Dancing with Dinosaurs – understanding how experienced Physical Education teachers sustain career-long professional learning in diverse settings

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CONTENTS

Summary

This thesis provides an interpretive study of the engagement of experienced Physical Education teachers in sustaining meaningful career-long professional learning.

The qualitative research was undertaken through the collection of evidence from six secondary school teachers, a review of the literature and reflections from field notes.

Case study evidence gathered over a two-year period provides an insight into the impact of professional learning on the development of teachers' knowledge that goes beyond surface technical knowledge to bring about change in their practice. Analysis of the research identified themes such as understanding of professional knowledge together with identification of personal education values, beliefs and practices that continue to inform a sense of moral purpose and self-efficacy by the participating teachers.

This research provides an insight into the complex world of teaching as it constantly changes, challenging the educational values, beliefs, and practices that influence the ways in which teachers teach every time they step into a classroom. Responding to this complex environment as teachers and its subsequent impact on those who believe that ongoing learning is an important part of their professional identity is at the heart of this research.

Today's world of increasing accountability as government policy shifts toward quality teaching performance standards in a predominantly marketised education environment now dominates how teachers perceive their professional identities. This study provides an opportunity to become familiar with how experienced teachers are able to identify what they need to change, and where, and how they are able to locate the professional learning support they need to bring about sustainable contextualised change.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed..

Date..

Acknowledgements

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In 2005, the Chief Executive of the then South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), now the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD[1]), spoke to the inaugural State Education Leaders Convention. He announced, 'Both the Premier and the Minister [Education] have stated that education is at the heart of the South Australian Strategic Plan' (Department of Education and Children's Services 2005a, p.1). When asked, 'Are we up to the challenge and can we deliver?' the Chief Executive posed to the education leaders that 'through the building [of] networks of educators engaged together in inquiry, our goal as a system must be to identify key areas for change, take action and keep moving' (Department of Education and Children's Services 2005a, p. 2). The Chief Executive went on to describe the term 'inquiry' as being 'about self and collaborative critical reflection [by] reposition[ing] us as intelligent problem posers and solvers better able to meet the needs of the cohort of learners we work with' (Department of Education and Children's Services 2005a, p. 2).

Prior to this speech, in the mid-1990s, I completed my first attempt at post-graduate academic research (Burnett 1996) with a project investigating the professional learning process of critical reflection in a secondary school setting in Victoria, Australia. Of particular interest were two teachers on the teaching staff who, over a three-year period, managed to avoid participating in the process by using a series of evasive strategies.

These two teachers were experienced Physical Education teachers, each with more than 15 years' teaching experience. This provided an interesting point for reflection when commencing a research project (Burnett, Baldock & Smith 2007) with DECD in South Australia early in the 2000s. My role in the DECD project was as an outside expert (project officer) rather than a colleague undertaking post-graduate study as in the Victorian project. My task was to support teachers in a variety of contexts to

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[1] The South Australian education department changed its name from DECS to DECD in… Throughout this thesis, apart from publications, I refer to the current name.

engage in critically reflective practice as a professional development process to bring about change in their teaching practice and the subsequent assumed effect of increasing participation levels of children and young people in physical activity.

The application of critical reflection as a tool to bring about change can be challenging given that it takes participants on a journey to uncover deeply held values and beliefs, and the way these influence their understandings and interpretations of the world in which they work. This project also had within its cohort several experienced secondary school Physical Education teachers who, unlike in my earlier project, had volunteered to participate and also remained engaged and enthusiastic. An emerging research question for me was an attempt to understand why some experienced teachers are able to engage in challenging change processes, and actively look for such opportunities to improve their practices. Seeking to achieve this understanding provided the impetus for this current research and thesis.

Initially I found myself looking for an explanation about why some experienced teachers continue to challenge the principles upon which their teaching practice is based. Such teachers have not identified the later stages of their careers as a time to 'ease-up' and comfortably see out their remaining years using familiar knowledge, skills and pedagogy. Instead they appear to be concerned about the ongoing quality of their teaching practice, and as one participant put it, 'they didn't want to become obsolete'.

In each of the two projects investigating professional learning using critically reflective processes (Burnett 1996; Burnett, Baldcock & Smith 2007), teachers were being challenged to learn about themselves personally and professionally, thereby enabling them to change their teaching practice and consequently the learning outcomes for their students. Both projects required teachers to collect quantitative evidence of their practice, and the second project provided evidence of a change in physical activity participation levels by students. Qualitative data was obtained by interviewing teachers at the conclusion of each project mainly to fulfil the purposes of reporting as a Master of Education thesis in the first project and as a public accountability document for DECD in the second.

2

Through this earlier work, my role as a facilitator of professional learning provided an opportunity establish rapport with the teachers participating in both projects. As I became increasingly enlightened about the professional lives and experiences of these teachers I was able to recognise how they perceived their strengths and weaknesses as they gained information from analysis of the quantitative data. As an interviewer, I also had the opportunity to focus on aspects such as context, change processes and self-discovery through using pre-determined questions.

In the context of this doctoral thesis, researching the professional learning of a group of experienced secondary school teachers using semi-structured interview questions facilitated a profound understanding of each participant's learning story. As an experienced secondary school teacher of many years myself, I became interested in these stories of professional learning and how they contribute to the development of teacher's identities. In the earlier projects, the act of interviewing provided a snapshot of the professional learning of a group of teachers only at a particular time in their various career stages. How experienced teachers viewed themselves as professionals and what motivated them to engage in learning in the later stages of their careers, was not addressed in either project.

The issue addressed in this thesis is how teachers sustain their passion for ongoing professional learning. The contexts for the earlier projects (Burnett 1996; Burnett, Baldcock & Smith 2007), where teacher professional learning was researched in diverse school settings were in direct contrast to each other. The initial project occurred in difficult economic times, but in a resource-rich independent school. The second project was situated across the public school system, resourced by significant government funding over a four-year period.

In each context similar questions were raised as to what would happen to the professional learning levels of teachers once the external financial and personnel resources were removed. The context for this post-doctoral research is one of decreased funding to public education and increased control over the amount and focus of teacher professional learning.

Organisational change is now a component of education (Ahonen 2000; Ball 1998) with a focus on changing principles as to how it is managed, and its purpose in the

current and future world. As a result of continuous change there has been a subsequent movement away from consultation and the inclusivity of stakeholders, (such as teachers) in decision-making, with teacher professionalism now situated in an environment based on performance standards and accountability (Barrett 2009; Blackmore 1999; Hargreaves 2004a).

In this research the professional identities of a small group of experienced secondary school teachers is explored as they deal with change in their schools and the education system. Education has moved away from the principles of equity and social justice, dominant when these teachers first joined the profession. The shift to prioritising a culture of marketisation, competition, and individualism is now evident. These changes in education challenge the professional identities of older teachers and in turn impact on their passion for the professional learning that has been a characteristic of their long careers.

Research by Shapiro (2010), exploring the relationship between emotional experience and teacher identity, explains the behaviour of the two teachers identified in my 1990s' research. Shapiro suggests that tremendous fear and insecurity for some teachers appears when faced with reform efforts at their school (2010, p. 619); hence their evasion strategies, with fear as the driver. However, the focus for this current research is to achieve understanding of what are essentially effective motivational influences for experienced Physical Education teachers in sustaining ongoing professional learning throughout their careers.

Research by Fullan (2001) and Hargreaves (2004), on teacher change and professional learning supports the view that educators need to continue to grow through the development of their own professional knowledge. This study seeks to understand this process as it plays out in the constantly changing world of education where teachers practice as individual professional learners, and as members of a profession.

As individual members inhabiting a modern society, teachers' professional lives are influenced by 'what they can do, and what they can think, by the cultural forms through which they must live their lives together as a society' (Dant 2003, p. 163). This current research seeks to explore how six experienced Physical Education

teachers access professional learning and bring about change in their teaching pedagogies to keep them motivated, learning and developing.

The premise of this thesis is based on the view that professional learning offered by the system is currently not meeting the learning needs of experienced secondary school Physical Education teachers. In researching this premise a key focus was to gain greater understanding of what motivates some experienced Physical Education teachers to continue to seek professional learning opportunities.

1.2 Theoretical basis

Much of the research in the field of educational change and (for the purposes of this research) the teaching of Physical Education, has a focus on pre-service and beginning teachers (see for example Butler 2005; Tsangaridou 2005). The literature suggests that there has been minimal research with experienced Physical Education teachers with a few exceptions such as Armour (2006), and Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997). Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan explored the reflective practices of pre-service Physical Education teachers, while Butler (2005) explored a range of teaching experiences encompassing changing teaching practice with pre-service, beginning teachers and established teachers in Physical Education. Armour's research with experienced teachers in Physical Education grew from a concern that teacher professional learning policy was primarily focused on pre-service programs rather than extending this throughout the career of teachers that could subsequently impact on the quality of their teaching.

Qualitative research with experienced teachers in curriculum areas other than Physical Education has been undertaken. Research conducted by Dawson and Bondy (2004) centred on changing the practices of experienced generalist classroom teachers through their use of collaborative networks and reflective practice. However, Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997) appear to have a unique study motivated by the need to understand a teacher's role and function. Their research with four experienced (10 years) elementary and secondary Physical Education teachers in the United States (US) was used to gather data on the role of reflection in teacher professional development in both teaching and learning environments.

This current research uncovered several themes in the literature that give a clear indication of relative perspectives of researchers and the contributions they make toward understanding the current construction of professional learning for teachers. These perspectives and their influence on the provision of professional knowledge supporting pedagogical change in teachers are presented in this thesis through the following themes:

- what professional development and professional learning looks like in a Physical Education context
- professional development and professional learning
- models of professional development and their impact on teacher learning
- teacher perspectives of professional development
- experienced teachers responses to professional development
- Physical Education teachers' professional development and learning in a Western cultural context.

1.3   The issue

This research seeks to understand social and organisational change as an influence of the constantly changing world of education that teachers inhabit as individual professional learners, and as members of a profession. Hammersley (2000, p. 395) claims that, 'in recent years the focus of qualitative research … has often been on the experience of teachers who are on the receiving end of successive waves of education reform'. Qualitative research with an interpretivist orientation investigates such human phenomena, which in the case of this research focuses on how teachers see themselves as professionals with a passion for lifelong learning in a constantly changing world of education reform.

1.4   The major research questions

The major research questions upon which this research is based are:

- How do experienced teachers engage with professional learning in the field of physical education?
- How do experienced teachers understand, manage and respond to change in their daily practice?

- How do experienced teachers respond to the changing contemporary social issues that they identify as having the most significant impact on the teaching of Physical Education today?

1.5 Research design

To understand the individual experiences of the teachers contributing to this thesis, the research methodology used is located within the interpretive purpose (Biesta, Allan & Edwards 2011, p. 229) of social research. A qualitative approach using an emergent design structure was applied throughout. The methodology has only been constrained by the participants' workplaces and the busyness of their work. This constraint provides an understanding of 'people's roles and experiences in everyday practice' as identified by Freeman and Vasconcelos (2010, p. 9) by contributing to an initial theoretical grounding on change in people's everyday life. The issue of how experienced teachers sustain their passion for ongoing professional learning is then able to be explored.

This thesis reports on the research activity and provides a context in which to discuss the provision of appropriate professional learning for experienced teachers in the field of physical education. The interpretive purpose of social research used in this way is to provide a context in which the researcher can obtain meaningful insights by unearthing and describing the interpretations and meaning people attach to each action, event or concept (Hall & Hord 2001). Having an interpretivist purpose places the research participants at the centre through the collection of localised data that is then analysed.

For the purposes of this research, I purposefully selected six experienced secondary Physical Education teachers who have been teaching for more than 15 years. Interviews with participants focused on situation, process, context and discovery in relation to critical self-reflection and change. The collection of data relied on a range of research tools. These included participant interviews, journals, researcher memos and field notes to provide clarity and build trustworthiness in the data gathering. Gathering data using in depth interviews with experienced secondary school teachers gives an insight into how these teachers access ongoing professional learning to construct their professional knowledge.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe case study methodology as a design employed by researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved in the research process. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. This particular research approach (Stark & Torrance 2005) drew on traditional educational research methods of collective case study (Stake 1994) from the qualitative research paradigm. In this project the six cases are aggregated. Qualitative research methods following the interpretivist paradigm were used to facilitate the collection of relevant information. The intent was to analyse, interpret and theorise about the lived experiences of the participants in their ongoing development of professional knowledge in the field of physical education, and uncover the changes they made in their practice or approach to physical education.

Carney's case study research with experienced teachers acknowledges that 'teacher's professional development is a complex and problematic phenomenon …' (2003, p. 426). Carney establishes that 'professional development must be located close to the classroom, resourced and championed by the school', but most significantly 'teachers must desire and look for opportunities to develop, and be encouraged to do so' (p. 426).

Semi-structured interviews established the participants understanding of 'professional knowledge'. Through dialogue I questioned whether the participants support the interpretation of Schemp et al. (1998) that 'pedagogical content knowledge is composed of: knowledge of student's conceptions of the content, curriculum, teaching strategies, and purposes for teaching' (p. 1). I determined if, as teachers of Physical Education, they concur that 'in a practical sense, it [professional knowledge] represents a class of knowledge that is central to teacher's work and that would not typically be held by non-teaching subject matter experts or by teachers who know little of that subject' (p. 1).

This thesis applies the interpretive purposes of qualitative research as layers to the analysis of data. In the first instance, it enables understanding of the unique context in which each participant has constructed their 'real world settings' (Patton 2002) of work. In the second, it 'historically ground[s]' how these practices of professional learning have been shaped and developed by external political and ideological

influences (Freeman & Vasconcelos 2010, p. 9). This thesis identifies ideological principles as they manifest through government policy that impact the decisions teachers make as workers in an organisation, and can limit the offerings made available.

1.6   Significance of this research

This current research is significant in the field of teacher professional learning (Physical Education) as it aims to reach in depth understandings of how teachers value and understand meaningful professional learning. Such understandings will have the potential to impact on the practice of teachers and consequent learning outcomes for children and young people in schools. Pre-service teacher education programs will also be impacted as increased understanding is developed. Pre-service teachers will increasingly recognise the value of ongoing professional learning as it contributes toward the development of their professional identity and self-efficacy as a teachers. It will also inform the development and articulation of education and professional learning policy, pedagogical practice, and the subsequent professional learning and support provided to experienced teachers in Physical Education.

DECD has a responsibility for the provision of meaningful professional learning for its teachers. DECD is concerned about learning outcomes for children and young people, committing resources to curriculum development and professional learning of teachers to deliver them. The research presented in this thesis is important because it will offer, through case study research, an insight into the current development of professional knowledge by teachers. This has the potential to significantly impact on the deeper development of knowledge among Physical Education teachers and improve learning outcomes for children and young people in schools. This, along with understandings acquired through the emergent design structure of the research, will contribute to the way professional learning for experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education is supported and delivered in the future, adding to the body of knowledge on teacher professional learning.

1.7   Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 constructs a context in which the six participating teachers work and learn through a review of the literature. Subsequently it clarifies and discusses the terms

professional development and *professional learning*. Chapter 2 then discusses the models used by professional development providers and their impact on experienced teachers. Finally, it explores what professional learning looks like for Physical Education teachers in a Western cultural context, including what motivates the teacher to learn in a policy environment that undervalues their curriculum area.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework applied to this research. The interpretive paradigm used is influenced by an ethnomethodological approach. The use of an interpretive research methodology with an emergent design structure, as outlined in Chapter 4, facilitated the collection of rich data from the lived experiences of the individual participants in the research.

Chapter 5 provides the research evidence through the presentation of six case studies identifying the professional learning experiences of the teacher participants, who teach in a range of diverse contexts. This chapter also provides insight into how professional learning is both transferred and sustained in an environment of increasing organisational accountability and diminishing local resources.

Chapter 6 further interrogates the data provided through the case studies. It explores the impact on the participants of developing professional learning pathways in response to the need for new skills, knowledge and pedagogical learning. This chapter also analyses the importance of moral purpose, self-efficacy and identity in influencing the research participants' use of particular and specific approaches to their professional learning. Chapter 6 explores the impact on the professionalism of the participants from the political environment in which they work, an impact exacerbated by an increasing sense of marginalisation of the Physical Education curriculum area in schools. Their sense of isolation is also compounded by increasing social concern about the impact of increasing obesity and decreasing physical activity levels among young people in South Australia. The chapter describes how the experienced Physical Education teachers in this research respond to these issues, illustrating their use of influential leadership skills and commitment to an engagement with career-long learning that allows them to respond to change.

The final chapter in this thesis brings to a conclusion research that began in a political environment hinting at new beginnings for the provision and delivery of

professional learning for public school teachers in South Australia. However, as this research demonstrates, the way to begin a career-long professional learning journey for teachers is impacted by policy decisions. Much could be learnt from highly motivated and experienced teachers, such as those participating in this research, who continue to be engaged in their own deeply personal and challenging professional learning despite changing policy developments in the education system.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Professional development and professional learning

Across the research literature on teachers and change in education, the terms *professional development* and *professional learning* are frequently applied to describe, or differentiate, teacher learning through their application in either a technical or cognitive context. Descriptors, such as 'an experience for teachers', 'teacher growth', 'development of a person professionally', 'staff development', 'teacher training', or 'a mechanism for improving teacher practice' can be found scattered throughout the literature. The application of these terms as descriptors means that a more generic intent is used that does not distinguish the type or depth of learning teachers are engaged in. A distinction can be drawn using either a technical or cognitive lens to delineate the type and depth of experiences to be provided to teachers and the learning they engage in. In a technical sense, professional development for teachers refers more to keeping skills and knowledge up-to-date, while professional learning refers to the pedagogical practice of teaching. Given that the 'field of research on teacher learning is relatively young …' (Borko 2004, p. 3), the practice of describing rather than clearly defining professional development and professional learning is an area that still needs expansion and explicit clarification for researchers and practitioners in the field.

Professional development as described in a technical sense by Keay (2004), Opfer and Pedder (2011), Akiba (2012), and Coggshall (2012), positions the act of professional development as the maintenance of teachers' professional knowledge, skill and practice (Keay 2004). Brown Easton (2008), Meirink et al. (2009), and Coggshall, on the other hand, describe professional learning in a cognitive sense as a 'culture of inquiry … [where] change is the result of constant questioning and searching for answers' (Brown Easton 2008, p. 759). For the purpose of this research, professional development is used to describe the tools facilitating the achievement of teacher professional learning outcomes, such as change in teaching practice and student achievement in the classroom. Traditionally professional development has emphasised the importance of engaging in particular activities in response to specifically identified needs, such as the implementation of a new

curriculum framework, which is centrally planned and developed. The particular role of professional development as described by Meiers and Ingvarson (2005, p. 10) has evolved such that it now provides the conditions for professional learning that will lead to better opportunities for teachers' learning. These conditions for learning are achieved through the derivation of various professional development programs and models, such as professional learning communities, that have been specifically designed to achieve pre-determined whole school improvement outcomes.

Professional development is defined as the process of accumulating skills, professional knowledge and qualifications that enable teachers to continually adapt within an education system (Coggshall 2012; Darling-Hammond & Richardson 2009; Fullan 2001; Guskey 2002, 2003; Hawley & Valli 1999; Keay 2004; Mushayikawa & Lubben 2009; O'Brien & Jones 2005; Owen 2005; Sarsar 2008). According to Fullan (2001) 'professional development … is at its heart the development of habits of learning that are far more likely to be powerful if they present themselves day after day' (p. 253). Development of the 'habits of learning' for teachers may come through their decision to acquire mastery of a new piece of technology, where they continue to challenge themselves to learn a related new skill, or application on a regular basis thereby increasing their degree of mastery.

The purpose of professional development programs and activities emphasise their importance in responding to contemporary political, social, economic and professional influences that may dominate education at any given time. The current emphasis on educational change places the professional development of teachers at the centre of much of the reform agenda across the education systems of countries such as England, US, Australia, Canada, Finland and New Zealand. The scope of these reforms take into account notions such as what makes a quality teacher, the importance of linking achievement standards to curriculum, the implementation of professional teaching standards and the organisation of schools themselves. The specific purpose and models of professional development programs implemented will determine whether or not professional learning will occur, and to what level. Guskey (2002) and Owen (2005) support this through emphasising that no matter the program or model implemented '… to be successful, professional development must be seen as a process, not an event' (Owen p. 388), involving sustained ongoing

engagement as opposed to a one-off activity. This premise is found in much of the literature on change in education, where the time taken to implement any change is identified as the key to its success or failure.

Professional learning is defined by Owen (2005), Gregson, Spedding and Nixon. (2008), Sarsar (2008), Huebener (2009), Coggshall (2012) and Akiba (2012) as a process that is planned and organised; whereby teachers actively develop their skills and understanding of teaching that will make cognitive change to their knowledge and beliefs. Owen and Coggshall describe professional learning as 'a social experience in collaboration with like colleagues (Coggshall p. 2) guided by the continued 'use of data and active inquiry around authentic problems and instructional practices' (p. 4) enabling deep learning and change in practice. Opfer and Pedder (2011) aimed to develop an understanding as to how professional learning is conceptualised by researchers. They conclude that 'simplistic conceptualisation' is used more often that 'continue[s] to focus on specific activities, processes or programs in isolation from complex teaching and learning environments' (p. 376–377), unlike the rich descriptions provided by Owen and Coggshell.

Confusion in the literature emerges when the term professional learning is applied in a way that is more relevant to a professional development context, as evidenced by Opfer and Pedder (2011). Sarsar (2008) demonstrates how this can occur by simply defining professional learning as a process or series of activities whereby teachers develop skills, knowledge and understanding of teaching that will improve learning outcomes for students. Such interchanging of definitions in the literature as identified by O'Brien and Jones (2005) makes the development of a common understanding through use of language an area for contestation because of the different values and beliefs applied by researchers. Meaning becomes less clear as a result, and may explain why the use of definitions becomes problematic, often being omitted from the literature because assumptions are made that frequent use of terms over time implies common understanding. Clarification of meaning seems to have become more achievable through discussion of models of professional development where professional learning is identified as an outcome rather than on ongoing process of professional change.

This lack of clarity and understanding of the terms professional development and professional learning has implications for change in the teaching profession when professional development is effectively viewed as learning through acquisition, and the 'sense of learning as personal growth is lost' (Hodkinson 2009, p. 158). In a discussion by Gore and Ludwig (2006) on the link between resource investment to support change in education, and the subsequent outcomes achieved, they too make the observation that 'in many cases … "professional learning" and "professional development" are poorly defined concepts, which is problematic through its impact on the achievement of measureable outcomes'. In their view, '… "teacher growth" is hoped for rather than measured, and improved outcomes are tenuously connected to anything done in the name of teacher learning' (pp. 1–2). When there is confusion surrounding the meaning of fundamental terms upon which change frameworks are dependent, establishing the achievement of authentic change will depend on how development and learning are applied and understood.

2.2 Models of professional development and their impact on teacher learning

The purpose of professional development models to provide a framework through which professional learning occurs are frequently cited in the literature as 'prescriptors' about how teachers should learn (Vermunt & Endedijk 2010, p. 294). Such prescriptors have been identified by Hawley and Valli (1999), Yates (2005) and Opfer and Pedder (2011) as having several characteristics essential for the effective implementation of professional development. These characteristics incorporate experiences that are grounded in inquiry, reflection and experimentation; are collaborative and interactional; are connected to and derived from teacher's work with students; and are sustained, ongoing and intensive using, modelling, coaching and collective problem solving around practice.

In delivering models of professional development to teachers, specific processes using prescribed activities are required to promote learning and the achievement of outcomes, such as meeting new qualification standards, career advancement, acquisition of new technology skills, or individual professional growth. A number of models of professional development have emerged over time to meet these needs through an expanded notion of what is required, such as:

- the top-down model when the process of professional development is done to teachers, not with them, using a prescribed formula in which sessions are planned and implemented as a technical- rational approach, for example, when learning skills pertaining to new technology

- a continuous approach toward professional development based on teacher professionalism, context and collaboration. Such an approach empowers teachers to take the initiative and meet their own needs, for example, when implementing new curriculum frameworks

- a collaborative learning approach used when school resources are provided to support the establishment of communities of practice. Communities of practice have become one such model of professional development that meets the changing needs of adult learners by promoting individual professional growth in a social context.

Communities of practice have emerged as a preferred model of professional development in recent times, in part due to their recognition of preferred learning environments for adults. Research on adult learning by Meirnik et al. (2009) confirm the findings of earlier research by Jarvis (1987) that collaboration between teachers creates the most effective environment for learning to occur (p. 98). Jarvis' theory of adult learning, cited by Lohman and Woolf (2001), emphasises the importance of a social context for learning and a hierarchical representation of learning outcomes that may result from the provision of different types and levels of activity. Collaboration between teachers has become an important element in professional learning because it enables critical reflection to occur where the strongly held values and beliefs about teaching are able to be uncovered and challenged in a supportive, 'social' environment. However, Timperley (2008) cautions educators about using communities of practice in the context of 'an intervention on its own [because] a collegial community will often end up merely entrenching existing practice and the assumptions on which it is based' (p. 19). Wider recognition of research findings on effective approaches to engage adults in learning may therefore be an area requiring further consideration by professional development providers in the future to guard against teacher collaboration that only results in current practice being reinforced.

The previously identified models of professional development demonstrate a 'paradigm shift' as identified by Smylie and Convyers (1991), cited in Hawley and Valli (1991), '… as moving from deficit-based to competency-based approaches, from replication to reflection, from learning separately to learning together …' (p. 134). Teachers more often identify opportunities to share and discuss teaching experiences with peers as being their most valued professional development experiences. This supports claims in the literature by Hawley and Valli, and Opfer and Pedder (2011) citing low levels of engagement in professional development activities when acquiring technical knowledge delivered by 'experts'. However, when teachers gather formally, or informally, the development that takes place is at a deeper level, frequently located in the pedagogical complexity of teaching. During these occasions, teachers share their experiences empathetically, by discussing approaches that have been successful in their own contexts, and share tools that have supported the achievement of positive outcomes. Participation in models of professional development where activity is focused on collaboration provide opportunities and pathways enabling professional learning to occur indirectly rather than as a direct consequence.

Armour and Yelling (2004) in their research on the professional development of experienced Physical Education teachers in England, identified two particular principles that reflect the research on effective adult learning provision:

> Involve teachers [in] identifying their own training needs and developing learning experiences to meet those needs;
>
> and, teachers [having] some autonomy over the choice and direction of their personal development. (2004, p. 99)

Teachers frequently identify the need for a context that is meaningful, provides them with a level of autonomy to make decisions about their own learning, and gives them an opportunity to reflect on their current teaching context through identification of their individual needs. These principles resonate in the findings of Jarvis (1987), Faucette et al. (2002),Watson (2005) and Meirnik et al. (2009) where teachers, as adult learners, prefer a professional development context that gives them control and allows them to implement a model that suits their own learning needs. A 'scan of research' undertaken by Teaching Australia, in response to the proposed establishment of standards for teacher professional learning by the Ministerial

Council for Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs in 2003, also identified a need for 'professional development programs for teachers … [to] be delivered by agencies … [with] a clear understanding of how adult learning occurs and the forms of delivery that promote effective adult learning' (Watson 2005, p. 6).

As identified earlier in this chapter, little is currently known through research, about how much learning is actually transferred into practice by teachers from their participation in professional development programs, but as Timperley et al. (2007) suggest, 'what is known is that the relationship is far from simple (p. 23). Propositions about how people learn identify the necessary contextualising of conditions so that learning does not occur within a vacuum but in the social context of a teachers' practice. Frustrations in the research community at being unable to conclusively determine the impact of professional development on the practice of teachers are reflected by Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009, p. 375), and O'Brien and Jones (2005) who reported in Scotland that '… only a quarter of teachers … claimed that [the] professional development work [selected by administrators] had an impact on their teaching' (p. 3). In more recent times researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2009) and Wei, Darling-Hammond and Adamson (2010), reporting on teacher development in the US and elsewhere, identify a paucity of research evidence in the field on which to substantiate claims made in their reports:

> Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to student achievement gains. While this insight is hopeful, it derives from a limited pool of rigorous studies on specific kinds of professional development (Darling-Hammond 2009, p. 5).

Research evidence connecting teacher learning to student achievement outcomes, while important, also needs to be considered with evidence of change in the practice of teachers as they shift the values and beliefs that impact their teaching pedagogy. A literature search by Guskey (2003) identified 21 characteristics of effective professional development, with teacher content and pedagogical knowledge the most frequently cited. Focusing professional development on teacher content and pedagogical knowledge allows for teacher learning to occur that is school-based, active and practical, collaborative, progressive and focused closely on student learning, while the attitudes, beliefs, values and dispositions of participating teachers influence what is to be meaningful and engaging. Helping teachers to understand the

role of these characteristics in learning more deeply was the most vital dimension of effective professional development Guskey identified.

Issues facing teachers are many and varied, but they are always situated in an environment of constant change and 'when complex change is involved, people do not and cannot change by being told to do so' (Fullan 1993, p. 24). Duncombe and Armour (2004, p. 148) also state that in responding to change through engagement in professional learning activities, that '… teachers' learning is not something that can be 'delivered', rather it should be about 'working with, not doing to, teachers'. Currently in education, the opportunity for Australian teachers to participate in professional learning is controlled by government policy and the centralised provision of funding to schools. This in turn prioritises not only the type of professional learning to be accessed, but also who will be supported to participate in the activity, the level of learning that can occur and the degree of teacher autonomy possible.

2.3   Teachers perspectives of professional development

Top of the Class (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 2007) a report on teacher education in Australia, recommended improvements to not only the quality of teacher education, but also the ongoing professional development of qualified teachers. A key issue of concern raised in the report includes 'a decline in the number of teachers interested in post-graduate study due to factors such as increasing teacher workload, the ageing of the teaching population, and the perception that further study was not linked to career advancement' (p. 96). Traditionally, programs that attract teachers to professional development, no matter their career stage, are those that bring about change in knowledge and skills. A similar study by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) in the US in 2008 analysed the status of teacher professional learning across the country, reporting findings similar to those in Australia.

The NSDC study found that although it noted an increase in early-career stage teacher participation in professional development through their participation in induction programs across the US, generally teachers across all career stages were involved in 'far less professional development … than teachers in the world's high-

achieving nations' (Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson 2010, p. 1). The authors do, however, caution against making generalisations based on these findings, as the report is in the early stages of ongoing research aimed at achieving better understanding of the kinds of policy contexts that lead to excellence in the practice of professional development at both system and school levels across the US (p. 8). Of specific interest in the NSDC study is the finding that the key issue was not so much about the quality of the professional development but rather the provision of 'opportunities [for teachers] to participate in extended learning opportunities and productive collaborative communities' (p. 1). The report found that there were too many one-off workshops and short-term events that generally do not lead to better student learning outcomes or change in teaching practice.

Huberman (1989) outlines two distinct pathways that teachers may follow throughout their careers that he referred to as 'successive themes of the teacher career cycle' (p. 37). These pathways have a significant impact on how teachers view, and engage with, professional development over time. Huberman identifies these elements of the career cycle as 'stages of teaching' linking them to 'themes or phases' that a teacher may experience throughout their career. He divides these aspects of the career cycle into five stages, termed 'survival and discovery, stabilisation, experimentation/activism and stocktaking, serenity and conservatism, and disengagement' (p. 37). Other research by Lortie (1975) and Hargreaves (2005), describes Huberman's initial stage of 'survival and discovery' as the early-career stage, when new teachers are finding their way, establishing practices and becoming grounded in their new profession, including the same elements identified by Huberman.

The early-career stage of teaching development can be viewed as the time when resilience to change is formulated as teachers decide whether to continue to challenge their practice, or be more conservative through maintaining approaches that appear to work, making them feel comfortable and safe. The first three years of teaching are described by Huberman (1989) and O'Brien and Schillaci (2002) as a period of 'survival and discovery' (O'Brien & Shillaci 2002, p. 33), which can have an enormous impact on early-career teachers when:

> … many new teachers become disillusioned about the
> realities of teaching and so change their idealized images to

what they perceive as more 'realistic' expectations (O'Brien
& Schiallaci 2002, p. 37).

Like Huberman (1989) and Hargreaves (2005), O'Brien and Schillaci (2002) propose that attempting to survive these initial years in the classroom can 'lead teachers to do one of three things' in following professional pathways, including:

leave[ing] the teaching field very early on; learn[ing] 'the
system' and work[ing] within it; or work[ing] to uphold their
beliefs and practices despite difficulties (p. 37).

The importance of career stages in teaching were formally recognised in Australia through the establishment of National Professional Standards for Teachers developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2011). These standards have been organised into four career stages that formalise the stages of teaching by identifying appropriate professional development to guide the preparation, support and development of teachers. They are described as *graduation* – beginning teacher; *competence* – effective teacher granted full entry to the profession; *accomplishment* – highly competent teacher, highly regarded by peers, engages in ongoing professional learning and contributes to that of colleagues; *leadership* – transformative professional with a recorded commitment to ongoing professional development (Watson 2005, p. 38). These stages are designed to reflect the continuum of a teacher's developing professional expertise from undergraduate preparation through to being an exemplary classroom practitioner and a leader in the profession (Ingvarson et al. 2006, p. 32).

This new requirement will pose challenges for all teachers, but in particular those who choose to remain in the public education system. After surviving the initial reality shock, their decision to remain teaching may be made more difficult given the increasing accountability that will continue to impact on them throughout their career. As their careers develop, these experiences will influence their perception of professional development and the decisions they make to either engage meaningfully to change their practice or not. As they move through the career stages and become experienced teachers, the attitude they develop toward professional development and change not only impacts on their own teaching practice, but can also influence future pre-service and early-career teachers they mentor. Hargreaves (2005) draws a distinction between early-career teachers and those in the later stages of their career,

noting changes in energy levels and personal interests that impact on the degree of professional learning they engage in. Older teachers may be resistant to, and readily challenge, change, but they may also have less energy to devote to teaching as other interests outside of the profession begin to take precedent.

O'Connor and Macdonald (2002), Carney (2003) and Keay's (2007) research into experienced teachers working as role models with pre-service teachers demonstrate the impact of what they identified as the experienced teachers' own best practice being reproduced. O'Connor and Macdonald's research aimed to understand the motivation of young people entering the teaching profession in the field of Physical Education. They discerned another dimension relating to the influence of an experienced teacher as a role model, finding that 'former … Physical Education teachers influence prospective teachers to enter the profession' (O'Connor & Macdonald, p. 40). The research found that role models have a significant influence on the decisions made by young people to become teachers, replicating the pedagogical practice of their 'hero teacher' through a cherished belief that they are using best practice. Hargreaves (2000) describes this relationship in teaching as historical where '… one learned to be a teacher through practical apprenticeship, and one improved as a teacher by individual trial-and-error' (p. 156). In such a relationship, reciprocal new learning may also be transferred from the pre-service teacher to their more experienced colleague; however, this is frequently represented more as a change in motivation rather than a change in practice. These 'master' teachers, according to Hargreaves, still '… persist … in pockets of the profession today, especially among teachers in later career' (Hargreaves, p. 156). Their preference in professional development is to access what is often referred to as 'new tricks and tips' where the later career teacher seeks variation in the activities they use to construct learning for their students while maintaining their already mastered preferred pedagogical approaches.

2.4 Experienced teacher responses toward professional development

Much has been written in the literature as to what is seen to be effective professional learning for teachers, particularly since the seminal works based on reflective practice and inquiry by Dewey (1900, 1902) and Schon (1983). Helping teachers to

understand what they bring to the teaching act, such as their values and beliefs, through the use of inquiry and reflection, gives them a much deeper insight as to their impact on student learning and supports them to challenge their practice and implement change. No matter the career stage of teaching, various approaches toward professional development may inhibit or enhance this level of effective professional learning for teachers. Teachers will respond positively to professional development according to international research by Yates (2005) and Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) if it involves teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the opportunity and the processes to be used. To be effective, professional development should provide learning opportunities that relate to individual needs, be continuous and ongoing, be organised around problem solving, and involve follow-up and support for further learning.

Sawyer (2001), cited in Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009, p. 375) provides an historical overview of the shift in focus for professional development from a content and knowledge (deficit approach), teaching practice (technical approach), to teacher professionalism and context (collaborative approach). The type of professional development approach once supported by the research as being the most effective process for learning was characterised by a one-off workshop, serving only to train teachers in new techniques and behaviours. This is now viewed by many in the field as a deficit approach to learning, whereby outside experts determine what skills and knowledge teachers are missing and rectify this through mandated professional development.

In the context of this current research the focus is on understanding the responses to professional development by six experienced Physical Education teachers and developing an understanding of their passion for professional learning that has gone beyond a simple response to mandated learning to become a lifelong pursuit. In pursuing this research focus it is important to be aware of how the literature understands experienced career stage teachers, their particular perspectives of professional development programs, and the importance of the professional context in which their work is located. Experienced teachers can be very harsh critics of professional development programs if they do not feel they are of a high quality and such 'that it will expand their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students'

(Guskey 2002, p. 381). As discussed earlier in this chapter, poor professional development experiences over time have encouraged many experienced teachers to resist active participation and, to instead, persist with teaching practices with which they are most comfortable and have proven to be successful.

A history of professional development in an Australian context reported through research by Johnson and Moraw (1994) suggests that until the 1980s teachers were able to exercise considerable control over the nature and extent of their ongoing professional development. During this time schools, professional organisations, state and territory education departments and the Australian Government, through the Schools Commission established in 1973, provided a diversity of professional development opportunities enabling teachers to choose what professional learning goals to pursue. However, the Schools Commission was subsequently abolished in 1987, just as the issue about the purpose of teacher professional development, and how it could be used to achieve newly defined and urgent economic goals, emerged. This resulted in the responsibility for the provision of diversity in professional development programs being moved to professional teaching associations and private providers – continuing to have access to a diversity of professional development was important for the ongoing learning of experienced teachers who were wanting (and willing) to make change in their practice.

Carney's (2003) case study research with experienced teachers also acknowledges that 'teacher's professional development is a complex and problematic phenomenon …' (2003, p. 426). Getting experienced teachers to change their practice needs to be considered in relation to their initial beliefs about teaching and learning (Meirnik et al. 2009, p. 98). Carney establishes that for these teachers 'professional development must be located close to the classroom, resourced and championed by the school', but most significantly 'teachers must desire and look for opportunities to develop, and be encouraged to do so' (p. 426). In the Australian context, in which this current research is located, private providers and professional organisations are meeting these needs.

 Hargreaves (2000), Guskey (2002), Duncombe and Armour (2004), Owen (2005), Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) and Nieto (2009) note that when describing experienced teachers and professional development it is evident that

experienced teachers brush aside teacher learning delivered through top-down models (a technical-rational approach) because it lacks meaning and relevance for them. In their view, decisions made as to the necessity of this learning has come from a distance, described in the literature by Foucalt (1998) as 'government steering from a distance' (cited in Barrett 2009, p. 1020). Government policy has determined the professional development programs and subsequent learning in which teachers engage, rather than teachers' own needs and local context. Teachers have historically viewed the role of government in education as being remote from the classroom, where advice given and decisions made, come from people not directly connected with the act of teaching.

Experienced teachers have been required to participate in many professional development programs throughout their career – many designed to specifically implement government policy. As teachers move from an early-career stage of survival and discovery to that of competency they begin to develop a clear idea as to where the gaps are in their professional knowledge and skills. The gaps tend to reflect the particular context they are teaching in both pedagogically and technically. When teaching in a specialist area, such as Physical Education as the participants in this research are, one aspect of professional development teachers regularly seek is to update specific training requirements, for example aquatics or umpiring certification, that enables them to teach at a particular level or in a particular environment. Pedagogically, they may also seek out professional development to broaden their understanding of the particular learning needs of a cohort of students, such as those in the middle years of schooling where new knowledge about particular teaching approaches are provided. Whatever their needs and contexts, experienced teachers prefer to determine the professional development in which they participate, select the location and context of their participation, and determine the duration of their participation.

Professional development formulated at a distance, as previously discussed, frequently occurs in response to changes in government policy, and is referred to in the literature as 'mandated' (Duncombe & Armour 2004; Fullan 2007; Gregson Spedding and Nixon 2008; Guskey 2002; Hargreaves 2000, 2005; Nieto 2009; O'Brien & Jones 2005; Rowe 2004). 'Mandated' professional development in this

context refers to participation in programs that are a required part of teachers' professional development centrally driven by government with the impact quantified through student achievement outcomes, such as changes in literacy and numeracy standards. Experienced teachers often reject professional learning outcomes linked to the achievement of targets such as literacy and numeracy standards as lacking meaning and relevance, particularly if the professional development has not been designed to meet their technical or pedagogical needs as described earlier. For experienced teachers, involvement in such models of professional development and these types of mandated activities are likely to have little impact on the way they teach, and are more likely to be remembered for the opportunities they gave to have a day away from their school, a break from routine, and a chance to catch up with former colleagues.

O'Brien and Jones (2005) published findings from their research with teachers in Scotland where they were able to identify more clearly a range of reasons to explain why experienced teachers claimed that participation in mandated professional development would not influence change in their practice:

> … they were talked to [or at] by invited speakers, … [programs] poorly organized, … used to launch an initiative generated by others outside the school, … [and the] sessions had little relevance to the classroom (p. 4).

Experiences such as these resulting from participation in inappropriate models of professional development reinforce for teachers the effectiveness of their own practices developed over many years in the classroom. These practices have their origins in the early years of their career when they developed strategies focused around behaviour management, content knowledge and skills that have enabled them to survive in the classroom. At this later stage of their career they continue to be comfortable with practices that, in their view, already achieve appropriate learning outcomes with students. Being compelled to alter their practice by 'experts' external to their context only increases their resistance to change. Lohman and Woolf (2001) describe this type of behaviour as 'non-learning' and suggest that it 'occurs in those situations where a person responds in a routine way … or rejects the opportunity to learn' (p. 61). One of the consequences for experienced teachers who respond to professional development in this manner is to increase their isolation in a profession that is, at times, characterised as being a lonely profession where teachers spend

26

much of their day working alone in a classroom with any number of students – rather than engaging professionally with peers (other members of staff).

Hargreaves (2000) and Fullan (2007) have long recognised a further consequence of top-down models of change in education for teachers, where '… course-based professional development has been delivered by experts outside the school … many teachers [are] … starting to turn more to each other for professional learning' (Hargreaves 2000, p. 162) using approaches that are collaborative. For many teachers this is a comfortable environment for professional learning to take place in when their sharing of practice is mainly with trusted colleagues, frequently based at their own school, and consists of sharing resources or pedagogical approaches. This model of self-directed learning meets the requirements of experienced teachers referred to earlier in this chapter. It is self-directed, self-initiated, self-managed and located in their own particular environment. However, the following quote from an unknown teacher engaged in research with Fullan in 2007, is still a common sentiment amongst teachers:

> when I die I hope it is during a professional development session because the transition from life to death will be seamless (p. 283).

Convincing experienced teachers that there are better models of professional development that will facilitate meaningful professional learning remains a challenge for the profession.

The challenge of enhancing teachers' perspectives to value professional development programs as a way to enhance their professional learning has been a focus of research on change in education (Carney 2003; Darling-Hammond & Richardson 2009; Duncombe & Armour 2004; Fullan 1993, 2007; Guskey 2002; Hargreaves 2000; Levin & Riffel 1997). Guskey (2002), through his research on changing the practice of experienced teachers through professional development, found that many continue to teach in the ways that they have always taught because:

> … change brings a certain amount of anxiety and can be threatening … and teachers are reluctant to adopt new practices or procedures unless they feel sure they can make them work … (p. 386).

Carney (2003) similarly describes cohorts of experienced teachers and their attitudes toward professional development as teachers who '… [see] themselves as being

under considerable and increasing pressure, largely unrecognised and suffering from low professional esteem' (p. 422) who consider they no longer have anything to learn. When teachers have spent much of their career developing pedagogies that are effective with many of the students they teach, to then ask them to abandon these to try something new, which may not work, is a risk few will undertake. The specific risk and feelings of anxiety for these teachers directly relate to their sense of moral purpose, self-efficacy and professionalism as an experienced member of the teaching profession.

The direct challenge for teachers in responding to change in education could initially be viewed through the lens of power relationships in the classroom between students and teachers, and the self-efficacy of the teacher. Research by Fullan (1993), Levin and Riffel (1997), Lohman and Woolf (2001), and Duncombe and Armour (2004) on the career stages of teaching, identify self-efficacy as an important characteristic of experienced teachers. Experienced teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely take risks in their professional learning through the pursuit of options such as post-graduate studies, engaging in learning opportunities delivered by private providers outside of education, or actively engaging with professional development provided by governments designed to 'up-skill' teachers to pre-determined standards or targets associated with particular policy initiatives. Self-efficacy is also a key facet developed by early-career teachers as they establish themselves in their first years of teaching. To put at risk practices that they have significantly invested in to establish themselves as competent professional teachers will not be easily surrendered to accommodate change in their practice.

Levin and Riffel (1997) suggest 'changes in learning require changes in people's behaviour that must be largely voluntary' (p. 15) that is, they must have significant personal meaning if an experienced professional is going to be prepared to risk changing proven successful classroom practices for others, which may fail and call into question their professionalism and status. For teachers with high levels of self-efficacy, personal values associated with their professionalism may drive them to seek change in order to maintain these values and their moral purpose. According to Fullan these 'teachers never stop learning to teach' (1993, p. 84). Their optimism is based on a belief, which probably influenced their original decision to become a

teacher – that they could make a difference to the lives of the children and young people they teach. They acknowledge that their 'initial Teacher Training on its own, was unlikely to be sufficient to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills they will need for the rest of their careers' (Duncombe & Armour 2004, p. 142). It is through this acknowledgement, that experienced teachers recognise that the Year 9 students they are working with today have different needs to those they taught in the early stages of their career.

Fullan (1993) describes the difference between optimistic teachers who continue to learn professionally, and those who stopped learning once they had completed their four years of teacher training: 'they [optimistic teachers] literally cope with and even grow in the face of the same objective adversity that would destroy others with different mindsets and capacities' (p. 84). Lohman and Woolf (2001), also made similar observations of optimistic experienced teachers in the US who engage in what they describe as 'self-initiated learning'. 'Self-initiated learning activities were defined as experiences that teachers initiated and participated in that, in their perceptions, resulted in the development of their professional knowledge and skills' (p. 60).

Through the research of Lohman andWoolf (2001), three different types of self-initiated learning activities were able to be identified:

> knowledge exchanging, in which teachers shared and reflected on others
> practices and experiences; experimenting with new ideas and techniques;
> and, environmental scanning during which information was gathered from
> sources outside of the school (p. 65).

These preferred learning activities provide greater insight into the types of activities experienced teachers may engage with to achieve change in their practice through self-initiated learning. Achieving meaning and control over professional development and professional learning, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is a pivotal motivational factor for engaging experienced teachers as positively engaged adult learners involved in change.

2.5 Physical Education teacher views of professional development and learning in Western cultural contexts

Research available on the professional development of Physical Education teachers in a Western cultural context has produced a discrete contribution to the literature from countries such as Scotland, Ireland, Greece, England, Australia, New Zealand and the US. Research by Armour and Yelling (2007), support this view that 'there has been relatively little research conducted in which Physical Education teachers and their career-long professional development were the focus of a study' (p. 181). Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997), Keay (2000, 2007), Armour and Yelling (2004), Butler (2005), O'Brien and Jones (2005), Tsangaridou (2005), Attencio, Jess and Dewar (2011), Kougioumtzis, Patriksson and Strahlman (2011), Makapoulou and Armour (2011), Armour, Makopoulou and Chambers (2012) and Casey (2013) also indicate a distinct discrepancy between providers and participants. They identify across their research a noticeable disconnect between what the participants, schools and providers think is important knowledge, and what directly impacts the scope and depth of professional learning accessible to Physical Education teachers.

Professional learning, as defined earlier in this chapter, challenges the cognitive aspects of teachers' work with the capacity to facilitate significant change by uncovering strongly held values and beliefs about physical activity. In this research with experienced Physical Education teachers, being older members of the profession means they have had extensive experiences of professional development and professional learning throughout their careers. Reflection on these experiences during this research may provide further insight into how Physical Education teachers in the later stages of their career have developed their views of professional development and how they construct professional learning in response to their particular context.

According to the literature (Armour 2006; O'Connor & Macdonald 2002; Thorburn 2014), Physical Education teachers often identify that they are at the end of the line when it comes to their field being recognised as a credible, academic part of the curriculum and a legitimate contributor to the development of young people through schooling (O'Connor & Macdonald 2002). This feeling of marginalisation is further illustrated by the professional development most frequently provided for Physical

Education teachers as identified by Makopoulou and Armour (2011) on their research with teachers in Greece, which is driven by a narrow 'performance pedagogy … or coaching orientation' (p. 429).

Contemporary professional development contexts as demonstrated by Wright (2000), Armour (2006), and Armour and Yelling (2007) in research with secondary school Physical Education teachers indicates that teachers are frequently marginalised because they perceive that they are teaching in a non-valued curriculum learning area in a system where curriculum is dominated by the more highly valued areas of literacy and numeracy. This constrained access is coupled with a deficit in opportunity for self-determination by teachers, impacting their ability to choose the professional development that will support their own professional learning aspirations. Armour's research findings provide further evidence of this change because 'physical education teachers tell us that much existing [professional development] is lacking in coherence, relevance … [and] is delivered out of context …' (p. 204). This reflects a significant change as to the purpose of education influenced by the neo-liberal government policies currently dominating Western societies where the focus is on using testing and other methods of data collection to gather evidence demonstrating whether education outcomes are being achieved that will contribute to national growth and prosperity.

Teachers' experiences of change in Western democracies occur both directly through their curriculum and pedagogical work, and indirectly across the systems of education in which they work. In the current context of system change in education a significant shift in power has occurred from teachers and schools to government with regards to decision-making about the provision of professional development. These changes in decision-making have their historical roots in the early 1960s and 1970s when innovation and greater autonomy was given to teachers by governments about what they taught and the ways in which they taught. Researchers such as Davies and Bansel (2007, p. 249) suggest that education became an early target for the newly emerged neo-liberalism 'as a response to some of the more radical and progressive positions being taken in education … at the time'. This neo-liberal discourse centred on the significance of a strong domestic economy projecting strength through national identity onto an international stage, including a change in the ideological

purpose of education to provide an educated workforce for an increasingly knowledge-driven marketplace.

At this time of economic and social change in Western democracies, change to the traditional authority of the teacher was also ocurring. Changes identified by Davies and Bansel (2007) and Hargreaves (2009) coincided with the decline in economic growth for Western democratic countries between the 1970s and 1990s. Prior to this time, student (and worker) rebellions in Paris in the 1960s had challenged the authority of universities in Europe related to issues of self-determination, leading to the subsequent initiation of new education reforms. Reform in education was also taking place in the US and England as 'part of a worldwide shift in control of education away from teachers and towards the state in order to enable the restructuring of economies' (Leat, Lofthouse & Taverner 2006, p. 1). These policy shifts came to be driven by a sense of urgency through governments' aspirations related to economic growth and power, and an increasingly educated community wanting more power through choice who became willing to support such moves. Hargreaves (2004) identified a consequence of this for teachers through their 'treat[ment] and develop[ment] not as high skill, high capacity knowledge workers, but as compliant and closely monitored producers of standardized performance' (p. 17).

Shifts in policy and power have impacted all teachers in various ways, but for teachers of Physical Education it has emphasised their feelings that the professional development being mandated to achieve economic goals is taking them further away from learning that is engaging and meaningful. A consequence of this is to encourage teachers to look to other providers of professional development to meet their needs, through their professional associations such as the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER), or the numerous specific sport development programs that are provided by organisations such as the Australian Football League (AFL) and Cricket Australia. According to Armour (2010) providers of meaningful professional development tailor their learning programs to meet the needs of Physical Education teaching contexts by making connections to curriculum frameworks, providing resources relevant to all standards of schooling, and providing experts in the field who facilitate the programs.

Two other factors identified by Reid (2011) and Casey (2013) can also be attributed to having influenced the increasing disconnect for experienced Physical Education teachers in accessing meaningful professional development. The first relates to the traditional values and beliefs about teaching pedagogies in Physical Education, which find their roots in the historical militaristic approaches used when 'physical fitness' was the dominant value (Reid, 2011). The second relates to the types of professional development for Physical Education teachers positively supported by schools in terms of funding and time to access certification in fields that are valued, such as first aid training that will benefit the whole school. Teachers themselves also reinforce these values and beliefs by continuing to practice pedagogies that are linear, with very specific skill outcomes, and by accessing competency based certification courses to add to their curriculum vitae and improve their employment opportunities (Casey, 2013). Makopoulou and Armour (2011) describe these 'barriers' as being significant in terms of how they restrict 'the Physical Education workforce [from engaging] in meaningful and challenging career-long learning' (p. 418). The impact of these current professional development approaches experienced by Physical Education teachers in Western cultures is to make them 'passive' (Makapoulou & Armour 2011, p. 431) participants in learning about their teaching, or participants who use the formal learning setting to engage in meaningful informal learning with colleagues.

Case study research by Armour, Makopoulou and Chambers (2012) with Physical Education teachers across Ireland, England and Greece sought to identify the nature of effective and ineffective professional development provided at three different career stages. The study raised serious questions about recent developments in education policy that links standards to what Physical Education teachers should know at different points in their career. Amongst the findings of this research was an indication from pre-service Physical Education teachers in Ireland that current professional development provisions do not support their needs for meaningful and progressive experiences (p. 69). While experienced Physical Education teachers in Greece reported that they 'felt they were passive not only in the process of selecting/directing PE/CPD [Physical Education/continuous professional development], but also during CPD [where] they had few opportunities to think for themselves or to generate knowledge' (p. 70). These findings were also reflected in

the English study, with experienced teachers describing a conflict between themselves trying to develop as learners and providers trying to control the learning agenda. Significantly in this particular study, was a view expressed by some professional development providers of the need 'to determine the learning agenda in order to ensure teachers addressed issues that "hit" current educational policy agenda [as being] more important' (p. 73).

Research by Armour, Makapoulou and Chambers (2012) and Casey (2013) further reflects the marginalised position felt by Physical Education teachers in Western democracies as an extension of their position in school curricula hierarchies. They believe they are valued more for their skills and abilities in coaching school sporting teams than as competent professional educators of children and young people, as their colleagues in more valued areas of English and the sciences are. Armour, Makoploulou and Chambers' findings are further evidenced by additional professional development research by Casey with Physical Education teachers working across schools in the United Kingdom (UK). Casey found that 'teachers are crafting their own informal learning opportunities and seem to be making the best of what they see as a bad deal' (p. 87). The 'bad deal' described by these teachers refers to their conscious awareness of professional learning driven by a top-down agenda designed to achieve government policy outcomes rather than addressing the particular teacher learning needs in their specific field of Physical Education.

2.6   What professional development and professional learning looks like in a Physical Education context

Physical education teachers develop as professionals by sustaining a close connection to their own personal values and beliefs, which are further shaped and re-shaped by their own life experiences throughout their careers (O'Bryant, O'Sullivan & Raudensky 2000; O'Sullivan 2006). For some teachers there is a commonly held belief that growth and learning will always be a part of their professional life, but with the growing move toward greater measurement and accountability by governments, professional development decisions are more lately decided away from the work of the teacher. Significant system-wide changes in education such as those currently occurring in Australia through the introduction of a national Australian Curriculum should be taken as an opportunity for teachers to move forward (Brooker

& Macdonald 1995; Penney 2010; Reid 2011). Physical Education teachers should use the changes to regain and further develop the motivating factors that propelled many into teaching as their chosen career. Such motivation is frequently driven by a passion for physical activity, health and wellbeing providing not only a sense of moral purpose through wanting to share these values and beliefs with children and young people, but also inextricably linked with their sense of optimism and self-efficacy as a teacher (Mouton et al. 2013, p. 343).

The participation of Physical Education teachers in deeper professional learning is influenced by a range of factors, some they are extrinsically aware of, while others are intrinsic, and function to block their ability to change pedagogically through learning (O'Sullivan 2006, p. 281). Factors that Physical Education teachers are aware of that serve extrinsically to inhibit their engagement in professional learning have already been discussed in this chapter, such as the historical marginalisation of Physical Education as a curriculum area (Rink 2013, p. 409) and contestation amongst physical educators around curriculum as to which beliefs should be valued. Other intrinsic factors that may also inhibit Physical Education teachers engaging in professional learning include the historical development of Physical Education teaching (Brooker & Macdonald 1995), the socialisation of new teachers (Keay 2009), and their preferred values and beliefs (Attencio, Jess & Dewer 2011). More recently, it is the implementation of new curriculum and teaching standards that will determine much of the professional learning to be undertaken by Physical Education teachers now, and professional development more generally.

Armour and Yelling (2004) in researching the professional learning of experienced Physical Education teachers in England, identified two particular principles for the effective provision of professional learning that will engage teachers:

> involve[ing] teachers [in] identifying their own training needs and
> developing learning experiences to meet those needs; and, teachers [having]
> some autonomy over the choice and direction of their personal development
> (p. 99).

Although these factors have been previously discussed in this chapter, they are of particular relevance in the case of Physical Education teachers who already feel that as a profession they 'lack status in the community [and schools]' (Reid, 2011, p. 83) and are increasingly required to attend mandated professional development that often

lacks direct relevance to their learning area, such as the current focus on literacy and numeracy. An additional complication for providing meaningful professional learning opportunities for Physical Education teachers is the 'duty of care' inherent for all teachers, but that has a higher level of risk and responsibility in a physically active environment when teaching sports such as archery. In teaching such an activity the traditionalist linear approach to teaching supports the safety lesson framework, which is a necessity where the personal safety of the students and teacher must be the first priority. The 'duty of care' responsibility overrides any pedagogical awareness the teacher may have in terms of creating a constructively challenging learning environment for their students. Casey (2013) supports this view by recognising that for Physical Education teachers in England, 'the demands for CPD seem to be exacerbated for the physical education teacher when consideration of pupil's well-being and safety have to be taken into account' (p. 83).

Researchers such as Brooker and Macdonald (1995), Attard and Amour (2006), Armour (2009), Keay (2009), Jung (2012), and Casey (2013) recognise the difficulties for Physical Education teachers in moving beyond a preference for professional development based on a technical-rational approach, to more profound professional learning that will challenge their values and beliefs:

> From the mid nineteenth century the purposes of physical education have included the provision of discipline and social control, games and sport, health and fitness (for both economic and military purposes), personal development, and scientific understandings of movement (Brooker & Macdonald 1995, p. 101).

All of the traditional elements of a Physical Education curriculum as identified by Brooker and Macdonald (1995) influence the professional development provided for teachers in response to their need to update their own skills and knowledge and to also respond to their concerns about social issues such as the health and wellbeing of their students. Jung (2012) describes this as a stage in the career development of Physical Education teachers when they 'develop teaching expertise, [and] their focus shifts from what they are doing toward what their students are doing' (p. 171), particularly as they become more aware of the 'ethical, social and political consequences of their actions' (p. 172). The values and beliefs that originally motivated people to become Physical Education teachers, such as life-long engagement in physical activity, continue to keep them anchored to professional

development that may not only teach them new physical activity skills, but also help them sustain their own physical abilities and skill standards. Keay (2009) suggests that this 'relative power of the physical education culture may be reasons for the lack of change and development in the subject' (p. 226).

How teachers respond to the introduction of new curriculum standards and testing has been the focus of research by Macdonald, Mitchell and Meyer (2006), (particularly for Physical Education teachers), and by Brookfield (1995). As previously mentioned, such significant educational change is currently occurring in Australian schools with the introduction of an Australian curriculum, and a focus on literacy and numeracy standards. Consequently, professional development is being driven by government policy requiring teachers to become familiar with the new curriculum they will teach and the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) standards to be achieved through national testing. This increasing government control also extends to who in the teaching profession will be supported to participate in professional learning at any point in time.

In the initial development of the Australian curriculum, four subjects – English, mathematics, science and history were identified for implementation during the first phase in 2010. Health and Physical Education was not identified for implementation until 2013, during Phase three, reflecting the lack of status that has been evident 'throughout its history' according to Reid (2011, p.89), Penney (2010) and Macdonald (2013). The 'shaping paper' for Health and Physical Education was released to teachers and educators for consultation in 2012, and advocated a change in curriculum and teaching direction towards a 'futures-oriented' curriculum. According to Macdonald, Health and Physical Education should:

> take a strengths-based approach; focus on educative outcomes; develop health literacy skills; value learning in, about and through movement; and include an inquiry-based approach (p. 95).

The professional development implications for teachers of Physical Education could be challenging or 'provide [a positive learning] environment where colleagues with the same interests and subject expertise can discuss specific issues relating to teaching their subject (Keay 2009, p. 228).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the particular challenge for teachers of Physical Education is to change their approach and attitude to professional development from discussions focused on new knowledge and skills to a deeper critical reflection on how they teach, why they teach in that way, and what the implications are for student learning outcomes (Armour 2009; Jung 2012). The introduction of a new curriculum for teachers of Physical Education provides an opportunity to '… refocus … on themselves as life-long learners …' (Armour 2009, p. 12)

The broader impact of the increase in control and accountability of education by the Australian Government echoes trends in education systems across the Western world that demonstrates a marketisation of schooling, which continues to impact the professional learning of Physical Education teachers. This chapter has recognised the marginalisation of Physical Education , as well as the exacerbation of this situation through the delayed entry of the learning area into the Australian Curriculum without any direct connection to the literacy and numeracy priorities. Through this current research, where the focus is on understanding how six experienced Physical Education teachers continue to engage in professional learning, an insight may be gained into how they construct and sustain their motivation and interest. Penney (2010), Reid (2011), and Macdonald (2013) recognised an opportunity for all teachers of Physical Education to move from being technically developed teachers to becoming reflective professional learners through the construction of a new curriculum and by responding to the dominant quality teaching discourse in Australia.

For Physical Education teachers to meet the challenges raised, professional development providers using models based on the effective principles of adult learning could support such change. Physical education teachers themselves would also benefit from their own personal reflections about why they entered the profession, identifying what currently inhibits change in their practice while recognising that teachers who do change initiate their own professional learning.

CHAPTER 3:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

> Viewing people as though they were simply for or against 'change' – as innovators or dinosaurs – is to miss a great deal (Hammersley 2000, p. 40).

The aim of this research is to develop an understanding of the uptake of professional learning by experienced Physical Education teachers in a context of mandated professional development. The choice of an interpretive paradigm for this study has been informed by the use of research methods influenced by an ethnomethodological approach in the gathering (and analysis) of data. By employing an interpretivist paradigm to orientate this research in education, an opportunity for change is provided. This would not only produce additional knowledge and understanding as would be the case in using a positivist approach, but create a change that is self-transformative for the research participants. This chapter uses an interpretivist paradigm thereby providing a voice for the small group of teachers who contributed to this research, in turn providing liberation to enable and encourage changes in the political environment that seeks to manage and purposefully direct changes in this important area.

3.1   The interpretive framework

Qualitative researchers in education, such as Sarantakos (2005), Schwandt (2003) and Walsham (1995) have explored an ontology influenced by an interpretive paradigm. They are interested in understanding the experiences of the research participants in the world in which they work, and how they construct meaning from their situation. Researchers using such an approach seek to develop closeness with the nature of the world, become familiar with what constrains the behaviours of their research participants, and so develop an understanding of the political and cultural influences acting upon them.

According to Schwandt (2003), interpretivists adhere to the purpose of becoming familiar with the world of the participants by using an approach such as ethnomethodology, allowing the researcher to become a part of their environment, such as a school. The framework is then provided through which the researcher can immerse themselves to obtain meaningful insights, allowing for reconstruction

through reflexivity so that they can 'understand how social reality, everyday life is constituted in conversation and interaction' (Schwant, p. 192).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Hall and Hoard (2001), describe the interpretivist paradigm as being more than simply dealing with observable behaviours – it stresses unearthing and describing the interpretations and meaning that people attach to each action, event, or concept. What is important to researchers is the natural world of their research participants, what makes it unique, and what the particular concerns are for each individual.

Qualitative research methods using an interpretivist paradigm facilitate the collection of relevant information with the intent of being able to analyse, interpret and theorise the lived experiences of the participants as to how they build knowledge and make changes in their lives. In applying an interpretivist approach to this qualitative study the participants are placed at the centre of the research through the gathering and analysis of data that will contribute to a particular body of knowledge on how teachers experience and engage in professional development.

One of the methods used by the interpretive researcher is the development of case studies described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) as a design employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and meaning for those participants involved. Case study methods will be explored more fully in Chapter 4, but for an interpretive researcher the interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than an analysis of specific variables, in discovery rather than confirmation as favoured by positivist researchers.

Engaging in reflexivity throughout the research also provides a process to critically reflect on how I am bringing my own social and cultural histories to my understanding of the construction of knowledge and meaning by the research participants in this study. The research process in this study is emergent, as is the development of greater understanding about how teachers continue to engage in meaningful professional learning within the constraints placed on them by government policy.

3.2 Self-knowledge through interpretive research

The purpose of this study is to seek to explore the lives of teachers who purposefully reflect on their own practice to bring about change, and resist the easy option determined by policy makers based on performance standards for teachers describing what a 'quality teacher' should look like. The influence of ethnomethodology in this research has the intent of developing knowledge through awareness of how knowledge is constructed through personal social/culture histories by the participants. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Potter (1996) identify ethnomethodology and case study research as two of the predominant methodologies used by qualitative researchers within an interpretive paradigm. Ethnomethodology in particular is seen by Potter as 'a methodology focused on the study of how people make sense out of everyday life' (p. 53).

As is the case in this particular research, a favoured method of data collection using ethnomethodology is through interview leading to the development of case studies. Such communications between the researcher and the participants helps the researcher to uncover how the participants construct meaning that influences their behaviour in a particular context.

The type of knowledge developed using such a methodology provides a practical understanding of the world of the participants that the researcher can then interpret. In this research it is important to gain an understanding of how and why some experienced Physical Education teachers continue to change their practice when others in their particular context do not.

Hammersley (2000) states that 'in recent years the focus of [qualitative research] … has often been on the experience of teachers who are on the receiving end of successive waves of education reform' (p. 395), but it is not the intent of this study to goad the research participants into a form of political action as critical theorists would contend. This research seeks to use the naturalistic ontology of qualitative research to gain an insight and understanding of the teacher's experiences, by raising consciousness about educators and how they are constructed, and the subsequent influence on their practice in the classroom.

In using an interpretive research framework for this study an opportunity is provided to gain insights into the 'real-world settings' (Patton 2002) of the participants, and to develop an understanding for the researcher of their experiences and understandings of the political context in which they work through the communications that take place. Hence, the researcher does not measure the performance of the participants, but rather seeks to understand how and why they react with their world in the ways they do, and how they make sense of their professional lives.

3.3   The purpose of understanding

By using an interpretive framework for this research, an opportunity is provided in the context of teacher professional learning to provide for a microanalysis of a small group of teachers, as described by Comstock (1982), and their engagement in meaningful professional learning. A criticism of interpretivist research is an inability to validate findings through science, and therefore raising a difficulty in laying claim to any truths, natural or otherwise.

Positivist researchers overcome this as they objectify their research by remaining remote to the social and cultural influences that determine how people act and respond to their natural environment. In keeping with this approach of distancing themselves from the subjects of their research, they do not accept that a purpose for their research could be to support the participants to engage in action that enables them to make better informed decisions about their lives. Quantifying the professional learning experiences of teachers does not allow for their voice to be heard in a way that communicates any real meaning and intent for change when they return to the classroom. Comstock (1982) describes positivist methods as a 'process that objectifies the human subjects of an investigation by treating their behaviour as raw data which is external to the scientific enterprise' (p. 371). The participants become part of the numerical data where the values and beliefs that influence their behaviour and frame their social and cultural worlds are ignored.

For an interpretive researcher, any moment in time captured through research gives a glimpse both forward and backward as to what will influence and has influenced change in the behaviours of the research participants. In a school context this is essential given the constantly changing dynamics in a classroom, the continual

change to the reform agenda impacting on pedagogical practice, and the particular processes and structures in the school and its community that 'give rise to particular understandings that presently serve to reinforce or maintain meanings, values and motives' (Comstock 1982, p. 382).

At a time in education that is dominated by constructivist teaching pedagogies, denying the social and historical construction of the lives of teachers when engaging them in their own professional learning, as the positivist researchers would have, perpetuates the 'done to' model of professional development described by Leat, Lofthouse and Taverner (2006) as being so often the experience of teachers. It is through the use of an interpretivist framework in this research that teachers who will help us to uncover the social and historical processes that have shaped them as learners that may influence future policy for teacher professional development are able to be involved.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) '… positivist criteria … reproduce only a certain kind of science, a science that silences too many voices' (p. 15) thereby supporting the view by Gage (1989) that 'the search for scientifically grounded ways to understand and improve teaching has led nowhere' (p. 4). The purpose of this current research is to give a voice to teachers so that they may be heard in developments such as professional standards for teachers so that teaching regains its status as a quality profession rather than a standardised workforce.

3.4   Interpretive research in education

This process of developing human self-understanding through using an interpretive framework enables the researcher to engage the participants in a critical reflection of both their personal and professional lives with understanding of the former freeing their professional selves to act in ways that align with that which they value. McIsaac (1996) identifies 'self-knowledge' or 'self-reflection' as involving an interest in the way one's history and biography has expressed itself in the way one sees oneself, one's roles and social expectations (p. 1).

Chapter 2 showed that Blackmore (1999), Day (2000), Fullan (2001, 2009), Hargreaves (2000, 2004) and Hattie (2003) all sought to portray the lived reality of teacher's work in a world where schools are increasingly impacted by neoliberal

policy influences. As researchers they have sought 'to place [the] actions of teachers in a wider context that is limited by these economic, political, and ideological forces, forces that might otherwise remain unacknowledged' (Schofield-Clark 2010, p. 1).

The aim of using an interpretivist framework in this study is to be able to provide authentic accounts of 'negotiated understandings of people's social situations in order to assist them in self-reflection and thereby to seek improvements in their understandings and situations' (Smith & Speedy 2003, p. 243) and contribute to this body of research. In using this approach, the continual transformation of the lives of the teachers will become evident through ongoing communication with the researcher, and the influence of reflexivity as understandings are uncovered and future possibilities for action are shared and considered.

3.5   Situating the researcher

In accessing the research participants in their worksites, the researcher is able to gain a closer insight into their professional world. By using qualitative methods for data collection, such as interviewing, reviewing field notes/memos, and reviewing documents, the researcher is able to validate their analysis and reflection throughout the research process. The act of bringing about or influencing change by the researcher is possible through the researcher's reflexivity where the researcher brings their analysis of the data together with their knowledge from research that then supports the teachers to be more reflective as they gain greater understandings of their own actions.

It is important in the context of research framed through interpretivism that the researcher is able to make visible the 'ethical and political questions which arise from relations between the researcher and the researched that are implicit to the research agenda' (Shacklock & Smyth 1998, p. 7). Reflexivity in research allows for such critical reflection on the research process in an effort by the researcher to honestly portray their influences on the participants, and also of the participants on the researcher, as the process unfolds and emerges.

Gergen and Gergen (2000) describe reflexivity as an emerging innovation in methodology through which the researcher 'reveals his or her work as historically, culturally, and personally situated' (p. 1028). Grace, Levinson and Tripp writing in

Being reflexive in critical educational and social research (Shacklock & Smyth (eds) 1998), describe how the researcher becomes critically reflective during the research process and the impact of this on their interactions with the research participants, and their subsequent role in the research process that is thus described as a 'reflexive' role.

McIsaac (1996) demonstrates how Habermas, a leading critical theorist, recognised the reflexive processes of critique as being fundamental to the development of modern forms of knowledge through research. This concept portrayed by Habermas in relation to the use of knowledge for the freedom of individuals complements this current research and is addressed in later chapters of this thesis through the insights provided by the teachers in this study.

CHAPTER 4:
RESEARCH METHODS

> The giving of one's story is a deeply valued gift. The researcher has a
> responsibility to care for and respect that gift and to use it as it was intended,
> that others may benefit from the participants story (Donalek 2005, p. 125).

The research methods used in this study is interpretive and qualitative using an
emergent design structure where the methods have only been constrained by the
participants' workplaces and the busyness of their work. This thesis will report on
the research, and provide a context in which to discuss the provision of appropriate
professional learning for experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education. An
interpretive approach to the research has allowed me, as the researcher, to become a
part of the school environment as I immersed myself in the participants' settings to
obtain meaningful insights. Hall and Hord (2001) describe the interpretivist paradigm
as being more than simply dealing with observable behaviours – it stresses
unearthing and describing the interpretations and meaning that people attach to each
action, event, or concept.

4.1   Qualitative research paradigm

The research approach of Stark and Torrance (2005) undertaken in this study drew
upon traditional educational research methods of collective case study (Stake 1994)
from the qualitative research paradigm, with the six cases initially aggregated as
demonstrated by the cross case themes Interview 2 (Appendix12). Qualitative
research methods influenced by the interpretivist paradigm were used to facilitate the
collection of relevant information. the intent was to analyse, interpret and theorise
about the lived experiences of the participants in their building of professional
knowledge in the field of Physical Education and the changes they have made in
their practice or approach to physical activity.

Patton (2002) describes the strategy of qualitative research as one that has an
emergent design flexibility that is open to adaptation as understanding deepens and
situations change. This type of design strategy assists the researcher to avoid being
locked into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness and pursue new paths of
discovery as they emerge. (Patton, p. 40)

4.2　Case study approach

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe case study methodology as a design employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation.

Using a case study approach in this research provided an in-depth understanding of the particular situation and offers personal and useful manifestations and insights (Hakim 1987; Merriam 1998; Patton 2002; Stark & Torrance 2005) into the phenomenon of interest. Such insights provided through this research study as demonstrated by the draft case study outline for Frank (Appendix 11) facilitate an opportunity to motivate and influence change in the teaching practice of experienced teachers in Physical Education in particular, and possibly initiate future research in this field.

Carney's (2003) case study research with experienced teachers acknowledges that 'teacher's professional development is a complex and problematic phenomenon.' (p. 426). Carney establishes that 'professional development must be located close to the classroom, resourced and championed by the school', but most significantly 'teachers must desire and look for opportunities to develop, and be encouraged to do so' (p. 426).

4.3　Semi-structured interviews

In this research study, motivating teachers to examine their own practice was addressed through the process of semi-structured interviews (Appendices 4,5 & 6) through which I, as the researcher, have been able to identify aspects of their current professional learning by asking questions such as:

- How do experienced teachers engage with professional learning in the field of

  Physical Education?

- How do experienced teachers understand change in their daily practice?
- What do experienced teachers currently see as their biggest challenge in
  teaching Physical Education?

The semi-structured interviews were also used to establish the participants' understanding of 'professional knowledge' as occurred in the first interviews (Appendix 4); whether they support the interpretation by Schempp et al. that 'pedagogical content knowledge is composed of: knowledge of student's conceptions of the content, curriculum, teaching strategies, and purposes for teaching' (1998, p. 1). And whether, as teachers of Physical Education they also concur that:

> in a practical sense, it [professional knowledge] represents a class of
> knowledge that is central to teacher's work and that would not typically be
> held by non-teaching subject matter experts or by teachers who know little
> of that subject (1998, p. 1).

I purposefully selected six experienced secondary Physical Education teachers who had been teaching for more than 15 years for this research. Interviews with the participants focused on situation, process, context and discovery (Appendices 4, 5 & 6), as did participants' field notes in relation to self-reflection and change. The collection of data for this study relied on a selection of tools including participant interviews and field notes, and researcher memos and field notes (Appendix 7) to provide clarity and trustworthiness in the data gathering process.

4.4   Research limitations

This study is limited to schools and teachers in DECD in South Australia directly involved in this research.

4.5   Data collection techniques

This study used the following methods of qualitative data collection to gather information to gain an intensive description and construct an analysis of the ways in which some teachers with 15 years' experience in the field of Physical Education use and engage with professional knowledge:

- field notes and memos (researcher and participants) (Appendix 7)
- semi-structured interviews conducted at the beginning and approximately every six months over the two years of the research (research participants) The interviews (Appendices 4, 5 & 6) began with a single opening question linked to an emergent theme in the research, and were then based on a planned series of

questions focusing on different parts of an issue in the research (Donalek 2005, p. 124)

- document analysis (researcher).

The interviews occurred over the two years of the research determined by the impact of the calendared school terms and holidays on the availability of the teacher participants.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews provided opportunities for both participant and researcher to investigate the participants' comprehension of their experiences Dilley (2004, p. 128). The research program also included a cycle of reliability checks and periods for reviewing the suitability of the research tools used together with opportunities to review initial analyses of the data and the retention of links to the original research questions using a content summary form. The contact summary form (Appendix 8) was developed from Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative research methods, which included steps in qualitative data analysis using a tool called a 'contact summary sheet' (p. 51). Although they proposed that the questions are used to get at 'the essence of the data set' it can also be used, as was the case in this research, as 'a rapid, practiced way to do first-run data reduction … [while also] captur[ing] thoughtful impressions and reflections' (p. 52). The first-run analysis also provides a useful tool to surface any issues or questions for further clarification in successive interviews.

More specifically, the schedule of interviews was constructed to allow for three interviews with each of the participants over the two years of the research. To enhance the opportunity for data to be reliably analysed for all interviews with the six participants, I conducted the interviews every four to six months, leaving sufficient time for transcription (Appendix 9) and analysis (Appendices 8, 10 & 12) of each of the interviews before commencement of the next series.

4.5.2 Emergent themes

Stake (1994) indicates that a case study approach to research is usually organised around a small number of research questions, which are then developed into 'thematic lines' or common 'emergent themes' as described by Donalek and

Soldwisch (2004). Conducting semi-structured interviews with the research participants at the beginning and during the period of the research allowed for these emergent themes (Appendix 12) to be realised, and these then informed the focus of each subsequent phase of the research (Appendices 5 & 6).

The initial theme for the first phase of this research emerged from a first run analysis of the interview transcripts using the contact summary form (Appendix 8). This data gave an indication of the participants' understanding of professional knowledge in both a technical, skills-based sense, and also in terms of their understanding of teaching pedagogy.

It was also during the analysis of this data from the first interview that individual educational values, beliefs and practices began to become apparent. On-going analysis of the data from the individual participant transcripts (Appendix 10) continued to inform the development of common key research questions across the group, and the emergence of specific questions for individuals (Appendices 5 & 6). These more specific individualised questions enabled the collection of further information, or assisted in the clarification of data already provided in prior interviews by the participants, as occurred in Interviews 2 and 3 (Appendices 5 & 6).

Clarity in identification of the emergent themes was achieved throughout this study by using triangulation processes from the data collected (Shenton 2004; Stake 1994) as semi-structured interviews in conjunction with the researcher's field notes and memos.

4.5.3 Journals

Research participants were asked to keep a reflective journal during the time of their involvement in this study. The purpose of these journals was to provide a 'rigorous documentary' tool (Denzin & Lincoln 2000) for the participants to find meaning and learning (Bain et al. 2002) from their experiences during the study using reflective practices, and the changes they made. The participants would then be able to identify aspects of their work that they found important and useful for the semi-structured interview during field visits by the researcher.

Creswell (2007) and Spalding and Wilson (2002) identify this method of data collection as one that teacher research participants find difficult to engage with for a

range of reasons, such as a lack of time, a feeling of risk by making public their thoughts and reflections about their professional practice, and the difficulties they may experience in being challenged by the research process. This aspect of the research is discussed in more detail in later chapters.

4.5.4 Researcher field notes

In this research study field notes kept by myself (Appendix 7) as the researcher facilitated reflexivity in the study, as discussed in Chapter 3, where situating the researcher in interpretive research becomes an important element in the context of the research process and analysis of the data.

Gergen and Gergen (2000) and Shacklock and Smyth (1998) support the view that reflexivity is the conscious revelation of the role of the beliefs and values held by the researcher in the selection of research methodology and for knowledge generation and its production as a research account (Smyth, p. 7). Being reflexive in this research process and in the interpretation of the data is a way of ensuring honesty and recognising the ethical complexities in this type of research (Appendix 10).

4.5.5 Data Sources

In identifying the participants for the research sample, selection focused on those who would offer the greatest opportunity to learn from, were accessible, and from whom the most could be learnt (Patton 2002; Stake 1994). Patton (2002) identifies this process as 'purposeful sampling', which enables the selection of information-rich cases (Tsangaridou & O'Sullivan 1997) and whose subsequent study has been able to illuminate the research questions in this study. In the context of this research all of the participants had participated in professional learning workshops that I had facilitated in my professional work related role as a project officer with the DECD Curriculum Unit in South Australia. During these workshops each of the participants demonstrated a high level of motivation in their pursuit of professional learning, and were subsequently approached, and invited, to participate in this research.

This purposeful sample of six participants focused on the selection of three male and three female secondary school Physical Education teachers with more than 15 years' teaching experience in the field. This has ensured an equitable gender ratio for the sample of cases in response to the higher prevalence of male Physical Education

teachers in secondary schools. The sample also addressed the issue of a demographic range with three participants teaching in rural secondary schools and three in metropolitan schools that were geographically accessible to the researcher. Participants were selected from sites demonstrating the additional demographic characteristics of high index of disadvantage, girls only enrolment, middle years only enrolment, and traditional secondary school encompassing Years 8–12 in both rural and metropolitan sites.

4.5.6 Sample criteria

The sample met the following criteria:

- Extensive data was collected from six secondary teacher participants with at least 15 years' teaching experience in the field of Physical Education.
- Participants were sought from a variety of secondary schools in the metropolitan and geographically accessible rural areas providing a range of demographics.
- All participants had current registration with the South Australian Teachers Registration Board.
- All participants were currently teaching in the area of Physical Education in a secondary state school.
- All participants held qualifications, and were trained, in the area of Physical Education.
- Participants indicated a commitment to engage in the research for two years.
- Participants agreed to discuss their learning with a critical friend.
- It was desirable that the participants showed a commitment to professional learning (through attendance at conferences, or professional development sessions and reading journals or professional newsletters in their field).
- It was desirable that participants show openness to changing pedagogies and a willingness to discuss their thoughts.

It was anticipated that participants would have a long-term commitment to an investigation of their own pedagogical practice, and a commitment to teaching children and young people in the field of Physical Education.

4.6   Ethics

It was desirable that I (as the researcher) was not involved in any formal working relationship with any of the participants, and essential that I treated the information offered by them as I became immersed in their working-life experiences as confidential. This information was communicated to the participants through the provision of a 'Participant Information Package' (Appendix 1) detailing the purpose, process and their role in the research. It was also vital that I became aware of their own preconceptions, values and beliefs, while temporarily relinquishing my own perspective so I could objectively enter their world (Appendices 2 & 7). As the researcher, I needed to be sensitive to all their work contexts and all the variables within, including the physical settings, the people, the overt and covert agendas, and nonverbal behaviour (Lincoln & Guba 2000).

In this qualitative study, as the researcher, I had to be sensitive to the biases inherent in this type of research. Researchers bring with them a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people's constructions or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied. The final product of this type of study is yet another interpretation by the researcher of others' views filtering through my own as portrayed by Lincoln and Guba (2000). 'Any [researcher's] gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity … there are no objective observations' (p. 19).

4.7   Data analysis

Data analysis techniques used in this study focused on several areas to develop the first and subsequent phases of the research to provide authenticity to the interpretation of the data (Merriam 1998):

1. Common viewpoints were collated to support the emergence of themes and an understanding of what the participants experienced while participating in the research (Appendix 8).

2. Analysis of interview transcripts (Appendix 12) proceeded throughout the research process where excerpts were categorised and used to establish connecting threads and patterns within these categories (Seidman 1998). It was through the process of

identifying these connections that the themes of the research emerged to inform each phase of the research (Appendix 7).

3. Identification of key features of change throughout the study were established through the use of my own memos that provided opportunity, as the researcher, to reflect on what was being observed, to reflect critically about issues that emerged (Merriam 1998) and determine possible themes that responded to the research questions (Appendix 6).

4. Development of individual case studies (Appendix 11) from analysis of the interview transcripts have been referenced in this thesis using the participants' name, interview number and transcript page number from which a quote has been cited.

4.7.1 Particular considerations

As the researcher, I had 'an obligation to provide enough detailed description of the study's context to enable readers to compare the 'fit' with their own situations Merriam (1998, p. 211). This collective case study research was interactive and collaborative, as I became an invited participant in the world of the research participants while they attempted to make sense of their practice and as such, issues of confidentiality were addressed with every attempt having been made to disguise identity without altering their stories (Donalek 2005).

Informed consent (Appendix 2) was obtained from the participants and, to access the site of the research, those whose permission was needed (Cohen & Manion 1994, p. 354), such as the principals of the sites where the participants were teaching. The package of information provided to the participants also addressed an option for them to refuse to answer questions, or reschedule the interview without consequence (Appendix 3).

4.7.2 Researcher bias

In analysing the data I needed to be aware of my own biases. By referring any analysis back to the research participants as much accuracy and trustworthiness (Tsangaridou & O'Sullivan 1997), as was possible has been maintained. Participants were invited to check the reliability of the data in two ways after each field visit to provide opportunity to clarify, elaborate, or suggest changes to the interview

transcripts and again after these were transposed into case narratives for authenticity of interpretation (Tsangaridou & O'Sullivan 1997, p. 7).

4.7.3 Participant withdrawal

Participants were able to withdraw from the research at any time during the study and were aware that such an option was available at any time (Appendix 1). Securing such an understanding with the participants ensured that only those who were genuinely willing to be involved took part and were prepared to offer data freely (Shenton 2004, p. 66).

4.7.4 Research dissemination

Dissemination of this research provides its own ethical issues, given that it is intended that an outcome of this work is to provide a point of leverage for impact on the policy development of DECD, teacher training universities and other professional communities to redress current gaps in the development of professional knowledge with experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education.

4.8   Special features

This research used a collective case study approach working with teachers to support them to change their practice and provide meaningful/authentic evidence with the intent of influencing DECD policy development in the area of professional learning.

In 2005 a draft paper entitled *A Professional Learning Framework* stated it:

> is committed to strengthening the professionalism of educators and recognized that the single most important factor that makes a difference to the learning outcomes of all students is the educator (Department of Education and Children's Services 2005a).

However, the DECD Quality Teaching Team established to do this work, and provide teachers with an appropriate professional learning framework, was disbanded in 2005. This research will provide an exemplar of rich data demonstrating processes to support teachers to change their pedagogy in the field of Physical Education and the implicit capacity building it will also provide through the use of critical reflection. This work will be unique through its demonstration of professional learning that is not only a profound learning experience for the participants, but will also impact on other educators and build capacity at their sites. It will also impact on

the students with whom they work, and provide a supportive environment in which experienced physical educators can re-examine their values and beliefs in the complex environment surrounding the engagement of children and young people in Physical Education.

CHAPTER 5:
CASE STUDIES

5.1 Frank's story

Frank was a sport coordinator in an outer metropolitan secondary school with an enrolment of over 900 students. He had the additional role of the co-ordinator of specialist Physical Education and sport programs across several secondary schools in his district. Frank's school supported specialist sports programs across the year levels, which in the junior school meant that Physical Education was offered over and above the basic South Australian Health and Physical Education curriculum requirement of 120 minutes per week. It provided additional support to students participating in sport at an elite level with demanding training requirements by making flexible curriculum arrangements. It also provided Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs for students in the senior school giving them a direct pathway to employment in the sport and recreation industries.

At the time of Frank's interviews one third of the students were supported in their attendance by government funding (in South Australia designated as School Card students). The schools' demographic included a mix of ethnic groups, of which the largest was Anglo-Celtic.

In this case study, I summarise some of the key issues raised by Frank regarding his and his colleagues' professional learning. Throughout the interviews he demonstrated a concerted and continuing passion to provide meaningful support to other experienced teachers regarding their practice in the new world of accountability and quality teaching.

I had come to know Frank through my previous work as a project officer with DECD in 2004, when his school was selected as one of 10 to participate in a three-year project. The project supported teachers to change their practice using critical reflection to achieve the key outcome of increased levels of engagement in physical activity for all of the children and young people at their schools. Frank's school, a secondary specialist sport school, was one of 10 selected to participate in the *be active Let's Go* (baLG) project of 2004–2006, and was featured in its final report

(Burnett, Baldock & Smith 2007) as a school that achieved the key project goal of increasing student physical activity levels.

As discussed in Chapter 2, emerging research in the field of professional learning and change with experienced Physical Education teachers, although 'sparse' (Barker & Rossi 2011), is beginning to recognise the importance of understanding issues unique to their teaching context, particularly how the profession sees itself in a world of increasing standardisation and accountability in teaching. For teachers in Australia such as Frank, the pressure is increasing to engage in professional learning through the development of national teaching standards developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2011). The sixth standard '… suggests that teachers should identify their own learning needs, evaluate and analyse their own practice, participate in professional discussion and engage in research' (p. 20).

Throughout the literature on change in education, teachers frequently identify the need for a context that is meaningful, provides them with a level of autonomy to make decisions about their own learning, and gives them an opportunity to reflect on their current teaching context through identification of their individual needs. These principles resonate in the findings of Jarvis (1987), Faucette et al. (2002),Watson (2005) and Meirnik et al. (2009) where teachers, as adult learners, prefer a professional development context that gives them control and allows them to implement a model that suits their own learning needs. Participation in the baLG project provided such a structure for Frank and his colleagues where they recognised 'a valuable opportunity to develop and implement programs to effectively engage students in physical activity' (Burnett, Baldock & Smith 2007, p. 73).

5.1.1 Professional learning and experienced Physical Education teachers

Research on educational change often occurs in response to the changing social context in which the system undergoing change is located. This research examines how experienced Physical Education teachers, in particular, are or are not supported to respond to this constant change. In the case of Frank, the opportunity to participate in a three-year project where intensive professional learning support was provided to teachers to change their practice in their own context enhanced its value for him.

Goodyear, Casey and Kirk (2013) claim that a key area of tension for Physical Education teachers is that they find it difficult to reflect on practice and engage in inquiry, unlike their peers in other learning areas:

> Physical education teachers rarely constructively or meaningfully reflect on their teaching (p. 23).

This limits their effective engagement with change processes offered through professional learning. In sharing the professional learning story of Frank, it may be possible to identify some of the difficulties that are unique to the field of Physical Education (as claimed by Goodyear, Casey & Kirk) and gain some understanding about how professional learning may be restructured to meet their particular needs.

The premise of this particular case study is based on the view that professional learning offered by the system is currently not meeting the learning needs of experienced secondary school Physical Education teachers. In researching this premise, a key focus has been to gain an understanding of what motivates experienced physical education teachers, like Frank, to continue to seek professional learning opportunities.

5.1.2 The case study context

During the first phase of the research, participants were asked to provide a definition of professional knowledge together with identification of their educational values, beliefs and practices. Through analysis of this data, evidence was sought as to whether the participants supported the interpretations by Schemp et al. (1998) that 'pedagogical content knowledge is composed of: knowledge of student's conceptions of the content, curriculum, teaching strategies, and purposes for teaching (p. 1). Frank's response to this initial question was to provide a definition for technical knowledge in a Physical Education context as being about:

> how you transfer skills and knowledge to the kids and they demonstrate them back in a practical sense (Interview 1:5[2]).

Frank's technical definition was based on the transference of skills and knowledge by the teacher to the students who demonstrate their learning through practical

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[2] The interviews are referenced using the 'Interview 1:5' format, indicating that this quote came from page 5 of the transcription from Interview 1.

application. His pedagogical knowledge, however, was clearly connected to his values and beliefs about supporting and celebrating success with all students by '[being] sensitive to the outcome for kids' (Interview 1:7). Frank's perception was that whatever pedagogy he used in his teaching there would be an impact on students who were highly motivated to be physically active and equally on students who had poor self-esteem. He connected effective pedagogy with assessment outcomes for students, giving an example to demonstrate:

> There's always the concern that the assessment we are giving will reinforce to the good kids that they're really good and they know that and reinforces [to] those that aren't good that they're still not any good. 'You're still there at that level and that's pathetic and you shouldn't even try'.
>
> That's the message we're giving them (Interview 1:7).

His pedagogical dilemma was to provide experiences for students that were appropriate to their standard of expertise and experience while also providing an opportunity for them to demonstrate improvement through assessment rather than being identified as a low-level achiever.

Frank was also acutely aware as to how the teaching environment had changed in other ways that affected the profession generally, and more specifically through new challenges as they sought to engage disinclined students in physical activity. He explained:

> I don't think methodology, curriculum and resources have kept up with the need for change, but I think that students who are expecting, if they are going to do physical activity we are going to do it in a degree of comfort and they don't necessarily want to sweat (Interview 3:5).

His impression was that students were expecting facilities that were more comfortable and attractive as a reward for expending physical effort, and it was the responsibility of teachers to meet these expectations.

While recognising that the expectations of students had changed over time, Frank was acutely aware of the lack of change he had observed in his colleagues, particularly after returning to teaching from a break of eight years:

> The staff had got older, the resources were the same and getting dated, but the kids had lost that respect for authority and that was Generation Y
>
> … the kids are all in your face.

60

'I don't want to do that. I don't want to do that …'

The staff for me that was a shock, it wasn't that the staff had aged it was that they had gradually got beaten down and weren't adapting the methodologies to Generation Y (Interview 2:11).

Although the physical environment had changed for teaching Physical Education, with many schools such as Frank's having gymnasiums and access to more sophisticated equipment, his main concern was that the curriculum had shown little change; nor had the pedagogies used by his colleagues. This inability of teachers to change was leaving them out of step with the students in their classes, which may have been a contributing factor towards the lack of engagement and respect Frank was observing.

The context for this research highlighted some of the issues faced by Frank at this moment in time, but during our interviews he also raised factors that could continue to change the teaching and learning environment for this school into the future. One such issue was his concern about future staffing in Physical Education that would make it even more difficult to continue with the provision of specialised sporting programs at the school. As he said:

I am probably on the precipice of losing three quarters of my faculty in terms of their skill.

Because without the specialist teachers from before I can't offer the specialist sport programs (Interview 2:26).

Staff at Frank's school were either retiring from the profession, moving to another school as their tenure expired or were taking leave to pursue other interests away from teaching for an extended period of time. As a government school, staffing was generally managed by a centralised DECD Human Resources unit allowing the administrators at the school only limited influence in determining the allocation of teachers to their staff. If a Physical Education teacher with expertise at an elite level in a sport such as volleyball left, the school could request a like replacement from DECD, but could not identify and select a suitable replacement themselves.

These contextual issues of decreasing change in student engagement and decreasing connection of his colleagues to teaching had an impact on Frank's ability as a leader to engage his colleagues in ongoing professional learning when their interests were declining in response to changes that were occurring in their careers and personal

lives. They also emphasised Frank's professional isolation as an ongoing learner constantly seeking to locate new ways to connect meaningfully with students and colleagues at his school, as well as across the local education district.

5.1.3 Frank's professional learning experience

Early in the research process, it became clear that Frank was able to identify a range of factors that both motivated and frustrated his engagement in professional learning. One such motivating factor related to how he reflected on his break from teaching as having contributed to his motivation for ongoing professional learning particularly on his return after an eight-year break. He highlighted this by recalling his initial response:

> … for me (it) was a shock, … the staff had stayed in that system … gradually got beaten down and weren't adapting the methodologies to deal with Generation Y. It was like nothing had changed. The staff had got older, the resources were the same and getting dated, but the kids had lost respect for authority… (Interview 2:11)

Frank made two observations on his return to teaching after such a long break. First, the apparent physical and mental impact of teaching on his colleagues after their many years in schools, and second, that they had not changed how they taught – even though the needs of their students had changed, they had not changed the resources they were using.

A further motivating factor for Frank's continued passion and enthusiasm for changing his practice through professional learning stemmed from his tertiary training days where he studied a Bachelor of Arts followed by a Diploma in Teaching. He described the Diploma as 'a lot of theory and a lot of bunkum'. During his early-career years Frank considered he was ill-prepared for his role as a teacher and his constant desire to seek professional learning relevant to his needs helped him to survive initially as a teacher, and then as a leader in schools. As he explained in the first interview:

> OK we can grow as people, we can grow as learners, and then there's professional pride where you think, 'I used to be crap you know'. (Interview 1:11)

Frank developed the skill of reflecting on his practice. As a beginning teacher he had felt that he was ill-prepared by his undergraduate training; now as an experienced

teacher he felt more able to demonstrate levels of competency as an effective educator.

As mentioned earlier, I had come to know Frank through his participation in the baLG project. During our second interview, I asked Frank why he had agreed to participate in such a project given that it would add extra load to his already busy professional life. His response indicated that it had been agreed to through 'a sense of duty' because they were a sport specialist 'Lighthouse school' (Interview 2:4), implying that their designated leadership role in sport and Physical Education meant that they should at least be 'seen' to be participating in a major DECD physical activity project.

Frank also went on to describe some of the difficulties he experienced in convincing colleagues that participation would be of benefit to them professionally as well, particularly when sharing his learning in the early stages of the project where he encountered negative reactions such as:

> 'Yeah, but that doesn't help us!' (Interview 2:5)

The irony of such negativity was not lost on Frank, given their responsibility as a Lighthouse school to undertake change and innovation in sport and Physical Education, and to also share this new learning with other schools. However, through a persistent approach Frank was able to identify a change in the attitude of his colleagues as the project began to impact when they collected evidence and began sharing this to bring about change. This was highlighted by his following observation:

> We started talking about ways to engage the kids more and came up with an alternate specialist sport program like outdoor recreation because we actually uncovered the truth. The girls don't want to do team sport necessarily. (Interview 2:5)

By providing his colleagues with evidence through the collection of data from the students Frank was able to give them authentic information, which gave them an insight as to why a particular cohort of students, in this case girls at the school, were not participating in physical activity during lunch breaks. In consultation with these students a new, more relaxed program based on recreational activities, such as bike

riding, was developed, resulting in greater levels of their participation in physical activity.

Frank was able to further identify how his experience of participating in the baLG Innovation Sites Project opened up a deeper level of professional learning, which became a shared collegial experience; as he said:

> [it]… challenged [me] from outside sources and more importantly we [the participants] were made accountable (Interview 3:4).

Frank could see that this particular professional learning experience helped him to recognise what was effective in pushing the boundaries of his own professional learning and growth, while also providing increased credibility for Physical Education as an important part of schooling. The baLG project required a collaborative learning process, an important criteria for effective professional learning with adults. Frank participated with two colleagues from his school throughout the 2 ½ years of the project.

In his leadership role in a specialist sport school Frank faced many challenges – some common across schools, and some that were unique to his context – in which he felt frustrated in his efforts to participate in professional learning himself and challenged his responsibility as a leader to engage his colleagues in continuous professional learning. One particular frustration was common to many of the public schools in the region. Student enrolments were changing toward a larger cohort of lower socio-economic status (SES) students, largely in response to a new independent secondary school opening nearby. Decisions being made by parents as to where to enrol their children were being influenced by a view that the new school provided an opportunity to purchase a better standard of education for their children than that offered by a free government school, where they perceived they would have little input into the quality of education provided.

Further, the teacher demographic had also changed, reflecting the national trend of an aging cohort of teachers at his school characterised by a declining interest in professional learning. The school increasingly looked inward for survival with a growing tendency to focus their energies on other activities beyond school life. Frank reflected on these changes and how they were affecting his school:

> I remember in [the] early days I was able to reflect, 'Yeah that was great. We were young, we were living together and learning together'.
>
> It's now one member with an outside business, one member with health issues, one member whose head is elsewhere because she's pregnant again.
>
> You've not only got the problem of an aging staff, it's not only age – they've got these other things that draw them away.
>
> So it's like, 'Yeah, I've got to come to school but at 4 o'clock I'm out of here' and there's no ownership (Interview 2:28).

Frank, as a leader, was confronted and challenged by his observations in the general staffroom, and especially in his learning area of Physical Education. His difficulties in engaging older colleagues in professional learning meant not only that he was asking them to redirect their energies back to teaching, but that he was also asking 'sporting experts' to continue learning and developing. He recalled the response from one of his colleagues to providers of a particular professional learning activity as:

> 'Hang-on, I'm already damn good and you couldn't do what I do with these kids in this area. Don't you tell me anything!' (Interview 1:18)

The frustration expressed by his colleague was shared by Frank, who also felt that the mandated professional learning provided by the system driven by priorities such as literacy and numeracy was not meeting individual special interest needs. However, it continued to be the main source of professional learning available through the National Partnerships programs.

Frank's own recent experience of participating in mandated professional learning elicited the following comment:

> The literacy program that they [DECD] are putting the staff through is just a complete waste … people are sitting there and they are getting taught … it is almost offensive methodology. (Interview 3:6)

While he objected to being required to attend professional learning that did not meet his needs, Frank was supportive of the focus on quality teaching through mandated professional learning and valued this as being an important part of teaching:

> The whole thing about teaching is, more probably than any other professions, is the quality of the educators, and therefore the engagement of the students (Interview 3:6).

He was very clear that engagement of students was heavily reliant on the quality of the pedagogical skills and knowledge of the teacher.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the professional development and professional learning of teachers is well documented but Physical Education has not been well served. There is little evidence about what motivates Physical Education teachers to continually engage in professional learning. Research by Carson and Chase (2009) enables them to look for other indicators such as the efficacy of Physical Education teachers through their perceived fulfilment of autonomy, competence and relatedness (p. 347).

Throughout my interviews with Frank, it was clear that he was still very passionate about his chosen career. His own sense of efficacy was derived from a professional responsibility to his students and colleagues in making a difference to their lives, particularly through the provision of positive and stimulating experiences.

Frank was hopeful that change for his colleagues may be elicited through the emergence of greater accountability for teachers. As he stated:

> … where it gets wobbly, is where we … haven't established a mode of accountability at a certain time and the kids drift, they (teachers) drift, there is not a challenge there, so there is not the growth (Interview 3:10).

The important issue regarding the accountability of teachers in Physical Education has already been identified by Schlinker (1997), Barker and Rossi (2011), Reid (2011), Goodyear, Casey and Kirk (2013) and Macdonald (2013). Goodyear, Casey and Kirk questioned how Physical Education teachers could meet this accountability challenge by calling for more research to understand how this could be enacted as a fundamental part of professional learning (p. 22).

Frank talked about accountability in terms of feedback/reflections from former students on their experiences in his classes when they were at the school, suggesting:

> In 10 years' time you might bump into … [a] kid and they go 'I remember you'. They might go, 'Yeah you were this and that or we were in a class and had a great time'.
>
> There's your accountability you know. (Interview 2:3)

Accountability raises particular tensions for Physical Education teachers with the views expressed by Buschner, President of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education in the US mirroring the Frank's dilemma:

> We walk a tightrope, when the focal point of our teaching and learning is 'fun' while simultaneously claiming standards-based instruction, developmentally appropriate practices, evidence-based teaching practices, and other indicators of quality physical education. (Buschner 2008, p. 2)

Frank recognised that he needed more than just a gut feeling that his teaching was being effective, and had been using reflection-in-action as a tool for accountability in an immediate sense:

> If they're happy you're going well. If they're not happy that doesn't mean you've been slack with them, they might be bored and unhappy. (Interview 2:19)

Frank referred to an example of teaching dance where he found that accountability related to summative student outcomes had become a key motivator for him as he sought to change and become more accountable for his actions as a teacher. Frank reflected:

> I don't know that we get enough feedback, its ad hoc and internal and just a gut feeling of how things are going.

> We don't look for feedback, we don't want feedback unless it says … you're doing a great job.

> It is not something that is part of our culture and we need to change that (Interview 3:11)

From his experiences in the baLG project Frank had been able to experience accountability mechanisms in a structured format where he recognised possibilities for cultural change with his colleagues so that authentic feedback could become a core part of professional development frameworks for professional learning. Frank made the following observation:

> We need to have more structured professional observation and that requires resourcing and it first of all requires professional education … if it's not implemented properly then it has got more holes in it (Interview 3:11).

Frank considered how he could share his learning about how to use accountability to make change to his teaching practice and that of his colleague given the limitations of having to rely on the resources that were currently available. He was optimistic

that there may be an opportunity to rethink the professional learning relationship currently in place between experienced teachers and pre-service teachers when they participate in their practicums at his school.

5.1.4 The phenomenon of re-culturing in Physical Education

Recent research undertaken with Physical Education teachers has focused on the development of pre-service and early-career teachers professional identities. Research by Dowling (2011) in Norway, determined that undergraduate Physical Education students enter their courses with beliefs about physical activity that bias them towards only wanting to teach elite skill level students in schools. In comparison, their fellow students in their final year of study had broadened their beliefs to teaching all young people about physical activity regardless of ability, and could now visualise the purpose of Physical Education differently. In Frank's context teaching at a sport focus school would likely attract teachers who have elite sporting backgrounds themselves, and may reflect the beliefs and values of the Norwegian pre-service teachers about physical activity teaching that bias them toward teaching talented students, providing some insight into their resistance toward professional learning.

Today's graduates are entering the teaching workforce with experiences of different teaching pedagogies and ways of working with young people that involve reflection on their own values and beliefs about Physical Education in ways that their more experienced colleagues have not been encouraged to. As Frank observed:

> It's when they're a couple of years out that we really do damage to them because we throw them in with older teachers who are teaching often in an old-fashioned manner or surviving. New teachers see this and that's the way they go. (Interview 1:8)

This phenomena of re-culturing early-career stage Physical Education teachers has been researched by Keay (2007), who found that the need for belonging to a Physical Education faculty became more important than implementing new pedagogies that may more easily engage young people in Physical Education. Through this process the pedagogical approaches of their more experienced colleagues are adopted as being the preferred way of teaching rather than accepting the challenge of implementing new teaching approaches. The needs of an early-career teacher to 'belong' become a priority.

The challenge for schools comes in being able to support change with experienced teachers who have found success with the teaching approaches they have used throughout their careers. An additional challenge for schools is in being able to resource this type of change, which can take several years to achieve. It is very resource intensive in terms of time and resource acquisition when there are other professional learning priorities that are already well resourced by external providers.

Frank had a solution that he was keen to try at his school. This involved making a connection with undergraduate Physical Education teachers at a nearby university who could provide appropriate relevant role models to students at his school. At the same time they could also challenge his older, experienced colleagues to change their teaching approaches and adopt some of the newer methods being used by the undergraduates. His proposal was based on a method of reciprocal mentoring:

> This person [undergraduate teacher] is going to work with you [experienced teacher] for a semester and you will mentor them and they will mentor the students because they can get to the kids when we can't. …They [the undergraduate teachers] can be role models for them [school students] when we can't, and if [experienced] teachers had someone they were mentoring, if there was a young teacher with them for longer – then the young teachers would be trained to challenge them as part of their education. (Interviews 3:5 & 3:12)

The pre-service teachers would provide young, energetic and enthusiastic physical activity role models to the school students while demonstrating new pedagogies to their older mentor teachers.

On one level, this appears to be a simple approach with achievable outcomes. However, when considering the research of Carney (2003) and Keay (2007), pre-service teachers do not have the confidence to challenge their older mentor colleagues about their practice. Carney's research in particular also found that while experienced teachers are re-invigorated by the pre-service teachers, the impact does not endure and the experienced teachers revert to their habitual pedagogies. Of most concern was the claim by experienced teachers that they:

> benefit[ted] from the chances they gained to see the best of their own practices being reproduced by others [the pre-service teachers] (Carney, 2003, p. 423).

This observation reinforces the findings of Keay (2007), who notes that experienced teachers who have such strong connections to the ways in which they teach value passing this on to the next generation of teachers, rather than being open to the new pedagogies being demonstrated to them.

5.1.5 Professional learning missing the target?

Research by Schlinker (1997), also undertaken with secondary school Physical Education teachers in Australia, recognised ongoing confusion amongst these teachers over what the idea of Physical Education is. The impact of this confusion is decreasing cultural meaning and significance for the subject:

> … the confusion and contestation resulting from different professional missions and their supporting knowledge and practice limits public perception of cultural authority and decreases relevance and status (Schlinker, p. 103).

This has perhaps been reflected and reinforced by the late inclusion of Physical Education into the recently developed Australian Curriculum. It was only as a consequence of lobbying that Physical Education was eventually included into Phase three of the implementation. Reid (2011) and Macdonald (2013) further develop the importance of this issue through their discussions on the focus and direction that Physical Education should take as the new curriculum is developed for implementation. Reid and Macdonald both advocate for coherence in any new directions that Physical Education may take in the Australian Curriculum by reflecting 'a systematic approach to the development of teaching resources and professional development programs' (Reid 2011, p. 89). They also express a hope that through a consensus approach the low status and historical marginalisation of Physical Education in Australian schools can be overcome by implementing change that is relevant to the field and across education.

Across Australia, different states and territories have been developing approaches to both professional development and professional learning that are seeking to engage teachers in a more reflective process. This is now being steered by the introduction of national teaching standards. In Queensland the development of 'productive pedagogies' (Lingard, et al. 2001) as an approach to professional learning also influenced the critical reflection stage of professional learning that Frank participated in during the baLG project. A key workshop was based on the challenge of using

contextualised data to inform authentic critical reflection on the project. Frank used photography to gather data on the physical activity levels of students at the school during their lunch breaks. Frank shared his initial observations:

> I mean the challenge of having to do some sort of research analysis presentation was really good for me to get out there and photograph all the kids in the school during lunch and say, 'Look at all of the girls doing nothing, look at the boys being active.' And to gauge okay well how are we going to turn that around. … so no, you need those sorts of things and if the teachers aren't getting it, in whatever way then we are not growing. (Interview 3:4)

Participation in this activity enabled Frank to achieve a clearer understanding as to how accountability could be 'decoded' into measures of quality and standards achievement through the use of contextualised data collected at his own school. This initial data provided Frank with a starting point for initiating a discussion with his colleagues and the students at the school. By sharing the evidence with them as a collaborative process of analysis, they were able to jointly decide on a strategy to change the physical activity levels of students during lunchtime. In providing photographs of inactive female students during the lunch break, Frank was able to motivate his colleagues to investigate further, resulting in changes to the types of activities provided and the environment in which they occurred. Girls at the school gradually began to increase their physical activity levels at the school during lunch breaks because the activities were engaging and provided in an environment where they felt comfortable and safe.

In the final interview for this research, I asked Frank how he had sustained his professional learning journey once the resources and support from the baLG project were withdrawn. His response encapsulated several of his key motivators that had become evident during this research:

> My professional learning [is] threefold … one [is] improving my strategic approach to achieving my goals, number two [is] my ability to drag people along with me, because it is not good on my own …

> The third one then is the reflecting on that and actually making that part of your modus operandi if you like, this is the way that I deal with these things and this is my blueprint for success (Interview 3:9).

Frank had learnt how to collect evidence and use this strategically to encourage others to participate in bringing about change through the use of collaborative learning and using reflection to ensure that change would be positive.

If, as suggested in Chapter 2, that Physical Education teachers need to develop a coherent approach to the development of a national Health and Physical Education curriculum, and a collaborative approach to the development of standards (Reid 2011; Macdonald 2013), the same needs to apply to the way professional development and professional learning are also perceived and developed. Frank's story is evidence of this.

The development of a common set of beliefs about the key idea of Physical Education is needed. Further, common understandings about what effective professional development and professional learning could look like for Physical Education teachers should be developed. Currently it appears that the only common ground for agreement amongst teachers of Physical Education is 'that the status of PE [Physical Education is] low in their school[s]' (Bechtel & O'Sullivan 2006, p. 370).

5.1.6 Findings

In the later stages of Frank's teaching career he had found himself in the unique position of being able to experience intensive professional learning through the participation of his school in a government-funded physical activity project. This experience provided him with the skills and knowledge required to become critically reflective about his practice as a teacher of Physical Education.

Frank was not only an experienced Physical Education teacher but also held leadership roles within his school and across the local education district focused on the development and provision of specialist sports programs that would meet the needs of secondary school students. Although the school demographic had changed significantly in recent years, Frank recognised this as an opportunity to provide meaningful professional learning for his colleagues that would support them to meet the challenges of this new environment.

Frank was aware of the lack of change in the Physical Education curriculum over his years of teaching, and had observed a lack of motivation by many of his peers to

change their pedagogical approaches in response to the changing needs of the students at the school. Frank also anticipated that he would be facing additional challenges in the future as specialist teachers leaving the school were no longer replaced with teachers skilled in the sports students identified with and were interested in learning more about.

Frank used professional frustrations such as decreasing resources for subject specific professional learning, changing priorities in education policy toward literacy and numeracy, and the resistance of Physical Education teachers to change as motivation to continue his own career-long professional learning. Frank was able to use changes such as those being made to education and the teaching profession by increasing the use of monitoring and accountability as an opportunity to make authentic change to his practice of teaching in Physical Education.

This particular case study provides evidence of how Frank met his professional learning needs throughout his teaching career and now as an experienced Physical Education teacher, sustains his motivation to continually engage with change. Throughout his career Frank has been motivated to engage in professional learning by inadequacies identified in his tertiary training experiences, lack of change by his colleagues, participation in a well-resourced professional learning project, proactively responding to the challenge of ongoing change in the teaching and learning environment, and his own professional efficacy.

5.2   Judy's story

The following case study gives an insight into the professional learning challenges faced by Judy as the only research participant in this study teaching in a single gender school. The school, with a student population of over 600 girls, was located in the inner city. Students are drawn from over 90 primary schools covering a wide geographical area.

At the time of the interviews less than 30 per cent of the students were supported by government funding to attend the school, with 10 per cent from non-English speaking backgrounds. Sporting activities and fitness are encouraged, with the school being proud of its high level of participation and achievement in sport.

This case study uncovers Judy's values – her professionalism, and passion for sport and physical activity – that drive her to continually learn, while identifying the tensions impacting on the development of Physical Education in a girls' only secondary school setting.

Judy's story gives some insight into her professional growth. It describes the issues and beliefs impacting her learning and teaching practice, such as her observations of disengagement of experienced teachers (in meaningful professional learning), low-level risk taking by pre-service and early-career teachers, the increasing accountability of teachers, difficulty in locating challenging professional learning, and contemporary social factors influencing student physical activity participation levels.

In establishing the criteria for this research, it was important to establish an equitable gender representation as well as teachers from a range of schools (e.g. metropolitan, country, inner city, middle years, and diverse socio-economic contexts) including a single gender setting. Judy was one of the six teachers participating in this research and I had never met her before. This provided a challenge for me as the researcher given that I needed to rapidly establish a positive and trusting relationship with her if the interviews were to be effective in providing data that would fulfil the purposes of the research.

In making my initial contact with Judy, I was able to organise an informal meeting to discuss my research and invite her to participate. Fortunately, during this meeting I discovered that she had recently participated in her sibling's doctoral research and was quite comfortable with the process of post-graduate research and willing to participate. It was also during this initial meeting that Judy first made the statement, 'I don't want to teach like I taught 18 years ago' clearly signalling that ongoing learning and change were core values shaping her professional identity.

5.2.1 Professional learning through identity

At our initial meeting, it was clear that Judy held very strong personal values and a sense of moral purpose about her responsibilities as a professional teacher, no matter the context. She expanded on this during our first interview when she talked about her approach to commencing a teaching position at a new school. Judy's first priority was to research the values held by the students (and the school) in relation to physical activity, and their interests and previous experiences, both within and outside of the school. She stated:

> I really believe in getting into somewhere [a school], and finding out about what that place is like, its values and what those students want and working from there (Interview 1:18).

Judy was signalling from the beginning that a key part of her teaching and learning role was to be open to authentic change by understanding the context in which she was working. Without this knowledge, she would not be able to connect with the school community to share her passion for sport and physical activity by providing meaningful experiences for her students. Research on constructivist theoretical perspectives of learning in education (Green & Gredler 2002) recognise that acknowledgement of prior experience, and personal values and beliefs influence the engagement levels and subsequent achievements of students.

As our interviews progressed, it became apparent that the previous knowledge and experiences Judy had gained during her own schooling and tertiary training years provided her with evidence of the impact of how teachers express their own values and beliefs toward physical activity through their pedagogy. This directly influences the experiences and learning opportunities for their students. Judy's strong personal values about the importance of physical activity were evident not only from her

enthusiasm when talking about the positive elements of her work, but also through her reflection about the aspects she found frustrating.

Judy demonstrated her life-long passion for physical activity when she reflected on her experience of Physical Education as a tertiary student:

> … we loved it. We had a great four years at teachers college and we played sport every day in a thousand ways and for people that love sport what a better profession could you have.
>
> We learnt that other education stuff along the way but seriously we were in our element when we went through teachers college because we loved it … (Interview 1:16).

Research by O'Connor and Macdonald (2002) reinforces that the passion for physical activity and sport as expressed by Judy is an identity trait common to those who enter Physical Education teaching as a career.

> Most prospective teacher/coaches entered the physical education field because of their love of sport and physical activity and their desire to continue their involvement in this type of sporting environment (O'Connor and Macdonald, p. 40).

I sensed from Judy's enthusiasm and genuine enjoyment when recalling these earlier undergraduate days, that these had been a significant driver motivating her through the early years of her teaching career.

Judy did not want to repeat the negative experiences she had as a secondary school student in Physical Education classes. Judy (not so fondly) recalled the Physical Education classes that she participated in as a school student herself:

> … the programs we had when we were kids, I'm trying not to swear, were disgusting, you know, and I think I had one teacher who was a hockey fanatic so we did hockey all year and then the next teacher was a volleyball fanatic so the net went up and I think they sat down and we just played volleyball and that's how skills were built (Interview 1:15).

During her pre-service years of training, Judy determined not to repeat the poor learning experiences that she had endured as a student of Physical Education with the future students that she would be teaching. As indicated by Judy's comments earlier in this case study (Interview 1:18), she felt it was her professional responsibility to develop pedagogical skills and knowledge that would be relevant to her students and

subsequently engage them in physical activity that was constructive, had meaning and was enjoyable.

When searching for research participants I had been looking for teachers who had not only been teaching Physical Education for a long time, but who had a passion for physical activity. The participants also needed to demonstrate a critical focus on providing the highest quality educational experiences and opportunities for their students. Judy's reflections on her early-career stage during our initial meeting, and later in the first interview, gave every indication that she met these criteria. Not just because she identified herself as a passionate advocate for physical activity, but also because of the professional standards that she expected teachers of Physical Education to demonstrate throughout their careers.

5.2.2 Career stage and quality teaching

Research on professional learning and the career stages of teaching has become closely connected to the emergence of 'quality teaching' as a professional determinant of desired teaching knowledge and skills (expertise) as well as dominating the current neo-liberal policy agenda for education. The literature (Darling-Hammond 2009; Fullan 2001; Hattie 2003; Masters 2003; Owen 2005) identifies several issues arising from the emergence of quality teaching as a major driver for the provision of professional learning for teachers in such an environment, whether they be early-career teachers or experienced teachers like Judy.

Judy's passion for physical activity and strong commitment to teaching as her chosen career provided much of her motivation to continually learn, change her practice, and constantly seek ways to engage the young people she teaches in schools and mentors into the teaching profession. Although critical of the motivation levels and preparation of pre-service and early-career teachers, Judy believed that, as an experienced teacher, she could influence and support 'new' teachers to develop some of the passion and motivation for teaching that has sustained her throughout her own career.

> I believe it's our professional responsibility because it's no good us in
> schools whingeing, moaning and groaning about them [early-career
> teachers] having no skills and no knowledge and then turn around and say,
> 'No, well we're not helping either'.

So, I actually think that it is a professional responsibility (Interview 1:7).

Judy understood part of her role as an experienced teacher was to be pro-active in supporting the development of pre-service and early-career teachers to critically reflect on their practice as they developed their professional skills and knowledge in the field. If she did not engage in this development of new teachers, it would deny the responsibility that she clearly identified as being a part of the professional role of experienced teachers in education.

The quality of teachers in schools, including pre-service, early-career and experienced teachers was an important issue for Judy. Her expectations were that quality teaching and learning should always be uppermost, rather than just keeping students amused or entertained for a time. For example, Judy commented:

> I like to see people out there giving the kids the learning outcomes and actually achieving them and that sort of thing and not just 'Here's a ball go play kicks' type of approach (Interview 1:15).

Masters (2003) and Hattie (2003) both attempted to define what 'quality teaching' means in the professional context of teaching. Masters' research indicates that 'quality teaching in practice depends on familiarity with, and an ability to apply, expert knowledge, and skills to achieve improved student learning outcomes (p. 46). Hattie's research meanwhile focused on what an 'expert' teacher may look like as opposed to an 'experienced' teacher, with a further key finding that 'teachers … account[ed] for about 30% of the variance [in student achievement]' (p. 15).

In an Australian context, research by Owen (2005) indicates that '… the Federal Government has identified that quality teaching accounts for sixty per cent of the variation in student-learning outcomes' (p. 1). It is noteworthy that in 2004 the Australian Government established a National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership with '… the overall objective being to raise the status, quality and professionalism of teachers and school leaders …' (2005, p. 1). Such an investment in teachers' knowledge and expertise has also been supported through the research of Darling-Hammond where her own findings suggest 'that there is considerable evidence that investment in teachers' knowledge and expertise makes a difference to student learning' (2009, p. 42). Such an investment in ongoing teacher professional learning throughout the career of a teacher is a value Judy recognised.

Judy was also aware of a range of sensitivities about the role Hatties' (2003) 'expert' and 'experienced' teachers should play in this process, particularly with pre-service and early-career teachers. These sensitivities refer to how much influence experienced teachers have on the professional development of early-career and pre-service teachers. In the context of Physical Education teachers, a longitudinal study in England by Keay (2009) explored the influence of experienced teachers as newly qualified teachers are socialised into the preferred norms of the subject department in terms of pedagogy and behaviour management.

As early-career professional learners, Judy could empathise with pre-service and early-career teachers about their reticence to make pedagogical change while their focus was on class management strategies. Judy was also very conscious of the risks associated with putting herself forward as a role model because of the need for new, developing teachers to find their own identity both technically and pedagogically. She explained the significance of this:

> It … makes you aware of how much you know and how little you knew when you first went out to teaching …
>
> But you know they [early-career teachers] don't have a lot of confidence and they don't have a lot of skills and knowledge and they're just sponging.
>
> They want, want, want, and you know I just hope that we give, give and as they become more confident and competent they develop their own style.
>
> I think that's all we can hope for because I don't want a little 'me' running around behind me by any stretch of the imagination because I've got my faults (Interview 1:7).

As an older experienced teacher, Judy was aware of elements in her own teaching practice that she would not want to pass on to pre-service teachers. Although Judy was reluctant to reveal what these faults may be, she was able through her discussions with new teachers to direct them away from practices they may want to emulate that Judy was more critical of.

Even though she was still a highly motivated teacher engaged in professional learning she was not immune to the impact of other experienced colleagues on new teachers, particularly those who had stayed in their 'comfort zone' and not changed their practice. Judy continued to explain:

> What I still hear and see out there is that people [teachers] just turn up, don't have a clue what they are doing, and throw the kids a few balls.
>
> You know life is easy, and you know there's still a lot of them around which worries the life out of me particularly when student teachers are going out and working with these people (Interview 1:11).

Judy's concerns reflected her awareness of developing the profession through the demonstration of good practice to new teachers, which could only be maintained through the ongoing engagement of experienced teachers in professional learning to change teaching practices throughout their careers.

Judy continually questioned and challenged the way teachers learn, or do not learn, professionally, and how this impacts on them and other colleagues throughout their careers. In particular, Judy was quite critical of the preparation and motivation of young people entering the teaching profession. She related her frustrations regarding two early-career teachers in her faculty:

> I've got two – a new one this year in PE [Physical Education] and they're both quite interested in their teaching … they've just got no drive.
>
> They've got no innovation(s), they don't make changes to anything. (Interview 2:17).

Judy wanted to see early-career teachers take risks, experiment and engage in critically reflecting on their practice to enable them to continue to change and reshape it.

5.2.3 Motivations and frustrations in the field of professional learning

The apparent lack of drive to try new things in the classroom was evident not only with the early-career teachers and experienced colleagues with whom Judy worked, but could in her view, be partially attributed to how people were making their career choices to enter into teaching. The following comment demonstrates Judy's strong professional values:

> I didn't choose to enter teaching because I *might* want to head in that direction, it was because I *did* want to be in that direction. Now, the teachers who come out as Phys Ed teachers don't even choose Phys Ed teaching – well [they] would have started to again now, but they chose Human Movement, and you get to the end of Human Movement and there was nothing for them, 'Oh, I might be a teacher then.'
>
> I chose to go into that career and I'm still in that career. They chose to go to Teachers College and then decided on a pathway.

> I do believe there's still some people with a passion for it, but a lot of them didn't come in as Physical Education teachers, as such (Interview 3:14)

Much of her concern about new entrants into the teaching profession were that some were choosing Physical Education as a 'second choice' or 'fall-back position' and therefore lacked commitment to the values of physical activity and sport as an important aspect of the education of children and young people. Part of this concern was also grounded in the knowledge that teaching had become a very complex business and even making every effort to change and remain relevant as a teacher in this ever-changing environment would still not be enough to engage students in physical activity. Judy explained:

> I mean I would love all kids to leave school and at least have a passion or something to be active or realise the benefits of it.
>
> But that's not going to happen … our obesity levels have gone up and our inactivity has gone up so there is something wrong.
>
> But I don't blame us for that (Interview 1:15).

Judy recognised that contemporary issues such as falling activity levels are of great concern to teachers, particularly in her field of Physical Education, but there are limits to what they could achieve in influencing any sustainable change. Research by Pringle and Pringle (2012) describes the tensions 'health and Physical Education teachers have become subject to … with competing obesity and physical activity discourses' (p. 143). Judy's own concerns were mirrored through their claims that:

> The dominating obesity discourse, replete with truth claims from science, argues that the globalised world is in the grip of an obesity epidemic that is producing dire health consequences.
>
> [While] a competing discourse … argues that obesity concerns are socially constructed in response to a moral panic surrounding modern lifestyles'. (Pringle & Pringle, 2012, pp. 143–144)

The construction of obesity as a social health problem to be addressed by schools has also been explored in the literature through the research of Wright (2000), Cameron, Mulholland and Branson (2003), and Wyn (2009), who suggest that school students as individuals be encouraged to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. Wright in particular critiques this notion by examining how teachers 'promot[e] in their students … a commitment to a healthy lifestyle and regular

exercise' (p. 159) by exploring in particular the idea of 'the metaphor of the body as a machine [which] is prominent in healthy lifestyles … discourses' (p.160).

With such issues already dominant in the community, Judy's concerns about teachers not sharing her passion and beliefs about the health benefits of being physical activity were further exacerbated. Judy provided an insight into how challenging the teaching environment had become by reflecting on the changing interests and motivation levels of students in recent years at her school. She related the following example:

> We have a fitness manager in the gym, with special training, and we have all of the equipment under the sun and three years ago our girls broke their arms and legs to get into the program to get in there and workout.
>
> Now, interestingly enough, our classes have increased. We've got more girls doing it as a subject called PE [Physical Education] and they get there and they don't want to do anything (Interview 2:3).
>
> But they just don't get it – you know.
>
> They just don't get that they actually have to do something.
>
> 'You know I really want to lose weight and everything. I really want to get fit', but they come in and sit around for 20 minutes! (Interview 2:9)

Although the changing levels of interest and motivation of her students, and how teachers would deal with these, frustrated Judy, she was able to make a broader connection to influences beyond her classroom and school to changes in society and their subsequent impact. These influences ranged from cultural shifts in work environments to the impact of students having paid employment and increasing responsibilities within their families.

Amidst the recognition of these influences that challenged her professional skills and practices on a daily basis, Judy continually returned to her own personal values in relation to physical activity as being the biggest issue for her as a teacher today. As Judy stated in the final interview:

> I guess my biggest challenge, and it always has been funnily enough, and always will be I believe, is to get students and parents to value physical activity. And they need to value it probably for different reasons now than when I first started 30 years ago, but at the same time it's still getting that credibility and getting the kids and the parents to value it, from a health perspective and an educational perspective … (Interview 3:5).

Judy recognised (and could empathise with families) that family values were being reshaped to meet the pressures of careers, work and income maintenance to support lifestyle priorities with activities such as a commitment to regular sporting/physical activity events often giving way to more immediate one-off recreational pursuits or not being addressed at all.

5.2.4 Leading professional change

Throughout our interviews, Judy frequently recounted examples depicting her own role and experiences as a leader of professional change across various cohorts, with her own peers and also pre-service and early-career teachers. In all of these examples it was evident that Judy recognised these interactions as professional learning opportunities for herself, as a mentor, and for the mentees.

Although Judy may have been critical of some of the pedagogical approaches used by colleagues she always promoted an approach to change that was respectful and opened up the opportunity for shared learning to occur. By negotiating change with colleagues, Judy gently supported change through a 'teacher leadership approach' that also extended to pre-service teachers with whom she worked. A teacher leader is described in the literature by Angelle and DeHart (2011) as a teacher 'who maintain[s] focus on student learning, seek[s] life-long learning for themselves… engage[s] others in shared vision and meaning, develop[s] and maintain[s] relationship[s], work[s] with a sense of integrity' (p. 143). The following story related during an early interview with Judy demonstrates this 'teacher leadership' approach:

> It's that balance that is really important because as I said I had this guy[pre-service teacher] out and he started off with Game Sense stuff and it didn't work and it fell flat
>
> … I said, 'Look I don't want to influence you but if you want to go that way you can keep going that way because I'm happy to support you but try some other things along the way as well.'
>
> He did change.
>
> I felt really confronted by that because whilst I didn't like what he was doing I didn't want to say don't do it and that's not the way you teach because it is for some people and I'm ok with that. (Interview 1:8)

This was a particularly valuable insight into how Judy understands change, and her role as a leader, not only for herself but also for young people entering into the teaching profession. At the same time, it also demonstrated her genuine understanding that you do make mistakes during the learning process, which become an opportunity for new learning. An opening is now available to critically analyse, reflect and implement pedagogical change.

Although in this instance Judy did not agree with the pedagogical approach being used, she was able to suggest additional ways of expanding or modifying it to meet the needs of the students and the pre-service teacher in this context. In being respectful of the preferred pedagogy of the pre-service teacher, Judy recognised that each teacher is affected by their own personal and professional histories, which provide a distinct perspective and influences their teaching practice.

5.2.5 Systemic professional learning

During my interviews with Judy, we spent some time discussing the professional learning provided by the system, which in the context of this research refers to DECD in South Australia. An outcome of Judy's many years of experience as a teacher enabled her to reflect on previous engagements with professional learning and the changes that had been implemented following their provision.

In the 1990s, schools across Australia were engaged in a curriculum innovation known as Statements and Profiles, which Judy remembered as being a valuable professional learning experience:

> It was Statements and Profiles because we were supported with that and we were given the time and we sat down in faculties and we looked at them and we got people in to support us and stuff (Interview 1:20).

The professional learning provided was relevant to their teaching area and provided by experts in their field who assisted with the implementation and changes in teaching practice that were required. Since that experience, Judy does not consider that teachers have been provided with useful professional learning support such as time release, which could be used to implement change in their own teaching context that would be effective and meaningful. According to Judy, with the lack of support there has also been the impact of increasingly centrally driven curriculum by DECD

and the Australian Government. Judy provided an example of how this had an impact through the following observation:

> I mean I think the curriculum is so directed by you know, DECS and the Future SACE [South Australian Certificate of Education] and all that sort of stuff, that you're spending more time and energy just concerning whether you meet these outcomes and those outcomes and whatever, that we sort of sometimes, lose sight of what it is that the kids really want? But we're being told this is what they want … (Interview 3:7).

At the time of these interviews, the senior secondary school curriculum in South Australia was also undergoing significant change, and was called *the future SACE* during this period.

With increasing monitoring of teaching and curriculum through a range of accountability measures such as testing and performance management, Judy expressed her growing frustration at having to engage in mandated professional learning that was not meeting her own personal needs and narrowing her ability to influence the curriculum. Her following comment demonstrates this frustration:

> There's that many of those workshops and I come out so frustrated and annoyed and then the Department wonders why people get their backs up all of the time because the changes are imposed on us and we keep saying 'but we don't understand what you want us to do!' (Interview 1:18)

Judy's frustration relates not only to the lack of contextualisation and meaning imposed by the curriculum changes, but also to the minimalist resourcing provided to bring about imposed changes. As a secondary school teacher in a specialist area, change needs to be directly related to the subject rather than be generic, to facilitate easy transference into the classroom. This lack of subject specificity was making it difficult for Judy to not only implement change, but to also lead her colleagues through this change process.

Judy also recognised the personal cost in constantly seeking her own professional learning, but given her experiences of mandated professional learning and its lack of a sustainable impact on her teaching it was a cost she willingly continued to bear. As she stated:

> I personally seek out my own professional development because, yeah, I'm happy with that but it would be nice to have some support to be able to do that as well and not always be doing it in your own time I guess (Interview 1:22).

Research by Cameron, Mulholland and Branson (2013) questions the nature of effective teacher learning with a particular focus on the lack of value ascribed to the 'personal' aspect, and how this affects the engagement of teachers in professional learning. They propose that 'an improved framework for understanding teacher professional learning must attend to contextual issues such as [professional] isolation and monetary and emotional cost' (Cameron, Mulholland & Branson, p. 388). The 'goodwill' demonstrated by Judy to bear the costs incurred for her ongoing professional learning is not always evident across the profession for many reasons. Lack of support is often cited in the literature (Duncombe & Armour 2004; Fullan 1993; Gregson, Spedding & Nixon 2008; Hargreaves 2000; Lohman & Woolf 2001) as one reason given to justify disengagement from professional learning, particularly when teachers are in the final stages of their career like Judy.

5.2.6 Locating meaningful professional learning

In our first interview, I discussed with Judy the context of professional learning and what it meant to her particularly in terms of perceiving her growth as a professional and how this had occurred. The purpose of these questions (Appendix 1) was to position each of the research participants into reflecting on their own interpretations of the purpose of professional learning and how it transferred into their teaching practice.

Judy's approach toward professional learning was very pragmatic, displaying a particular passion for her own learning, while it was also a big part of how she identified herself as a teacher, and her practice. As Judy said:

> So I don't want to teach like I taught 18 years ago if there's something new and there's a better way and it works for me and works for the school … I'll use it for sure (Interview 1:5).

Judy identified a range of ways in which she accessed professional learning that was meaningful to her, and enabled her to access quite a broad spectrum of education-focused knowledge and information supporting ongoing learning and change. This spectrum included belonging to a range of informal networks, accessing the resources of external professional learning providers, supporting the learning of pre-service teachers, and collaboratively learning with early-career teachers.

> Just talking to other people … or even just watching other people … and
> you think, 'I could use part of that and do it this way' or talking to other
> Phys Ed teachers
>
> … between the two of us we can come up with something that none of us
> have done before
>
> I find that really valuable that I can talk professionally to someone …
>
> Whether it be my faculty or someone outside of school who are teachers.
>
> I find that really useful (Interview 1:13).

For Judy, these approaches to professional learning were much more effective than her experience of mandated learning, which afforded her little, if any, opportunity for follow-up, making sustainable change to her practice unlikely. Informal opportunities to engage with colleagues and other experts enabled follow-up over an extended period with the more likely outcome of sustainable change being made to practice.

Where Judy had experienced meaningful professional learning from external providers she keenly identified with the impact of a lost opportunity because of the lack of follow-up, coupled with the busyness of daily school life that sometimes impeded the transference of new learning into practice. As Judy explained:

> Maybe it's our responsibility to follow it up and deal continually with it, and
> guess what in a week's time after that motivating session that you went to
> it's all forgotten and you're back in front of a class and doing what you used
> to do.
>
> … you just get back into the daily management, the daily routine, the daily
> stresses and you forget about it (Interview 1:12).

Research by Goodyear, Casey and Kirk (2013) uses experiences such as Judy's to provide evidence as to why Physical Education teachers find it difficult to reflect on new learning from professional development activities – because of their '[history of attending] one-day off site courses' (p. 19). Equipping teachers with a folder of resource materials at a one-day activity was not always enough, in Judy's experience, to prevent her from reverting to a familiar fall-back position of pedagogy that was already effective in getting both herself and her students by in the achievement of some learning outcomes.

Throughout this and subsequent interviews, Judy was able to reveal a trusted and effective way of accessing new knowledge and skills she had developed during her early-career stage of teaching, and continued to use:

> The thing that I think I got out of those first early years of teaching was just the learning by experience.
>
> You know that huge thing when you come out of teacher's college and you think you know it all and you get in there and it's really nothing like what we are prepared for.
>
> … it was just that evolvement where nothing would work and what could I do to make it better and to seek information?
>
> … gaining experience as you went.
>
> I just found … seeking out from people you work with that were also new teachers through to the coordinator … (Interview 2:4)

Judy had learnt through experience that colleagues were a valuable, accessible resource to help her reflect and implement change. Even now, as an experienced teacher and leader in the school, Judy continues to seek opportunities to engage in conversations with other people, whether they be colleagues, community members, parents of young people, early-career teachers or people with a particular set of skills and expertise – always with the aim of facilitating her own learning and growth.

Through her membership with a local surf lifesaving club Judy has been able to access a network of parents of young people that she described as a 'social incidental network' (Interview 2:22) from whom she felt that she could 'learn so much more about what the community thinks about … your role as a teacher' (Interview 2:23). In particular, Judy reflected on the importance of these interactions to her own professional growth:

> their (parents) opinions – I find that really valuable in networking, and to learn I guess, more about our [students] and what they're like because they are the parents of [young] people that work with them in other areas (Interview 2:23).

This gathering of anecdotal data provided Judy with authentic information that she could use to critically reflect on how she was engaging the young people she taught who were of a comparable age and background to the members of her local surf club. The 'incidental network' provided an important element of her professional learning that she took back with her into the classroom.

In our second interview, Judy described the impact of such conversations on her learning:

> You do start to get right into it and it leads to huge discussions and that's because you don't think about it for the rest of the night but maybe three days later you think, 'Oh yeah what was that she said?' and you take that and you might pursue it further or put it in the brain box for later … (Interview 2:13).

Judy used these professional encounters to stimulate her reflections over time and in response to new situations as they arise in her teaching.

5.2.7 Sustaining professional learning

During the second interview part of the focus was to determine how each of the research participants transferred their professional learning to their practice and so bring about change. Of particular interest was the participants understanding of reflective practice and its role in changing their teaching.

Judy, throughout this series of interviews, frequently demonstrated a thoughtful reflective approach to her teaching, which became more explicit during the second interview where she was able to describe this as being part of the way in which she had always worked. Judy provided an example:

> This always happens, you think you've got it sussed and then you've got to move on and sometimes you have a struggle and sometimes it's sidewards and it is, it's just continually changing. You have never quite got it.
>
> That's the time when you have gotta start thinking, and I think that's the reflection, it's the thinking on your feet stuff (Interview 2:3).

As Judy described how she applied reflective practice processes in her work, the underlying strategies supporting this approach became more apparent and identifiable as her preferred ways of learning enabling her to meet the ever changing needs of her students. Judy explained how she constructs her approach:

> You've still got your planning and reflecting before and after, planning before and reflecting after but I would love to think that I am flexible enough to change stuff as I go to suit the needs of the students …
>
> … just trying to make it relevant I suppose to that particular group at that particular time (Interview 2:7).

Judy's understanding of Schon's (1983) reflection-in-action and on-action processes 'focusing on the development of practical knowledge from the teacher's unique experiences' (Nelson & Sadler, 2013, p. 46) greatly influenced her approach to teaching. As an experienced teacher, she was able to use both processes in conjunction with knowledge of her students and the teaching context to enhance transference of Physical Education knowledge and skills to achieve relevant learning outcomes.

Judy described one of the key motivators driving her need to continually learn and change as 'that boredom stage' observed in colleagues who were near retirement and what Huberman (1989) describes as the 'disengagement' career stage. Here teachers are content to remain in the comfort zone they have developed and refined over the many years of their career, making them unable to respond to changes in their environment. Unlike these teachers, Judy was excited when relating an incident where she had been able to change her practice while reflecting-in-action, and recognised that this was a celebration of her extensive knowledge and experience. Judy recalled an earlier event when teaching soccer:

> The other day I was teaching soccer and I came up with a brilliant way of teaching a skill or a drill and I thought, 'Why haven't I done that for the last 20 years?'
>
> You know these new things come to you …
>
> I think, 'Yeah that went brilliantly' and 'I've never thought about that before' and where do these thoughts come from?
>
> You know, you've been doing this for 20 years! (Interview 1:13)

Judy was able to respond intuitively to the experience levels of her students and their engagement to make pedagogical change and achieve positive student outcomes.

Throughout our interviews, the passion Judy had maintained throughout her career for teaching and for physical activity remained a constant, and certainly provided the motivational foundation for her ongoing learning and change as a practitioner. Her concerns for the future were never far away, however, particularly in relation to the next generation of teachers and in her view, their apparent intention to 'maintain the status quo'.

Judy demonstrated this concern and frustration when relating the gist of a recent conversation with a pre-service teacher where she sought critical feedback about the ways in which curriculum had been interpreted and professional development provided at her school. Judy provided an example of how she encourages feedback:

> 'Is our program relevant? What would you do? And, how would you change it?' – that sort of thing. You know, they [pre-service teachers] seem quite happy with what we do and think it's all relevant … and no, they wouldn't change anything, so we've got to think – well, what do you do?
>
> You're asking the younger ones for input and even with the young staff that I have got here, and they're just happy just to plod along with the programs that we offer and the professional development that's around at the moment (Interview 3:9).

Judy was clearly concerned about their passive acceptance of practice being implemented by experienced teachers at the school. She did not want them to perceive her, or her colleagues, as experts from whom the pre-service apprentices could learn everything. She was already challenging them about their ready acceptance of the practice of others rather than developing critical thinking as an integral part of their own professional learning and way of thinking into the future.

Judy's concerns about the passive acceptance of what experienced teachers model as 'best practice' by the pre-service and early-career teachers during their transition years has also been a focus of research by Keay (2007) who states that the 'induction to teaching has historically been problematic' (p. 1). Crosswell and Beutel (2013) also found the period of 'internship' for early-career teachers to be an area requiring research, with a significant gap in the literature, and they also raise their concerns that 'in Australia there exists a wide variation in support for beginning teachers' (p. 145). Research by Curtner-Smith (2001), McCormack and Thomas (2003), Keay (2007), and Croswell and Beutel (2013) also share this concern about the quality of induction processes for Physical Education graduates in particular and their limited 'access to a wide community of discourse and practice' (McCormack & Thomas, 2003, p. 11).

As a leader, Judy continued to challenge her colleagues and engage them in discussions about their practice as she tried to support them in slowly making changes to their practice that would be sustainable. She shared an example of her

own professional learning that she had sought in response to the needs of her students:

> It's just a matter of finding out about stuff and then you can use it.
>
> I'd rather be bothered and go and do some training and workshops and that sort of stuff so yeah that's basically it.
>
> Some things are imposed on us and some things happen as a result of what the students want and some is taken up because you want more out of your teaching as well.
>
> You count it all as the development of professional knowledge (Interview 2:12).

For Judy it was evident that it was not so much the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that were meaningful to her but rather the process of new learning that enabled her to respond to the needs of her students. This she claims would ultimately achieve an outcome of increasing student's engagement in physical activity.

Judy's ongoing pursuit of meaningful professional learning always came back to her values and beliefs about the profession of teaching and the importance of physical activity. As she stated:

> I don't want to front up at a class and I don't think I've ever done it, and not be as prepared as I possibly could be. I guess that's the motivation. I feel guilty doing that and I don't think it's fair for the students (Interview 3:2).
>
> … it's just been an intrinsic motivation to do well and make sure that the people enjoy what I'm providing and delivering and presenting … (Interview 3:14).

In seeking out her own professional learning Judy was able to continue to focus on that which was most meaningful to her and would sustain ongoing change and development in her practice, which she referred to as 'the teaching of students'.

> … I think it's the teaching that's the critical part. It's the teaching of students, not what you're teaching … (Interview 3:15).

This fundamental tenet about teaching helped Judy develop her values about teaching and learning, from her own negative experiences as a school student to her ongoing motivation as a professional learner, and leader of change.

It was evident throughout the interviews with Judy that the professional sense of responsibility that she expected of herself and her colleagues was strongly connected

to a passion for physical activity that drives her motivation for ongoing professional learning. These two elements are fundamental to how she mentors pre-service and early-career teachers to also value professional learning using critical reflection and to value the process of ongoing professional learning throughout their careers. The key areas of frustration for Judy in the achievement of these goals are the increasing levels of accountability demonstrated through the generalised mandated professional learning available, and the lack of support provided for teachers such as herself to engage in meaningful professional learning.

5.2.8 Findings

Core personal values and beliefs about physical activity and a passion for learning underpin Judy's professional identity and sense of moral purpose as a teacher of Physical Education. Prior experiences of poor Physical Education teaching when a school student and then experiencing excellent teaching and learning during her tertiary training inflamed her passion for maintaining high standards throughout her own professional career.

Contemporary social issues such as changing student needs through a waning interest in being physically active combined with increasing obesity levels are impacting the Physical Education profession and the role of teachers in schooling. Understanding the changes in values and beliefs about physical activity held by the students Judy teaches provides her with an authentic context through which she can frame meaningful experiences for them.

Other issues have affected her motivation for career-long learning, such as the observation of disengaged, experienced colleagues and their poor teaching approaches that no longer engage students. These contradict the early-career experiences she had with experienced teachers who mentored and supported her to seek ongoing change in her practice, which she has recognised as her professional responsibility as an experienced teacher.

Judy was concerned that the moral purpose driving the new generation of Physical Education teachers had changed since she entered the profession; that they did not demonstrate the same commitment to the field. A further issue she raised reflected their lack of inclination to take risks with their practice. Although critical of these

93

early-career Physical Education teachers, Judy believed experienced teachers needed to support the development of their professional identity to ensure they would value ongoing professional learning.

The development of centralised curriculum priorities for teachers in Australian schools has led to an increasing lack of relevance in the professional learning provided for teachers in specialist teaching areas such as Physical Education. Consequently, Judy found that accessing relevant professional learning came at an increasing personal cost to sustain meaningful learning.

Judy accessed sustainable professional learning by engaging in activities such as collaborative learning with her fellow teachers where opportunity was provided for her to undertake mentor and mentee roles as a teacher-leader and colleague. She accessed other learning opportunities through networks and subject specific professional learning sourced from external providers and by using reflective practice.

Judy used reflective practice in diverse ways to initiate change, such as having discussions with pre-service teachers about their current learning about teaching pedagogy from their tertiary Physical Education courses. Judy also made use of reflective practice as a way to celebrate her own expertise and experience that were critical to her self-efficacy and professional identity.

Throughout this case study Judy demonstrated an awareness of the impact of career stage on her changing professional learning needs while still retaining her moral purpose as a teacher of Physical Education. These professional stages of a teaching career, and changes to professional learning needs, while being concerned with maintaining relevant skills and knowledge for experienced Physical Education teachers like Judy, also require an ongoing response to the significant challenge of locating relevant professional learning.

5.3 Brian's story

Brian's case study follows the professional learning journey of a teacher with a leadership role as the Health and Physical Education coordinator at a non-metropolitan secondary school three hours from the nearest city in South Australia. The school population at the time of Brian's interviews (2008–2009) comprised in excess of 400 students, 20 per cent of whom were financially supported by the government to attend the school.

The school was an integral part of local community life, with an extensive history of valuing participation in sport and being a successful competitor. A high level of student, parent and staff commitment and participation led to a long record of success as one of the top athletics schools in South Australia. In recent years, volleyball had also been developed by the school as a major sporting focus, with teams competing annually in the Australian Schools National Volleyball Competition.

I had known Brian throughout my life. We attended the same district high school but had lost contact once we graduated from our respective teacher's colleges. We reconnected when, as a part of my role in DECD, I was involved as a provider of professional learning to Physical Education teachers in Brian's education district. He was an active and interested participant in the professional learning activity. He was willing to share his experiences with others, while frequently asking searching and critical questions during delivery of the program.

Knowing that Brian was an experienced Physical Education teacher, and from my observations still seemed highly motivated, I invited him to participate in this research. During our initial meeting, we identified common responses to familiar influences that had affected our professional lives as Physical Education teachers. This presented the possibility that identification and analysis of issues from the interviews may be influenced as a consequence of my own experiences impacting on how the data was interpreted. To lessen this effect Brian and I discussed my analysis throughout the process of the interviews to ensure that it was his voice that was being heard rather than an interpretation seen through the lens of my own experiences.

As with the other participants in this research, I was able to travel to Brian's school – in this case a three-hour journey – to conduct the interviews at the school site. I found this to be extremely valuable, as I was able to gain an insight into his working environment and meet several of his colleagues. Brian also met several other participant criteria. As a male participant in a non-metropolitan Year 8–12 high school, further diversity was added to the cohort of participants.

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that Brian had a strong commitment to teaching based on strongly held beliefs, influenced by living and working in a small rural community where he believed he had a significant responsibility to make a positive difference to its young people. He used the well-developed connections with his own experiences of physical activity and sport as part of growing up in a rural area to strengthen these beliefs. These experiences together with the development and expansion of his knowledge and skills during pre-service training have shaped his beliefs toward teaching Health and Physical Education:

> What shaped me was the sheer love of physical activity and the great variety
> of challenges that it offered … (Interview 1:4)

The value he placed on participation in physical activity and sport developed from his diverse experiences as a young person. These values and beliefs are supported by the school's approach to teaching and learning, where a framework based on personal development supports student learning, underpinned by a strong values' philosophy. In Brian's words:

> … I came [to teacher training] with a huge diverse background of [physical
> activity] experiences so I guess in that sense that has shaped me, and I then
> got put into an environment [at teacher's college] that totally suited me and
> [was] totally suited to what I understood to be normal [engagement in
> physical activity] and that is, here I am doing all of these wonderful things,
> doing them at a higher level and then being trained to do them better with
> wonderful experiences that I've never had before … (Interview 1:14).

Brian's reflections on his opportunities growing up in an environment that actively created opportunities for physical activity influenced his professional practice. He described himself as a 'jack of all trades and a master of none' (Interview 1:29) based on the diversity of physical activity pursuits that he engaged in when growing up. This occurred on a large agricultural property, in a warm climate with access to a large river and lake system amidst a number of closely connected communities in

which participation in sport was highly valued. When Brian went to teacher's college he was able to transfer these experiences and opportunities by participating in a wider range of sports and physical activities that he thought was 'completely normal for everybody' (Interview 1:18) and these experiences 'reinforced what the values were [about sport and physical activity] that I already had' (Interview 1:30).

Brian reflected that he had been very fortunate to grow up in this environment, and drove him to provide similar meaningful life-shaping experiences for the young people he now influenced as an educator. He recounted a comment that he made to one of his lecturers at teachers college when he graduated:

> These experiences that I have had that have shaped me as a person and ultimately as a teacher … very much now influence me as a teacher (Interview 1:18).

Brian sensed that the journey he had travelled, beginning with a rich diversity of physical activity to now being professionally trained to provide these experiences to children and young people in the same community, had taken him 'full circle'.

The key motivation for Brian in sustaining his own professional learning was fundamentally connected to what Kelchtermans (2005) describes as 'the central role played by teachers' 'self-understanding' – their dynamic sense of identity' (p. 995). In Brian's case, he still claims to maintain a strong connection to the knowledge and experiences developed about physical activity when growing up in a rural area. This environment provided diverse sporting opportunities that were beneficial during his pre-service teacher training. Later, as an experienced Physical Education teacher of many years, Brian found his drive for ongoing professional learning frustrated by his geographical location. Tensions created by the intensity and duration of his work, and meeting the challenges he faced as a leader while investing significant emotional capital into making sense of his actions were part of his complex working situation.

5.3.1 Issues of work intensity

Although the impact of geographical isolation on being able to access professional learning, which was mainly provided in the nearest city, was an ongoing issue for Brian, he treated this more as a fact of life rather than an impediment to his own professional learning and growth. Brian commented on this in the first interview:

I'll look at … professional development opportunities [only provided in the city] and I'll say of about 20 per cent [offered] – I would love that. But I can't afford that whole day, going to the city or the whole weekend and sometimes there's really good things, but I'll be honest and say, come the weekend I have to recharge. So it's early mornings, late at night every day all through the week and … [this is] the responsibility of coaching, and other things are still on the weekends, and that is when I have to have personal time in order to re-group ready for another intense week (Interview 1:2).

The choice between giving up personal time needed to regroup and recover from an intense working week, while continuing to meet sporting commitments associated with working and living in a rural community meant that choosing to attend a professional learning activity was not a real possibility.

The opportunity to attend even professionally relevant activities in the city can become very complex for teachers like Brian. He must travel long distances with an early morning start, and a very late evening finish. At times accommodation to stay overnight would be required. Whichever choice he made, considerable financial costs were incurred for himself and the school, which was then required to employ a casual teacher to manage the classes he was absent from.

Research by Cameron, Mulholland and Branson (2013) with teachers across Australian schools:

found three sets of major influences on teachers' engagement with professional learning and the quality of that learning. These influences were isolation (both geographical and professional), cost (both educational and emotional), and the professional and personal life stages of teachers (p. 377).

These findings echo several of the issues raised by Brian that influenced his decisions to not attend professional learning when it was not located on-site or easily accessible in his local geographic area.

The purpose of the study by Cameron, Mulholland and Branson was to 'better understand what motivates teachers to commit to professional learning (2013, p. 378). From their findings, they propose that education 'systems [within Australia] can do much to provide a supportive working environment for teachers by acknowledging the relevance of *all* that impacts on the teacher-learner' (p. 322). Even when professional learning could provide him with much needed opportunities to take up new skills such as computing, which were needed to support his teaching

and leadership roles, Brian was loathe to break ongoing commitments to service this need. As he explained:

> [I am] so busy running a faculty, meeting educational responsibilities, running extra curricula at the same time, and then you find a day out of school - you just don't like, well you just don't have the time to be out doing this and that because of all of the things that you are responsible for … (Interview 1:3).

Despite Brian's resistance to taking time out to attend professional learning, he was becoming increasingly pressured to become computer literate. Over the years, administrative tasks in teaching are increasingly undertaken using computer technologies – to report student learning to parents, access information about student attendance, learning capabilities and medical data, and for communicating with colleagues within the school and at other school sites. Finding the time and resources to participate in training provided by DECD off-site that would enable Brian to use a computer as a teaching, learning and administrative tool was becoming an increasingly important issue to resolve:

> I don't think I've got the time to track off … to [many systemic training conferences such as computing] … so, therefore, you have to seek it yourself when it suits you, not when it's offered because that doesn't suit, because we might have something really important on … (Interview 1:3).

From Brian's perspective, the issue about accessing meaningful professional learning to become computer literate was more one of poor resourcing, rather than an issue of geographical isolation where the only available professional learning for computing was available off-site. This poor resourcing was not only a professional learning issue but also one of providing him with the basic equipment to undertake administrative tasks in an appropriate environment. Brian highlighted this by recalling:

> For many years I didn't have a phone in an office or a computer in an office so that was limiting (Interview 1:32)

Although he later acquired these basic resources, there was still an impact on his professional learning because he considered himself as 'time-poor' while recognising that it had now become his professional responsibility to resolve the issue of computer literacy.

In the literature on teachers and professional learning, Hargreaves (2000), Guskey (2002), Duncombe and Armour (2004), Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), and Nieto (2009) provide insight into the decision-making of experienced teachers such as Brian when making decisions to attend (or not) professional learning. Research by Guskey found that for teachers to surrender what they highly value, that is, teaching time in the classroom, to listen to a visiting expert, engagement in the learning is essential. Teachers then feel when they return to their classrooms, that they have learnt something that will influence change in their teaching practice and increase the learning outcomes for their students.

The solution Brian found to resolve the increasing professional need to become computer literate was to seek help from expert colleagues at his school who were an accessible resource at times when he himself was available. As he explained:

> So just from a resource point of view … it's people within the school who know computers who give me the support … (Interview 1:16).

Brian was of the opinion that relying on local support from colleagues to meet this growing need to become computer literate helped him to comply with administrative requirements and keep up with the constantly changing technologies being accessed and used by his students. A further advantage was that he would not have to give up teaching time or use up personal resources to travel to another site to access this professional learning.

Throughout our interviews, Brian continued to demonstrate how frustrated he felt about issues related to the increasing intensity of his work. In particular, the unique work of Physical Education teachers over and above their scheduled teaching time affected him. He was intensely aware of the personal impact from meeting out-of-hours commitments such as that required to coach teams, train athletes, and travel with them to facilitate participation in competitions, not just in the local region and community, but also at intra and interstate competitions. Brian described the significance of this for his teaching and students:

> As PE [Physical Education] teachers it is so busy. You're out of school for knock-out and of course often, [and] – well if the teams win, it's another day out. And then if you're involved in athletics that can be three days, so it is significant that when you have two staff out for a three day trip, it's a lot of time …

> … the classes begin to be impacted.
>
> … and it reinforces to me it's our job, all of our quality teaching it's more
> and more about teaching. So you can have the best programs in place … it
> will hold up, and [then] slowly … plummet … (Interview 2:18).

Like many Physical Education teachers, Brian was professionally conflicted as he combined the responsibilities of teaching, sports coaching, managing teams and leadership. The intensity of these roles for Brian was influenced by the impact of his philosophical approach to teaching and learning. This approach was supported by school as it was based on personal values such as teamwork and personal responsibility. These factors are seen as being connected by reciprocity and significantly influenced Brian's interests and professional approach toward learning.

During our second interview, Brian described the impact of these tensions on him personally, through his health and wellbeing and on his work as he struggled to achieve outcomes for his students that were becoming increasingly standardised and monitored while also being absent from classes to meet off-campus sporting commitments. Brian shared his observations:

> Travelling along [with teaching], you're nearly there, where you want
> them[students] to be [in achievement of outcomes], and then you've lost it.
> So you have got to drive it [the learning] back again. And that's why I
> haven't had a sick day for twenty-five years.
>
> And it's all to do with the factor that it's too hard [taking time off]
> (Interview 2:21).

The struggle for continuity in the classroom, where pedagogically he scaffolded learning for students to achieve outcomes, was made more complex when he was absent from the teaching role and a replacement teacher was used. Research by Armour and Yelling (2007) with experienced Physical Education teachers in England also found that the issue of quality replacement teachers significantly impacted their attempts to access and engage in existing professional learning opportunities, and not only in meeting traditional off-campus commitments (p. 184).

Brian's vision for this situation changing in the future was not encouraging. He predicted an ongoing build-up of pressure for teachers in the classroom, from the impact of changing education policy that increasingly monitors teaching and learning

through accountability measures. These changes to education are driven nationally by the federal government and centrally by the South Australian state government.

During the time of the interviews, Australian schools were being required to take up and implement a new national curriculum covering the pre-school, primary and middle years of schooling, while locally South Australian schools were also implementing new curriculum in the senior years of schooling. Brian gave an example of state-based changes to schooling in the senior years' curriculum that he was particularly feeling the impact of as a teacher and leader:

> … time taken up with new SACE … while I think there's obviously merit in that, that means a whole lot of new things have to be done, and processes and whatever, and meetings to go [to], and the like. And there's only so much of the pie … which means that everything else is on hold and you come back totally exhausted on Monday, and then off to a conference.
>
> … I can't let the Department [DECD] completely overpower me to the extent that I lose the very essence of what I think the job's about, and that's the connection with the students and what they're doing (Interview 3:6).

Brian connected this increasing pressure back to personal and professional issues, such as being time poor, which he had already identified in previous interviews. He recognised a direct impact not only on the quality of his teaching, because of depleted energy levels, but also to his deeply held values about his core business and responsibilities as an effective teacher in a small rural community.

5.3.2 Values in education and learning

Values education became a focal point for education in Australian schools during the first decade of the 21st century. The concept of values education refers to the teaching of social, political, cultural and aesthetic values. Veughelers and Vedders (2003) describe education itself as 'an interaction between the value-laden meaning constructions of teachers and the value-laden meaning constructions of students (p. 386). This then portrayed itself as values forming education, which stresses the pedagogical dimension in which values are developed and where education itself plays an active role as practice.

Historically teachers have been dealing with values in education in different ways since the second half of the 20th century, beginning in the 1950s where 'the main emphasis was placed on conformity and adaptation to society' (Veughelers &

Vedders 2003, p. 377). This went through a range of iterations until the 2000s, when the complexities of today's society now demands from young people that they develop their own identities. At the same time, they must be prepared to actively participate in society and respect differences in identities (Veughelers & Veddders 2003, p. 377). In the context of education in South Australia, where Brian was teaching, government schools are encouraged to promote values such as respect, fairness, excellence, integrity, responsibility and cooperation with their students.

It became very clear throughout our interviews that in a rural community the local school was under public scrutiny with expectations that they should be implementing new policies such as values in education. The schools were also expected by the community to provide their young people with equitable educational opportunities, despite the impact of distance and geographical isolation. Keltchermans (2005) describes this situation as 'the teacher as a person [being] held by many within the profession and outside it to be at the centre of not only the classroom but also the educational process' (p. 1000). In response to this context of high community expectations the school had developed a strong values culture around the personal responsibility of students with respect to their own learning journey. Brian described this culture during our second interview:

> We have our core values, a huge component [contributing] to the success of our school, so we're very much a driven school.
>
> … they have been devised through our experience where certain [student] behaviours have impacted upon us, and when we've got to the point, like if this continues or these behaviours continue, then it might be that we can't continue to work at this level in this activity [with learning impacted] (Interview 2:6).

The valuing of a positive school culture, described by Brian as 'a circle of courage' (Interview 1:34–35), identified how the behaviour of students directly impacted not only on individual learning but also the learning and achievement of competencies for all students. Student behaviour also impacted on the ability of teachers to provide appropriate learning experiences in the classroom. With student achievement being directly connected to the achievement of curriculum standards and competencies the positive or negative behaviour of students directly impacted the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

The 'circle of courage' culture established by the school used a concept based on valuing teamwork, and achieving competencies at a personal level to meet the needs (and ultimate achievements) of the team. Students, through challenging themselves to be successful in their learning could create a sense of personal belonging through a range of pathways within the school. These included being in a sporting team, a member of a choir or musical, and in the classroom. These achievements meant that students were meeting commitments through active participation, achieving prescribed levels of competence that brought a sense of personal achievement, greater self-esteem and, ultimately, connection to the school community.

Transferring this values' culture into the Physical Education context had been achieved by the teachers' development of a values rubric where 'the students are fully aware of what behaviours [in a learning environment] they must demonstrate in order to be selected [in a school sport team]' (Interview 2:4). Brian recognised that a positive learning culture was having a real impact on behaviour management and learning outcomes for students. However, research by Hickey (2006) questions whether Physical Education is an appropriate place for this to occur. Hickey suggests that 'any cultural shifts in Physical Education and sport need to occur away from the sub-cultures of oppressive and exclusionary codes of behaviour and the endorsement and celebration of character attributes associated [with] strength, aggression and solidarity … can be very problematic' (Hickey, p.17).

The transference of values into Physical Education and sport learning environments at this school affected teachers and their work, achieving both positive and negative outcomes. Brian provided an example when describing how they linked student performance in the classroom to selection in sporting teams:

> So now that the students have the [values] rubric, they are fully aware of what behaviours they need to demonstrate in order to be selected [for a sports team]
>
> To take the emotion, the angst [out], because that's, to be honest, that's the issue that drains us, it's hard to quantify the emotional energy that you spend (Interview 2.7).
>
> … the kids at the end really clearly understand where the line is in the sand.
>
> … then they're invited – 'Well done you've been selected but now you have the opportunity to not continue if you think that these expectations for you will be too difficult'. So in a sense they're invited to leave. (Interview 2:9)

104

An assumption was made by the teachers that the school community values underpinning learning behaviours in the classroom were understood by all students and that they would be able to identify on a rubric whether they were meeting the desired standard or not. It was their behaviour in the teaching and learning environment that would facilitate their inclusion into a sporting team not their particular skills and ability in the sport. As indicated by Hickey (2006) students were being asked to put aside individual competitiveness that helps them to defeat rivals in the sporting arena to consider the wider grouping of students as a team of learners.

Brian further explained the emphasis on behaviour management and standards, through the personal development of students, as having a high priority in the school because of its impact on teaching and learning:

> … our mantra [across the school] is that personal development is number one.

> … everything associated with that, the values of kids, their personal development, their social skills and their physical skills, is encompassed in personal development, and we find if we focus on that then success comes (Interview 2:15).

The 'success' he referred to here was not only implicit in learning outcomes for students at the school but also in the achievement of sporting success.

This issue when discussed more broadly in the interview provided an important insight into what influenced Brian's direction and interest in the professional learning he engages in. As Brian said in the final interview:

> We have to be constantly evolving and …

> Because the clientele is changing, even the activities we've done very successfully, they are constantly evolving.

> … we're training our athletes incredibly differently, in the way physically, in the way we're managing them psychologically.

> … it used to be probably 90 per cent physical training and far less needed to be attended to the psychological training of the athletes (Interview 3:4).

It was this shift in training focus, combined with the values and personal responsibility approach of the school, that gave additional meaning to Brian's professional learning through his personal interest in sports psychology. It was through this interest that Brian was able to make connections between the schools

approach of encouraging students to 'own' their behaviour. Subsequently the consequences for transferring this into the sporting context of individual performance and teamwork were that the commitment and endeavour of the individual impacted the outcomes of the group on the playing field.

To support this professional learning Brian undertakes authentic theoretical research by reading when he can. He provided an example of how this was achieved:

> Part of my professional reading is … [from] … sport psychologist(s) … [it is] very much [about the] empowering … of the participants [students] (Interview 1:9).

> I devour that type of book, those types of books during the holidays that give me this energy.

> They give me inspiration … because dealing with so many kids at the intensity and at the level [we do] – if we stand still we will soon be going backwards … (Interview 1:11).

With many of the students at the school having the ability to compete at an elite level in state and national sporting competitions, Brian felt the need to maintain his own professional knowledge of change in professional sports coaching, particularly in the field of sports psychology in order to support them. Brian acknowledged that, while the amount of work and energy he put into the ongoing development and implementation of this philosophical approach to teaching and learning was personally demanding, he was adamant that this approach supported the culture of the school, its community, and his own professionalism. Brian went on to explain:

> … with their values [being demonstrated by the students] we come out energised not drained. Because they … [we've] established a framework on how we operate …

> … the values are absolutely critical … we have to develop a model that's sustainable (Interview 3:9).

In our third interview, Brian expanded on this emphasis of supporting and implementing a values approach in his teaching by also making a connection to the contemporary social health issue of declining physical activity levels amongst young people in Australia. In making this connection he explained that:

> The biggest challenge is the change of clientele, who are a reflection of the era they live in. So they [students] come in with a lower, overall lower skill base, lesser physical capacity and less of that natural inclination to want to

do physical activity. So we're [teachers] having to work harder at establishing the values, the interest, the skills and physical capacity.

We know that our [sporting] performances overall are declining. It's just that we know that the rest of the state is declining faster than us. So that presents a challenge in our day-to-day teaching (Interview 3:4).

The change in social attitudes toward sport and physical activity more generally across populations in Western societies added another dimension to his interest in psychology and sport at an elite level. For Brian's school a 'decline' in ability and interest in sport by each new intake of students was of particular concern given the extensive history of the ongoing success of the school, particularly in athletics and more recently in volleyball at a national level. The only comfort that Brian could find in this alarming trend was that for students at his school skill levels and physical abilities were declining at a slower rate than the remainder of the state according to information collected anecdotally.

5.3.3 Professional learning tensions

Brian attained an enormous amount of professional growth from his reading, and gained satisfaction from observing the impact of changes to his teaching practice on the development of the young people he taught. This focus for professional learning enabled Brian to make valid connections to the teaching and learning values of his school with the changes he implemented being recognised and understood by his colleagues and students.

Brian acknowledged that continuing his own professional learning was the enabler for him to bring about meaningful change to not only his own practice, but also to influence change in his colleagues. He identified his approach to professional learning as '[being] driven by the fact that [I] have got to keep relevant' (Interview 1:26) In later interviews Brian shared the tensions he experienced when directed by his principal to attend mandated professional learning to increase his knowledge, skill and expertise as a leader of curriculum change. As Brian recalled:

Sometimes when I've been asked maybe by the Principal, in something to do with boys in education because [it is] both targeted and they'd like you to go and you look at – you think right, this is going to be the cost if I go, you understand the cost in terms of what … is going to happen [to students] …

… you've got them highly motivated and all of a sudden a relief teacher comes in to do it.

> … while it's a strength it can be a problem, because they[students] expect that you've talked about this, we're heading towards that, and then a conference is plucked out of nowhere, it comes at a really bad time (Interview 2:21).

This impact from leaving classes to attend professional learning, particularly when identified by a school leader as being important to the school, was also exacerbated for Brian when leaving the school to meet sporting commitments that had not been previously planned or provided for. O'Connor and Macdonald (2002), who write about the complexity of teacher's work with particular reference to Physical Education teachers, explore the conflicts that arise from the diversity of Brian's roles in the school:

> For teachers who work in a variety of settings, such as a physical educator it may be difficult for them to make sense of their work as they move across responsibilities such as sports coach, physical education teacher, camp convenor, sport official, and student counsellor (O'Connor & Macdonald, p. 37).

In Brian's case, the roles of faculty leader and professional learner provided additional complexity. Brian, like other teachers in his situation as described by O'Connor and Macdonald, accepted that attending professional learning for mandated change was an important part of his leadership role and ongoing development as a teacher. Brian, however, preferred to have control of the decision-making about what and when he would attend such activities and thereby 'make sense' of their relevance.

Research by O'Brien and Jones (2005) and Nieto (2009) raise similar concerns where teachers are directed to attend professional learning by others such as line managers or leaders. They describe 'mandated professional development activities – in which administrators select the topics and teachers are a captive audience for half a day or whole day as notoriously unproductive' (Nieto, p.10). O'Brien and Jones note from their research with teachers in Scotland that 'only a quarter of teachers … claimed that [the] professional development work had had an impact on their teaching' (O'Brien & Jones, p. 3).

Part of the development of professional meaning for teachers like Brian comes from their ability to control the decision-making to engage in professional learning. From this personal control came personal commitment and a belief that the sacrifices made

to attend such activities would be beneficial not just for himself, but also his school and local community. Brian explained how this became meaningful:

> … when you do go … I'm out in the real world, and you think, 'Why don't I do this more often?' but then you realise when you come back, that you can't do it all the time, but yes, there are times when it just fits beautifully, you're not at a peak time … (Interview 2:22)

MacClure (1993), Beijaard, et al. (2004), and Kelchtermans (2005) argue that teachers like Brian use their identity as a 'personal interpretive framework, [through which] the set of beliefs and representations that teachers develop over time [and that] operates as the lens through which they perceive their job situation, make sense of it and act in it' (Beijaard et al. 2004, p. 1000). When Brian considered that he had the time and could anticipate value being added to his teaching practice through attending formalised professional learning off-site, he felt comfortable in making a decision to attend – 'it makes sense' to him and he valued the experience. However, his professional learning was 'fragmented and almost totally voluntary' as described in research by Bechtel and O'Sullivan (2006, p. 377) when writing about the professional development and learning design and opportunities for experienced Physical Education teachers.

Although Brian frequently highlighted the tension between accessing professional learning or travelling outside of the school to participate in sporting activities, noting the impact on his teaching in the classroom, he still had a high level of awareness of the role professional learning played in his ongoing development as a teacher:

> … two things that promote my professional learning.
>
> Looking to do something different can just appear. And I don't know when it will be, or where it will come from, conversation with someone, it's something I've read in the paper or it's a book that I've read, so that's inspired something that will impact on some aspect of my work …
>
> And the other aspect is very much responding to need, from a curriculum point of view …
>
> The issues of binge drinking, and sexual promiscuity, that's been made aware to us by police, health workers, students …
>
> … it's responding to issues that we observe within our own setting (Interview 2:17).

Brian's response to the emergence of new contemporary curriculum issues such as those described above was to acquire new knowledge and skills while also reflecting on how he would change his pedagogical approach to teaching. Over the period of the three interviews, Brian responded to the need to bring about change pedagogically when describing the tension of being a leader and a learner. This gradually emerged through his description of a reflective feedback loop he had developed, using processes not unlike those used in critical reflection.

5.3.4 Reflective learning

Historically in education, reflective practice as cited in research by Nelson and Sadler (2013) has sought to develop an understanding of orientations and the components of reflection. Examples include Dewey's 1930s use of constructs as a process, Van Manen's 1970s connections between the traditions of social sciences by developing 'modes'of reflection, Schon's 1980s approaches to reflective practice; and Valli's 1990s levels of reflection. These contributions to the discourse on reflective practice give some insight into the various complexities that educators such as Brian use when seeking to understand the truth about their practice, the values upon which they are based, and how they transfer this into the act of teaching.

Brian created his own version of reflective practice through the development of a reflective feedback loop. His process was to collect evidence from a variety of sources, analyse the data, make changes to his teaching practice, then seek feedback before starting the process again. Brian's values relating to his method of learning were demonstrated by the following comment:

> … I'd hate to think the administrative [leadership tasks] trade-off will cause me, stop me, from continuing to improve, evolve and grow as a teacher, in looking for new opportunities.

> … I protect that little part of my mental energy, because otherwise I'll stagnate. It's a very fine line between continuing to reflect and review what we're doing, run it, and then bring in something new.

> Yeah, so it's a lot of things to juggle.

> … you have days where you feel like you're drowning, but it is nice … what really sustains me is this new direction, particularly if you have a real[ly] strong sense that you're going to get some good outcomes (Interview 3:7).

Brian's reflective feedback loop was pivotal in sustaining his professional growth while also keeping him feeling 'fresh' in his approach to teaching particularly when he felt that his multiple responsibilities were becoming overwhelming.

In the South Australian context in which Brian was teaching, inquiry-based learning had become a well-established approach toward changing teacher practice, particularly in DECD schools, through a program established in the 1990s. International research by Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997) supports the more recent supposition by Goodyear, Casey and Kirk (2013) that Physical Education teachers have not engaged with this form of professional learning to any great extent:

> practitioner inquiry has been offered as a meaningful and sustainable form of professional learning for a number of decades … [it] is still underdeveloped and (is) far from embedded into physical education teacher's practice (Goodyear, Casey & Kirk p.19).

Brian freely acknowledged throughout the interviews that he was always questioning [inquiring] whether he could do things better or differently as a teacher, and that this has been a constant driver in the continuation of his professional learning. During the second interview Brian explained:

> I talk to people from all over Australia … about the complexities of dealing with kids …
>
> … you can reflect on it immediately and relate it to your situation.
>
> … if anyone comes [to our school] … I will seek what's their experience of working with our students (Interview 2:19).

Reflective practice appears to be one that is driven by personal beliefs rather than an embedded trait of Physical Education teachers' professionalism. Interestingly, Brian proposed that this continual reflection and making change to his teaching practice could be as much a flaw as a positive trait in his personal practice:

> … part of my weakness or what could be a strength, but it's the constant self-appraisal where things have gone pretty well but I could have been better (Interview 2:11).

His continued engagement in professional learning, whether it be through reading, talking with others or analysing feedback data left me with a sense that Brian will continue to seek improvement in the quality of his teaching no matter what the personal cost. He provided an example of how this had an impact:

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> I don't know if it's deliberate, but it's actually the foundation of everything I do, and a part of … I guess, adding to the stress of the job is that I'm constantly seeking that feedback.
>
> … I take any incidental opportunity I can … (Interview 3:1).

For Brian, the experience of unstructured professional learning as provided by his reflective feedback loop energises him while working in an intense environment. It was this outcome that continued to provide the motivation for his ongoing professional learning and its transference into his practice.

5.3.5 Transferring learning

From his family connections with elite athletes in the international field of athletics Brian has been able to attend Grand Prix athletics meetings overseas, and subsequently been able to transfer what he has observed and learnt into his own school's sporting context. Part of this process has also been to transfer new knowledge and understanding to early-career Physical Education teachers at the school, who then collaborate with him in the development of new approaches to teaching and training:

> Our process, our philosophy, our teaching practice which has, every year, evolved. … has allowed us to be successful again – … we're not training any harder we are just training smarter and improving our talent identification. We are getting better at encouraging kids to be more involved in training, and that type of thing.
>
> … because of my longevity with the athletics program, when a new Phys Ed teacher comes, I in-service them … my in-servicing has come from – … you go back to college days and then experience through the family … and … travelling overseas to Grand Prix meets … (Interview 1:6).

Brian described how this access to elite experts in the field of athletics brings to life his interest in sports psychology, which he transfers not only to his colleagues but to the students he taught:

> … [I am]a passionate reader of anything to do with group dynamics and psychology and that can be very diverse and I consume any[thing] like articles, that I often will bring them to discuss with kids where a writer has provided a really good angle …
>
> My professional learning is centred around my interest in group dynamics and I draw many interesting tools, anecdotes [from this] (Interview 1:11).

The richness of these sources of research that Brian was able to access provided a vital element to his reflection on practice. Research by Thorsen and DeVore describe

this action as 'the interplay between research and practice within natural contexts' (2013, p. 92).

Transferring his professional learning and research interests to his students and colleagues was facilitated through the leadership and mentoring processes he used as he responded to changing demands in the school environment and the wider community. He continued to explain this observation:

> I'm reading the mood.
>
> We'll adjust.
>
> … this school is very dynamic. Well I think it's quite dynamic and that is because of all this feedback we're getting from lots of different people…
>
> … it's about getting the mix right between the head stuff and the physical stuff, and I think that's the most difficult. That's the real challenge and if you're not getting lots of feedback you're not going to get that right, or not very often (Interview 2:10).

It was this act of combining professional learning from sports psychology and group dynamics together with the ongoing collection of evidence and reflection from a range of data sources that came together to bring about meaningful change, not only for Brian but also for his colleagues and students.

5.3.6 Leading professional change

Brian frequently talked about his role as a leader and mentor in the school. He described his style as an instructional leadership role facilitating change in how his colleagues work and contribute to the culture of the school community. As Brian explained:

> If we're [teachers]on the same page,[then] we can do terrific things for kids … when we're doing any activity it's a team – we present as a team. We talk at the beginning of the year as to what are our goals for the year, and that might be with regard to curriculum focus, facility development, and extra curricula things. … we actually discuss our themes.
>
> And so the kids, very quickly I think, read and see us as a consistent group, and we're not piecemeal in our approach (Interview 2:3).

Brian frequently described himself '… more as a facilitator rather than a leader', (Interview 3.2) in supporting his colleagues to deliver quality teaching experiences that promote a positive learning environment for students. Gurr, Drysdale and

Mulford (2007) identify this approach as being an example of instructional leadership whereby they claim 'the more typical [leadership] path is indirect, working through and with others' (p. 2). Brian's own leadership goals promoted collaborative teamwork; essential if the teaching group were to reflect their values effectively to the students they taught. Brian described one particular approach that he used to achieve this:

> What we're looking at in the Phys Ed department is good practice …
>
> … so you're reinforcing …
>
> … it's about the balance so again we talk about [it] collectively…
>
> … you're coming back and talking about what really is quality teaching, core business, being consistent, and I think that is something that perhaps we don't do enough as teachers, we just stagger on alone (Interview 2:5).

Here Brian reflected on the impact of the schools' geographic isolation. His inability to access professional learning on a regular basis affects both himself and his colleagues. This issue is frequently identified by teachers – that of their personal professional isolation in the classroom and its impact on the act of teaching. Through his leadership approach, Brian invited and guided his colleagues to collectively reflect on their practice to support pedagogical change.

Teaching has been identified by Fullan (1993) as 'a lonely profession', which stifles professional growth. As he explained:

> The professional isolation of teachers [that] limits access to new ideas and better solutions … permits incompetence to exist and persist to the detriment of students, colleagues, and teachers themselves (p. 34).

Brian recognised that by engaging his colleagues in reflecting on their collaborative practice he could in some way help to decrease the personal professional isolation of his colleagues and mentor them toward becoming reflective about their practice.

Brian provided support not only by actively engaging his colleagues in collaborative decision-making that impacted on their teaching practice, but also by acting as a mentor, encouraging and supporting them in the pursuit of their own professional learning and growth.

> A main role of mine is to excite, to enthuse, to offer roles where people can feel that they are making a difference …

> They can get the satisfaction that I get in starting or, initiating an idea, following it through, seeing it through to a conclusion.
>
> … I really try and foster that and generate that within other faculty members … that way other staff members are feeling that they are contributing and it's not like they are just going through their teaching motions – that they are developing (Interview 1:13).

Through Brian's leadership, different skills and experiences within the teaching team were recognised and fostered to enrich the teaching and quality of learning experiences for their students with a deliberate expectation that they would become professional learners.

Brian's leadership approach in the Physical Education faculty provided a catalyst for change on many levels with its focus on learning, personal development, and growth. This included both students and teachers but with benefits for the school and the wider community.

> I think a really successful part of our faculty is that people are very empowered … I like to see myself as a facilitator, rather than 'the leader', because we are so diverse in … what we bring to the faculty, and yet we do things together (Interview 3:5).

Brian recognised that by tapping into the particular passions of his teaching team, they were more likely to want to pursue professional learning that facilitated their own personal and professional growth. The additional benefit was that as this learning and growth occurred the entire group of Physical Education teachers also benefited as the learning was shared.

5.3.7 Sustaining professional learning into the future

The issue for Brian in sustaining his own professional learning into the future may depend on his ability to further develop his reflective loop while maintaining his personal and professional energy levels. Luttenberg and Bergen (2008) state that:

> It is generally acknowledged [in the field of teacher change research in education] that reflection is an important part of the professional behaviour of teachers and essential for the stimulation of their professional development. (p. 543)

Participating in reflective practice is acknowledged as a time-consuming method of changing teaching practice, but frequently cited as being more likely to bring about authentic sustainable change as it is strongly connected to examining the values and

beliefs of teachers that influence their pedagogical decisions. Schon (1983), Dinan-Thompson (2001), and Glazer, Abbott and Harris (2004), suggest that 'when the professional learning of teachers becomes 'personal', it develops its own change momentum for individual teachers, using processes such as those found in reflective practice and lifelong learning' (Burnett, Baldock & Smith 2007, p. 13).

5.3.8 Findings

The location of Brian's school in a small rural community puts the values and practices of the school and its teachers under close scrutiny by parents who do not want their children educationally disadvantaged by geographical isolation. In responding to this context, Brian has transferred the values-based policies developed by the school into a Physical Education and sporting setting where personal development values are expanded through physical activity. This policy focus has also influenced the teaching of Health & Physical Education through the adoption of a personal development framework reflecting concerns from teachers about the declining physical activity levels of young people.

Brian has found over the duration of his professional career that the intensity of work as a Physical Education teacher, leader and sports coach/manager have increased. Brian has recognised the increasing impact on his work of changing student learning needs, continuous technological change and curriculum change. He has also experienced the increased tension of the requirement to attend mandated professional learning when, as a sports coach he was already committed to spending time away from the school, increasing the amount of time taken from his teaching commitments.

Brian's professional learning was closely influenced and driven by changing approaches to coaching, his personal interest in sports psychology together with a desire to facilitate change in the practice of his colleagues. In his role as leader of the Health and Physical Education faculty, Brian had at times been required to initiate change in areas that he may not have a particular interest in himself, but he endeavoured to unpack the purpose and find relevance for Physical Education.

Reflective learning played an important role in Brian's ongoing change to practice. He used both reflection-in-action and on-action in his roles as a teacher and leader,

while the collection of data enabled him to make authentic change. Brian also used these processes of reflection to motivate and re-energise himself while using this learning to facilitate discussion with colleagues and other professionals in the field of Physical Education and sport.

Brian drew together the different aspects that affected his professional life to facilitate his learning, such as personal interests, roles as a leader and mentor, implementing the school's values, and life experiences. Brian's leadership style was that of instructional leadership using collaboration to promote teamwork. This decreased the professional isolation of his colleagues while facilitating their professional learning through utilisation of their different skills and experiences. Brian's personal belief was that as a professional teacher in a small rural community he has a responsibility to make a positive difference through Physical Education to the lives of its young people.

5.4   Cathy's story

This case study provides insight into Cathy's professional learning journey, a teacher in a public non-metropolitan middle-years' high school located in the same education district as Brian's school (Case study 5.3). The school at the time of the interviews had a population of more than 650 students. The school's location in a small town required students to be bussed in each day from the surrounding district. The school maintained a strong sporting ethos with a proud tradition of sporting participation and achievement at high levels.

Cathy had undertaken her entire teaching career at the school following being a student there. Cathy was the only member of the cohort of six teachers in this research with whom I had taught during my own teaching career. We had been members of the same Health and Physical Education faculty for three years, losing contact when I moved interstate. We did not reconnect until many years later when she attended a professional learning activity where I was a presenter.

When we taught together, I was aware of the high standards Cathy set for herself in providing quality teaching to her students. I was interested to observe during her participation in the professional learning workshop I conducted, many years later, that she had not lost any of her passion for teaching. As Cathy commented:

> I believe [teaching], it's all about skilling-up adolescents, because gone are the days where the teachers [are] the font of the information … (Interview 3:8).

Cathy was able to reflect on how teacher-student relationships had changed over the years since she had been a school student herself – a move away from teacher as holder of all knowledge, 'pouring' into the student as a willing passive receptacle, to a collaborative relationship where teacher and student negotiated the transmission of knowledge and learning.

Cathy met all of the criteria required to be a participant in this research. Apart from adding another female, she was teaching in a different setting to the other participants. As a teacher in the school site she once attended, she also had a unique perspective to offer. When approached, Cathy agreed to participate, and I was able to travel to her school to conduct the interviews.

Cathy's school had recently undergone a major reform, which involved separating it into two separate campuses – senior and middle years – with the senior campus established in a nearby town. The school administrators had been discussing a range of issues for some time, particularly for senior students, that affected transition from secondary school to further education, such as that provided by Technical and Further Education (TAFE). With a large TAFE campus located at a regional centre nearby the possibility of relocating the senior school had been a topic of planning conversations over many years.

Such a move had been resisted for various historical, economic and politically sensitive reasons, leaving the school at its original location. However, as national issues surrounding retention levels in the senior years gained traction politically, the school faced the need to broaden the curriculum and increase access to VET subjects. The decision was made to relocate the senior students to the TAFE site.

Cathy, and other teachers like her, had to make a choice, both professionally and personally. Did she want to teach senior students only, or did she want to become a middle-years' teacher; did she want to remain at the original school site, or relocate to a new site? If she stayed, the implication was that she would have to change her pedagogical approach and adopt a middle-schooling philosophy. The opportunity to continue teaching across all levels of secondary schooling would be lost, perhaps threatening professional satisfaction levels. Cathy explained:

> … when the school first split about seven years ago.
>
> Then I had to make a decision – there or here and I chose here because I knew I had more behaviour management type issues but … I knew when I taught up there I'd spend all day Sunday marking and I used to spend Saturdays coaching and I needed my balance.
>
> That's one of the things that in teaching health I think you learn to balance your work your life and community work and I've always been conscious of doing that … (Interview 1:9)

This issue, therefore, became not just a professional career decision, but was more about work-life balance given the potential impact on her personal time and community responsibilities.

5.4.1 Issues impacting professional learning

In our first interview, I sought to understand what had motivated Cathy to pursue a teaching career focused on physical activity. She gave the following insight about her strong personal beliefs on the health benefits of physical activity she had developed at a young age:

> I think the thing that drove me and I was most conscious of was the fact that my Dad died when I was in Grade 7.
>
> He died from heart disease and – if he was fit he would have been a good league footballer. He was overweight, he smoked and I knew his lifestyle caused his death basically.
>
> So I was always interested in sport and I had some good success with it.
>
> … and back then I was really conscious that lifestyle was everything.
>
> … I did Phys Ed[at university], but I've [also] had an interest in Health too through most of my career … (Interview 1:20).

For Cathy the connections she made early on in her life between a healthy lifestyle and physical activity influenced her choices in pre-service training. These experiences provided ongoing motivation to continue professional learning and make changes to her practice.

From the time Cathy decided to enter the teaching profession and went to university, she felt poorly prepared pedagogically for a career in the classroom. Cathy explained:

> I did the university course … we did things in the laboratories in reaction time and we did some units that were like third year medicine – very, very technical stuff.
>
> So when I came out at the beginning of [my teaching career] I was quite green to the actual nuts and bolts of delivering [pedagogy].
>
> I came out knowing [about] netball and basketball – [and] I was [a] swimm[er] (Interview 1:6).

From Cathy's perspective, pre-service training may have given her a thorough sports' science grounding in areas such as biomechanics, but this was to be of little help when facing a class of Physical Education students. Providing them with an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills across more than the sports she had expertise in was a challenge. It left Cathy in the position of learning about pedagogy 'on the job' as her teaching career progressed. Research by O'Bryant, O'Sullivan and

Raudensky (2000) into the preparation of Physical Education teachers suggests that what little research has been undertaken on the effectiveness of their teacher education programs indicates 'too great a focus on a technical orientation' (p. 177). Cathy's pedagogical skills and knowledge gap continued to be of concern throughout her teaching career and was frequently raised as an issue during the interviews.

Being located at a school three hours from the nearest city also meant that Cathy considered herself at a disadvantage when accessing professional learning support. Early support may have assisted her to overcome her perceived pedagogical deficiencies emanating from her pre-service training. As she said:

> We have to do our own professional development and I really do if it comes in the local community. I don't seek it going to [the city].
>
> … I've got commitments and I look at that balance so I don't go near and far chasing it, I see what comes to me … (Interview 1:19).

Cathy was very clear about the professional learning impact of her geographical isolation. Balancing personal commitments that took up her non-teaching time, such as being a parent of young children, were important to her. These non-teaching commitments were more highly valued than the significant investment that a journey to the city would entail to attend professional learning activities. From Cathy's experience, the professional learning activities themselves could be a gamble in terms of their value and meaning. As Cathy reflected:

> I think there was only one time where I can recall where I went to [the city for professional learning] and spent a fortune and came away with a tool kit/tool box that people did see … as a big waste of money (Interview 1:26).

Teachers who are geographically isolated from larger centres where a wide range of professional learning is frequently provided, have to consider more than just the cost of planning lessons for a replacement teacher while they are absent. They also have to consider the personal time and costs associated with travelling long distances, and accessing accommodation. In today's environment teachers also [usually] have to pay a registration fee to attend professional learning sessions, and if they have a negative (and costly) experience such as described by Cathy, they are much less likely to pursue such an option again.

The amount of resourcing available for teachers like Cathy to support their professional learning has been diminishing over time. A report by the Business Council of Australia (BCA) (Dinham, Ingvarson & Kleinhenz 2008, p. 27) indicates that the 'total investment by governments for ongoing professional learning for teachers is approximately one per cent of recurrent budgets, which is poor compared with commonly accepted levels of around five per cent in industry'. Cathy and other teachers who are motivated to drive their own pursuit of professional learning do so at their own expense or rely on opportunities provided by the state and commonwealth governments. These professional learning opportunities are frequently designed to 'up-skill' teachers to achieve pre-determined standards or targets associated with specific policy initiatives, such as in literacy and numeracy, and may not meet the specific needs of individual teachers.

The increasing intensity of work for teachers in Western countries such as Australia as described in the literature by Blackmore (1999), Day (2000), Fullan (2001, 2009), Hargreaves (2000, 2004a) and Hattie (2003) has meant that for many years increasing pressures leave little, if any, time to engage in meaningful professional learning either independently or with colleagues. Cathy identified this issue and, as an experienced teacher of many years in the classroom, also felt that further demands were also made on her time with the added expectation that she would take up leadership roles as the need arose. Cathy explained the significance of this:

> As you get older and more experienced in a school, a lot of other things start to impact on you.
>
> … every now and again I have … acted in different jobs.
>
> I haven't done that and been a big stayer because I like the balance in my own life because I've still got one [child of my own] in Year 9 and I always like to keep that balance and you see how the job is getting so big now and probably with our coordinators over both campuses the load on people is quite big … (Interview 1:11).

Implicit in this reflection on getting older and becoming a senior member of staff is the challenge frequently faced by female members of the profession as they attempt to balance family, career and personal time (Addi-Raqccah 2005; Macdonald 1999). Cathy observed that the job (teaching) just on its own continues to grow, as does the intensity of the work. These conditions are directly impacting on where and how she can access professional learning that would contribute to her professional growth.

O'Connor and Macdonald (2002) highlight an observation frequently noted in the literature about the particular complexity of roles for Physical Education teachers:

> Differences in individual contexts in which physical education teachers work may influence the way in which teachers perceive their work and may either enhance or inhibit teachers' ability to do their job (p. 37).

Cathy echoed these issues as she described her life as a Physical Education teacher, which requires time out of school and away from classes to enable student participation in sporting competitions:

> Quite often it's very hard to have days off [for professional learning]… because basically it gets so tight here.
>
> With all of your other days off for sport and knock-out cups and that, it can be frowned upon because you are hard to cover and someone else has got to pick up after you (Interview 1:26).

The additional complication for Physical Education teachers in such a situation is that if a replacement teacher is not available from the local community, the responsibility is placed on colleagues to cover additional classes. This causes a range of tensions to emerge. Colleagues may become resentful, and a teacher such as a Physical Education teacher feels guilty because of the added stress being placed onto colleagues. There is also an associated disruption to classes, particularly when few replacement teachers are comfortable covering a practical activity lesson, thus forcing the teacher to leave a theory activity that is not always well received by students looking forward to being physically active.

For non-metropolitan teachers such as Cathy, taking up an option to attend professional learning still means sacrificing personal and family time. It also involves investing significant time for travel, meeting the costs involved, and jeopardising valuable collegial relationships. This makes it an option with little appeal.

5.4.2 Professional learning and changing pedagogies in Physical Education

Throughout my interviews with Cathy the frequently raised issue of greatest concern affecting her professional learning, was how to respond to a teaching environment that was constantly changing. This was quite a complex issue for Cathy, covering not just the increasing challenge of engaging students in physical activity, but also the

changing family dynamic, and the community, which were all impacting in the classroom, and on how teachers went about their work. The following comment by Cathy further explained:

> People… and kids are so much more into ad hoc teams/sports, skating …
>
> But it's not as organised and hasn't got that structure that we would have … it's not such a planned thing.
>
> I think some of these things are forced changes. They are forced because of all the social changes that have happened, parents that aren't so giving of their time. Parents are under a lot more stress anyway, you know, they've got to be working, gone are the five and half-day weeks and everyone has Sundays to relax, and have the Saturday afternoon to hit the netball (Interview 3:13).

As a Physical Education teacher, Cathy was constantly seeing these changes through a physical activity lens where the types of activities students participated in changed markedly over the years from organised team sports to more individual leisure pursuits. These changes have not only been in response to the expectations of young people but also to the role of parents who have traditionally provided transport, financial support for uniforms and playing fees, while also fulfilling important volunteer roles such as time keepers, scorers and fund raisers.

Research by Tinning (2010) into the ways in which teachers respond to such changes in participation through their teaching pedagogies in the traditional domains of sport and physical activity, proposes that in focusing initially on sport as pedagogy, that is:

> a conception of pedagogy that allows us to seek 'multiple connections between things that have [apparently] nothing to do with each other' (Mercer, 1992, p. 39). It should enable us to 'connect the dots' (Klein 2000) between all pedagogical work that is done relating to the various orientations of our field – between physical activity, the body, and health (Tinning 2010, p. 22).

In relating this to the teaching of Physical Education in schools, Tinning suggests:

> Schools have [for too] long used pedagogies for physical activity in formal PE [Physical Education] lessons and sport sessions (2010, p. 25)

If teachers have been using pedagogies in the way Tinning suggests, then the change that has occurred in Cathy's local community affecting the participation of young people in traditional team sports and competitions, has increased the challenge that

enables her to make meaningful connections with students helping them to value physical activity more broadly.

These social changes, according to Prusak et al. (2011) have not only resulted in decreasing participation in physical activity, but have also influenced the development of pedagogical issues for teachers in recent years:

> In terms of teaching children and youths the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to manage a healthy and active lifestyle, PE [Physical Education] in its present and past forms has been relatively ineffective (p. 43)

This finding supports the concerns raised by Cathy that her pre-service training may have provided high levels of skills and knowledge that could be transmitted to her students about traditional sports such as netball, tennis and athletics, but did not support a focus on the adoption of lifelong physical activity habits. Teachers now have to acquire new knowledge and skills across a greater diversity of physical activities, such as adventure sports, while also addressing the issues of pedagogical change by developing new approaches to teaching.

Cathy recognised that this may represent the biggest contemporary professional learning challenge for teachers of Physical Education. How do they service and engage the diverse interests of students so that they will develop a lifelong desire to participate in physical activity? Further, many Physical Education teachers like Cathy have increasing concerns about the decreasing physical activity levels of young people and subsequent increasing obesity levels. During the first interview Cathy recounted her own experiences of these concerns:

> Kids are much less prepared to push themselves.
>
> We used to go, when the kids first came out years ago, they would run for quite a big run, I reckon that's halved.
>
> I reckon kids aren't prepared and they are much more self-righteous and to go down that path would only cause angst.
>
> You are meeting them part-way really. In terms of what they were prepared to do a generation ago – they're just not prepared to do it and some of them would be quite uncomfortable doing it because I mean it's a catch-22 situation. They're got bigger so they can do less – they have to do less because they've got bigger (Interview 1:13).

Cathy identified several dimensions of complexity such as increasing obesity, decreasing physical activity, resistance to participation and behaviour management issues. Supporting and encouraging students who are overweight, physically unfit and unable to participate at a skill level expected for their standard of schooling makes it difficult for teachers to achieve prescribed outcomes across such a diverse cohort. The challenge presented by these social and physiological changes is making teaching a more complex issue for teachers. Specialists need to be able to access appropriate professional learning in their specific area of expertise that will meet the changing needs of their students. Research by Prusak et al. (2011) refers to the negative learning experiences that are possible for such students as described by Cathy that may have long-lasting health consequences for their future participation in physical activity.

Cathy expanded further on the issue of changes in the teaching environment impacting on professional learning. She shared her observations about how her own teaching has had to change:

> As time has gone on … kids are far more reluctant as a group, you get your ones at the top, they want to roughly do things, play the game, and if they want to go out and excel at a higher level they get that opportunity in the community, so you think, well I want to give them an experience, I want them to get the nuts and bolts of it.
>
> … whereas maybe when you first came out, it's 'this is how we'll do it' and 'this is the right way' and [you are]probably a bit more dogged in your determination to get it happening (Interview 2:7).

The increasing reluctance to actively engage more students in Physical Education classes was becoming an increasing challenge for Cathy. She described the gap between able and less able students as increasing and making teaching Physical Education more complex in trying to meet these needs. In a teaching and learning environment, reluctance by students to participate in physical activity can deteriorate into behaviour management issues and the social isolation of students by their peers. Those students with higher skill levels and physical ability continue to seek experiences in physical activity both within, and outside of the school, reinforcing their connections to community.

Teachers of Physical Education frequently come from a sporting background characterised by a great love of physical activity, having very often been successful

in their chosen sports. As students have changed, with their interest in sport and physical activity decreasing, teachers are required to move away from traditional 'skill and drill' teacher-directed approaches. Approaches are becoming more inclusive of not only a broader range of interests, but also more diverse physical capabilities. In so doing teachers are recognising that they have to adopt more inclusive student centred approaches to teaching if they are to connect with, and engage, students who do not share their values.

> Looking at it from a netball point of view, and I do a school netball thing with a group of mixed-ability kids, it's never going to look like a training that I do after school because they haven't got the mindset – they don't want to be at that level.
>
> In this day and age (it's) – have-a-go.
>
> … kids have changed so much – they're not prepared to push themselves to the limit.
>
> At the end of the day we just want to get them to be active (Interview 1:7).

Having to step back from the strong values and beliefs that Physical Education teachers have in relation to acceptable participation levels for their students, means changing the culture, or as Kirk (2004) argues, 'the idea of physical education' in the profession. Acceptable participation now means different things, as described by Cathy:

> You've certainly got to put your head around also the fact that doing something is better than doing nothing,
>
> There's some kids that can't do the … you know they have to play a lesser role because they're not built for it, and they're certainly not comfortable doing it. So doing something's better than doing nothing. So, I think in terms of your headset, that's changed a bit (Interview 2:9).

Such a possible change in thinking is described by Smith (2012) as 'curriculum practices that involve pleasurable engagement in physical activity … beyond *an idea* of physical education as sport-techniques' (p. 32). Smith proposes that teachers of Physical Education need to move beyond their traditional values and beliefs of assuming that students must be proficient in the knowledge and skills of numerous traditional sports, to equipping them for lifelong physical activity as recognised by Cathy.

During our second interview, Cathy recounted an example of how she had changed her approach to teaching. She described how she had supported a student to become an active participant in a lesson taught earlier the same day:

> The sideline sitters – well I have [had] one today and she just lacks … she's not here very much and … she's got no self-esteem and that's a confidence [thing], so I went out of my way today in terms of setting something up for her, I put her in an unobtrusive way with a good working partner, so straight away you got the smile and she didn't really know who she would relate to so I pre-empted it and put her with someone I knew she would be really comfortable with and then she did it. And then you can also get the social sideline sitters, that want to sit all out together, and then I might approach them in quite a different way … (Interview 2:9).

This description by Cathy of her Physical Education class gave an insight into some of the environmental factors influencing student's varying levels of participation. Cathy was able to share her knowledge and understanding of issues specific to preventing this student's participation while using 'pedagogical tact' (Van Manen 1995) to facilitate her engagement. In recognising that a lack of confidence may be attributed to frequent absences from school, social isolation and poor skill levels, Cathy was able to establish a learning environment that was supportive of this student.

In reflecting on how she has been able to make such changes to her practice, Cathy referred to the background she has in teaching Health, developed over many years throughout her career:

> Coming in[to class] and making them [students] feel comfortable in terms of the way they go about things – in coming from a Health background I am always conscious of what spotlight I put the kids under, little things over time …

> … I haven't had captains for years [when setting up sporting teams in class] just because I'm more mindful of the mental and emotional side of things [for students] (Interview 1:10).

Her foremost thoughts that now impact her pedagogical approaches are influenced not just by her deeply held values and beliefs about the importance of physical activity, but are also shaped by ensuring that her students have positive experiences that will stay with them throughout their lives and support their continued active participation. The students are therefore supported to participate in an environment and at a level where they feel safe and comfortable.

5.4.3 Mentoring and professional learning

Throughout the course of my three interviews with Cathy, I did not attain a strong sense of her obvious involvement in actively leading pedagogical change at the school. This may be attributed to personal issues and her reticence to take on any long-term leadership roles referred to in Interview 1. The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the motivation of experienced teachers to continue their engagement in professional learning, which could include change management and leadership, but it was not a topic that was pursued in my interviews.

In previous years when Cathy was located in a common Physical Education teacher planning and preparation room at the school (as was the case when we were colleagues many years ago) it was easier for experienced teachers to influence and lead change in the teaching practices of colleagues. However, because of the new middle schooling structure now in place, teachers such as Cathy find themselves operating in physical settings with colleagues from a range of curriculum areas, decreasing the opportunity for interaction and collaboration with colleagues in the same field. As Cathy commented:

> You haven't got that natural 'getting together' … I work with two much younger guys and they probably share an office and they've probably got a … like it's basically things you have in common. They teach in a different area as well, which is common to them.

> … I definitely don't have as much just natural interaction with them as what I did with my past colleagues (Interview 2:4).

The opportunity to foster collaboration and facilitate learning through shared protocols, such as care and storage of equipment, also appeared to be missing for Cathy, where previously they would have represented an opportunity for her to not only share her experience, but also mentor younger teachers. Cathy felt that there was a change toward a more modern culture where even resources are not as highly valued as perhaps they were earlier in her career:

> We notice even here the [teachers] who come out now who are middle-school trained are jack of all trades and master of none … we came from a headset where we know it [Physical Education] well and we teach it well …

> We use balls and equipment until [they] break …

> That's not the head-set that people have necessarily now …
> (Interview 1:12).

129

From her observations non-specialist Physical Education colleagues were more inclined to wanting access to 'new equipment' and not as keen to maintain and use resources until they were no longer safe or useable, as has been Cathy's prior experience with specialist colleagues.

The area where Cathy acknowledged she could continue to have some influence with her learning area colleagues was in developing their understanding of the importance of getting involved in physical activity in the local community, and linking that to their teaching practice at the school through role modelling. As she explained:

> … our two younger guys, one thing that I've sort of tried to promote with them is getting involved in your local community and … they have both coached out in the community …
>
> … they are very quick and easy to pick up on new ideas, but they were also brought up with the idea of finding stuff that makes it easy for them to operate within … so those short circuits and stuff, you know how can I pick up on this later stuff and get it so that I'm having a pretty good time too. So that self-gratification has to be pretty well met straightaway. I think we [older teachers] worked a bit harder for it … (Interview 3:10).

Cathy transferred her own values and beliefs about the longer-term benefits of physical activity as a mentor, influencing change in her colleagues by encouraging them to become actively involved in the local community. Her community involvement through coaching and her teaching role has enabled Cathy to develop her sphere of influence in a complex social environment.

5.4.4 Systemic professional learning

At the time when the school Cathy had been teaching at was split into middle and senior year campuses, middle schooling was a key policy innovation being implemented by DECD resulting in targeted resourcing to support schools in the adoption of middle schooling structures and methodologies. Cathy's participation in this research during such a significant, well-resourced change in education was unique.

Involvement in whole school mandated professional learning bought with it particular meaning for not only the teachers and students but also the local community as the new changes were implemented. Cathy highlighted this when recalling:

> … the professional learning that's happened here is definitely in terms of whole school strategies guiding practice that way [toward middle-years' pedagogies] (Interview 1:12).

Decision-making about the type of professional learning provided to the teachers was made by the school leadership, in partnership with DECD and the district education office. Because of the unique changes being made to the entire school support would have occurred via specific funding and allocation of resources through the district education officers and units from the central DECD office. Such an arrangement meant that professional learning was designed to support the structural changes, and facilitate change in teacher practices as they adopted middle schooling philosophies and pedagogies.

Cathy described some of the professional learning that the entire teaching staff had participated in:

> We've done things like 'Mind Matters' and we have done 'ForMac' and we've done more looking at the brain than what we ever have and we've had a George Oetero [session] and it's all about puzzles and challenges and engagement and I've really got value out of that because it's all to do with connecting you to kids and when you do Health and you've got that Mind Matters in terms of grouping kids and having a different way that you can shuffle the deck, sort of thing using little ploys to get them to work with other people. I've found that quite valuable (Interview 1:22).

For Cathy, these professional learning experiences have been relevant and influenced change in her teaching practice, moving her closer to approaches based on the principles of supportive environments, diversity and social justice appropriate to engaging young people in physical activity. She did admit that not everything had been useful:

> We've had a couple that probably haven't been worthwhile but generally they've been pretty successful … (Interview 1:23).

Participating in whole school change can be professionally challenging for teachers in secondary schools because of their tradition of subject specialisation. Inherent in this has also been a 'traditional hierarchy of curriculum' (Teese & Polesel 2003) where subjects like Physical Education are less valued. Teachers often struggle to find relevance in many widespread school change programs as evidenced by the research of Armour and Yelling (2004), Macdonald and Tinning (2003), O'Connor and Macdonald (2002), and Smyth (1993).

However, in this particular instance, as Cathy had already mentioned when recounting what influenced her decision to join the middle school campus (Interview 1), the increased likelihood of dealing with behaviour management issues occurs across all learning areas, not just in Health and Physical Education. Sharing a whole school change experience with all colleagues gave more meaning to Cathy's participation in mandated middle-years' professional learning than may otherwise have been the case.

5.4.5 Locating meaningful professional learning

Apart from these whole school experiences of professional learning provided to support a transition to middle schooling, Cathy relied on the ad hoc nature of experts in the field of physical activity (usually in the form of elite coaches) travelling to her local community to provide the specific professional learning she needs as a teacher of Physical Education.

In the early years of Cathy's teaching career public school teachers were 'in-serviced by advisers' allocated to each curriculum area. They would travel to schools across the state and provide teachers with specific support and resources – something that was still valued and clearly missed by Cathy:

> I've come through a time where we've had the specialist Phys Ed advisers
> that would come out to schools.

> … it's dried up but [middle school professional learning] basically it's like,
> to set the tone, it's setting the tone of the place … it's a whole school
> approach so the [subject] boundaries have sort of gone (Interview 1:18).

To access new subject-specific knowledge and skills Cathy has had to find a way to do this herself,

> [As Physical Education teachers] we were brought up with the … processes
> of warming up, and stretch static, and now it's dynamic it's all moving and
> I've learnt that by-the-by just because of changes I know in netball.

> … it would be all so nice if it came from the general thrust from above so
> that it is general practice throughout.

> That advisers thing I have missed.

> Just that [the adviser] gives you do's and don'ts (Interview 1:18).

Providing guidance and support to a particular learning area like Physical Education, where training methods and skills acquisition techniques continue to change and improve, becomes particularly difficult for teachers in isolated communities. Even the traditional ways of learning, and collaborating with faculty colleagues as a form of professional learning have been diminished by the new middle schooling structure at Cathy's school. She recognised this in the following way:

> The professional learning that I think I have gone to has been less specific than just Phys Ed but [more] in terms of dealing with conflict, those general approaches to working with kids … (Interview 1:18).

Although, as stated earlier by Cathy, she found this professional learning beneficial in relation to behaviour management and strategies for engaging her students in learning, she clearly missed opportunities for learning that were specific to Physical Education.

Specific professional learning that influenced change in Cathy's teaching of Physical Education has had to evolve from whatever was locally accessible to her. These opportunities included using formal and informal learning from a range of sources such as elite sports coaches, pre-service teachers, and participants in a range of networks that she belongs to. Cathy provided an example of how she achieves this:

> I might see a basketball, or whatever, level umpire course and I know I've got to do that anyway and every time your kids play a sport you've got to coach or umpire so I'll do that because I can count it for my [training and development] and also gain some benefit from doing it.
>
> … my professional development has been very much what's available in my area (Interview 1:19).

Cathy's reference to 'counting it for my [training and development]' refers to a DECD requirement for all teachers to participate in 37 hours of professional development each year. This requirement was first implemented in the late 1990s and stipulated that line managers and school principals were to verify compliance for every teacher annually.

Networks also played an important part for Cathy as an informal resource for meaningful professional learning in fields such as elite sports coaching, physical activity trends, behaviour management and responding to social change in the

community. Her values related to networks were demonstrated by the following comment:

> I've always had a reasonably strong sporting network which I've maintained. … networking is good for all sorts of reasons. We've got one where we go off and chill out of a Thursday sometimes and debrief, and that meets a need of stress release and getting a few things off your chest to like-minded souls, and that's just an ad hoc 'who wants to come'.
>
> … basically it gets around to talking shop, but all sorts of other things, and it's got a few personal anecdotes (of things) that are happening in their life and you get an all-round feel for where the person is coming from, and that's beneficial.
>
> (I have a) teacher network … a fairly strong family network, … and you can offload certain things to them, so you've got your layers.
>
> I think females are good at that … (Interview 2:11).

These networks meet several needs apart from that of informal professional learning, as they lead into areas where values associated with teaching are also explored, contributing to the building of a collegial support network. Networks such as these have been identified as important for teachers wanting to take risks in changing their practice by providing a safe learning environment. Research by Armour and Yelling (2007) undertaken as part of a three-year two-phase project with experienced Physical Education teachers in England, identified that this method of informal learning presented strongly in their data. Teachers 'placed a high value on learning with and from professional colleagues in their self-selected learning networks or communities' (p. 189).

If a particular learning need arises, Cathy established a new network, as she did to develop her computer literacy skills:

> I'm pretty well practiced in some of this computer stuff now … I've just got a little network there where I know people that are really good at it that can help me and they don't mind doing that.
>
> So I can see I've got my little network here for helping me do my job, I've got my outside network, I've got my social, and I've got my little group at school here that we go off and de-stress (Interview 2:11).

Cathy believed developing her computing skills would open another network and provide a way of accessing professional learning, helping to lessen the impact of geographical isolation. Cathy's approach to learning was predicated on accessing resources in a context that met her professional needs.

134

Cathy recognised how her networks and observations of colleagues' practice encouraged her to be more reflective about her practice, describing this as a professional learning process:

> I've got a social worker [in a network] and it's that cross-referencing.
>
> Like [I]… learn from everybody and I can see some really good operators out in the community and it's as if they are all engaging and when you're working with people … it's all about engaging with somebody else.
>
> I'm out there anyway and I'm talking to other professionals, I gain from everybody.
>
> Like I can recall taking something away from everything we've done (Interview 1:25).

5.4.6 Transferring learning

Cathy identified reflecting on-practice and in-practice as an implicit part of her ongoing professional development as a teacher:

> I think you're full time interpreting [teaching] and you're guiding it, so that if something's not working you'll change it, you'll cut it short, and in the back of your mind you've probably got a little bit of a toolkit in terms of how to guide or redirect somebody that's… and most times that's very subtly done …
>
> … it's redirection, it's reading the group.
>
> You certainly reflect on it when you haven't got the response you wanted. You say 'how could I have done that differently'. You need to reflect on practices because if something's ended badly then you need to reconnect to that kid to go forward again. But the good time to do that is not then. Next time (Interview 2:6).

In reflecting-on-practice a 'next time' opportunity is then made for discussion with others in various networks, then modifying and transferring new practices into her own context. Reflection used in this way allows teachers to find solutions in their own practice to problems that experts may not solve (Luttenberg & Bergen 2008, p. 544). This has now established itself firmly as a 'key competency' in the professional learning of teachers (Collin, Karsenti & Komis 2013, p. 104). Contextualising reflective practice for Physical Education teachers began to emerge in the 1990s with research such as that by Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997) with experienced Physical Education teachers in Greece.

Cathy also used a preferred method of professional learning where she observed the practices of colleagues, a method frequently identified by teachers as an effective way of learning:

> Given the ideal and the time, I like to see it happening. I am a visual, picking it up, I find that easier. Definitely to look at it … (Interview 2:3).

Cameron, Mulholland and Branson (2013) support this preference for professional learning as described by Cathy through their research, which found that:

> Visits to other teachers/classrooms, watching colleagues at work, and time to share their ideas outranked all other professional learning opportunities in importance for … teachers (p. 381).

Transferring this professional learning into practice involved Cathy accessing new knowledge and skills that were then implemented into a different context – her own classroom. Cathy recognised this as an important consideration if the change was to be effective:

> There's definitely some expertise out there that I've had some chats to, and some people that have really gone up and got some really good levels of coaching.

> Yeah, and it is a good way of getting a new headset and picking up on some of the things that you think would work for you (Interview 2:12).

By combining observation of the practices of others, particularly elite coaches, and being able to increase her access to such resources through her networks, Cathy transferred new knowledge into her classes to improve the engagement of her students in physical activity. She provided an example of how this had an impact:

> We've just had quite a few prac teachers, and I'm one that you can learn from each other … they're quite interesting really giving you their ideas for some new little drills that they might have, and sort of recalling some that you did earlier on that you might have forgot – we can relate to, 'Oh yeah I remember doing something like that' and that prompts your memory and I think they are – the ones that are coming out now, are good at setting up all of the drills and all of that you know, and engaging kids, but I think that I can learn from other people (Interview 1:12).

Not only did Cathy acknowledge the important contribution pre-service teachers made in challenging her established teaching practices, but they also helped to remind her of ways in which her practice may have narrowed over time. This experience also prompted her to again seek opportunities to learn from colleagues

and other experts, as she realised that with the intensity of work these had become less of a priority.

5.4.7 Sustaining professional learning

Challenges of a unique nature emerge in Physical Education. As teachers get older, and their ability, and desire, to be physically active begins to decrease, they are challenged to change how they approach their teaching to successfully engage their much younger students in physical activity. Research by O'Sullivan (2006) on the professional lives of experienced Physical Education teachers in Ireland who were marginalised within their profession found the lack of resourcing severely impacted their access to professional learning, but it did not deter them from creating their own opportunities. O'Sullivan found that:

> Their resilience … provide[s] examples of what teachers can do when given appropriate personal support … they are active locally in enhancing their own professional learning that is reflective of their values and beliefs about physical education (pp. 281–282).

Cathy has found that fostering the emergence of shared values related to physical activity with her students and young people in the wider community has become a strong motivator for her as a professional learner in the later stages of her teaching career:

> It's very easy at 50 something to sit back, but I'm not in the position I can do it, anyway it hasn't entered my mind-set.
>
> That's the one plus I see, the one big reward – is that I see kids that struggle in the classroom and PE [Physical Education] is their saving grace.
>
> Isn't that rewarding?
>
> I mean we have kids say, 'The only day I come to school is when we have PE that day'.
>
> We've had kids say that and I think if that is what is keeping them going – how wonderful is that! (Interview 1:27)

The observations Cathy made of her students and the relative successes they achieved in her Physical Education classes provided her with high levels of instant gratification. This motivated her to engage in professional learning, helped her to preserve connections with students and provided them with a supportive learning environment.

137

Further evidence of her belief about the need to maintain her engagement with professional learning as an aging experienced teacher were apparent throughout her reflections on student engagement and pedagogy:

> Sometimes you've got to step back and see where they're coming from, because they're not coming from where you're coming from, and I think as you get older you've also got that generation gap where they're much more tuned into different things and you've got to be mindful of what makes them tick and how they … work … and it's far more instantaneous and gratifying than what ours was, and if you don't keep abreast of some of that you're not going to be on the same page as them (Interview 2:6).

Sustaining professional learning for Cathy was connected not just to health and physical activity values and beliefs, but also to her sense of awareness as to her role, not just as a teacher, but also as a member of a close-knit rural community that was constantly evolving and changing. As frequently mentioned during this series of interviews, keeping connected with her students and the local community continues to be a high priority, and for Cathy:

> [the main] challenge is to deliver it [teaching] in such a way that it's still as beneficial [for students] as you're getting older (Interview 3:5).

Without her motivation to be constantly changing and evolving as a teacher, Cathy does not feel, as an aging teacher, that she would be able to provide beneficial education to her students, who themselves are constantly changing.

5.4.8 Findings

Cathy had recently participated in an extensive whole-of-school mandated professional learning program that had been meaningful and increased her knowledge of social change and its impact on teaching and learning for middle-year students. Participation in this professional learning helped Cathy move her teaching in Physical Education from traditional approaches toward a more constructivist one. The professional learning was whole-school-based to support the introduction of a new middle-schooling framework.

In the context of Physical Education, changes in the health and fitness levels of young people over the time of Cathy's teaching career had become a specific pedagogical challenge. There had been a decline in participation as their participation and intensity levels decreased. This issue also challenged Cathy's own personal

values and beliefs about physical activity and impacted her construction of connections with reluctant, less skilful and less physically able students.

Cathy recognised that future challenges in sustaining her motivation for professional learning were diverse as she also recognised her declining physical abilities as she aged. As Cathy's ability to role model physical activity participation changed, she increasingly recognised that sharing her physical activity values would continue to impact her professional relevance as a physical educator with both students and the local community into the future.

Cathy was also professionally challenged by issues such as changes to participation levels in traditional sports and competitions leading to decreasing relevance of her pre-service training. Students' values and beliefs toward lifelong participation in physical activity had changed during the period of her employment.

As an experienced teacher, Cathy accepted leadership responsibility to act as a mentor for early-career colleagues. However, she found this to be complicated by the introduction of middle schooling structures and decreasing significance of the traditional teaching specialist in Physical Education. Maintaining her own meaningful connection to a specialist culture was achieved by Cathy through connections she had long established with the local sporting community.

Cathy accessed meaningful specialist professional learning by attending elite sport coaches training sessions locally that met her needs in relation to the rapidly evolving sports science and training methods and their implications for her teaching. Cathy also participated in a range of networks to meet such diverse professional learning needs as the impact of social change on student behaviour.

Networks supported Cathy's use of reflective practice as she shared her learning experiences with colleagues who provided her with feedback, which she then used to facilitate change. Cathy expanded this approach by also observing colleagues to collect evidence of different pedagogical approaches, having conversations to interrogate their actions and then transferring these into her own practice once appropriately contextualised.

Accessing meaningful professional learning as a specialist Physical Education teacher has been a career-long challenge for Cathy, in part due to tensions arising from personal issues such as balancing family, career, decreasing personal time, and a lack of control over increasing pressures of sports coaching, administrative workloads, and the increasing intensity of teaching. However, motivational factors, such as personal values and beliefs about sport and health, her poor pre-service tertiary training experiences, being geographically isolated from accessible professional learning, and the changing teaching environment continue to drive Cathy's career-long professional learning.

5.5 Arnold's story

Arnold's case study provides an opportunity to observe the transition of a teacher moving from teaching at a low SES school to one in an inner city location. When I first began interviewing Arnold, he was teaching at a low SES, coastal metropolitan high school exceeding 850 students, 55 per cent of whom were supported by government funding to attend the school. The school was a leader in the local educational district through the provision of vocational education while also providing specialist aquatics programs.

During the period of this research, Arnold's 10-year limited tenure expired, causing him to relocate to an inner city high school of over 1,000 students. This school provided a vastly different context, with a high percentage of students from a multicultural background and over 60 per cent from non-English speaking backgrounds. The school provided a specialist interest language program and also had a long and successful sporting tradition, where sport was an important and valued part of life in the school.

Sharing the story of Arnold through this case study provides an opportunity to not only give an insight into his professional growth, but also explore how he was able to reaffirm the values and beliefs underpinning his approach to teaching and learning in vastly different teaching environments. Arnold's participation in this research also provided an opportunity to include a participant with a strong commitment to providing professional learning support to other teachers. In particular, Physical Education teachers across South Australia were his focus through involvement in a professional learning association.

Having known Arnold for several years from my own involvement in the same professional learning organisation, I was well aware of the many years of service that he had provided to the organisation and his peers. In approaching Arnold to participate in this research I was keen to access the unique data that he could provide through his long standing commitment to not only the continuation of his own professional learning, but also to that of his colleagues.

During our final interview, Arnold reflected on why he had retained his long-standing commitment to sharing his professional learning:

> Well most things have a built-in obsolescence, and I don't want to be boxed into that category. No shelf life (Interview 3:9).

Arnold's view was that he did not want his professionalism to become out-dated, and it was through sharing his own new practices that he was able to remain relevant to the profession of Physical Education teaching.

The development of teacher identity for teachers like Arnold with a focus on professionalism is developed by their personal values and beliefs being further shaped and re-shaped by life experiences. Arnold's belief that growth and learning would always be a part of his professional life is also reflected by research on the moral purpose of teachers by Farouk (2012) and Hargreaves (1998), who describe their deeply held beliefs about the purpose of teaching.

5.5.1 Issues impacting on professional learning

Across the three interviews with Arnold, he frequently raised several issues that had an impact on his motivation for continuous professional learning. Described as 'career-long learning' – the progression of learning throughout the career of a teacher by Armour, Makapoulou and Chambers (2012) – these motivating issues were his declining ability to be physically active with his students as he aged, and his responsibilities as an acknowledged Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) in recognition of his skills, knowledge and expertise in teaching. In the South Australian public education system concerns in recent years had been raised focusing on the need to retain expert teachers, such as Arnold, in the classroom resulting in a reward system based on a performance management framework. The subsequent outcome of this policy initiative was the establishment of an AST register, through which Arnold had been accredited with an AST1 classification.

This framework designed to promote expert teachers' skills, knowledge and practice in the classroom, and to also establish these teachers as leaders/mentors for their colleagues. Being recognised (and financially rewarded) as an expert experienced teacher is highly valued by DECD teachers, such as Arnold, who do not want to move into an administrative leadership career pathway, preferring to stay in the classroom where they believe they can make the most difference.

Recognition through the AST process also endorsed the pursuit of professional learning that had been constant throughout Arnold's career while validating sharing of his knowledge and expertise with colleagues, early-career teachers and pre-service teachers.

> I haven't wallowed in the mire and been gagged and as you get older in the teaching force you realise that you can have an impact in certain areas … (Interview 1:6).

Arnold referred to how he was able to actively influence the teaching of others through sharing his own learning. Recent changes in education have seen teachers feeling that their voice has been lost in decisions being made about education however, Arnold has been able to address this through his professional status that recognises his teaching expertise increasing his subsequent standing with his peers (Fuller, Goodwyn & Francis-Brophy 2013).

Arnold's role as a professional leader was reinforced through becoming an AST1. As he explained:

> I have been a AST 1 now for 10 years and with that comes the responsibility for peer tutoring and mentoring and taking on other leadership roles as well as the main aim [of] being able to stay in the classroom (Interview 1:17).

Such professional leadership is now more formally recognised by the DECD and provides added value to teachers like Arnold, who feel more valued in the classroom. The AST role encourages and enables him to share this passion and expertise with colleagues as a recognised expert teacher.

The impact of Arnold changing schools during this research period also facilitated the emergence of an additional motivating issue closely linked to how 'valued [he actually felt] in the classroom' that may not have surfaced if Arnold had remained at the first school. This issue focused on the role of power in relationships between teachers and students, and how this impacted teaching and learning relationships, and the self-efficacy of teachers. According to Kougioumtzis, Patriksson and Strahlman (2011) research in the area of power, which they describe as 'a sociological issue related to issues of authority' (p. 112), has received little attention in academic studies focused on teaching in Physical Education. However, research on the self-efficacy of teachers has received more attention by Moutan et al. (2013), Meirnik et

al. (2009), Martin et al. (2007) and Gu and Day (2007) who describe the self-efficacy of teachers as being linked to their feelings of confidence, and their ability to make authentic change to practice.

In our first interview, Arnold talked about how important 'values' were to his teaching, with greater understanding evident when placed in the context of how he managed the tension of power in his relationships with students at the school.

> The power that you bring to the way you teach. My teaching is values based because that is what I teach in Health and we look at respect and the aims and goals that we set.
>
> … if it's achievable and valuable to the student then they will engage in whatever you are trying to do (Interview 1:4).

His very strong belief was that by supporting students to understand and value particular elements such as respect that characterise effective relationships, they could then be transferred into a transitional power arrangement. If students were able to develop their own understanding of respect and to experience it in a positive learning environment, the process of developing goals and having these realised would demonstrate a shift in power from the teacher, to the group, to the individual students and their lives.

This shift in power enabling the development of a collaborative relationship also supported the emergence of individual learning progressions for students. This positive outcome provided Arnold with confidence in his skills as a teacher to further implement authentic change through his teaching.

A further demonstration of how highly Arnold valued the role of respect in the construction of relationships with his students was shared when he compared the physical teaching environment he and his colleagues had tried to establish in his previous school, as opposed to the dominant culture in his new school:

> The classrooms [at his previous school] we valued as a place that should be respected. Teachers put posters up, cleaned desktops on our own, even without classes there, cleaned whiteboards, kept things in a presentable and respectful manner. But, because we weren't in total control of that environment it became a source of frustration, because others [teachers] didn't show the same degree of respect and responsibility towards it and that just made us shake our heads and say what are some people letting these kids get away with. Just leaving doors open.

Here [at the new school] you leave doors open and nobody walks in and does any damage. Down there [at previous school], leave a door open and they'll start being mischievous … (Interview 2:9).

For Arnold and his colleagues, the creation of a pleasant physical environment that would be valued by students was seen as a way teachers could demonstrate the importance to them of a comfortable learning environment. They were also demonstrating that respecting the physical environment was an integral part of the teaching and learning process, facilitating the sharing of their professional knowledge and expertise with students.

Arnold and his colleagues at the school had a very pragmatic view of the world in which they were working, particularly in relation to how they established effective ways of working with their students. Arnold described the impact:

We have really good conversations about strategies that we employ to get through the day …

… we have different styles and strategies and personalities which we bring into our teaching and that is the value of the experienced teacher who do[es] have a broad range of strategies, but we also need to understand that we only have the amount of power that the students allow us to have (Interview 1:3).

Teaching in a low SES secondary school provided the teachers with challenges to their teaching on a daily basis. How the tension present in the power relationships with their students was managed was pivotal to success in the classroom. As experienced teachers they were also aware of the importance of collaboration as colleagues to maintain consistency in the tone and culture they wished to establish in the teaching environment. Having a consistent teaching and learning environment would impact positively on the teacher's relationships with students thereby enhancing their opportunity to engage them in learning.

By the time of our second interview, Arnold had transferred to an inner city school with a culture strongly characterised by a tradition of academic and sporting excellence. During this interview Arnold reflected back to his experiences in the previous school, demonstrating a broadening understanding of the impact of the constant power struggle between teachers and students impacting on the functioning of the school:

> One of the issues with the general tenor and feelings down there [at previous school] … it was that there was always a power struggle.
>
> … the admin were always struggling to maintain their authority, separate from the staff, then the staff were threatened with their authority, so they kept to themselves and separate from the student body
>
> … and then some of the students thump other students, so it was a cyclical spiral I guess. Everyone was guarded and protected about their own power base.
>
> You can't really work and be successful if you are fearful of losing power and authority. And I may have said before but the only power you have is the power that they [students] give us (Interview 2:5).

Keeping positive working relationships with colleagues and students dominated how Arnold approached his work at the school, and although still an important issue at his new school, the dynamics had changed to a more equitable working relationship. As he observed during the final interview:

> After a while (at the new school) it's power and authority with a friendship because you are working with the students rather than directing them …
>
> … you do tend to be authoritative in the initial stages but after that they understand why certain procedures have been put in place. They do tend to come [to] the party and co-operate a lot more (Interview 3:2).

The relationship with students at the new school was based on the establishment of equitable and supportive learning environments, in marked contrast to Arnold's former school where teaching pedagogies had been directed toward behaviour management to enable learning. In the new environment, they changed to being more about facilitation of learning.

Throughout our interviews Arnold frequently referred to the strong sense of obligation he felt toward the students he teaches to establish a positive learning environment. This was demonstrated as a key motivation for Arnold to engage in ongoing professional learning as he sought to maintain standards that were relevant:

> The strategies that I have adopted and the person that I have become is in part a reflection of the students I have taught and how I've had to change to meet their needs and how I've impacted them so that they meet my needs … I remember at college, one of the questions that still makes me think sometimes is, 'Is teaching a role that you play, or is it who you are?' (Interview 1:7)

146

Arnold's insightful reflection on the role of the teacher and how to use this to engage students, provides insight into his perception of his professional identity. Cohen (2010), Martin et al. (2007) and Lasky (2005) describe this in terms of the relationship between teachers' identity and self-efficacy. This is recognised as an essential component giving confidence to teachers about their identities as 'their perceived capability in different aspects of teaching' (Lasky, p. 174).

Responding to the needs of students reflects a well-developed understanding of not just the value Arnold placed on respect in relationships, but also the importance of changing pedagogies to engage the diverse cohorts of students encountered in the different school environments and cultures in which he found himself:

> The world is in a state of change, and we as teachers are required to adapt and perhaps lead this change by improving our ability to translate the latest trends, information, in a manner which is able to be received by the [student] … so it needs to be packaged appropriately for them to understand and interpret the information. It's part of our job descriptor. In other words that's what we get paid to do, is to share, direct, [and] engage students in their learning …
>
> As a result … hopefully the outcome is that what we do better (Interview 2:2).

Arnold recognised that not only did he have to change pedagogically to meet the diverse learning needs of students, but he also had to move from traditional approaches such as teacher-centred to student-centred, reflecting the changing role of students in the teaching and learning relationship.

5.5.2 Mandated professional learning

As a teacher of senior classes in Physical Education and Health, Arnold was expected to participate in mandated professional learning when changes were made to the curriculum that he felt had '… sterilised a lot of the senior secondary courses …' (Interview 1:6). This does not indicate that Arnold avoided professional learning provided to support teachers with curriculum change, but he did recognise an emerging issue:

> I see SSABSA [the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia] as providing support for you to apply whatever the [curriculum)] changes are.
>
> Which is almost like being forced to do it but your students will be disadvantaged if you don't so that means going to workshops and

147

conferences and things like that which will keep you up with the latest changes, otherwise if you miss one particular change then another may not come along for another five years and you will be teaching to the disadvantage of your students in that period of time.

… it's an obligation that I tend to feel rather than something I terribly want to do – [other] than workshops and conferences I would voluntarily go to after a working day (Interview 1:14).

Arnold considered that some of the curriculum changes were remote from the lives and experiences of students, making it more difficult for teachers to engage their students in schooling as it became less meaningful to them. The 'trade-off' for Arnold was that participating in professional learning on curriculum changes that he did not necessarily support met student expectations that as a professional he would deliver current programs and curricula to meet their learning needs.

Arnold identified issues such as these as professional challenges, while Morgan et al. (2010) and Gu and Day (2007) describe such behaviour as evidence of resilient teachers who manage to maintain their motivation (Gu & Day, p. 1302). As Arnold explained:

Sometimes I need to skill myself to do my job, or prepare myself for the challenge. And that's what it is I think, you go into an environment and it's a challenge to not just survive but to thrive within that environment and if the students can see that you have mastered whatever it is that you require, whether its skills, whether its knowledge or information or strategies or methodologies, they tend to then just focus on what you're trying to do, not how you're doing it, and that avoids distractions I think (Interview 2:11).

The reward for Arnold in investing his time and energy into mandated professional learning, whether or not it was valued personally or professionally, was achieved through the confidence it gave him to provide a learning environment for his students that they would not just appreciate and enjoy, but also benefit and learn from. While Gu and Day (2007) identify this characteristic displayed by experienced teachers like Arnold as resilience, they also closely link it to self-efficacy. In their view, given the rapid pace of change in education in recent years it demonstrates 'the positive role that resilience plays … enable[ing] [teachers] to thrive, flourish and sustain their effectiveness' (p. 1303).

5.5.3 Leading school-based professional learning

During our first interview, Arnold reflected on the importance of role models and mentors on his own early career. In particular, they initially provided informal professional learning which, when reconciled with the impact of diminishing resources, later developed into mentoring programs providing ongoing formalised professional learning for teachers.

Formal professional learning that is likely to be experienced by teachers in South Australia such as Arnold has been subject to tensions created by policy directives prescribing how much, and what type of professional learning teachers will engage in. This change from self-directed to explicitly prescribed directions in the professional learning environment for pre-service and early-career teachers has prompted Arnold to recognise the important role that he can play in filling the void and redressing this imbalance.

> That [level of funding] no longer exists so we've been forced to support each other in a professional way, and that is because we've been able to [do that] quite admirably over the last 20 years now [at] least … [since] the local PE [Physical Education branch professional learning advisers] became defunct.
>
> … it is incumbent upon us as senior teachers [now] to do that [task] and that's also why we take on student teachers.
>
> … the fact is that it [mentoring] was done to me and I [now] do it for others and that's the way we work.
>
> It's sort of like passing over the baton (Interview 1:16).

The school-based leadership demonstrated by Arnold has long been cited by Hargreaves (2006) as a singularly important element in supporting change in education. For teachers such as Arnold leadership was seen as part of his moral purpose in teaching – he had a need to share strongly held values and beliefs about physical activity with his colleagues. This approach to influence change within the school setting is seen by teachers as taking place in an authentic environment where the professional learning is situated close to their own classrooms and teaching spaces, and is reflected in research by Clement (2014) with teachers in Australian schools.

When discussing the role of experienced teachers, such as ASTs at his former school providing knowledge and expertise to colleagues, Arnold reflected that this had an impact on team survival. It was more than just a demonstration of pedagogical leadership. It was critical for the good order and functioning of the school. He explained further:

> There's always that type of support and structure in place because we don't want anyone to sink here, we are all in it for the same reason …
>
> … we actually want to help teachers to develop and grow because if they do then we are all winners (Interview 1:2).

By sharing strategies and approaches that had proven to be effective in challenging teaching environments while providing leadership was viewed more through a 'collective survival' lens rather than one of 'professional leadership'. In the literature Angelle and DeHart (2011), Bywaters, Parkinson and Hurley (2007), Ingvarson, et al. (2006), Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2007) and Hargreaves (2006) refer to such examples of leadership as being the strongest motivation for other teachers that impact their beliefs and inspire action in themselves and others.

Arnold's experience provided similar professional leaders during his own early-career years. This enforced a similar lifelong value:

> I mean I had mentors as teachers who stimulated me and perhaps supported the passion that I thought I had at the time and that fire has kept burning (Interview 1:13).

Arnold perceived the role of being a mentor to colleagues, early-career and pre-service teachers as providing an opportunity to connect with the passion they brought them into the profession, and he helped them sustain it. By leading professional change Arnold recognised an opportunity to 'share knowledge and experiences [to] basically try and do things better' (Interview 2:7) through informal conversations with colleagues and in more formal settings provided by meetings at his new school.

5.5.4 Systemic professional learning

Informal incidental learning for teachers, provided by colleagues as described by Arnold, has evolved partly in response to the lack of resourcing provided by DECD. DECD's focus has been on the provision of training for mandated change to curriculum.

Arnold had very clear expectations about the responsibilities of DECD in the provision of professional learning. In the new world of 'accountability' and 'testing' where large amounts of data about student learning and achievement has been gathered, the focus has shifted from assessment *for* learning to assessment *of* learning through the achievement of standards. Arnold described these expectations:

> I would have expected the Department to take on that role as part of its
> whole business of education in South Australia to provide updated
> information, resources, and servicing computer literacy and all the electronic
> data for example to schools, because they have the responsibility of setting
> the standards and maintaining them and making sure they're actually able to
> be applied, and if you don't provide workshops and training sessions how do
> you know that what you expect to happen has actually happened
> (Interview 1:15).

It is not an unreasonable expectation, according to Arnold, for the government to provide professional support to teachers to achieve prescribed targets. This should be part of their business plan. However, he was not confident that this is occurring or filtering down to teachers in the classroom as effectively as it may have in past years when resourcing for professional learning was at much higher levels.

Ingvarson, et al. (2006) describe this in the context of 'teacher leadership', identifying it as one of 'the three vibrant foci of interest in school leadership literature' (p. 21). This approach to providing professional learning is also acknowledged in a review of the literature on informal professional learning by Angele and DeHart (2011) and Avalos (2011), where informal 'teacher co-learning' (Avolas, p. 12) is recognised as being highly valued by teachers because it is accessible, relevant and trustworthy.

According to Arnold, gaps created by the decreased resourcing of subject specific professional learning for teachers are only being addressed in areas such as Health and Physical Education where they are fortunate enough to have well organised professional associations such as ACHPER. Arnold explained the significance:

> They're [ACHPER] expert in their field in terms of current information and
> resources. Because they work in connection with a lot of other agencies,
> they should, I hope, stay at the forefront or cutting edge of what's available
> (Interview 2:11).

Being able to access meaningful professional learning through an organisation such as ACHPER has helped teachers like Arnold to keep a balance between what is

mandated by the government and what he identified as subject specific needs. When the South Australian Standards and Accountability framework (SACSA) was introduced in the 1990s, he identified the learning that helped him to be a better teacher in his specific subject area with the new curriculum.

> To a large degree we are forced to adopt SACSA guidelines and all of the other changes that come through the curriculum and that's part of the professional learning that we have, and of course have to be in-serviced in that.
>
> [Teaching] … it's not a static profession, and if you teach in a stated way I think you are going to be lost and fall behind even though some [subject] areas probably still teach in a way they did 20 years ago (Interview 1:12).

Arnold used the example of new curriculum implementation to demonstrate that not only do teachers need to change how they work, but the system as a whole also needs to be renewed. As such Arnold did not dismiss mandated professional learning as being a waste of his time, instead describing it as something that is incumbent on teaching professionals to engage with, while also accessing more meaningful learning when provided by other specialist organisations. As he said:

> I maintain this professional interaction with my peers and other professional organisations. I update my [subject] skills in terms of doing workshops … (Interview 2:6)

By actively participating in mandated professional learning Arnold believed he was meeting his professional obligations as part of a wider collegial team in the school. To keep his knowledge and skills relevant in his subject area of Health and Physical Education he sought out professional learning workshops provided by other organisations, such as ACHPER and professional sporting entities.

5.5.5 Locating meaningful professional learning

Throughout our interviews, Arnold demonstrated his passion for teaching, particularly in the fields of Health and Physical Education. For him these exemplified the values of health and wellbeing that become accessible to young people through their participation in physical activity and sport. He also strongly advocated a view that participation in physical activity and sport has a positive impact on the mental health of young people, providing them with processes to deal with future challenges in their lives.

Engaging in career-long professional learning allowed Arnold to continually alter his teaching to meet the changing needs of his students, while value-adding to the school community in which he was working:

> It is more personal development so that I can engage the kids better and you need to stay current with things like strategies, statistics information and resources, it's just changing so fast and you know, if you stop, well it will overtake you, and then it will be hard to keep up so that time is lost (Interview 3:3).

Arnold did not identify locating meaningful professional learning as a particularly onerous task, but rather something he found easy to access while valuing the positive experiences and opportunities to interact with colleagues as he increased his own learning. Arnold shared some examples to further demonstrate this approach:

> I'm involved in sporting clubs, so you work administratively with people, which means you work with regard to safety, first aid, 'Alcohol - go easy' programs or good sports clubs, so this is all peripheral to what you're doing, but it is still a link to personnel, resources, information. At the moment I'm coaching basketball, so yep, do a coaching course, you then get into the coach's scene, you can join or be a member of the Australian Coaching Council for example, and they'll allow you to access resources … (Interview 2:12).

Arnold accessed other learning opportunities in the field through his involvement with sporting organisations and clubs that have their own professional learning programs, providing additional skills and resources that he could embed into his school teaching.

Arnold acknowledged that the vast, diverse professional learning he can access can be attributed to the field of Health and Physical Education in which he predominantly taught:

> In my subject field, there probably are more opportunities to maintain networks and develop resources, and continually update and improve your own skills. Some ways you have to be smarter, not work harder … (Interview 1:13).

He perceived that the opportunities he had to access resources and learning through sport and health organisations and clubs as being unique when compared to other subject areas where access to such a breadth of resources may not be as available.

5.5.6 Transference of learning

My own professional connection to Arnold was through our collaboration as members of professional learning committees with ACHPER conducted over several years. Throughout this shared work, it was evident that Arnold had a long history in providing professional learning for colleagues, which was a reflection of his ability to constantly locate new and meaningful knowledge, skills and resources.

In his role as a facilitator of professional learning through ACHPER, Arnold used the many networks he had established during his teaching career across not only education, but also the wider sporting community to provide quality professional learning support to colleagues. He described an example of how this had an impact:

> We do … share the load, when we share … resources.
>
> … sharing the resources, so it gives them extra stuff that they can do in a single lesson for example, so we are into that, and they said, 'Wow, where did you get that from'. And I said, 'Well I only pick[ed it] up this year at the last meeting at ACHPER' so there [are those] support, structures we have in place with ACHPER and these other agencies (Interview 2:3).

The professional learning Arnold engaged in through his role with ACHPER not only enriched his own teaching, but was willingly transferred to his colleagues.

An interesting aspect which emerged during my interviews with Arnold, which may in part be due to his role as an AST1 and a facilitator of professional learning with ACHPER, was his frequent reference to how he transferred his own professional learning to colleagues:

> I try and maintain a level of activity and maintain what I consider to be an important role that I have, and that is to be a role model to the people that I will be presenting information to and saying, not just giving information but doing what you say, so that you give credibility to what you are doing (Interview 1:8).

Transference of professional learning in Arnold's experience became a process initiated through his own desire to continually change his practice and engage a constantly changing student cohort. Once confident of his understanding of the effectiveness of changes made in his own teaching he then shared this with colleagues either informally or through a formal professional learning presentation.

This action of transferring learning from his own experiences and reflections as a learner gave Arnold the credibility to share with colleagues as a professional learning facilitator. As he recalled:

> Sometimes I may have felt inadequate in a situation and realised I needed to do some learning myself. I say well you know I didn't deal with that at all well, or I didn't get that point across as well as I was hoping I would, and you think back to what happened and I'll do that better next time. And that's just professional reviewing of what you do (Interview 2:11).

As a facilitator of professional learning, Arnold was able to share authentic learning experiences such as these, which may encourage colleagues to reflect on their current practice, and risk making change to more effectively engage their students.

It was interesting to hear Arnold reflect on the practices that have not transferred to his new school from his previous teaching environment:

> There's a lot of that stuff which doesn't translate from another school to here because it's unique to what they do here and the deputies [principals]… stay on top of things a bit better in terms of following through with suspensions and gear like that, which sets the standard I think. And then you can concentrate on doing what you get paid to do (Interview 2:4).

As mentioned earlier in this case study, much of the focus in Arnold's teaching at his pervious school had been centred around managing classroom behaviour and the development of respectful relationships between teachers and students. The culture at his new school made assumptions about student behaviour, expecting that respectful relationships already existed. This enabled Arnold to redirect his teaching and professional learning toward a stronger emphasis on curriculum skills and knowledge to challenge and extend student learning.

5.5.7 Sustaining meaningful professional learning

Throughout my interviews with Arnold there was never any indication, even though he was entering into the later stages of his career, that he would no longer engage in professional learning. Arnold always expressed the personal view that it would not be possible to achieve perfection as a teacher. He considered that this was because the teaching environment was complex and ever-changing, making perfection unattainable:

> I generally believe that you stop learning when you're dead, so there is this concept of lifetime learning. And it's probably one of the major reasons why

> I've continued to attend professional development because it helps me maintain, or it drives me to maintain a level of growth and development that will challenge me, perhaps sometimes reinforces what you might be doing well, i.e. professional reading and obviously at workshops etcetera, because of the fact that there is always something more you can learn. There's an old quotation I saw once, it's 'if I don't change today I will be obsolete tomorrow' (Interview 3:9).

When I first interviewed Arnold, part of his professional learning was directed toward achieving qualifications to teach in the field of technical studies. This would enable him to move out of Physical Education as he aged, when he expected the impact of not being able to role model physical activity to his students would become evident. At Arnold's new school, working in such a different environment where teaching for learning rather than behaviour management was the focus, the strongly held values he had for physical activity were renewed, reinvigorating his passion for teaching in this field.

As he reflected on the impact of physical activity on the lives of the young people he was now teaching, Arnold began to talk about how he could engage with the school community. In part, he was beginning to develop an understanding of the more contemporary issues impacting on the students' position as physical activity consumers, and how this was influencing on the choices they made. Research by Tinning (2004) identifies these emerging issues when describing how the preparation of future Health and Physical Education teachers needs to be reviewed by universities. Where the universities have traditionally catered for a Physical Education teacher whose role 'has been to teach for the development of physical activity and sport related outcomes' (Tinning, p. 242), Tinning advocated for change.

Tinning (2004) calls for change reflecting curriculum changes that have oriented Physical Education toward the inclusion of health and personal development outcomes in addition to those of physical activity and movement (p. 243). The emergence of changes such as these and their resultant impact on the hegemony of Physical Education provided Arnold with new motivation for his ongoing engagement in professional learning. Arnold explained, emphasising a key point:

> [This]… affords me the opportunity of dealing with things slightly different as reasons for professional development because I want to be a better teacher and that is why I do teaching professional development (Interview 3:3).

In concluding my interviews with Arnold, a strong feeling persisted that he would never have to search far for a new motivator for professional learning. It was also evident that somewhere into the near future he would be sharing these new experiences of learning with colleagues at yet another professional learning activity that he would be leading.

5.5.8 Findings

Arnold placed a high value on maintaining his professional knowledge and skills as required by changes to curriculum. He also recognised the gap for teachers in specialist areas such as Physical Education, where adequate professional learning resources are no longer provided. As a formally recognised AST, Arnold recognised a professional role for himself in contributing to redressing the professional learning void for Physical Education teachers that has developed in recent times.

Arnold actively role modelled professional practice for pre-service and early-career teachers while also using peer tutoring and influential leadership to challenge experienced colleagues to change their practice. Arnold acknowledged the value of this type of informal professional learning as something he experienced from colleagues in the early stages of his own career, and now values being able to provide similar learning for the next generation of Physical Education teachers.

Self-efficacy was important to Arnold in maintaining his professional identity as a Physical Education teacher whose decreasing physical abilities due to age increasingly impacted his pedagogical approaches. He reflected this concern through how he perceived his relationships with students as based on beliefs about personal development, principles of equity in the teaching and learning relationship and as a cooperative learning environment where power was equally shared.

Arnold's strong values and beliefs about physical activity and health facilitated his practice of accessing new professional knowledge and skills through his involvement with community organisations, such as sporting clubs and associations, by undertaking various roles and the training associated with them. Maintaining relevance through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge to meet changing student needs over time has provided him with career-long professional learning motivation.

Access to appropriate knowledge and skills was provided for Arnold by professional learning associations who contextualised change in education for Physical Education teachers. Arnold also actively participated in these associations as a facilitator, providing new information to his peers in the recognition that they may take the opportunity to challenge themselves professionally by learning from a trusted colleague in their field.

Arnold also recognised a more important role for professional subject associations now and into the future through the contribution of experienced teachers like himself to the professional growth of his Physical Education colleagues. This recognition developed his increased understanding of the position of Physical Education in the curriculum hierarchy, where it finds itself outside the subjects that are politically and socially valued.

The current curriculum emphasis on literacy and numeracy, coupled with the policy direction taken in education where a focus on monitoring and accountability is gaining momentum, further reinforces this view of Physical Education. The responsibility of DECD in this context, according to Arnold, was gathering data related to the achievement of learning outcomes and teaching standards, and providing professional learning to support teachers in how to use this knowledge in the context of teaching for learning.

Arnold validated much of his career-long professional learning as an experienced teacher by trialling new approaches to teaching in his own classes before sharing his learning with peers and colleagues as a facilitator of Physical Education professional learning workshops.

5.6   Maureen's story

Maureen's case study provides an insight into the professional life of a teacher located in a metropolitan high school with a population of more than 500 students at the time of the interviews. The school had a proud tradition of active involvement and success in competitive sport, with students encouraged to participate in an extensive sports program. At the time of the interview, the majority of the students were of Anglo-European background with slightly less than 50 per cent supported by government funding to attend the school.

Maureen held the leadership position of Health and Physical Education Coordinator, identifying that part of her role was to sustain this sporting tradition through her level of personal and professional commitment. Maureen described the importance of this:

> Each night … I plan … I can't go to bed until I've thought about what am I going to do the next day. Not that I stay awake, I still go to sleep, but I know peace of mind, and I'm ready (Interview 2:6).

Maureen described the personal measures that she used to determine whether she will be able to meet her professional responsibilities each day to her own standards.

I initially met Maureen when she presented a case study on the changes she had been leading at her school when supported by a targeted government strategy to increase the physical activity levels of students. This particular strategy, called *be active – Let's go*, provided generous funding to all public schools in South Australia from 2004–2006 while also supporting a designated project involving 10 Reception–12 schools over two years aimed at changing the practice of their teachers.

My role at the time was to manage the designated project by providing professional learning opportunities for teachers from the 10 schools to critically reflect on their experiences and make change to their teaching practice. Although Maureen's school was not one of the 10 schools in the specific project, she frequently attended professional learning activities where the project participants shared their learning, and in which she actively participated by sharing her experiences as she endeavoured to transfer their learning into her own context.

As was to become apparent during my interviews with Maureen, her attendance and active participation at professional learning activities was evidence of one of the

many ways in which she demonstrated her commitment to 'career-long learning' (Makapoulou & Chambers 2012). Maureen was a committed 'networker' and her participation at various professional learning activities was evidence of this practice. Uniquely, among the six research participants in this project, Maureen was also studying a post-graduate diploma course with the intent of moving out of the Physical Education field in the future to pursue a career in student counselling. Fortunately, Maureen did not action this professional change until after the collection of data was complete, ensuring that she still met the research criteria.

5.6.1 Leadership and learning

Maureen had been the leader of the Physical Education faculty at her school for several years, which provided her with some time release to fulfil the obligations of this role such as managing colleagues, providing teaching resources, maintaining equipment and other administrative tasks. More recently, she had also become a year- level manager, where the responsibilities associated with this role were much more difficult to manage because of its responsive nature. Maureen made an observation of how this was impacting her:

> The time I spend on behaviour management, and it's got worse; 53 suspensions in the first term from Year 8 and 9 and you …have one line for behaviour management that has taken far too much time away from my year level management and teaching my own classes (Interview 2:6).

The role of a year-level manager frequently required Maureen to respond to incidents in an 'as needs basis' then follow-up with teachers, students and parents as required. Administrative procedures also needed to be completed so that all relevant actions were documented by the year-level manager, taking time away from Maureen's teaching in the classroom. Of specific concern were the ways in which the demands of her leadership roles were making her feel increasingly time poor. Research by Tam (2010) attributes part of this increasing tension to the 'new era of rapid and far-reaching change [in education]. At a school level, heads of departments are shown to be critical figures for bringing in curriculum changes' (Tam, p. 367).

During my interviews with Maureen many of the issues she identified as having an impact on her professional learning decisions had strong connections to how teaching, and the world in which they worked, had changed. Two of the key issues

she identified focused on the time-poor environment of teaching and the increasing impact of mental health on the teaching and learning environment.

These issues were particularly evident in the school where Maureen was teaching due to the very complex nature of the low SES community from which much of the student population was drawn. They also explicitly impacted her ability to undertake her dual leadership roles as a coordinator of Health and Physical Education, a year level coordinator and ensuring viable extra-curricular sporting programs for students. As she explained:

> We've got every single kid that's playing just a sport this term who has been suspended, and our fourth netball team players either got suspended or put on detention, and the whole soccer team has been [affected] (Interview 2:3).

Maureen's description of the impact of student behaviour on the school sporting program demonstrated how participation of students, and ultimately of teams, were affected by student suspensions preventing their participation at various times. As an experienced teacher, one of Maureen's responses to working in such a demanding environment was to focus her professional learning in directions that would give her increased skills and understanding, supporting her practice in the classroom, and provision of extra-curricular programs.

Through her identification of time as an issue when meeting leadership responsibilities, Maureen also reflected on the lack of time for thinking and planning for teaching, which she considered affected the students in her junior classes.

> I guess in the olden days I would have all the balls pumped, ready to go, as soon as the kids came in the gym and it would be great, 'How you going?' and 'da da da'.
>
> But now it's a rush, the phone's gone, you've just seen someone's diary, and you'd always get more a little bit late, so they're all sitting down and ready, and yeah, I wished I was five minutes early for getting organised and that kind of thing. I used be there and welcome them basically, but that's all done in a rush now because you're busy though recess and lunch and you don't – you just run by the seat of your pant[s] (Interview 2:6).

Maureen described how she preferred to establish the classroom environment by being well prepared so that she could greet and interact with students as they arrived to class. This was now no longer possible, as evidenced by Maureen's frustration. This expression of frustration is not only unique to her circumstances, but echoes a

sentiment held across the teaching profession. In the literature on the impact of leadership development work on teachers and students by Hargreaves (1994), Linquist and Nordanger (2006) and Frost and Durrant (2002) it was found that teachers are finding their overall increasing workload to be intolerable (Frost & Durrant, p. 144). For some teachers, this has become the predominant reason provided when making a decision not to move into leadership, because of the impact on their ability to continue to teach effectively in the classroom.

5.6.2 The changing teaching environment

In recognising the ways in which the demands of leadership were impacting the quality of her teaching in the classroom, Maureen was able to make a connection to the issue of behaviour management that had influenced a new direction recently taken in her professional learning. This new direction directly related to Maureen's recognition that as an experienced teacher she could address student behaviour management through a more dedicated 'hands-on approach' by making a professional move away from classroom teaching, and her current leadership roles, into student counselling. Research by Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997) suggests that this change in awareness of teachers can also be attributed to their career stage:

> Teaching early in their careers … [they were] overly concerned about management and control … and paid limited attention to student needs and individualities. Over their [ensuing] years of teaching, they were able to pinpoint concerns and constraints such as equity, and racial prejudice, subject matter and marginalization, and student's personal problems (p. 17).

As teachers move through the various career stages their professional focus changes from one of subject specific knowledge, skills and student behaviour being of primary importance, to one directed towards pedagogy and other issues impacting the learning of their students.

Maureen's increasing experience as a teacher at her current school had led to an observation that the mental health of students had emerged as a key issue impacting the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom and student engagement in learning. As she stated from her own recollections:

> I had a year at [one school] and then I was at [another school], three and a half years in Phys Ed where it was much easier – I don't know whether it was because it was 20 years ago the kids were more respectful or what at this time – I don't know.

I mean now the kids can give new teachers absolute hell and you just have to survive, and I don't know, maybe that has just evolved but having had seven years in this [current] school that [behaviour modification] has not been an issue [for me] (Interview 1:10).

Maureen's reflections of her teaching career led her to believe that student behaviour was not the pre-eminent issue that it is today. Maureen acknowledged that her long tenure at the school had possibly inured her to a certain extent against this, particularly when observing the difficulties experienced by teachers new to the school.

Maureen identified addressing the emotional aspects of teaching as the biggest shift in learning that she has had to make in her career. This recognition occurred through her understanding that there was always a reason for poor behaviour, lack of engagement or student absence:

We do a lot of mentoring and counselling, I can't believe the counselling now in schools that we didn't do before when we had good role models at home but we don't have that now and they come to school because it's the only stable place … they know that we're there to listen and to help them and they're not getting that at home.

So definitely it's a different focus now (Interview 1:13).

Maureen's knowledge and experience as a teacher provided evidence for this insight as she reflected on her own home environment when growing up. Maureen was able to recognise the powerful influence of her own parents as role models who valued her participation in physical activity while also encouraging her growth through education, as they did with her siblings, which many of her students were not able to experience. Maureen highlighted the significance of this when remembering her own experiences:

Looking at immediate family my parents really encouraged me to study. They'd been living on a farm and I was involved in a lot of sport and they encouraged me to come to town and study. All three of us [siblings], they bought a house in town and we all went to uni. One did Art teaching, one did Home Ec teaching and I did PE [Physical Education] teaching. So we have had that support from each other, even though they never went to uni, my parents (Interview 3:6).

This early development of values pertaining to education and physical activity provided a strong foundation for Maureen's value-laden beliefs that she has used to validate her career-long professional learning.

Making a connection between the development of values and beliefs related to being physically active and engaging in education in Maureen's own life highlighted for her the lack of such influences in the lives of many of her students. This awareness influenced Maureen's change in direction for professional learning while still maintaining a connection to Physical Education. As she stated in the initial interview:

> I'm not as good a teacher with the junior PE [Physical Education] as I used to be because of the time I spend on behaviour management.
>
> … it's part of the leadership approach
>
> It's tricky, it's tricky.
>
> Sometimes we have classes at Year 9 of 28 boys and we have many really bad behaviour problems and just to manage that – I feel that I should be surviving at that time.
>
> It's tough from kids fighting and dealing with abuse and not feeling confident at all with their bodies … ranging to a kid who is the top soccer player in the state … (Interview 1:6).

In reflecting on the changing teaching environment, Maureen contended that she may not be teaching as effectively because of leadership claims on her time. However, she did not blame issues on this alone, but in describing the diversity of the student cohort recognises that there are many factors impacting the teaching and learning environment at her school.

Maureen's earlier comment on her observation of how student behaviour impacted teachers new to the school where '… the kids can give new teachers absolute hell' (Interview 1:10) raises another issue impacting on how she engaged in professional learning to bring about change. This issue specifically relates to finding teachers who will also go the extra distance in difficult teaching environments by putting in additional time to provide other activities for students, while maintaining enough energy to pursue their own professional learning. As Maureen observed:

> Some teachers are still slack so I can't say there's any pressure on teachers but some don't do enough, don't do enough, obviously most are gone at 3.00[pm] and don't put the extra time in, but others are working really hard … (Interview 2:14).

Maureen was frustrated by the number of her colleagues who did not feel obligated to work past the explicitly identified end of the school day while others, like her, recognised that the particular environment in which they were teaching needed extra

effort to support students who were already disadvantaged. A study by Swedish researchers, Lindqvist and Nordanger (2006) on how teachers use their time beyond the end of the school day, found:

> Extra-curricular work (planning, preparation, evaluation, supplementary work, etc) … for teachers [has continued to] increase. Working overtime or bringing work home is more common … than it was 10 years ago …'
> (p. 624)

Getting and retaining effective teachers in a school who will remain positive in a difficult teaching environment also impacted on how Maureen measured her effectiveness as a leader. Keeping herself fresh and motivated as a professional provided Maureen with an opportunity, through leadership, to influence others to also become career-long learners. It was this freshness that Maureen hoped would influence and increase the professional knowledge and skills of her colleagues enabling them to provide extra-curricular activities and support the increasingly complex needs of their students.

5.6.3 Leading professional change

During our final interview, Maureen talked about how she tried to ensure that students 'have fun and feel good about themselves' (Interview 3). I could not help thinking that she was also making a reference to her role as a leader in making sure her colleagues enjoyed the same satisfying experiences from their teaching:

> You as a leader motivate and role model and encourage people to be involved in their PD and you need the team to all be working towards the same goal so delivering fun, engaging programs, and if you haven't got everybody working towards the same goals then that can be … very divisive, and limited success probably will come from it (Interview 3:10).

Maureen gave the impression throughout the interviews that if her colleagues were getting professional satisfaction and personal reward from their work then they may find sustaining their own energy levels would become an intrinsic personal response rather than something they have to consciously work at for extrinsic expectations.

In sustaining her own energy levels, Maureen identified her development as a reflective practitioner as an integral part of her development as a leader while also supporting and challenging the motivation levels of her colleagues. Maureen had a strong belief that her role as an educator did not stop with making learning a fun and

enjoyable experience for students in the classroom but extended to an approach that would support her colleagues in achieving satisfaction from their teaching whether they were pre-service, early-career or experienced teachers. This notion of 'job satisfaction' in education according to Menon and Athanasoula-Reppa (2011) is contested within the ideas of it being a 'pleasurable emotional state' derived from a positive evaluation of 'job satisfaction' or 'an emotional reaction based on the comparison between actual and expected outcomes' (p. 436).

In relating a story demonstrating how she encouraged a colleague to extend their professional boundaries by taking up new challenges, Maureen also provided insight about how she used her leadership to influence professional growth and learning:

> [The teacher] had [been at the school for] six [years]) … when he came he was just one that would go at 3.30[pm], yeah, and just do his job but the first day I coerced him into being sports coordinator because no one else was there at the moment … so [the teacher] stayed, and he took that on and he has been really good in that role and now that I have got the counsellor's role I encouraged him to apply for the PE [Physical Education coordinator] position and he's been talking about it – he's rather excited about it now.
>
> … I think he won it last week, so that's something he is learning, and [he was] on the computer today – he has got to update all his skills …
>
> He [also] has to mentor two new ones [teachers] because [a teacher is] leaving, and he's spoken to a student teacher so I think it is good for him and he is ready for a challenge yeah so it will be good that I will still be in the school …
>
> Then he said he was even prepared to take the [Year] 12s in a couple of years, because he's never wanted to do that extra [work] (Interview 3:8).

It was evident that Maureen obtained great personal and professional satisfaction in being able to encourage change in a colleague as she supported him to grow and meet new satisfying professional challenges. With Maureen's support, her colleague was able to feel confident in taking on additional responsibilities as a new leader by engaging in professional learning through a diversity of ways as a mentor of new teachers and as a leadership mentee himself. In reflecting on this successful outcome, Maureen felt that she was replicating formative aspects of her own professional leadership learning journey with influential leaders who had acted as mentors. Maureen now demonstrated this as her own preferred professional mentoring 'style … by leading by example and [being] fortunate that they've [colleagues] come along with me …' (Interview 3:11). Research by Frost and Durrant (2002) suggests that

this approach can be likened to the development of 'interpersonal capacity' (p. 153) where the impact of professional learning undertaken in schools by a teacher-leader can influence and motivate the learning of colleagues.

Maureen demonstrated a further dimension to her leadership as a professional learner through her participation in a university post-graduate diploma course on counselling, undertaken with a view to applying for a position that was becoming available at the school. Making the professional move from Physical Education leader to a counsellor further reinforced her identification of the increasing impact of mental health issues on teaching. This significant career change demonstrated how important she now felt the issue of student mental health in schools had become, while also enabling her to provide ongoing mentoring to her colleague (Interview 3:8). The value Maureen attributed to career-long professional learning was also demonstrated to her colleagues through her willingness to commit her own personal time to achieve additional tertiary level qualifications in education when she had already identified being 'time poor' (Interview 2:6) as a significant personal/professional issue. Maureen's personal motivation to continue with her own learning through tertiary study also demonstrated her high levels of self-efficacy, which Prat-Sala and Redford (2010) in their study on the interplay between motivation, self-efficacy, and approaches to studying, suggest is a key factor for students who demonstrate high levels of intrinsic motivation towards tertiary studies (p. 285).

5.6.4 Systemic professional learning

Maureen did not always identify leading professional change as an enjoyable part of her work, as evidenced by the frustration she expressed in response to increasing pressures placed on teachers by the education system. This occurred when major changes such as the introduction of a new curriculum took place in the 1990s when the SACSA framework was implemented. As Maureen stated:

> [the professional learning that the system imposes on you whether it's
> SACSA or Mandatory Reporting] Yeah I do find that a bit frustrating
> (Interview 1:16).

Maureen's responsibility as a curriculum learning area coordinator involved taking the lead in the implementation of any curriculum change specifically relevant to the

teaching of Health and Physical Education. These responsibilities also included Maureen meeting her own professional learning needs related to the new curriculum framework. As a leader Maureen was then expected to share this professional learning with her colleagues so that they too would be able to use the new structures and resources supporting the curriculum's implementation into their school.

Maureen's previous experience involving the mandated state-wide curriculum change, Statements and Profiles, was not recalled by her as having been a particularly positive one. This had been implemented previously by DECD in the 1980s, leaving Maureen with clear memories of her less than enthusiastic colleagues who were now participating in a similar process of change once more in the 1990s:

> [I] need to lead in these areas …
>
> It's hard to do SACSA stuff when there is a history of Statements and Profiles that people didn't enjoy but we do have a new contract teacher who has just done a lot of work on SACSA and is willingly to share and lead this professional learning (Interview 1:17).

As previously stated, Statements and Profiles preceded the SACSA as lead curriculum document for schools in South Australia. The hope Maureen expressed this time was that a new Health and Physical Education contract teacher appointed to her school would bring a 'new face' with a different mindset to the implementation of mandated change. While the new teacher would still provide contemporary knowledge of the new curriculum, they could also contextualise the changes, making the professional learning more meaningful for Maureen's colleagues. Research in the context of Health and Physical Education faculties and mandated change by Williams and Williams (2013) proposes that leaders required to act as 'change agents' have a unique struggle because of their 'traditional commitment toward extra-curricular activities' (p. 515) and senior school administrators who negatively portray 'the worth and value of PE [Physical Education]' (p. 526) in the structure of their schools.

This research finding by Williams and Williams (2013) was demonstrated during our first interview, when Maureen described a local education district mandated professional learning opportunity organised for all teachers in the district by their peers from the participating schools. Her disappointment in the response of her colleagues to this opportunity was evident:

> We've got a T&D [training and development] day on the Friday before the long weekend, it's a northern area [education district] big one we've got to go to. It is offering a stack of courses at different campuses, and people have to go on online to do their training and pick a course, so it could be IT offered at [location] and there could be crocheting offered at [location], but it's all to do with school obviously
>
> We're finding the talk is that all of our staff are just going to come to our venues, it's easier – they don't have to go north, and then they can still work in between sessions and then finish early at 2.30pm and they can go home for the weekend. So the idea is it's set up to get a variety of speakers and programs, but by the sound of it, yeah, they're not going to be accessing it, just from the talk (Interview 1:17).

The resourcing of such a localised professional learning opportunity for teachers reflects a trend over previous years whereby education policy in Western countries such as Canada, the US, and the UK supported teachers to take greater control of their professional learning programs. In an effort to provide teachers with an opportunity to determine the professional learning they would participate in on such a day, teachers and leaders would form an organising group to identify the particular needs of schools in the education district, as had occurred in Maureen's district. The intention was to then target relevant professional learning programs and provide resources that would specifically meet the needs of teachers and their students. For a highly motivated teacher such as Maureen who was not only a leader of change in her own school but had consistently engaged in, and valued, professional learning throughout her career, the lack of commitment by her colleagues set her apart.

5.6.5 Locating meaningful professional learning

In the earlier stage of her teaching career, Maureen sought professional learning that would meet her technical needs. She explained the significance of these early experiences:

> Firstly for the skills based sessions, so just for technical knowledge for the year levels … you keep upgrading what you have been doing and to give you confidence so that you have the right materials to teach the kids properly and new ideas for variety in your activities, so ideas for games and other modifications that you can use (Interview 1:10).

Research by Armour, Makopoulou and Chambers (2012) on 'the nature of career-long learning for PE [Physical Education] teachers' (p. 64) evidenced this specific professional learning need for early-career teachers where their priority is to ensure that their subject content knowledge and skills are relevant and meet the standards

required by the students they are teaching. Once teachers believe they have achieved their desired level of technical competency, as described by Maureen, they look to servicing the professional learning needs of other teaching dimensions such as pedagogy

As an experienced teacher, Maureen recognised a similar need in early-career teachers coming to her school who she found to be inspirational through the demonstration of their passion to access any form of professional learning available.

Over the years of her career, Maureen continued to access professional learning to improve her technical knowledge and skills through attendance at sport specific workshops and other activities. She identified being prepared technically as crucial to how effective she could be pedagogically in that it gave her confidence and motivation, enabling her to be more flexible in her teaching approaches when engaging challenging students. Maureen provided examples by recalling particular workshops that she had attended:

> [I] haven't been to too many [workshops] that have been a waste of time.
>
> I know I still refer back to notes from some that have been way back (Interview 1:10).

> I really haven't had any that I have walked out of, and said, 'That was useless'. All the technical ones have been really valuable.
>
> … I can't remember one that has not been useful.
>
> For a couple of years I have been to just half days and I have thought, 'Yeah maybe that could have been better' and haven't been able to find a session and said I'd be better off at home with the kids than at the ones where I need more content.
>
> There's been some times where I'm doing research at the same time and used some of the notes and made phone calls where I can follow that up and they're ok (Interview 1:11).

In critically reflecting on the value of these professional learning experiences Maureen was positive about what she has learnt and that the process of targeting learning to her own needs has been rewarding as her needs have changed. Maureen's reflections also demonstrate a pragmatic view in that she recognised where activities have been professionally rewarding, and how she has allocated her personal and professional time in the most effective way where those that were not challenging.

One of Maureen's most successful ways of engaging in professional learning has been to make extensive use of networks as a significant professional learning tool to facilitate making pedagogical change in her teaching practice. Throughout her teaching career, Maureen has continued to access and form new networks as additional learning needs arose.

Throughout our interviews, Maureen referred to a number of these different networks that have surfaced at various stages of her career, with many of them continuing to function as a support in meeting her professional learning needs:

> I have a group that are moderators and are a good network through the Year 12s, and obviously through the moderators' meetings. That's two or three sessions, and then we have a prac that we moderate together so we've got consistency of moderation and we also talk about stuff such as marking and so forth.
>
> I've got friends I went through uni with and we still get together.
>
> So each Christmas we have a coffee or tea and get the families together and often it always ends up that we are talking about school stuff.
>
> There are some young ones from when I taught at [school] for a year…
>
> Their whole faculty always turn up at ACHPER conferences and so that is contact there.
>
> … [university lecturer], with the link to student teachers and we often have conversations about the student teachers and we have three or four a term and I feel that supervising student teachers … is a good connection with the uni (Interview 1:11).
>
> … with [partner] being manager of Sport and Aquatics, we talk all the time about different things and we have friends that we've worked with.
>
> So people in the sports side of things are pretty well covered (Interview 1:12).

Maureen was able to identify five different networks that she participates in with many having been active for much of her professional life. Each of the networks has developed in different contexts but all contribute to incidental and purposeful professional learning. Research by Green (2002) into the characteristics of networks amongst Physical Education teachers proposed that they 'make particular interpretations of Physical Education more likely than others (p. 80), whereby they sustain their 'ideological orientations' (p. 78) that is, their values and beliefs about Physical Education and sport.

As Maureen's career has changed over recent years, an increasing emphasis has been on teaching classes in the senior years in Physical Education. Maureen has also taken on an additional role as a subject moderator for senior years' Physical Education courses that has enabled her to join yet another network. She explained how this has supported her own learning:

> It's good for my 12s, as I said last year that it helps me deliver my course better, it helps the results, it helps me to teach because I have a better understanding of the marking and the program is kept on target. So that is the main reason why I do it.
>
> … there is huge networking going there … they['re] one of the best groups to work with … they relate to each other and they're really interested in their subject and have the passion for the subject …
>
> [They are] a professional group, but have a passion and fight for the subject we teach and that's an aim at this stage (Interview 2:9).

As with all of her networks, the more recent group of moderators provided not just additional skills and knowledge for Maureen as a Year 12 subject teacher, but also provide professional motivation through a shared passion of strongly held values and beliefs as Physical Education advocates. As Physical Education teachers, physical activity is not just highly valued but also has strong personal connections to their moral purpose in education. Maureen recognised that this was an important development in the later stages of her career, providing a unique opportunity where she could interact with experienced colleagues who were still as passionate about Physical Education as she was. This 'collegiality' was valued by Maureen, as it reinforced her own values and beliefs though the opportunities provided for formal and informal professional learning. Barber (2009), Fullan (2009), Hargreaves (2004, 2009), Sleeter (2008), Johnson (2004), Hattie (2003), and Sparks (2003) identify moral purpose as a significant element of change in schools and teaching, particularly in the context of establishing meaning for teachers like Maureen. It is also through this process that 'teacher[s] negotiate their professional identity in collaborative exchanges' (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 311) with colleagues in their field of education.

As Maureen described her future transition from a curriculum area teacher of Physical Education to a student counsellor, she was able to identify her intent to

172

establish a new network to support her professional learning and growth in this new field of her career:

> I will have to network with a group of different people than I do with things … now but it depends on what I'm teaching, or where I'm teaching, but [I'm] already getting help from 'CAMS' and 'Shop-front' and those sorts of people and yeah, so they'll develop and I've just got to go find out from the [local City] Council if I do get this job … I've got to make a point of getting to know the contacts and it's important that I've got that back up (Interview 2:15).

Maureen's extensive professional history in developing networks of 'supportive teams' for different purposes whether for their provision of peer support, modelling practice, motivating or encouraging learning, have all helped her to achieve the outcome of being an expert teacher. Maureen was also able to use these experiences to reflect on what degree and type of support she may need when undertaking a new position as either a leader or provider of a support service in the school. Establishing a new network will provide her with access to this support, not just from an education perspective but also from a broader health and social services sector in the wider community.

Interestingly, throughout our interviews and discussion related to the importance Maureen placed on being able to access a broad range of networks, she typically, as many Physical Education teachers do, continued to identify herself as a 'doer' and a 'leader' rather than a 'thinker'. O'Connor and Macdonald (2010) describe the role conflict demonstrated by Maureen as being a particular issue for Physical Education teachers struggling to clearly identify themselves away from the socially constructed stereotyped roles of Physical Education teacher and sports coach.

With her professional learning needs changing substantially in both content and professional direction, Maureen continued to locate meaningful professional learning. She explained the significance of these changes:

> I am not really going to find it out anymore how to kick a football and to run a game. I have done that so now mental health is more important and the counselling side of it so I have learnt a lot through my uni course so far. I've finished six out of the eight units so hopefully we can finish those and the Diploma at the end of the year.
>
> … I am prompted through needs of kids to go and do some more work in [this] area and I am finding out I'm enjoying it … (Interview 2:14).

Although Maureen continued to validate her pursuit of ongoing professional learning by making positive learning connections with the changing needs of her students, it also demonstrated the breadth of resources that she accessed. By undertaking a university diploma course, Maureen was also accessing a higher level of professional learning that would provide her with tertiary-level qualifications, enabling her to make a change in her career as she learned to understand and respond to student behaviours through a mental health and wellbeing perspective.

5.6.6 Transferring learning

In our earlier interviews, Maureen described how she fundamentally transferred her learning as an early-career teacher into a habit that she still continues with as part of her teaching preparation routine:

> I still do little cue cards in my pocket, even 25 years later.
>
> I still have them in my pocket … I have them as a back-up even though I go through it in my head and even going to school in the morning I might, if I have the chance before, go through the activities but I have on a bit of paper and prepare because yeah I don't like to 'wing it'.
>
> I do like to prepare (Interview 1:5).

Although in those early years this practice was attributed to mainly ensuring that Maureen felt confident about skills and content knowledge, the enduring purpose has enabled her to focus on continuing to change her practice, meeting personal and professional needs described in the literature as self-efficacy. Research on motivation for lifelong learning by Martin (2012) demonstrates a view in the literature that 'motivation and learning are inextricably linked' (p. 670). In unpacking this relationship, Martin states:

> It is well known that learners of all ages are influenced by their beliefs, emotions, values and personal goals when it comes to learning … taken together, these beliefs, goals, values and affects give meaning to the individuals' life and sense of self (2012, p. 670–671).

Maureen's career-long practice of preparing 'cue cards' to prompt her teaching is evidence of what Martin (2012) describes as 'having a sense of efficacy or mastery [that] will influence the opportunity to grow and learn' (p. 672).

This meticulous preparation continued to be a valid practice for Maureen even when teaching senior students where behaviour management was not anticipated as a

predominant issue, but appropriate knowledge and skills to support pedagogical approaches such as guided discovery with senior students continued to be important. Maureen explained:

> You do need to walk in confidently, knowing that you've prepared, and each time you take a lesson and particularly with Year 12, the content will change according to the level of the students.
>
> I've got two [Year 12] classes now, and they're never going to be the same lessons, but I have a template to work from … so you do have to do it a little bit differently or explain it a little bit differently … I can't just go in and do it from the book. And you want to teach it differently every single time. There's no way that you can just do it from using the book and the board,
>
> … we need to keep them engaged …
>
> … but it is different each time and that takes preparation, so you just can't come in there and expect them to be able to listen … the feedback's good, and they're attentive, and there's lots of discussion and engagement, so I find that works (Interview 2:5).

Maureen highlighted an important aspect related to how teachers respond flexibly to the characteristics of student cohorts when teaching, described in the literature as reflecting-in-action. Schon (1983) cited in Van Manen (1995) defines the action taken by teachers when interpreting the effectiveness of pedagogy in the act of teaching as 'thinking on your feet' that is, that teachers think about something while doing it (p. 34).

Reliance on theoretical and technical resources were not seen by Maureen as the only way to be an effective teacher that would facilitate meaningful connections with the diverse knowledge and experiences of the students in her classes. It was Maureen's knowledge as an experienced teacher that helped her recognise and respond to diverse learning needs in each different class cohort in a way that also provided a supportive and inclusive learning environment. In doing so Maureen recognised three key principles – supportive environments, recognising diversity and social justice – that underpin teacher driven pedagogical approaches in Physical Education.

Reflecting on practice was a further technique used by Maureen to provide appropriate structures and approaches to engage her students and transfer her own knowledge and expertise to them as learners. Schon (1983) cited in Husu, Toom and Patrikainen (2008) 'refers to the process of reflection-on-action as making sense of

an action after it has occurred, and possible learning something from the experience, which extends one's own knowledge base' (p. 39). Maureen said:

> You learn from experience as to how to treat kids and how to approach them and you can [either] challenge them and come in their face at the start or you know that by experience that doesn't work.
>
> So the caring and the questioning and starting with the positives and being a subtle challenge that works but then sometimes you can make a mistake and you go back and you think how could you have done that a little bit differently? (Interview 2:11)
>
> You do learn through working with them. Then sitting back and thinking how could you have done it differently (Interview 2:12).

Maureen not only reflects-in-action as she responded to the cues she received from the participation levels of students in her classes but she also reflects-on-action at a later post-lesson time where she can analyse the achievement of outcomes and the impact of her pedagogy.

The practice of reflecting on teaching practice was also demonstrated in how Maureen's career move toward student counselling was beginning to influence the transference of new professional learning into her Physical Education teaching. Maureen had recently observed how she now viewed participation in elite sport:

> When I go out to a 36-ers [basketball] game or another game, I really enjoy watching it … and I don't think of it as the players and all the technical [sporting] things, I think about how the people are feeling … it's really weird, like on the bench if someone's been put on the bench, … [I] see how he's reacted, I'm looking at that more than the sport and the players, so I guess I've switched away, switched around a little bit … (Interview 3:10).

Maureen showed she was consciously aware of the different lens she was using to observe and reflect on the behaviour of participants in a sporting environment that may not have been the case previously. Observations made prior to the new learning she has gained from undertaking study in the field of behavioural sciences would have focused on the biomechanical technique, specific skills and teamwork of elite sporting athletes. Now, however, Maureen finds herself interested in how players are responding psychologically to the situations they find themselves in during a game.

5.6.7 Sustaining meaningful professional learning into the future

During our interviews, Maureen frequently provided examples of how her ability to locate professional learning through networking also supported her transference of

that learning into the classroom as happened when teaching her Year 12 students. As she explained:

> I took on moderation and I thought that would be good for my own development and help with the subject content and now I moderate seven or eight other schools in a prac … so that helps as well.
>
> … it's good for my confidence …
>
> I did the marking last year and now it's the exam prep.
>
> … there's more and more that I seem to take on I don't know if I want to do the marking but for my kids time to mark exams has been really good.
>
> That's a way of keeping up as well (Interview 1:7).

As Maureen's own experience and confidence grew as a senior years' teacher, bolstered by her participation in a network of moderators, she took on a broader leadership role where she assisted teachers in other schools with their professional learning by contributing to their achievement of student learning outcomes and course standards.

On a different level, Maureen had also been role modelling career-long learning by sharing her own experiences as a current post-graduate student with students at her school:

> The kids at school know as well that I am studying and we have conversations about that (Interview 1:8).

Students at Maureen's school were less likely to have a role model in their own family who has engaged in post-secondary education. As Maureen shared her experiences as a student, she provided them with a meaningful role model who may provide motivation for some of her students to pursue tertiary education as an accessible goal in the future.

Everything that Maureen did related to teaching was connected to her professional identity, self-efficacy and moral purpose, whether it be her learning as she changed her professional direction or responding to the needs of her students by being well prepared and confident in the classroom. For Maureen as an experienced teacher, networking, and the actions of teaching and learning were all connected to her own professional motivation, the motivation of her colleagues and the engagement of her students in meaningful educational experiences.

177

5.6.8 Findings

Career-long professional learning was always a part of Maureen's professional life. Maureen recognised how her needs had changed over time and found that learning with peers, particularly through networks, reinforced her own moral purpose through the values and beliefs about Physical Education that she shared with colleagues.

Maureen established her values and beliefs about physical activity and education from experiences gained through her own family environment, growing up. Maureen recognised that this was a privileged position, as opposed to the experiences for many of the young people she now taught.

Maureen was critically aware of how the school environment has changed since she began her teaching career, as negative student behaviour increasingly impacted on their learning engagement. The lack of support and positive role modelling from students' families has also resulted in students mainly identifying school as a safe place to be. Maureen recognised that part of the impact of this on the moral purpose of teaching was to contribute additional time beyond that of the normal school day to help change the attitude of students to one where they value education and learning.

Maureen's moral purpose was also portrayed through her commitment to sustaining high levels of energy in her teaching, which in turn sustained her self-efficacy as a teacher. She also used this role modelling in an attempt to influence and motivate her colleagues. Reflection on the role modelling and mentoring that helped to shape her as an early-career professional learner now motivates her to influence her colleagues using like approaches.

Maureen also used reflective practice to sustain her self-efficacy in the classroom as she made connections between her practice, the changing needs of students and the three key principles underpinning the pedagogy of Physical Education teaching. In reflecting-on-action, Maureen extended this to a higher critical level by engaging in tertiary level study. This professional learning was giving her a sound academic understanding of changes to student behaviour and their psychological needs that she used to change her practice.

Maureen's challenging teaching environment also influenced her to initiate a career move away from Physical Education to student counselling as she responded to the

issues her students are dealing with in their personal lives and the changing values they place on schools as safe havens.

Dual leadership roles affected how Maureen managed herself professionally, reflecting her identity and how she sustained her self-efficacy. This is demonstrated by how she anticipated and met the needs of colleagues while also being able to respond to the unanticipated needs of students during the teaching day when required.

Maureen used mandated professional learning as an opportunity to be an influential leader with her colleagues and looked for opportunities to overcome the previous negative experiences they have had to contextualise change by making it more meaningful and relevant. Maureen's professional identity and self-efficacy motivated ongoing professional learning and a desire to influence colleagues by role-modelling learning, mentoring colleagues through change and contributing to the sustenance of networks.

CHAPTER 6:
DISCUSSION

6.1   Motivation

Achieving an informed understanding of how the cohort of experienced teachers who are the focus of this project have been able to continue their own career-long professional learning is central to this research. To achieve such an understanding, key themes have been identified from the qualitative data collected during a series of interviews with the six teachers. One of the key emergent themes identifies the role of motivation in career-long professional learning for the experienced Physical Education teachers participating in this project.

Motivation to seek career-long professional learning has developed from a range of experiences during different stages of their teaching careers. These include experiences from their pre-service training days, and strongly held values about the benefits of participating in physical activity. They developed an increasing awareness of how their practice responded as the teaching and learning environment continued to change, and their personal and professional experiences combined to impact their sense of moral purpose, self-efficacy and professional identity as teachers. These factors, together, provided powerful motivation to continually engage in professional learning throughout their careers.

Research by Bassett-Jones and Lloyd (2005) and Gokce (2010) refers to the influence of Maslow's humanistic theory, which asked a key question about what motivates people. Bassett-Jones and Lloyd identify Maslow as a major contributor to research on the motivation of people to work that 'is internally stimulated' (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, p. 930). Maslow (1970), in researching this question, identifies personal values as being significant to his theory on motivation. Maslow based this on an assumption 'that motivation is constant,[and] never ending' driven by 'fundamental goals that remain constant' (Maslow, pp. 7–9). In turn, the environment and the situation a person encounters influence this.

Maslow (1970) also proposed that self-efficacy and identity, which he identified as 'esteem, mastery and recognition' are centrally important to the feelings of 'self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy' (p. 21). These contribute

strongly to how the individual evaluates themselves. The significance for this research is that it provides a locus for exploring motivators to explain why people work. Such explanations are outside of theories such as those proposed by Herzberg, cited in Bassett-Jones and Lloyd (2005), based on the notion of reward through payment or promotion that are in contrast, external motivators.

The teachers in this research shared a success-oriented motivation they used to measure their professional success, employing it as a value in their teaching environment. These indicators of success varied across the group, with Cathy and Arnold valuing the relationships they build with their students, and establishing connections with them through aspects of the curriculum, such as the ways in which physical activity promotes a healthy lifestyle. Frank and Judy measured their success through their professional growth since their early-career days, both reflecting that they had made many mistakes but used these as opportunities to learn and grow. Brian and Maureen expressed determinants of success through maintaining their passion for physical activity by staying connected to change in the wider world of physical activity and sport, which in turn influenced their teaching practice.

One of the most significant findings from this research demonstrates how a strong sense of moral purpose motivated these experienced teachers to continue their own professional learning and growth, and was strongly linked to their feelings of being successful. They all portrayed a belief in wanting to make a difference to the lives of the students they teach. They also connected this to their personal need for career-long learning. The retention of these values has continued to be reinforced throughout their careers by providing motivation for ongoing change in their classroom practice.

In reflecting on what motivated their learning throughout their careers Cathy, Judy and Frank recognised their professional growth, moving from an initial position of thinking that they knew all there was to know about teaching Physical Education. As their careers progressed, they developed an increasing awareness that by growing their knowledge of pedagogy and becoming more flexible in their teaching approaches, they were more likely to demonstrate the moral purpose which had originally attracted them to teaching as a career.

In their research on teachers who have retained their motivation for teaching, Gu and Day (2007) describe them as being 'resilient' (p. 1303). In their definition of resilience, Gu and Day describe this 'as the capacity to continue to 'bounce back', to recover strengths, or spirit quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity' (p.1302). The teachers participating in this research have been able to demonstrate this 'resilience' through their engagement in career-long professional learning driven by their motivation to keep changing their teaching practice.

Gu and Day (2007) also suggest that resilience in teachers can be closely linked to self-efficacy, which, in their view, given the rapid pace of change in education through recent years, highlights 'the positive role that resilience plays … [as it] enable[es] [teachers] to thrive, flourish and sustain their effectiveness' (p. 1303). The teachers in this research all demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy, which was closely linked to their professional sense of identity as teachers and learners.

Research by Gu and Day (2007), Martin, et al. (2008), Meirnik, et al. (2009), and Putman (2012) explored the notion of the role of self-efficacy and teaching by making a connection with teacher resilience in the face of continual change to their profession. For the teachers participating in this research the role of self-efficacy is evidenced in the findings from their case studies. Reference has been made to teaching situations that have not worked well but have been used as motivational experiences from which professional learning takes place to progress their effectiveness in the teaching environment.

Martin et al. (2008) and Bruce and Ross (2007) describe such teachers as being able to 'employ effective problem solving skills, [and] develop strategies to be more effective teachers, manage their emotions well, and persist in the face of failure' (Martin et al., p. 174). By using experiences gained in their teaching environments as described by Martin et al., and Bruce and Ross, resilient teachers deliberately seek to acquire new knowledge and skills that will enhance their professional expertise while continuing to change and develop their professional identity over time.

Lasky (2005) explored how the professional identity of teachers is shaped by the schooling structures in which they work that are evident amongst the secondary teachers participating in this research. Teachers in secondary schools teach in

specialist curriculum areas and may initially identify themselves by the learning area environment of Health and Physical Education in which they have expertise and strong alignment. For the teachers participating in this research, part of their motivation for career-long professional learning occurred through how they see their professional identity as experienced Physical Education teachers and their incumbent responsibility to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues. When they talk and share their experiences with colleagues, they use a language/discourse that has meaning. They are demonstrating their 'shared technical culture', identified by Hargreaves and Goodson (1996, p. 5) as a characteristic of professional identity.

In the context of this research, understanding what motivates these experienced teacher-participants to seek change in their practice throughout their careers provides important information as to the roles played by their identity, self-efficacy and the broader notion of moral purpose.

6.1.1 Moral purpose

A significant finding from this research relates to the strong sense of moral purpose held by the participating teachers, which they illustrate through their professional values. How their moral purpose has developed continues to identify who they are as professionals. This is reflected by Fullans' definition of moral purpose referred to in Chapter 3 as 'acting with [the] intention of making a positive difference in the [social] environment' (2002, p. 414). Participants in this current research demonstrate their sense of moral purpose when describing the beliefs they have about teaching Physical Education, influenced by the responsibility that they feel in making a positive difference to the young people they teach.

Hattie (2003), Sparks (2003), Hargreaves (1998, 2004b, 2009), Sleeter (2008), Barber (2009), Fullan (2009) and Farouk (2012) identify moral purpose as a significant element of change in schools and teaching, particularly in the context of establishing meaning for teachers. Through their research, they found the role of deeply held values and beliefs by teachers influence how effective any changes they make to their practice will be and whether they are likely to be sustainable.

Hargreaves' (1998) and Farouk's (2012) research on 'the emotional practice of teaching' identified moral purpose as one of 'four interrelated points … that are

183

germane to the … analysis of how emotions are located and represented in teachers' relationships with their students (Hargreaves, p. 838). All of the participants in this research have frequently articulated how they value making a positive difference to the students they teach and the personal professional satisfaction they derive in observing their students achieve learning outcomes as a consequence of their professional actions.

Farouk (2012) refers to Hargreaves' (1998) research when exploring the emotional feelings of guilt, teachers work, sense of moral purpose and the impact of these features on their relationships with students. In particular, Farouk's research focuses on the frustrations felt by teachers when 'they perceive a mismatch between their moral [purpose] objectives regarding the care and education of their pupils and their ability to meet these aspirations under the directive of imposed educational reforms' (Farouk, p. 492). An example in the context of this research is evident by the frustrations shown by the teacher participants at the decline in physical activity levels of young people over recent years. All participants expressed this concern. Strong personal values that coalesce around the importance of being physically active have been challenged by the emergence of this contemporary social health issue. Their professional feelings of isolation have grown with an increasing focus of educational reform being directed more towards the attainment of literacy and numeracy objectives with little attention on addressing social health issues.

Judy typified this shared frustration when reporting conversations she had overheard amongst her students about their own physical activity aspirations and desires to change their body weight (Interview 2). Judy found their subsequent lack of action in Physical Education classes particularly frustrating when these same students would demonstrate passive behaviours by sitting down for much of the class time rather than take the opportunity to be physically active. Judy's own professional knowledge and experience based on research evidence that participation in physical activity can contribute to weight loss was being seriously challenged by the passive behaviours of her students. The lack of physical effort by Judy's students also provided evidence for her that the learning outcomes she was trying to achieve through her teaching were not being realised in practice, and that she was perceiving 'a mismatch' not unlike that described by Farouk (2012, p. 492).

The professional knowledge and experience of the teachers in this research has been enriched by their own life experiences and choices made about participating in physical activity. These experiences contributed to the desire to make a difference to this aspect of their students' lives. Cathy provided an example of this (Interview 1) when describing an event in her life where one of her parents passed away while she was still a student at primary school. As she reflected on the causes of this death she was able to identify lifestyle choices (to smoked and be overweight) as contributing to his death from heart disease at a relatively young age. Now as an adult, Cathy places a high value on decisions she personally makes about her lifestyle and her family's by becoming a lifelong participant in physical activity and sport, reflecting Hargreaves' view that the 'moral actions and judgements [made by teachers] are based on emotional as well as cognitive understanding' (1998, p. 840).

Hargreaves also proposed that teachers' emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve these purposes (1998, p. 838). Findings from this research support this view, with moral purpose contributing to the motivation of these teachers in pursuing career-long change to their practice because they want to provide young people with an opportunity through education to maximise their potential, and achieve a fulfilling quality of life. The research participants also held shared values about physical activity and sport, which they demonstrated by being positive role models and transferring the culture of teamwork to their students through their collaborative commitment for achieving successful learning outcomes.

The other teachers in this research had also developed similar beliefs about the benefits of physical activity as a consequence of their own life experiences. Like Judy, they attributed these to shared family beliefs and the influence of the local environment in which they lived as a young person. These values have subsequently been transferred, and contribute to their moral purpose as a Physical Education professional where they recognise that engagement with career-long professional learning is also important if they are to remain relevant and able to influence the lifestyle choices made by the young people they teach.

As teachers in the later stages of their careers two of the participants, Judy and Cathy, articulated concerns about what they identified as a lack of moral purpose evident in the early-career teachers they had recently been teaching with. Both

participants were concerned at an apparent 'lack of passion' demonstrated by new teachers for their chosen field of teaching in Physical Education. Judy provided a suggestion (Interview 3) that their entry into the Physical Education profession was not viewed with the same degree of idealism, based on sharing her passion for physical activity with students, as in her own early-career stage, but rather the role was viewed as a step along a career path to other places and professions. These concerns expressed by the teachers in this research reflect a key aspect of a review of the literature by Farouk (2012) on the working lives and emotions of teachers when they experience negative emotions related to their moral purpose. The negative feelings experienced by these teachers arose from their view that new teachers were not necessarily caring for students as they would because of their lack of passion for teaching therefore 'providing them [children] with an education that is not of a high enough standard' (Farouk, p. 494).

The strong sense of moral purpose evident in the teachers participating in this research was expressed by not only Judy and Cathy's concerns about the motivations of early-career Physical Education teachers, but also by a concern about the quality of teaching demonstrated by experienced colleagues. The research participants interpreted these behaviours and low levels of motivation as demonstrating an apparent lack of concern regarding how their resistance to changing pedagogies during their career was impacting student engagement and learning in Physical Education.

Hargreaves (1998) suggests that some teachers with a deep sense of moral purpose underpinning their self-efficacy and identity as a professional may 'feel [they] have fallen short of [their] own or others moral standards in a fundamental way … [they] feel [their] integrity and … selves have been placed in question' (p. 840). How these experienced teachers see themselves is evident through their relationships with their students and colleagues, being effective role models and for those teaching in non-metropolitan schools the relationships they have with local communities.

6.1.2 Self-efficacy

While the role of moral purpose as a driver for teachers to engage in professional learning, whether they are in a supportive environment or not, is pivotal to their pursuit of learning and their feelings of integrity, research by Martin (2012), Putman

(2012), Ross and Bruce (2007) and Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998) established that the self-efficacy of teachers is linked to their feelings of confidence, and ability to make authentic change in their practice. Broader research by Meirnik, et al. (2009), Gu and Day (2008), and Martin, et al. (2007), also explored the notion of teacher efficacy by making a connection with teacher resilience in the face of actions by policy-makers that are beyond their control.

In the context of teaching, efficacy is described as being 'a teacher's belief in her or his ability to positively affect student learning and behaviour' (Putnam 2012, p. 28). Throughout the series of interviews with the teachers participating in this research there was a common theme portraying a link between their level of confidence in the classroom and their level of knowledge and pedagogical expertise. Confidence in their professional knowledge and expertise was also directly linked to their values, beliefs and sense of moral purpose in teaching.

Martin, et al describe such teachers as being able to 'employ effective problem solving skills, develop strategies to be more effective teachers, manage their emotions well, and persist in the face of failure'(2008, p. 174). This description could fit any one of the teachers participating in this research, and is evidenced throughout their case studies where they all make reference to teaching situations that have not worked well, but each has learnt from these, and progressed. Frank related an example of this when sharing his reflections on a basketball lesson (Interview 2) where the outcomes had not been to his satisfaction. Students were off task and not responding to the new pedagogical approach he was using. As a consequence he reflected on different teaching approaches that he could use to achieve the student learning outcomes of the basketball lesson if he were to teach the same lesson again.

Frank later repeated the lesson with the same class of students and was able to celebrate a successful outcome resulting from the changes he made to his practice. The qualities demonstrated by Frank exemplify what Ross and Bruce (2007) and Putman (2012) identify as being characteristics of a teacher with high levels of self-efficacy. According to Putman '[such teachers are] also more likely to seek ways to improve their teaching methods through alternative methods of instruction and experimentation (p. 28), as Frank did. Frank, in this particular instance, was prepared to risk failure to experiment with a teaching pedagogy that he had only recently been

introduced to at a professional learning activity. His demonstration of high levels of confidence were verified by his determination to reflect on outcomes, make change to his practice and teach the same lesson again, motivated by the desire to achieve the curriculum aims using a modified pedagogical approach.

Hattie (2003), Rowe (2004) and Martin (2012), through their research on teachers and their impact on student learning, clearly identify the effectiveness of the teacher as being crucial to the outcomes for students. The teachers participating in this research demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy in various teaching environments presenting different challenges. These variables included school location, single sex, middle years, and low socio-economic to highly academic, which impacted not only on their practice but also on the ways they accessed professional learning to support their teaching.

Arnold reflected (Interviews 1 & 2) on the impact of student demographics, school culture, and resourcing on how he was able to engage his students in learning. His experiences at the school where he was placed at the beginning of the research period, reflected an ongoing power struggle with his students. Later, at a different school Arnold's focus returned to being up-to-date with skills and knowledge so that his students were not disadvantaged in their learning.

Regardless of the context in which Arnold was teaching, he continued to seek ways to engage students in learning. The ability of Arnold to continue with his own professional learning while changing the focus to meet the changing contextual needs of his students reflects the findings of Martin (2012), demonstrating a connection between motivation and self-efficacy. That is 'motivation and lifelong learning are inextricably linked' (Martin, p. 670).

The teachers in this research have also contended with broader issues impacting education that are beyond their control. These issues range from changing student demographics, the aging teaching population and associated decreasing professional interest, increasing obesity levels and decreasing physical activity levels together with the increasing accountability of teachers, all of which impact their work. However, as evidenced in this research, although these issues are external to their

immediate daily work in the classroom, they do impact their beliefs as to how much they believe they can influence student learning and behaviour.

Fullan (1993) and Lohman and Woolf (2001) describe teachers who continue to thrive in an increasingly constrained environment as optimistic teachers who involve themselves in self-initiated learning. Although each of the teachers participating in this research were living and working in significantly different contexts, they were still subject to the external influences of policy decisions impacting their environment, influencing the decisions they made every day in their classrooms.

The teachers participating in this research were able to identify personal motivators that drive them to continually engage in learning and change. This enabled them to have a flexible approach to their teaching, which they sustained throughout their careers. In each of their teaching contexts they responded to the teaching environment, which can be described as an authentic setting. When engaging in any change process the success of the intended change is significantly influenced by how it will suit the environment or setting into which it is being implemented.

This determinant of effective change processes as a consequence of professional learning reflect the findings of Dinan-Thompson (2001) who describes how authentic change underpins the self-efficacy of teachers. The examples of authentic change already provided in this section demonstrating the self-efficacy of Frank and Arnold can be taken to further by the reflective practice loop developed by Brian (Interview 3). In developing a reflective practice tool, Brian was demonstrating the confidence he had in his abilities to gather data on his teaching. Using peer and student feedback gave him authentic data, which he could then use to inform any changes he made to his practice.

The teachers in this research consistently provided examples of how they continued to initiate their own learning as they responded to the changing needs of their students. Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) attribute this underlying characteristic to an organising force that powers self-directed professional learning which they identify as 'teacher efficacy' (p. 382).

6.1.3 Identity

Teachers' identities as professionals are shaped by their own personal values and beliefs, which are further refined by teaching experiences and their own life experiences. This is demonstrated by the case studies of experienced Physical Education teachers described in this research. The case study descriptions assume a simple delineation of identity and how people change. There is much more to be understood which can, in the first instance, be explored by understanding the professional and personal identities that people construct in their lives. That is, their ways of behaving and communicating in different environments developed from the construction of knowledge and beliefs that are important in each context, such as their working or personal lives.

These two types of identity formation are not easy to keep separate, with movement occurring between the two areas best described as a binary of sliding positions between the self (personal) and the professional identity. For teachers like Cathy and Brian, this was further complicated by teaching and living in a small rural community where they are 'known' in different roles by community members who know them either in a professional or personal context, or both, as the case may be.

Identifying oneself professionally may be shaped by not only the specialist curriculum area, which in the case of this research is Physical Education, but also by other aspects, such as years of service, role in the school as a leader, coach of school sporting teams, or classroom teacher (O'Connor & Macdonald 2002). All of these 'roles' can impact on professional identity at any given time.

Connelly and Clandinin (1999) provide insight into the ways in which teacher identities are composed, sustained and changed by not only referring to practitioner knowledge and teaching practice, like Lasky (2005), but also through the role of personal histories. Connelly and Clandinin's research focused on the role of personal histories in shaping identities with particular reference to memory. They noted the role metaphors play and their impact on teachers understanding and interpretation of curriculum in the context of their teaching practice. Maureen provided an example of this when she identified herself as an unskilled snow skier on a pre-service practical experience (Interview 1). Maureen described how she now used this experience of incompetence to support students in her classes by being able to empathise with their

190

situation where they lack the skills and experience required to participate effectively in a practical class.

Metaphor is also understood as providing a way of sharing professional experiences with colleagues. It becomes an important part of professional learning for teachers. Brian and Cathy identified this, both referring to anecdotal learning they gained from an elite sporting professional that they later shared with their students and colleagues. By using metaphors in conversation with colleagues, teachers are able to make sense of new knowledge and experiences, which subsequently contributes to the ongoing construction of their identity.

Research by Goodson (2008) refers to the impact of life experiences and background as key ingredients in constructing the person we are – our sense of self. In teaching, life experiences and backgrounds, both inside and outside school, impact on how teachers see and interpret teaching. This becomes their dominant view of teaching and how they practice. Brian, Cathy and Maureen reflected on their formative life experiences as contributing to the development of a passion for physical activity. It continues to influence the dominant pedagogies they use in their teaching. This supports the findings of research by O'Bryant, O'Sullivan and Raudensky (2010) who identify the impact of extensive formative physical activity and sporting experiences with family, school and university as a significant influence in attracting tertiary students to Physical Education (p. 179).

Each of the teachers participating in this research was able to reflect on significant experiences during the early years of their teaching careers. Their reflections focused on how much they learnt from these incidents and the resultant changes they made to their practice. They reflected on these experiences as being markers used to measure their continuing growth as a professional. All of the teachers participating in this research held a common belief that growth and learning would always be a part of their professional life. Arnold in particular, during Interview 3, expressed concern that he did not want to become 'obsolete' by ceasing to change and thus becoming irrelevant to his students.

Research by Alsup (2006) claims that experience and knowledge growth over time contributes to the development of a teacher's expertise. This challenges research by

Hattie (2003), who proposes that this is not necessarily the case. However, Hattie found life experiences over time, together with increasing experiences as a teacher, do contribute to the formation of identity as a professional teacher. Experienced teachers in this research supported these ideas.

Broader influences on the social construction of identity can also be viewed as being 'socially situated' (Rhodes, Scheeres & Iedema, 2008, p. 6), who claim the situation of ongoing change in the construction of personal identities throughout a lifetime also occurs in a professional sense. The influence of a situation is also important in the context of organisations as they affect 'the settings in which [professional] identities are [re]constructed' (p. 6). The impact of organisational settings and how work changes during a persons' career impacts a person's professional identity as evidenced in the findings of the case studies in this research.

As organisations such as schools change, so do the students within the schooling system. Teachers like Frank, Judy and Arnold identified how students had changed since they began their careers as Physical Education teachers, and the ongoing challenge this presented to them professionally. They were particularly aware of this challenge when they expressed the shared professional responsibility they had with other health sectors across the wider community, specifically in response to the increasing social health issues of rising obesity levels and decreasing physical activity participation.

In the context of Brian and Frank, collaboration by teachers established standards of behaviour they themselves preferred to role model. This established what they were willing to accept from their students while also modelling aspirational lifestyle goals. These professional behaviours represented a conscious projection of the professional identity they wanted to establish, which would reflect how they valued the organisation (schools) in which they worked and their hopes of influencing the lifestyle choices made by their students. In Brian's case, he was also pro-actively responding to the culture of a close rural community that held clear expectations that physical activity would be highly valued by the school. While in Arnold's case it was a professional survival response by teachers to protect themselves in a challenging teaching environment that was not countered successfully by the organisation as a whole. The response by Arnold and his colleagues was to establish a preferred

culture of student behaviour in Physical Education classes that they could manage and control.

In the work contexts of Arnold and Brian, both responded to how their identities were constructed by the school organisation by recognising that this change influence is closely connected to their professional identities and how they see themselves. Other teachers, such as Judy, also identified this issue of change. Her awareness that the education system was offering professional learning that was no longer meeting her professional needs in terms of resourcing and access (Interview 1) did not support her ability to respond to change.

Change currently impacting education is shaped by principles that support a belief about how education is managed, its purpose and value in the current and future world. Research by Sachs (2000), presents a view that 'professional identity … is a set of attributes that are imposed upon the teaching profession either by outsiders or members of the teaching fraternity itself' (p. 3). As a result of continuous change there has been a movement away from consultation and the inclusivity of stakeholders, such as community members, parents, teachers and students in decision-making, with teacher professionalism now situated in a managerial environment based on standards and accountability.

For the teachers in this research the new work environment they were experiencing contributed to feelings of a loss of power and voice in relation to making decisions about how they work and the curriculum they deliver. For older teachers, such as the participants in this research who have participated in the profession for many years, equity and social justice were the dominant principles upon which education and curriculum were founded. Their strong identification with these principles aligned with their own individual values and beliefs. These influenced how they then interpreted and implemented the Physical Education curriculum to address the specific needs of their students and the school.

However, as Arnold noted in Interview 3, in recent years changes in education have been based on philosophies akin to marketisation, competition and individualism, which directly challenge teachers' professional identities and how they use this new knowledge with their students. The impact on experienced teachers' identities, self-

efficacy and moral purpose by an external reform agenda that includes curriculum change (Keltchermans 2005; Van Veen, Sleegers and van de Ven 2005) needs further exploration.

6.2 Professionalism

During the data collection period, a political environment strongly influenced by neo-liberal government policy dominated school education. Marginson (1997) identifies the drivers of the neo-liberal policies in Australia as The New Right. In this research the 'New Right has been applied in the British and Australian [context] as a political movement uniting market liberals and mainstream political conservatives' (Marginson, p. 78). Rizvi and Lingard (2010) in their research on the globalisation of policy making, focused in particular on how neo-liberal policy was impacting education. Through their research they determined the increasing use of data and accountability measurement in education globally is a consequence of 'a push for valid and reliable comparative measures of education outcomes' (Rizvi and Lingard, p. 18) reflecting the influence of market driven policy.

 Such a shift in policy, according to Gordan and Witty (1997), has broader international connections 'reflect[ing] the neo-liberal policies initially favoured by New Right governments in the English-speaking worlds in the 1980s and early 1990s … and [were] encouraged by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank …' (p. 453). Change in education in Australia was also being determined by international financial interests focused on outcomes suited to economic policy rather than socially just ideals through education. According to Marginson (1997, p. 75) the argument for change in economic policy generally was being based on the premise that increasing public borrowing to support growing sectors such as public education was stifling growth in the private sector. Consequently, this inhibited the ability of the Australian economy to grow and prosper (Marginson, p. 74).

The New Right neo-liberal influence on education in Australia has impacted schooling through its marketisation policies by insisting on the implementation of standards and accountability measures related to student, teacher and school performance. Research by Davies and Bansel (2007) and Lingard (2010) sought to analyse the impact of such policies on education by reflecting a move in 2007 by the

then federal government to adopt approaches which 'include[d] new national accountabilities and testing, a national curriculum … and a range of National Partnerships' (Lingard, p. 129) such as Quality Teaching.

By adopting these approaches it was clear that education had come to be seen as an important factor in the future of economic success for Australia. Subsequently, the flow-on from these new policy directions impacted the structural organisation of schools, the curriculum being taught and the professionalism of teachers. Sachs (2000) notes what this looked like for schools in Australia leading up to these changes when in 1985 a sustained attack on the shortcomings of the public school system conducted through the media began. In particular this attack used 'the issue of standards in schooling' reflecting the practice of teachers themselves identified as essentially being an issue about teacher professionalism (Sachs, 2000, p. 77).

Creating new understandings as to the meaning of 'teacher professionalism' in the context of growing political and public concerns about the 'declining standards' of literacy and numeracy of Australian students, (Marginson 2000, p. 151) put the practice of teachers under scrutiny. According to Sachs, it was during the 1990s in Australia that teacher professionalism began to emerge as a vehicle for school reform and the political repositioning of the profession (2000, p. 79). Hence, the increasing focus by government and the public on the performance of teachers and student results in education.

Research by Jones (2009), Macdonald, Mitchell and Mayer (2006), Gregson, Spedding and Nixon (2008) and Macdonald (1999) on this period of change recognised the impact of a focus on teacher professionalism as 'tensions around teacher professionalization and de-professionalization' increased (Macdonald, p. 49). This tension was becoming more apparent as economic investment in education decreased together with the autonomy of teachers in decision-making, and control over what they could learn tightened.

How teachers were able to respond to change driven by the New Right was also influenced by powerful non-government interest groups such as the BCA. In 2008 the influence of neo-liberalism in Australian education was demonstrated by the publication of a report on education entitled *Investing in teacher quality: Doing what*

matters most (Dinham, Ingvarson & Kleinhenz 2008). In the report, the BCA put forward a position describing the role of education in achieving future prosperity for the nation. The report proposed a vision for education as one that would ensure 'sustained growth in the intellectual, economic and creative capital of the country from one generation to the next (Dinham, Ingvason & Kleinhenz, p. 2). The BCA was explicitly identifying the value placed by business on education as being a significant contributor to the ongoing wealth and economic prosperity of Australia in a global economy into the future.

Research by Fuller, Goodwyn and Francis-Brophy (2013), Gewirtz et al. (2009), Berry, Clemans and Lostorigriz (2007), Kennedy (2007), Ahonen (2000), Hargreaves (2000), Helsby (2000), and Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) sought to demonstrate the impact of these shifting views in education policy on the work of teachers. In particular, they sought to address the significant issue of teacher professionalism and what it now means in an environment dominated by marketisation discourse and reform measures (Ahonen 2000).

Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) contest that 'what it means to be professional, to show professionalism or to pursue professionalisation is not universally agreed or understood' (p. 4). However, in their eyes, and those of the wider public, a view is held that teachers are being de-professionalised by changing education policy (Fuller, Goodwyn & Francis-Brophy 2013) when their professional standing should instead be enhanced and celebrated.

For the teachers participating in this research the dominant professional environment when they commenced their careers during the late 1970s and early 1980s, prior to the emergence of neo-liberal policy in education, was characterised by a period of autonomy. During this time 'teachers work' in important respects escaped policy direction [with] … teachers enjoying a kind of protect[ion] … in terms of their classroom work' (Jones 2009, p. 55). During this time teachers who were newly commencing their careers also developed personal perceptions of 'professionalism' and how they understood their place 'culturally, socially, and educationally' (Gewirtz et al. 2009, p. 14) in the work of education.

Participants in this research, Frank and Cathy (Interviews 2 & 1), reflected on this period of time during their teaching careers by identifying it as a 'special time'. They recalled it as being a period when Physical Education teachers were extremely well served by specialist advisers, who travelled to schools across the state, supporting and working with teachers in their own specific environment. They were also able to access adequate release time from schools to attend professional learning activities over extended periods, which gave them time to understand and develop new knowledge and skills to apply in their teaching practice.

For teachers in non-metropolitan schools these resources provided opportunities, previously not available, to attend professional learning activities either at their own school or in another location. Teachers were also able to determine how they would use resourcing that would be of most benefit to them personally and professionally. They now sought to engage with new curriculum and access specialist pedagogical expertise relevant to issues they may be facing in their schools.

Research by Evans (2011) and Swan et al. (2010) in England sought to determine what 'professionalism' specifically means to school teachers. Part of their findings also reflect findings of this research, where teachers felt that being committed to their practice was an element of professionalism and a key 'part of [a] teacher's professional identity' (Swan et al., p. 566). Additional elements raised in the research by Swan et al. also identified 'expertise' and 'an inner core of strong shared beliefs and commitments' (p. 567), or moral purpose, with colleagues as being fundamental to teacher professionalism.

According to Gewirtz et al., many teachers actively look for ways 'to actually act practically in their own institutions against the models of de-professionalism that are being imposed on them' (2009, p. 16). For secondary school teachers such as those participating in this research, the consequences of changes in government policy driven by neo-liberal discourse in education presents such a challenge. How teachers respond to the organisational environment in which they work has idiosyncratic meaning for Physical Education teachers.

Jones (2009) describes this 'self-image' of being de-professionalised and lacking a place in education as being built on a perception where teachers see 'teaching as an

individual craft and themselves as 'lone fighters' or 'artisans' …' (p. 55). This could also be attributed to the habit of the historical tradition of Health and Physical Education, which has been described as being slow to implement curriculum change (Lynch 2014). A review of the research on Physical Education teacher's professionalisation by Kougoumtzis, Patriksson and Strahlman (2011) supports this contention that the public and policy makers hold Physical Education teachers and the curriculum in a position of low esteem. The increasing marginalisation of Physical Education as a non-academic subject reflects the behaviour of Physical Education teachers as 'passive recipients' of change (Kougoumtzis, Patriksson & Strahlman, p. 119).

Lynch also contends that 'the HPE school curriculum within Australian schools [is] considered to [be] in crisis' (2014, p. 8). Part of this perception was reflecting social awareness and media commentary describing declining physical activity and skill in the Australian community. An additional concern for Physical Education teachers was a decrease in curriculum time allocated to their curriculum area coupled with decreased resourcing for schools (2014, p. 8).

The increasing emphasis by governments in Western societies on accountability through the monitoring of literacy and numeracy standards does not accommodate subjects such as Physical Education. The curriculum area of Physical Education does not have a literacy/numeracy foundation. Research by Brooker and Clennett (2006) to establish what is valued as Physical Education in Australian schools concluded a 'need to embed [these values] in social and cultural understandings to ensure that students … develop the capacity to critique and make informed decisions about health and engagement in physical activity (p. 10). This would make allocation of suitable time in the curriculum an important contributor to the achievement of these outcomes.

Research by Penney (2007) on the position of Health and Physical Education in relation to the recent development of a national curriculum in Australia acknowledged the historical perception held by the Physical Education community that the skills and knowledge they hold are not valued by policy makers. This was demonstrated when the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) established a timeline for implementing subjects into the national

curriculum. Physical Education was not identified in the initial list of subjects for implementation, forcing physical educators such as Penney to advocate for its inclusion (p. 22). This situation has become increasingly fractious for Physical Education teachers. These tensions are coupled with their struggle to reach consensus on the key idea of Physical Education and the need for change within the profession (Lynch 2014). This may be impeding accommodation of the new pedagogical 'futures' (Macdonald 2013, p. 97) directions in education valued by ACARA within a 'socially just' framework (Lynch, p. 3) .

Professionalism is portrayed through self-efficacy and the leadership teachers exhibit, which shapes the way they work. How they respond to change in the political and social environments in which they are located by Lynch (2014) also influences their work. The social environment in which the teachers participating in this research now work has changed in significant ways since they began their careers in the 1970s. Lifestyle issues such as decreasing physical activity skills and participation levels, increasing obesity and mental health issues impact the classroom environment in Physical Education in ways that would not have been evident when their careers commenced.

These social issues have the potential to influence the motivation of experienced teachers in Physical Education, particularly their ability to negotiate change, and to sustain ongoing engagement in professional learning throughout their career stages. While some of the changes taking place are beyond their control, findings from this research demonstrate that highly motivated experienced Physical Education teachers are able to identify areas where they can exert influence and respond positively.

Participants – Maureen, Judy and Arnold (Interviews 1, 2 & 1 respectively) – all valued essential elements of professionalism as important components, which they sought to role model through leadership and by sharing good classroom teaching practices. Valuing these elements also contributed to their motivation for engaging in career-long learning while reflecting a shared view of what being a professional in the field of Physical Education might look like. These shared values were able to be demonstrated by personally being physically active, keeping up to date professionally with changes in sport pedagogy and physical activity, and adapting to changes made in curriculum and technology.

Pascual (2006) describes people like these teachers as 'leading professionals'. They are 'people who undertake a continual process of questioning and improvement of their practice … using the process of reflection' (p. 80) that they share with colleagues. Research by O'Connor and Macdonald similarly describes the process of becoming a professional in organisations such as schools 'as [being] an active process in which individuals, within the school context, create and maintain identities [such as leadership]' (2002, p. 41).

6.2.1 The impact of changing education policy on teacher professionalism and learning

> When I die I hope it is during a professional development session because the transition from life to death will be seamless

The unknown teacher cited above by Fullan (2007, p. 283) echoes a sentiment often attributed to the older, world-weary experienced teacher inhabiting our classrooms. These experienced teachers are frequently nearing the end of their career and have experienced the implementation of professional learning programs in recent years that have become increasingly dominated by the political agenda of the New Right. These agenda have also come to challenge what professionalism means in the context of their teaching. In many respects these older teachers feel that their career experiences are of no or little value.

For experienced teachers in South Australia, where the participants of this research are located, understanding the concept of professionalism and the role of professional learning is influenced by many factors creating tensions for both program providers and participants. Sachs (2000) describes these factors as being both inside and outside of teaching. These tensions are often a direct result of policy directives prescribing how much, and what type of professional learning teachers will engage in.

Currently in South Australia it is a requirement that all public school teachers participate in 37 ½ hours of professional development each year outside of school hours. School leaders manage and monitor this requirement, with school principals given authority to authenticate compliance.

At the time of its inception in the 1990s, mandatory professional learning requirements may have been viewed as an innovative way of ensuring that all

200

teachers participated in professional learning activities, ensuring that the entire workforce was engaged in ongoing learning. However, if meaningful professional learning for teachers was an intended outcome of this policy then understanding how teacher professionalism is viewed inside and outside of the profession is important for its success (Sachs 2000, p. 84).

Arnold reflected on his experiences with policy change as mandated programs came to dominate his professional learning. He acknowledged that it was his professional responsibility to be cognisant of the most recent curriculum, and the way to achieve this was through participation in mandated professional learning. He believed that non-participation would disadvantage his students; however, his choice to participate was also influenced by his professionalism and sense of obligation to his students. Arnold's reflections (Interview 1) provide an insight into how his personal and professional values influenced his response to the outcome of government policy changes that were beyond his control, but affected his work.

Barber (2009), Fullan (2009), Hargreaves (2004b, 2009), Sleeter (2008), Hattie (2003) and Sparks (2003) identify the role of these strongly held professional values and beliefs (described as 'moral purpose' earlier in this chapter) by teachers as being critical in influencing how effective any mandated change will be and whether it is likely to be sustainable. Two of the participants in this research, Brian and Arnold (Interview 1), provide further insight. They described how their moral purpose and sense of professional responsibility influenced their engagement with politically driven change to the senior school curriculum in South Australia.

As senior school teachers, both had experienced major changes to the teaching of curriculum in schools throughout their careers. One such recent change occurred with a major review of the senior school curriculum by the Government of South Australia in 2005, known as *The SACE Review*. SACE already provided graduating senior school students in South Australia with a qualification enabling their access to tertiary studies in universities. Reviewing the purpose of the curriculum and qualification was designed to increase the status of technical training and further education for students by incorporating them into one certificate, the *New SACE Certificate*. Both Brian and Arnold participated in professional learning associated

with these changes because of the professional responsibilities they had towards their students and wider school communities.

At this time, curriculum change was also occurring in the early and middle years of schooling with the development of a national curriculum across Australia. The development of this new curriculum under the auspices of ACARA commenced with the implementation of four core subjects – Maths, Science, English and History. The identification of these subjects in the first implementation round reflected the influence of neo-liberal policy and the increasing importance of Australia's literacy and numeracy performance standards as determined by the international bench-marking of the Programme for International Student Assessment and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Recent Australian Government policy had also been characterised through the development of a key focus on quality teaching through the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality (Commonwealth Organisation of Australian Governments 2008). The partnership agreement involved all states and territories in Australia and included an emphasis not only on standardising the teaching workforce nationally, but also linked literacy and numeracy outcomes to teaching performance standards (Hargreaves 2009).

The development and implementation of these policy directions by the federal government has the potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes for students. At the same time, however, with a focus on curriculum areas dominated by literacy and numeracy the professional isolation for teachers in areas such as Physical Education is further increased. The omission of Physical Education from the initial implementation rounds of the new Australian Curriculum also had the potential to impact negatively on the professionalism of teachers in this curriculum area.

Research by Kougiomtzis, Patriksson and Strahlman (2011), Gewirtz et al. (2009), Jones (2009), Macdonald, Mitchell and Mayer (2006), Gregson, Spedding and Nixon (2008), and Sachs (2000) explored the impact of neo liberal policy on the characteristics of teaching and what teacher professionalism now means. How teachers in particular curriculum areas such as Physical Education are valued became

apparent when they explored what professionalism means to those inside and outside of education. Kougiomtzis, Patriksson and Strahlman (2011) suggest that 'defining the teaching profession in general and PE [Physical Education] teachers' … specifically can be regarded as a complicated project' (p. 114) in itself.

Across all of the participants in this research it was evident that what the participants identified as future challenges both in their local context and through the transference of broader government policy continued to influence their ongoing professional learning and professional work as a teacher. However, there was a shared determination that they would continue to exert what control they could over their own professional learning even though they felt that their voice was being lost in a broader political agenda.

6.2.2 Changing student behaviour and interest in Physical Education

Nieto's research in 2009 *From Surviving to Thriving* focuses on what keeps teachers working in difficult environments. At best they can depend on collegial support, and at worst rely on their own resilience and sense of optimism that they are making a positive contribution to the learning outcomes of the young people in their care. Teachers participating in this research demonstrated this sentiment. They have been conscious throughout their careers of the dangers associated with settling into a comfortable teaching routine, knowing that 'making the familiar strange can be an unsettling process' (Nieto, p. 98). However, they demonstrate constant engagement with change being incorporated into their professional approach as a rewarding experience and one used throughout their career-long learning journeys. It has enhanced the professional growth of these teachers as they change to meet demands set both inside and outside of the school environments in which they teach.

The teachers participating in this research have been critical of colleagues they have observed who have succumbed to the 'comfortable' way of teaching. Those for whom 'the sense of personal learning as personal growth (has been) … lost' (Hodkinson 2009, p. 158) as evidenced earlier in this chapter. These criticisms, expressed earlier by participants, have contributed to their motivation for continued engagement in professional learning. Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) describe such actions as 'basic concerns related to their professional efficacy or their classroom efficacy', contending that 'when these concerns [are] not met' teachers could not be

effective teachers, and through their own professional learning process they 'tried to find ways of meeting these concerns' (p. 380).

The concern of Physical Education teachers in this research who perceived that their effectiveness in the classroom was decreasing also reflected a feeling that they have lost their voice in what they could determine professionally. This particularly related to how they understood and located pedagogical resources that would enhance how they could respond professionally to the social changes increasingly impacting their teaching.

When the teachers participating in this project began their careers in the 1970s and 1980s, the primary social health issues dominating the Health and Physical Education curriculum were those such as smoking, alcohol use and skin cancer prevention. At the time of this research the dominant social health issues facing contemporary Western society were increasing levels of obesity, frequently referred to as 'an epidemic' (Pringle & Pringle 2012), decreasing physical activity levels and lifestyle related diseases such as type 2 diabetes. These had replaced the earlier social issues such as smoking and alcohol using a new core health focus described by Macdonald and Tinning (2003) as the 'politics of lifestyle'.

Research by Rink (2013) on teacher effectiveness in Physical Education determined that much of the research in the field considered that 'teaching effectiveness' could be identified through 'student motor and skill performance' (p. 408). South Australian research by Ridley in 2005, provided evidence of a decline in physical activity over the average person's lifespan where the greatest period of decline occurring between 13–18 years of age.

Further evidence of this decline has been provided in a 2014 report released by Active Healthy Kids Australia providing the inaugural national Australian update 'on the physical activity and sedentary behaviours of [Australia's] children and young people' (2014, p. 5). The findings of the report indicate that only 19 per cent of children and young people aged 5–17 years meet recommended physical activity guidelines (p. 8). For the teachers participating in this research the impact of this continuing decline was being observed each day in their classes, and was an increasing challenge for them as secondary school teachers.

Evidence as to how this professionally affected Physical Education teachers in schools was provided through the frustrations experienced by Judy (Interview 2), who described the lack of enthusiasm shown by her students to be active. As she reflected (Interview 3), 'obesity wasn't an issue when we went out teaching' and, subsequently, it was easier to engage her students in physical activity. Judy was able to recognise that many other social changes had also occurred impacting the levels of engagement of her students in Physical Education. She was also aware that she was not alone in viewing her increased teaching challenges as being influenced by changing social conditions.

Each of the research participants provided a similar insight as to what had changed the behaviours of their students and how these impacted their teaching over time. Brian and Cathy (Interviews 3 & 1) raised concerns about students participating in Physical Education in their schools. They described observations made of lower skill levels and decreased physical activity capacity. Arnold, Frank, Brian and Maureen (Interviews 3, 2, 3 & 1 respectively) also talked about the lack of desire shown by their students to even want to be physically active during lessons.

Of particular interest is the case of Cathy, who had returned to teach at the school she herself had attended as a student. Having spent her entire teaching career at the same school, her situation was unique in being able to witness many long-term changes in contextual nuances. In particular, she had observed that students had become less engaged in physical activity over time as they pursued other interests outside of school such as part-time work. Cathy (Interview 3) also identified a decline in support by parents who no longer had the time to transport their children to training sessions and matches. Offering their time in the traditional sporting administrative work such as the participation in committees, and other tasks such as umpiring was also less frequent.

For these participating teachers, not only have they been struggling to engage their students in physical activity, they are also confronted with the contribution of obesity to 'low self-esteem, poor confidence levels and depression in children' as identified by the Parliament of South Australia *Inquiry into obesity* in 2004. Regarding teachers, the inquiry also states that, 'the education sector does not carry the predominant responsibilities for strategies to reduce the incidence of overweight and

obesity' (p. 5). However, the report did go on to state that '… schools provide ideal access points for education and other strategies aimed at children and families' (2004, p. 5).

Armour and Yelling (2007), Armour (2006) and Wright (2000) through their research have particularly identified the problematic issue of the marginalisation of Physical Education teachers as referred to earlier in this chapter. This professional marginalisation has also impacted their perceived ability to help young people deal with overweight and obesity issues in their current and future lives.

At the same time, however, Physical Education teachers are anointed with responsibility to assist in finding a solution to many social health issues. Research by Lewis (2012) has identified that historically Physical Education teachers in Australian secondary schools have become responsible for the teaching of Health-related curriculum. Like the teachers participating in this research, the majority were never trained to teach Health Education, and consequently 'are not well prepared to teach in the field' (2012, p. 16).

Research by Drummond and Pill (2011), Wyn (2009) and Cameron et al. (2003) also demonstrates how schools have become increasingly targeted as the ideal site in which to address the new 'epidemic' of inactivity and rising weight. Drummond and Pill and Wright (2000), like Lewis (2012) propose this targeting is due to Physical Education being identified as the curriculum site in schools that obtains its legitimacy through its contribution to fitness and a healthy lifestyle. They note that 'increasingly schools are being targeted as the ideal site in which to address the 'epidemic' of inactivity and rising weight' while warning of 'the possibility for immense accountability…' (2011, p. 5).

Arnold and Judy (Interviews 3) raised this issue when questioning the role of the media and its influence on the social behaviours of the young people they teach. They shared concerns that the knowledge they were providing students through education was not connecting. They also perceived that the influential powers of the media appeared to be impacting and changing behaviours of children and young people – not in a positive direction.

Judy in particular went further by noting that although her students could demonstrate their knowledge about healthy eating and the benefits of physical activity, they were not changing their behaviours in practice (Interview 1). Wyn (2009) and Macdonald and Tinning (2003) connect such issues of increasing obesity and decreasing physical activity to choice and the responsibility of the consumer in today's society. Macdonald and Tinning also suggest that 'students have become consumers of curriculum' by where knowledge has become a product they (the students) 'consume' (p. 97) but do not necessarily use to inform the choices they make as experienced by Judy and Arnold.

The impact of this dominant political agenda had become a real concern for teachers of Physical Education as indicated earlier in this chapter. The decision-making regarding the current priority for professional learning and allocation of resourcing continues to reinforce the marginalisation of their curriculum area.

Kirk (2004) also questions the direction Physical Education should take in the future – whether it should be restricted to a sport-education model, or encompass sport education more broadly by including diverse pedagogical approaches such as inquiry and constructivism. His over-riding concern, however, is the likely impact of politicians and the media on the development of quality Physical Education in schools. He says they 'persist in perpetuating an inaccurate, outmoded and simplistic notion about physical education' (Kirk, p. 186) that views Physical Education as merely time for sports and games, providing students with an opportunity to be physically active, away from the constraints of the classroom environment.

The consequence for teachers is that, like their colleagues in other curriculum areas, their motivation to engage in career-long learning is continually challenged and directed by influences beyond their immediate control. For the teachers in this research, increasing accountability of work practices through the measurement of outcomes and the introduction of a national curriculum have dominated the provision of professional learning in recent years. Research by Kirk and Macdonald (2001) into how much voice Health &Physical Education teachers are actually given in major curriculum reform conclude that they 'are delimited by powerful institutional forces in educational systems' (p. 557). It is only in their own local teaching context, Kirk

and Macdonald ascertain, that teachers can demonstrate an 'authoritative voice'
(p. 558), which is during the implementation phase of new curriculum.

Part of the response by these research participants to the difficult environment referred to earlier in this chapter by Nieto (2009) has been to use their influence as leaders in their schools to encourage their colleagues to question the validity of their marginalised curriculum position. They encourage their colleagues to challenge their teaching practices demonstrating their willingness to recognise the contribution that they can make in addressing the social health issues that they are now being confronted with and the important education role they play.

6.2.3 Leadership and learning

A finding of particular interest in this research was that all of the participants were dedicated, influential leaders in their professional field. Their leadership was either identified by holding a designated 'leadership position' in their school or demonstrated through strongly held personal beliefs about their professional role as an experienced teacher. In either construct these teachers accepted that they should demonstrate 'leadership', and 'quality teaching' practices as characteristics of their own professional practice. Implicit in this demonstration of professionalism was an expectation that they would mentor pre-service and early-career Physical Education teachers while also providing peer support to colleagues.

Through this demonstrated leadership capacity the teachers participating in this research have been able to influence others by demonstrating what Bywaters, Parkinson and Hurley (2007) describe as a 'core capability' that is no longer just the preserve of designated senior leadership teams. Through this leadership capability, the six research participants have been able to demonstrate a shared sense of moral purpose (identified earlier in this chapter as a significant professional learning motivator) with their colleagues as they respond to the social issues impacting their students' wellbeing.

For the teachers participating in this particular research, investigating why some experienced Physical Education teachers are motivated to continue to seek career-long professional learning is partially explained through their demonstration of professional leadership. Their emergence as leaders was an unanticipated finding of

this research, but perhaps should have been expected through their demonstrated passion for teaching, the value they placed on the benefits of physical activity and, that they would use this to influence others in the profession.

Leadership has long been cited in the literature (Angelle & DeHart 2011; Bywaters Parkinson & Hurley 2007; Fernandez 2007; Frost & Durrant 2002; Fullan, 2005, 2007; Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford 2007; Hargreaves 2006; Ingvarson et al. 2006; Mizell 2012) as a singularly important element in change initiatives in education. More recently in Australia, this has been recognised through the establishment of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in response to a 'letter of expectation' from the Commonwealth Minister for Education (2010).

The key purpose in the establishment of AITSL was to develop a set of standards to guide improvement in the quality and effectiveness of professional learning programs for teachers and school leaders nationally. Leadership research by Ingvarson et al. (2006) and Hargreaves (2006) has raised concerns about what is influencing such a move. Hargreaves in particular describes moves such as those being undertaken by the Australian Government as being likened to business influencing education with bad business philosophy (2006). Their concerns focus in particular on the increasing value placed on the results of testing, measurement and accountability measures that are coming to dominate teachers' and leaders' work.

Of interest in the findings of this research was that in identifying sustainable aspects of leadership the participating teachers did not advocate in terms of increased testing, results or accountability measures. Leadership was described as part of their moral purpose. They all desired to share their strongly held Physical Education values and beliefs with their colleagues, but they also used their leadership to motivate and influence colleagues.

The teachers participating in this research frequently referred to, or described, ways in which they used their leadership expertise and teaching experience to mentor colleagues into acting leadership positions. Judy tutored her peers who were in new leadership positions (Interview 2). Maureen actively promoted and encouraged the development of leadership skills in her colleagues (Interview 3). Frank rewarded the growth and professional learning of colleagues, that would contribute to an

209

accumulation of accredited leadership skills (Interview 1). Brian encouraged colleagues to recognise the particular skills they had to offer through taking up leadership positions that would contribute to the developing culture of the school (Interview 1).

In the literature, Bywaters, Parkinson and Hurley (2007), Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2007), Ingvarson et al. (2006) and Hargreaves (2006) refer to influential leadership as being one of the strongest motivational influences that can impact beliefs and inspire action in others. All of the participating teachers in this research were motivated by a sense of responsibility to share their knowledge and experience to influence others whether they were pre-service, early-career or other experienced teachers like themselves.

By sharing and distributing leadership with colleagues in their faculties participants such as Maureen and Arnold created dedicated professional learning communities. Hargreaves (2006) suggests that the creation of such communities enables leaders to return their colleagues back to the moral purpose and values that originally encouraged them into the teaching profession. Ingvarson et al. (2006) identify 'teacher leadership' like this as being one of 'the three vibrant foci of interest in the school leadership literature' (p. 21) with transformational and distributed leadership being the other two. Bywaters, Parkinson and Hurley (2007) argue that 'the roles and work of leadership in schools … have undergone a profound shift towards a more generative, distributed model where leadership participation is invited at all levels and positions of responsibility' (p. 1). The framework developed by Bywaters, Parkinson and Hurley known as the 'L5 Frame' has been adopted by AITSL in its development of leadership standards referred to earlier in this section.

Each of these forms of leadership has been demonstrated either individually or collectively by the participants in the research. Brian's example of distributed leadership (Interview 1) allowed other teachers in his team to emerge and take the lead on particular initiatives while enhancing their own professional learning. Arnold and Judy shared examples of transformative leadership (Interviews 1 & 2) through their role modelling and mentoring where they enhanced a shared moral purpose with colleagues. In each instance the experienced teachers were also using their

leadership to support their colleagues in developing and sustaining a culture of career-long professional learning.

6.3   Career-long learning

A fundamental issue reported by teachers interviewed for this research, is that many experienced Physical Education teachers 'continue to practice [pedagogically] for many years perhaps unaware that they may be failing to meet their professional commitments to the pupils in their care' (Armour & Yelling 2007, p. 182). Tinning (2010), writing in the introduction to his book *Pedagogy and human movement – theory, practice and research* suggests, like Armour and Yelling, that the pedagogy continuing to dominate the practice of Physical Education teachers is 'informed by tradition rather than research' (Tinning, p. 16).

This issue of pedagogical inertia described by the teachers in this research, as referred to earlier in this chapter, continues to challenge their concept of professionalism. Arnold (Interview 3) explicitly identified inertia as a key issue of concern – if experienced teachers cease to change their practice and do not engage with professional learning or make pedagogical change throughout their careers, they are at risk of becoming obsolete.

In the Australian context, the historical development of pedagogy in Physical Education teaching as described by Tinning (2010) depicts development over time, moving from drills through to skills, movement, sports science, health-related fitness and constructivist approaches (p. 27). Teachers frequently use a combination of pedagogies to suit the activity and student abilities in their classes. A concern shared by teachers in this research was that too many of their colleagues continued to use approaches that focused on the needs of the teacher rather than handing more control of the learning experience to their students.

The implication of such practice is that teachers retain pedagogies that suit their preferred approaches to teaching, sustaining their classroom efficacy. However, with quality teaching now a priority for education in Australian schools, experienced teachers have found themselves swept up in a culture of performance measures and accountability that had not previously been a factor influencing how they taught. Engagement with professional learning is now a career-long requirement for

teachers, encouraging them to inquire and reflect on their pedagogical practice by challenging their impact on the achievement of student learning outcomes.

Armour and Yelling (2007, p. 182) express their concern related to the effectiveness of the current trend in education toward centrally determined professional development for experienced teachers in Physical Education. The issue of finding appropriate professional learning was also raised by the six experienced Physical Education teachers participating in this research.

Huberman's (1989) research on the stages of a teacher's career identifies two distinct pathways that teachers may follow that will impact how they view professional learning throughout their careers (p. 37). These pathways could either engage or disengage teachers with the notion that professional learning should be a fundamental ingredient throughout their careers. O'Brien and Schillaci (2002) also support this view of Huberman's that the initial years of a teachers' career are akin to a period of 'survival and discovery' (Huberman, p. 33) not just in the classroom, but as a professional educator. The impact of these early experiences can have a significant impact on how they view any future engagement with professional learning.

In the findings from this research several of the participants were able to reflect on their experiences as either pre-service or early-career teachers that clearly influenced later decisions to become career-long learners. Cathy (Interview 1) identified her tertiary studies as providing poor pedagogical preparation, leaving her with a view that it was her professional responsibility to develop this area and continue to implement change throughout her career. Judy (Interview 1) reflected on her poor secondary school Physical Education experiences and the teaching practices used. These sustained her determination not to settle into similar practices that would remain unchanged throughout her career. Frank, however, was able to provide a different perspective arising from a break of several years away from teaching that sharpened his motivation to engage in career-long learning. He described (Interview 2) the lack of change that he observed on his return to teaching. Frank observed that his colleagues had not altered their pedagogical practice during his eight-year absence. It was also very clear to him that student learning needs had changed markedly.

Recognition by the teachers participating in this research that mandated (centrally determined and driven) professional learning is not meeting their specific needs has not deterred them from locating their own sources of professional learning. Judy provided an example – while recognising that her many years of experience in the classroom constitutes valid professional learning (Interview 1), she was still conscious of the need to constantly learn and change her practice more broadly.

Judy was not willing to close her mind to professional learning simply because it was mandated and lacked relevance. She was able to identify a range of pathways that she used to access learning, such as networking, attending professional development provided by recognised sporting associations, collaborating with colleagues and mentoring pre-service teachers. The other research participants mirrored similar practices through their willingness to be open to new ideas meeting their specific needs. If they were to have meaning and value, the new ideas had to make a connection to their own professional needs and interests, as well as demonstrating relevance to their school context.

The engagement of each of the participants in career-long learning became a significant part of their identity as a professional teacher. Both Brian (Interview 1) and Arnold (Interview 3) reflected on their career-long engagement with professional learning as a significant contributor to keeping their professional skills and knowledge relevant while also maintaining a constant level of professional growth. Frank (Interview 1) and Cathy (Interview 1) maintained that their sustained career-long professional learning had developed from their continued curiosity and predisposition to constantly challenge what was accepted as good teaching practice, while Maureen (Interview 1) considered that her career-long engagement with professional learning was essential to sustaining her self-efficacy in the classroom.

Findings from this research have not only identified what has motivated this group of six experienced secondary school Physical Education teachers to engage in career-long professional learning but also the ways they have been able to sustain learning. All of the research participants had engaged in reflective practice while also using recognised adult learning strategies. These learning strategies have helped them to respond to the isolation of Physical Education as a curriculum area by developing other pathways to access new knowledge and skills.

Research by Armour (2006) on Physical Education teachers as career-long learners recognises that where education systems have introduced CPD into schools, as has occurred in England, it has become 'problematic in schools where physical education teachers are marginalised' (p. 204). For Physical Education in Australian schools this is also relevant, as discussed earlier in this chapter where teachers feel that their curriculum area has not always been valued by policy makers. The wider community has further reinforced this feeling of marginalisation by suggesting that Health and Physical Education in schools lacks effectiveness, questioning the practices of teachers. Such responses reflect the increased focus on education by government and the public discussed earlier.

6.3.1 Professional learning and reflective practice

Macdonald and Tinning (2003) draw attention to the role of reflective practice for teachers to make their own act of teaching more meaningful, purposeful and enjoyable. They also link the value of this practice for teachers through their use of internal drivers to reinforce a sense of moral purpose as educators. Bain et al. (2002), DeShon (2004), and Husu, Toom and Patrikainen (2008) through their research with pre-service teachers, also consider the importance of developing these skills earlier in a teacher's career during teacher education courses, developing the practice of reflection with students before they graduate.

For the teachers in this research, developing the skills required to reflect on their practice was not a part of their pre-service training. They have had to develop an understanding of how to reflect on their practice and develop these skills over the duration of their careers. Arnold and Judy were very aware of this as they role modelled their reflective skills to pre-service and early-career colleagues, demonstrating how important being reflective was for their professional development and effectiveness as a teacher.

Built into this conscious awareness is the importance of not just being reflective but in being critically reflective of practice. At the beginning of this chapter reference was made to Maslow's theory of motivation driven by internal personal values (1970, pp. 7–9). The role of critical reflection in learning is one such process using the inner beliefs and values of an individual to ground their analysis of their practice.

The process of critical reflection uses evidence relevant to the teacher practitioner making an authentic connection to the ways in which they teach and why. For Arnold and Judy this constant reassessment by reflecting in-action and on-action of their values and beliefs pertaining to physical activity also enhanced understanding of the quality of their teaching and subsequent impact on student learning.

Several of the teachers in this research described how they implemented reflective practice processes to help them with an ongoing critique of their practice. Arnold constantly reflects by refining the changes he makes to his teaching. When satisfied that he has achieved meaning and effectiveness Arnold then shares this with the wider teaching community of physical educators as a professional learning activity. Frank uses a similar process but broadens his reflections by discussing these with colleagues, students and others such as nearby university teacher educators. Frank then shares his critical reflection and analysis of his practice with teaching colleagues in the local education district, also as a professional learning activity. Maureen makes effective use of her many layers and levels of networks outside of her immediate teaching context to share her experiences, concerns and approaches to reflective change. Judy uses a similar approach through broadening her access to feedback from parents and the wider sporting community. These interactions help Judy to reflect and re-evaluate the ever changing social and cultural context in relation to the relevance of her own values and beliefs that influence her teaching. Brian and Cathy through life-long connections with their local rural communities have continued to access and take advantage of the many opportunities they have to get feedback, which is used in reflection on their practice. They obtain feedback from students, parents and local community members to constantly re-evaluate the influence of their values and beliefs on their teaching as community demographics and the culture in which they live and teach continues to change.

According to Macdonald and Tinning (2003), the field of Physical Education has been discussing the implementation of reflective practice for some time. Their research has established that discussion in the field has resulted in a proposition that 'reflective practice should work towards making physical education experiences for young people meaningful, purposeful, enjoyable, and just' (Macdonald & Tinning, p. 88). The teachers in this research expressed these values, recognising that by

reflecting on their teaching approaches they could implement change that would meet the changing needs of their students.

The literature frequently identifies critical reflection (Brookfield 1995; Mezirow 1981; Van Manen 1995) as the most challenging change process for teachers to engage in as it questions, and puts to the test, the validity of values and beliefs that have long been a part of their identity. By inviting others, as Brian does (Interview 3), to provide feedback on teaching effectiveness he is uncovering how students, colleagues, and community members see him and understand his practice. Brookfield describes such actions by a teacher as 'work[ing] from a position of informed commitment' (p. 23) through their deliberate seeking of the opinions of other colleagues, students and wider members of the school community who seek to understand the meaning behind the teacher's work.

In Brian's case the importance of ongoing critical reflection, by sharing his private professional thinking was essential to his professional learning and sense of growth. By using a range of tools and processes he identified during the interviews, it was clear that over time Brian had developed his own unique version of a critically reflective feedback loop to make ongoing change to his teaching practice. He considered (Interview 2) that the process of constant self-appraisal he had developed was uncovering aspects of his practice that could either be a strength or a weakness.

In actively gathering evidence as data from colleagues and students, Brian was openly searching for information that may better inform his practice rather than relying on his own personal assumptions and reflections. 'For many of us, thinking privately about what we do is easier than subjecting ourselves to the scrutiny of others' (Brookfield 1995, p. 33). Without taking the risk of seeking feedback Brian would not be authentically informed as to what had been or had not been effective pedagogical practice and why.

Brian's case study provides an example of a teacher who is not behaving as a 'passive subject' as he develops his own critically reflective process of professional learning. Brian, throughout his interviews, consistently referred to the high value he placed on receiving feedback about his teaching and leadership from a broad range of

sources in his school community. In doing so he has uncovered what Brookfield terms his 'authentic voice' (1995, p. 47).

Macdonald and Tinning (2003) in particular, proposed the importance of teachers in the field becoming much more reflective in their practice. Although Macdonald and Tinning raised this as an issue several years ago to support a transition from teachers as 'deliverers' to teachers as 'facilitators' it still retains its relevance as an effective pedagogical approach to use in changing the attitudes and behaviours of young people.

The teachers in this research demonstrated this approach to professional learning by being reflective practitioners as they sought to influence the learning of their colleagues. They questioned and inquired into their actions through their role as mentors and leaders. The participants would engage their colleagues by sharing examples of using reflection-in-action and on-action to demonstrate how they used these processes to celebrate practices that had been effective, while also analysing unsuccessful practices to make change for the future.

In all cases, it was evident that these research participants were not reactive in seeking professional learning as a result of a critical incident in their teaching. They were purposeful in responding to changes in classroom environments, and the behavioural needs of their students. By reflecting-on-action over time, the research participants challenged their own professional learning by moving it to a higher level of competence. This constant engagement in professional renewal through reflection also sustained their self-efficacy as effective teachers of Physical Education, reinforcing their identity as career-long learners.

6.3.2 Retaining resilience as career-long learners

Faucette et al. (2002) describe the actions of teachers, such as those participating in this research, as having forced the 'traditional methods for professional development [to] give way to a new paradigm whereby teachers are empowered to be 'self-governing' and 'self-managing' (p. 289). The findings of this research, with its focus on the professional learning of experienced Physical Education teachers, also provides evidence of adult learners who as 'professionals transform themselves' while also becoming 'developers of others' (Faucette et al. p. 306).

By developing their own ways of managing professional learning, each of the teachers participating in this research established professional learning processes that were particularly meaningful for them. They described specific practices that contributed to their formal and informal professional learning influenced by motivational factors that facilitated their actions.

The professional development generally made available to current teachers is driven by the policy priorities of literacy and numeracy, with a move toward nationalising the curriculum. According to Glazer, Abbott and Harris (2004) this move toward 'prescriptive professional development prevents many teachers from becoming autonomous learners who are responsible for their own professional growth … more authentic learning activities need to be provided' (p. 33).

Several of the teachers in this research claimed to feel abandoned by government and policy makers as the resourcing for professional development dried up and became narrower in focus with tighter controls. They argued that teachers were no longer free to choose the professional development they wanted. To remain employable they must participate in professional development based around the current priorities. The impact of this, particularly for Brian and Cathy as teachers in rural schools, meant that they were unable to find the time and personal resources required to attend relevant professional learning activities when offered in a city three hours from where they lived and worked.

Physical Education teachers have often described themselves as being on the end of the line in education when it comes to recognition as a credible, academic aspect of the curriculum and a contributor to the development of young people. This loss of voice, particularly for Physical Education teachers in relation to being able to convince their employer of the need for accessing meaningful professional learning was particularly frustrating for Judy and Frank (Interviews 1 & 3). For both, their resentment was directed towards the centrally driven mandatory professional learning sessions. These experiences evoked quite an angry emotional response as they recounted attending workshops that had no relationship to their teaching context, and in their view were also poorly presented.

Earlier in this chapter, mention was made of these teachers having been a part of the changing fortunes of Physical Education throughout their careers; from a time of plentiful resourcing in the late 1970s to early 1980s, till now, a time of limited resourcing and low curriculum credibility. Tsangaridou and O'Sullivan (1997) describe such a 'marginalization of subject matter' as an action that 'can imprison teachers, irrespective of the energy and professionalism of individual Physical Education teachers' (p. 14). The participants in this research have provided an example of highly motivated and resilient, experienced Physical Education teachers who do not accept such a premise. These teachers continue to challenge themselves to change, driven by their values and belief that Physical Education is a critical part of schooling for all children and young people.

CHAPTER 7:
CONCLUSION

The introduction to this thesis identified a gap in the literature specifically related to research about older experienced Physical Education teachers, their professional learning and changes occurring in education. The major research questions sought to provide evidence demonstrating how six experienced teachers engaged in professional learning, understood pedagogical change in their daily practice, and responded to issues of social change in their particular school context. Of specific interest to this research was that these Physical Education teachers' professional identities portrayed them as highly motivated professional learners. Each of the teachers had engaged in sustained professional learning throughout their careers, which contributed to their professional identities.

A review of the literature for this thesis explored the impact of broader issues affecting education, particularly how professional learning and professional development are interpreted and the ways in which professional learning is provided to teachers in the curriculum area of Physical Education. The research in this thesis endeavoured to provide evidence that may 'be helpful in informing policy and improving professional learning and professional practice' (Gewirtz et al. 2009, p. 6) explicitly related to experienced teachers who are highly motivated professional learners.

Through an analysis of contemporary research and the data collected from the experienced teachers participating in this research, three broad approaches to teacher professionalism and learning were established:

- how teachers interpret and respond to professional learning, particularly in Physical Education
- the role of moral purpose, self-efficacy and identity in motivating teacher professional learning
- how a changing professional environment impacts teacher professional learning.

This thesis sought to demonstrate the importance of such research in a contemporary context using the stories of six teachers who shared their journeys of professional

learning. It explored what drove them to continually learn, and what they identified as tensions impacting on the development of Physical Education pedagogy in their specific teaching and learning contexts. In seeking to interpret the experiences of these older teachers in times of significant change, some understanding of how professional learning might be constructed was developed.

A particular issue of interest emerging from this research came from a perception held by the participating teachers that Physical Education was being isolated due to a curriculum hierarchy in schools, reinforced by the late inclusion of Health and Physical Education into the Australian curriculum. This situation exacerbated a difficult time for teachers of Physical Education, including those participating in this research, with their values and beliefs about physical activity being questioned and challenged. Each of the teachers in this research viewed this situation through the unique interaction between their roles and status as teachers of Physical Education and coaches of sporting teams.

The six teachers participating in this research also used experiences such as advocating for the position of their subject in the school curriculum hierarchy to demonstrate influential leadership skills. In part, they were attempting to counteract the wider marginalisation of Physical Education in an effort to sustain the motivation and beliefs of their colleagues about the value of their subject. These leadership actions also strengthened the professional identities of the research participants and their motivation for career-long learning. They sustained their drive to remain relevant in the changing world of their students. Their view was that they could continue to make a positive difference to the physical activity behaviours of their students.

Context and resourcing were powerful influences that led these research participants to develop diverse professional learning approaches, thus bringing about change in their teaching pedagogy. Their knowledge and previous experiences of professional learning provided in a mandatory environment had motivated them to establish their own opportunities to access learning that was personally meaningful and relevant. The participants achieved these opportunities through their participation in professional networks, critically reflecting on their practice, identifying other sources

of professional knowledge and sharing their professional knowledge and experiences with colleagues through mentoring practices.

The case studies of these experienced teachers particularly demonstrate how they used mentoring to support the professional learning of younger inexperienced teachers, while increasing their own professional knowledge. The achievement of successful outcomes using this approach could also be attributed to their many years of experience as teachers and professional learners influenced by their strong sense of moral purpose and self-efficacy.

The contribution of mentoring in providing teachers with an opportunity to continue their own meaningful professional learning to bring about sustainable change to teacher practice could provide an area for future research. Such an investigation could explore how participation in research undertaken by external interests could influence the quality of mentoring relationships and consequential professional learning between colleagues.

As proposed in this thesis, educational change occurs in response to the changing social context. In this thesis we see the system undergoing significant change, and observe how experienced Physical Education teachers feel supported (or not) to respond to this constant change. Recording this has been fundamental to the research. Through this research the moral purpose retained by these experienced teachers, and the contribution of moral purpose to teacher self-efficacy, has provided some understanding as to what has driven them to continually engage in professional learning.

The teachers in this research frequently identified change as an opportunity to move forward, to strengthen the profession as Physical Educators and as an opportunity to personally sustain or regain the motivation that propelled them into teaching as their chosen career. The participants identified their motivation as a passion for physical activity, health and wellbeing, which as early career teachers they wanted to share with children and young people.

This finding may also provide a future opportunity for additional research that could question what we know about the values and beliefs of older, experienced Physical Education teachers. In particular, research could explore whether the tensions

identified by the teachers in their work places over issues such as decreasing curriculum time are driving their motivation for ongoing professional learning because their values and beliefs about Physical Education are being challenged.

Throughout the interviews undertaken with the six teachers in this research it was clearly evident that they were still very passionate about their chosen career and sense of responsibility to students and colleagues, and making a difference to their lives so that their experiences were positive and stimulating. These teachers still sought professional learning opportunities that were motivational and would continue to enhance their professional practice.

Each of the participants had developed their own ways of authentically challenging their values and beliefs so that the meaning in their teaching remained relevant to the context in which they were teaching. All of the participants used connections with the community in which they worked to help them with an ongoing critique of their practice. This approach was particularly evident in the case studies of the non-metropolitan teachers. Both Brian and Cathy recognised the importance of their role in the wider school community context in retaining their relevance through developing meaningful Physical Education pedagogies.

For the teachers participating in this research, being in a position to retain control of their professional learning was a key motivator in sustaining their professional efficacy and enthusiasm for ongoing learning. Their pragmatic approach to the changing social world in which they work has helped them continue to reflect and re-evaluate the impact of issues such as increasing obesity levels amongst young people. This was not only for themselves as teachers but also to identify new ways of teaching Physical Education. If they are to remain relevant and engage their students in changing their behaviours new approaches are required. Two case studies in particular draw attention to how these challenges were countered in schools and how these issues also influenced the self-efficacy of teachers as professionals.

The impact of contemporary social issues on the self-efficacy of Physical Education teachers as discussed in this thesis, may also provide an additional area for future research. Such research could focus on the consequences of education messages about physical activity and lifestyle not translating into positive action by young

people. In particular, it could investigate whether this perceived inability to achieve intended learning outcomes through the Physical Education curriculum has any impact on the motivation of teachers to keep changing their practice as demonstrated by the case studies in this thesis.

The findings of this research provide evidence demonstrating how a group of six experienced Physical Education teachers, teaching in a curriculum area subject to changing social pressures, expectations and needs, has been able to retain, and maintain their sense of moral purpose, self-efficacy and motivation to continually learn and be leaders of change. The evidence provided by the teachers not only supports this research contention but also proposes that they actively seek change to provide meaningful learning experiences for their students and their own professional identity and efficacy.

Limitations of this research study are identified as having been restricted to a small cohort of research participants; teachers participating in the research were only located in South Australian schools; and, the participating teachers were represented only by those employed in government schools. A further limitation could be identified through the common career-stage and pre-service training experiences of the participating teachers which, may have impacted the level of diversity demonstrated by the case studies.

Future implications from the findings presented in this thesis could emerge through an expanded study of the concerns expressed by the teachers related to their own experiences of tertiary education preparation for their teaching careers. This issue was particularly demonstrated through the case studies, with a perception held by some participants that they were not well prepared for their future careers as teachers of Physical Education. Other participants in this research also contested their level of preparation and the ongoing support available to retain their career-long passion and motivation as teachers in challenging environments.

Future research emerging from the findings of this research could seek to address the issue of early career preparation. The implications for Physical Education teachers could result in preparation that would encourage them to engage with career-long professional learning in a curriculum area that is increasingly challenged by social

issues and decreased resourcing. A literature review of professional development and professional learning terminology in contemporary research publications could also contribute to an enhanced understanding for teacher educators in their intent and application of these terms.

Publications emerging from this research could explore the professionalism of experienced Physical Education teachers in the context of changing education policy, the impact on their self-efficacy, moral purpose and identity. These issues could also be further explored by taking into account the impact of contemporary social health and physical activity issues on the professionalism and self-efficacy of experienced Physical Education teachers.

Appendix 1: Participant information

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Research Title: *The development of professional knowledge with experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education.*

Researcher: Ashley Burnett (M.Ed)

Phone: (08) 83797206 (hm), 0412 411343 (mob), (08) 82264309 (wk)

Supervisor: Prof Wendy Schiller (Director, de Lissa Institute of Early Childhood & Family Studies Research Group)

Phone 8302 4582   Email: wendy.schiller@unisa.edu.au

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Invitation (Appendix 4)

Purpose of the study

The significance of this research in the field of teacher professional learning will be demonstrated as it aims to reach deeper understandings of how experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education currently value and understand meaningful professional learning.

Such understandings will have an impact on the practice of teachers and learning outcomes for children and young people in schools, on teacher training institutions, and inform the development and articulation of education and professional learning policy, pedagogical practice and the professional learning and support provided to experienced teachers of Physical Education.

This research project is important because it is expected to offer an insight through case study research into the current development of deep knowledge that goes beyond surface technical knowledge to improve learning outcomes for children and young people in schools.

Through the development of deep knowledge, teachers identify the assumptions they make about their practice as they become active learners and inquirers about their practice. This along with understandings acquired through the emergent design structure of the research, will contribute to the way professional learning for experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education is supported and delivered in the future by adding to the current body of knowledge on teachers and change.

An expectation of this study is to raise awareness of policy makers, teacher educators and teachers in schools to the critical importance of the provision of deep professional learning for experienced teachers. The results of this study will inform the providers of professional learning in the Department of Education and Children's Services in South Australia and other professional organizations such as the Australian Council for Health Physical Education and Recreation in South Australia.

Through longitudinal exploration of teacher perceptions of professional learning this study will be important because of the development of close links with the teacher participants in the case study research, Officers in the Office of Primary, Middle and Senior Secondary Services in the Department of Education and Children's Services in South Australia, and the University of South Australia. (338 wds)

The role of the research participant

Research participants will be required to participate in five, one hour semi-structured interviews over a period of two years. All interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed with research participants being required to check the transcripts and subsequent analysis for the purposes of honesty and trustworthiness.

Withdrawal from the research

Research participants will be able to withdraw from the research program at any time without personal or professional penalty. Any data held by the researcher at the time of their withdrawal such as audio-tapes, transcripts and analysis pertaining to the participant will either be returned to the research participant or destroyed by the researcher.

Possible benefits or risks to the research participants

Possible benefits for the research participants through their involvement in this research will offer an opportunity to influence change in their teaching practice as they examine aspects of their professional learning and their understanding of 'professional knowledge'. Participation in the interviews will provide opportunity for the participants to investigate and comprehend their experiences and enable them to identify aspects of their work that they find important and useful.

Issues of confidentiality will be addressed by compliance with the strict guidelines set out by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia. Every attempt will be made by the researcher to disguise the identity of the research participants without altering their stories from the case studies.

Storage of all information collected as a part of the study

Confidentiality of all records containing personal information will remain with the researcher and no information will be provided leading to the identification of any individual will be released.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: Vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au.

Provision of a copy of the final research report, or summary, of the research findings for the research participants.

When the research and analysis is completed the research participants will be provided with a copy of the researchers Action Plan containing anticipated dates for the completion and submission of the thesis.

All research participants will receive a hard copy of the final summary of the research findings upon completion and acceptance of the thesis.

Appendix 2: Consent form

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DIVISION OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

<u>CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY</u>

The development of professional knowledge with experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education.

<u>Researcher</u>: Melinda Ashley Burnett, M.Ed

Phone: 8226 4309 (wk)

8379 7206 (hm)

0412 411343 (mob)

Fax: 8379 7370   Email:
ashley.burnett@internode.on.net

<u>Supervisor</u>: Prof Wendy Schiller (Director, de Lissa Institute of Early Childhood & Family Studies Research Group)

Phone: 8302 4582   Email: wendy.schiller@unisa.edu.au

- o I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the nature and the purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- o I understand that I may not directly benefit from taking part in the project.

- o I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

- o I understand that I will be audio-taped during the study.

- o I understand that the audio-tapes will be stored at the home of the researcher and that the researcher and myself as the research participant only, will have access.

Name of the participant: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

I have explained the study to the participant and consider that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's signature and date:

_____

Ashley Burnett (contact details as above)

The security and confidentiality of the information provided will be in compliance with the strict guidelines set out by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia.

Appendix 3: Participant research package

5 Montrose Pl

Beaumont SA5066

26/2/07

Dear Research Participant (name) ,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my PhD research, "*Dancing with Dinosaurs – the development of professional knowledge with experienced teachers in the field of Physical Education*".

The enclosed package contains the following information as required ethics protocols by the University of South Australia and the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS):

- ➢ Invitation to participate in a research study (Appendix # 3)
- ➢ Participant Information (Appendix # 4)
- ➢ Consent to participate in a research study (Appendix # 5)
- ➢ Retention of Audio Taped Materials (Appendix # 7)
- ➢ Letter to Principals
- ➢ Interview # 1 questions (Appendix # 2)

The research will be undertaken over two years (2007 & 2008) and will consist of five one hour interviews which will be audio taped.

I would like to undertake the interviews according to the following proposed schedule, with specific dates, times and venue to suit your own requirements:

2007	
May - June	Interview # 1
September - October	Interview # 2
2008	
February - March	Interview # 3
June - July	Interview # 4
October – November	Interview # 5

Could you please read the enclosed information, sign the following:

- ➢ Consent to participate in a research study (Appendix # 5)

- ➢ Retention of Audio Taped Materials (Appendix # 7)

and, return to me in the enclosed self addressed, stamped envelop as soon as possible.

I will then contact you by phone to organize a date, time and venue suitable to you to conduct the first interview during May/June, 2007.

If you have any questions about this work please contact me on the following:

Phone (08)83797206 (Home), (08)82264309 (Work), Mobile 0412 411343

Email: ashley.burnett@internode.on.net

I look forward to working with you over the next two years and hope that this research will make a positive contribution to the development of professional knowledge with other experienced teachers in the future.

Regards,

Ashley Burnett

PhD Candidate

University of South Australia

Appendix 4: Interview 1

Primary Research Question:

(1) How do experienced teachers engage with professional learning in the field of Physical Education?

1.1 When we talk about professional learning with colleagues, we may be looking at professional learning through a particular lens that may be at a technical level or at a deeper pedagogical level.

Through your experiences as an educator what do you understand 'technical professional learning' to mean?

1.2 Do you consciously engage in professional learning or do you assume that this type of learning comes through your increasing experience as an educator?

1.3 Professional learning that occurs at a deeply personal level is initially encountered through pre-service education courses and helps to reinforce/reshape our values and beliefs as an educator in the field of Physical Education.

Do you have a sense that such deep learning has been ongoing throughout your teaching career?

1.4 Our own experiences in physical activity are demonstrated everyday through our teaching do you think that these same experiences influence how you learn professionally and the depth of the learning that you engage with?

1.5 How do you value the professional learning that is provided to you at a systemic level?

1.6 Should professional learning be provided by the system to support your professional practice or would you prefer to determine your own processes to engage in professional learning that is personally meaningful?

Appendix 5: Interview 2

Secondary Research Question:

(2) How do experienced teachers understand change in their daily practice?

2.1 Our first interview focused on your own personal physical activity experiences and your pre-service professional learning.

From the initial interview I would like to ask the following questions:

2.1.1 How did participating in the *be active – Let's go Innovation Sites* Project help you to develop the approach described on page to support colleagues to become engaged in meaningful, non-threatening professional learning?

2.1.2 In the passage on page 12 & 13 'It's just not happening the way it should', do you mean how professional learning used to occur or how it should now be happening as 'collaborative learning'?

2.2 This, our second interview, will focus on how you learn from your teaching experiences i.e. how you *reflect-in-action* and how you *reflect-on-action*.

Reflection-in-action refers to 'thinking on our feet'. It involves looking to our experiences, connecting with our feelings, and attending to our theories in use. It entails building new understandings to inform our actions in the situation that is unfolding.

Reflection-on-action refers to what is done later – after the encounter. This enables us to spend time exploring why we acted as we did, what was happening in a group and so on. In doing so we develop sets of questions and ideas about our activities and practice.

How do you recognise this type of learning in your own experiences as a teacher?

2.3 When you access professional knowledge are you prompted to do so in response to a particular incident in your work?

Tell me about it.

2.4 Networks are often cited in the literature on professional learning as being a key element for the development of professional knowledge with experienced teachers.

As an experienced teacher could you describe networks that you participate in, both formally and informally, that influence your own professional learning?

2.5 I would like to get some contextual information such as the number of people in your faculty, their years of teaching experience and your role in this team.

Additional questions for each individual participant arising from the initial analysis of Interview 1 (Appendix 1):

Judy: 2.1.3 From the initial interview I would like to ask the following questions:

(Transcript page references are provided)

➢ On page 10 you make a reference to "seeing other people's practice". Do you do this consciously to learn new things and reflect on what you do in the same instance?
➢ On page 15 you talk about the need for the collective staff at Glossop needing to perform well, professionally, to ensure that sufficient students are attracted to enrol. Do you see that this applies specifically to your own professional performance standard and your responsibility in being a part of this team?
➢ In reference to the above question do you identify this also as a reflection of your sporting values relating to the role of every player in a team?

Frank: 2.1 From the initial interview I would like to ask the following questions:

(Transcript page references are provided)

➢ How did participating in the *be active – Let's go Innovation Sites* Project help you to develop the approach described on page to support colleagues to become engaged in meaningful, non-threatening professional learning?
➢ In the passage on page 12 & 13 'It's just not happening the way it should', do you mean how professional learning used to occur or how it should now be happening as 'collaborative learning'?

Brian: 2.1.3 From the initial interview I would like to ask the following questions (Transcript page references are provided) :

➢ The philosophical agreement with colleagues at the beginning of each year (referred to on page 4) – is this coming from your own deep reflection in relation to your values and beliefs about physical activity?
➢ What is in the 'values sheets' given to students that were (referred to on page 7) – how were they developed?
➢ Are you consciously aware of the challenges that you set for yourself (referred to on page 9) and do you consciously do this with others?
➢ Can you tell me more about the 'reflective practice' process you use with students? (referred to on page 10)

Cathy: 2.1.3 From the initial interview I would like to ask the following questions:

(Transcript page references are provided)

➢ On page 10 you make a reference to "seeing other people's practice". Do you do this consciously to learn new things and reflect on what you do in the same instance?
➢ On page 15 you talk about the need for the collective staff at Glossop needing to perform well, professionally, to ensure that sufficient students are attracted to enrol. Do you see that this applies specifically to your own professional performance standard and your responsibility in being a part of this team?
➢ In reference to the above question do you identify this also as a reflection of your sporting values relating to the role of every player in a team?

Arnold: 2.1.3 From the initial interview I would like to ask the following questions:

(Transcript page references are provided)

➢ On page 3 you were referring to "issues" as being a focus for professional learning with colleagues. Are these "issues" 'technical', 'pedagogical', 'administrative' or 'behavioural'?

➢ On page 7 you refer to the reward you gain from being an AST1. Do you see this reward as a professional learning opportunity where you can pass on your wisdom or does this facilitate time for personal reflection when you discuss with others what you know and why you work in the ways that you do?

Maureen: 2.1.3 From the initial interview I would like to ask the following questions:

(Transcript page references are provided)

- On page 5 you were talking about the preparation that you do for teaching, "… I don't like to 'wing it'. I do like to prepare". Is this thorough preparation for yourself and your own wellbeing, wanting to provide a quality experience for your students or both?
- On page 6 you were reflecting on your teaching with Junior classes "I'm not as good a teacher with the Junior classes as I used to be …" Is this a perception because of time committed to preparation for teaching with Junior classes being eroded by other time commitments as required by your leadership role? How do you know that you are not teaching as well?
- On pg 6 in referring to the first time you did moderation, you make the point "… it was with older males which was rather interesting …" Is this a reference to the different ways that male and female teachers in physical education work?

Appendix 6: Interview 3

Secondary Research Question:

(3) What do you currently see as your biggest challenge in teaching physical education?"

> 3.1   How do you see the challenges in the long term as you continue to work and teach in this learning area?

> 3.2   In what ways do you see these challenges influencing your ongoing professional learning?

> 3.3   Is there an analogy that could be made between the professional learning motivation for a physical education teacher and being a part of a sports team?
>
> For a sports team to be successful everyone has a responsibility to contribute through ongoing practice and learning new ways (skills/knowledge/approaches), that enable the team to either achieve or maintain a high level of performance.

> 3.4   Is this culture/way of being influencing how you continue to change your teaching practice in this learning area?

Additional questions for each individual participant arising from the initial analysis of Interview 2 (Appendix 2):

Judy:

> ➢ In our previous interview we talked about stages you went through in your early years of teaching (pg 4). Have those experiences provided the motivation that continues to influence your interest in ongoing learning because of what worked then and was intrinsically rewarding to now being seen as essential in a continually changing and challenging environment?
> ➢ Do you see part of the challenge in teaching today being influenced by the importance that students may place on relationships with their peers which, in turn, may influence the choices they make when selecting subjects (pg 8)? For example, in choosing to undertake a fitness-based Physical Education course because their friends have rather than for personal interest.

Arnold:

➢ Is the value of being able to reflect on professional learning experiences diminished for someone like yourself, as a highly motivated learner, when you have to engage in such events on your own? (pg 5 of transcript)

Brian: Additional questions not required

Cathy:

➢ On Pg 11 you identified a 'sporting network' as one of your learning networks – does what you discuss/learn from this network transfer to how you teach?
➢ Of the four networks you identified in our last interview, do they reinforce your values and beliefs in different ways and do your interactions with these networks trigger reflections on how you teach and facilitate some of the changes that you make?

Arnold:

➢ 'You can't really work and be successful if you are fearful of losing power and authority'. Is this a motivator for ongoing learning to engage constantly changing students? Is there a 'power dimension' to professional learning?
➢ Are you still feeling isolated at your new school?
➢ Pg 9 '… quite often we worked with each other and we saw how each of us dealt with situations'. Do you consciously use this as a way to learn professionally through observation followed by a conversation with colleagues of the observed practice? (Similar to Sue)

Maureen: Additional questions not required

Appendix 7: Personal reflections – Interview 2

Interview Series #2 (Personal reflections)

PARTICIPANT	PROCESS COMMENT	COMFORT ZONE	INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY	COMMON PTS TO OTHER CASES
FRANK	Apprehensive about the direction of this interview but under pressure from supervisor to go. This is the 1st of his 2 interviews.	Initially I was nervous of the direction of this interview but Ross is a good subject & the interview went way as committed by Ross at the end.	Professional isolation is a strong feeling - coming across & frustrated at lack of growth.	A sense of optimism - a block is seen as a challenge to be met & overcome so that growth / change can continue. Are all of the participants naturally optimistic people??
ARNOLD	Started in an upstairs classroom in gym (below) but another class wandered in so we moved to his Home Room.	Very comfortable - takes the process very seriously but this reflects his professional self & how he values his pref role.	A very committed, experienced teacher also has been very aware of his career - very seriously on many levels of responsibility.	More of a link & South. She also has been very aware of her role as an experienced teacher & the high value she places on hers.
MAUREEN	Not as well prepared as should have been. People was not going to continue so we had wrong questions & tape not placed well. Mixing up process & client help.	Not comfortable at all - home issues - to went professional is important to Leonie. Some domestic interruptions impact on student learning.	Being a "calm" professional is important & of the impact on student learning.	Networking links used & South - their networks are diverse & have different purpose - family may also emerge
CATHY	Interview occurred during Aquatics lesson at West Lake & had prepared lots of notes for the interview. We got on famously but other - wise OK	Executed - Sunday provided morning tea across as a highly sophisticated learner - committed & very strong critical reflector.	Strongly committed as a highly sophisticated learner - committed & clear re purpose & direction & how to get there	links so well to all of the participants - a great thinker & very articulate & clear re her purpose & direction & how to get there
BRIAN	I was late - I read works on the Short Hwy - to took 3½ hrs to get here & incident & petrol man. Had confirmed interview in the a.m. so released	We began & my lateness apology & that caught up on how our panels were - quite comfortable	Rick is concerned about the quality of the information that he is providing - exemplifies his high prof. standards	Start to develop an understanding of how Rick learns thru the clarification & additional information gained related to the initial interview
JUDY	Sally was quite unwell for this interview which had an impact toward the end. She was well prepared & had closely read the manuscript.	Very comfortable as we caught up on people she knew & then moved into the interview	Began to identify what she thinks is important to the research.	Reference to early career teachers comes thru strong & Leonie & Sandy & Holly concerns about what they accept & don't seek to develop & grow.

Appendix 8: Interview (contact) summary form

Contact type: Interview 1

Research participant: Frank

Date: Friday, May 4th, 11:30am

1. *What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this interview?*

   (1) The transference Frank has made from professional learning in an extensive reflective practice two year project to innovations he is making at his own school for professional learning i.e. using video to distance 'expert teachers' from a 'mentee role' to an assumed 'mentor role' where the collaborative learning puts them into both roles for significant learning and change in practice to occur.

   (2) The different motivators that Frank was able to identify throughout his career for personal growth and learning under-lining his belief that this growth and learning will always be part of his professional life.

2. *Summarize the information you got (or failed to get) on each of the target questions you had for this interview.*

   Question: Looking at professional learning through particular lens?

   Information: Defined 'technical' easily and prof learning providers needing to know their stuff about pedagogy.

   Question: Consciously engage or does it come through increased experience?

   Information: Lot of information about personal professional reflection leading to identification of blockers for others.

   Question: Deep learning starts in pre-service – has it been on-going?

   Information: Deep learning and stages of learning especially the notion of survival and how the context has changed.

   Question: Own experiences in physical activity, do they influence how they engage?

   Information: Sporting expertise isn't the block, rather the individual values a teacher holds that influence how they learn and work.

   Question: Systemic prof learning value?

Information: The need to move beyond 'me and my needs' to those of the students you are teaching leading to ideals for how to build reaction time into the teaching day.

Question: Should it be provided by the system or do your own?

Information: Professional learning is an individual thing – what comes out centrally is often resisted and sometimes educationally flawed. PD is a lottery at the moment.

3. *Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating or important to this interview?*

   The identification of serious flaws in his tertiary education that didn't support his role as a teacher with an adequate level of competency.

   That Frank sees professional learning as 'survival' in various ways from his time as a beginning teacher to that of a leader.

   Frank is clearly able to articulate what is worthwhile professional learning, including that which directly challenges how we teach.

   Recognition of the negative/blocking impact that experienced teachers can have on young teachers as being one that is holding back the professionalism in terms of pedagogical change.

   An interesting motivator for professional learning was the development of good relationships with students and seeking out good mentors from colleagues.

   Identification of 'curiosity' as a key element of wanting to learn professionally.

4. *What new (or remaining) target questions do you have in considering the next interview with this research participant? i.e. look at proposed questions for the next two interviews.*

   (1) Pg 18 How did being in the 'be active project' help him develop his approach for supporting colleagues to become engaged in meaningful, non-threatening professional learning?

   (2) Pg 20 Does Frank mean how professional learning used to occur or how it should be happening now as a collaborative learning team?

Appendix 9: Interview 2 transcript

(AB = Interviewer)

AB I suppose you know the transcript off by heart Arnold?

Arnold: Yeah right - eight pages or something like that.

AB Here it is. No it was more than that – it was 15. I did like your comment about going on and on, that you emailed me. When I rang Frank at the end of last year and just to check that he got the transcript, he said "No, haven't got it" and I thought "I bet you have". And I said probably a brown envelope "Yeah", you know it was a bit like tell me more. And he said "I think I can see it in that pile over there".

Arnold: As coordinator down there he would bloody having piles left right and centre. I've got half the space in this office that I had down at …, half the stuff's home, I've got stuff under the desk, I made a little shelf because there's no shelving where I'm sitting. All the others have got bloody shelves and that's why I've got to be smarter. I've got to organise myself.

AB You've got to wait for people to leave. You know what it's like in a school – mm that's a nice desk – I'll wait!

Arnold: I've got to be smarter, because I haven't got any senior staff now. They're all middle. All these characters are now moving up and taking senior classes, and that's fine by me. Okay, now.

AB You got the questions? So I'll just explain to you how these came about. What I have done so far and can even show you on this one, is that I've done the first part of the analysis, so what you do, for me is that I go through it and I listen to this three times now.

Arnold: Let's make it brief!

AB And so what I have to then do is go through and look for things that I think really stand out that demonstrate how you learn, from what you've said. Your professional learning, what motivates you, and then just other things that I've found are interesting, and then as I've gone through, a question has come up in my mind, so I just jot that down, and that's where the questions have come from that I've got here. They've just come out of that. And then the other part of my analysis is: what were the main issues or themes that I think came out of your interview and out of the six of you, every one of you is completely different, which I reckon's amazing, because you all learn professionally completely differently. And are motivated by different things. And then I just had to go through and identify key points related to each of the questions I asked you, the main questions that I asked you. So that's the first analysis. And I won't get to do a second one until next year, when I finish these, because I've got to do… I am going to do this interview obviously now, and I can do one more next semester, and I reckon that will be it. So I was going to do five, but what I've found is that once I did the analysis that there were some questions that I was going to ask in my original second

set that have already been answered, so then I looked at the next set of questions, for the second interview and the third interview, and I've been able to condense them, and then having the conversation with Wendy Schiller and Judy Gill who are my supervisors, then they also started to talk around "well maybe you should start to move into this part of your work". That's their… particularly this stuff involved, reflection, inaction and on-action. They've said from what they've read and from what I'd said to them, they thought I should really start heading into that now, and I was going to do that at the end, so they said to pull that in earlier. So the two questions in 2.1 have come out of your transcript, and I just needed to ask some things about that.

So what I did was, I just gave you the reference if you need it.

Arnold: So just explain technical. What do we mean by technical aspects?

AB – which questions have you got.

Arnold: On page ?? 2 point. I'll just clarify these. Are these issues technical, pedagogical, administrative or behavioural. So technical ones relate to what aspects?

AB It would be like if the issue was one about maybe not being sure about some rules or technique of the game, so your skills. The pedagogical issue might be one about oh I couldn't get these kids engaged, what have you guys done! Or, this is an ongoing issue for me with these kids, or it might be an administrative one to do with…

Arnold: *Maybe timetabling, lesson structures.*

AB Yeah, someone nicking your room, like just then, and the behavioural. So you were talking about … yeah here… you were talking about how you sit in the office and have conversations about your work there and you said we have our resources there and our work sites so we're always communicating about something, that's why we deal with issues pretty quickly – we don't wait for faculty meetings or staff meetings, if there's something that concerns us we try and deal with it. We see it happen, we try and address the issue so it doesn't fester.

So what were really you talking about? Was it a technical thing or with issues were mainly talking about behavioural type stuff, or…

Arnold: *Well they were administrative issues, behavioural issues which was ongoing. Things that were to do with the changing mix of the clients. There were trendy innovations, let's say, which required staff adjustments, and quite often that entailed time allocations, resource allocations, acquiring skills with workshops, training development, professional stuff, and quite often an external agency might come into the school, as we did with later in the year, domestic issues, violence, all those. Now with regard to that question, are the issues focussing on technical, pedagogical, administrative or behavioural. All the above. Fairly simply, the world is in a state of change, and we as teachers are required to adapt and perhaps lead this change by improving our ability to translate the latest trends, information, in a manner which is able to be received by the recipients, which is what ever year level the students are, so it needs to be packaged appropriately for them to understand and interpret the*

information. It's part of our job descriptor. In other words that's what we get paid to do, is to share, direct, engage students in their learning, and their school in particular is very focussed on use of technology. There's a computer in every classroom, so I can book a room here, I can check my emails, book resources from these classrooms. As a result of all those, hopefully the outcome is that what we do we do better. We do things better, and it may just be more efficiently. It may be a different way of sharing the same information. For example, I've got a girls' class that I had in here just before lunch and about a bit more of a third have got hearing impairment, so they do have hearing aids, and I need to ensure that I am actually facing them when I speak and address them, that I speak clearly and not too fast, that I use other resources, so I turn term that an adaptation and do that.

AB That's okay, last time we had hammering, remember?

Arnold: S*o with diminishing resources we do need to get smart in the way we work and that requires us to be innovative and use technology where students can access some of this information at home. We've got a crowded curriculum, well people tell me we have a crowded curriculum, I'm not sure how much crowded it's going to be with the Federal Government's new drive for five learning areas and a national curriculum and all that, so from my point of view there are concerns with regard to the position that this subject deals with H & PE is now going to be placed in, and whether it's going to be watered down, whether it's going to have equal allocation of importance, not sure, because the government still hasn't shared any of that information with us.*

AB So you're actually talking about – issues for you are huge, in scope. They go from the really big picture that you're starting to talk about now down to the nitty-gritty in terms of what resources you've got to run your lessons and what you can access and you also I get a sense of you talking about that resourcing bag is your colleagues and the sharing of information that you do.

Arnold: *It is, and we do that, as one character said, share the load, when we share the resources. And I find that is fine and I give them a copy and hand it around. So our folders are getting thicker and thicker. This school's got a disability unit basically two weeks, not a physical unit, a unit of theory on disabilities, and for the next two weeks we have got wheelchairs in the school which we have hired and the kids are going to learn about disability, blindness, reduced mobility and so on. And there's a package that … showed me, it wasn't Willing and Able, it was in the new disability unit with worksheets on how you modified Bocce for example, and stuff like that, in wheelchairs and on paper line games, and I showed the guys yesterday Oh we can use that because we actually do a two week block on that so got on the photocopier and give it to them. So sharing the resources, so it gives them extra stuff that they can do in a single lesson for example, so we are into that, and they said "wow, where did you get that from". And I said "well I only pick up this year at the last meeting at ACHPER so there's that support, structures we have in place with ACHPER and these other agencies.*

Our clients are changing too. That's an issue in terms of the multicultural sensitivities that some groups have. We now have more students with learning difficulties, whereas years ago they were institutionalised or they had special coaching, mentoring, etc, but now they're in the mainstream and that puts extra demands on us as teachers, our classes are still 20+ students generally. But I've got to say this place makes dealing with those issues a lot easier, because a lot more kids - are focussed. Just the amount of work you can get through in a class in a lesson is more, because you don't worry about kids getting up and walking around the classroom. You tell them to sit down – even though they still do it at Year 10, but generally it's not general behaviour. So you can actually focus on doing what you're getting paid to do, which is handy.

AB So that's starting to sound like there are still lots of issues to deal with on a day to day basis, but there's a sense of support that you are getting is almost relative to the complexity of issues that you're dealing with as a teacher…

Arnold: *It can be.*

AB … and that's enabling you to keep your teaching going well, but also you actually sound like you're learning new stuff along the way.

Arnold: *Yeah, I am. I mean we've got deadlines for finalising and this place is a busy place. This week we've had to do our reports by yesterday. We had to proof read them by last night. I handed in my USB today but I think the due date's tomorrow, of the reports. We've got open night tomorrow night, which means putting up displays etc, etc. Saturday night is the school centenary dinner. This year and this term is a busy time and you've still got to teach well amongst that. And still address some of the demands of other people in the place, for resources and so on, so we need to be good time managers to get through all that and it's been very stressful last week doing all those reports, so big ones are the more comprehensive ones but we got to get smart even though physically and emotionally it can be draining. There's still to sports day, my house won. First time in 10 years apparently. Was a really good day.*

AB And you didn't have to write reports.

Arnold: *No, not at all. So our ability to handle these changes I think is a measure of our professionalism. Being a dinosaur it is challenging, because you can get set in your ways, so we have to actually be adaptable and sometimes smile and listen to what the youngies have to say and do and think, yep, okay, you do it your way. I've worked out a better way of doing things, but it's a learning process and if you can't keep directing them and saying this is the way it should be done, because there's no one road that leads to Rome, as the saying goes. You can get to the same destination many ways. So you sit back and say that's not a bad idea I'll take that on board next time.*

AB When we caught up last time you were talking about the change from Underdale to Christies Beach and you had a really quick, steep learning curve there with the change of kids. Has it been as steep coming to Adelaide High or has it been a bit more of a relaxed response to the different types of kids?

Arnold: *No it's still full-on because the kids expect a fair bit as well. So what I hope to be doing here is actually doing more work and with the same kind of application because I can feel a little more confident that the students will do their homework, that they do their assessments an assignments and tests, and I was quite happy to do a test generally and just amazes me that we've got a lot more marking to do.*

AB Bad Luck. Probably stops filling in behaviour management slips for marking.

Arnold: *Kids not yet changed for PE and they get selected to pick up litter and stuff, and I've got to take it to the next step because of the Year 10s haven't done it, even after two reminders, so, there's now going to be a consequence to that.*

AB They going to challenge you, are they?

No there's a system in place and I've just got to be more familiar with it in terms of whether they get detention or the focus room. There's a lot of that stuff which doesn't translate from another school to here because it's unique to what they do here and the deputies and that stay on top of things a bit better in terms of following through with suspensions and gear like that, which sets the standard I think. And then you can concentrate on doing what you get paid to do.

AB Doing your core business, yeah.

Arnold: *On page 7 you refer to the rewards you gain from being an AST1.*

AB Yep. So … you're talking about that you've been an AST1 for 10 years and the responsibility for peer tutoring, mentoring, taking on other leadership roles as well as the main aim of being able to stay in the classroom, and then you went on to say that if you didn't value the AST1 you wouldn't have taken on the leadership roles and applied for promotional positions, but you didn't want to, in your position, you feel more valued in the classroom, and not sitting behind a desk leading a group of people, which may not be too far away you thought. But I was interested in it was an indirect comment about the AST1 and the fact that you quite value it and then you went on to talk about that you don't value it in terms of stepping stone for leadership so much as you're very strong about staying in the classroom and that …

Arnold: *Well I don't see it as a stepping stone. To me it's progression in a different area, and it's not an administrative direction. Lots of people choose to progress professionally as an administrator. I have had those roles, and I don't aspire to those roles anymore. Which, on reflection, is the way I started teaching. It was to be hands-on involved and engaged, even though some may say well you know if you're a principal of the school you can have a huge impact on the learning of kids, but yes and no.*

AB It' at a distance isn't it.

Arnold: *It is and you hope that the people who work for you in the system do the right thing, but you can't see what's happening at the classroom and teaching is still a people based profession I think. You still need to have people standing in front of classrooms, sharing personal bits of information, sharing generally known information and directing kids in terms of resources and getting them to crystallise where they stand on issues. Because we do give them opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas and beliefs.*

AB You were really strong in your interviews about the relationships with kids and you did link that back to... it was interesting for me because you linked it to your professional role as a health teacher and then your very strong views about values and it almost made a bit of a triangle, of the kids, your values, sharing those with kids and that's partly what you now talk about as well, guiding them and supporting them to make sensible decisions and so on and then what you've learned as a health teacher as well, and that they all seem to be very interlinked and you were really strong on the relationship with kids and whose got the power and certainly from Christies Beach you were certainly talking about the kids as having the power in what went on in the classroom and some of your examples where that was born out.

Arnold: *Yes they tried to, because this was an opportunity to assert some power though, which they may be missing at home because they may be a victim yet at school they could be the bully, instead of the victim. So that's one of the issues with the general tenor and feelings down there. It was that there was always a power struggle. You know, there's the admin were always struggling to maintain their authority, separate from the staff, then the staff were threatened with their authority so they kept to themselves and separate from the student body and then some of the students thump other students, so it was a cyclical spiral I guess. Everyone was guarded and protected about their own power base. You can't really work and be successful if you are fearful of losing power and authority. And I may have said before but the only power you have is the power that they give us.*

AB Yeah, you did, yeah.

Arnold: *You could just walk out of the classroom and leave them to get on with it. So there are consequences administratively speaking if they do that, but you disrupt your classroom. It could demean your position, it could undermine your position if the students don't understand what you're doing in a classroom and the way that you work*

with them, but the AST1 reminds me to maintain the skills of being an effective teacher only to continually monitor my own performance for effectiveness in the classroom and that means engagement, it means providing them with feedback, it means giving them information, it means teaching them skills that will allow them to further their education. So how do I do that? Well I maintain this professional interaction with my peers and other professional organisations. I update my skills in terms of doing workshops, for example this week we've got two weeks of Year 9 outdoor education pursuits, you need your map and compass, setting up a tent using a trangent and I haven't done one for years. I only learned that trangent at Christies, in outdoor ed and camping, so I'm using my resources and ask somebody to put me through the process of orienteering again which I haven't done since one of the workshops and all years ago so it's all this re-engagement because we do a different program here. All the health topics are slightly different at different year levels so you've got to approach the same topic from a different angle. Different maturity levels. So that's been my challenge this term, is to rejig things so that what I've got can now be applied and added to and modified, etcetera, and that's the change we face as teachers. I'd hate to be going from school to school every year and taking different classes with different programs, and practical is not bad, that doesn't change very much, but the health topics do vary according to the school's needs and it's just disappointing that they don't have continuity through to Year 12. It's only middle school, I can handle that at the moment. It's all I need to manage.

I still, with the AST1 require myself to work with SSOs because they're the people with whom you need to work, get things done to find out information, etc, so that's one of the criterion in the AST1 is how you work with those people. So you need to learn a lot about these personalities, I think I know the groundsman and a few other things because we're out there, and quite a few of the others at front office – I hardly go there anymore. We're down at the gym here and have classes around here, so the last time I had a cup of tea in the staff room was probably week 2 or week 1 when we were having staff meetings, up there so that's almost eight weeks ago, and I haven't had a cup of tea up there, you see? So you do become a little disengaged from the rest of the staff whereas previous school you'd go to the staff room at least once a day to pick up your notices and check your pigeon hole and interact with a few staff and just generally touch base but it's a lot less likely here.

Arnold: *No I still go to the pigeon hole but the pigeon hole is not near the staff room. It's up on the first floor, and the boxes are downstairs, so, it's just a physical difference in location.*

Arnold: *No.*

Arnold: *We saw a lot of each other at the carnival last Thursday, but that's the good thing about it, there's stuff going on around here. You do interact out of class. But other than that, there's not enough classrooms and everyone sort of has their own little classroom and you work. You do what you're getting paid to do. But I am assuming they'll have social activities coming up too. So you need to work with the people that help the school run, because their the information base for example they can give you a document and you can read that – who was that lady again who am I supposed to see there and so student services is one area I need to be going into a little more actually knowing who is in there – over 100 staff here and I've probably acknowledged maybe 30. There's a lot of people I wouldn't even know by name, let alone appearance.*

AB You seem to be making reference to the, I'm calling it criteria for want of a better word, for the AST role. Do you consciously go back to that what the role description or whatever it is and make sure that you're fulfilling the requirements?

Arnold: *You do because it's part of the performance management, system that you have to make sure you touch base or address or your doing your work in all these areas and I have faith in the system that whoever devised the AST1 process valued this criteria enough to make it one of the essential ones. So you can see that in order to be engaged in the whole learning environment you do need to work with a whole range of people. So you do it consciously, I think that the first person you get to know is probably the groundsman.*

AB Yes, you do in phys ed, and probably by the canteen in my book. The canteen lady.

Arnold: *The AST1 also again expects leadership to be shown and here we've got leaders in our own particular areas. Within the faculty there's numerous opportunity for leadership. Okay you've got HPD coordinator, but you've also got sports coordinator male, and sports coordinator female. Because there are just so many things going on they've got two to complete that task. You've got a guy who is chair of the occupational health and safety committee. So within that faculty there are people that have taken on leadership roles in other areas, and of course you get the compensation in time off to do that. So you are taking on leadership roles in some shape or form and there's opportunity to do that.*

Quite often at faculty meetings there's opportunities to show leadership in terms of providing opinions, information, past experiences etc. Because I think I'm the oldest faculty member now which is saying ?? anyway, but that's why you are calling me a 'dinosaur'! So we do share knowledge and experiences and basically try and do things better, I think that's what we should be aiming for. Even though our clients do change a little bit.

AB In the last interview you also talked quite a lot about a really profound sense of responsibility that you have towards the profession in passing on what you know and I

251

thought that that went really well with how you value the AST position and perhaps that's… is that a way that you see that this is legitimacy to actually pass that wisdom and knowledge and experience on to other teachers that you've actually got this designated role, so you've identified…

Arnold: *You do. I'd hate to think that such an intelligent workforce would do dumb things. I mean if we can't get smarter then we're really reinventing the wheel over and over again. So we do have this responsibility to pass the baton, as the saying might go, in terms of upgrading styles of teaching, methodologies if you would like to call it that and not disregarding previous ones, because it depends on your work in class, some old methodologies are still effective with certain clients and with a perhaps a way of teaching if you're teaching at a secondary school with only Year 11s and 12s they're a different methodology that are required there as well, because the students would have gone through a number of years of IT familiarity, skill development and so on so your style of teaching would change. But here, this is a transition phase I think with IT and resources and new library and first time I've ever brought a bank of computers into a classroom. We've got them on a trolley, laptops, and they're all wireless. But there are some kids who change the keys around and the kids can't log on and then you have to pick up that issue and beat it. Say oh this is new, this will be a challenge.*

AB They can't pinch the mouse ball…

Arnold: *There is no mouse. So they're the things – IT. They've got two banks of computers. Go anywhere.*

AB Amazing isn't it?

Arnold: *It is good. Because then you can just go on the internet. We were doing world youth no tobacco day with that poster up there, National Youth Tobacco Free day, and the day before I had a Year 8 class and we got on the Quit SA website and Oxygen website and so on, and I thought it's good and they did a little survey and they put their details, and they're in line to win a prize or whatever.*

AB Amazing isn't it?

Arnold: *It's good that they are able to do that.*

AB It is. So that just cut down a bit of the… when you were talking earlier about getting to know other staff, but if you're not going to a computer room anymore, that's another opportunity that you're not interacting with others.

Arnold: *It is. It is. So you must book the bank, send three kids to the library and they trolley it down.*

So they'd do the interacting with everyone else and you're left back here in the classroom.

That's right, because they won't let one person carry it, it's just too cumbersome, so they say two or three students, round corners and safety and all those issues, so… That's good and it's not as though it always works not every computer lets every student log on to it don't ask me how, then they just work in pairs. They're the type of things which I now need to be more familiar with and be prepared to do.

AB So if we go on to… that would lead us very nicely into the second question I reckon. Because one of the things that really came out in the first interview from everyone, and more explicitly for some people than others, was what I've got there is the two definitions of how you learn during your teaching experiences. And over here we're referring to yourself as being the oldest person in the faculty there and being able to pass on knowledge and experience and to me, when you were talking about that, that's what we call reflection on action. So you've had quite a lot of time to think about things that have happened, what it is that you've learnt from that and what the meaning is, and probably next time you've thought about it, depending on the context and that's moved on as you've said, things keep changing, you have to keep responding to things differently. And then the early one is reflection in action, that's that thinking on your feet which you talked about quite a bit in the first interview, managing kids and thinking about what they brought with them to school that day or even yourself, you referred to your own self and what you've brought and how you had to be conscious of that and that would impact on how you worked. So the question that really came out of that was how you recognise that type of learning and your own experiences as a teacher, and I'm just wondering from what you've been saying already today, do you recognise that type of learning when you're actually in a role in your AST1 role, where you're actually sharing that with others and you're consciously trying to pass on and inform younger teachers or other teachers about things that you know?

Arnold: *Yeah, that's why we do student supervision. That's why we take on student teachers. To provide them with more options. They will by and large teach according to who they are. And it's important to feel comfortable in the environment, and of course when you're in a place long periods of time, you do develop this comfort and familiarity, at ease and you concentrate what needs to be concentrated on and not the position in a place. Now previous school, I always felt that I was out of place there in terms of my set of values and what I thought was important and what the administration over that ten year period thought was important. So you support what the administration wants, but you don't feel comfortable doing it because you think "this is a waste of time, this isn't working". Obviously somebody's gone to a conference and they've come back with all these ideas and they're trying to implement it in an environment which is not conducive to that. But, as a subordinate you go with the flow, you do what's required of you because you're directed to. And I always felt that my value systems did not align very strongly with the value systems in that location. So you compromise yourself to*

some degree, bite your tongue if you like, and just do what's required, but still try and use your value system to the benefit of your classes, and other staff for that matter, and that's probably one of the reason's why the faculty worked so well, was because we had a similar set of what was important for success in our subject field and that meant setting guidelines down and sticking to those guidelines, identifying certain behaviours, identifying consequences to behaviours that weren't followed, so that there was a degree of consistency and we didn't really worry about what each person thought, because we'd come to a consensus in terms of what we thought was most appropriate for our working environment. And that's a compromise. Some people didn't support it totally because they didn't embrace it, because they were perhaps a little more lase faire attitude, but by and large we did show a degree of consistency and that's how things work better I think because kids then don't play one teacher off against another. So there's consistency there, and its been predetermined and its been worked out and options and consequences all been set in place, so you can react better to situations which is worked on your feet, because you know what's in place. You know what the support network is and you know some strategies to employ.

AB So it sounds like you were all really conscious of the deeper consideration that you've given to how you worked with the kids there and the difficulties that you would encounter and what you had and how you responded to those so that when you had the reflection in action, things are occurring and you had to respond immediately you actually had that ..

Arnold: *We had a template.*

AB Yeah, you had that in the background that gave you that support already.

Arnold: *Well we knew we would be supporting each other, because quite often we worked with each other and we saw how each of us dealt with situations. The classrooms we valued as a place that should be respected. Teachers put posters up, cleaned desktops, on our own, even without classes there, cleaned whiteboards, kept things in a presentable and respectful manner. But, because we weren't in total control of that environment it became a source of frustration, because others didn't show the same degree of respect and responsibility towards it and that just made us shake our heads and say what are some people letting these kids get away with. Just leaving doors open. Yeah. Here you leave doors open and nobody walks in and does any damage. Down there, leave a door open and they'll start being mischievous, generally without making a general comment, but there was always those few that would be opportunists. So you're told like "tonight, shut the door, make sure everything's off". Security purposes, because kids just walk past the door and test to see if it's open. Opportunity.*

AB Would that have been a deliberate strategy was that some people you help set up at the school when you went there or was it something that was already there, the way that teachers worked where they had this considered approach that had been developed over time and then it really helped you in those incidents in class time as to

Arnold: *Partially, but I think it exists anywhere. But we worked on making it workable. So that that became a tool and it became a guideline for our interaction with students, so that there was a consistent message that was getting across, so no matter whether you had a female teacher, a male teacher, me or somebody else, behaviour in the gym there's a certain expectation, in classrooms there's certain expectation, with equipment there's a certain expectation, and that I think stopped a lot of opportunities for kids to play one teacher off against another. Which saved us a lot of hassles, and that's what a lot of teachers need to sort out, is what is the most appropriate and the most beneficial pathway to take with regard to a whole range of issues, even though there were behaviour guidelines throughout the school, they were only appropriate if they were applied, and some staff do not like to enforce school policy. To be truthful it's easier not to do anything. It's easier to ignore, misbehaviour, than to do something about it, which means filling out forms, spending your own time sending a kid to student management room or what have you, so they conveniently ignore stuff. And that's why it's sometimes difficult for a relief teacher to come into a school and enact a lot of the guidelines which permanent staff know, but kids realise they can pull one over your eyes. That's just experience, but I guess if you're harsh all the time it doesn't matter what the guidelines are, hopefully they react to your standards.*

AB How would you talk to student teachers or other new teachers that you might be mentoring through your AST role about how you establish that reflection on action almost culture and way of working so that it then informs what they react to immediately in the classroom because you often see student teachers will just blow things away with how they've responded to something in the classroom and they don't have that knowledge and understanding of the reflection on action that's built up over the time.

Arnold: *Well that's the role modelling part, and we find that most student teachers will have a phase in period student teachers will have a phase-in period where they will go through a number of different classrooms with different teachers. For example two or three of us might share one student teacher because they've got two or three subject fields. So they will go with a teacher in health, they'll go with a teacher in PE they'll go with a teacher in outdoor ed for example or rec. So they would get a pretty good exposure to different techniques and styles of teaching. But hopefully they would all get a consistency in terms of the managerial processes that we adopt. In terms of the content, well that's something they work out between the course, the teacher and what they're required to do in that subject field. But I think role modelling is important. Pre-class discussion is important in terms of just explaining what type of class the student teacher will be going into. Course content and what you've got to get through. And then of course afterwards the feedback that you can give a student teacher in terms of methods of improvement, what they have done well, what engages students, what they need to be aware of, and further options, in terms of how they could have done things. And that generally tends to be both formal and informal on feedback sheets.*

Okay. So perhaps if we go into 2.3 and this might link back with what you share with student teachers. When you access professional knowledge and you've referred to this already today, are you prompted to do so in response to a particular incident in your work, and I think that could be one or two things. It might be an issue that has arisen with some students and maybe that repeats itself at a few occasions and you think there's obviously a pattern here and it's not something I'm familiar with so I need to go and do some learning about that. Or it may be that you as you've mentioned already with health, having to teach health and have got different topics here, you're going to have to go back and learn how to pitch a tent again and those sorts of things. Is it either of those that prompts you to go and do the professional learning or is it both?

Arnold: *Well it's a requirement to teach appropriately, to teach the course content and do the best job. And sometimes I need to skill myself to do my job, or prepare myself for the challenge. And that's what it is I think, you go into an environment and it's a challenge to not just survive but to thrive with in that environment and if the students can see that you have mastered whatever it is that you require, whether its skills, whether its knowledge or information or strategies or methodologies, they tend to then just focus on what you're trying to do, not how you're doing it, and that avoids distractions I think. Sometimes I may have felt inadequate in a situation and realised I needed to do some learning myself. I say well you know I didn't deal with that at all well, or I didn't get that point across as well as I was hoping I would, and you think back to what happened and I'll do that better next time. And that's just professional reviewing of what you do. As I've mentioned the two units in Year 9 and Year 10 PE, I've got to upskill myself in terms of not being given any training or in-servicing, other than a booklet, saying this is what we're doing in the next two weeks. And I though okay, maybe I should have focussed on this last week, but last week I was doing reports, preparing for sports day and all the practices and yesterday the coordinator gave me a document and put a document on everyone's desk saying what we do for outdoors pursuits and this is what we're doing for disability week. And that starts tomorrow. So last night, going through it, just delayed things a little bit. So they're the type of things that we need to address in terms of preparing ourselves to do the job and how well you do it, well does it really matter, if the kids learn something and they're engaged, because next semester I'll do it better. I'll have time to have thought about it, I would have given myself some feedback, I would have probably gained some resources and I would have actually probably had time to organise a program which I could manage within the two week timeframe, so I won't have to ask "where are the compasses?" "When do the wheelchairs come in?" "Where do I find the maps?" So it's all that type of stuff because we will have gone through it once, so it's almost like a first time again. But second time is easier, third time is probably easier again.*

AB And you're probably… I mean you would be, with all of your years experience, you know more precisely where to go. You mightn't be able to put your hands on it, but you know the processes or the people to approach or whatever so you can get there pretty quickly, get that extra information.

Arnold: *And new teachers in most schools now have a mentor, or a buddy system, so that they tee up with someone who can answer questions like "Where do you go if you need to do this?" or "Who is in charge of this?" That type of stuff which is a lot quicker*

to ask the question than it is to read through the manual or the book. You know, let's find a category. Yesterday, I was away on Friday, I said who to you send this absentee form to. Oh just take it to the front desk, drop it in there. It's fine. I was looking through the booklet last night saying absences, student absences, teacher absences, it tells you what to do with your relief, it doesn't tell you where to send the form, so maybe I'll provide someone in Admin feedback in terms of who the person is to contact there, or maybe I didn't read the right book, I don't know. I'm sure they wouldn't have left something like that go amiss.

Arnold: *Yeah, generally because they're expert in their fields in terms of current information and resources. Because they work in connection with a lot of other agencies, they should, I hope, stay at the forefront or cutting edge of what's available. And that's why we need to make sure that a lot of information is distributed electronically now rather than just hard copy. I think a lot of people still like the hard copy. The 'Extra', that's now electronic copy. So scrolling through that last night… something a nice little connection to reach out, reachout.com which is a mental health things so gees I'll go through that a bit more, that'll be interesting, I'll come back to that when I've got a few more hours up my sleeve, troll through it, might even register and get them to send out information. So that's the type of stuff you need to do and that's now become a resource, that magazine electronically whereas before, read it in the staffroom, oh cut out a piece of paper, I'll keep that aside and I'll work on it, and recycle the rest. Well now recycle by just pressing delete.*

Arnold: *Plus the co-workers in SSABSA, other moderators, other teachers and other schools, and quite often you ring back to your previous school or a connection you've made with somebody else. It might be someone with expertise beyond what's required for you. So yeah, you do use each other as resources, because quite often they're using resources which I'm not aware of, so whatever's current, even though we tend to use some old stuff, the information is still relevant. Today I showed a video on cigarette smoking called "confessions of a simple surgeon". And it must be 25 years old now, but the issues are still there and they're still relevant, even though people had different haircuts and different clothing, issues are still the same, and that's what I tell students, is disregard the haircuts and the clothing, what's it about? The issues tend to still be the same. And that's what you pick on because you don't want to throw away a good resource just because it's dated when the information is still there, because they rarely*

talk about statistical information, it's more values, behaviour, it's those type of things, and really it hasn't changed.

AB One of the other researcher participants who is working at Glossop High, she talked a lot in her interview about people in the community through the sporting contacts and they actually are very much her professional learning network. Do you see your involvement personally outside of teaching time, do you use people in the community in that way, through their expertise or whatever as another network for how you learn?

Arnold: *I have, in terms of going to workshops. I remember going to Asthma SA's workshop one evening about that condition. I'm involved in sporting clubs, so you work administratively with people, which means you work with regard to safety, first aid, alcohol go easy programs or good sports clubs, so this is all peripheral to what you're doing, but it is still a link to personnel, resources information. At the moment I'm coaching basketball, so yep, do a coaching course, you then get into the coach's scene, you can join or be a member of the Australian Coaching Council for example, and they'll allow you to access resources, so that's another agency. So your involvement in the community allows you to perhaps reach out into other areas you wouldn't normally simply because you now have accessibility, and of course you can put theory into practice in terms of training drills and so-on which quite often you transfer into a classroom.*

AB Do you think that's a bonus of being a Phys Ed Health teacher that you can just go and join a club and do that…

Arnold: *Absolutely.*

AB … whereas people in other learning areas can't go and join a science club.

Arnold: *Well they can, but*

AB It's limited, it might be a science club something like that whereas…

Arnold: *There might be less opportunity in other subject fields. I'm sure maths teachers have probably had enough of maths when they leave, they don't want to go to maths conferences unless there's some innovative program or strategies or resource being say fielded or being introduced into schools. But yeah, that's one of the advantages of being in my subject field, there probably are more opportunities to maintain networks and develop resources, and continually update and improve your own skills. Some ways you have to be smarter, not work harder.*

AB Let someone else do it for you.

Arnold: *Well if they've done it, use it and benefit from what the outcomes have been, I think anyway.*

AB *And there's so much going on now, particularly in health, that you would almost be at the point when you can drown underneath the stuff that's coming in.*

Arnold: *I'm sure some have, because there's a lot of funding put aside now for special projects, and of course they drag a lot of resources in and then they flood the market, then everyone's had enough and, hang on, the problem is still that issue is still there. Yeah but now we're onto something else. Well hang on, these kids are still drowning. So its an individual worksite decision in terms of how far you continue with something. I guess it gets to be a crowded curriculum after a while.*

AB *Okay, last question. I need to get some contextual information so what I might do is get it in relation to Christies Beach High School to start with and then maybe at the end of the year, ask you a bit more about the Adelaide High faculty. It's just a bit of information about who is in the faculty, their age ranges and that sort of stuff.*

Arnold: *At the H & PD faculty at … the numbers were always around 9 to 12 because it was a large faculty, depending on the number of part-time staff in Home Ec for example, but basically in Phys Ed and Health it was pretty stable, around 5 to 7. The majority were experienced teachers in terms of perhaps 10 to 15, or maybe even 15 to 20 years of experience or more, and in my case it was more than that. The core group remain pretty stable in terms of them not transferring in and out and in my first couple of years there that there were ins and outs but the last 8, I think 7 or 8, we were… that was the faculty with some part timers coming in. So that allowed us to set in motion any initiatives we wanted to do, develop resources, purchase resources which we felt were going to be useful for that period of time and also updated it, so as a faculty most of us were teachers of 8 to 15 years or more and that assisted – I do remember Mike being straight out of uni, but now he's been there 7/8 years and he's taken on leadership roles in that area and he's been encouraged to do so so that he's even becoming year level coordinator for a period of time. So working in a stable environment allows you then to reach out and do other things, rather than feeling vulnerable about your position or what have you, so there's always a good fallback situation. This allowed for many opportunities to develop a workable system in terms of just the way we ran things. Course content in the programs were updated and modified and improved on over that period of time, with resources and strategies and sharing information and workshops and so on. Our teaching standards I would like to think remained high.   The expectations that we had of each other and of the school and the administration were pretty consistent as a result of continual discussions on a whole range of issues. Leadership was pretty steady in terms of the coordinator of the faculty, and for the first 5 to 6 years, and then it became transitional leaders, but one interesting thing that we accepted was no matter who the new coordinator was, we still worked professionally and we could actually work without a coordinator simply because of our experience and what we'd set in place, and that became a bit of a guide for the person that represented*

the faculty in those areas. For example I became the key person for health education resources and program. I was up teaching the senior classes, became the person who purchased resources, led some training and development and initiated some of that, became the contact person for resources and other agency personnel, outside the school. I also had stints as a H&PD coordinator there, so that stability allowed all those things to happen I think.

AB Were there other coordinators in that faculty? Did people have other leadership roles formally, so was there a sports coordinator, Phys Ed coordinator, those sorts of things?

Arnold: *You had a specific – he was appointed as a sports coordinator in that subject field as well, so been in that role for five years – and worked well at it. One of the others became the H&PD coordinator acting for a while. When the acting – when the substantive in H&PD coordinator won a senior role he left the school. And then they split the role between two people so that they wouldn't have to pay the salary and they could reduce by one coordinator so they gave them time off to do that role. So last year there wasn't actually a coordinator of the whole faculty. There was one for home ec and there was one for H&PD. Again…*

AB That's a familiar sounding story.

Arnold: *Not that it became difficult but as I said, we work with or without a coordinator, and we just divied up the role.*

AB So you became a self managing team.

Arnold: *Yeah, which worked pretty well.*

AB Interesting isn't it? I reckon there's another whole topic in there of the change in how they use resources in school and the impact that it must have on groups of teachers and for your team, the fact that there were so many experienced teachers there who had been together for so long, you were still able to cope with it.

Arnold: *And apparently they haven't replaced me, they've just loaded other people with my subjects. That was interesting. And they had to reduce staff because they were overstaffed apparently, so my position became absorbed.*

AB That happened when I left mine too, and I was the coordinator, so I wasn't replaced, I used to get the phone calls, you know, all the time.

Arnold: *If you've got a really young and enthusiastic and motivated group of new teachers, you can still get away with that, it's just the energy would allow them to get through that. With energy alone, not smarts or anything, just by pure effort, and that's would be interesting to see if that would work. There's always get up and go and after a while you'll get up and go if you up and leave and your left with just a shell of a person where you've been drained, physically and emotionally and professionally.*

AB Okay, thank you very much. Excellent stuff.

Appendix 10: Reflections on analysis - Interview # 2

<u>What I am learning</u>

- Networks through the wider community around physical activity not necessarily with teachers
- That some of the ways that they construct their learning are quite sophisticated and sometimes complex eg Brian's reflective feedback loops; how Arnold uses the AST1 to validate his professional learning

<u>Themes that are emerging</u>

- Change is always occurring because kids are always changing so what worked and connected today may not necessarily be appropriate
- Relationships with students are highly valued to provide a genuine learning environment that is effective and honest because trust is crucial
- They are all constantly responding to triggers such as changing students, their ageing colleagues, role modelling/mentoring Early Career Teachers

<u>Patterns that may be present</u>

- They don't access new professional knowledge in direct response to an incident in their teaching but they do more broadly as a response to challenging behaviours, the (mental health) needs of students, reflecting-on-action by making connections over time and responding to these, challenging learning to access a higher level of competence, responding to the challenge of surviving and thriving as a teacher.

<u>Connections between pieces of data</u>

- All research participants access networks formally and informally with Brian being the only one where this is not a high priority and only does so co-incidentally
- The remainder of the group have diverse networks that meet a great range of needs.

<u>Additional ideas</u>

- In their various leadership roles both formal and informal (mentors) reflecting-on-action is an important aspect of their professionally learning self.
- None of them are sitting still – they are constantly seeking out and re-shaping their learning motivators and are highly critical of similarly aged colleagues who are sitting in a comfort zone regardless of the impact on student learning.

<u>Other thoughts</u>

- What they think of the future challenges, both immediate and long term, that will influence their on-going professional learning and work as a teacher.
- Their response to the research process by coming to the second interview with prepared notes and thoughts – they were beginning to demonstrate shared ownership; that their role in the research has personal meaning therefore they are willing to demonstrate this though their 'preparation' to provide thoughtful data (input)

Appendix 11: Case study report outline

Draft Case Study Outline

Participant: Frank

Entry Vignette:

- Frank is an experienced physical education teacher teaching in a Southern metropolitan sport school also known as a 'Lighthouse school' – been teaching for 28 years and now Regional Sport Coordinator
- Did a Bachelor of Arts and a Dip T
- Has leadership role at the school and across the local schools network
- Leads a faculty of experienced and experts in their particular sports with two about to retire
- Leads professional learning with network of local secondary schools
- Works on two levels as a leader in his own school and as a leader across a network of schools
- Had 8 years away from teaching leading to being more aware of how much students had changed reflecting their disrespect for teachers (refer to Chpt 2 literature)
- Had a 3 year break between secondary school and tertiary studies
- Breaks from schooling and teaching have made Frank more objective and reflective about teaching
- Always looking for opportunities that may help colleagues to change eg ECT's, new contract teachers from different contexts
- A strategic operator when initiating change

Issue Identification, Purpose and Method of the Study

Talk about purposeful sampling – refer to the literature

Why Frank was approached:

- Teaching for more than 15 years in secondary school
- Teaching in a sport specialist school
- Participated in DECD physical activity project
- Demonstrated significant growth and engagement in learning, leadership and change
- Quote from the case study report
- Had already been engaged in a significant change experience with extensive support
- Learnt how to use evidence to guide effective contextualised change

Interview focus

(1) Professional learning define:

- Consciously engage
- Starts in pre-service to ongoing?
- Physical activity experience impact on engagement
- Systemic professional learning value
- Who should provide it?

> Own personal physical activity experience and pre-service professional learning

(2) Impact of being in baLG project leading to supporting colleagues to learn:

- Recognising reflective practice in own experiences

- Incident triggers to reflect on practice/access professional knowledge

- Networks that influence professional learning

> How you learn from teaching experiences ie reflect-in-action and on-action

(3) Learning on own:

- Biggest challenge currently

- Challenges in the future

- Challenges influencing professional learning

- Sporting analogy of teamwork and accountability impacting teaching

Extensive Narrative Description to Further Define Case and Content

- Went into teaching because Frank wanted to make a difference to young people (1-10)
- First year out teaching was a disaster because Uni course and mentors when practice teaching (1-11) (1-12)
- How the school has changed (1-21) from young enthusiastic teachers to declining student numbers and aging staff; Faculty split into two separate offices impacting on deep level change
- Very challenged by wanting to get colleagues to change their practice and continue to engage all students
- Challenged by the strong personal values he has about continuing his own professional growth to keep changing his practice and engage his students
- Able to now identify change that has occurred due to his efforts of leading change with colleagues
- Recognizes the pressure of being a change leader and having to drive it all of the time
- A strategic operator (see earlier points)
- Networks with community sporting organisations to provide pathways for students from the school
- Example of challenging change – South Adelaide Football Club and the school – students and teachers and administrators in the football club
- Relationships essential to Frank – students, colleagues, wider community to engage them and bring about change

CODING AND DEVELOPMENT OF KEY ISSUES / THEMES

ECT ⅹ ·impact of older teachers on ECTS (1-8) (2-10) (2-16) (3-5) (3-9)
    + reverse   (3-12)

ST ⅹ ·stages of teaching   (1-10) (1-11) (1-12) (2-12) ½
                           (1-10)

Mo ⅹ ·why Ross went teaching (1-10)

L ⅹ ·leadership role (1-11) (1-16) (1-18) (1-21) (1-31) (2-6) (2-20) (2-23)

Me ⅹ ·mentors (1-12) (3-4) (3-12) (3-15)

RP ⅹ ·reflecting on practice (1-13) (1-24) (1-26) (1-27) (1-32) (1-33) (2-13) (2-14)
                      (2-22) (3-4)

PD ⅹ ·pd opportunities / experiences (1-14) (1-31) (2-10) (2-18) (2-29) (3-6)
                 (3-8) (3-13)

OTC ⅹ ·engaging older teachers in change (1-16) (1-19) (1-21) (1-22) (1-24)
                   (1-25) (1-26) (1-29) (1-30) (1-32)

SI ⅹ ·staffing issues in a sport specialist school (1-15) (1-17) (1-18) (1-23)

R ⅹ ·relationships (1-19) (1-26) (2-19) (2-24) (2-29) (2-30)

N ⅹ ·school networks & change (1-20) (2-22) (2-23) (2-24) (2-25) (3-7)
    + wider community

T ⅹ ·transferring learning from pd to colleague (2-4) (2-8)

   ⅹ (1-33) (2-5) (2-6) (2-13) (2-14) (2-23) (3-5) (3-9)

A ⅹ ·accountability (2-5) (3-4) (3-6) (3-10) (3-11)

TE ⅹ ·change in teaching environment (2-7) (2-11) (2-20) (2-26) (2-26)
          (1-31) (2-27) (2-28) (3-5) (3-6) (3-7)

Codes

ECT — Early Career Teachers
ST — Stages of teaching
Mo — Motivation
L — Leadership
Me — Mentors
RP — Reflecting on Practice
PD — Professional development
OTC — Older teachers and change
SI — Staffing issues
R — Relationships
N — Networks
T — Transferring learning
A — Accountability
TE — Teaching environment

Appendix 12: Cross cases themes – Interview # 2

How do they know if their professional learning is being effective?

Judy: the professional learning stimulates her professionally – gives her an 'edge' then she feels well equipped

Maureen: she feels confident when she walks into a class – this makes her relax and then she has fun with students while they learn

Judy – always wants to be well equipped

Decreasing level of commitment and the interest levels of students at school in physical activity. Trigger for on-going learning throughout her career initiated as an early career teacher thinking that she knew it all & finding in reality that she was poorly prepared. The importance of providing well informed peer support for early career teachers

Cathy – quality of relationships with students

Further developed the analogy of the approach by PE teachers' forward professional learning being influenced by sporting culture. Strong interest in health especially those displayed in her students through challenging behaviours guides her professional learning

Maureen – high standards for preparation

Strong personal belief that if she is well prepared as she walks into each teaching context then she will be confident. Being confident is a motivator allowing her to be flexible and engage all students in learning. Being able to engage all students in learning facilitates the establishment of positive relationships with students.

1. Identification of teachers who don't continue to learn professionally because they don't want to move out of their comfort zone
2. Relationships that they establish with students are a tangible indicator as to their level of success as an educator. They all provide examples of success and examples of challenging behaviours (two levels – positive and negative). None of the participants portray challenging behaviours as a negative rather they ask questions about their own teaching practice.

What is it that they are doing to block student engagement?

What can they change to give a meaningful/motivational experience for challenging students

* refer to Hattie's research and any other re expert /excellent teachers

3. The role networks play in their professional learning:
   - Maureen has 5 (?) – clear levels of learning are the core of her professional learning
   - Cathy has 4 – they provide informal reflection
   - Judy has 3 – they provide informal reflection

268

Brian: he and his team are successful

Frank – learning is life-long

> Frustration with the ageing teaching population and their lack of interest in continuing to value/identify their own need for ongoing professional learning. The lack of recognition by his peers (colleagues) that their dismissal of professional learning impacts on their students negatively and would also give them increased personal satisfaction from their work

Brian – his personal values re quality teaching

> Has a strong view as to what is identified as 'quality teaching principles' and he sees as identifying 'a successful teacher'. 'Quality teaching' is linked to the values of the school and its community's cultural identity.

4. Being a leader in their school and local community:

- Impact of leadership tasks on preparation for teaching but still wanting to change teaching pedagogy regardless
- Using reflection-in-action and on-action to support and challenge colleagues
- As an AST1 having an expectation that he passes his professional knowledge (learning) onto others

5. Sporting team analogy:

- Always working with others and the support this provides to collegiate approaches to teaching

6. Working with pre-service and Early Career Teachers can trigger reflection-in-action.

Arnold – a personal responsibility to remain relevant

> Strong sense that he must keep changing how he works professionally as a teacher because the students are continually changing therefore he needs to remain relevant. AST1 recognition by the system is a motivator by acknowledging his expertise therefore gives him a sense of responsibility. Power in the student-teacher relationship has changed with the change in schools from a behaviour management focus to protecting pedagogical development

Abbreviations

ACARA   Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

ACHPER   Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation

AITSL   Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

AFL   Australian Football League

AST   Advanced Skills Teacher

baLG   be active Let's Go

BCA   Business Council of Australia

CPD   Continuous Professional Development

DECS   Department of Education and Children's Services

DECD   Department for Education and Child Development

NAPLAN   National Partnership Literacy and Numeracy

NSDC   National Staff Development Council

OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PE   Physical Education

SACE   South Australian Certificate of Education

SACSA   South Australian Curriculum Standards Accountability

SES   Socio-Economic Status

TAFE   Technical and Further Education

UK   United Kingdom

US   United States

VET   Vocational Education and Training

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