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Understanding the conditions to support the on-the-job learning of teachers:
A Case Study of a P-12 School

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Keywords

On-the-job Learning	Informal learning gained from the experiences of working.
P – 12 School	A school that combines Primary and Secondary education.
Professional Learning	The learning and development of a professional that extends skills and abilities through formal and informal means.
Mentoring	A relationship between professionals based on the sharing of skills and knowledge.
Teaching Practice	The process by which a teacher engages their students in learning through a specifically designed curriculum.

Abstract

This study investigates the important concept of informal, on-the-job learning of teachers in a P-12 school in the Australian state of Victoria. Literature that examines how teachers learn within their school environments typically focuses on either Primary or Secondary schools. However, in recent times there has been an escalation in the prevalence of a new type of school, the P-12 model, which combines these sectors. Therefore, this thesis confronts how the P-12 school environment facilitates the professional learning of its teachers so that we can better understand the relationship between environment and learner. Whilst informal learning is understood to be a significant aspect of teacher learning, the dedicated research pool on this topic can be described as "limited". Therefore, the focus of this study will not be on structured external Professional Development courses or formal examples of educational programs. Instead this study highlights how the everyday informal incidental learning of the practitioner is encased within a school environment embedded in its contextual conditions. This is done through an ethnographic case study which uses online survey, face-to-face interviews and observation fieldnotes. All data have been collected and analysed by a researcher-practitioner working within the college environment. This allows for a strong connection between researcher and context and as the environment in question is highly significant the methodology allows for a deeper connection. The data extracted is used to understand the interaction between environment and professional learner as the learning that takes place. Specifically, this study interprets and understands the case through an ethnographic lens using the concept of "Five Rs": routines, rules, rituals, roles and relationships. From this, it can be determined how routines, rules and rituals support the teacher learners who portray roles and build relationships. This frame encompasses the institution within its own complex social network allowing for a multilayered picture of teacher learners as they build, maintain and regulate their own professional knowledge and skills.

Statement of Original Authorship

I, Beth Louise Cilia declare the following:

This thesis is my own original work and has not been submitted in part or whole for any previous degree;

Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and

The thesis is 26,204 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices

_____

Signed

Beth Louise Cilia

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List of Abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
PD	Professional Development
PL	Professional Learning
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching

Chapter 1: Introduction

"You are always a student, never a Master. You have to keep moving forward"

- Conrad Hall

Throughout history the traditional role of the teacher was the master of the classroom. The sage on the stage. Entrusted with knowledge, this all-powerful figure would impart their wisdom to rows of compliant students. This particular perspective had a justified social and historical value at the time, such was the structure of school as "Mass systems of public education were developed primarily to meet the needs of the Industrial Revolution" (Robinson, 2011, p.9). However, this outdated icon is in direct contradiction to the current way that teachers are viewed in contemporary arenas. Today, teachers are trained to be facilitators of learning who build capacity in their students. Furthermore, these students are seen for their individual contexts, abilities and obstacles. The sage on the stage is now the guide on the side. Research contends that high performing education systems are characterised by the design of policies and programs that are built on the idea that teachers are ongoing learners in a constant state of development (Darling-Hammond 2017). The modern teacher is an education professional who is constantly learning, growing and developing. Therefore, the identity and role of the teacher has morphed from the untouchable master whose knowledge was capped to a life-long student who continues to learn and grow throughout their career. However, how much is known about this teacher-learner? And what is known about how this professional grows within their educational environment?

Context

In order to accurately explore how teacher learning is supported in the school environment there must be reference to the professional context that frames this inquiry. As this particular research project is focused on a Catholic P-12 School in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, a description of the governance and industry structure is needed to clarify the context of study. In 2002, the Victorian state government

established the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) as an “an independent statutory authority for the regulation of the teaching profession in Victoria” (2019). This state based agency requires teachers to register as educational professionals, submit to background and education checks and commit to and uphold specific educational standards. VIT’s link to teacher learning can be explained through the functions of the institute according to part 2.6 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. Specifically:

> “(j) develop and maintain a Professional Learning Framework to support and promote the continuing education and professional development of teachers and early childhood teachers;
>
> (k) undertake professional development programs and activities in relation to the functions of the Institute;
>
> (l) undertake and promote research about teaching and learning practices”
>
> (Victorian Parliament, 2006, S. 2.6.3(1)(j) amended by No. 19/2014 s. 43(1)(g))

This legislation formally recognises the ongoing education of teachers as a vital requirement for the position whilst also demonstrating a strong value towards professional development and the teaching and learning practice itself. Additionally, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), also plays a role in the background to this discussion. Since AITSL was formed in 2010 for the purpose of heading educational reforms under the Australian government the organisation “has implemented reforms aimed at improving what teachers know, do and care about, and how leaders support the teaching process and build a culture of learning” (AITSL, 2019). AITSL provides a detailed learning framework for teachers that both labels stages of teacher career development and defines the depth of each stage. This particular agency requires Victorian teachers to adhere to seven professional standards (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. AITSL Framework Standards

		AITSL Professional Teaching Standards
Domains of Teaching	Professional Knowledge	1. Know students and how they learn
		2. Know the content and how to teach it
	Professional Practice	3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
		4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
		5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
	Professional Engagement	6. Engage in professional learning
		7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Source: www.aitsl.com.au

The role of both VIT and AITSL is to reinforce industry expectations of teachers as self-regulating, professional learners who develop through a continual cycle of learning. As such the regulatory climate in Victoria is structured in a way that both supports and challenges local teacher-learners in their professional learning. The expectation of professional growth is directly linked with their roles as teachers and also therefore specifically linked to their setting – their school. These overarching structures rely on a relationship between teacher-learner and school environment to meet these mutual needs. Analysis of the standards reveal that "professional learning" is viewed as both offsite and onsite, formal and informal and structurally supported by schools. Therefore, it must be said that a key element in this inquiry is the professional environment itself – the school, and the way in which it supports, nurtures and influences teacher learning.

For the sake of professional and geographical relevance the main focus of this research project is a Catholic P-12 school. A school such as this was chosen due to the increasing presence of P- 12 schools in newly developed areas. The specific school at the centre of this inquiry will be referred to by the pseudonym of Welldale College. Welldale College opened in 2006 and is located around fourteen similar P-

12 schools within a 20km radius. It is also one of only a few Catholic schools of its kind in Victoria. However, despite the growing popularity of this type of school being established in the growth corridors, there is a scarce amount of research that looks at how P-12 schools impact on education. Therefore, a P-12 school is a relevant environment to observe and participate in research so that we may better understand its environment compared to the conventional Primary/Secondary split system.

The Problem

As the industry and regulatory bodies present the process of teacher learning in form of a scale it must be asked: do we know enough about how schools facilitate and support teacher learning as they move through this continuum?

Contemporary educational research trends to be more focused on formal teacher training. Notwithstanding the importance of this aspect of training, this pursuit is an important topic. However, the role of schools in facilitating and supporting the on-the-job learning of teachers is an underexamined component in the larger picture. Academic research itself acknowledges that inadequate attention is paid to the facilitation of teacher learning on-the-job despite its significance in the education sector (Buchanan 2012, Darling-Hammond, LePage, Hammerness, Duffy & Bransford 2005). Without an in-depth awareness of how to support teacher-learners, how can we be sure that the education sector and its schools are adequately supporting and growing their greatest asset? Whilst the industry continues to conduct research and change teaching practices, styles and methods, consideration must be given for the most efficient ways to impart and utilise these findings. This can only be done when we understand more about how schools and teachers develop knowledge, skills and practice. Therefore, the central theme in this research project is to shift the focus from the training of the teacher to the learning environment that develops and shapes the leader of the learners. This will contribute to a growing understanding in industry knowledge as we work towards better leveraging teacher learning for the benefit of all learners in schools.

Rationale for Research

An investigation such as this is particularly relevant during a period of unbridled reflection in education. Never before throughout history has the teacher been scrutinised for accountability by policy-makers and the general media with such

intensity. This is because it is understood that teachers have an important function in the development and education of their students (Hattie, 2003), and these students are competing in a knowledge economy both locally and internationally (Sakarneh, 2014). Therefore, teachers and schools are viewed as responsible agents in the equation. Time, research and money is being invested into curriculum, pedagogy and standardised tests. What is lacking in these ventures and indeed in the debates is the opportunity to examine how schools can scaffold and guide the on-the-job learning of their staff. There is inadequate academic knowledge about how schools and teachers can better leverage their professional learning opportunities by understanding and planning for their learners, their needs and their learning styles.

One of the biggest issues with understanding the school and teacher learning dynamic is found in the "Professional Development (PD) Model" that is commonly adopted within schools. The concept of "PD model" here is in reference to the practice whereby teachers are sent out to external providers to gain knowledge and expected to return to the workplace to apply and/or share the knowledge. This research project considers the "PD Model" to be less relevant as the industry has begun moving away from this particular format and opted for more on-the-job embedded training approaches. As such the focus here is to target on-the-job learning, where the learner makes meaning within the workplace space itself. Moving away from the labelled "formal" types of professional learning, allows for more contextual and culturally relevant knowledge and understanding. It is important to emphasise the value of on-the-job training. For example, Billett's (2001) work based on a constructivist perspective argues that work and learning are interdependent as workers construct their own meaning through practice. He questions the untouchable status of teachers as the "transmitters of the knowledge" emphasising how the workplace environment allows for deep, structured and contextual approaches that cannot be obtained from traditional teaching environments (p 19).

It must be acknowledged that the industry itself recognises that on-the-job learning is significant. As mentioned above the shift towards viewing teachers as professionals has brought with it professional standards and expectations (see Table 1) which are built on the idea that a teacher's knowledge grows with experience, collaboration, reflection and research. However, although policy frameworks recognise teacher-on-the-job learning as significant, the volume of literature on the topic is lacking (Kyndt,

Gijbels, Grosemans, Donche, 2016). Therein lies the problem, we don't know enough about the context and needs of our teacher-learners, leaving gaps in a much larger educational picture.

Aim and Scope

This research project is explicitly dedicated to finding out how the workplace shapes, supports and structures the informal learning of the teacher. The focus is on the everyday classroom teacher, who has graduated undergraduate studies and is working within diverse levels of experience. The term "Professional Learning" is defined in this thesis as:

> "the formal or informal learning experiences undertaken by teachers and school leaders that improve their individual professional practice, and a school's collective effectiveness, as measured by improved student learning, engagement with learning and wellbeing." (AITSL, 2014, p7)

The term "workplace" refers in this thesis to the school context of the teacher learners, that is, the staffroom, classroom and other school spaces. The objective here is to unpack influencing factors in the school context that impact on how teachers learn. This research is an insider's study of elements such as school culture, institutional structure, teacher attitudes and learning dispositions allow for an authentic examination of teacher learning.

This case study was designed with the aim to add value to growing conversations around the role of environment in on-the-job teacher learning. The intention is to highlight, compare and contrast the learning experiences of teachers in a specific school context. A possible result from case studies such as this one could be that professional learning be viewed not as complementary to student learning and growth but as an imperative component in the learning continuum of all professional learners. Furthermore, it is hoped that the developments in other areas such as curriculum, pedagogy and assessment may be better understood when they can be considered alongside the environmental context of on-the-job teacher learning.

For the purpose of clarity, the limitations of the employed research methodology must be addressed for both its strengths and limitations. The nature of case study allows researchers to place themselves deep within the context of study. In this particular case this researcher-teacher had an opportunity to develop a deep description of the

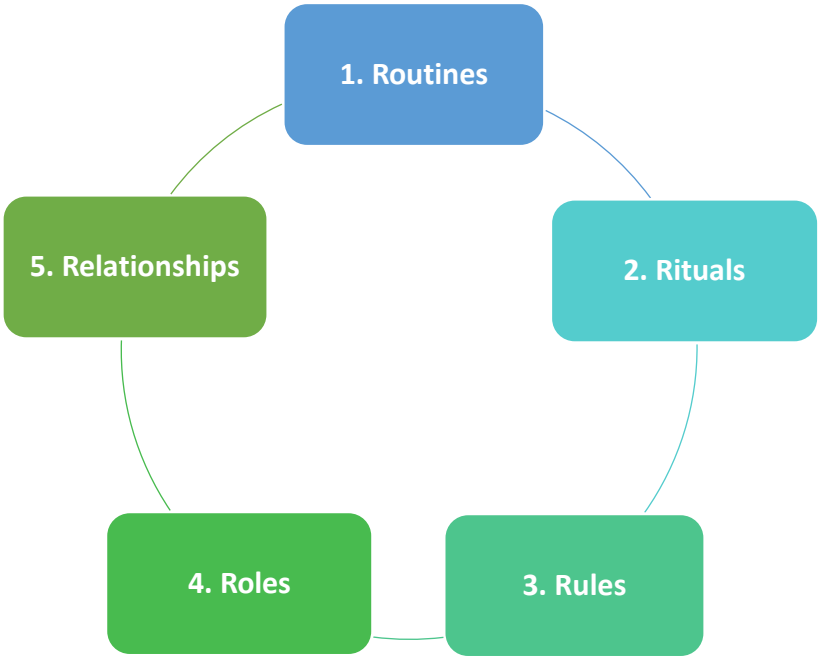
workplace resulting in a rich recount of phenomena (Merriam, 1998). An approach such as this is vital for an investigation where a deep understanding of the contextual environment is a core theme. However, it must be acknowledged that replicating case studies is problematic and can make it harder to confirm findings and generalise based on outcomes (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). Case studies are also associated with research bias as researchers have their own "construction of reality" which interacts with the filtering of data (Merriam et al. 1998, p2).

In order to address the limitations of the case study method this particular research thesis will adjust its methodology as much as possible to strengthen its effectiveness. Firstly, this thesis will address the possible bias of the researcher by addressing possible contradictions throughout the project and drawing attention where bias may be present. Secondly, this thesis will triangulate its data by using three different sources: quantitative online surveys, qualitative face-to-face interviews and ethnographical field notes. Juxtaposing these sources allow confirm findings, highlights patterns and validates the data set from within the school context.

Theoretical Framework

In order to frame this investigation, a theoretical framework has been applied to house and guide the focus. As the structure of this project is an Ethnographic Case Study the aim is to deconstruct the conditions upon which learning takes place for the everyday teacher. Accordingly, this project will be guided by the work of Saldana (2016) who argues that qualitative researchers look for patterns that demonstrate "habits, salience, and importance in people's daily lives", specifically he refers to the "Five R's: routines, rituals, rules, roles and relationships" (p.6). The researcher has applied this succinct summary as a foundation upon which to build questions of inquiry. Subsequently, all literature reviewed will be guided by the way in which it depicts the "Five R's" of Professional Learning within the cultural setting (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework - Five Rs



Source: Author's own interpretation of Saldana (2016) p. 6

Overview

This research project will encompass both quantitative data and qualitative data. It seeks to describe the cultural conditions of teacher learning within one specific school context and lay the foundation for a discussion about professional learning for teachers everywhere. From this a comprehensive discussion is generated to link one particular school context and its implications for the wider industry.

Chapter 2 provides a concise but comprehensive description of the case study environment. It identifies the internal and external factors that are relevant to this study and draws implications for the research process.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature available on Teacher Professional learning and the formal or informal learning experiences of teachers. This literature review is structured according to the Five Rs that embody the qualitative understanding of a research subject. These concepts are applied to current literature to gauge what discussions and debates are emerging as relevant. From this a discussion emerges that speaks to the way in which the methodology can work within the space and hint towards the placement of the study within a larger context.

Chapter 4 describes the case study research methodology. It highlights reasons for the choice of environment, case study structure and selection of data collection tools. The sources consulted range from books, articles and government reports to school policy and field notes.

Chapter 5 presents data and outlines the findings collected from the quantitative online survey, face-to-face interviews and ethnographic field notes. The data is presented in a variety of forms to be considered on its own and in relation to other types of data.

Chapter 6 discusses and analyses the data relating to how the Welldale College frames teacher learning through its context. This discussion will connect the findings with the literature review and outline the key themes.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of this case study, synthesising the results and discussions. This section will also offer insight for future research and investigations.

Chapter 2: Case Study Context

The context of this Ethnographic Case Study - Welldale College must be examined in relation to contextual factors that influence both the way the environment operates as a cultural space whilst also considering how it is placed within the community and educational arena. Therefore, an examination of internal and external elements provides a broad background which informs this study. Internal factors such as the College's history as an organisation are worthy of examination for their possible impact on teacher-learners and the cultural space that they are learning within. Likewise, highlighting external factors to the college contributes to an understanding of a geographical context of this P-12 College in both the sense of physical space, the community but also abstract space, the industry. By acknowledging the power, range and reach of these internal and external factors this chapter will determine which cultural characteristics must be considered when conducting research within the space.

Internal Factors

As a school Welldale College has a young history in terms of its population, leadership and structural change. The school opened in 2006 with 303 students in a newly developed suburb in the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne. Over the following ten-year period Welldale experienced a successful but also turbulent level of growth (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Welldale College Student and Staff Population

YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
No. of Students	303	503	696	914	1130	1318	1421	1656	1650	1734	1731
No. of Staff	27	43	65	93	127	153	176	207	214	190	195

Sourced: Welldale Financial Department 2016

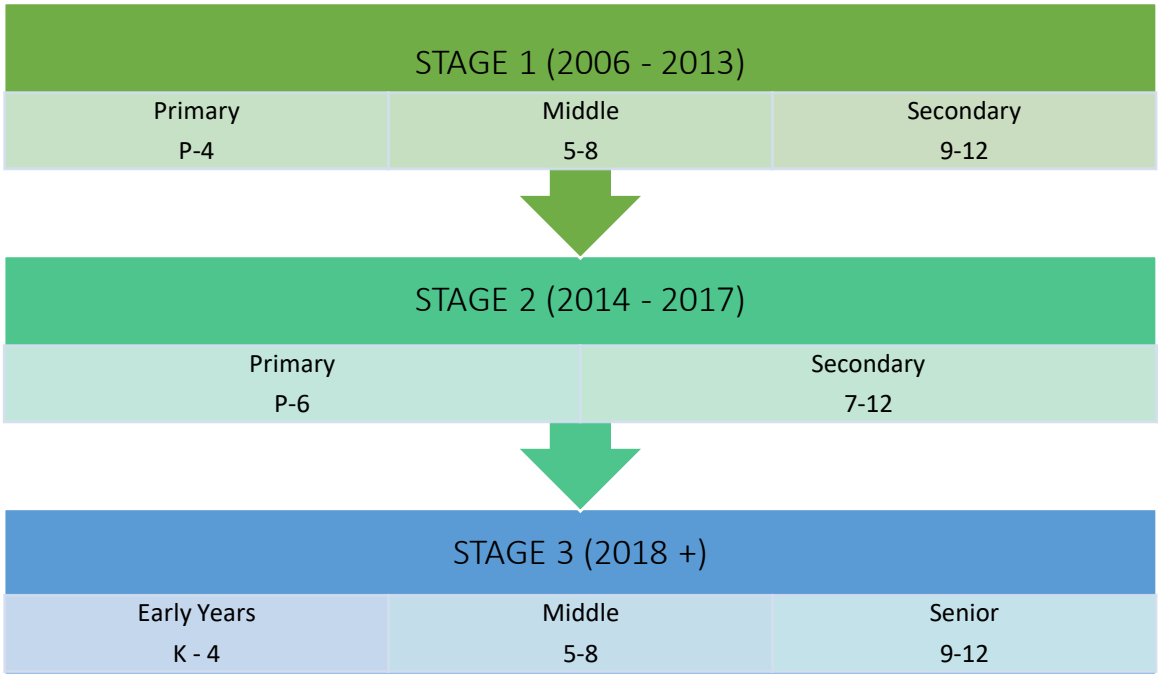
Between 2006 and 2016 Welldale College increased in student population by an average of 47% per year. Staff population advanced by an average of 25% with dramatic growth in the early years and a more stable plateau after the eight-year mark. It is important to consider what these figures tell us about the development of the

school as an educational and cultural space. Rapid student and staff growth can put a significant strain on a young school as it works towards stabilising and establishing itself. Consequently, consideration must be given to the time it takes to induct staff and establish stable policies and procedures. These may have been compromised during this time. As the school culture grew and established, it did so under constant change. These assumptions need to be considered during the research phase of the study. Constant change within a school can have both positive and negative effects on the operation of the organisation. Questions need to be framed with consideration for how stable the school culture is and what this means for teacher-learners. School culture can and does impact on professional learning as a process and professional learning communities as cultural groups (Furner & McCulla, 2018).

School Organisation

The organisation structure of the school has changed several times since opening in 2006. These changes can be deduced to three main stages of significant organisation (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. Welldale College Organisation Structure Development



Welldale College has also experienced several changes in leadership with five different principals running the College over the first ten years. This further reinforces

the idea that the Welldale context has experienced significant change in relation to leadership whilst also explaining a lack of consistency with school structure. Such a complex picture of fractured organisation design speaks to the climate, politics and logistics of the school. As this project is focusing on how the school supports teachers as learners, the nature of the environment is highly important to this study. In the world of Ethnography subjects and their environmental context are dependent on each other. The practitioner-researcher must act as ethnographer conducting fieldwork like a “hike through social and cultural wilderness” (Fetterman, 1998, p 31). Therefore, it is the position of this project that the rapid population growth, unstable leadership and varied school organisational structure of Welldale College may have presented social challenges that cannot be ignored. An awareness of complexity of the social landscape within the school will be translated into the project methodology so that care can be taken in regards to any possible fragile relationships and conflict.

External Factors

External factors that need to be considered in this case study are those that frame Welldale College both locally and within a larger context. Specifically, this project looks at the college as a school in the northern Catholic community of Melbourne in relation to other P-12 schools in the same area. These comparisons allow for reference to the identity and role of the school whilst locating it within a specific social and economic network. Furthermore, understanding how P-12 schools are perceived in a larger educational context through research and industry dialogue highlights the knowledge and resources available to schools of this type. These external mitigating factors paint a picture of where the school is located, who the school is in its identity and why the school is the way that it is constructed.

P-12 Schools in the North

In the northern corridor of Melbourne there are fifteen schools within a 20 kms radius of Welldale College. This indicates that schools of this type have been successfully taking students and operating with a combined Primary and Secondary structure long before Welldale College was established in 2006. See Table 3 below.

Table 3. P-12 Schools in Northern Suburbs of Melbourne

Year Opened	Name of School	School Type
1915	Ivanhoe Grammar (E-12)	Private/Independent
1973	Eltham College (K-12)	Private/Independent
1981	Plenty Valley Christian College (K-12)	Private/Independent
1983	St John's College	Private/Independent
1991	St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College	Private/Independent
1993	The Grange P-12 School	State Government
1997	Sirius College	Private/Independent
1999	Aitken College	Private/Independent
2006	Welldale College	Catholic
2008	Hume Anglican College	Private/Independent
2009	Mount Ridley College	State Government
2011	Charles LaTrobe College	State Government
2014	Hazel Glen College	State Government
2017	Mernda Central College	State Government

From the list it is clear that this type of school in the region is usually created by private or independent organisations. However, since 2009 four new Public P-12 schools emerged in the area, with three of these in correlation to new housing developments occurring at this time. This situates Welldale College as a Catholic institute not only on trend with local educational structures but as a pioneer in the area as the first suburban Catholic P-12 school in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

It is important to reference the fact that P-12 schools structure their organisations in different ways. Though a school may use the label of P-12, it may still borrow from conventional school structure by having a campus dedicated to Primary P-6 and a campus dedicated to Secondary 7-12. However, some schools borrow from the American model and apply a Junior P-4, Middle 5-8 and Senior 9-12 structure. Some of these may use a different location for each school sub section, but the model is flexible. As mentioned previously Welldale College has experimented with its school structure throughout its history using both of these types of models.

P-12 Schools in Research

Despite the fact that the state of Victoria has close to two hundred P-12 schools in total there is a lack of attention on this school type in academic and industrial literature. In 2007 the Country Education Project conducted an investigation into P-12 schools discovering that despite their differences to traditional mainstream structure, the divide of Primary/Secondary dualism still exists within these schools and prevents a genuine P-12 approach to the learning continuum (CEP, 2007). This prompting a call from The Age newspaper for the educator sector to invest more in understanding this very popular school type (Milburn 2008). Despite these references to the P-12 school format most research that occurs in these schools rarely does so with a focus or reference to the P-12 structure itself. In contrast, Primary schools and Secondary schools are traditionally structured separately in a variety of different ways. Both of these types of schools are divided by a range of differences. See Table 4 below:

Table 4. Differences between Primary and Secondary

	Primary	Secondary
Teacher Contact Hours	max of 22.5 hours per week	max of 20 hours per week
School Spaces Allocated	Consistent classroom base	Diverse classroom base, consistent Office
Pedagogy Structure	Pedagogy "method" is theoretically based across subjects, eg, inquiry method. Subjects are often integrated.	Subject "method", pedagogy is content based and driven.

Source: IEU, 2018

Although there are some courses available that allow teachers to work across the levels, the industry tends to work with the labels of Primary and Secondary as two separate categories. This project will need to examine how the industrial separation of Primary and Secondary schools and teachers works within this particular P-12 model in relation to its possible impact on teacher PL.

Information such as this leads to the following points:

- Does the physical space of the school reflect an industrial separation of Primary and Secondary?
- Are the learning spaces and resources shared equally?
- With these teachers coming from different training points do they have enough common language and pedagogy to work from common ground?

According to industry reports, P-12 schools operate using a variety of structures but tend to encounter common issues. Critique in this area contends that P- 12 schools need a more consolidated approach to their curriculum, teaching and learning (CEP, 2007, Millburn, 2008). This research found that a common language is needed to drive a strong operational and educational policy shift which has the potential to increase outcomes for students. However, given that the school cluster context of this study is a collection of schools from across State, Catholic and Private/Independent (see Table 3) sectors it is likely that these schools are not sharing their P-12 experiences as they operate under separate governance and organisational grouping. These elements combined indicate that despite Welldale College possibly experiencing some of the common P-12 issues and operating in an area full of P-12 Schools, it is in a sense isolated from other likeminded schools.

Factors and their Implications

The picture of Welldale College as a P-12 institution is complex. Whilst within the school the stages of development, leadership and structure were fraught with challenges the school itself stayed open with healthy enrolments and reached a point of stability. This indicates that although the school is functioning on an operational level, consideration must be given to social and political networks operating within the space. Therefore, this research project must tread carefully when constructing the social elements of its inquiry. Although the aim of this project is to understand the context of on-the-job learning within a social environment, the inquiry itself should be mindful of increasing any social or political divides. As the Practitioner-Researcher is a Primary trained teacher working in the Primary section of the school, the language used for questioning must be neutral and inclusive so that all participants understand and are able to participate.

Before continuing further, it must be acknowledged that the exploration of the internal and external contexts of the school allude to assumptions held by the Practitioner-Researcher. It is assumed that significant growth within the Welldale College environment would have impacted on the professional learning of its staff. With a high student and staff growth rate it is probable that many hours and resources of staff development were dedicated towards inducting staff into the college itself. This would allow new staff to become familiar with the systems and tools that the college used. In other words, administrative function may have taken priority over Professional Learning that focused on teacher knowledge and skills. However, this research project is not preoccupied with the formal Professional Learning of teachers. On an informal level, the on-the-job Professional Learning of teachers during this time may have been highly productive due to an increase in staff population and the high-pressure context of change. On the hand it is also likely that both of these scenarios are likely. Though the historical content is relevant it is not necessarily a pre-determination of the current state of Professional Learning within Welldale College. With assumptions acknowledged, the project can move forward in reference and respect to its key inquiry routed in the teacher learning within the P-12 school space.

A review of the complex internal and external factors that impact on Welldale College indicates that the environment at the centre of this Ethnographic Case Study is just as important to the study as any theoretical considerations. As such this project will structure its overall approach with respect to the divisions within the school and the school's complicated position as a P-12 structure. It is the position of this project that the choice to use an Ethnographic Case study method will allow for flexibility when exploring the phenomena of the environment and the teacher learner subjects within the school space.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Teacher Professional learning has been researched extensively in the field of education in recent times both on an international and local level. The scope of this topic includes themes such as teacher agency (Biesta & Tedder 2007, Darling-Hammond et al. 2017, Molla & Nolan, 2020), Professional Standards of teacher knowledge and skills (Henderson & Jarvis 2016, Hallinger, Heck & Murphy 2014), Communities of Practice in schools (Borg 2012, Sutherland, Scanlon & Sperring 2005) and Reflective practices (Henderson and Noble 2015, Woolway, Msimanga & Lelliott 2019). Whilst the literature presents a variety of different angles and concepts to be considered, this literature review will focus specifically on the self-directed, on-the-job learning of P-12 teachers within an Australian school context. Informal learning is understood to be a significant aspect of teacher learning worthy of exploration (Grosemans, Boon, Verclairen, Dochy & Kyndt, 2014) with a dedicated research pool described as "limited" (Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans & Donche, 2016). Therefore, the focus here will not be on structured external Professional Development courses or formal examples of educational programs. The focus here is on how the everyday informal incidental learning of the practitioner is encased within a school environment. Moreover, a framework to capture such data must have the capacity to support the phenomena of the everyday. Saldana's (2016) work argues that researchers using qualitative methods look for patterns that highlight the habits and salience of the everyday experience. As this research project is an ethnographic case study this chapter will utilise this idea and Saldana's Five Rs "routines, rituals, rules, roles and relationships" (p 6) to navigate this conceptual map. This particular angle is relevant and complementary to the structure and nature of ethnographic case study as it adopts a social and environmental scaffold. It also further complements the epistemological position of the Practitioner-Researcher, whose constructivist position is invested in how learning occurs and how its value and meaning are made within the school arena. Saldana's Five Rs provide a framework from which to interpret social learning behaviours:

1. Routines: Regular and habitual learning behaviours, typical of everyday activity. Routines will be understood through the question - How do teachers negotiate individual/school led routines to meet the needs of their Professional Learning?
2. Rituals: Conventional norms that are transferred through exploratory process to become rites of practice. Rituals will be reviewed through the question - What is the function of ritual in the process of teacher Professional Learning?
3. Rules: Principles, guidelines and regulations of practice. Rules will be explored through the question - How do official/unofficial rules impact on teacher Professional Learning?
4. Roles: Parts that people play as members of a social group. Roles will be examined through the question - What are the key roles involved in on-the-job Professional Learning?
5. Relationships: Connections and associations within social networks. Relationships will be investigated through the question – How do relationships foster teacher PL?

As this research project is concerned with the question – What conditions are needed to support the on-the-job learning of teachers? It must first address the central concepts. Professional Learning is defined by various sources in different capacities. As mentioned previously the term “Professional Learning” is defined in this thesis as:

> “the formal or informal learning experiences undertaken by teachers and school leaders that improve their individual professional practice, and a school’s collective effectiveness, as measured by improved student learning, engagement with learning and wellbeing.” (AITSL, 2014, p.7)

However, before the Five Rs can be applied to the conversations around our central question, this research project needs to examine the evidence that explains how teachers define their own on-the-job Professional Learning. As the case study relies upon participants to examine the relationship between their on-the-job learning and the school in which it takes place, then attention must be given to how they view this type of learning. Therefore, before the ethnographer is “to catch the insider’s viewpoint” (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, Okely, 2006, p.66) it is important that teacher perspectives on the main concept are reviewed.

How do teachers define Professional Learning in schools and what does it look like?

Data collected within this case study relies upon the viewpoint of teachers, such as the online surveys, face-to-face interviews and fieldwork observations. Therefore, after establishing what is known about how teachers define PL a comparison can be made between the teachers within the Welldale case and those in the wider field. The question - How do teachers learn? Is to be embedded with an awareness of how the learners themselves specifically define PL through their own eyes and language.

Although the volume of research that focuses on the teacher definition of Professional Learning is limited, the knowledge that exists offers this project important factors to consider. These perspectives highlight the complexity of the issue as teachers make meaning with and in opposition to government and regulatory bodies within the socio-cultural network of their own schools. Tait-McCutcheon and Drake (2016) explore these concepts through a study that required teacher subjects to define their relationship and definition of PL through the construction of a "jacket" metaphor. The metaphoric construct unearths a variety of competing and complicated relationships between teacher and their PL. While on the one hand PL is defined as useful and integral to teaching by being relevant to some learners for individual reasons and purposes, it is also defined as a problematic. These issues arise when teachers relate to PL as being counterproductive to their classroom practice. Specifically, when PL is "perceived as a form of compliance" and/or is "disrupted by a lack of trust between leaders and teachers". Tait-McCutcheon and Drake's (2016) research indicates that the teacher definition of PL is multifaceted and complex. Where there is a conflict between the political structure and the individual learner the process of PL is compromised. However, where the PL is "adaptive" and "flexible" teachers respond positively by using facets of the program that meet their individual needs. Additionally, Adams (2014) captured contradictions between the definitions of PL in the eyes of teachers and the top down policy approach due to a complicated relationship with government and regulatory bodies. This research found that teacher's definitions of PL were negated by top down approaches to teacher development. When asked for a definition of PL teachers actually responded with reference to two known definitions, what it "should be" (p. 123) what they actually thought it was in their own experiences. This is a significant finding given that the government framed PL program was based

on formal industry accepted definitions and their inherent values. In this particular context the program being presented included structured external days of PL and internal PL structures to address students with significantly low literacy levels. Tension occurred in many areas including where teachers had to stop using methods they had found successful in the past and were engaging for their students to use a more prescribed model. Adams discovered that although they worked together following the state guided model the teacher's definition of PL did not correlate with "(a) their descriptions of what PD "should" be; (b) their experiences and commonly understood notions of what PD is; or (c) guidelines in federal law and state policies." (p. 133). These findings thus far indicate that the teacher definition of PL is contested based on the stakeholders in the context, their experiences, teaching loads and opinions on the best outcomes for students. This is an important evidence for this study as it shows that the contextual understanding of PL is dependent on the individual's own experiences, roles within the job and the school environment. Furthermore, underpinning all of these are the educational values of the professional educator which drive their behaviours and are at the receiving end of PL. If the PL falls short of these values, there is a possibility that the knowledge and/or program will be rejected as a genuine source of learning.

Other relevant studies looking at specialist teachers also uncover this problem of disconnection between definitions of PL from different sides in education. Alibakhshi and Dehvari (2015) conducted research on how English language teachers define PL by examining a collection of their experiences. Their research found that teacher definitions and understandings of PL are also multilayered and complex with a strong emphasis on the experiences of the teacher. The most relevant of their findings corelating to this inquiry being the following: (a) PL definition depends on the context of the teacher (b) PL is "complicated" as it depends on the views of teacher education of the teacher and the governing bodies around them, where the teachers are located and the availability of PL and (c) PL is a continuous process somewhat driven by teacher interest. Furthermore, the work of Bautista, Toh and Wong (2018) focuses on teachers who specialise in music and also concentrates on how the teacher's definition of PL is in conflict with other stakeholders in Education. This research concluded that there is a significant discrepancy between how teachers define PL and how designers and implementers (such as schools and policymakers) define PL. With the data

indicating the teachers thought that PL means acquiring new knowledge and/or skills in an effort to grow as a professional a view which “does not fully align with scholarly views” (554). These findings raise questions that relate to the context of the school investigated here -Welldale. As the cohort of teachers is large in size and complex, due to being a combination of Primary and Secondary the experiences, the values and definitions of teachers must be considered. This research project will need to account for the specific context of the case by investigating such divisions and factors when collecting and processing data.

Routines

How do teachers negotiate individual/school led routines to meet the needs of their Professional Learning?

Routines in the context of on-the job PL in schools embody the repetitive practices of teachers and schools as they scaffold the development of educational professionals. With leading authors in this space investigating various approaches such as e-learning (Hunt, 2015, Kelly, Clarà, Kehrwald & Danaher 2016), teacher networks (DuFour, 2014, Révai, 2020), and classroom-based research (Pressick-Kilborn Griffin, Weiss 2006) there is a spectrum to be considered. However, among the teacher learning literature three main routines stand out as pertinent: Professional Dialogue, informal Coaching/Mentoring and Reflective Practices, and will be discussed in detail in this section. These particular routines with their social and communal grounding enrich the nature of this specific inquiry as they frame teachers as social beings who learn through connections, critique and relationships with other professionals. The extent to which routines support PL through their connections, leverage knowledge and understandings and address the direct needs of learners is unearthed in this discussion.

Professional Dialogue is a significant routine that academics study in both on its own and as a crucial component of PL programs and strategies. Grey (2011) argues that on-the-job dialogue between professionals is an alternative for of Professional Learning. However, the dialogue being discussed here is specifically defined by its nature and content. Grey explicitly refers to discussion that is genuinely shared between professionals who respect each other and adhere to a social set of rules within a culture of listening. Additionally, Mantei and Kervin (2011) contend that

authentic professional dialogue occurs when players within the conversation make links between their own experiences and their colleagues' experiences in synthesis with professional knowledge. This position proposes that teacher identity is developed through these acts of dialogue. If these relationships are based on trust and reinforce teacher identity then what happens when there is contention? Segal's (2019) work in narrative research examines how story functions in three ways to identify, to represent practice and to reason. This work explores how argumentation is important in the process. Such an idea is reinforced by Grey (2011) who contends that Professional dialogue reveals the subjective nature of teaching as differences in teacher perspectives are needed for professional engagement. However, Zakaria (2012) contests aspects of this discussion by declaring that teachers have multiple identities and arguing that professional groups with too much conflict are factious and less effective. These positions differ in their agreement on the precise function and nature of Professional Dialogue, however they all concede that its connection with community and relationship is relevant.

The social theories of learning that build upon community learning such as Communities of Practice (CoP) and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) both prescribe to the idea that dialogue is a foundation upon which learning communities are built. Cole, Jane and Sugget's (2017) work examining the role and significance of dialogue between teachers in relation to teacher development argues that "participation in informal conversation is the most common and valued professional conversation" (p.4). This paper contends that Professional Dialogue takes multiple forms, often being "unstructured" where it serves to meet the needs of the teacher learner. Lavie, Steiner and Sfard (2019) discuss the existence and importance of *discursive* routines in schools. This perspective contends that participants used discourse as a means to communicate and tell stories "about chosen aspects of reality" (p 163). These narratives work to inform through the sharing of knowledge and experience.

However, an interesting point to consider here is how these commentators address the differences between dialogue/discourse in the Primary and Secondary domains. It is contended that "Primary and Secondary schools differ in their meeting participation and the value they place on team meetings" (Cole, Jane and Sugget 2017, p.5). Lavie, et al. (2019) also allude to specific discourses relating to specific types of school when

they reflect “School is a place for fostering different types of historically established discourses, such as biology, in which stories are told about living creatures; history, the discourse that produces accounts of past generations; or mathematics, where the protagonists of the narratives are abstract mathematical objects.” (p.163). This reference to specific knowledge discourse reminds us that Primary generalists do not specialise in one or two languages but instead have to be ‘multi-lingual’. From this we know that not only is dialogue/discourse active in schools as a way for teacher to learn but the language is linked to specific educational contexts/structures. This may be not simply be about language on its own but also the identity attached to the language. Levin & Young (1994) contend that teachers in Primary schools view themselves as teachers who teach children, whereas teachers in Secondary schools view themselves as teachers who teach subjects. Therefore, whilst dialogue is accepted as a learning routine relevant to the on-the-job development of teachers it must be understood within the network of context from which it arises.

Another learning routine referred to in research about teacher PL is the Coaching/Mentoring dynamic. This peer to peer relationship is now gaining traction as an official strategy recommended by educational institutions. In the Victorian context AITSL refers to mentorship in their standards as a method for sharing knowledge between colleagues. In the literature the label of Mentoring is also referred to under other names such as peer coaching, cooperating teaching and supervising (Artigliere & Baecher 2016). As such its description cannot be somewhat diverse. The label of Mentoring will refer to this range of practices described as a process that develops a teachers personal and professional growth (Suchánková & Hrbáčková 2017) through the use of “use alternative forms of inquiry, such as conducting peer observations, reporting on their own practices, and making collaborative reflections” (Kato, 2018, p.50). Allan’s (2007) work which is a UK based case study examined the use of mentoring within a Secondary context. This research found that participants used mentoring to “process of setting realistic goals and targets” and all reported that it was useful for their practice (p.18). Specifically, the benefits included:

- Enhanced personal effectiveness and the ability to work smarter and not harder;
- Greater reflectivity and professional growth;

- The development of techniques for constructively challenging unhelpful behaviours, including negativity and limiting beliefs;
- Enhanced energy and job satisfaction;
- Improved problem-solving skills.

(Allan, 2007, p.19)

Furthermore Cordingley (2005) found that general benefits from the coaching/mentor relationship were just as significant for coaches/mentors as they were for mentees. This research emerged from the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) with the national British Framework for Coaching/Mentoring. It indicated that industry and academia agree that the structures and schemes that support the Coaching/Mentoring relationship do so to benefit all parties.

Research on the use of routines such as Professional Dialogue and Mentoring indicate levels of success due to agency in which teachers able to conduct themselves. School structures such as Primary and Secondary need to be considered for their formal impact on discursive practices. With Professional conversations being a key component in all teacher relationships they inadvertently impact on Mentoring and any other PL routines that may be incorporated into practice.

Rituals

What is the function of ritual in the process of teacher Professional Learning?

The concept of “ritual” and its role within the learning process has sparked an important dialogue that defines and debates what “ritual” is and how it works in a cultural learning context. An engagement with this dialogue allows for understanding and analysis of both the concept itself and the research methods applied. From this, a connection is made between what is known about ritual and how to apply it to the school workplace.

Before the question of “function” can be addressed, this section will define “ritual” and description of the nature of “ritual” itself. These elements provide the foundation needed to understand the part that “ritual” plays in how teachers learn in their professional environments. From these discussions a determination can be implied as to what ritual does within the PL process and how teachers apply, approach and interact with it. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the concept of “ritual” stems from the social sciences bringing with it a context of discourse and culture. Since

Durkheim's enterprising work in ritual studies (Allen & O'Boyle 2017) the term "ritual" has become so widely used that its meaning can be determined unspecific. Sociologists argue that contemporary use of the term "ritual" is characterised as "generic and trivialised" (D'Orsi and Dei, 2018, p.116). However, academics working in education apply the term more specifically with direct reference to its discursive routes. Lavie et al. (2019) contends that the cultural and social quality of the term gives it relevance and value in application to educational contexts.

Recently, the concept of "ritual" has been captured in conversation by academics, working within the area of mathematics education (Lavie, Steiner & Sfard, 2019, Khazemi, Lampert & Ghousseini 2007). These dialogues look at teacher learning and the role of rituals in developing best practice. Commentators in this space agree that "ritual" is embedded in social context, a type of participation that is driven by process (reference needed). Furthermore, it is acknowledged that "ritual" is a type of routine, that transforms from a repetitive practice to "explorative" participation through the learning process (Lavie et al. 2019). This suggests that actions that start as a repetitive behaviour are transformed when the learner invests in an expert that they trust as they begin a genuine process of "imitation" to improve knowledge and practice. Therefore, the function of said routine is to develop the professional practice of teachers who are participating.

However, discussions outside of education that examine ritual in different contexts speak to a range of social and cultural functions of ritual. Smith and Stewart (2011) propose that rituals exist on a continuum from solidified culturally entrenched rituals to ritual-like events. This work recognises nine functions of ritual within the workplace:

Table 5. Functions of ritual in the workplace

1. Provide meaning
2. Manage anxiety
3. Exemplify and reinforce the social order
4. Communicate important values
5. Enhance group solidarity
6. Include and exclude others
7. Signal commitment
8. Manage work structure

9. Prescribe and reinforce significant evens

Source: Smith & Stewart (2011)

These ideas are confirmed and extended by Erhardt, Martin-Rios and Heckscher (2016) whose work examined ritual within restaurant workplaces. Their perspective found that rituals are dynamic learning components that educate participants through the core values within an organisation's culture. However, this work acknowledges that rituals can work to either strengthen culture or challenge it. In summary, ritual does not exist in isolation of professional learning but functions within a complex social structure intricately linked to values held by social groups. The extent to which rituals reinforce or oppose social norms is dependent on the context of the environment.

Academics debating the significance of ritual have directed discussions beyond looking at what ritual does for PL but also what it means for the professional learner within their environment. This again leads back to the routine of Professional dialogue/discourse. Legare and Souza (2012) argue that the nature of ritual itself begins with discourse. Though this work was more preoccupied with specific cultural rituals than it is in line with other perspectives. On the contrary the work of Kádár (2015) is vested in workplace context, as it argues that ritual within the workplace is intricately linked with identity. It is contended that identity is co-created between ritual interaction and institutional interaction. Likewise, Delany (2009) asserts that ritual is integral to both cultural life and identity. Discussions such as these demonstrate how complicated the boundaries of these two concepts are to consider, rendering their separation arbitrary. What can be gained is the idea that ritual is grounded in cultural practice through discourse and identity formation. Therefore, in a teaching context it could be proposed that ritual functions on a range of levels to support learning through a cultural experience.

Although the perimeter of ritual is not clear and the literature less available, an understanding of how ritual interacts with professional learning can be reached from these ideas. Consensus from various perspectives contends that ritualistic behaviours are discursive and cultural acts that assist in workplace learning. Though it can be said that ritual exists on a continuum and can be both complimentary and conflicting with the social norms of the space it is worthy of recognition.

Rules

How do official/unofficial rules impact on teacher Professional Learning?

In a space as highly regulated as education there are various rules and regulations that impact on the on-the job Professional Learning of teachers within schools. This section of the literature review will examine how external formal regulation and internal school rules/processes influence on-the-job teacher PL. Two significant types of relevant research that surface in this area are *education policies* and *academic critique*. Although these documents and commentaries offer insight into the context of regulatory structure of teacher learning, there is a lack of representation from the perspective of teachers within schools. Therefore, the gap between formal policies and the reality in schools will be alluded to and addressed based on the evidence presented.

The formal "rules" that are relevant to the context of this discussion are both explicit and implied in the Victorian/Australian context of Welldale. The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and department/school level policies are all forces that seek to manage, shape and influence teacher professional learning. The VIT requires all registered teachers to maintain and document twenty hours of Professional Development each calendar year. This regulatory body has a strong relationship with AITSL through the way it encourages teachers to align their professional development meet industry standards (see Table 1). The AITSL Strategic Plan for years 2019–2022 makes reference to Professional Learning in all five of its focus areas (see Appendix A).

Commitment to the process of registering as a teacher is process each year and all registered teachers are held to account through spontaneous audits to ensure all teachers are compliant. In this case, the term "Professional Development" refers to a wide range of activities such as conducting meetings, attending training, supervising student teachers/graduate teachers and miscellaneous professional activities. The specification of dedicated hours to Professional Learning is relevant in the way which the industry quantifies the activity of learning and reflects a possible systemic ideology. This is reflected in the self-defined direction of AITSL.

> AITSL works with the education community to:

- define and maintain standards for excellence in teaching and school leadership
- lead and influence excellence in teaching and school leadership
- support and recognise excellence in teaching and school leadership.

(AITSL, 2004, p ii)

The verbs used here *define, lead and support* indicate a position of power and leadership in the industry, in simple terms, this institution is paramount in writing the industry "rules" to shape teacher professional learning. This is further reinforced in various policy documents that speak to how teacher learning is understood and valued by governing bodies who influence the entire industry. AITSL's (2012) *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders A shared responsibility and commitment* expresses the importance of PL and defines a PL culture. The section most relevant to this part of the literature review is the way it describes the characteristics of effective PL through three specific concepts: relevant, collaborative and future-focused. As the document circles back towards the concepts of "excellence" and "shared responsibility" it paints a very specific view of PL.

It is argued by some academic commentators that this Australian context which regulates teachers with specific standards and requirements is driven by government policies intent on shaping the workforce of teachers to meet economic and political gains (Hardy, 2008, Day & Sachs 2004). Exploring this political element further Day and Sachs et al. (2004) contend that *teacher professionalism* is the discursive element driving policy existing in two main forms, *Managerial Professionalism* and *Democratic Professionalism*. The dual existence of these competing forces are indicative of the complex network of ideas, groups and official institutions intertwined in the regulation of teacher learning (see Table 6 below).

Table 6. Managerial and democratic professionalism compared

Managerial professionalism	Democratic professionalism
System driven/ends	Profession driven/ends
External regulation	Professional regulation
Drives reform agenda	Complements and moves beyond agenda reform
Political ends	Professional development
Competitive and market driven	Collegial and profession driven
Control/compliancy	Activism

Source: Day and Sachs et a.l. (2004, p. 7)

Whilst *Managerial Professionalism* is driven by economic and market forces it is organised by central controlling elements such as government bodies. This ideology emphasises whole system standards which simultaneously concentrate on both local employment concerns and international competition. Contrary to this, *Democratic Professionalism* is driven from within the professional community. It is controlled within the industry working towards standards set by the industry. This ideology is comfortable challenging the compliant expectations of Managerial Professionalism. Commentators maintain that these two types of Professionalism coexist within the Australian context, presenting an insight into tensions within schools and the wider industry. However, despite their coexistence, academics argue that the momentum and power of structured regulation such as the VIT and AITSL represent a shift in the Australian context to a more *Managerial Professionalism* approach. A point evident in the way the system has restructured to be more "centrally controlled" where the focus is on new types of teacher learning that complement standardisation and "accountability" Day and Sachs (2004, p.8). However, the delineation between these ideas is not as polarised in reality as it is in theory. It must be noted that the teachers, schools, clusters and systems have agency in the way they structure, plan and manage their own professional learning.

Grundy and Robison (2004) speak to the complicated landscape of teacher professional development in Australia. They argue that there are three Primary functions served by professional development – extension, renewal and growth – and that there are two operators – systemic and personal. This idea concurs with the work of Day and Sachs in the way it labels the complexity of forces at play whilst acknowledging the central system as a key driving force. It is due to this and various competing forces that lead these commentators to classify spaces within the Australian context as "contradictory and contested" (Grundy and Robison, p146, 2004). So, what does this mean for teacher learning? If the school is a microcosm of the wider industry how do these competing ideas infiltrate the way it manages teacher learning?

School policy and processes surrounding the way in which teacher learning is facilitated and managed are relevant elements of a larger picture. These documents and systems are the vehicle of translation from official government regulation to the end result – the classroom. In effect the way in which the school chooses to structure

and support teacher learning speaks to its “Professionalism” inclinations. Hardy & Melville (2019) contend that teacher learning cannot occur on its own in segregation but reflects the policy context and professional ideals around it. This academic work grounds itself in the dichotomic relationship between teacher agency and industry contextual factors that influence teachers. It is within this that the nuances of real time policy enactment are found. These nuances reveal how diverse “conceptions of professionalism” result in teacher learning that can be described as “varied, and sometimes conflicting ways” (p.17). In depth explanations for this are defined by a range of potential causes where the individual ideologies of teachers, socio-economic contexts of schools and networks of support interact. Overall, it was discovered that an increased presence of accountability measures can be detrimental to the goals of policy. Despite the complexity of the translation from policy to action, it could be argued that an over dominant type of professionalism can lead to an undercutting of the ambition of the policy itself.

The work of Webel and Platt (2015), a case study of two teachers learning in relation to their professional obligations mirrors elements of restrictive professionalism thus far. This perspective argues that there is a lack of focus in academia on how professional obligations impact on teacher change. This they are argue is due to an underrepresentation of the culture of teaching in this discussion including the phenomena of teachers’ individual practice conflicting with their own beliefs and goals. This relates to an emerging body of work which examines the motivation of teacher’s interaction with professional learning in the workforce, a factor which is relevant when examining the politics of power between Teacher Learning policy and Teacher Learning actuality.

Although limited in size, the collection of literature focusing on this area is able to characterise common motivations for teacher PL. This is important because it provides insight into when and why teacher learning is successful within schools. Despite the evidence that suggests conflict between school policies and real time teacher PL, we know that learning occurs and teachers continue to grow and change their practice. So, what is happening? It is the contention of this literature review that the common practices of implementing PL policies do not capitalise enough on motivation factors, subsequently they are underutilised in this conversation. Research tell us that there are a range of teacher motivations that are at play when teachers engage in on-the-

job learning. These include addressing a need for a new skill/knowledge (Lohman 2006), individual teacher beliefs (Vermunt & Endedijk 2011, Borko & Putnam, 1996), previous experiences (Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Vermunt 2010) and career interests (Kwakman 2003, Geijsel, Sleegers, Stoel, & Kruger 2009). However, the body of evidence available suggests that Australia's current teacher PL structures are driven by a top down approach that is not grounded in interacting with individual teacher input. That is to say that PL policy is not comprehensive enough to engage with or understand the motivations of teachers. Therefore, without a harmony between the direction of the state and the needs and wants of teacher learners it is not surprising that there appears to be an absence of buy in within schools. The relationship between teacher buy in and the regulation of teacher learning is worthy of exploration.

Literature concerned with teacher buy in highlights a strong link between teacher responsibility (of learning programs) and successful school and/or government initiatives. Opportunities for teachers to be involved in developing, monitoring and shaping onsite learning allows for teachers to own their practice. Fasteen, Thanheiser and Melhuish (2015) argue that Professional Learning is only "useful" when teachers believe strongly in a new learning practice and use it in their classroom (p.963). Without the connection between teacher and the ideology and methods of new pedagogy it will not translate into practice. Klingner (2004) explores this further by explaining that teachers who apply a strategy to their own classroom in a way that makes it relevant and meets their needs take it on a type of ownership ensuring that its use is sustained in their practice. This implies that teacher learners relate to PL policy and regulation according to how well it meets their context and the needs of their students. However, the idea of teacher buy in is not a simple utopic concept without complexities and problems. Turnbull (2002) contends that a true and equal meeting of stakeholders in the management of teacher learning encounters conflict and complications. This is because purposeful participation is represented by conflicting dialogue in pressure filled conditions where individuals engage sporadically depending on their time and needs. Buy in is therefore accepted as a relevant grassroots force in the framing and regulation of teacher PL, but the extent to which professional conversations navigate contention is rarely acknowledged.

An engagement with various discussions about the regulation of teacher learning in Australia reveals multiple forces at play. Whilst there is a top down trend in policy

towards maintaining uniformity and accountability this is not always welcomed or embraced from commentators and schools. However, at an institutional level, schools have some agency in how they roll out teacher learning programs and support teacher learners.

Roles

What are the key roles involved in on-the-job Professional Learning?

When examining the roles and responsibilities involved in on-the-job Professional Learning there are a number of angles one could take. For the purpose of ethnography this section of the literature review will look specifically at the roles of individuals within the school community who work in an official capacity as they participate in the facilitation of the learning process. This allows for a discussion directed at how roles and their responsibilities work to support the PL of teachers within the school community and their strategies - which are current practice. An analysis of current research and practice is needed for comparison to this case study school. Various sources of literature focused on this topic speak to individuals acting as directors to staff learning, principals, teachers and facilitators whose actions enact the school PL structures.

Inquiry into the roles of school officials and their impact on teacher PL reveals different classifications or types of characters participating in the space. Lin, Lee and Riordan (2018) recently conducted a case study on the interaction between school leadership and its role in empowering PLCs. This study draws on the work of existing body of knowledge in this space (Day & Harris, 2003, Harris 2003, Gronn, 2002) to identify four specific types of leaders.

- The Brokering Role: Those who connect other teachers with professional learning events and activities. This person translates the school improvement plan into the classroom practice. (Day & Harris et al. 2003).
- The Mediating Role: Those who are called upon as experts and sources of information due to a critical and reliable constitution. They are also able to refer people further to other relevant professionals and resources (Harris, 2003).

- The Participative Role: Those who actively participate in schoolwide initiatives or development. They take ownership of their learning and help others as they are cooperative and collaborative. (Lin, Lee and Riordan 2018)
- The Forging Role: Those who create mutual learning opportunities from within close professional relationships (Harris, 2003).

Furthermore, this study concluded that the types of leadership correlate with the level of engagement from teachers within the case schools. This point which is directly linked to another key finding that the types of leadership are directly influenced "by school policies and structures such as co-teaching and timetabling" (Lin, Lee and Riordan 2018, p 547). In other words, the style of leadership embraced by the leaders and internal policy structures influence both the levels of participation from teachers when it comes to PL opportunities and the extent to which PL can be strategically collaborative.

Subsequently, it must be acknowledged that within a complex social structure such as a school the identity and impression of a specific role can be just as relevant as the agency of the role itself. Benedicte and Devos (2016) examined the connection between teacher judgement of leadership and the way in which they teachers acted within a PL community. This particular study examined two types of leadership, transformative and instructional leading to the discovery that there was a correlation between teacher participation levels and their interpretation of the leadership style in their school. This compared to the research discussed earlier which also addresses how leadership style can impact on the way in which teachers engage with collaborative learning.

Research framed around roles within a school's PL structure contend that the perception and function of these roles affect the PL that takes place within the space. It is clear that identity is a significant factor that is framed by styles of leadership, actions and perceptions within the learning community.

Relationships

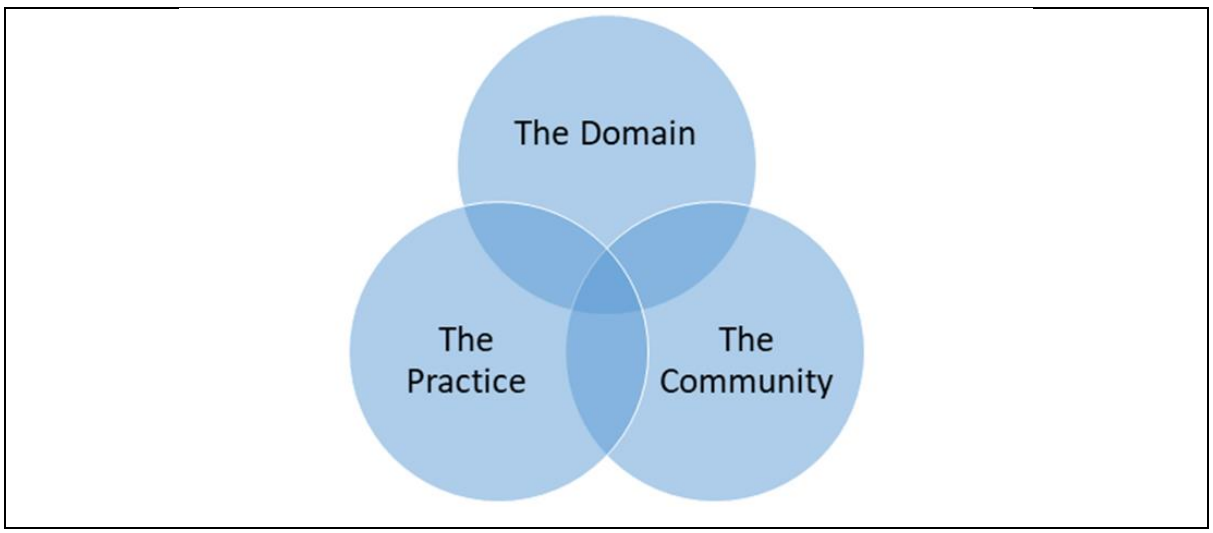
How do relationships foster teacher PL?

Within a school context there are a range of relationships that occur. Those between stakeholders such as teachers, leaders, parents and students and those between

abstractions such as ideas, concepts and institutions. This section of research is primarily focused on the human relationships between teachers, leaders and administrators and the role in which they play in fostering teacher PL. From this point, the focus is directed to two specific relevant social constructs that have been explored theoretically and practically with application to teachers and schools. Communities of Practice (CoPs) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are approaches that each organise groups of like-minded people to work together to develop a collective practice. By examining these approaches this section of the literature review will address how the nature of these relationships and the way in which they meet teacher learner needs work to assist in encouraging growth and learning. With pillars of identity, trust, collaboration and contribution these socially engineered structures provide a foundation upon which teacher learners have more agency in their own learning. Furthermore, as this leads to ownership and connection with professional expectations adding to a larger picture of teacher learning that schools can reference to assist staff and students.

It is important at this stage to clearly define and compare Communities of Practice (CoPs) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). COPs are defined as groups of people whose bond is cemented by a common interest. This connection is further strengthened as they come together to learn (Wenger, 2000). This viewpoint contends that learning occurs when social interaction supports the development of the learning through three crucial elements Figure 3 below:

Figure 3. Community of Practice – theoretical construction



The Domain- The domain is an "identity defined by a shared domain" (Wenger) that can be formally sanctioned like a dungeons and dragons club or an organic social movement like a youth gang. Members value their "collective competence" and share knowledge.

The Community- The community is built by the relationships that the members form as they meet regularly and participate in regular activities. This allows for them to learn and grow together.

The Practice- This is where the interactions of the CoP become a "shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems" (Wenger). It is not just about a group of people with common interests but an interaction that develops the collective knowledge and practice of the group.

Source: Wenger (2007)

Keenan (2020) defines PLCs as organised groups of professionals with the following characteristics:

- Shared vision, values, and goals,
- Willingness to collaborate,
- Willingness to share experiences,
- Focus on outcomes or results,
- Supportive leadership structure.

They work by sharing a common vision, working towards specific goals or outcomes. DuFour (2009) argues that schools cannot simply label their groups as PLCs, but this occurs when the participants within the school conduct their practices in line with PLC concepts. This indicates that all the elements Keenan (2020) refers to such as collaboration and willingness must be present and functioning not just within the teacher group but also in sync with leadership. From reading this material it is clear that whilst multiple groups operate independently, they are all connected by common values and focus sanctioned by a majority of teachers and leaders.

Whilst the inter-connectness between the concepts of CoPs and PLCs is worthy of exploration and could warrant its own investigation, the scope of this case study is framed around the way in which relationships develop learning through social space. As such this case study is examining the nature of relationships within these social constructs. Research addressing this topic describe a very specific type of relationship that occurs between participants. That is to say that there are common elements and patterns evident within both CoPs and PLCs alike. The work of Harris, Huffman and Jones (2017) which examined the role of leadership in sustaining PLCs overtime highlights the element of trust as being crucial in PLC relationships. This work argues that trust and relationships build the basis for communal success (p.218) irrespective of support and scaffolding provided for learning. Some research has explored this further, where it has found a perceived "emotional safety" leads to confidential sharing and collective ownership (Admiraal, Lockhorst & Van Der Pol 2012, Hord 2004).

This indicates that in order for these structures to work the relationships must encourage and maintain trust between members who respectfully adhere to a code of conduct. Whether the conduct is explicit or understood and implied, there is a social form of regulation that binds and directs all participants. In other words, the way in which relationships foster growth is through supporting members who trust each other because they identify with each other. The nature of the connection is built upon safety and identity. Leading the discussion to the question, if a CoP or PLC is constructed where members do not control who is invited what happens when there may be pre-existing relationship issues? Does this mean the same level of trust and support can be achieved? This is worthy of exploration in this case study as the map of social groups is drawn.

As CoPs are celebrated for their membership buy in and participation, they tend to attract participants from various stages of development. Once the trust is established and the members feel safe they then call upon more experienced members for advice and guidance. This means that the learners are able to regulate their own learning through choices of when, where and how they will participate.

Limitations

The limitations of applying social learning models are pertinent and worthy of discussion. These particular constructs do not always speak to the "outsiders" of the

learning group, the teachers who for various reasons do not share (or share in limited ways) their own practice with colleagues. Furthermore, another factors to be considered is the operation of these groups in opposition to each other. For example, we must ask does Welldale have CoPs or PLCs that negate each other? Given that both of these types of groups have an accepted form of membership and can be both organically created or formally set up, what happens when the learning in these groups is in competition or contradicts itself? Although one could argue that this could also be seen as a positive aspect of social learning constructs. If we accept that Professional Learning can have multiple truths, then it is fair to say that the act of critically engaging in Professional discussions or learning under different sets of values or understandings can enhance group learning. This is because each teacher has to both think and act critically by examining their own pedagogy and measure it against their learning community and any other learning communities. The process of challenging Professional ideas and practices is accepted as part of the journey of being a Professional Learner. However, the extent to which these factors are limitations will be determined when the context of social learning within Welldale is established. Our data set must be examined to both look for CoPs and PLCs and critically review their relationship. Do they speak to the nature of Professional Learning?

Chapter 4: Research Design

The methodology chosen for this research project fits within an ethnographic case study model. This practitioner driven inquiry utilises a mixed-methods approach that is built upon the use of qualitative interviews, online quantitative surveys and fieldwork documents and notes. Such an approach is the most appropriate way of capturing the case of one school context. It allows the project to leverage the position of the practitioner researcher as a teacher working within the school to better depict the experiences of educators within the environmental context. By using an 'Interpretive Lens' the researcher is able to explore themes within a "bounded system" (Creswell 2007) to unearth the depth of motivations, actions and personal positions of teachers. Additionally, the nature of the core question itself compliments the structure of the investigation. It is Yin et al. (2014) who argues that inquiries focused on the "how" and "why" questions are best suited to a case study methodology which allows access to phenomena. This provides a fitting framework to house and structure a research investigation such as this one, one that is seeking to understand "how" teachers learn within their school context. This question within a collection of "how" and "why" questions will help this project paint a picture of a school to be described, analysed and understood. Specifically, this methodology chapter will outline the important structural elements of this case study including the design and methods, context of the environment, tools used to collect data, the data analysis process whilst also addressing the challenges of the teacher-researcher.

Research Design and Method

The three key research elements that encompass the design of this project are Case Study Method, Ethnographic approach and Interpretive Lens. Each of these is significant on their own whilst also important in combination and relationship to each other.

Figure 4. Research Methodology Structure

Relationship between components

Source: Author's own interpretation

The Case Study Method is a useful strategy to employ when the context of research is a phenomenon within a real-life scenario (Yin 2014, O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). Furthermore, when qualitative in nature, Case Studies can be defined as being particularistic (highly focused on one particular situation), descriptive (narrating a rich and thick description) and heuristic (highlights the understanding of meaning within the phenomena) (Merriam, 1998). These qualities allow for a detailed snapshot of a complex network of people, language and relationships within a specific environment. It is the position of this research project that a Case Study method or frame is befitting this investigation because it is focused on a specific school, a specific phenomenon and the unique essence within the confines of the case. Furthermore, this study is examining a P-12 school, an uncommon school type and the only of its type in the Catholic Sector in Victoria. The nature and style of the investigation needs to capture

and explain the uniqueness of the environment, drilling deep enough to understand important social mechanisms at work.

Whilst the Case Study was selected as the most suitable frame for this research investigation it needs a conceptual avenue to strengthen its direction. In this research project an Ethnographical approach has been employed to complement the Case Study structure and provide guidance for its aim and focus. Ethnography is understood to be an observation-based technique where researchers “listen to the conversations”, “read the documents produced by the organisation” and “ask people questions” (Gobo, 2008, p.5). With its roots in Anthropology, this approach allows for a broad depiction of the natural environment in which the “richness of the data generated” contributes to a “complete picture of the context” (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, Okely, 2006, p.68). Therefore the Ethnographical path allows enough access to the data needed to answer the main question. How can one ask “how” and “why” without walking with the natives and understanding the social structures, rules and networks in place? Only then can a researcher truly unravel the complexity of the case.

In order to engage with the Ethnographic Case Study a researcher must apply a filter or lens through which to process data. Although it must be noted that underneath the surface all researchers bring pre-determined filters and lenses based on life experiences, education and cultural perspectives, it is important to be aware and conscious of the applied layers of meaning. This research project has chosen an Interpretive Lens to use to collect, interpret and analyse data. Spindler and Spindler (2004) declare that Interpretive Ethnography requires the researcher to infer and speculate, however these ideas must be “grounded in observation and inquiry” (p. xii). As such this layer of Interpretation has enriched the overall methodological structure. Data was collected from the following sources: fieldnotes, observations, online surveys, face-to-face interviews and school policy documents. The study itself was conducted over a twenty-four months period with the practitioner researcher working on staff as a teacher at the time. All staff were invited to participate in the online survey and volunteer for the face-to-face interviews.

For final participation information see Table 7. below

Table 7. Research Participation Rate

	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	PRIMARY & SECONDARY
Online Survey No.	12	14	4
Online Survey %	34%	23%	10%
Face-to-Face Interview No.	2	1	1

This project took advantage of the value of the position held by the practitioner researcher by using the data to depict the structure of various cultures within the school. As the discovery of culture helps the ethnographer find patterns, it is the ritualistic behaviour that can define the character of the group. From this they can then examine and analyse a social map of connections and community understandings. Furthermore, this has allowed the "learning" at the centre of the investigation to be contextualised. How can we understand *how* teachers learn within a P-12 school without adequately describing the social context of the school itself? By channelling the study through a teacher within the context this research project is able to gain access to the environment in a way that could not be achieved with another research method. This point not only relates to the unique existence of all school environments, but in particular this one with an uncommon P-12 structure. Therefore, the role of the practitioner researcher as the ethnographic translator is important for the methodology. They connect the study to the outcomes, via a deep exploration of space.

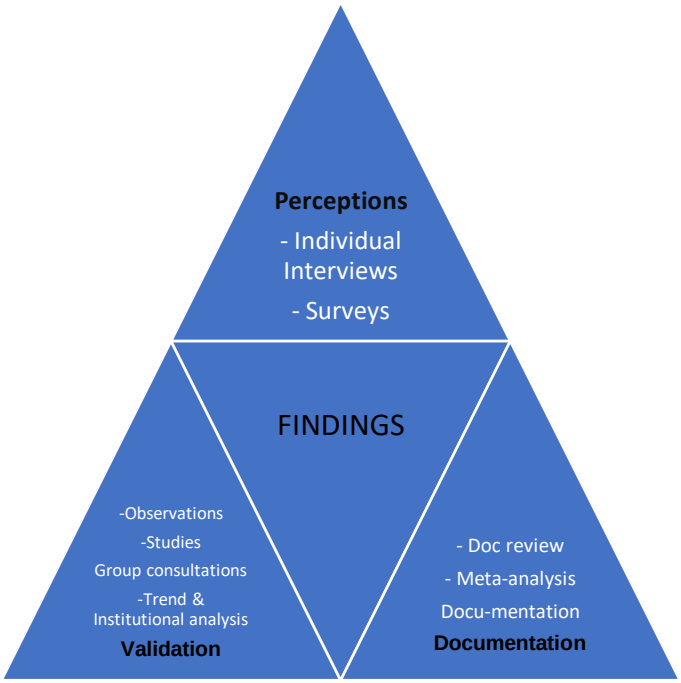
Furthermore, this also relates to the overarching question of the study. The "learning" the question is concerned with and the "school context" where it takes place are vital concepts in this investigation. They are significant on an independent level in terms of *how* and *why* they impact on each other whilst also having a strong intertwined relationship that can make viewing them as separate concepts problematic. Nonetheless the methodology is the most appropriate due to both its structure and nature.

Using the overarching Ethnographic Case Study design with an Interpretive Lens, this research project connects strongly with a theoretical framework characterised by the idea of teachers being social learners. By immersing the practitioner researcher into the case study environment, the project invites social systems into play. This in turn highlights the boundaries within the network, draws out the dialogue and works to map the cultural forces in motion. As such the project will benefit from the supportive relationship between the three concepts as they reinforce the epistemological and theoretical basis from which the research was devised. In order to extract information from the data, the techniques applied for analysis must relate to the tone of the investigation and provide answers to the original question: How do teachers learn in their professional environment? In this Ethnographic Case Study, the aim is to deconstruct the role of learning within an everyday teacher experience. As such this project will be guided by Saldana et al. (2016) who argues that Qualitative researchers look for patterns that demonstrate "habits, salience, and importance in people's daily lives", specifically he refers to the "Five R's: routines, rituals, rules, roles and relationships" (p.6). All data will be screened for the way in which it depicts the "Five R's" within the cultural setting. These labels will be applied as codes throughout the encoding of the face-to-face interviews, online surveys and in reference to the interpretation of fieldnotes and school policy documents.

To ensure the validity of the study is accurate, the triangulation of data, which is the process by which data is "corroborated from at least two other independent angles" (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013, p.30) has been used. See Figure 6 below to demonstrate a visual depiction of this concept.

Figure 5. Triangulation Pyramid

Research Pyramid



Source: Carugi, C (2014, p.71)

This research project supports its own methodology by triangulating its data to ensure reliability. This is done through the use of various sources of data that are different in nature and independent of each other. Furthermore, the use of qualitative data and quantitative data simultaneously reinforces the reliability of the Ethnographic Case Study by capitalising on the strengths of the two different types of data. Where qualitative data captures the deep experience of small groups, such as the teachers in this study, Quantitative data can verify trends and experiences. It can also offer another dimension to the data pool. This aspect of the design is important for the validity of the study for two reasons. Firstly, the use of both types of data will allow cross referencing to ensure the data is accurately collected and analysed. Secondly, the quantitative online interview was presented to subjects prior to face to face interviews to enable the researcher to use the data collected to inform the questions on the interview itself.

Tools Used to Collect Data

As mentioned previously this research project is built upon several different types of data that were collected throughout the investigation:

- Online Surveys
- Face-to-Face Semi-structured Interviews
- Ethnographic Field Notes
- School Policy Documents

The Ethnographic element in this study has been reinforced through the fieldnotes of the practitioner researcher who has referred to a detailed 24-month journal of anecdotal notes, observations and references. This journal contains data collected from attendance to staff meetings, general observations and statements of experience. Such a collection allows for a rich description of the school culture, environment and context of Welldale. It complements the process of translation through the ethnographer whilst providing a data set to compare with other sources of data.

It must be acknowledged that all data needs to be considered from an ethics and validity viewpoint. All participants who volunteer for projects such as this one brings their own personal experiences and agendas. This means that there are limitations to the extraction of data, especially in terms of the four face-to-face interviews. With a small pool of data, the information used will not inform generalisations but rather will be used in juxtaposition to other data collected.

Online quantitative surveys

The Online Survey (Appendix B) was administered via the Google Forms platform as it allowed for unlimited responses and presented in a user-friendly format. The introduction of the survey began with a demographic element that captured the gender, age, career stage, school section, and responsibilities of the teachers who participated. Within the survey itself the structure required participants to read closed statements and measure them against the Likert Scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

The survey questions were organised according to the following themes:

- Personal Learning

- Teaching Career and Commitment
- Professional Learning
- Professional Standards and Expectations
- Engagement and Support
- Professional Behaviour and Environment

The composition of each statement was written with the intention of integrating teacher identity and learner identity so that respondents would consider each idea as teachers learning on-the-job. The questions were constructed drawing from the main aspects of the AITSL standards whilst also incorporating key words and concepts from literature on the informal learning and professional development. Not only was this research tool used to pool relevant data on its own, but also to inform the semi-structured interviews in the second stage of data collection.

Face-to-Face Qualitative Interviews

Leading on from the first stage, the semi-structured qualitative interviews were originally written with four key sections:

- Teacher Background
- Me as a Learner
- Professional Learning
- Future Implications

See Appendix C for a full list of guiding questions.

However, based on the results from the Online Interviews, the guiding questions were changed. As the research project organically developed, the practitioner researcher decided that the connections between the AITSL Professional Teaching Standards (see Table 1) and the interview needed to be more explicit. Therefore, they were altered to fit within the following categories:

- Professional Knowledge
- Professional Practice
- Professional Engagement
- Future Implications

An assessment of the results indicated that the language used in the interview would benefit from being more directed towards the environment by using the framing of the

word “professional”. In turn the questions were framed to compliment this by strongly linking the identity of the teacher and the environment itself.

Demographic Profile of participants

Data from the Online Survey indicates that there are strong patterns across the school that depict a profile of the who the average Professional Learner is within the school space. On a demographic level 76.7% of online survey participants were female and 23.3% were male. Segmentally, 46.7% of participants were Primary teachers, 40% were Secondary teachers and 13.3% taught P-12. Out of these participants 96.7% worked full time. The levels of experience are recorded below in Table 8.

Table 8. Education experience levels of survey participants

Years of Experience	% of Participants
0 - 2 years	16.7 %
3 – 6 years	16.7%
7 – 10 years	23.3 %
10 + years	43.3 %

The face-to-face interviews that were conducted with four teachers support these trends from the Online Survey in regards to the profile of teacher learners. See the demographic information of participants in Table 9 below:

Table 9. Demographic Information of face-to face Interview participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Years of Experience	Primary, Secondary or P-12
Sarah	Female	3 – 6 years	Primary
Jenny	Female	3 – 6 years	P-12
Emma	Female	7 – 8 years	Primary
Martin	Male	10 + years	Secondary

Data analysis process

Analysing Online quantitative surveys

The analysis of the Online surveys worked as a cyclical process. Firstly, the data was used as a reference point prior to implementing the face-to-face interviews. Secondly, it was analysed by establishing "norm" responses and comparing these demographically between Primary, Secondary and both Primary and Secondary categories. Thirdly, the data was organised according to the "Five R's" coding system, establishing its relationship with the learning culture of the school and the profile of the average teacher-learner. A detailed description of results can be found in the "Findings" chapter.

Analysing Face-to-Face Qualitative Interviews

The analysis of the face-to-face interviews were directed through a qualitative coding process by which the practitioner researcher used NVivo software to encode all interviews according to the "Five R's" theme. The specific choice of qualitative codes used and their reasons and value are listed below in Table 10.

Table 10. Qualitative codes used in case study

TYPES OF CODES	DEFINITION OF CODE	VALUE OF CODE
Invivo Codes	The literal words/phrases from participants.	These codes capture language and behaviour in a pure and open mode.
Process Codes	These codes focus on the actions described by the language, specifically verbs.	These codes help establish routines and rituals within an environment.
Values Codes	These codes reflect the beliefs, attitudes and viewpoints of participants.	These codes relate to cultural values, identity and roles.
Evaluation Codes	These codes reflect the judgements of participants.	These codes highlight the viewpoints about specific programs, policies or responsibilities.

Source: Saldana (2016)

Practitioner – Researcher

It is important to acknowledge the complicated role that the Practitioner-Researcher has within an ethnographical case study such as this one including the potential for bias. As ethnography demands a close relationship between researcher and environment so that the researcher is immersed in their subject, it opens up the possibility that the objectivity of the study be compromised. As mentioned previously, the choice of topic for this case study came out of personal experiences and as such is driven by my own passions and perspectives. This was crystallised for me one day when I was sitting in a formal Professional Learning session, which was a lecture style event when the presenter proceeded to tell us all that talking at children for hours would not help their learning. This was in the third hour of her speaking non-stop to the audience and it occurred to me that we were considered to be 'teachers' first rather than 'learners'. She did not however consider how doing this to adults may impact on their learning. I doubt that any learning disabilities or learning style dispositions were being considered in this transaction. It is this sort of experience which has driven my passion in this area of study.

However, though the potential for bias exists, it can also be said that the intensity of relationship between researcher and environment deepens the investigation and offers a level of authenticity to the journey of the case study. As a teacher who works within Welldale College I am an insider to the teacher population. This allows me to create a "cultural portrait" that comes from describing the values and beliefs behind the behaviour and language (Hancock & Algozzine p 9, 2006). This in turn will support the 'thick description' that is the product of ethnography. The deep insight required for this sort of investigation will in turn uncover meanings that cannot be found using other research methods.

The Ethnographic Case Study method used in this research project is appropriate and well suited to the topic of investigation and the context in which it is being studied. The use of qualitative and quantitative data across face-to-face interviews, online surveys, fieldnotes and school policy documents comprises a deep set of data directed by a practitioner researcher practicing within the school environment. As such the processes for analysing data are designed to complement the nature of the discussion and unearth the culture within the environment.

Chapter 5: Data

The data collected from this Ethnographic Case Study describes who the Professional Learners are in the Welldale environment and how they view, frame and interact with their environment. This chapter has been organised according to the Five Rs framework (Saldana et al. 2016) and the key questions of inquiry (Table 11 below).

Table 11. Five Rs Framework: Key Questions of Inquiry

Five Rs Framework	Key Questions of Inquiry
Routines	How do teachers negotiate individual/school led routines to meet the needs of their Professional Learning?
Rituals	What is the function of ritual in the process of teacher Professional Learning?
Rules	How do official/unofficial rules impact on teacher Professional Learning?
Roles	What are the key roles involved in on-the-job Professional Learning?
Relationships	How do relationships foster teacher Professional Learning?

The data collected from this research project seeks to inform the common understandings of how teachers learn on-the-job. However, as this case study is P-12, specific the data is collated with respect to the teaching levels and training of teachers. Therefore, the participants within this case study are categorised in some cases according to Primary and Secondary status. A third category encompasses teachers who work across both levels, this category is labelled P-12. This allows for comparing and contrasting of data based on the context of teachers work which includes training, experience and role. For a full collection of Online survey results see Appendix D

Routines

How do teachers negotiate individual/school led routines to meet the needs of their Professional Learning?

The data collected from Welldale College describes a range of individual and school led learning routines and the relationship between these routines with the teacher learners themselves.

The image of a typical Welldale teacher emerging from data is a confident, agile learner, able to describe and analyse their own learning routines. It is significant that all respondents but one, who had a learning difficulty, were in agreement that they fully understood their own learning style and needs. Likewise, interview participants illustrated themselves using phrases like "I like learning visually and kinaesthetically", "(I am an..) inquisitive learner" and "teachers are collaborative people". Therefore, the data tells us that the majority of staff who participated in this research appear confident in understanding the processes involved in their own PL and learning style. The "Learning Style" section of the online survey can be found below in Table 12. This section presented an opportunity for teacher learners to examine their own learning methods.

Table 12. Online Survey: Section 1 – Learning Style (n=30)

1. Learning Style Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I fully understand my own learning style and needs.	43%	53%	3%	0%	0%
I am a visual learner who benefits from videos and displays.	43%	37%	16%	0%	3%
Reading professional literature assists my teaching.	43%	40%	16%	0%	0%
I do not benefit from observing experienced teachers.	0%	3%	13%	33%	50%
Team teaching experiences are valuable to my professional development.	43%	30%	27%	0%	0%

From survey responses, common personal learning routines could be established which included "team teaching" (73%), "visual" learning through videos and visual examples (80%), participating in "professional reading" (83%) and "seeking out

assistance when needed" (90%). These inclinations are consistent across the board regardless of school section. Furthermore, in terms of using routines to develop Professional Knowledge, teacher responses were self-assured. For example, "Sarah" described Professional Knowledge as "evolving" and "changing" so constantly that teachers "need to keep learning". She clarified professional learning wasn't something that was contained to universities or impacting on teachers in isolation as it relied upon the workplace to scaffold it. "Sarah" shared her perception of professional knowledge as a complex process directed by teacher learners. Another point she made was that teachers need to keep adapting: as "theories change, as the kids change, you change". Another interviewee had similar thoughts suggesting that her personal routines for learning were a "day in day out process" in which her thinking dominates across a range of pedagogical facets ("Jenny"). These responses are supported by the online survey section asking about Professional Knowledge. Questions relating to how teachers engage with curriculum, learn school programs and develop teaching skills attracted strong responses. It may suggest that teacher learners were confident in their own choices of routines to meet their own learning needs.

Despite positive responses to 'individual learning' routines which uncovered common trends, the investigation of 'school-based' routines revealed less consistent responses, indicating a more diverse reality. Data related to this theme indicated that there is a clear conflict between learning incentives driven by individual teachers and those managed by the school. According to the online survey just over half the staff agreed that their school facilitated effective professional learning teams while less than a quarter of staff responded that they received regular feedback from mentors and managers. Additionally, questions directed at school systems identified that only half of teachers agreed that they were trained in the current programs and assessment systems that were provided by their school, with some suggesting that they were not invited to participate and contribute in professional discussions and teams in their school. It shows there is the clear tension with school-led routines. Nevertheless, teacher learners responded positively to practices in school that can be described as social in nature. This was evident in teacher interviews which showed a strong emphasis on routines such as "professional conversations", "sharing resources" and "learn(ing) from each other" ("Emma", "Jenny", "Sarah"). These interview responses were consistent with fieldnotes indicating that all of these practices were observed

within the Welldale environment. Such practices included many transactions of communication whereby professional learners provided support to each other, demonstrating that the benefits were mutual and not limited to one party. They took the form of formal conversations in staff meetings, sharing programs and plans, emails requesting assistance and incidental chats throughout the day. What is interesting to note is the consistent tension between the teachers and school. Whilst teachers were confident with their own learning routines and seeking social learning opportunities there was a certain lack of satisfaction with school led practices.

The disconnection between the learning routines of the individual with those of the school as a whole possibly indicates an existing problem with school culture. Fieldwork notes indicated that whilst teachers were confident and positive in their own personal routines, they found the school led learning routines in place were out of touch with their own strengths and weaknesses. A series of professional learning meetings held mid 2016 dated 10/08/2016, 24/08/2016 and 07/09/2016 recorded strong reactions from teachers that confirm these points. These meetings were dedicated to Literacy Running Record training for the school's new Fountas and Pinnell literacy program. Staff showed dismissive behaviours during the meetings with negative body language and disheartened commentary. Some recorded phrases were:

"this is ridiculous, I know how to do this",

"why can't they just speak to the people who aren't confident"

"I have been teaching for over twenty years, I know how to write a running record. How insulting".

In this instance from teachers' perspective, the types of activities proposed were deemed inappropriate for the learners and needed to be differentiated to meet the needs of the teachers. However, the school neither addressed the complaints by staff nor altered the PL program for the year. Such experiences may indeed lead to disconnection between individual and school-led professional learning.

Another example, of these tensions were when school led routines were being constructed within social boundaries without consultation with teachers. Some evidence was found in recorded conversations and meeting notes where staff expressed concerns that the social routines such as professional learning groups, they

were expected to participate in, were held between networks of staff experiencing tension or issues. In 2017 teachers were divided into “Professional Learning Teams” based on a central pedagogical interest. At the end of the year teachers reported a “lack of trust” for not finding the teams “as good as they could be” (Fieldnote dated 02/05/2017). Furthermore, the foundation upon which this program was built was a common pedagogical subject, without differentiated content or skill levels. The complexity is added by looking at the perceptions of each school level. As can be seen in Table 13 reporting on online survey’s section – School Culture, there has been some difference in response to the statement: “My school facilitates strong teams that work towards better outcomes for students” (which was aimed at year level/subject teams as it was conducted prior to PLTs). This attracted a disagree/strongly disagree response from over a quarter of teachers. This paints a complicated network of competing values, social challenges and hidden needs.

Table 13. Online Survey: Section 6 – School Culture (n=30)

6. School Culture Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school environment encourages teachers to think critically about curriculum and pedagogy.	10%	47%	20%	17%	7%
I feel that I have many opportunities to learn new things in my school.	23%	37%	13%	23%	3%
My school facilitates strong teams that work towards better outcomes for students.	17%	3%	20%	23%	3%
I feel disconnected to the wider teaching community	0%	30%	33%	27%	10%
The school environment encourages educational excellence by promoting staff who are passionate and exceed professional expectations.	10%	37%	17%	33%	3%

The data indicates that whilst teachers preferred social learning routines and performed them for their own PL, Welldale’s support system of teacher PL showed a misunderstanding of social and cultural networks in play. Teacher were less likely to engage with school led routines when they were not consulted on content, skill or social construction.

Rituals

What is the function of ritual in the process of teacher Professional Learning?

The objective of the data collected here is to illustrate and understand the ritualistic learning, being the transformation from repetitive practice to deep understanding that may be taking place in the Welldale school; the extent to which rituals fit in PL and how they are relevant are worthy of exploration.

Data from the Welldale context indicates that rituals are diverse and dependent on the context of the learners themselves. “Jenny”, the STEM Secondary teacher, described a ritual process whereby she was challenged to improve her planning process. This occurred when a colleague read her work and criticised her for “doing what she was told to do” by planning in a conservative manner. This, she described was far from exploring and being “a good teacher”. In this experience she explained how she went back to a communal planning document with a critical approach and changed the document and subsequent practice based on what she learnt. Without the challenge from her colleague and her willingness to experiment, “Jenny” would not have changed her practice.

Another teacher, “Sarah”, tapped into ritualistic learning when describing her ideal PL:

> “It’s motivating. It’s challenging so it asks the teacher to question their current practice and what they can do to improve and it’s inspirational. It wants you to actually go into your classroom and try new ideas, try new approaches and empower you”.

Throughout her interview “Sarah” gave examples of ritualistic practices whereby she read about new methods and tried them, conferred ideas with colleagues and sought out problems to solutions.

The feedback from these interviews is that rituals are vital for PL for the way they allow Professional learners to make their own meaning.

If it is accepted that rituals support the teacher learner then how can the environment support rituals? In other words, what conditions are needed for ritualistic learning to occur within a PL context? When discussing professional knowledge, interviewee “Martin” depicted conditions upon which ritualistic learning needs to flourish declaring that “unless questioning and the deconstructing happens it [practice] is not long lasting”. His contention that ritualistic learning is defined by a significant shift in practice

has ramifications for the space in which the PL occurs. For teacher learners to feel comfortable confronting and challenging current practice they need to operate within a safe space for exploration. Spaces such as this allow for conflict, mistakes and experimentation. Another important point to mention here is that “Martin” used the interview process as a learning experience for the researcher by sharing academic articles with the interviewer at the end of the interview. He also offered to continue the conversation about PL through email and further discussions if needed. Therefore, “Martin” himself interpreted the interview as a safe space where ideas can be challenged allowing for collegial learning ritual to take place.

Fieldwork notes from school meetings dated 17/08/2016 and 02/11/2016 are prime examples of ritualistic learning. In these meetings, which took place to bring together the senior level Maths team contained various discussions where teachers shared experiences of experimental teaching and the outcomes for students. What is interesting here is not just the content of the conversation but the way in which teachers phrased the critiques of the practices such as:

“Instead of this… try this”,

“That method of teaching multiplication confuses me, I usually teach it this way…”

This confirms that ritualistic learning is present at Welldale and is supported in specific, safe spaces.

For ritualistic learning to work it requires a particular type of relationship to enable the transactions of knowledge sharing and the process of practice changing. It is worth noting that throughout his interview “Martin” referred to the teachers within Welldale as “Primaries” or “Secondaries” addressing the negativity of the dichotomy by saying “I think the habit of Primaries and Secondaries doing separate things is an obstruction”. He added that he thought this was something leadership were aware of and wanted to address. This trend of referring to the school by its two parts was common and seen as problematic in other interviews. When asked about obstacles to PL “Emma” responded with comments reflecting on the size of the staff and the complications with working with a large cohort of teachers. What is significant here is that she only referred to the “35 odd teachers” indicating she was only talking about PL in the Primary section of the school and not even including the Secondary side in her answer. This exclusion could be read as not only a confirmation of division but an

obstacle for ritualistic learning to occur across campus. Ironically, “Sarah” discussed the environment through the use of a building metaphor where “closed doors” are an obstacle for learning as people within the environment are not able or willing to learn with others.

It has been shown through the data that teachers at Welldale use ritualistic learning to develop their own PL and evolve their teaching practice. However, given that this process can be quite diverse depending on the individual and relies upon specific relationship parameters ritual is needed for PL to occur but must organically develop within a nurtured context. The Welldale environment experiences pockets of ritualistic learning but needs more consideration to be effective on a larger scale.

Rules:

How do official/unofficial rules impact on teacher Professional Learning?

The rules within Welldale College, both official and unofficial frame PL within their learning environment. These rules, driven by management and social structures represent the values of the school and speak to the cultural structures embedded in the school.

One of the most iconic symbols of regulation within Welldale is the use of the school handbook. This large document is presented to all new staff as a reference point for guidelines and administration within the school. All interviewees were asked about the school handbook and how they related to it in reference to their PL. Although it is described “very clear and structured” (“Emma”) with “important phone numbers” (“Jenny”), the teachers are critical of its application and usefulness:

> “Look to be honest, electronic documents that are 485 pages long that you are told to read in your own time don’t work” (“Martin”).
>
> “As far as I was aware [the handbook] wasn’t even updated for 2016. No, I think it had a few guidelines as to logistical things, bell times what have you, but in terms of wanting to know about what behavioural programs there are or what expectations there are of teachers, no not at all” (“Sarah”).

Furthermore, “Jenny” elaborated with her description of her ideal handbook, being in the format of a “showbag” with a mixture of administrative advice, but also prescriptive proformas to teach teachers communication tools. Responses such as these indicate

that the handbook's use as an overarching guidance tool is limited. The information needed for teachers to plan and manage their own PL is lacking due to both the content and format/presentation of the document.

Additionally, emerging systems of onsite teacher PL such as formally constructed teams and school knowledge sharing were met with mixed reactions from staff. These PLTS that have been mentioned previously were constructed and run according to certain rules. All staff were required to attend their assigned PLT and a staff roll was kept to monitor attendance. According to the "Professional Engagement" section of the online survey (see Table 14 below) over a quarter of all Primaries, Secondaries and P-12 disagree that "My school facilitates effective Professional Learning teams".

Table 14. Online Survey: Section 9 – Professional Engagement Standards (n=30)

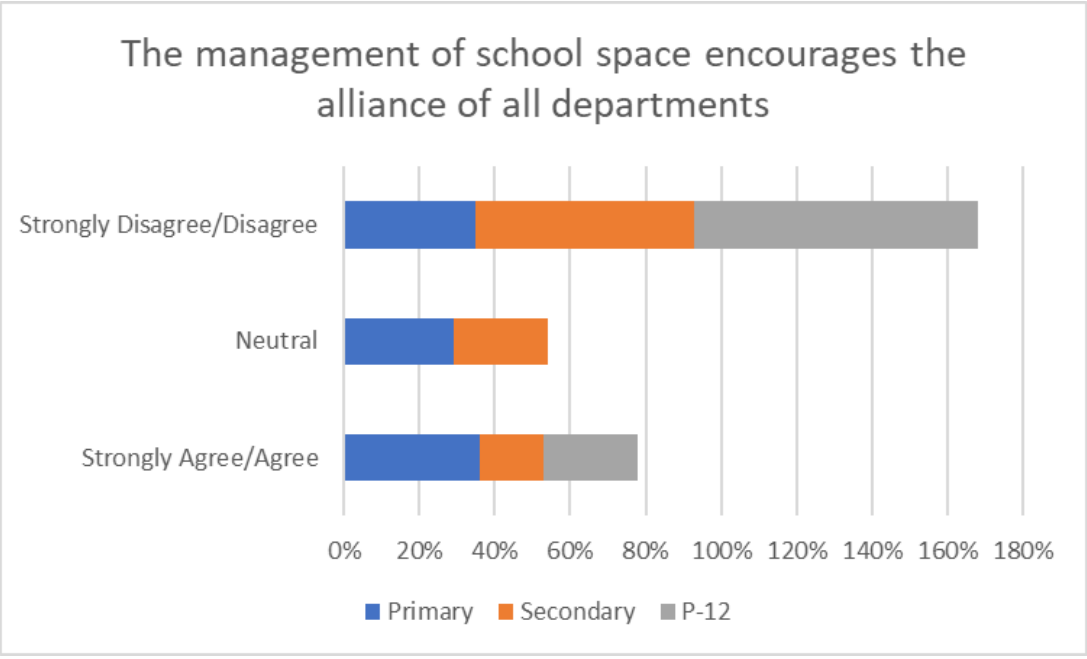
Professional Engagement Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school facilitates effective professional learning teams.	17%	37%	20%	27%	0%
I participate in professional reading beyond my school context.	37%	40%	20%	3%	0%
I feel inspired by my Professional Learning.	40%	37%	20%	3%	0%
The latest pedagogical developments are discussed and implemented across different areas of the school.	0%	37%	20%	40%	3%
I am not invited to participate and contribute in professional discussions and teams in my school.	3%	20%	17%	43%	17%

Also, when assessing the statement "The latest pedagogical developments are discussed and implemented across different areas of the school" disagree responses were recorded at just under half for Primary, and equally half for Secondary and P-12. Responses such as these indicate that rules applied to formal learning opportunities within Welldale are met with some opposition from teacher learners.

What adds complexity in this case study is that P-12 schools such as Welldale use atypical internal organisation structures that position Primary and Secondary schools as free standing schools or combine them within smaller school structures such as

Junior, Middle, Senior. Therefore, the cultural use and status of space is worthy of exploration as it is managed and used by large and diverse groups from various parts of the school. In this research project the data pertaining to the school environment as both physical and abstract space paints a divisive picture of contradictions. Questions aimed at uncovering the use of space within the school speak to the everyday cultural experience of rules. When faced with the statement "The school environment is shared fairly between departments" the responses from participants were mixed with an overall balanced response of 40% who agree and 37% who disagree. Furthermore, when evaluating the statement "The management of school space encourages the alliance of all departments" is only agreed upon by just over one quarter of staff compared to 37% who disagree. These results show a consistent division within school departments as to the opinion of "fair distribution" and use of the school environment. It must be also noted that this question attracted a strongly disagree response of 13%, a factor which is reinforced by a 50% of those who were unsatisfied with the way that school spaces were managed. Deconstructing the demographics of these responses below reveals that this division occurs across the board regardless of Primary of Secondary status. The breakdown of responses can be found below in Table 14.

Table 15. Online Survey: Section 12 – Statement 12.4 The Management of school space encourages the alliance of all departments (n=30)



This ruling and governance of space and operations is one that was also observed within the Welldale environment on a regular basis. Fieldnotes collected throughout the research demonstrated complex social-spatial relations within the Welldale environment where the competing demands of Primary and Secondary were confronted. Several recorded incidents demonstrated how separate labels and sections such as Primary and Secondary have been contentious. One incident dated 23/4/2016 described a conversation between teachers focused on the separation of the year 5 cohort into multiple buildings. Teacher X asked "why don't we (Primaries) get use of house 6? Wasn't it supposed to house the year 6s?" which was met with "it was originally designed for the year 6s but once it was built, we were kicked out and it was used for Secondaries". Another incident dated 13/03/2017 described a situation where teachers from Primary and Secondary were challenging each other as to who had more authority of the use of space. A Year 5 Cohort had booked the multiuse performing arts space for an assembly and a Secondary House were lined up outside the building. When Primary staff approached the Secondary staff to inform them of the booking, they were told that "it doesn't matter, we need to have a house assembly". Discussion followed whereby the logistics of relocating large groups of students were considered. What is culturally significant here is that Secondary staff assumed that their event held priority despite not being booked in. The power of the "we" in the conversation cannot be overstated where it demonstrates cultural regulation of prioritising Secondary over Primary. This situation may not appear to be directly related to teacher learning but is highly relevant of the spatial politics at play.

Rules within the Welldale environment whether they be official in the form of the school handbook or unofficial in terms of a social pecking order, influence the PL landscape. Teacher learners respond to this form of regulation in who they choose to learn with and which spaces they utilise. Results such as this highlight how rules within this space reflect challenges within the school.

Roles

What are the key roles involved in on-the-job Professional Learning?

As stated previously, the roles that are to be explored in this study are defined as the parts that people play as members of a social group as they participate in the facilitation of the PL process. Specifically, these are the roles which operate within an

official capacity and have a context in their learning community. The three types of learner roles that have been identified, through interviews and observations, are: individual learners, collegial learners and leading learners. These parts are interconnected and can be performed simultaneously by one individual.

The first role to be addressed is that of the individual learners, the key figure in this investigation for how they see and enact their own role as Professional Learners. As one of the emerging themes in adult education is lifelong learning, this data is framed around the idea of teachers as lifelong learners with their own vested interests, history and experiences.

From examining this data, it is clear that the teachers within Welldale have certain beliefs around their role in their own PL which are intertwined with their identity. This is further compounded by the 66% of participants who would not change teaching for a higher paying job. Furthermore, when evaluating whether or not participants would remain as teachers in 5 years' time 73% answered in favour, a factor confirmed by just under a quarter of respondents who are planning towards an administration role away from teaching. These responses indicate that the majority of participants see themselves as Professional Educators and have a vested interested in their own learning and growth.

Moreover, the discussions within interviews confirm a high level of professional responsibility as all participants conclude that their role as Professional Learners is not solely about their own growth and development but strongly linked to the outcomes of their students. For example, "Jenny" describes a Professional Teacher as "A person that respects (the students) enough to prepare the class… they are teaching to a sufficient standard that the kids deserve" while "Emma" makes a direct link between the individual learner and the PL that is needed when she says "Effective professional learning is when you get to learn something that can actually help enhance the kids learning in the classroom". This direct connection between teacher and learner is further explained in fieldnote incidents where teachers changed direction of their own learning based on the perceived needs of their students. Fieldnotes from Literacy meetings in term 2 2017 describe a situation where school direction and self-driven PL come into conflict. Whilst the Literacy leader was running meetings and training sessions on a new school wide program based on the work of Fountas and Pinnell

(2016), the teachers were covertly seeking other programs with different objectives. In recorded discussions, teachers were saying “my kids aren’t responding to that program” and “it isn’t helping in my class”. As such teachers were sharing resources and conducting conversations about alternative programs and resources instead.

Evidence focused on the role of the individual learner indicates that the perceived role of the Professional learner is to stay committed, interact critically with pedagogy and understand their own learning needs so that they may better educate the students. However, despite the strong independence in these concepts, many of the tools used by teachers relied on colleagues. This leads into the second type of role - collegial learners and what the data says about their role in the PL process.

Across all forms of data there is a strong description of who the collegial learners are and what their function is in the PL process. This data paints a picture of individual and collective social ownership of teacher PL. Respectfully, these learners perform useful functions such as modelling, discussing, sharing and counselling. “Jenny” explained how she perceived it: “I like observing other teachers. I like discussing with other teachers how they approached a particular content (area)”. These collegial learners can work outside of the area of the teacher they are supporting, or even come from a different point of experience. Similarly, “Sarah” points out:

> “I seek the counsel of more experienced people and in some respects less experienced people. Anyone that I think has knowledge to share with me, I will turn up on their doorstep. And I would knock on their door”.

This is reinforced by the words of “Emma” “I do a lot of professional knowledge conversations from people from different year levels”. Fieldwork notes describe several instances where teachers within the Welldale context sought out other teachers for specific learning needs. These ranged from content-based concerns to more methodical applications. In a recorded event dated 15/09/2016 a teacher who was about to teach Indigenous students sought out another teacher who had previously taught in an Indigenous community. She clarified cultural points, shared the content and method of her lesson and sought advice. The advisor was content to share and even followed up with the teacher after the lesson to see if her advice helped. From this information, it can be said that the profile of a collegial learner is not limited by age, experience or subject/year level. However, the choice of person sought out is

strategic and will be discussed in greater detail in the “relationships” section. Specifically, the collegial learner being described in this context is one that addresses and/or meets the needs of the individual learner. According to survey, 66% of participants agreed that they share their learning needs indicating that this is a wide spread practice. Such a quality is needed for collegial learners to thrive.

Finally, there is a category of leading learners. This is defined as the role of people who hold specific titles and are officially in charge of supporting the needs of PL within Welldale by providing structures and services. The collected evidence demonstrates there is a disconnection within the school between individual learners and leading learners. For example, “Sarah” discussed a lack of “differentiation” for onsite PL sessions and support. This is a point which has been previously raised with data related to staff commenting on in house PL sessions. The comments from these were contradictory between Primary and Secondary. Similarly, “Emma” discussed the absence of opportunities for feedback and deep practice sharing where teachers can “show evidence from their classroom so there would be more of that team-teaching element and we'd learn from each other. Instead of it just always being spoken to by a key speaker”. Table 15 below presents an insight into how teachers view the Professional Support provided within the Welldale environment.

Table 16. Online Survey: Section 10 – Professional Support (n=30)

10. Professional Support Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school thoroughly evaluates the professional capabilities of all staff.	7%	30%	17%	43%	3%
My school is not aware of my skills and weaknesses as a teaching practitioner.	7%	37%	17%	37%	3%
The administration at my school provides opportunities for me to learn from other teaching professionals in the school.	7%	27%	33%	30%	3%
I seek professional support outside of my school environment.	27%	37%	13%	13%	10%
I am not certain that the leadership teams in my school are aware of important issues and problems currently facing the staff.	20%	33%	13%	27%	7%

According to the online survey the perceptions of leading learners are quite different between the Primary Staff and the Secondary staff. Whilst nearly half (40%) of Secondary staff answered in the affirmative to a question about the school providing opportunities to learn from colleagues, only a small amount of Primary staff agreed with this idea (14%). The P-12 category experienced equal division. Similarly, when asked if the school was *not* aware of the teacher learner's skills and weaknesses more than half of Primary teachers agreed (57%) compared to a much smaller Secondary contingent (17%). Opposing perceptions of leading learners were consistent with interviews as the Secondary teachers were less critical of leading learners, whilst Primary teachers spoke more frequently and in detail about perceived misunderstanding of PL and the needs of Professional Learners. One recorded fieldwork event incapsulates this situation in a stark way. A formal PL session was held at Welldale in late 2017 that focused on "Adjustments and differentiation for students: catering to different needs". The key researcher was present at a table represented by Primary staff during the event. Throughout the day the Primary teachers expressed disappointment in their mandatory attendance due to the content being "standard knowledge every Primary teacher knows". Comments such as "I could have run this session", "I learnt this at uni" and "it's nice to have a reminder but a whole day is a waste" are indicative of the tensions at the time. Though "Martin" does discuss a change in PL model in his interview, the changes that came through in mid 2017 where teachers were allocated workshops, based on topics of their choice were not differentiated enough to meet PL needs. It is clear that the leading learners in Welldale are able to address the needs of the Secondary staff better than the Primary staff.

Overall, the key roles within Welldale context: individual learner, collegial learner and leading learner meet or miss the needs of teacher learners. Where supports and services are lacking, such as with leading learners, the evidence suggests they are not sufficiently aware of all learners needs and the perceived function of their role.

Relationships

How do relationships foster teacher PL?

In a highly social environment, where Professionals are reliant on each other, the significance of relationship cannot be overstated. The connections and bonds between teachers are not only socially valuable but also assist in the learning process.

Understanding precisely how relationships work within Welldale and what this means for PL requires an explanation of what the nature of these relationships are and how they impact on PL.

Themes of connection and relationship between self and other professionals were present and prolific in various forms of data. Statements that described cooperative practices trended strongly in the online survey. Teachers reported that they initiated conversations with colleagues about learning needs (66%), experienced sharing of professional knowledge within their teams (66%) and sensed a connection to other teachers with desired skill sets (46%). However, within this theme there were some responses that indicated division and/or isolation. It is worth noting that the statement "The school vision is shared between leaders and teachers" attracted a positive reaction from half of the participants. Divergence was detected when teachers felt they were excluded from professional discussions (23%) and denied opportunities from leader learners to work with other professional teachers (33%). These results are also evident in field work journal notes taken in meetings on several occasions where teachers negotiated the conditions upon which they regulate their own learning. For example, Fieldwork Journal entry dated 16th March 2016 in a Year 3 level planning meeting a team of teachers evaluated the items on the agenda and made changes accordingly. Specifically, they identified their own knowledge base of spelling strategies for the year level as lacking. This particular item had been set by a coordinator. However, the teachers altered the agenda of the meeting and set tasks as a group to work towards other areas in need of attention such as reading programs. Another example of learning process is found in Fieldwork Journals from 2017 commenting on the internal Welldale PL program. Teachers enrolled in this program over time found it out of touch with their learning needs. Comments such as "I've done this before", "This does not relate to my classroom practice" and "I could run this course" all indicate derision between some participants and the set courses. However, it must be noted that within these conversations deep insights were shared and teachers compared strategies, outcomes and programs. It highlights two important factors relating to the learning process in this environment. Firstly, the relationship between leading learners and individual learners is problematic. This has been particularly evident in the Primary section of the school and it is interfering with the way in which teachers respond to PL supports. Secondly, the environment is not

feeding back the rich aspects of discussions and findings to the leading learners of these PL supports. In other words, professional learners who operate individually and collegially experience PL in isolation with important critical discussions and PL practices deliberately kept underground.

So, what does this say about the nature of these relationships? Data indicates that there is a lack of consistency when it comes to the characteristics of relationships in this space and it is complicating the way in which professional learners' function. "Martin's interview offered some insight into these problems when he discussed a lack of trust between management and teachers, specifically sighting "a ten year history of people sitting in judgement over other people". This was in the context of teachers sharing and learning within a PL program. Likewise, "Sarah" reflected on problems between the vision and direction of management and the understanding on the ground with teachers when she commented "at the moment I don't think that there is a solid or driving philosophy or vision. And I think that that is reflected in the quite sporadic pieces of communication that are sent to us." An examination of section 11 of the Online survey "Professional Behaviour" (Table 16) unearths some inconsistencies between the expectations that individual learners have on themselves and those they have for leading learners.

Table 17. Online Survey: Section 11 – Professional Behaviour (n=30)

11. Professional Behaviour Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school has high expectations of effective classroom practice.	17%	47%	23%	13%	0%
I consider myself to be a professional educator.	53%	47%	0%	0%	0%
My school treats its teachers as professional educators	27%	43%	20%	10%	0%
The latest pedagogical developments are discussed and implemented across different areas of the school.	7%	37%	23%	27%	7%
I am rarely invited to participate in educational projects that will develop my skills and career.	3%	27%	40%	20%	10%

The above responses show that whilst 70% of teachers think that the school treats them like professional educators there are different perceptions about how the school

facilitates professional behaviour. Just under a third of teachers felt excluded from educational projects that would develop their career (30%) with a significant number of neutral responses (40%). Under half of all staff believed that the latest pedagogical developments were implemented across the school (43%) with strong negative responses from the Primary teachers with their share being 21% disagree and 14% strongly disagree. Elements of contention that were present indicate that the relationship between teacher leaders' initiatives and teacher learners is fractured in terms of educational learning values. This is particularly evident with the Primary teacher data.

To review, the data pertaining to the relationships in place that impact on teacher PL highlight a complex reality. A perceived lack of trust paired with a misunderstanding of the learning needs of teachers indicates that there are issues with connections within the space. In order for the PL to be more consistent and cooperative the nature of relationships needed is one where individuals are open about their needs, visions and understandings. As such the systems and programs used to support teacher PL must be cognisant of these factors.

From collected data in this case study a picture can be depicted of the teacher learner, their school and the process of learning within the environment. The data shows us that teacher learners in this context are invested in working in the education long term and define themselves as professionals through their PL actions. Three key roles within Welldale context were identified: individual learner, collegial learner and leading learner. Where supports and services are lacking, such as with leading learners, the evidence suggests they are not sufficiently aware of all learners needs and the perceived function of their role. The Welldale school context has many complex relationships, especially between Primary teaching staff and leading learners. This demonstrates stark inconsistencies between both Primary and Secondary teacher experiences within the same school. As such the learning that takes place within this environment is both in line and simultaneously in opposition to the frameworks provided by the school. Whilst teacher knowledge increases within the environment much of this learning is out of sync with school led initiatives and plans.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Through the analytical lens of Five Rs: routines, rituals, rules, roles and relationships, and by exploring the context of on-the-job learning, this research project has Illustrated and analysed how teachers control and manage their own learning. Through socially embedded supports, it has been shown that teachers use the people, resources and structures available to them to shape to design what they learn, how they learn and who they learn with whilst on-the-job.

Routines

How do teachers negotiate individual/school led routines to meet the needs of their Professional Learning?

Educational research suggests that three main routines are present and relevant in on-the-job learning, including: professional dialogue, informal coaching/mentoring and reflective practices. These findings paid attention to how these were used and it established that teachers use these practices to meet their own individual needs as these particular practices allow teachers flexibility, as learners use them to set their own goals and prioritise information. Data from Welldale College has confirmed that these routines are evident within the school with each routine addressing learning requirements in a way that empowers teacher learners.

It is known that professional dialogue is not only recognised a significant tool which works as an alternative form of professional learning (Grey, 2011) but one that is intricately linked to professional identity (Vloet & Swet 2010). According to academic literature, professional dialogue works to both provide insight into teaching practices and perspectives whilst challenging the internal thinking and methods of the practitioner (James 2006, Lloyd, Skyring & Nykvist, 2015). However, it must also be acknowledged that its application within schools is limited due to time constraints, insufficient structures and demands from within the environment (Horn & Little, 2010; Simoncini, Lasen & Rocco 2014). This is mirrored in the Welldale context. Whilst there was strong evidence for the occurrence of professional dialogue across online surveys, face-to-face interviews and fieldnotes and its benefits for individual learners, its function within the school is more complex. Data focused on individual teacher routines showed multiple layers of professional dialogue as social practices were rated highly amongst staff. Recorded conversations and incidents showed teachers

engaging in dialogue to solve problems, develop curriculum knowledge and hone skills. This was even explicitly captured in the online survey with questions that targeting aspects of collaboration. Teachers articulated how initiating professional dialogue helps them attend to needs and issues in interviews. Though the needs and issues varied depending on the teacher, it is clear that teacher learners in this context frame conversations to assist them in professional capacities. Nonetheless, data focused on school structures and supports that aim to facilitate professional dialogue indicate that teacher-learners do not consistently find these to be helpful. The Welldale context of “Primaries” and “Secondaries” revealed divided tribes where teachers conversed closely with trusted colleagues from the same area of the school as them. This interconnection between dialogue and identity limited the capacity for staff to optimise sharing and collaborating opportunities which is an important factor in understanding the area of informal learning on-the-job. Such a powerful discovery highlights layers that need to be considered when planning and analysing professional learning contexts.

The rise of informal mentoring/coaching as an area of significance is worthy of exploration. Emerging literature has compared formal and informal types of mentoring with an emphasis on the value that an unofficial connections and relationships can bring to professional learning. These are the pairings of teachers who have organically been drawn to each other for support. Juxtaposing these academic conversations with the Welldale data reveals both correlations and gaps. One of the strong correlations can be found in the discovery that teachers bond with compatible colleagues (Coburn, 2001) approaching these informal mentors when they are in need of advice and guidance (Du & Wang 2017). In parallel, the Welldale interviews reveal 34 recorded references to informal mentors with corresponding needs such as “help with programs”, “unsure of things” and “if I have questions”. Literature recommends that schools utilise both formal and informal types of mentorship providing a more “coherent system of support” (Desimone, 2014, p 104).

However, as a significant portion of the literature available is concerned with novice teachers it must be asked if the overall data pool is deep enough to adequately address teachers of all ability levels. Fieldnotes have identified a range of informal mentorships, with many teacher learners falling outside of this novice or graduate category. It is clear that this type of routine (or relationship) is pertinent at Welldale.

There is a general consensus that reflection brings together observations, classroom experiences and academic knowledge in an ongoing analytical process where teacher learners evaluate aspects of professional practice (Allen, 2018). Evidence of this type of routine is found in the Welldale case study. The online survey data showed a level of self-conscious confidence with 96.66% answering positively that teachers in the school know and understand how they learn. This is a process that is established through various forms of reflection. It also alluded to in the common practices that teachers engage in such as “professional conversations”, “sharing resources” and “learn(ing) from each other” all of which require reflective dialogue. Although most of the recorded fieldnotes captured instances of teachers reflecting together such as in planning sessions, on the go conversations and within team meetings, the interviews highlighted the limitations of reflections occurring within the space. Whilst all teachers who were interviewed discussed aspects of reflection in their practice, only one, “Martin” referred to official school structures in place to facilitate collegial reflection. It is worth noting that where the literature discusses Issues with implementing official systems of reflection within school there are social parameters to be considered (Allen, 2018, Farrell & Kennedy 2019, Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles & Lopez-Torres 2003) highlight reflection as a metacognitive component and a social practice-based routine. They argue that reflection cannot be considered as a routine or practice on its own but within its cultural context. This relates directly to the Welldale context as the school operates with its Primary and Secondary silos where learning routines are rarely observed crossing the barrier between.

Rituals

What is the function of ritual in the process of teacher Professional Learning?

The function of ritualistic learning (being the transformation from repetitive practice to deep understanding) in the process of teacher PL is explained as an opportunity for individual exploratory process (Lavie et al. 2019). As the nature of ritual is described as discursive relying upon routines such as professional dialogue it also therefore relates to routines and relationships. However, for the purposes of clarity this section will address how ritual itself functions within the Welldale context referring to connections when needed.

Data from this case study revealed pockets of ritualistic learning, especially through the interviews where teachers shared stories about risk taking and experimentation. In these instances, teachers discussed ritual as a regular tool or process that they use to regulate their own learning. However, a review of fieldwork notes demonstrates that unless directly asked about ritualistic learning, teachers were not very forthcoming in social situations. These may be related to issues of trust, (discussed in greater detail in the relationships section) or other factors such as time and personal attitude towards this type of process.

It appears that although ritualistic learning occurs in Welldale, its presence is somewhat subversive. There are two factors that have bearing on this particular point. Firstly, the school itself through its PLT models, sporadic mentoring and general PL structures does not discuss learning in a "ritualistic" way. Fieldnotes from meetings with reference to school goals and PL intentions paint a blacker and whiter picture. The language used is similar to competency-based ideals, being that you either obtain skills and knowledge or you do not. The journey from unknown through exploration to understanding is not referenced. The reasons for this are not clear and cannot be speculated on. This second point applies only to the Primary side of the school. Primary teachers within Welldale have operated under a traditional model of teaching and learning where their team planning is limited and most of their planning relates to their own classes. In other words, opportunities to explore parallel practice and or converse with someone about the same pedagogy, activity or concept are limited by time and class programs.

Rules

How do official/unofficial rules impact on teacher Professional Learning?

Discussions about external and internal rules have a loose connection to professional learning within schools but offer some insights that apply to the larger themes of concern. In terms of conceptualising "rules" this research project looked specifically at the VIT (regulatory authority), AITSL (the policy institute), the school handbook and the rules and guidelines to occupying and operating within specific school spaces. Just as the literature contends that the official government structures that regulate a top down approach it can be argues that Welldale uses a top down approach to regulate staff and students. It is worth noting that the reaction to the school handbook can be

seen as in indication of how staff see the school authority or at least how they view the representation of school authority. This reaction was one of partial compliance which came through strongly in the interviews. Out of the four participants only one teacher referred to the handbook in a positive way. The other participants recognised issues with its roll out in the school such as the size of the document, the tone of its message or the structure of its contents.

On another level the management of space within school proved to be a contentious topic across the board. With space being a physical indication of powerful relationships and cultural rules, it is clear that two specific silos exist in the Welldale environment. This is evident in the way that interviewees used the terms “primaries” and “secondaries”. The labels relate not only to those who work with specific year levels, but work within silos with specific cultural groups. Furthermore, due to the social nature of professional learning it is not surprising that informal collaborative learning is occurring in pockets within the silos. In other words, the languages, values and connections maintaining these silos are reinforced by the rules and structures in place.

Roles

What are the key roles involved in on-the-job Professional Learning?

Out of the academic discussions on the topic of roles of professional learners, two main contributions speak to the types of inquiry this study is interested in discovering. The work of Lin, Lee and Riordan (2018) on the four specific types of roles and Vanblaere and Devos (2016) exploration of how teacher leadership relationships impact on PL roles are both relevant and relatable to this case study.

Lin, Lee and Riordan (2018) uncovered four role types based on the following behaviours: brokering, mediating, participative and forging. Analysis of the learning behaviours within Welldale demonstrates evidence of these roles. However, the frequency of these roles and the balance of types cannot be seen equally across both Primary and Secondary. Data from the Primary side of the school indicated that many teachers took on the forging role (by creating mutual learning opportunities with those who they trusted and relied upon) and the participative role by embedding school wide initiatives into their practice. On the other hand, there were less people taking on the mediating role (called upon experts) and brokering role (connecting with teachers outside their circle). Evidence suggests that trust issues within the environment

compromise these types of roles. Though fieldnotes show teachers referring to each other for subsets of expert knowledge, individuals refrained from labelling and being labelled experts. When it came to school driven practices where staff were held up and promoted internally as experts, these people were mostly Secondary teachers with specific subject training instead of Primary teachers with generalised pedagogical knowledge and expertise. Contrasting to this is the type of roles on the Secondary side of the school which saw a more even spread of brokering, mediating, participative and forging. However, it is worth noting that this particular part of the school experienced less trust issues and complex political issues.

This leads to Vanblaere and Devos (2016) whose work determined that leaders with a combination of instructional and transformation styles facilitate better participation from their teachers in professional learning experiences. This they argue can be achieved by leaders working closely with teachers and understanding their classroom practice. Although there is evidence of leaders with various styles from Welldale, the socio-political landscape revealed a deep lack of trust between Primary teachers and leadership. Therefore, the opportunity for these two groups of people to work together is not quite there yet. Though in the past there have been official mentor type relationships, these were altered to make way for the new PLT structure. Therefore, comparing the data to this research indicates that roles impact on PL with how they position individuals in relation to colleagues. That is to say, roles are a foundation for the relationships that occur within the space and through actions they support and/or hinder professional learning.

Relationships

How do relationships foster teacher PL?

Literature contends that teachers use relationships within the school space to negotiate their own needs. They do this by initiating the choice of who joins them and how they participate in the development of their PL. Data from the Welldale environment is consistent with these patterns of behaviour.

Where literature discussed teachers participating in CoPs and PLCs it emphasised the levels of trust and collegiality needed for fruitful relationships to occur. Teachers within these constructs relied upon like-minded colleagues who they built a connection with, be it during the community experience or prior to it in another context. Therefore, the

nature of relationship needed for shared PL experiences is based on social credibility. Those who do not fit into this are excluded. However, in a complex environment such as Welldale the sub cultural community landscape is a network of interrelated CoPs and PLCs where the boundaries are not clear. This in itself speaks to the organic nature of the network, where teachers are building relationships and connections where they are needed. These relationships are providing teachers with opportunities to share experiences and communicate their needs within a safe space. However, within this complex network of Welldale, there are competing communities. As discussed earlier the Primary and Secondary staff speak different languages, operate separately and compete for space. This phenomenon is under explored in literature and research.

It is worth noting that relationships are not a standalone concept in this theoretical framework. The evaluation of literature and the collection of data have emphasised how wholistic the role of relationships is in relation to teacher professional learning. Without stable relationships learners cannot enter a CoP or PLC ready to share, trust and relate. Therefore, this impacts on how teacher-learners receive and process rules, develop their routines and rituals and define their own roles. An ideal community learning structure is built on relationships stable enough to naturally support the development of knowledge and skills.

Given the complications in the Welldale context: the political history, high staff turnover and consistent divisions among staff relationships are a central problem for teacher learners. With a substantial portion of literature emphasising the importance of positive relationships and their value in social learning it is not surprising that online data, interviews and fieldnotes are layered with social conflict. The extent to which Welldale does facilitate trusted relationships is complicated. Various staff on the Secondary side of the school were observed more frequently engaging in learning communities. Nonetheless the Secondary school structure does have learning community elements built into subject teams. Overall, the political nature of the space has compromised its ability to foster large scale social learning networks that see teachers work with colleagues beyond their year level/subject/area.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research project has explicitly explored how the school workplace environment shapes, supports and structures the informal learning of the teacher. By unearthing the complex social elements within a school environment this case study has examined how the relationship between the environment of learning and the teacher learner operating within this environment impacts on the learning that takes place.

It is clear through the evidence that teacher learners within the Welldale context apply **routines** and **rituals** in direct response to their own needs. Whilst individual **routines** are social in nature and arranged within specific social conditions (as defined by the teacher learner), **rituals** are an extension of this process whereby the teacher learner leverages their own skills and knowledge with that of trusted colleagues. Evidence suggests that Welldale teacher learners not only pick and choose their own **routines** but also the level of engagement. A lack of positive engagement with school led **routines** stem from social and political conflicts within the culture of the school. This factor should be considered in direct correlation with the function of **ritual** in the on-the-job learning process. As data from Welldale demonstrated that teacher learners use **ritual** to both motivate and challenge themselves, they do this from within a personalised social construct of their own making. In other words, **ritual** takes place within a trusted group of peers. As **ritual** allows teacher learners to question and deconstruct their own practice, it does so in specific hidden areas. Therefore, professional learning benefits individual teacher learners, their students and trusted colleagues. However, this learning is not out in the open for others to benefit from, it remains concealed to the wider teaching community where it may benefits others.

In terms of the **rules** of professional learning and the **roles** of individuals within the Welldale context, this case study found that structures of governance are disconnected from teacher learners and their needs. Though the official **rules** pertaining to professional learning are clear on a big picture level, the Welldale expectations for teacher professional learning within the school are unclear and somewhat absent. However, the unofficial cultural **rules** are very clear as they dominate the way that space is managed. This impacts on social relations, which in turn impacts on teacher learning. Therefore, unspoken divisions within the school have a flow on effect to the **roles** of individuals creating an unhelpful cycle. As cultural **rules**

define the way in which teachers view each other, cultural divisions restrict opportunities for widespread and open collaboration. Without intention, the **roles** of leading leaders perpetuate the issues by not addressing them directly and as such teacher learners continue to build social learning experiences with a select group of colleagues within their own trusted circle.

Underpinning **routines**, **rituals**, **rules** and **roles** is the most significant element to be addressed – **relationships**. This study has found that **relationships** within the Welldale context are complex and fraught with conflict. Whilst productive professional relationships exist within the school and function to support the professional learning of teacher learners, very specific divisions limit learning opportunities. These productive pockets of professional learning continue to exist without interaction, sometimes in opposition and sometimes unaware of each other. As such, division will continue to occur unless two specific issues are addressed, a lack of trust within staffing and a disconnection between leading learners and the needs of teacher learners.

The disjoined cultural landscape of Welldale illuminates the importance of understanding environmental conditions and the impact they have on-the-job teacher PL. Whilst social conflicts and political concerns are normal within an organisation, the level of distrust and division within Welldale has shown to be unconducive to the progress of the wider teacher learning community.

Implications

The results of this case study have implications for the way in which on-the-job professional learning practices are addressed and managed to facilitate on-the-job learning for teachers. In particular, three specific areas have been recognised for their significant implications: teacher learner needs, internal social divisions and balancing competing learning designs.

Teacher Learner Needs

Whilst the data from this study indicates that teacher learners show initiative and direct resources to meet their own needs, it also shows that gaps exist between what schools think teachers need and what the teacher learners think they need. Many of the self-directed practices such as routines and rituals set up by teachers were in response to

their perceptions of their own individual professional requirements. These were specifically related to the knowledge and skills of the practitioner and their class load and students. This sits in line with literature that deems personalised practices as the most valuable for teachers. Systems that frame and support PL within the most school environments operate independent of teacher needs because they are not aware of them. Often, these are devoid of feedback components such as regular pre-testing; skill stocktake or survey tools to determine how systems of PL can be tailored to meet teacher learners needs. A lack of differentiation in internal PL combined with collegial learning programs that do not take social divisions into account have led to teacher needs being unaccounted for, misunderstood and somewhat ignored.

Internal Social Divisions

Evidence suggests that the multi-layered levels of internal social division found within Welldale have repercussions for the on-the-job learning of teacher learners. This implies that when teachers are learning within a network of distrust, they not only strategically choose who they learn with and from but also strategically choose who they wish to exclude from their learning communities. This applies to both formal social learning and informal social learning. Therefore, unaddressed social conditions such as divisions between groups of teachers and those between leader learners and teacher learners create obstacles for learning. In the long term this could have unwanted consequences for the organisation's growth as a whole.

Competing Learning Plans

Analysis of data from this case study shows an internal competition between different visions for the PL of teacher learners. Whilst Welldale follows its overarching school improvement plan and direction from both the Catholic Education Melbourne office and Victorian Government, teacher learners within the space have their own PL plans and designs. The balance between individual teachers PL and the PL demands of the space can be described as passively hostile. Both exist without an open connection, competing for resources, people and time. This has implications for the wider industry. How can policy bring these two learning plans together? How can we manage the learning programs of schools in a way that complements the individual needs and plans of teacher learners?

Recommendations

From these three points a set of recommendations are presented that relate to the conditions to support the on-the-job learning of teachers. These relate both to the case study environment of Welldale itself and other schools.

Distrust and division must be formally addressed: One of the most powerful aspects of the distrust and division uncovered in this case study was its ability to hide and yet be in full view at the same time. Welldale's decision to ignore staff and department disjunction exacerbated the problem as the socio-political forces influencing the culture of the school continued to have an impact. This is particularly evident in the "Primary" and "Secondary" divide but is also evident across the board in general staff relations. Where trust is lacking, people are less likely to genuinely engage with others.

It is recommended that Welldale (and other schools experiencing this predicament) acknowledge cultural issues and reach out to teachers to assist bridging gaps in between staff and sections of the school. This will not only assist with creating a more inclusive professional learning community but also has the potential to help schools, (in particular P-12 schools) utilise a P-12 continuum of learning (CEP, 2007). By discussing the issue directly and allowing teachers the chance to give their own input the organisation may have a better chance to move forward. P-12 schools have a unique opportunity to combine the expertise of Primary generalists with strengths in relationships, differentiation and pedagogy with Secondary subject experts with depth of understanding in their own field.

Trust needs to be encouraged and supported: In order for a school to fully address distrust and division, it needs to create conditions whereby staff have strong relationships with each other and leading learners. In this case study several factors have been attributed to the lack of trust including insufficient communication, a culture of prioritising certain sections of the school and the absence of transparency with policy decisions. As such, it is suggested that Welldale set up a working committee to address issues reported by staff and use staff input to put strategies in place that can increase trust and work towards changing the workplace culture.

Teacher Learner agency should be encouraged: Although there is evidence in this case study and in many other research sources that teacher learners are resourceful and goal-orientated, the way in which schools support teacher agency is worthy of discussion. In the case of Welldale on-the-job learning was a large part of how teacher learners developed themselves as teachers and accumulated skills and knowledge. However, due to pockets of learning existing in isolation and the lack of connection between school and teacher learning plans, the larger picture of learning was unchartered by the school. Therefore, it is recommended that examples of on-the-job teacher agency are encouraged and supported with time and resources. Teacher learners who own their learning journey are more likely to succeed in their goals and meet the AITSL professional standards. Accordingly, schools would benefit from taking examples of teacher learner best practice from their own schools, which not only promotes the skills and knowledge gained from the content but also facilitates social practice, a highly important element of on-the-job learning.

The need for a clear on-the-job PL strategy: As the majority of literature on on-the-job learning is emphasising attention towards informal types of learning, the policy and practice need to recognise this type of learning with more seriousness. This case study advocates for an explicit on-the-job PL strategy that values, tracks and supports the development of teacher learners. Specifically, this policy needs to define on-the-job learning and integrate it into the whole staff development strategy. Welldale College is a good example of a school in transition as it attempts to address different modes of teacher learning through formal mentorship and PD groups. However, it must be said that the value of unofficial and organically developed on-the-job learning provides important quality learning experiences for teacher learners. Therefore, it is worth acknowledging this type of learning in specific school policies where teacher led practices can be assimilated into the school's learning discourse.

PL supports and programs require feedback tools built in: The idea and value of feedback has been widely accepted as an important tool in education for some time. However, its use in school PL programs (pedagogy) is not on par with the its common application in the classroom (andragogy). The Welldale example shows that when

schools present in house PL sessions, they do not often survey teachers before hand in a way that allows for differentiation. In fact, this was specifically mentioned in the data. This is an opportunity for schools to use PL more strategically. Therefore, it is advised that feedback tools to be applied to whole school PL strategy and sessions in conjunction with an analysis that allows teachers to work at their specific point of need. Interventions such as this ensure that teacher learners are able to focus on where they need to be and can be achieved with survey tools, sophisticated pre-assessment tasks and local knowledge of teacher ability and experience.

Limitations

It is worth mentioning that case studies such as this one come with their own limitations. Qualitative research requires deep participation from the Primary researcher, who in this study worked within the school at the time of the project. It must be said that conducting research within a school whilst being employed raises potential challenges. Whilst researchers in any environment bring bias and personal experience, this context also comes with existing social connections and relationships. However, at the same time it can be said that when an ethnographic case study requires a researcher who is able to access the “every day” understanding, a teacher working within this environment is a suitable perspective to capture the community, the languages and experiences. Furthermore, whilst this case study offers insight, it only looks at one specific example of a school. Thus, these considerations highlight the nature of ethnography and phenomenology.

Agenda for Further Research

As the main focus of this study has been understanding the conditions upon which on-the-job teacher PL operates, it is recommended that further research would add value to this discussion. Specifically, the research needed falls into the following main areas:

- How can school structures better support on-the-job learning of teachers?
- Do we know enough about our P-12 schools?
- Why are trust issues occurring in our schools? Is this limited to individual cases or an industry wide problem?
- How do leading learners view PL obstacles?

By applying these questions to other schools, we can compare the Welldale context to other examples in the industry.

Whilst the role of schools in their support of the on-the-job learning of teachers is understated in current literature, it is a growing concern. What is discussed in conversation is the value that teacher learning gains when it is directed (at least in part) by the teacher themselves, meets their needs and allowing them to access a safe space to be challenged. The aim of this thesis has been to use one P-12 school as an example to deconstruct for its environmental relationship with on-the-job learning. As such, this investigation has discovered that school contexts play a complex role in facilitating the professional learning of teaching staff and meeting or not meeting the needs of their teacher learners.

The relationship between school space, leading learners and the individual teacher learner is a complicated exchange that needs to acknowledge and confront its own challenges and limitations. A case study such as this, even with its specific ethnographic context calls us to reconsider the significance of the school workplace in its ability to support and nurture on-the-job teacher professional learning. As the sector increases its focus on the accountability of teachers, it needs to also consider the role and accountability of school environments and their cultures on a ground level. This is an important aspect of a much larger picture that may assist in supporting teachers and leveraging their knowledge and skills for better outcomes for students.

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AITSL Strategic Plan 2019–2022: Overview

AITSL's strategic plan is based on its Guiding Principles and structured around clear Focus Areas, Actions and Goals.

Vision

Australia has a high-quality education system in which teachers and leaders have the greatest impact on the educational growth and achievement of every learner.

Mission

Promoting excellence so that teachers and leaders have the maximum impact on learning in all Australian schools and early childhood settings.

Guiding principles

Our Guiding Principles describe how we go about our work and what values we serve in its conduct.

- Every child experiences a quality education.
- Graduate teachers are well-prepared to teach when they enter the profession.
- Improving professional practice is central to maximising impact on learners.
- Leadership is a team effort at all levels.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education needs are understood, respected and supported in all actions.
- Evidence and knowledge drive our decisions and we evaluate and learn as we progress.

Focus Areas	Actions	Goals
Placing impact of initial teacher education, teaching and leadership at the centre of our work Building, enhancing and sustaining effective teaching and leadership at every level Advocating for quality and rigour in the design and implementation of national policies, tools and resources Supporting the professional education community to make evidence-based decisions Affirming the status of the profession	1. Promote and support implementation of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* in partnership with jurisdictions to increase their impact 2. Strengthen leadership engagement, broaden participation in leadership and enhance the capability of aspiring and emerging leaders 3. Consult with the Indigenous community and stakeholders to identify services to benefit Indigenous teachers and teachers of Indigenous students and studies 4. Play a key role in national initiatives to support quality teaching and leadership 5. Promote Australian Curriculum-mapped formative and diagnostic tools to better enable teachers and leaders to understand more clearly their impact and support individual learner progress 6. Strengthen the evidence base about the teaching profession, sponsor research and support the use of evidence in decision making and professional practice 7. Drive and support improvement of excellent initial teacher education (TEMAG) 8. Develop and implement a strategy to affirm the status of the teaching profession and seek to enhance teacher professionalism through all projects and initiatives 9. Provide accurate and efficient skills assessments for teacher migration to Australia 10. Strengthen collaboration and cooperation with stakeholders and all educators 11. Use new technologies to enhance and strengthen AITSL's capacity and capabilities 12. Consolidate and strengthen our resource base and use resources efficiently to maximise our impact	Strengthened capability and a shared commitment to professional growth Use of evidence to inform practice and improve learner outcomes A valued profession

Appendix B – Online Survey

This online survey consisted of 60 statements to consider across 12 sections. Each statement required a response using the Likert Scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

Section 1 - Learning Style Statements

I fully understand my own learning style and needs.
I am a visual learner who benefits from videos and displays.
Reading professional literature assists my teaching.
I do not benefit from observing experienced teachers.
Team teaching experiences are valuable to my professional development.

Section 2 - Learning Conditions Statements

Bright and noisy environments help me learn.
I have a learning disability and/or impairment that impacts on my learning.
Teacher learning spaces around the school are designed to compliment my learning.
I set regular goals for new skills and knowledge.
My colleagues and I discuss our learning needs.

Section 3 - Vocational Identity Statements

I always wanted to be a teacher.
Teaching was not my first choice.
When I compare my career to friends and family I am content with my position.
The work that teachers do is valuable.
I market myself as an educator on social media such as Linked In etc.

Section 4 - Future Plans Statements

If I could get a higher paying job I would leave teaching.
Teaching provides many personal rewards
When I think ahead five years I anticipate that I will still be working as a teacher.
I am not interested in working in the classroom but pursuing a management position in Education administration.
My job provides me with professional stimulation and growth.

Section 5 - School Culture Statements

My school environment encourages teachers to think critically about curriculum and pedagogy.
I feel that I have many opportunities to learn new things in my school.
My school facilitates strong teams that work towards better outcomes for students.
I feel disconnected to the wider teaching community
The school environment encourages educational excellence by promoting staff who are passionate and exceed professional expectations.

Section 6 - School Culture Statements

I receive regular feedback from mentors and managers
My colleagues are not aware of my strengths as a teacher
The administration at my school have provided opportunities for me to seek out and participate in professional development for my areas of concern.
I have participated in mentor programs such as taking on student teachers and

supporting graduate teachers etc
I feel connected to other teachers at my school who have skills I would like to develop.

Section 7 - Professional Knowledge Statements
I thoroughly understand AusVELS and the Australian National Curriculum.
My team shares professional knowledge through conversations, online platforms and digital storing systems.
I have basic teaching knowledge that supports my teaching without any need for development.
I use creative and critical thinking language to improve the learning of my students.
I am well trained in the current programs and assessment systems that are provided by my school.

Section 8 - Professional Knowledge Statements
I feel that I am improving each year.
I seek out education in areas that I need assistance in to develop myself as a teacher.
Guidelines of acceptable professional behaviour are unclear and inconsistent at my school.
I feel comfortable in seeking out advice of leaders when unsure of professional expectations.
The school assists and supports teachers in their journey to meet AITSL standards.

Section 9 - Professional Engagement Statements
My school facilitates effective professional learning teams.
I participate in professional reading beyond my school context.
I feel inspired by my Professional Learning.
The latest pedagogical developments are discussed and implemented across different areas of the school.
I am not invited to participate and contribute in professional discussions and teams in my school.

Section 10 - Professional Support Statements
My school thoroughly evaluates the professional capabilities of all staff.
My school is not aware of my skills and weaknesses as a teaching practitioner.
The administration at my school provides opportunities for me to learn from other teaching professionals in the school]
I seek professional support outside of my school environment.
I am not certain that the leadership teams in my school are aware of important issues and problems currently facing the staff.

Section 11 - Professional Support Statements
My school has high expectations of effective classroom practice.
I consider myself to be a professional educator.
My school treats its teachers as professional educators
The latest pedagogical developments are discussed and implemented across different areas of the school.
I am rarely invited to participate in educational projects that will develop my skills and

career.

Section 12 - School Environment Statements

The school environment is shared fairly between departments.
I am unsatisfied with the way that school spaces are managed.
Teacher administration and recreation spaces are engaging and well resourced.
The management of school space encourages the alliance of all departments.
The school vision is shared between leaders and teachers.

Appendix C – Guiding Questions for Face-to-face Interviews

As this is a semi-structured interview, the questions listed are main questions asked during the interview. The researcher will ask relevant follow up questions not reflected in this guide depending on the participant's responses and when the situation calls for it.

Introduction

- Instructions will be given prior to the interview commencing (start recording the interview)
- I will ask you some questions relating to your experiences as a professional teacher within this
- specific school context.
- Do you have any questions before we commence the interview?

Professional Knowledge

- What is your definition of Professional Learning?
- What resources do you use to gain Professional Knowledge?
- How valuable are your connections to colleagues in relation to your development as a teacher?

Professional Practice

- What factors assist you to learn in the workplace?
- Do you have any learning disabilities/needs that are not being catered for?
- Are there aspects of the schools Professional Learning program that assist you in your learning?

Professional Engagement

- How would you define and describe a "professional teacher" and do you see yourself as one?
- What does effective Professional Learning look like?
- The school has an in depth and explicit handbook for staff, are there any important rules or practices that you think are not included?
- How do you connect with colleagues to collaborate? (online, meetings)
- How does the school culture in this environment support the Professional Learning of teachers?
- Do you think school culture impacts on the learning outcomes of students?
- Tell me about the best Professional Learning (onsite) you have experienced. What made it so
- great?
- How does the school culture support your career as a professional teacher?

Future Implications

- What would you predict is going to be challenging for the Professional Learning of this school next year?

- What role do individual teachers play in addressing these challenges?
- What aspects of school culture do you think are counterproductive to school improvement?

Questions to ask at the end of the interview

- I will now summarize what you have said thus far. Could you comment on my summary (e.g. whether you would like to elaborate on anything I have said)?

(Researcher now summarises what participant has shared to clarify understanding. Care will be taken to use participant's words and phrases rather than researchers own terminology.)

- Do you have any further questions or comments you would like to add?

Appendix D – Online Survey Results

1. Learning Style Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I fully understand my own learning style and needs.	43%	53%	3%	0%	0%
I am a visual learner who benefits from videos and displays.	43%	37%	16%	0%	3%
Reading professional literature assists my teaching.	43%	40%	16%	0%	0%
I do not benefit from observing experienced teachers.	0%	3%	13%	33%	50%
Team teaching experiences are valuable to my professional development.	43%	30%	27%	0%	0%
2. Learning Conditions Statements	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Bright and noisy environments help me learn.	3%	10%	23%	40%	23%
I have a learning disability and/or impairment that impacts on my learning.	3%	3%	7%	13%	73%
Teacher learning spaces around the school are designed to complement my learning.	7%	26%	20%	27%	20%
I set regular goals for new skills and knowledge.	23%	53%	13%	7%	3%
My colleagues and I discuss our learning needs.	13%	53%	13%	13%	7%
3. Vocational Identity Statements	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
I always wanted to be a teacher.	23%	30%	10%	20%	17%
Teaching was not my first choice.	20%	27%	17%	20%	17%
When I compare my career to friends and family, I am content with my position.	33%	47%	17%	0%	3%
The work that teachers do is valuable.	63%	27%	7%	3%	0%
I market myself as an educator on social media such as Linked In etc.	27%	20%	23%	7%	23%

4. Future Plans Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
If I could get a higher paying job I would leave teaching.	3%	7%	23%	43%	23%
Teaching provides many personal rewards	47%	43%	7%	3%	0%
When I think ahead five years I anticipate that I will still be working as a teacher.	33%	40%	13%	10%	3%
I am not interested in working in the classroom but pursuing a management position in Education	3%	20%	17%	30%	30%
My job provides me with professional stimulation and growth.	37%	47%	7%	7%	3%
5. School Culture Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school environment encourages teachers to think critically about curriculum and pedagogy.	10%	47%	20%	17%	7%
I feel that I have many opportunities to learn new things in my school.	23%	37%	13%	23%	3%
My school facilitates strong teams that work towards better outcomes for students.	17%	3%	20%	23%	3%
I feel disconnected to the wider teaching community	0%	30%	33%	27%	10%
The school environment encourages educational excellence by promoting staff who are passionate and exceed professional expectations.	10%	37%	17%	33%	3%
6. Systemic Mentorship Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I receive regular feedback from mentors and managers	3%	20%	20%	40%	17%
My colleagues are not aware of my strengths as a teacher	10%	27%	30%	3%	3%
The administration at my school have provided opportunities for me to seek out and participate in professional development for my areas of concern.	20%	43%	17%	20%	0%
I have participated in mentor programs such as taking on student teachers and supporting graduate teachers etc	27%	30%	13%	20%	10%
I feel connected to other teachers at my school who have skills I would like to develop.	20%	27%	17%	27%	10%

7. Professional Knowledge Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I thoroughly understand AusVELS and the Australian National Curriculum.	10%	70%	13%	7%	0%
My team shares professional knowledge through conversations, online platforms and digital	26%	33%	20%	20%	0%
I have basic teaching knowledge that supports my teaching without any need for development.	3%	17%	13%	43%	23%
I use creative and critical thinking language to improve the learning of my students.	27%	63%	7%	3%	0%
I am well trained in the current programs and assessment systems that are provided by my school.	0%	50%	33%	17%	0%
8. Professional Expectations Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel that I am improving each year.	37%	53%	7%	3%	0%
I seek out education in areas that I need assistance in to develop myself as a teacher.	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
Guidelines of acceptable professional behaviour are unclear and inconsistent at my school.	10%	13%	20%	40%	17%
I feel comfortable in seeking out advice of leaders when unsure of professional expectations.	33%	43%	13%	10%	0%
The school assists and supports teachers in their journey to meet AITSL standards.	7%	63%	7%	23%	0%
9. Professional Engagement Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school facilitates effective professional learning teams.	17%	37%	20%	27%	0%
I participate in professional reading beyond my school context.	37%	40%	20%	3%	0%
I feel inspired by my Professional Learning.	40%	37%	20%	3%	0%
The latest pedagogical developments are discussed and implemented across different areas of the school.	0%	37%	20%	40%	3%
I am not invited to participate and contribute in professional discussions and teams in my school.	3%	20%	17%	43%	17%

10. Professional Support Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school thoroughly evaluates the professional capabilities of all staff.	7%	30%	17%	43%	3%
My school is not aware of my skills and weaknesses as a teaching practitioner.	7%	37%	17%	37%	3%
The administration at my school provides opportunities for me to learn from other teaching professionals in the school.	7%	27%	33%	30%	3%
I seek professional support outside of my school environment.	27%	37%	13%	13%	10%
I am not certain that the leadership teams in my school are aware of important issues and problems currently facing the staff.	20%	33%	13%	27%	7%
11. Professional Behaviour Statements	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
My school has high expectations of effective classroom practice.	17%	47%	23%	13%	0%
I consider myself to be a professional educator.	53%	47%	0%	0%	0%
My school treats its teachers as professional educators	27%	43%	20%	10%	0%
The latest pedagogical developments are discussed and implemented across different areas of the school.	7%	37%	23%	27%	7%
I am rarely invited to participate in educational projects that will develop my skills and career.	3%	27%	40%	20%	10%
12. School Environment Statements	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
The school environment is shared fairly between departments.	3%	40%	20%	37%	0%
I am unsatisfied with the way that school spaces are managed.	10%	40%	13%	33%	3%
Teacher administration and recreation spaces are engaging and well resourced.	3%	30%	17%	43%	7%
The management of school space encourages the alliance of all departments.	0%	27%	23%	37%	13%
The school vision is shared between leaders and teachers.	0%	50%	30%	7%	13%