that these are special moments for learning (Shulman, 1997). Learners may come up with ideas that teachers may not have thought about at all. Some learners may be exposed to and have access to technology, whereas teachers may be lacking in this area.



Fig. 5.5 : Significant teachers' learning

As per fig. 5.5, a very significant part of teacher learning is happening at the workplace, on site, especially in the classroom. Learning is taking place through experimentation, observation, teachers' experiences, reflection, reading and through interaction with colleagues. Learning is taking place informally and when it's unplanned. Teachers are learning from chatting over the telephone with colleagues from other schools. This type of learning is planned but informal. Teachers in this study have learnt in these ways, however, besides these categories of learning, I have found that in my study teachers have mentioned one other way of learning - that they are also **learning from their learners**.

5.7 Self-initiated PDAs

How learning happens through self-initiated PDAs will be analysed under the broad theme of "the quest to learn". It will be analysed through sub-themes of i) courses at universities/ other institutions and ii) union workshops.

5.7.1 The quest to learn

a. Courses at universities/ other institutions

Teachers have enrolled in formal graduate programmes. This formal, planned activity provided by the university made teachers feel empowered and confident in their classrooms, as Betty states in the excerpt below:

Betty: “ *My studies helped me a lot..I am more confident now...*”

Pam: “*It required us to think... the activities we engaged in for assignments etc... required or forced us to look into our own practice.... It changed my practice*”.

Teachers were actively engaging with their subject material through their studies. The study material was appropriate and relevant. The content of this PDA must have made links between theory and practice. This initiative at enrollment was self-initiated. Teachers enrolled for these formal, planned courses when they were ready and saw a need for it. It was not mandated. Learning took place at these portals as it was something that the teachers themselves wanted or required. It was not forced onto them. This self-initiated learning through the university proved to be transformational to teachers.

b. Workshops initiated by the teacher union (NAPTOSA)

NAPTOSA offers teachers opportunities to attend several PDAs. Teachers are invited and not mandated to attend. Teachers are required to bear the cost of the workshops they attend.

Betty had the following to say about the union workshop:

I attended the Foundations for Learning workshops by both the Department and NAPTOSA. There was a vast difference in the way it was delivered, i.e. both in manner and content. At the dept. workshops, the requirements were mentioned to us. They had dynamic presenters. They did an example on how you can use a reading session to achieve the necessary foundations. I enjoyed it. It made a difference to the way I teach in class. I use these ideas in my lessons now...

Pam had the following to say about a creative writing workshop she chose to attend:

A picture was placed on the chalkboard. Types of creative writing activities were discussed.. I had the most informative and interesting exposure to creative writing. They were different

from the stereotypes that I use in class...songs, poems, narratives etc...I began implementing these ideas in class.

The workshops conducted by NAPTOSA proved to be transitional. Pam, Martha and Betty attended the Foundations for learning workshops provided both by the DOE and NAPTOSA. They were in a very good position to make a comparison. Departmental workshops basically covered the requirements that the participants had to adhere to, e.g. the time allocations and what is required in each aspect. The union workshop provided the participants with a practical demonstration on how the teachers can achieve the required foundations. Teachers were also exposed to *different, interesting* and innovative ideas about creative writing. Whilst union workshops focussed on the enhancement of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge, they were also active, engaging and interesting at the same time. Undoubtedly, teachers enjoyed and appreciated these workshops.

The self-initiated PDAs, through the formal, planned courses offered by the university proved to be transformational to teachers' learning. According to Fraser, transformative learning takes place when there are strong links between theory and practice. There also needs to be reflection, internalisation of concepts and construction of new knowledge. Their formal studies, helped achieve and fulfil these criteria, thus bringing about a change in the teachers. Teachers felt empowered. This self-initiated learning space afforded them the opportunity to rethink and review their practice and, in so doing, become reflective practitioners. However, DoE workshops and the phase, cluster and CPD workshops at school support procedural knowledge acquisition, thus the transmissive nature of these PDAs. The principle focus at the above-mentioned PDAs is collective development whereas the principle focus in self-initiated learning is on individual development. Union workshops as a self-initiated PDA proves to be transitional.

5.7.2 Summary

The once-off PDAs provided by the DOE and the PDAs at school sites are transmissive, and contribute in a technicist way to teacher change. Teachers are perceived as receivers of knowledge, who will comply with departmental agendas. The one-way flow of information means that dialogue being a pillar for meaningful teacher learning is absent. This

transmissive approach to teacher learning maintains the status quo of teachers as anti-intellectual, as it does not encourage teachers to think. Teachers' work as intellectual work remains a myth.

PDA's that took place at the school site, for instance, peer coaching; engaging in reading; learning from the learners themselves and observation can be categorised as transitional learning. Transformational learning took place in the classrooms as teachers engaged in reflection, learnt from past and present experiences and through experimentation in the classroom.

The self-initiated union workshops provided a space for transitional learning to happen. Teachers found these workshops informative and relevant. Teachers gained insight into innovative and interesting ideas about teaching in the class which brought about a change in their practice. The self-initiated PDA's that fell into the transitional category are the workshops provided by the union. These workshops were engaging and it brought about changes which resulted in learning.

The self-initiated PDA's which teachers engaged in through their formal studies proved to be transformational. Teachers began to think about their work intellectually and began to see things critically. Informal learning through classroom experiences, like reflection, experiences in the classroom, as well as experimentation led to transitional learning.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

South African education has undergone tremendous changes in the last two decades as it tries to address the inequities of the past. One of the major changes affecting teachers was curriculum change. Policies were put into place to direct curriculum change. These changes required teachers to transform the way in which they practised and viewed education. In order to provide the opportunity for teachers to make the necessary shifts from an era of apartheid teaching to one of democracy, they were and are required to engage in ongoing learning for professional development (CPD). The different curriculum review documents such as RNCS, NCS and the Foundations for Learning required education providers to re-skill the teachers.

CPD has taken various forms in our context. Teachers within the South African context attended workshops conducted by the education departments and certain unions. The Department of Education (DoE) workshops were compulsory, part day or day-long workshops. Teachers also engaged in individual learning opportunities like enrolling in masters courses. Teacher unions, like NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers' Association of South Africa) provided opportunities for both members as well as interested non-members to attend union workshops, but payment was necessary for non-members. In this regard, teachers had a choice as to which of the union workshops they felt inclined to attend. There were also mandatory, school-driven initiatives on professional development, such as CPD workshops at the school sites, phase meetings, cluster meetings as well as learning area meetings.

6.2 Methodology

The case study methodology chosen was an effective tool which allowed me to explore how and what practising teachers are learning from these professional development activities (PDAs), and to gain an insight into which kinds of PDAs have contributed most to teachers own professional learning in the context of educational change in South African schools. It allowed me to gain in-depth insight into what and how teachers learn from PDAs. This study looked at three different forms of professional development activities which teachers attended or engaged in, that is i) the once-off workshops; ii) PDAs at the school site and iii) self-initiated PDAs. It attempted to determine how beneficial these PDAs were in bringing about a change in the teacher. In order to do this, teachers were purposively selected to participate in individual and conversational interviews. However, one of the possible limitations of the study could be in the methodological choice of the study. A case study is confined to a limited context, however useful information has been derived to improve our understanding of professional development and teacher learning. Interviewing teachers whilst they are at a workshop may add another dimension to the study. Teachers tend to forget the actual experience over time. It would be interesting to audio record an actual professional development programme e.g. employer-driven activities. Researching up in this manner could be problematic. Nevertheless, I have found the case study methodology suitable and effective in allowing me to answer the research questions.

6.3 The framework

The triple lens framework (Fraser, 2007) was a composite framework which drew on three different ways of understanding CPD. Due to the complexities of CPD, one needed to take into account the range of factors impacting on CPD and I believe that this framework allowed me to do this. Bell and Gilbert's (1996) three aspects of professional learning assisted me to analyse the 'what' of teacher learning. This looked at how the personal, social and occupational aspects of the individual plays a role in **what** teachers learn from PDAs which are offered to them. It is reflective of the domain of influence of professional learning. Kennedy's (2005) framework for analysing models of CPD allowed me to answer the '**how**' of teacher learning, which indicates the capacity for professional autonomy and transformative practice. Reid's quadrants (McKinney, 2005) for teacher learning answered

the ‘where’ of teacher learning which indicates the sphere of action in which the professional learning takes place. This lens looked at PDAs and explored the effectiveness of planned – incidental and formal –informal PDAs.

6.4 What are teachers learning?

In asking what have teachers learnt from PDAs, this study indicates the following:

The formal planned once–off workshops provided by the DoE does not appeal to the three experienced teachers as they say they do not learn anything from these formal planned events. The once-off workshops, whilst addressing the professional aspects of subject knowledge and curriculum content, neglects to address the social and personal aspects of the individuals. Experienced teachers believe that DoE workshops have nothing to offer them, be it on a personal, professional or the social level. The formal planned once-off departmental workshops as a platform for a learning space did not achieve its aim to develop teachers.

However , the study found that the formal, planned once–off DoE workshops benefitted the one inexperienced teacher, as her learning was enhanced professionally, encompassing both professionalism and professionalism.

DoE workshops were decontextualized, as professional learning opportunities did not respect and acknowledge teachers as adult learners who learn in different ways, come from different backgrounds, work in a variety of context-specific settings and cater for the needs of diverse students. The formal planned once–off PDAs established by the DoE fail to recognise that teachers have individual needs, different motivations for learning, and prior knowledge and experience that will impact on the type of learning they choose to engage in. The design of learning activities did not relate to, and make explicit the intended purpose and nature of what is to be achieved to ensure teachers understand the relevance and value these activities have to their classroom practice and student learning.

PDAs at this particular school site e.g. the phase, cluster and LA meetings as well as CPD workshops have made little impact on teachers’ professional learning. Teachers are mandated to attend or conduct workshops at school. Departmental circulars and policies may mandate attendance but they cannot mandate learning. Management at schools follow instructions from “above” dogmatically who, in turn, instruct teachers on the ground. Thus

learning becomes a vicious cycle of non-learning when mandated. This ‘blanket approach’ (Fraser et al, 2007) contributes to teacher disaffection due to lack of ownership. Formal, planned PDAs at schools are fulfilling the managerialist discourse, as they are being done as a formality. It is being conducted because it has to be conducted-for record purposes. There is little or no learning taking place at these portals.

The once-off PDAs and PDAs at this school site neglected to develop the personal, social and occupational domains of the teacher. Furthermore, learning from planned formal PDAs are restrained due to the absence of follow up activities, which signals the schools’ and DoE’s failure to sustain PDAs. Follow-up activity is important in order to reaffirm beliefs and attitudes. Abdul-Haqq (1995) and Ball (1996) state that time, reflection and follow up activities are important, which is missing from PDAs.

At the same time, self-initiated opportunities provide a useful space in bringing about change within the individual, as it addresses the personal, social and occupational domains which are inter-related. Constructive learning took place when the “self” desired the learning. When learning is self-initiated, it brings about changes in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of teachers. According to Ball (1996), teacher development is considered especially productive when teachers are in charge of the agenda and determine the focus and nature of the programming offered. In the name of professional autonomy, many argue that teachers should determine the shape and course of their own development.

6.5 How are teachers learning?

In asking, how are teachers learning from the PDAs in the context of change, the study indicates the following:

Once-off PDAs as well as PDAs at this school do not contribute to teacher learning due to their transmissive nature. The transmissive model of CPD supports a skills-based, technocratic view of teaching, whereby CPD provides teachers with the opportunity to update their skills in order to be able to demonstrate their competence (Kennedy, 2005). This type of PDA is indicative of a lack of respect for teachers’ own capacities for reflective and critical inquiry as PDAs are often initiated in short, taught courses where new content, ideas and techniques are ‘delivered’ (Kennedy, 2005), as was the case of C2005. These workshops do

not allow for any professional autonomy. Teachers are not challenged as they are perceived as receivers of knowledge with little capacity to think. The transmissive nature of the DoE workshops places teachers in a submissive role as recipients of particular knowledge.

However, PDAs at school, which were informal and unplanned were transitional in nature. Transitional learning is taking place informally through peer coaching, observation, reading to keep informed and, finally, through learning from their students themselves. Learning is taking place amongst colleagues as they “give and receive aid and assistance or share ideas and materials” (Hargreaves, 1994). Teachers particularly value the **informal** support from, and professional dialogue with colleagues whom they are comfortable with. **Unplanned, informal, incidental** opportunities were more beneficial to teachers. Teachers themselves determined the space for this learning. Transitional learning also happened incidentally, whilst chatting with colleagues in the staffroom or over the phone. Whilst colleagues provide a lot of support, teachers choose whom they want to work with.

However, whilst this study found that teachers have learnt from their colleagues through conversations and dialogue, they did not engage in critical dialogue. Critical dialogue is a characteristic of a learning community (Wenger, 2002), where teachers talk critically about their own practice.

The self-initiated PDA, namely the courses offered by the university proved to be transformational to teachers’ learning. These formal planned courses were able to establish strong links between theory and practice. Within this social space, opportunities were created for teachers to engage in reflection, for the internalisation of concepts and construction of new knowledge, thus bringing about a change in the teacher. Teachers felt empowered. This self-initiated learning space afforded them the opportunity to rethink and review their practice and, in so doing, become reflective practitioners.

The self-initiated formal, planned PDA offered by the union NAPTOSA proved to be transitional. These workshops were engaging and brought about changes which resulted in learning for three teachers.

PDAs have the potential to contribute towards teacher learning by bringing about a change in the teacher. Due to the lack of appropriate feedback and follow-up and the transmissive nature of PDAs, teachers’ learning was restrained. The one-size-fits-all approach used by the DoE to teaching and learning becomes apparent in this research.

Whilst the literature reviewed did not reveal information about teachers who learn from their students, this study found that teachers can also learn from their students. This learning is unplanned and incidental.

An apparent gap in teacher learning dealt with technology. In an era where technology is advancing at a phenomenal pace, teachers at this school are not using technology to advance their learning. None of the teachers interviewed mentioned learning from the internet or how they have learnt to use technology to advance their learning which, in turn, would result in enhanced student learning. Technology has the potential to transform learning and teaching in the near future. It can also transform continuous professional development.

6.6 Conclusion

Teacher learning, within the context of this school is taking place both formally (through workshops , own studies, cluster meetings) and informally (through discussions with colleagues). The findings of this study showed that formal, planned professional development activities which are mandated as in the case of workshops, cluster meetings and phase meetings have not contributed much to professional learning. It has, however, addressed the functional aspect of development, wherein teachers developed their technical skills.

The findings also suggest that learning is happening when it is self-initiated. Teachers are learning more through professional development activities which are driven by themselves. Teachers who have decided to study formally, through institutions, have stated how beneficial these studies were, and how this type of learning brought about a change in their attitudes, beliefs and the assumptions that they make. Who teachers are, where they are coming from and where they are in a particular point in time has a bearing on how and what learning is taking place.

A very significant part of teacher learning is happening at the workplace. Teachers are learning collaboratively, through working with each other, through conversations and assistance from colleagues. These learning opportunities are sometimes planned, sometimes informal. However, the type of collaborative working displayed by the participants on this staff merely skims the surface. A considerable amount of beneficial learning is taking place when it is unplanned and is informal - in the classrooms, through observation,

experimentation, experience and from the learners themselves. These classroom opportunities act as the catalyst for teachers to engage in reflection, thus resulting in transformative learning.

Within the South African context, professional development activities are heavily influenced by the managerial perspective as it focuses on such things as compliance with policy, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. PDAs need to move away from traditional professional development practices using the cascade models which teachers are mandated to attend to promoting PD activities which would prepare teachers to become empowered professionals who would be able to make informed professional choices. PDAs which succeed in doing this would ultimately bring about a change in the individual teacher thus ensuring that learning has taken place. PDAs need to take cognisance of the words of Marike and De Witt (2007) who state “ *I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand*”.

Policy developers need to take note that policies put forth to direct teacher learning can only mandate attendance and not learning. Teachers learn when they are receptive to it. Teachers learn in varying contexts but most importantly, the journey of learning needs to begin with the SELF.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT TO TEACHERS

Mrs F. Sheriff Uddin

P. O . Box 19580

Dormerton

4015

Dear Sir/Madam

Sandalwood Primary

Phoenix

4062

_____ September 2010

M.Ed project: Exploring teacher learning in schools

I am a M.Ed. student at UKZN, and this project forms part of my studies. The aim of this project is to explore teacher learning in particular school contexts. I would appreciate the opportunity of conducting interviews with you. The interviews will produce data on what and how teachers are learning. This project is supervised by Dr Daisy Pillay (Tel 031 260 7598), module co-ordinator at the School of Education and Development, UKZN.

I would like to conduct two half hour interviews with you. I would also like you to participate in a group interview that will take the form of a conversational interview. The duration of this interview may be approximately two hours. I will record your views in writing and may also tape record the interview. Interviews will be conducted after school hours at your convenience. Participants will be given pseudonyms, as a result it will not be linked to your name. The data will be used in my research. Also note that there would be no benefits to the participants in this research. You are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Be advised that permission for this interview will also be sought from the principal.

Thank you.

Yours in education

Mrs F Sheriff-Uddin

APPENDIX B

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

Mrs F. Sheriff Uddin

P. O . Box 19580

Dormerton

4015

The Principal

Sandalwood Primary

Phoenix

4062

____ September 2010

Dear Sir

M.Ed project: Exploring teacher learning in schools

I kindly request permission to conduct a research at this school.

The aim of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions of their learning in particular school contexts. This project is supervised by Dr Daisy Pillay (Tel 031 260 7598), module co-ordinator at the School of Education and Development, UKZN.

I am a M.Ed. student at UKZN, and this research forms part of my studies.

I would like to conduct individual interviews and conversational interviews with four teachers from your staff with regards to teacher learning. I will be recording their views in

writing and may also tape record the interview. The data will be anonymous i.e. it will not be possible for it to be linked to the school or any persons of the school. Also note that teachers are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Please note that in no way would the research interfere with the teaching and running of the school. Should for any reason you find that you wish to withdraw your permission for the research, you may do so without any negative consequences. If you require any other information about the ethical aspects of this research , please contact : UKZN Research Ethics Office, Ms. Phume Ximba, Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office, on 031 260 3587.

Thank you.

Yours in education

F Sheriff-Uddin

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF CONSENT (TEACHERS)

SUBJECT : MEd Research (2010)
INSTITUTION : University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN)
RESEARCH TOPIC : **Exploring teacher learning in schools**

.....(name of participant)	
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research, and I consent to participating in the research by engaging in: <i>Please tick the appropriate box.</i>	
one on one interviews.	<input type="checkbox"/>
and	
conversational interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.	
.....
SIGNATURE OF TEACHER PARTICIPANT	DATE
.....
WITNESS	DATE

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF CONSENT (PRINCIPAL)

SUBJECT : MEd Research (2010)
INSTITUTION : University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN)
RESEARCH TOPIC : **Exploring teacher learning in schools**

I.....(name of principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I hereby give consent for the said research to be conducted at this school. All interviews will take place after school hours and would not interfere with the smooth running of the school.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, if I want to.

.....
SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL	DATE
.....
WITNESS	DATE

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TOPICS / CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

1. What do practicing teachers learn from professional development activities and practices in the context of change?

- What professional development initiatives do you engage in (e.g. workshops, studies, reading)?
- How beneficial were they to your learning? Elaborate . Did it change your practice in any way?
- In which context do you prefer learning (e.g. individually –your studies or collaboratively e.g. workshops? Please elaborate.
- Drawings : Draw a picture of a PD experience which you found to be most beneficial or /and least beneficial to your professional learning.

2. How is learning taking place amongst practising teachers in the context of change?

- How do you learn new knowledges/policies/approaches at school?
- If given a learning area to teach for the first time, how do you deal with the learning?
- Is your learning taking place formally or informally at school? PROMPT eg. The CPD workshops at school or phase meetings. Elaborate.
- Do you learn from your colleagues? Explain.
- What kinds of things would you like to (or need to) learn to grow and develop as a teacher?
- Does the way you learn change over time?

Other probes used:

Tell me about...

How do you...?

You said indicated/explained... Could you please say more about...?

Can you tell me a little about...?

Comment on...