A CASE STUDY EXAMINING THE EXPERIENCES OF GRADE 7-12 TEACHERS IN A JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

by

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ABSTRACT

Traditional models of professional development for teachers are often characterized by formats intended to transmit information for transfer to classroom practice. But it can be argued that one-size-fits-all models do not adequately meet the professional needs of teachers or respect the view of teachers as learners (Hall & Loucks, 1978; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). More recently, school districts have explored job-embedded approaches to professional development. However, little or no program evaluation has been utilized to gather evidence of their value to practitioners (Guskey, 2000).

This study examined the perceived transformative value of an alternate professional development (PD) experience on teacher practice. The study aimed to:

1. Describe teachers' conceptualizations of "teacher practice".
2. Describe the ways teachers perceive their professional development experiences as having impacted their teaching practice.
3. Report teachers' perceptions of effective and ineffective professional development.
4. Identify institutional practices that influence teachers' perceptions of meaningful professional development.
5. Describe the intrinsic and extrinsic factors valued by teachers in a professional development experience.

Qualitative research methodology was utilized for this case study. I invited participants from the District Literacy Committee (DLC) to participate in this research, and conducted a cross-case analysis to analyze the experiences of Practicing Teachers...
(PTs) and Observing Teachers (OTs). My data collection included web-based surveys, artifacts, and two focus group discussions. Results indicated a strong perception that the job-embedded lesson study model had significant impact on teaching practice. My analysis of the data analysis elicited many similarities and some key differences between the two groups. While the OT and PT were similar in their conceptions of effective and ineffective PD, they differed in their conception of teacher practice and what they valued in a PD experience. Both groups believed PD had tremendous potential to impact teaching behaviours. The findings suggest that differentiated learning opportunities are necessary to meet the needs of teachers, and that alternative models of PD such as lesson study deserve consideration. This study has significant implications for those who facilitate PD and those who develop it.
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This thesis would not have come to fruition without the support and understanding of some key people. First, I must thank Dr. Lynda Colgan, who initially sparked my desire to pursue this research. She was the one who convinced me that the voices of the teachers in this project deserved to be heard. Though she insists she had little to do with the development of this paper, her unwavering belief in my abilities and gentle nudges helped me to stay focused amid many personal and professional distractions. Our conversations about the intricacies of teaching and learning were a great source of inspiration.

I am also incredibly thankful for the contributions of my thesis committee, most specifically Dr. Rebecca Luce-Kapler. Her questions and insights challenged me intellectually and were instrumental in shaping how I presented my findings.

My family’s sacrifices must also be acknowledged. Thank you to my husband, Brent, who forfeited many of his own pursuits so I could focus on mine and occupied our busy toddler for days on end while I locked myself away to write. Thank you to my son, Grayson, who gave up so much time with his mother. The writing of this thesis spanned the first 18 months of his life. Though rewarding, it will be nice for my family that I close this chapter of my life.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Professional development (PD) programs can be characterized as systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students (Guskey, 2002). Unfortunately, little research exists on teachers’ assessments of the effectiveness of these PD programs. This is especially true in Canada, and specifically for the intermediate and senior grades. Anecdotally, there appear to be more examples of failed efforts than successes (Guskey, 1997). This is especially troubling because, more recently, the attributes of alternate models of PD have been purported in the literature with little empirical evidence to support their efficacy. In the area of literacy, the gap in the research widens even further. While much research exists on adult literacy and literacy in the primary grades, it is grounded predominantly in an examination of literacy acquisition and development, not in teacher development in the area of literacy instruction. Thus, the literature related to professional development in content-area literacy in the intermediate and senior grades is scant, at best.

Guskey (1985) suggests that while the relationship between PD and improved student learning is far too complex to allow for simple causal relationships, it does appear that when teachers adopt more effective instructional practices, they accept greater personal responsibility for their students’ learning and feel more positive about teaching. Guskey (2000) also suggests that notable improvements in education almost never take place in the absence of well-designed and well-conceived PD. Hence,
although PD alone may not be responsible for significant improvements in education, it is a critical factor in all school improvement efforts.

The apparent gaps in the literature speak to the need for further research on effective PD and literacy PD, particularly in light of the potential for PD to impact student learning and school effectiveness. From a personal perspective, the impetus for this research stemmed from my work as a public school board consultant responsible for facilitating professional development for teachers of the intermediate and senior grades. In particular, my work as a literacy consultant over four years caused me to question why so many efforts to improve literacy instruction have failed to yield discernable differences in student learning or teacher practice. The desire to pursue this research is a reflection of my increasing ambivalence about the modes of delivery so often used in teacher development. Over time, I have come to question a number of implementation and change efforts of which I have been a part. This journey of inquiry, then, is symbolic of my own growth as I have sought to understand this divide between research and practice.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive research study is to examine teachers’ perceptions of the transformative value of professional development on teacher practice. In particular, I sought to explore the experiences of Grade 7-12 teachers participating in a research-based, job-embedded professional development initiative. Job-embedded learning is based on the premise that authentic learning arises from “in-context” events in the everyday lived experience. Thus, job-embedded PD for teachers
would take place in classroom and school settings, and be rooted in actual teaching occurrences.

Stake (2006) suggests we can “use the case as an arena or host or fulcrum to bring many functions and relationships together for study.” Thus, I used a qualitative case study to examine the experiences of Practicing Teachers (PTs) and Observing Teachers (OTs) in a literacy-based lesson study model.

To achieve this goal, the case study was guided by specific data collection and analysis activities aimed at the following:
1. gaining an understanding of teachers' conceptualization of "teacher practice";
2. describing the ways in which teachers perceive their professional development experiences as having impacted their teaching practice;
3. reporting teachers' perceptions of what constitutes effective and ineffective professional development;
4. identifying institutional practices that influence teachers' perceptions of meaningful professional development; and,
5. describing the intrinsic and extrinsic factors valued by teachers in a professional development experience.

Study Model

Teachers from a medium-sized school board in eastern Ontario served as the participants in this study. All participants were drawn from a District Literacy Committee (DLC), a school district-wide cross-panel group of 65 Grade 7 to 12 teachers with representation from nearly all kindergarten to grade 8 elementary sites in
the district and all secondary schools. The members of the DLC varied in their years of
teaching; they represented urban and rural schools, large and small schools, and both
elementary and secondary teachers. By nature of their involvement with the DLC, all
had participated in a variety of professional development experiences, including large
group sessions, workshops, book study, family of schools based projects, classroom
observations, and software training. For this reason, I believed the subjects would serve
as rich cases for an examination of teacher perceptions of professional development.
The subjects reflected on their participation in a job-embedded professional
development initiative based on a modified lesson study approach (Stigler & Hiebert,
1999, 2000) wherein Practicing Teachers (PTs) worked collaboratively to develop and
then teach literacy-rich lessons across the content areas, and Observing Teachers (OTs)
viewed these lessons and reflected on the applications to their own classrooms. This PT
and OT structure, influenced by Hall and Hord’s Concerns-Based Adoption Model,
allowed for differentiated learning opportunities based on each teacher’s level of use
(LoU) and stage of concern (SoC) related to the embedding of literacy strategies into
classroom instruction. The data acquired from the PTs and OTs provided information
for a cross-case analysis of teacher perceptions of professional development.

Rationale

There now exists an extensive international body of research that indicates
traditional PD methods are ineffective at changing what or how teachers teach (Boyle
et al., 2004). Sustained PD efforts that occur over an extended time period appear to
have much greater impact on teaching practice. Further, many teachers believe that
collaborative, job-embedded approaches are more helpful than the traditional PD formats in which they participate (p. 48).

It is the intent of this study to examine teachers’ perceptions of the value of a job-embedded professional development experience. The qualitative approach was best suited to achieve this end because it enabled a rich examination and offered a depth to the research that would otherwise not be possible. Stake (2006) asserts that the more qualitative the study, the more the emphasis must be placed on the experience of the participants (p. 27). For this reason, the case study seemed the most fitting research methodology for me to employ. However, since the study participants represented two groups within the PD initiative, it made sense to conduct a cross-case analysis of the results. This enabled me to report the more general findings and commonalities while still allowing the distinct characteristics of both groups to be respected and reported. Above all, it was imperative that the voices of the participants be heard.

Theoretical Framework

There are a number of theoretical constructs that I used to situate this work and provide grounding for analysis of the findings. While no particular ideological stance predominates, there are a number of perspectives that served as the lenses through which I examined the research results. For example, Schon’s (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner provided an interesting perspective for examining the psychological dimensions of learning. He argues that, regrettably, we discount the notion of reflection in favour of technical knowledge, and his work highlights the danger of developing an identity as a technical expert because it ultimately renders the
practitioner impotent to practice reflection (p. 69). By using Schon’s concept of the reflective practitioner, for instance, one might view a student’s lack of understanding not as a deficit of the student, but as a deficit in one’s own instruction (p. 66). Unfortunately, Schon suggests, reflection-in-action is often not seen as a legitimate form of professional knowing.

The “pedagogical content knowledge” construct of Shulman (2004) is also useful to my research, though Shulman himself has identified its limitations as a strictly cognitive and individual approach. In response, he has developed a more comprehensive conception that situates teacher learning and development within communities. Shulman and Shulman (2004) have provided a framework that helps to characterize the “community of learners” that more accurately reflects the profession of teaching. The essence of this work is a theoretical formulation to identify the components of teachers’ capabilities for teaching, and the conditions under which these components can be fostered within a teaching community. They characterize an accomplished teacher as a “member of a professional community who is ready, willing and able to teach and learn from his or her teaching experiences” (p. 259). Shulman and Shulman (2004) have also developed a model that suggests that vision, motivation, understanding, practice, reflection and community are the features of accomplished teacher development and learning (p. 259). Within this, they identify five clusters around which accomplished teaching develops: cognitive, dispositional, motivational, performance and reflective. Shulman and Shulman (2004) have added a “communal cluster” (p. 265) as a suggested necessary component in a theory-rich reform
environment. This latter cluster might offer possible explanations for why some PD reform efforts appear to succeed while others fail.

Schon’s (1983) concept of reflecting in and on one’s practice and Shulman’s (2004) construct of pedagogical content knowledge are both useful to my work. However, their focus on the individual would narrow the scope of my analysis. For this reason, I have sought out theoretical perspectives that also include a strong social and cultural viewpoint, and focus more specifically on the teaching profession as a community of learners.

Any reference to the concept of community would be incomplete without regard for social practice theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Unlike some of the theoretical constructs cited earlier, social practice extends beyond the individual as a person to the individual as a member of a larger community. The collective learning experiences of this larger community culminate in the development of rituals, processes and traditions that become a community of practice. Learning within a social practice perspective involves the whole person. It is an inseparable part of all activity where “understanding and experience are in constant interaction” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51). Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that “conventional explanations view learning as a process by which a learner internalizes knowledge” and that “learning as internalization is too easily construed as an unproblematic process of absorbing the given” (p. 47). Further, they contend that intentional instruction is not a pre-requisite for, or often the cause of, learning (p. 40). More likely, learning is a result of what Wenger defines as co-participation.
Graven (2004) examined to what extent Wenger’s ideas about learning as co-participation were helpful in explaining the nature of teacher learning. She suggests these ideas are helpful as a conceptual framework for analyzing learning as social participation. Her assumptions about mathematics teacher learning run parallel to my own because they are grounded in part in social practice theory. Although Graven suggests Wenger’s learning perspective does not apply seamlessly to formal education contexts, I would argue it still has direct application. The assumptions on which social practice theory are based contradict those of most formal PD models. Research supports the idea that most learning does not occur within structured and contrived settings; it is far more organic and unintentional. Although Wenger’s ideas give less attention to the impact of individual forces on learning, social practice theory provides a useful framework for analyzing learning through the lens of social participation. In summary, Wenger (1998) asserts that “learning is fundamentally experiential and fundamentally social” (p. 227). As such, social practice theory brings forth significant implications for the development of PD frameworks because it challenges the very nature of PD and the assumptions on which teacher learning is based.

The theoretical construct most applicable to my research is Mezirow’s notion of transformative learning. Put simply, transformation theory offers a means of explaining how our beliefs shape our experiences, and our insights shape our decisions. It is based on an examination of how we negotiate our own meanings, values and feelings, but does not attempt to explain the meanings and values which have been assimilated for us by others (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). A transformative learning experience enables the learner to become more aware of and critically reflective about the assumptions on
which his or her beliefs are based. While informative learning causes a change in what we know, transformative learning changes how we know; it transforms our perspective. In fact, three perspectives are offered by Mezirow: the epistemic, the sociolinguistic, and the psychological. In her book “Professional Development as Transformative Learning,” Cranton (1996) applies Mezirow’s perspectives to the teaching profession. The first perspective is characterized by knowledge about teaching and learning and ways to gain that knowledge; the second is shaped by cultural codes, social norms and language; and the third reflects the understanding that educators have of themselves. Cranton asserts that a transformative learning experience is necessary in order to change any of these perspectives. Moreover, she suggests that both self-directed learning and critical reflection are the foundation on which transformative learning is based (p. 95). For the purpose of my work, transformation theory offers a robust examination and explanation of the individual, social, and cultural forces at work during an authentic learning experience.

Within my research, careful distinction must be made between what Hargreaves (1994) identifies as collaborative cultures and contrived collegiality. While the former is typically voluntary, development-oriented and spontaneous, contrived collegiality is often characterized as a compulsory, administratively regulated mandate that is implementation-oriented (p. 195). Cooper (1994) highlights the dangers of this contrived collegiality, arguing that, “if teachers are told what to be professional about, how, where and with whom to collaborate, and what blueprint of professional conduct to follow, then the culture that evolves will be foreign to the setting” (as cited in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 189). Evidence suggests that greater confidence from collegial
sharing results in teachers who are more willing to take risks and more committed to their own continued development (Hargreaves, 1994).

For example, Talbert and McLaughlin (2002) assert that teachers who collaborate about instruction are more likely to hold high expectations of the students in their classes and the colleagues in their schools, are more likely to use innovative approaches in their schools, and to have stronger commitments to the teaching profession (p. 327). The research of Talbert and McLaughlin suggested that within both weak teacher communities and strong traditional communities, innovative and artisan teachers suffered due to lack of collegial support, while strong collaborative teacher communities facilitated an artisan approach to teaching where sharing and inventing teaching repertoires fostered improvement in classroom practice. These conceptions of collegiality and collaboration are useful to frame my research. The construct on which I have based my research is true to Hargreaves’ notion of collaborative cultures.

In conclusion, my research is based on a mosaic of several perspectives. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the interplay between the individual, his or her environment, and the larger culture or organization in which he or she participates. Thus, the nature of learning as a transformative experience, and the construct of the teaching profession as situated practice within a community of learners resonate with the personal perspectives I have come to establish. The assumptions on which I have based my work align with the theoretical framework and the research methodology I have employed.
Significance and Limitations

A significant gap exists in Canadian literature on teacher development, specifically for literacy instruction in the intermediate and senior grades. I hope this study will help to further the understanding of teacher needs as they relate to professional development. This case study offers the unique perspective of a select group of subjects in a specific context. However, it may shed light on areas of future research in the area of job-embedded professional development as well as further needs in the area of teacher development in literacy. While the specificity and subjectivity of my research may limit its application to other contexts, this study may be of relevance and value to those who participate in professional development, those who facilitate it, and those who oversee it.

Overview of Methodology

One of the strengths of qualitative inquiry is that it embodies a commitment to the exploration of interacting individuals. Since the focus of my work was to examine teachers’ perceptions of the transformative value of professional development experiences on their teaching practice, a qualitative approach was essential.

This case study paints a portrait of Grade 7-12 teachers in a differentiated job-embedded professional development initiative. The study participants were members of a cross-panel literacy professional development group representative of Grade 7-12 teachers in one Eastern Ontario school district. Purposive sampling was used to elicit the richest cases possible, and all participants were assigned pseudonyms for the purpose of the research. On-line surveys, artifacts and focus group interviews were
utilized to explore the experiences of the PTs and OTs, and cross-case analysis was used to highlight both parity and inconsistency between the PT and OT experiences.

A History and Overview of the DLC

It is appropriate to provide a synopsis of the work of the DLC and how it came to be based on a lesson study model because it serves as a lens into the changing needs of both the participants and me as facilitator of the group.

The DLC was developed in 2001 in response to the introduction of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Grade ten students in Ontario were now required to demonstrate proficiency on a standards-based literacy assessment as a high school graduation requirement. This change sparked considerable anxiety amongst educators across the province, particularly English teachers; school districts devised actions plans to address these concerns. In this particular district, each secondary school was asked to send a representative to monthly central office meetings in which the action plan for the school board was fleshed out. Under the leadership of a literacy teacher-consultant, the group developed and shared sample or “mock” tests and practice activities for the OSSLT, and devised solutions to issues regarding test administration and logistics. Until 2003, the DLC functioned as a committee of approximately twelve secondary teachers who slowly forged a network. During this time I served as the representative for the school in which I was teaching.

In 2003, the provincial government unveiled its Student Success initiative. A supervising principal was hired in each district to create a system of literacy and
numeracy supports for students in Grade 7-12 who were deemed “at-risk.” It was also
during this time that I was appointed to the position of Literacy Consultant. Since the
Student Success initiative spanned the intermediate and senior grades, the DLC was
opened up to Grade 7 and 8 teachers. By the end of the 2003-2004 school year, the
group had grown to approximately 35 members. The new mandate of the group was to
build better links between the elementary and secondary schools. Families of schools
began to share information on students “at-risk” who were making the transition from
grade 8 to grade 9. In addition, each school family began to develop goals for their
work together, and money was set aside to support these endeavours. Most of these
goals involved the purchase of new classroom resources and training in the use of
technological supports. A new “Think Literacy” cross-curricular resource for Grade 7
to 12 was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education to coincide with the launch
of the Student Success initiative, and teachers were able to explore the resource and
discuss the applications to their own teaching. Some teachers shared lesson plans and
activities they were using to support literacy in their classrooms, but this was always
done on a strictly voluntary basis. Thus, the DLC enabled teachers to learn from one
another in an environment that offered low accountability and low risk.

The following year, the DLC expanded yet again, with more elementary
teachers joining the group. The focus for the year was to continue with the literacy
goals set out within each family of schools. Each family was able to access up to
$6,000 to continue the work from the previous year. In some cases, families abandoned
their original literacy goals because they were unsatisfied with the results, and in other
cases, families built on the previous year’s work, often with some additional members
and new ideas. It could be said that many of the goals were superficial in nature. Many focused on the purchase of resources or the development of mechanisms to identify and track students who required literacy support. However, one family chose to use their funding for release time for classroom observations and debriefing sessions. One of the elementary schools in this family had been selected as a “Turnaround” school by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and they were eager to move to a model reflective of that work. In tandem with the families of schools projects, the DLC embarked on a professional book club using Kylene Beers’ (2003) book “When Kids Can’t Read, What Teachers Can Do.” DLC members were given “homework” each month, which included reading a chapter and experimenting with particular literacy strategies outlined in their resource. Members were expected to return to DLC each month to share the outcome within their families and provide any materials from their classes that were developed in response to the homework. An online conference was created where teachers shared lesson ideas and posed questions to the group. Even by its fourth year, the DLC representatives from secondary schools were predominantly English teachers, a fact that became more and more bothersome for the group as a whole. Much time was spent discussing what could be done at the secondary school level to share the work of the DLC and infiltrate pockets of teachers who were not teachers of English. It would take two more years before this goal was realized.

By 2005-2006, the Student Success initiative was well established, the DLC had grown to 50 members, and the group was challenged to demonstrate its effect at the classroom level. Families of schools were afforded the opportunity for funding yet again, but now each group’s project proposal had to include measures for
demonstrating impact on teacher practice and student learning. A number of families opted to explore the classroom observation model initiated by one of the families the year before. The DLC also continued its book club format, with a focus on before, during and after reading strategies. At the end of the year, a menu of possibilities was introduced to the group for consideration. Using an anonymous electronic audience response system, similar to that on the game show “Who Wants to be a Millionaire,” DLC members voted on their preferred model for the DLC in the coming year. A job-embedded model was selected, and a steering committee of seven DLC members met with me to formalize the details.

The 2006-2007 year was an opportunity for the DLC to assimilate the learning that had occurred over the past three years. The lessons learned from the family projects, coupled with the craft knowledge developed via the “homework” from the book clubs, resulted in a merging of theory and practice. It was time to put this learning to the test. Within the modified lesson study model, 65 teachers came together on a monthly basis, assuming a role as either a Practicing Teacher (PT) or Observing Teacher (OT). Members were able to select a role that reflected their level of comfort as well as their current professional growth needs. Forty-eight OTs and 17 PTs embarked on a learning journey none had participated in before. The specific format of this modified lesson study model can be found in chapter 3.

This movement into the classroom represented a high level of risk for everyone. Aside from their pre-service education, many of the DLC teachers had never observed a colleague’s classroom before. While many expressed excitement, some were anxious that their teaching would be scrutinized by others. For this reason, the non-evaluative
nature of the work had to be emphasized throughout the project. As the facilitator, I was also apprehensive. The lesson study project would cost the school board $85,000. Not only was the financial expense tremendous, but my own credibility would be tested by this experience.

The sense of community and level of trust that developed amongst the DLC members during these four years must be recognized. Some secondary teachers had been a part of the group since its inception, and many elementary teachers had been involved from 2003. But because the group expanded each year, there was always an influx of new members. Initially, members came to the DLC starved of resources and the opportunity for dialogue. As those needs were met, members began to seek opportunities for learning that challenged them and caused them to examine their own practices and assumptions more carefully.

As members’ desires were met, the vision for the DLC changed. As a result, my role as facilitator evolved. Initially, my purpose was to chair the monthly meetings, and to conduct large group workshops and training sessions. With the introduction of the family of schools projects, I liaised with project leaders, attended family meetings, provided approval to project proposals (with endorsement from senior staff members at the school board), kept apprised of communications through the family online conferences, and monitored project budgets. Once the professional book club was introduced, our numbers necessitated taking a more intimate approach during large sessions, and more time was allotted to teachers engaging within their family of schools’ groupings. Large group sessions were frequently followed by break-out time within the families. Finally, within the modified lesson study approach, I conducted the
workshops at the beginning of the year, developed and coordinated the OT and PT observation schedule, participated in some classroom observations and debriefing sessions, and facilitated the afternoons when OTs and PTs came back to the board office to share with larger groups what they had learned.

Initially, the DLC was constructed on a model of facilitator as expert. But as the depth and breadth of our work increased, my role became more about guiding the members through an experience that balanced accountability and autonomy. In summary, the dynamic nature of the DLC over these four years reflects its evolution as a group of people, and this evolution parallels my own growth as facilitator.

Overview of Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. In the first chapter, I provide the study purpose, model and rationale, as well as the significance and limitations of the study, and an overview of the methodology. To maintain a transparent presentation of the perspective and bias I brought to this work, I spend considerable time outlining the theoretical framework on which this research was based. I close the chapter with a history of the DLC, which is used to provide context and background for the reader. In chapter two I include a review of the literature on professional development and change theory. In particular, I explore existing research on job-embedded PD and lesson study. The study methodology is provided in chapter three. It is here that I provide an in-depth overview of the PD format, as well as the data collection and analysis methods. Ethical considerations round out the chapter. In chapter four I present the data, which include self-evaluations, surveys and focus group results. I provide a biography of the
participants and reveal the themes that emerged from the transcripts. My focus in this chapter is to illuminate the unique experiences of the OT and PT through the development of a composite of the participants. Finally, I discuss the findings in chapter five. I share the cross-case analysis of the OT and PT, and situate the findings in the literature and existing research. To conclude, I outline the implications for various stakeholders, and emphasize avenues for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Thiessen (1992) identifies a number of faulty assumptions on which many teacher development models are based. In particular, these assumptions are that teachers are not learners themselves; are incapable of determining how they should develop; are in need of specialized training that only experts can provide; and are highly responsive to changes that can be broken down and implemented immediately (as cited in Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992, p. 91). Many of these assumptions fail to take into account the psychological, cultural, and sociological underpinnings of learning. The lack of PD models informed by research may result in ineffective and largely irrelevant experiences for teachers (Boyle et al., 2004; Lee, 2005; Loucks-Horsley, 1995; Loucks-Horsley & Matsumoto, 1999).

According to Loucks-Horsley (1995), just as teaching by telling has traditionally permeated the classroom, staff development by listening has dominated the way teachers have been expected to learn. In an examination of the literature on international PD, “one shot” approaches to PD appeared insufficient to foster any change in what or how teachers teach (Boyle et al., 2004, p. 47). Stigler and Hiebert (1999) suggest that such approaches demonstrate a lack of regard for teaching as a cultural activity since, if learning were not culturally-based, improvements could be gained by simply disseminating information and providing recommendations for more effective teaching methods. But the conceptions of PD in more recent years have changed; as a result, PD has come to be viewed as a process, not an event (Guskey, 2000). Moreover, newer models of PD demonstrate a greater regard for adult learning principles whereby learners are more intellectually engaged, the learning is situated in
authentic contexts, and there are opportunities for collaborative work (Landry, et al., 2006). Within Knowles’ (1979) andragogical theory of adult learning, for example, the learner is conceptualized as a self-directed organism that diagnoses his or her own needs, seeks out resources to satisfy those needs, and, through the use of a facilitator, evaluates the extent to which those resources have met those needs (p. 39). This is in keeping with models of PD seen more recently.

Newer models of PD not only demonstrate more respect for the adult learner but also recognize that the improvement of teaching must be done in classrooms and must be an integral part of a teacher’s work week, since allowing teachers to talk about their work and to participate in instructional decisions helps teachers view themselves as professionals (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). The results of Lee’s (2005) development and subsequent evaluation of a teacher needs-based (TNB) PD program suggest this to be true. This model, developed for three externally funded projects of three grade groupings (K-3, 4-6 and 5-8), was designed based on teacher surveys and interviews, school improvement plans, and standardized test scores. Employed for one year, the TNB model included at least two or three mathematics teachers from each respective school district. The format centred on discussions, group work, hands-on activities, and participant presentations, while lesson plan design, audiotaping and videotaping of lessons, and the use of reflective journals comprised the major elements of the teachers’ work. Program evaluation was conducted through the use of pre- and post-study questionnaires, analysis of reflective journals, and follow-up interviews with several participants. In addition, the program evaluator conducted classroom observations before, during, and after the project. The results showed that participants’ beliefs about
the teaching of mathematics were improved, and the teachers perceived themselves more as reflective practitioners when they were included as both decision makers and consumers of the PD experience (p. 45). Further, Lee’s work suggests that connecting learning to practice and recruiting participants from within the same context are also critical for an authentic learning experience. This model of learning runs contrary to the conception of PD facilitator as “expert.”

The social and cultural influences that impact learning must also be recognized. Wenger (1998) argues that failure to reflect on our fundamental assumptions about the nature of learning can result in misleading ramifications. The literature is replete with examples of this phenomenon in teacher education and PD programs (Guskey, 1991, 1997, 2000, 2002; Hall & Loucks, 1978; Loucks-Horsley, 1995; Loucks-Horsley & Matsumoto, 1999). A lack of regard for the interconnectedness of the psychological, sociological, and cultural influences on learning often leads to the ineffectiveness of these programs. To be valuable, PD must be a sustained effort that embeds opportunities for teachers to engage in self-reflection and self-monitoring. Wenger (1998) argues that information in isolation cannot become knowledge unless it is integrated within an identity of participation, and is embedded within a larger social practice. Effective PD models, then, must recognize and foster a social and collaborative approach to learning, though not at the expense of individuality (Hargreaves, 1994).
Professional Development Models and Change Theory

The literature on change theory also serves to highlight a number of potentially faulty assumptions on which PD models are developed. Hargreaves (1994) suggests that while many change efforts in education look impressive, they are largely superficial. Many innovations such as new buildings, resources, or technology will not affect change unless “profound attention is paid to processes of teacher development that accompany these innovations” (p. 11). Le Fevre and Richardson (2002) assert that teachers’ prior beliefs are strongly related to this process of change (p. 485). Moreover, the literature suggests that PD must move beyond the acquisition of new knowledge since teachers are not just technical learners; they are social learners, too (Hargreaves, 1994; Wenger, 1998). Hamilton and Richardson (1995) contend that many change efforts do not pay “sufficient attention to the cultural context of the school” (p. 369). Whereas Schon’s (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner is limited to the scope of the individual, Mezirow (1997) helps to explain this connection between the individual and the larger culture since his “perspective transformation” theory suggests that a change of perspective can only come about through critical reflection on one’s own cultural and contextual experiences. This reflection shapes how humans interpret events and therefore how they behave.

A discussion of the change process must include an examination of the concerns of individuals as they experience change. According to Anderson (1997), the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (C-BAM) is considered the most empirically grounded theoretical model for the implementation of educational innovations. Within the C-BAM, PD providers must be cognizant of and respect the stages of change that
individuals might experience as they adopt an innovation. The individual must be the primary target of interventions designed to facilitate change in the classroom, but this change takes time and is achieved in stages (Hall & Loucks, 1978). The concept of concerns, first described by Francis Fuller (Hall & Loucks, 1978), provides a rich theoretical grounding for the understanding of teacher development. The C-BAM is suggested as a relevant conceptual model on which to base PD initiatives because it “provides an elaborate framework and methodology for describing key dimensions of the process, content and support for teacher implementation of changes in curriculum and instruction” (Anderson, 1997, p. 338). The premise of the C-BAM is that the needs and concerns of the individual must be respected because institutions cannot change until the individuals within them change (Hall & Loucks, 1978). Moreover, it is argued that the personal dimension is far more significant than the technological dimension when designing professional development. This perspective has important implications for PD facilitators; the facilitator’s job becomes one of diagnosing where individuals are and developing interventions that will satisfy their needs (p. 39).

For example, in a concerns-based implementation study conducted by Hall and Loucks (1978), in-service training was spread over 1½ years to respect the fact that teacher concerns would not reflect the latter stages of concern until much later in the professional development experience. The study, conducted in a large suburban school district in the southern United States, aimed to evaluate the impact of a revised science curriculum on teachers in grades three to six. Key principles of the C-BAM used within this research included the understanding that the needs and concerns of teachers may not be the same as those of the staff developers, and that, within any group, a variety of
concerns may exist (p. 52). Further, two “tracks” of professional development were established in order to respect the differing needs of the teachers. This model allowed for differentiated learning opportunities more closely aligned with the interests of the learners. While the existing literature provides many examples of the C-BAM used to study specific projects (Anderson, 1997, p. 339), none of the research studies examined the implementation of literacy instruction methods in the intermediate and senior grades. The research undertaken here described the use of the C-BAM in the development of a differentiated approach to literacy PD in which participants assessed their level of use (see Appendix C) and stage of concern with the innovation at both the midway and end point of the initiative.

The work of Joyce and Showers (2002) demonstrates more specifically how the change process manifests itself within the practice of teaching. According to the theory of transfer, it is far easier to adopt or implement new knowledge and understanding when it is in close proximity to that which the individual already knows or can do. This concept is reminiscent of Vygotsky’s (1978) notion that learning occurs within a sociocultural framework, and that new learning must be within proximity to one’s current level of understanding (as cited in Landry et al., 2006, p. 307). In addition, Joyce and Showers (2002) suggest that the more closely a training setting approximates the workplace, the more likely that transfer of new learning will be facilitated (p. 74). Bennett’s (1987) work showed that when information-only treatments such as lectures and workshops are provided, knowledge increases by an effect size of .50, with a mean knowledge score in the 67th percentile. But when demonstrations, practice, and feedback are combined with this treatment, the effect size grows to 1.31, and the
per centile knowledge score of participants increases to the 90th percentile (as cited in Joyce & Showers, 2002, p. 76). Surprisingly, even when increased knowledge is the only desired outcome, the use of practice and demonstrations increases knowledge more than information-only sessions. Further, a dramatic increase in transfer is seen when explanations and demonstrations of an innovation are complemented with coaching.

In their initial work in the 1980s, Joyce and Showers (2002) postulated that learning new behaviours necessitates not only the presentation of new information with guided practice, but continued assistance and coaching over an extended period of time. Their research demonstrated that when coaching complemented the theory, demonstrations and practice included in initial training sessions, effect size grew to 1.42 (p. 77). These results highlight the social nature of transformational learning and underscore the value of job-embedded approaches to PD.

The merit of these collegial, in-context learning experiences can be found in the later work of Joyce and Showers (2002). In one study of collegial interactions, the researchers investigated the implementation of several alternative teaching models within a multi-year district-wide school improvement project in the southern United States. One hundred sixteen teachers and administrators from three of the target schools were selected for the research sample. Peer coaching study teams were arranged at each school; these groups met on a weekly basis to share lessons and materials, observe each other, and monitor student responses to the teaching models. Six teachers from each of the three schools were then selected on a stratified random basis for case study research. After summer workshop training, the teachers collaboratively planned and
shared lessons with their colleagues and were encouraged to practice their planned lessons during the first few weeks of school. Consultants observed and informally interviewed the sample teachers six times during the school year. Teachers kept monthly logs, and were videotaped during a lesson near the end of the first year of the project. All teachers completed a formal interview toward the end of the first year and again nine months later. Sixteen of the eighteen participants completed a two–week training session the following summer and participated in a second year of implementation for the project. Teacher logs and classroom observations were analyzed to ascertain teachers’ level of implementation of the teaching method, and self-report information from the six interviews was used to supplement this data. A five-point rating scale was used to analyze the “level of transfer” apparent in each lesson, and mean scores were computed for each teacher. “States of Growth” were calculated to account for individual factors since teachers characterized by high growth states are more likely to adopt an innovation (p. 103).

Results indicated that teachers practiced the alternative teaching methods an average of 14.48 times per month in year one and 22.73 in year two (p. 104). In year one, the mean “transfer” score on the 5-point scale was 3.3, and 88% of the participating teachers were using the teaching innovations effectively enough that “students had developed the requisite skills for learning within the models’ frameworks” (p. 112). By the end of year two, 67% of the teachers had developed a transfer score of level 3 or higher. A number of factors were evaluated to determine their impact on transfer. First, years of teaching experience did not show a positive correlation to transfer, which is consistent with other research that demonstrates no
relationship between years of teaching experience and willingness or ability to engage in professional growth (p. 107). Second, the correlation of level of study team functioning to transfer was .61, suggesting that collegial interactions are at least somewhat vital to the success of implementation. These results uphold the notion that an in-context PD experience can facilitate growth for all participants, regardless of teaching experience.

**Job-Embedded Professional Development**

The literature specific to both PD and literacy point to a variety of areas that have shaped this research study. For example, several studies suggest job-embedded approaches to learning as a promising alternative to more traditional PD models. Job-embedded learning for teachers can be described as in-context experiences that situate the learner in real-life classrooms settings. Thiessen’s (1992) classroom-based teacher development model (CBTD), which situates learning with the “daily realities of classroom life” (as cited in Hargreaves & Fullan, p. 85) suggests three possible models: teachers on their own, teachers with teachers, or teachers and students. The work undertaken in my study involved the first two models. In “interventionist” approaches to teacher development, a host of stakeholders attempt to influence classroom practice; in CBTD, for example, the primary stakeholders—teachers and students—dictate what will be done to enhance learning. In essence, the principles of job-embedded PD suggest that a focus on teacher learning that is removed from the classroom is doomed to fail because it ignores the context in which the practices will occur.
Graven’s (2004) paper on mathematics learning provides some evidence of the potential benefits of such approaches to teacher learning. In this qualitative, ethnographic study, Wenger’s social practice theory was used to investigate teacher learning within a mathematics in-service program for Grade 7-9 teachers in South Africa. A 2-year longitudinal study of 14 teachers’ learning was conducted by the researcher, who also served as co-ordinator of the program. The work was based on a long-term, small-scale, classroom-focused project which included weekly workshops, classroom visits, videotaping of lessons, and individual and group reflections. Methods of data collection included interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, video recordings of teacher lessons, and field notes. The study sample was small, purposive and based on opportunity. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires revealed that teachers’ confidence levels increased as a result of participation in the PD model, and this increased confidence enabled teachers to move toward a conception of themselves as *math teachers*, rather than *teachers of math*. Graven’s work illuminates Wenger’s concept of social practice and the components of learning, namely practice, community and identity, and extends this conceptualization to include confidence as a central theme to teacher learning. Both the methodology and theoretical frame on which this work was based draw strong parallels to my own research. This exploration of job-embedded approaches led me to a more careful examination of lesson study.

Lesson Study Research

Several studies have shown favourable responses to lesson study as a job-embedded alternative to more traditional models of PD. Stigler and Hiebert’s (2000)
groundbreaking work led them to conclude that lesson study provides the optimum forum in which individual, social, and cultural influences can flourish because it enables teachers to learn with and from each other while still providing time for individual study and reflection. Moreover, it is based on the belief that emphasis on the improvement of teaching will lead to teacher development, not vice versa. This represents a fundamental shift in thinking from more conventional approaches to PD.

The seminal work of Stigler and Hiebert (2000), and their Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) video study, set the stage for the exploration of lesson study, and, for this reason, it is worthy of examination. Within this study, the teaching practices of Grade 8 mathematics teachers in three countries were compared. A random sub-sample of teachers from the 41 countries participating in the TIMSS study was used to ensure that the classrooms observed were representative of Grade 8 mathematics classrooms. Germany, Japan, and the United States were selected for the study because researchers wanted to compare the teaching methods in American schools to those in countries where TIMSS results were typically high. A national probability sample was used to select 100 German classrooms, 50 Japanese classrooms, and 81 American classrooms. To minimize bias, no substitutions were permitted once schools, teachers and classrooms were selected for videotaping. Researchers collected a videotape of a mathematics lesson, a questionnaire completed by the teacher, and any useful artifacts such as worksheets that were used during the lesson. Teachers were asked not to adjust their teaching for the purpose of videotaping; to increase the likelihood of typicality, the questionnaire administered to teachers asked them to describe the previous day’s and next day’s lesson. After laborious and painstaking
work viewing the lessons from the three countries, a coding system was developed to compare the teaching. Independent coders were used to test the objectivity of the codes, and only those that demonstrated consistency 80% or more of the time were used. Coded data also helped to ensure the videotaped lessons were not atypical of the teaching methods utilized within a particular country.

The conclusions drawn from the video study are diverse and far reaching. The results suggest a staggering difference in teaching approaches among the three countries. While Japanese classrooms focused on solving challenging problems and teaching for conceptual understanding, students in American classrooms were far more likely to practice procedural skills in isolation (p. 10). On a broader scale, Stigler and Hiebert’s (2000) examination of American approaches to the teaching of mathematics suggests that although teachers in the United States have a great deal of autonomy in utilizing various teaching methods, there exists a very definite cultural script for teaching to which they are bound (p. 8). In addition, they argue that even after numerous reform movements in the teaching of mathematics, much of the change that occurs in classroom practice in American schools can be referred to as “changes at the margins” (p. 9). Their work supports the conclusion that teachers learn not only through their teacher training, but through their cultural participation (p. 83). Further, they suggest that reform efforts which do not underscore the cultural beliefs and assumptions on which teaching and learning are based will certainly fail:

Improving the cultural scripts for teaching is a dramatically different approach from improving the skills of individual teachers, but it is the approach called for if teaching is a cultural activity. No matter how good teachers are, they will be only as effective as the script they are using. To improve teaching over the long run, we must improve the script. (p. 101)
They suggest the lesson study approach as effective because it is “large enough to capture the system, yet small enough to afford analysis and improvement” (p. 11), and allows teachers to reduce anxiety and uncertainty through collaborative preparation.

Within the Japanese lesson study model supported by Stigler and Hiebert (1999), the improvement of classroom practice is placed in the hands of teachers. The design, implementation, testing and revising of “research lessons” is conducted by grade level or subject level groupings of teachers who meet regularly and extensively over the course of a school year. Stigler and Hiebert outline the steps which typify the lesson study process:

*Step 1: Define the Problem*

Teachers identify a learning goal; that is, they come to consensus on a problem that can be addressed through a specific classroom lesson.

*Step 2: Planning the Lesson*

Teachers work collaboratively to develop the lesson. The goal is to not only produce a lesson to tackle the problem, but to develop understanding as to how and why the lesson is effective for addressing the problem.

*Step 3: Teaching the Lesson*

All teachers participate in preparation of the lesson, but only one teacher uses the lesson in his or her classroom. The other teachers act as observers to the lesson, taking notes on what the students are doing throughout the lesson.

*Step 4: Evaluating and Reflecting on the Lesson*

Teachers meet for a debriefing, critiquing the problematic aspects of the lesson. The debriefing is not an evaluation of the teacher, but of the lesson the group designed.
Step 5: Revising the Lesson

Evidence from student observations is used to modify the lesson, which could include the materials, activities, or the problem itself.

Step 6: Teaching the Revised Lesson

Another member of the group teaches the lesson, and all school faculty are invited to observe.

Step 7: Evaluating and Reflecting

All faculty meet to evaluate the lesson. The lesson study group shares their objective in developing the lesson, and faculty critique the lesson and make suggestions for improvement.

Step 8: Sharing the Results

Typically, a report is drafted outlining the group’s goal and findings. In other cases, an outside group of teachers is invited to observe the final version of the lesson.

Stigler and Hiebert (1999) suggest that lesson study yields success because it respects teaching as a cultural activity where improvement is a gradual, incremental process. Further, lesson study is useful because of its focus on the “direct improvement of teaching in context” (p. 122) and because, unlike most PD efforts, its success is measured through student learning, not level of teacher implementation. Lesson study makes teaching a public activity where teachers’ interactions with one another help them reflect on their own practices. Moreover,

Through the process of improving lessons and sharing with colleagues the knowledge they acquire, something remarkable happens to teachers: They begin viewing themselves as true professionals. They see themselves as contributing to the knowledge base that defines the profession. And they see this as an integral
part of what it means to be a teacher. (p. 126-7)

This perspective aligns with the results of Graven’s work cited earlier.

Blum et al. (2005) found that while significant changes needed to be made to the Japanese lesson study model to fit the American context, teachers could gain from it an increase in professional growth and heightened respect for each other as professionals (p. 20). Their lesson study research examined a mid-western Lab School where inclusive teaching methods were studied to assess their impact on student learning for special education students. University faculty, classroom teachers, a pre-service teacher, and both a special education instructor and exceptional student were part of the group. The Lesson Study format of classroom observations, debriefing sessions, and lesson revisions was used. Although standardized test results for special needs students had been historically lower than classroom means, eight students with special needs achieved results above the classroom mean upon completion of the lesson study research (p. 19). In this instance, teachers were able to “forge a common vision of good practice” (Lewis, 2002, p. 64 as cited in Blum et al., 2005). Thus, while the lesson study model needed to be modified, it still yielded positive results for the study participants.

In another example of a lesson study adaptation, Stewart and Brendefur (2005) involved 50 teams of teachers in a cross-grade grouping model that merged lesson study with the principles of authentic assessment. The teams of teachers, formed in 13 school districts, were monitored through pre- and post-questionnaires. In addition, all teachers submitted portfolios at the end of the school year, which included reflections, lesson plan ideas, and student exemplars. Of the 50 teams assembled, five were
monitored closely through the use of classroom observations, lesson plans, and videotapes. In cases where teams cut across grade levels and content areas, teachers brought their lesson plans to the team for critique, taught the lesson, and then received feedback from the other team members. Including the element of critiquing student work from the lessons added another dimension to the discussions. One participant noted the power of the experience: “There is power in collaborative planning. There is value in observing colleagues teach. My thought processes were stimulated….My focus on instruction has been brought to a higher level” (p. 686). Many study participants cited extreme lack of collaboration as a part of their schools’ cultures, and, in fact, one lesson study group disbanded because they were unwilling to open their classrooms for videotaping or observation. The researchers cite group leadership and an ability to work collaboratively as crucial factors to the success of the groups. One study participant commented “We bring lessons to be scrutinized by our colleagues without the fear of being ridiculed. I felt I was being mentored in the truest sense of the word. As we spent time together, we learned to value each other’s opinions” (p. 686). It is also noteworthy that the teachers in the cross-grade groupings felt they gained insight into how to improve their teaching even when they were not focused on their own grade or content area (p. 687).

The model employed within this study demonstrates how lesson study can be adapted, while still maintaining the integrity of the principles on which it is based. Second, it demonstrates that teachers with all levels of experience, and even those in cross-grade groupings, can benefit from participation in such a model of professional development.
Fernandez (2005) explored how lesson study impacted the practice of four elementary mathematics teachers. Using social cognition and situated learning theory, Fernandez sought to analyze the educative potential of the conversations between teachers which took place during the lesson study experience. While this work spanned three years and involved over 30 teachers, this paper focused on an examination of one particular lesson study team. The participants, all from one school, represented the second, third, and fifth grade as well as a range of teaching experience from novice to veteran. The conversations occurred over a three month period, during which the participants planned, taught, and revised a third-grade mathematics lesson. Detailed field notes, videotapes, and transcripts of all meetings were kept as were artifacts from the design of the lesson and videotapes of the lessons. Researchers discovered that, within the experience, a cycle of learning developed in which teachers deepened their own understanding and subsequently pursued avenues to deepen student understanding. The results suggest that lesson study provided opportunities to further pedagogical content knowledge in ways not accessible through other means.

Fernandez (2005) reports that the research on lesson study to date is still predominantly anecdotal and speculative, and based largely on work in content-specific instruction in mathematics. The researcher suggests the use of lesson study as “a vehicle for teachers to learn about particular teaching practices” (p. 286) and an area for further exploration. The modified lesson study model undertaken in my research provides that vehicle because teachers from all disciplines focused on best practices in literacy instruction across the content areas.
Literacy Professional Development

Since literacy instruction was to be the focus of my study, it necessitated an examination of the empirical research in this area. But a review of the literature on literacy in the intermediate and senior grades yielded few results. The published work appears to be sparse, which suggests a number of significant gaps in the existing research. The research on reading, for example, tends to focus on literacy acquisition in the primary grades, or on the outcomes of particular remedial programs on adult literacy, while very little attention is paid to the impact of classroom instruction and teacher practice. This is perhaps due to the fact that when teaching behaviour is explored, it becomes problematic to attribute improved student performance to these factors. The result is a great deal of research that explores a simple “input-output” relationship between teaching and learning.

The work of Spear-Swerling et al. (2005) suggests that a substantial gap exists between teachers’ knowledge of reading as compared to the available research on reading. In part, the researchers set out to determine how accurate teachers’ self-perceptions of literacy knowledge were, and if level of experience or knowledge of reading would impact the ratings they gave themselves. The 132 participants in this study were graduate students with a mean of 3.34 years of reading teaching experience. Study participants were assigned a high-, medium- or low-background score based on years of teaching experience and educational background in the teaching of reading. All participants rated their literacy-related knowledge in three areas and then completed five tasks to measure their disciplinary knowledge in these areas. These measures included open-ended questions about reading development as well as specific tasks.
requiring demonstration of phonemic and morpheme awareness. Regression analyses showed that while high-background teachers self-reported higher scores and outperformed their low-background counterparts, they still demonstrated results that were well below ceiling on all five tasks (p. 289). The researchers suggest this speaks to a need for more ongoing teacher development in reading, even for those with high-background. Moreover, Spear-Swerling et al. suggest a possible “disjunction between certain information learned in teacher education and basic research findings” (p. 291). While this research focused on the primary grades, it does serve as evidence of the continued need for PD in the area of literacy, specifically reading. Further, it speaks to the need for PD models that serve to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Topping and Ferguson’s (2005) work suggests that the skill of the literacy teacher is critical to the success of a particular curricular approach. The aim of this study was to determine if highly effective teachers demonstrated consistent teaching behaviours. The research, conducted in a Scottish school district, involved five primary teachers considered highly effective teachers of literacy, who were selected using both observational data and self-report data. Two classroom observations were completed with each teacher, and both lessons were videotaped. Observable classroom behaviours were grouped into five macro and 25 micro categories. A semi-structured interview protocol was used with each participant at the end of the observations, and emerging themes were identified. The findings from the self-report and observational data showed consistency in teaching behaviours utilized by those teachers who were deemed effective teachers of literacy; in essence, there were no statistically significant differences between the teachers’ instructional approaches. Furthermore, the
observations coupled with the interview data demonstrated that the teachers used literacy strategies about which they were not even aware. The interview data also yielded findings about what participants felt had shaped their teaching behaviours. All participants noted that observing other teachers model strategies had been influential in their learning, four teachers suggested team teaching had impacted their practice, and four believed professional literature to have been instrumental in the development of their teaching practice (p. 139).

These outcomes point to the need for teachers to have access to opportunities to observe others and interact in multiple social contexts to help develop effective teaching strategies. The researchers suggest that teacher practice, not a particular programme or curriculum, has the greatest impact on student learning. The study reinforces the merits of collaborative models of literacy PD in shaping teachers’ behaviours.

Lastly, a two-year, quasi-experimental study (Landry et al., 2006), which compared the gains of children whose teachers participated in two-year, one-year or no training in a literacy intervention model, is worthy of careful examination. The initial focus of the study was to examine the effects of a literacy intervention program on student performance. However, the gains in student achievement were attributed in part to the research-based PD program that was implemented for the teachers. This PD was based on the principles that “adults will learn most effectively when they become intellectually engaged in the subject matter…when the learning is situated in authentic contexts…and when there are opportunities to do collaborative problem solving and practice specific skills” (p. 308). Within this model, 750 teachers participated in
intensive and long-term PD that included ongoing training; small group learning; side-by-side in class coaching; and opportunities for practice of specific skills. The training, which emphasized a research-based approach to literacy instruction, included guided practice in developing lessons and integrating literacy across the content areas. Three hundred fifty randomly selected classrooms were chosen for pre- and post-assessments. A rating scale was used during observations to document changes in teaching behaviours. Of those teachers who participated in intensive PD, 60% demonstrated strong growth, and 30% demonstrated moderate growth in most areas of literacy instruction (p. 314). Not only did the students of the target teachers demonstrate significant changes in many skill areas, but more than 85% of the teachers reported increases in students’ social-emotional behaviours, even though this was not a focus of the intervention. Sixty-five percent of the participating sites adjusted their budgets the following year in order to maintain the mentoring program that had been established as a facet of the study. Most importantly, many of the target teachers reported an increase in morale and a renewed commitment to their profession as a result of participation in the program.

These results speak to the power of meaningful and authentic professional development experiences for teachers. Similar to the work of Graven (2004), the study results suggest that the increased confidence that arises from PD experiences may lead to changes in conceptions of teaching and learning.
Summary of Research

A synthesis of the literature suggests that job-embedded learning has become a more widely used means of PD, and is a more prominent topic in PD research than in the past. However, few studies have diverged from an analysis of its impact on teaching in areas other than math and science. Further, while literacy acquisition is an area of extensive research, literacy instruction appears not to have been explored so thoroughly. Within the research community, a lesson study approach to literacy PD seems to be largely uncharted territory; a review of literature in the Canadian context suggests it to be virtually non-existent.

This examination of the literature indicates a need for more empirical and theoretically-based research in the areas of job-embedded professional development, but more specifically in content-area literacy in the intermediate and senior grades. The aforementioned research supports the belief that PD must be considered a vital component of any change or reform efforts, if, in fact, teacher learning is concomitant to improved student learning and achievement.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Patton (2002) suggests that qualitative inquiry depends on the researcher’s experiences and insights, and that the pursuit of a case for examination often stems from a question, a puzzlement, or a desire for greater understanding (p. 3). Further, he argues that by examining the particularities and complexities of a single case, we come to understand its importance. All of these motives and outcomes are applicable to this research.

One of the strengths of qualitative inquiry is its usefulness in “illuminating the nature and meaning of quality in particular contexts” (p. 150). Quality qualitative inquiry requires “detailed, in-depth and holistic descriptions that represent people in their own terms and that get close enough to the situation being studied to understand firsthand the nuances…” (p. 151). The teachers in this study were Grade 7-12 teachers from the DLC, a district-wide professional development initiative. Through the use of purposive, homogeneous sampling, I hoped to maximize the insight gained from the participants in this initiative. An emergent design methodology enabled a rich and in-depth examination of the cases.

Data collection began part-way through the initiative, once permission was obtained from Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board (GREB) and the host school board, and spanned the rest of the school year. The research methodology framework can be found in Appendix A. The methodologies specific to each type of data collection are outlined below. These represent the data source triangulation (Stake, 1995) that was achieved in this study:
1. On-Line Survey: All Grade 7 to 12 teachers involved in the District Literacy Committee (DLC) completed a short web-based survey at the half-way point (January 2007) and end point (June 2007) of the PD initiative (see Appendix B). As the researcher, I knew how many respondents had completed the survey, but was not able to identify any participants based on their responses. The survey enabled me to elicit preliminary information about respondents’ perceptions of the value of the professional development experience as well as to identify any overall changes in respondents’ feelings and attitudes by the end of the school year. In both cases, participants were asked to complete the surveys within a 1-2 week timeframe at a time that was convenient to them. The surveys were differentiated for PTs and OTs, and included both Likert scale and open response questions. Participants completed the surveys either at home or at school by visiting the URL provided. Since my decision to conduct the research occurred after the surveys were developed, simple descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey results.

2. Artifacts: Guskey (2000) suggests that formative assessment used during the operation of a program can provide ongoing information about whether or not things are going as planned and if expected progress is being made. Self-evaluation artifacts such as reflective journal entries and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model Levels of Use assessment tool (Appendix C) completed at the half-way point (January 2007) and end point (June 2007) were used to assess how participants responded to the PD experience, and if and how they believed their teaching behaviours had changed. Submission of these artifacts for research purposes was entirely voluntary. Participants were provided with two envelopes in which to send the artifacts if they wished to do so.
These envelopes, which were addressed to the researcher, were provided by me in January and in June by the new facilitator of the group.

3. Focus Group discussion: Morgan and Spanish (1984) purport that focus groups “have much to offer as an adjunct to other qualitative techniques” (p. 254). For this study, I used focus groups to examine further the results that presented themselves in the web-based surveys. Fontana and Frey (2000) suggest that focus group interviews can be advantageous because they are “relatively inexpensive to conduct and often produce rich data that are cumulative and elaborative” (p. 652). Further, Stake (1995) argues that the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the multiple realities and different views of what is happening, and the interview is the main road to these multiple realities. The more qualitative the study, the more the emphasis must be placed on the experiences of the participants (Stake, 2006, p. 27).

Stake (1995) argues that the real business of case study is particularization; that is, the process of coming to know not only how the case is different than others, but to understand its uniqueness. Patton (2002) suggests that it may be best to first find out what participants believe the phenomenon to be before it is addressed (p. 362). For this reason, I used baseline questions about professional development and teacher practice to begin the focus group discussions. Throughout the interviews, I used detail-oriented elaboration and clarification probes to solicit deeper responses where necessary. Teachers were also asked to share both positive and negative experiences with PD, and to offer suggestions as to how those positive PD experiences could be maximized. I employed mental rehearsal before the focus groups, as Stake (1995) suggests it should be a routine part of preparation for interviews. The focus group interviews were
between one and two hours prior to the end of the school year (June 2007) and were audio-taped. Seven OTs and six PTs from the respective groups were interviewed in a neutral location. As the primary researcher, I led the focus group discussions and took notes during the interviews. While this proved challenging for a novice researcher, it enabled me to capture the key words and central themes of the discussions and to summarize for the participants what I had heard. It was predicted that animated and information-rich responses would be elicited from the participants. Thus, one additional note-taker was present for the focus groups.

The Participants

Grade 7-12 teachers from a medium-sized school board in eastern Ontario served as the subjects in this study. All participants were drawn from the DLC, a cross-panel group of 65 Grade 7 to 12 teachers with representation from nearly all kindergarten to grade 8 elementary sites in the district, and all secondary schools. The members of the DLC represented a homogeneous sampling of teachers in that they had participated in similar PD experiences. However, they varied in their years of teaching, and represented urban and rural schools, large and small schools, and both elementary and secondary teachers. By nature of their involvement with the DLC, all subjects had participated in a variety of PD, including large group sessions, workshops, book study, family of schools based projects, classroom observations, and software training. For this reason, the subjects served as rich cases for an examination of teacher perceptions of PD. The subjects reflected on their participation in a job-embedded PD initiative based on a modified lesson study approach (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999, 2000) wherein
PTs worked collaboratively to develop and then teach literacy-rich lessons across the content areas, and OTs viewed these lessons and reflected on the applications in their own classrooms. This PT and OT structure, influenced by Hall and Hord’s Concerns-Based Adoption Model, allowed for differentiated learning opportunities based on each teacher’s level of use (LoU) and stage of concern (SoC) related to the embedding of literacy strategies into classroom instruction. Patton (2002) suggests that “sampling for focus groups typically involves bringing together people of similar backgrounds and experiences to participate in a group interview about major issues that affect them” (p. 236). The data acquired from the PTs and OTs provided rich information for a cross-case analysis of teacher perceptions of PD.

Subjects were informed fully about all aspects of the study, including the purpose, methods and possible or intended uses of the research, and any inherent risks to them as participants. The confidentiality of the participants was respected, with pseudonyms used for all transcriptions. Web-based surveys were completed by all teachers in the project to allow for accumulation of data related to teachers’ degree of satisfaction with professional development experiences in the district. Further, all teachers used the C-BAM as a self-reflection tool at the mid-way and end-point of the year in order to ascertain whether or not they believed their use of literacy strategies had changed.

Stake suggests that “case study research is not sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case” (1995, p. 4). Additionally, since time and access is of the essence in case study, we must maximize what we can learn (Stake, 1995). For these reasons,
convenience sampling was used for the focus groups, and effort was made to select participants who would provide the richest interview data. A sampling frame was used to develop criteria by which to select participants for the focus groups. Both groups were comprised of between 6-8 members of the DLC, and included participants from both elementary and secondary panels with varied PD and teaching experiences.

The PD Format

In order to understand fully the work of the DLC, it is perhaps prudent to provide an overview of the modified lesson study format that was used. The descriptions that follow outline the process that was used to recruit participants for the project, the roles of the PTs and OTs within each facet of the PD experience, and the specific literacy instruction methods that were used.

The DLC model was crafted to offer a job-embedded professional development experience that provided teachers with differentiated learning opportunities and ownership over their own learning. Within this framework, teachers demonstrated lessons for other teachers who wished to see what a quality lesson in a particular area would look like, sound like, and feel like; in this case, teachers modeled effective literacy instruction across the content areas. The focus during observations was on student learning—how engaged the students were and how the lesson met their needs as learners. This model allowed two types of professional development to occur simultaneously:

1) Lesson development, team planning and collaboration for the PT.
2) Classroom observation, tracking of students’ instructional experiences and application in own classroom for OT.

Three PTs planned one lesson together and then went back to their classes to teach while three OTs watched the lesson in each respective classroom. The following month, OTs moved to the classroom of another PT in the group to observe a different lesson with a different skill or strategy focus.

In August of 2006, a Powerpoint presentation outlining the PD opportunity was given to all elementary and secondary principals in the district. Shortly thereafter, a package of information was sent electronically to all principals and former DLC members, and was posted in various sites on the district email system. Included in this package was the Powerpoint presentation, a detailed overview of the initiative, and a “Request to Participate” form (see Appendix E). Teachers were asked to self-nominate, though both DLC members and principals were encouraged to discuss the opportunity with staff members who might benefit from and be interested in the experience. Submissions were due to the literacy consultant by mid-September, and the principal’s signature was required on the form prior to acceptance.

The following descriptions were provided to assist teachers in selecting the role that best suited their PD needs:

*The profile of the Practicing Teacher (PT)*

Though not necessarily a literacy expert, the PT has experimented with and implemented literacy strategies and tools in his or her class, and has met with a level of success. The PT is willing to experiment with different teaching approaches, and to
share teaching practices with observers. The PT is also able to work collaboratively and collegially with a small team of teachers.

*The benefit to the PT*

This model allows a small group of enthusiastic teachers to work with like-minded individuals on collaborative lesson planning. Each PT creates his or her own lessons with the assistance and support from others in the group, and then shares the lesson. Debriefing time the following month allows PTs to share the outcome of their lesson while developing a focus for the next month. These steps enable consolidation of learning about effective literacy instruction methods.

*The profile of the Observing Teacher (OT)*

The OT would like to build on present literacy teaching practice but needs to see what it looks like in order to go about change. The OT is willing to question his or her own teaching practices and is open to experimenting with and implementing literacy strategies or tools in the classroom. The OT is able to observe others’ teaching practices in an open-minded and positive fashion.

*The benefit to the OT*

Lesson observation allows the OT to see the impact of literacy strategies on student engagement and learning, and helps the OT see how curriculum from other content areas can be taught more effectively. Observations are followed by a debriefing with the PT and a discussion with the facilitator, which will reinforce critical learning and understanding of the skills observed. The OT is then able to experiment with the strategies in the privacy of his or her own classroom during the early implementation stage.
Schedule for the Year

A full-day training session for all members was conducted at the end of September 2006. Since the group represented both new and veteran members, it was necessary to have both large group and breakout sessions for the PTs and OTs.

The ground rules and guidelines for the project were outlined, followed by a question and answer session about the lesson study format. A variety of the strategies and tools contained in the lesson study resource were modeled within the training so teachers could also become familiar with the contents of the resource binder. For example, at the beginning of the day, the K-W-L tool was used within a diagnostic activity to ascertain what teachers already knew (K) about literacy instruction, and what they wanted (W) to learn. At the end of the day, and later in the year, this tool was revisited to determine what teachers felt they had learned (L).

The ten literacy skills and strategies that were the focus for the year were reviewed in detail, as were key ingredients in a literacy-rich lesson, and “look-fors” in explicit instruction methods. To apply this learning, the group analyzed sample teacher questioning sequences as well as video clips, and I provided one of my own classroom lessons to be deconstructed by the group. Teachers completed these activities within their PT/OT clusters to help OTs get better acquainted with the colleagues they would be observing. Although many PTs felt quite comfortable with the content of this portion of the training, engaging all members together was done to ensure consistency in understanding. During the breakout sessions, PTs were given time to plan their teaching while OTs analyzed additional video clips and reviewed the guiding questions.
they would use during observation days. Reflective journal questions were provided at the end of the day and participants were asked to place themselves on a learning continuum related to comfort with both literacy instruction methods and sharing their practice with colleagues. Specific journal questions are included in Appendix F.

**Meeting Formats**

The DLC conducted its work on the last Wednesday of each month. Mornings were devoted to site-based observations and debriefings while the afternoon sessions were conducted as a large group at the school board office. Breakout time was provided to enable PTs and OTs to discuss their experiences and learning with their colleagues, and for PTs to plan for the next month. Journaling was also completed during this time. The large group portion of the afternoon enabled members to share the highlights of their morning and seek clarification about the strategies and tools that had been demonstrated. In preparation for the next session, I modeled the tools and strategies that were to be the focus for the next month. Video clips and sample lesson materials were used as the basis for the additional training that occurred at these times.

In November of 2006, a web-based survey was used to assess progress-to-date and gain feedback on possible refinements to the project. This anonymous survey included both Likert scale and open-response questions and was completed again at the end of the year. Results of these surveys can be found in the findings chapter of this paper.
The Literacy Skills and Strategies

The DLC Lesson Study binder included a compilation and assimilation of the learning that had transpired within the DLC over the previous three years. Professional resources as well as publications from the Ontario Ministry of Education were used to develop the resource. The lessons created and observed were developed around the following skills and strategies:

1. Activating prior knowledge
2. Making connections
3. Visualizing
4. Predicting
5. Questioning
6. Making inferences
7. Checking for understanding
8. Using fix-up strategies
9. Summarizing
10. Understanding features of text

The Lesson Planning Process

For planning purposes, two or three of the ten skills and strategies were highlighted each month. For example, the focus for October was on activating prior knowledge, predicting, and understanding features of text. These were selected early in the year since they could be used largely as pre-reading or pre-writing strategies to “frontload” students’ learning. Skills and strategies such as checking for understanding
were used mid-year while summarizing and making connections were saved until later in the year. This narrowed the planning burden for PTs, who were free to craft a lesson that modeled all three, or choose one as a focus for the whole lesson.

PTs were provided a four-step lesson planning template to develop their lessons, though they were not obliged to use it. The template required PTs to first identify the students’ literacy skill deficits they wished to address through the lesson, the strategy they would select from the binder to support student learning, the tools from the binder that would reinforce development of the skill, and the curriculum area in which they would use the tool. PTs provided a copy of their lesson plan to the OTs on the day of the observation, and in many cases, provided electronic copies to the observing OTs and the entire DLC.

Once the lesson observation was completed, the PT and three OTs debriefed the lesson. OTs could ask for clarification about the contents of the lesson, and PTs could elaborate further on their teaching decisions. The guiding questions provided to OTs were used to scaffold these discussions. OTs were asked to submit their guiding questions during the afternoon session at the school board office to give the facilitator a sense of the discussions that took place.

Ethical Considerations

In November, 2006, the purpose of this study and its methods was outlined in a recruitment script as well as a letter of information and consent. Included within the script and letters was an assessment of risk and an overview of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were required to complete and sign an informed consent form;
one copy was kept by the participant, and one was kept by the researcher. These measures were used to address all issues of consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy. The purpose of this research was to allow teachers to share personal experiences related to professional development and to reflect on their practice. Any situations that may have created anxiety or distress would have been met with appropriate follow-up. However, none were presented. All identifying marks were removed from the focus group transcripts. Subjects were able to check transcripts before they were used, and had the right to be removed from the study at any time.

As one of eight consultants with the school board, I was responsible for facilitating various PD opportunities for teacher colleagues. Although I was still a member of the Teachers’ Federation and the Teachers’ Bargaining Unit, I was not in any position of power over my colleagues. The role was and must be entirely non-evaluative. Additionally, since I began a maternity leave while conducting my research, I was not in the role of consultant during the time of the focus group interviews, year-end artifact collection, or when analysis and reporting of the data occurred. Nonetheless, to ensure that my work as facilitator of the DLC did not in any way influence teachers’ decisions to participate, consent forms were returned to a second party, and artifacts were submitted voluntarily through mail. Further, while the focus groups were conducted by me, a second researcher was present and involved in data analysis as a means of analyst triangulation (Stake, 1995). If anything, the trust relationship that I established with this group of teachers served to increase the likelihood of subject participation, enhance the elicitation of frank and honest responses from the participants, and augmented my ability to capture their voices. Stake (1995)
touts case study as an empathic means of understanding how the actors see things (p. 12). My involvement with this group best enabled me to serve this purpose.

Focus Group Data Collection

Both paper and electronic versions of all focus group data were produced, and back up copies of all transcripts were maintained and stored in a secure environment. Transferability was achieved through the development of thick descriptions. Through an inductive process, I read the data and assigned codes through open coding. All research processes and procedures were documented, and all methods of data collection and analysis have been made transparent to increase the external reliability of the research.

Graven (2004) suggests that interviews may elicit more informal responses as compared to formal written discourse (p. 192). Thus, the data from focus group interviews served to balance the use of formal web-based surveys. All sessions were conducted in a neutral environment, and a matrix of options (Patton, 2002) was used in the development of questions. According to Charmaz (2002), “Any competent interviewer shapes questions to obtain rich material and simultaneously avoids imposing preconceived conceptions on it” (p. 681). For this reason, a think aloud protocol was used to ensure that the questions adequately addressed the information sought from the interviews. Appendix C provides a sampling of the question types used with the focus groups.

The focus groups, which took approximately 2 hours, were tape recorded. Furthermore, brief notes were taken by both the primary and second researcher during
both sessions. Transcriptions of the focus groups were completed in a timely fashion after the interviews. Stake (2006) suggests that “researchers in social situations deal a lot with impressions—their own, as well as those of others. Impressions can be good data, but good researchers want assurance of what they are seeing and hearing” (p. 33). For this reason, both researchers were involved in data analysis. This procedure reduced the impact of any researcher bias and facilitated investigator triangulation (Stake, 1995). An experienced third party transcribed the interviews to increase credibility. A project-specific transcription protocol was also used to ensure consistency in transcription format. All names were removed from the interview transcriptions in order to increase anonymity.

Focus Group Data Analysis

Following the analysis of each group’s data, a cross-case analysis of the PTs and OTs was used to compare and contrast the experiences of the two respective groups. Stake (2006) suggests that cross-case analysis provides interpretation across the cases, and allows determination of the theme or phenomenon that strings the cases together (p. 39). This process enabled me to compare and contrast the responses to report the similarities and differences between the PTs and OTs.

Analysis of the data was based on a variety of open coding techniques. The two focus groups were analyzed in the same manner, but each case was analyzed individually in order to create a detailed profile for both groups. First, multiple copies of each transcript were made. Both focus group transcripts were read repeatedly to increase familiarity with the responses. Each transcript was read 7 to 8 times, and key
statements were highlighted, with notes made in the margins. Some words appeared prominently in the transcripts, which suggested them to be salient to the participants. Thus, word frequency was analyzed by determining the unique words within the transcripts and counting the number of times they were used. The word frequency lists for the PT and OT transcripts provided useful clues as to the themes that might emerge when coding the texts. A table of word frequency results can be found in chapter four. Metaphor analysis was also used. Finally, selected sections of text were cut from the transcripts and sorted into piles. Codes were applied to the piles. This process was utilized and repeated until emerging themes were exhausted and theoretical saturation had been reached. Emerging patterns were then used in the development of categories and codes were collapsed into themes.

The PT transcript elicited 37 pages of text from which 93 salient quotes were selected. Twenty-nine categories were formed in the first stage of analysis; 14 of those were common with OTs. Categories were collapsed into 23 categories in the second phase of analysis, and later reduced to 15 categories under two themes. The OT transcript elicited 31 pages of text. In the first phase of analysis, 80 salient quotes were used to identify 24 categories. This number was reduced to 17 in the second phase, and finally to 15 categories under two themes. A journal was used throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Included within it were my own thoughts as I participated in a lesson observation alongside some of the OTs, quick thoughts immediately following the focus groups, ideas about ways to sort the categories into piles, compare and contrast notes about the PTs and OTs, and concept maps to show relationships between the categories.
The trustworthiness of the research was established through a variety of means. First, the rigour and credibility of the findings was enhanced by the triangulation of data sources, methods, and researchers. Three data sources were used and two researchers were involved in the process of data analysis. Transferability was enhanced through the development of thick descriptions in the focus group interviews. The recursive nature of the work helped to ensure the development of these thick descriptions. Two member checks were completed with focus group participants to ensure that the context and meaning of their words were captured accurately. First, once the focus group discussions had been transcribed, each participant was provided an electronic copy of the statements attributed to them. Participants were given the opportunity to have their comments removed from the transcripts before data analysis or to clarify if they felt their words were taken out of context. Second, prior to the defence of this thesis, focus group participants were provided a draft copy of this paper and were provided a final opportunity to have any of their statements struck from the findings or discussion chapters. No requests were made by the participants on either occasion.

An audit trail was developed to increase trustworthiness. The transparency of the research process was enhanced by including sample raw data and an autobiographical signature. I hope that this audit trail builds a case for the authenticity of the research and enables other researchers to replicate the study methodology if desired.
This chapter outlined the methodology used in this study for the collection of data and its analysis. The case studies undertaken and the subsequent cross-case analysis form the basis for the findings identified in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter reports the study results of a job-embedded PD experience for Grade 7-12 teachers. The focus of the findings is to portray the unique experiences of the PTs and OTs in a modified lesson study PD model. Thus, the data are presented through the eyes of the participants. In this chapter, I set out to answer the research questions that were posed in the study aims. The chapter begins with an overview of the C-BAM and web-based survey results from the DLC members. Next, a brief biography of the OTs and PTs who participated in the focus groups is provided. A participant profile is developed for the OTs and PTs using the themes that emerged from the data. Finally, the responses provided by both groups are related back to the research questions. For simplicity, each OT and PT in the focus groups was assigned a number (e.g. OT1), and quotations from the data sources are cited using this method of identification. The profiles are written as a female composite to represent the majority of participants.

The intention of this chapter is to most accurately reflect the PT and OT journey through the PD experience and to create a composite of both groups of participants. The patterns and themes that emerged from the study are presented separately in relation to the unique OT and PT experience. The chapter closes with a summary of those themes as well as the PT and OT profiles developed through analysis of the data.
C-BAM Results

A total of 19 DLC members submitted their C-BAM results at the end of the professional development experience, which represents a return rate of 29%. Though the response rate was lower than I had hoped, it was consistent with typical survey return rates. It is possible that the return rate would have been greater if I was still in my role as facilitator at the time the surveys were collected.

Participants were asked to choose the level that best reflected their level of use (LoU) of literacy instruction methods. They were given the option to provide written comments explaining the reasons for selecting their LoU. C-BAMs were copied on two different colours as a means of differentiating between the fall and spring self-evaluations. In some cases, respondents submitted both C-BAMs in the same envelope. In these cases, I was able to compare respondents’ self-evaluations from the two reporting periods. To facilitate anonymity, I did not ask participants to identify themselves on the C-BAM evaluations or to indicate if they were an OT or a PT. In hindsight, colour-coded evaluations for OTs and PTs might have been advantageous for a more thorough analysis. Although the respondents’ roles could not be ascertained from the surveys, their reflections offer revealing commentary about their opinions of the PD experience and the LoU of literacy skills and strategies in their teaching practice. To view the C-BAM survey, please see Appendix C.

It is not surprising that there were variations in the LoU identified by the respondents. A majority of the participants rated themselves as level four A at the midway point of the PD experience, signified by “routine use of the innovation without reflection on the consequences.” By the final evaluation, many respondents felt their
level of use had risen to either *level four B*, signifying a “refinement of use to maximize student learning” or *level five*, characterized by “integration of efforts with other teachers and colleagues.” Overall, 15 of the 19 respondents felt their LoU had increased. Some teachers had difficulty selecting a specific LoU, and wrote comments in the margins to more aptly describe what they saw as being constantly in flux: “I go back and forth between mechanical use and refinement depending on the strategy.” One respondent drew a circle between levels to reflect a fluctuating nature to the learning, and wrote “this loop is indicative of reflection at the ‘in-action phase.’” One respondent commented: “I am still trying to get away from ‘covering the curriculum’” and another wrote “I am very excited to try new literacy ideas in my class and am always willing to change practice. It is a work in progress—always.” In the final evaluation the same respondent commented, “I feel very confident using the strategies and teaching the strategies. I feel that I am almost at ‘Renewal’. More effort, I’ll get there!” Thus, at least a portion of the respondents came to view their progression as more recursive than linear.

One striking finding from the C-BAM comments was the number of respondents who spoke about their desire for collaboration with colleagues. One cited a desire to seek out “other like-minded people to continue to grow my practice.” Another commented, “I put a lot of thought into integrating literacy activities…DLC is providing the opportunity to communicate with other teachers with an interest in literacy.” Two particular comments from the spring self-evaluations deserve mention because they capture the passion some felt about the experience. One respondent wrote: “I truly believe that DLC has changed the way I teach…In order to move forward I
need to continue to observe, SHARE materials…and gather info.” Another respondent commented, “Opportunity to share with colleagues through DLC has enabled me to be reflective/and improve my literacy instruction.”

Thus, for at least some of the participants, the PD experience was believed to be pivotal in its impact on their teaching. It should be stressed that the low return rate of the C-BAM self-evaluations means these thoughts cannot be generalized to the whole group. Nonetheless, they are of value. It is reasonable to assume they offer a cursory representation of the OTs’ and PTs’ perspective on their teaching practice. These sentiments were consistent with the anecdotal feedback I received from participants throughout the initiative and the comments that were made by participants during our large group sessions.

Web-Based Surveys

At the mid and end-point of the lesson study model, participants were asked to complete an anonymous on-line survey. Six Likert response and two open-ended questions were used in the surveys. Although the same questions were asked of both groups, a different survey was administered for the PTs and the OTs. This allowed me to compare and contrast the OT and PT survey responses. The new facilitator for the group adjusted some of the Likert scales for the questions on the end point survey. Therefore, it was not possible to make direct comparisons between the two surveys. In this case, it seemed most fitting to use the year-end survey results for analysis. The Likert responses and anecdotal comments in the open response questions provided thought-provoking findings. The results that follow were elicited from the surveys
conducted at the end of the year. Thirty-eight OTs and 16 PTs completed the survey, representing an overall response rate of 86%. The survey results are found in Table 1. Due to the small sample size, the number of respondents and the overall percentages are provided for each question.

Table 1: OT and PT Web-Based End-Point Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>OTs n=38</th>
<th>PTs n=16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This professional development has been an enriching experience</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have benefited from working with my fellow OTs/PTs</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work as a PT/OT has had a positive impact on my teaching practice</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work as a PT/OT has had a positive impact on student learning in my classroom</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would recommend the chance to work as a PT/OT to other teachers</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>32%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compared to other PD in which I have been a part, this experience has been:</th>
<th>Significantly more effective</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More effective</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just as effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both OTs and PTs were asked to respond to the statement: “This professional development has been an enriching experience.” Ninety-two percent of the OTs and 81% of the PTs either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. When asked if their work as a respective OT or PT had a positive impact on their teaching practice, 92% of the OTs and 88% of the PTs agreed or strongly agreed. Respondents were also asked to reply to the statement: “My work as a PT/OT has had a positive impact on student learning in my classroom.” Eighty-five percent of OTs and 82% of PTs agreed or strongly agreed. Interestingly, when asked if they had benefited from working with
their fellow OTs or PTs, the results were 92% and 62%, respectively. This question elicited the largest discrepancy between the two groups. Ninety-three percent of OTs and 75% of PTs either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend their role to other teachers outside the DLC. Lastly, when respondents were asked to compare this experience to other professional development in which they had been involved, 89% of OTs and 81% of PTs rated it as more effective or significantly more effective than their other experiences. While these results are largely positive, some of the most interesting points were gleaned from the anecdotal responses to the open ended questions included within the surveys. The responses to some of those questions are described below.

When asked to give advice to other OTs, respondents said things like: “Have an open mind and modify the tools to fit the needs of your students” and “Take notes and talk to the PTs as much as possible. The discussion and observation time in the morning is the most useful time.” One respondent also suggested: “Take on the role of PT to gain the experience—the feedback is invaluable.” The comfort level of the OTs was reflected in the comment: “Don’t pressure yourself to try all of the strategies your first time out. Pick a few that you are most confident in trying.” One of the most salient responses to the question was: “Participate in this. It is so hard to change your practice on your own.” In another question, OTs were asked how they had shared what they learned through the lesson study experience with colleagues who were not part of the DLC. A number of respondents suggested it was through “casual dialogue” and “around the staff room table at lunch.” Many respondents discounted their own spontaneous or haphazard attempts: “I have only shared what I have learned
informally.” Some expressed frustration about there being no time to share with colleagues:

We need time to do this. If release time is not feasible, then we need to reduce the burdens of other school activities or focuses so that after school planning time IS available for teachers to meet. But too many extra-curricular initiatives overburden teachers and they lose their ‘reading’ focus.

Others expressed uncertainty about how to facilitate sharing in their school, or if they were comfortable even doing so: “I have not had the opportunity to share with my colleagues at this point. I think that this would be beneficial, however, only if participants are willing to put themselves out there and share. I certainly would not want to be ‘forced’ to share with my colleagues.”

The PT responses to the first question reflected the different nature of the role. When asked to offer advice to fellow PTs, they made statements such as: “Get out of your comfort zone and take a risk.” Many also stressed the need for the lessons to be authentic, with comments such as: “Don’t be overly concerned with perfection. Genuine lessons provide opportunities for you and your colleagues to talk and generate ideas” and “Just teach the way you would normally teach—don’t do anything to ‘wow’ the people coming to watch. It will exhaust you….”

There also were differences in the PT responses to how they had shared with colleagues not in the DLC. Many had engaged in more formal means of sharing with their colleagues at school, such as presentations at PD days or discussions within the school’s professional learning community meetings. One respondent stated: “I have provided resources for them and some have come into my classroom to observe” and another commented that “each PT on the DLC from my school has run a carousel
where we each did a 20 minute workshop for the staff…My principal has been VERY supportive.” Another commented “I post the templates I develop to a School Instructional Practices folder so other teachers can use them.” Overall, it appeared that more structured avenues for sharing had been utilized by the PTs. But similar to the OTs, some respondents expressed frustration about the sharing within their schools: “Tried to share with staff but it is difficult as there is not a forum in place for this type of (incredibly valuable) professional sharing” and “Not as much sharing as I would like.”

The OT and PT Focus Group Participants

It is prudent to provide a brief biography of the subjects who participated in the interviews before reporting the focus group results. In the interest of anonymity, I have removed identifying marks and allocated a code and number to each subject that corresponds to his or her OT or PT role.

It should be noted that the proportion of elementary to secondary teachers was different for the OT and PT focus groups. Although the OT group had four secondary and three elementary teachers, only one of the six PT focus group participants was a secondary teacher. However, since only three of the 17 PTs in the lesson study project were secondary teachers, this was representative of the balance of elementary and secondary teachers in the PT role. Further, the desire to bring participants together who could serve as rich cases was far more important to my research than their teaching assignment.
OT1 is a 14 year teacher who works in a French Immersion elementary school, half-time as a Grade 7/8 teacher, and half-time as a Student Support Teacher. She has taught in all subject areas during the span of her career.

OT2 has been teaching elementary school for 10 years, and started her career in the United States. She has a current teaching complement of part Grade 6/7 teacher and Student Support Teacher. She also works within a French Immersion school.

OT3 teaches in a rural K-12 school with 140 secondary students. She is a qualified secondary school English and History teacher, has been teaching for five years, and is currently a department head at her school.

OT4 is a Grade 7/8 teacher at a challenging inner city elementary school. She is in her fourth year of teaching.

OT5L is a secondary math and science teacher in her second year of teaching. She teaches at a small, largely rural high school in the west end of the district.

OT6 teaches in a mid-sized suburban secondary school. Over the past 17 years, he has taught math, computer science, business and technology. He also spent two years teaching in Hong Kong.
OT7 is a secondary school computer science and math teacher with 14 years experience. She currently teaches at a mid-sized secondary school in the east end of the district, and spent one year teaching at a Christian private school in another district.

PT1 is an elementary teacher in her sixth year of teaching. She currently teaches Grade 7/8 at a small rural elementary school north of the city.

PT2 is also an elementary teacher in his sixth year of teaching. He currently teaches Grade 8 in the west end of the school district.

PT3 is a literacy and drama teacher at an inner city secondary school. Over the span of her career, she has taught overseas, in a large metropolitan city in Ontario, and in her current school. She has been teaching for 13 years.

PT4 has 8 years’ experience as an elementary teacher, 3 of which were in another school board. She currently teaches Grade 7 in a small, rural elementary school north of the city.

PT5 teaches a Grade 5/6/7 split class in an inner city elementary school. She has been teaching for five years.

PT6 is a seventh year elementary teacher. She currently teaches Grade 7/8 in a rural elementary school north of the city.
Focus Group Results

In both cases, the focus group discussions far exceeded my expectations. The conversations were not only lively but impassioned. There was no “dead air.” Frustration, excitement, and vulnerabilities all came to the fore within both focus groups and, in both cases, discussion ensued even after the interview was completed. It was obvious to me that participants wanted their voices to be heard. It was also obvious that many participants had spent a great deal of time pondering the topic. This might have reflected their preparation for the interviews and desire to make a useful contribution to the discussions. However, the level of introspection apparent in the responses seemed to signify emotions that had spanned, in some cases, their whole life as a teacher. It was as if some of them had waited their entire teaching careers for the opportunity to share these feelings.

While both groups exhibited animated responses within the discussions, I expected the OT group to be the more subdued of the two. This certainly was not the case. In fact, their responses were filled with more frustration and anxiety than the PT group displayed. They viewed their previous PD experiences as a personal affront to their professionalism and a waste of their time. One participant characterized PD as someone “talking at you for two hours and you come out with your head reeling, and you’ve learned nothing, and you don’t know why you’re there” (OT3). At one point, the participants’ fervor necessitated a reminder from the second researcher that the conversation would be difficult to transcribe with so many interjections and simultaneous conversations. The passion revealed at the outset of the focus group came
to signify the clear convictions and deep dissatisfaction expressed throughout the interviews.

**Word Frequency**

Word frequency analysis provided some interesting preliminary findings in the comparison of the two transcriptions (see Table 2). The frequency of use for the top ten words in each focus group is identified in brackets; words that were unique to a group are identified in bold.

Table 2

*Focus Group Word Frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTs</th>
<th>PTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time (73)</td>
<td>Time (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals (23)</td>
<td>Focus (42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talk (21)</td>
<td>Talk (27)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus (15)</td>
<td>Change (26)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing (13)</td>
<td>People (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Reflect (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Skills (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration (11)</td>
<td>Goals (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice (10)</td>
<td>Initiative (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These findings suggest some commonalities and differences in the ideas that were prominent in the minds of participants. Both groups made regular reference to time as an issue, not only within a PD experience itself, but in the period of implementation following. Having a clear focus and goals in a PD experience was raised repeatedly within both discussions. The concept of “talking with colleagues” versus being “talked at” in PD was something mentioned frequently by both the OTs and PTs, and both groups made a number of references to active and passive learning experiences within their discussions. While there were significant similarities between the two groups, there were also striking differences. The OT group made more frequent mention of the desire for sharing, modeling and applying new knowledge within a PD experience. As well, the need for choice in PD and the frustration of not having it was something voiced more frequently in the OT discussion group. In contrast, more of the PT discussion focused on teacher change, and the elements required to move people forward within the change process. Moreover, the concept of reflecting on practice and skill improvement was mentioned more regularly within the PT discussion. Lastly, the PT discussion included more references to various change initiatives and the feelings associated with the introduction of those initiatives.

In summary, word frequency analysis provided a snapshot of the most prominent discussion points within the two focus groups. This was useful in the forming of preliminary ideas about areas of concern for the OTs and PTs. The results provided a valuable starting point for the comparison of the two groups, and were very useful clues as to the themes that would emerge from the focus group discussions.
Within the analysis of the OT and PT finding strips, two major themes began to materialize. While these themes happened to be similar for both groups, two distinct perspectives came into view. What follows is an overview of those perspectives. In both cases, the participants’ sense of self as a teacher emerged from the data. Additionally, and related, I drew a conception of authentic learning out of the analyses. I will present the sense of self and authentic learning conceptions separately for the two groups. Following this, I will link the main points that were distilled from the data analysis back to the research questions posed in this study.

*The Development of “Self” through PD Experiences*

Figure 1 provides a conceptual representation of the findings that follow. The profile statements that introduce each factor are meant to capture the OT voice.
The OT profile

*Figure 1*. Impact of PD on the OT sense of “self”
My sense of self is improved when I make decisions about what I want to learn

There are a number of inside and outside factors that appear to impact this sense of self. The first external factor is the issue of autonomy, and the need by the OT to feel empowered to make decisions about what is important. The OT has a need to be treated as a professional. She expresses a cynicism about directives or “stipulations we HAVE to follow” and values PD experiences where “you’ve selected to go for your own personal growth” (OT2). In essence, she feels that teachers should be the ones making decisions about what goes on during PD days (OT3).

The chance to learn with and from others increases my sense of self

Another externally controlled factor that impacts her is the opportunity to learn within a collaborative framework. In particular, she expresses excitement about the lesson study experience compared to other PD models: “One of the joys of the DLC this year has been the discussions and the interactions, and I found that to be much more valuable” (OT2). She admits that her actions are often done in isolation: “I’m the Lone Ranger. I’ve got to solve all of my problems myself, and maybe I’ll talk to a colleague every once in a while…” (OT6). Thus, the OT feels that not only should there be opportunities to collaborate, but that it is a skill which she must develop: “the most important thing is to learn to collaborate with your colleagues. I think the rest of it will come” (OT6). Overall, she is driven to find meaningful opportunities to work with her colleagues, but states: “I so crave that time with my colleagues to discuss, and then when we do have it and it’s not used effectively, it just about drives me insane” (OT1). Thus, while the opportunity is not always presented, she desperately seeks the chance to learn with and from her colleagues.
I need a “complete” learning experience

Next, a PD experience that allows immersion in the learning elicits the most reward for the OT:

I like the DLC. One of the things I noticed when you ran those things was that you modeled it…it was done in a way that we could actually see it being applied as you were presenting, or as you were teaching a lot of the things…there [were] a lot of things there that not only in the observational time at the school that we could see and apply, but we could see how you had taken these very things and [were] practicing them with us. (OT7)

Moreover, the OT values learning with a clear focus and direct application to the classroom, so she can see “how it’s going to impact on the INSTRUCTION that I’m doing, because I’m going to follow through HERE, and I’m going to do this amazing job here” (OT2). Further, the OT thrives in a PD experience that is tailored to her needs, suits her teaching context, and allows the freedom to “change it and adapt it for me” (OT2). She states, “I thought that’s what was really amazing about the DLC, because I loved going to watch a lesson and then trying it out the next week…” (OT2). The job-embedded learning model provides the explicit instruction necessary to bolster the OTs confidence in her own abilities: “But…when I went to see them actually being done, it was like ‘Oh, okay, I get it now’. I go back to class and then it was, like, amazing what was happening…for me, I think I would need to observe things…I can’t very well read something and then just go and do it” (OT4). The observation time is pivotal in the development of the OTs practice: “I did feel like I moved up from the mechanical use, to the refinement stage…and largely because I’ve been teaching for a long time, so once I SAW it, and saw somebody else do it, it wasn’t a huge stretch for me to then go put it into practice” (OT1).
My sense of self is eroded by a lack of trust and respect from others

Trust, respect and a sense of being valued by the organization cannot be underestimated in their impact on the OT’s sense of self. Not only does the OT feel a lack of control over her own learning, but she is jaded by PD experiences with no follow through or focus, such as school goals that never get revisited. She has come to resent what she sees as shallow attempts to craft PD experiences, declaring, “I have totally avoided it because I don’t have the time to waste trying to figure out what we are going to do” (OT4). Unfortunately, she can trace these experiences right across her career. She states: “when I started teaching, they gave me a key to my classroom” (OT1), which to her, signifies a lack of regard for her learning needs even as a beginning teacher. Learning opportunities for new teachers feel like they “just have to be done to get done” (OT5). In addition, she resents missed opportunities for individualized learning, such as the teacher performance appraisal. Instead of it being a chance to reflect on her strengths and weaknesses, her administrator’s superficial treatment of the process and lack of attention to the details of her work in the school left her thinking “…it was ridiculous, that whole process. I thought it was brutal” (OT4).

Her attempts to share her learning with others are thwarted by either the lack of opportunity for sharing, or avenues that are poorly-conceived mechanisms for dialogue. This causes her to think: “you know what, in the future I’m just not going to be very useful, I’m not sure how much time I’m going to put into sharing what I learned” (OT2). Even when opportunities for sharing and autonomy are offered, the OT senses doubt from the organization, as she declares: “I think they need to trust us enough to
know that if you give us the time, that we will USE the time” (OT5). Issues around trust and respect, and an overarching feeling of not being valued, have perhaps the most profound effect on the OT’s sense of self.

*Time for reflecting on practice is rewarding for me*

While these external factors seem predominantly injurious to the OT’s sense of self, there are many internal factors that impact the OT’s outlook either positively or negatively. If modeling is integral to PD for the OT, so, too is her desire to be reflective. She indicates: “I need time to get my head around it” (OT3), and “sometimes you want to practice it before you reflect on it” (OT4). The OT sees her teaching practice as a cyclical learning process which includes setting small steps for learning and then adjusting past practice (OT5). She views PD as an opportunity to garner “great ideas, and then go back…reflecting and improving practice and instruction” (OT2). Sadly, the OT is faced with “quick and dirty PD” (OT4) where “all we do is talk about it” (OT5). The act of reflecting on past learning experiences and current teaching practices is instrumental in the cultivation of her sense of self.

*I flourish in a PD experience that is non-threatening and reassuring*

Reassurance is also crucial to the development of the OT’s feelings of self-efficacy. She may feel a degree of intimidation when trying new things in her classroom. Some PD experiences are constructed such that “you can’t possibly get to everything they give you, and so I end up feeling like I do a lot of things poorly, instead of two or three things really well” (OT1). Sometimes these experiences make her fearful of failure. Additionally, her lack of confidence in her abilities makes her less likely to share with fellow staff members if she is leery of the response she might
receive (OT1). The lesson study model in this research, however, elicits a different response:

It was very clear from the beginning of the DLC in September, and I’ve only done it for a year, that we were going to make mistakes and it didn’t have to be perfect, and so it was such a comfortable environment that by the end of the year…I felt comfortable being a presenting teacher, whereas if you’d asked me in the fall, I would have said ‘not a chance’…the way it was delivered, I think made me feel like I didn’t have to be an EXPERT, whereas sometimes when I’ve gone to PD sessions where an expert is reading to me or talking to me, I’ve felt, like ‘okay, well, that person is the expert, but I don’t know if I can make that work in my classroom’…and I felt intimidated to try it, whereas this stuff, I couldn’t wait to get back and try it. (OT1)

Critical to her sense of confidence, then, is a model of professional development that is grounded in real-life experiences where uncertainty and fallibility is endorsed as a legitimate form of learning.

I am renewed by PD that I find fulfilling

Not surprising, the OT’s sense of self is fuelled by PD experiences that she sees as fulfilling. She views PD as a chance for renewal and a source of hope for her students: “I felt very much I guess at the end of myself, with some of the things I was doing, and I needed something, and things were put into place this year where just some of the PD was just right on time for me to get some renewal…some renewal and some hope in ME to put into them” (OT7). She uses words such as “exciting” and “energized” to describe her feelings when she is engaged in learning she considers meaningful. When she has a positive learning experience, she states: “I just float for the next couple of weeks trying new things and working differently with my kids” (OT1).

To summarize, the OT’s sense of self is negatively impacted by PD experiences that offer little choice and few opportunities for collaboration. Her past experiences
have come to make her feel undervalued and, at times, disrespected as a professional. The lack of autonomy she feels in making decisions about her own learning suggest to her that she cannot be trusted to decide what she needs to learn. Conversely, the OT can come to find real satisfaction and fulfillment from PD in which she is immersed in the learning experience. A non-threatening environment that is paced to allow time for integration and reflection elicits the greatest impact on her sense of self as a teacher. These experiences culminate in enhanced motivation, a heightened feeling of self-efficacy, and a sense of excitement about teaching.

*My Conception of “Authentic Learning”*

The analysis of the OT focus group elicited a number of beliefs about the ingredients in an authentic learning experience, and the impediments to the development of one (see Figure 2).
Figure 2. OT authentic learning conception

My authentic learning experience

Ingredients
- Purposeful
- Integrated
- Differentiated
- Collaborative

Impediments
- Not situated in time or context
- Divide between stakeholders
- Contradictory messaging
My PD must be goal-oriented and purposeful

A range of factors help to shape an authentic PD experience for the OT. The first relates to goals and focus. Put simply, the OT seeks learning opportunities that are purposeful and relevant. She is less concerned about who facilitates the PD, provided they are effective and provide a useful experience. She states, “You know, every now and again, it’s nice to have…a really fabulous speaker that comes in and inspires everybody, and makes you laugh…but we don’t always need that” (OT1). She respects a facilitator who, like an effective teacher, values the time of his or her audience, strives to ensure the time is used well, and can read his or her participants: “If you have all your students, and you’re teaching a lesson, and they’re all kind of like this [leans over her chair] [laughter], you know what, your lesson’s over. It’s not effective. Move on. Try something else…” (OT2). She also wants a PD experience that is relevant to her most immediate needs, and is “going to help me when I go back to my classroom the VERY NEXT DAY, not years from now” (OT1). PD that demonstrates focus and is connected to the practicalities of the classroom is of great value to the OT because her concerns are very much grounded in the “here and now.”

My PD must be an interactive and integrated experience

Second, the OT learns best within an experience where she is able to engage in the actual process of learning (OT6). She places little value in PD she considers superficial. The OT yearns for PD that goes farther than just the brief five minute introduction to something that we have to learn. We have to take that and figure out how that fits and it follows through the whole lesson, and how it interacts with the assessment, and all those things…it’s like we’re going to this buffet and we’re getting a piece of each thing, but then
we’re not…putting the whole package together…we can’t just keep taking from the carousel. (OT6)

This necessitates a PD experience that is incremental, integrated, and strives to answer the question:

And what does that mean, not just every time we discuss it, you know, once a term, but what does that mean for teachers on a daily basis, so that it’s in manageable little chunks so we can all feel like we’re moving forward. (OT1)

Moreover, the OT needs to see how the learning translates to the classroom and will improve her own practice. She is energized by seeing it in action (OT4). This is in sharp contrast to her typical learning experience where the PD is something “done to you” and is never revisited: “there’s always a brand new thing, there’s always a brand new focus, and you don’t get…enough time to PRACTICE it before they’ve moved on to the next thing” (OT1). A job-embedded model is highly desirable to the OT for these reasons.

*My PD must be differentiated*

Not only does the OT want to be immersed in the learning experience, but she also hopes her PD opportunities will meet her unique needs. She expects these experiences to take a variety of formats, and to appeal to different learning styles. She resents PD where “we’re talked at…you’re told to get into groups and do this, and everyone looks at their watch thinking ‘come on, when is this going to be done?’” (OT4). At the school level, she begrudges administration using PA days to talk about the school’s goals instead of her own. The lack of choice or involvement in the decision making process is highly frustrating for her. From her perspective, the lesson study model was enjoyable because
it, in itself, has evolved based on the needs of the teachers. And I think that’s because we were continually asked what do we need, what do we want, what do you want to see happen… and we had a lot of input in that, so we had a couple of sort of varying levels at DLC…I think it was able to… meet people where they are, like, sort of, on their own continuum. (OT4)

To the OT, authentic learning experiences are true to a differentiated learning model, are rooted in sharing and reflection, and based on teacher choice. Inextricably connected to these ideas is the final factor, which is the desire for a social network.

*My PD must be based on learning with and from others*

The OT recognizes that a supportive environment is an integral part of meaningful professional learning. But this learning need not always be highly structured. Some of her most valuable experiences are casual interactions with colleagues. She states:

> We are our own experts. It doesn’t have to be this formal, let’s meet in the library with microphones and a slide show, even just sitting in your office with another English teacher talking about lessons or lesson planning or whatever it is, is in itself PD that is relevant. (OT3)

She has derived satisfaction from her work in learning teams and professional learning communities within her school, and considers the team mindset critical to their success. In one experience, she states:

> Our focus was to make one goal that we could all as a team obtain. And if that’s to start at the beginning and to work together toward that goal, that PD piece is really important… we can’t possibly say everybody go and do shared reading in the classroom when somebody on the team doesn’t know what shared reading is. (OT2)

The less formal nature of some PD models appeals to her, in part because it augments the social and collaborative aspects of learning.
In summary, then, it becomes clear what the OT deems as the critical ingredients in a successful PD experience. First, its purpose must be transparent and based on a recursive model of learning. Next, it must be differentiated based on teacher needs, and rooted or situated in a context. Also, it must offer a high degree of choice and control over the learning, which increases the likelihood of its relevance and, ultimately, the quality of the learning itself. Lastly, it must promote and utilize social relationships and networks as a means of enhancing the learning.

What impedes an authentic learning experience

**PD that is poorly timed or out of context for my school, my students, or me**

In the eyes of the OT, a PD experience that is based on a linear model of learning, and whose purpose is either convoluted or absent altogether, is doomed. But these are not the only impediments she struggles against in her PD experiences. She must contend with PD that is ill-timed or out of context. The OT believes that the success of the experience depends upon the need of the teacher at the time of the PD. For her, the lesson study model happened to come at just the right time: “If I was getting the DLC maybe last year or two years ago, and hadn’t seen how this was coming about in math, I might have thought ‘well, you know, this is great, but…’ so I think that the timing for me was exceptionally perfect” (OT7). Unfortunately, much of the PD she experiences occurs without consideration of the time at which it is best offered, or the context in which it is most pertinent. At times the OT feels a pressure from administration to attend PD simply so her school is represented (OT4). More often than not, these experiences are irrelevant to her needs. In her words, this PD “just
blows up in a ball of dust” (OT3). The likelihood of meaningful learning is diminished further if there is no time to assimilate new learning into current practice. Even within her lesson study experience, she feels her LoU did not increase as much as it could have if she was provided time at school to integrate what she had observed.

**Contradictory messaging**

The OT sees an enormous contradiction between what she is expected to do in the classroom, and what is “done” to her in PD. She compares some PD events to an independent study project where the student is left to fend for themselves. She states: “You wouldn’t give that, a HUGE project…and not meet with them and conference along the way” (OT5). She is exasperated by PD that conflicts with the instructional practices she is expected to uphold: “It’s reinforced that we need to be explicit in our own teaching, and I feel like a lot of this PD and information that we are being given is NOT explicit…I went to…a math in-service…and the point I felt was all over the map. I felt like when I came out of it that it was…we had some money, so we had to throw this together” (OT4). Perhaps the biggest paradox for the OT is that the PD methodology she most commonly endures is the one condemned most within those PD experiences. She laments over one occasion where: “I felt it was quite ironic that they were using the Socratic method to tell us how wrong the Socratic method was [laughter], and I think that’s an interesting metaphor for the way that teachers are treated, that they don’t bother applying…the strategy to us that we’re expected to apply to our students” (OT6). The OT cannot help but to feel belittled by PD facilitators who advocate for one approach, but “sort of forget to do it to us” (OT5).
Divide between the stakeholders

The sentiments outlined above increase the divide between what the OT sees as those in the trenches and those who make the rules. When she speaks of the various levels of the hierarchy, she talks in terms of what she is “told” to do by others (OT3). She views her school leaders as those who must ensure the board’s goals are realized. The OT believes the implications of these goals at the classroom level are not appreciated: “They’re obviously figuring out that WE’RE going to understand how to apply it when they probably don’t” (OT6). This perspective of “us” and “them” leads to further distrust of the motives of those with decision making power. Because those decisions are so far removed from her stance and made without her input, she comes to feel her free will is usurped. More important, she believes this trickle down effect is not to the benefit of the student (OT1). What the OT sees as a lack of transparent motives and recognition of the implications at the classroom level serve as significant barriers to an effective PD experience for the OT.

The PT profile

The Development of “Self” through PD Experiences

In some respects, the PT displays many similarities to the OT. Some of the same factors, such as trust and respect, influence her sense of self. But the PT also exhibits some of these attributes more strongly or with greater complexity, such as her desire for autonomy and the need for self-fulfillment. She also displays some of her
own unique needs in the development of her sense of self. Figure 3 serves to conceptualize the PT sense of self.
I need trust and respect in order to believe I am valued

Like the OT, issues of trust run deep for the PT. From her perspective, others think she cannot be relied upon to make sound decisions about her own PD or use her time in a meaningful way: “It’s, like, this distrust of the VALUE of being together with colleagues, and talking about what you do in your classroom” (PT3). She wishes that
accountability could be shown through other means than large forum sessions at the school board office (PT5) where the central office mindset seems to be “if we don’t manage their time, they’ll waste it” (PT1). She applies this concern not only to herself, but her school administrators, who she feels are constrained in their roles as facilitators of school-based PD. These problems about trust are compounded when she participates in PD sessions that she feels do not respect her as an adult learner. She draws a parallel between these times and occasions when students are forced to do something “just because.” She is also astute enough to realize when those delivering the PD are indifferent to the cause: “They’re passing on information that they’ve been asked to give us, and they don’t believe in it, they don’t know if it’s going to help anybody, and so there’s this lackluster delivery” (PT2). She disapproves of the minimal effort that may go into planning her professional learning:

They would get together on Thursday afternoon for a full-day on Friday, and say ‘what are we going to do, let’s call some department heads in. Hey, can you have a department meeting and talk about this really big initiative?’ So, very disorganized, no planning, maybe a lunch…. (PT3)

Even the PD topics she considers worthwhile are still portrayed as painful (PT6). In her mind, the way she is treated at PD sessions is nothing short of disrespectful and insulting (PT1).

The feelings the PT expresses about trust and respect influence her overall sense of worth to the organization; feeling undervalued transcends not only her PD experiences, but other aspects of her work as a teacher. For example, she thinks about all of the unnoticed extra time she devotes to her classes, and the days of work she has spent on student documentation that was never used (PT6). The resulting cynicism causes her to resist new PD topics as just another initiative.
Many PD experiences make me feel inadequate

If PD experiences make her feel undervalued, they certainly contribute to her sense of inadequacy. The PT uses words such as “guilt” or “overwhelmed” to describe her sentiments and states these experiences cause her to feel “smaller and smaller” (PT4). She talks about PD in terms of things that should be done rather than wanting to do them. She has two different conceptions of PD, where “one is the top-down delivered PD, which is when you go to the board office because you’re told to, learn about this because it’s important…those ones I find cause me a lot of anxiety…I will get excited about something, but…I leave always feeling worse about myself as a teacher rather than feeling more inspired and better” (PT1). The PT is also less likely to share her uncertainties within a top-down delivery model because it would require admitting not doing something which is expected of her. The end result is a never-ending cycle where the PT’s hesitance to show her weaknesses means her true needs are not realized, and her sense of self is eroded further.

Choice and control over my learning empowers and motivates me

A lack of self-governance is also prominent in the PT’s mind. Like the OT, she resents it when the board dictates what happens on school-based PD days (PT5, PT6). Even instances where divisional or department time is set aside are scripted. She is frustrated that there is little opportunity to deviate from this script to do something of value for a particular school or group of teachers. She recounts past experiences where “instead of using it for what we wanted to do, we had to talk about some big topic, fill out a little thing and hand it in, and then never hear about it” (PT3). The PT recognizes that PD determined by her will likely be more fulfilling: “I always leave those top-
down PD sessions feeling very anxious and feeling very poor about myself as a teacher. Whereas the experiences I’ve had where they have been personally driven, I always feel very good about myself as a teacher” (PT1). Fortunately, the PT can recall past experiences that she deemed rewarding and enriching. She describes with fondness a time where teachers had control over their own learning: “And it was GREAT, because we got to choose workshops that we knew the staff wanted…And the leader was really a workshop leader, and they were really workshops, and people were doing things and creating things, and we did a series of days like that” (PT3). PD experiences that are based on choice and an internal accountability provide the sense of autonomy that fuels her sense of self.

*I feel self-fulfilled when my learning makes a difference for students*

The PT finds it difficult to work with resistors who seem disinterested in the improvement of their craft. She seeks opportunities such as the DLC where she can continue what she has learned. The PT’s drive for both self and student improvement is her incentive for changing practice. While she perceives it as very difficult, she states: “you have to be willing to be honest with yourself and to take criticisms…and so how do I make sure that I’m moving forward as a professional, and that my students are getting to where I want them to be” (PT6). The benefit to students is vital to the PT’s decision to adopt new ideas and is a strong determinant that a PD experience has been fulfilling: “The first thing I need to get out of it is a real belief that this is important for my students…and it will benefit them if I learn it and practice it” (PT1). The PT describes her practice as one that evolves based on her perceptions of her performance as a teacher. While changing her practice is difficult, it is something she is willing to
embrace: “…it was hard for me to do the switch, but once I did, I jumped in head-first…and it was really good” (PT4). For the PT, the risks are high, but the reward is worthwhile.

*Critical self-reflection and being a critical thinker enhance my sense of self*

The PT’s conception of self is based on the belief that she must be “a little bit good at a lot of things” (PT2). In reality, she feels that teaching and learning are very little about the curriculum and very much about the personal and social factors at play. She considers her LoU as dependent upon where she puts the most attention. Thus, her performance as a teacher fluctuates up and down the ladder (PT6). She believes that to benefit from PD experiences, teachers must not only be willing to take a critical look at *how* they have done things, but *why* things are done as they are. The tremendous value she places in critical reflection, in addition to her desire to be acknowledged as a critical thinker, are what set her apart from the OT.

The PT characterizes her own learning as a cycle that, by its very nature, leads to a desire for more learning. Within that learning cycle, she constantly reflects on the outcomes of her efforts. To her, the most pressing questions are “Am I hitting the jackpot for most of the kids?”, “am I doing the best that I can?”, and “is my learning going to help THEM to learn?” (PT4). True PD requires an honest examination of the answers to those questions. Effective PD, then, is not just about acquiring knowledge, but also about enabling a teacher to determine if the desired outcomes are being achieved. Ultimately, the PT believes a teacher must possess a sense of personal responsibility because “there is no supervisor. There’s no effective performance appraisal. There’s nothing at the end of the day except a self-check ‘am I doing the best
that I can?’…‘is it working?’, and ‘am I willing to make the changes I need to if I feel it’s not working?’” (PT1).

Connected to this desire to be critically reflective is the ambition to exercise her intellectual capacity as a critical thinker. The PT wants permission to challenge the status quo. She longs for a PD experience that goes beyond mere imparting of information to deconstruction of the subject at hand. But the cultural norms that regulate the PD arena hinder such behaviour:

I don’t know why we as teachers take ownership for poor training. Why we take it as, you know, as admission of fault that I’m not doing shared reading well. And that’s why I was in DLC…I’m very unapologetic about the fact that I did not have a shared reading program before this year, because WHO told me what it LOOKED like? Whoever trained me in it, other than passing me the Balanced Literacy document. So I think we need to be more unapologetic…You know, if I see that the consultant has planned a great day, and provided us with nice snacks, and has worked really hard on a Powerpoint presentation, [laughter], I don’t want to be the person to put my hand up and put the cog in the wheel, and say “this seems like it’s going to be a waste of precious time as teachers”, I don’t want to be the rude person in the room. So there’s really not a good avenue for critical thinking or questioning or discussion. It’s very just top-down ‘eat it.’” (PT1)

So not only does her PD provide little time to talk about the practicalities of implementation, there is no forum through which to “pick it apart and say ‘these are the things we don’t like about that, and this is how we could make it better’” (PT2). She believes this lack of opportunity through central office to probe the issues stems from “a fear of being questioned because they don’t know the answer” (PT1). But in her mind, it is essential that teachers be empowered to determine for themselves the merit of the initiatives that come their way. The PT does not lay all of the blame for disempowerment with central office, however. She recognizes how her behaviour encourages the continuation of this PD delivery model: “I think that it’s partially
teachers’ fault that we don’t PUSH for critical thinking, because we sit there thinking of all the things we could be doing in our classrooms…we don’t really pose the questions at the end because we think ‘get me out of here’” (PT2).

In summary, to be trusted and respected as a professional is of tremendous importance to the PT’s sense of self. Her sense of being valued is enhanced when she is given the chance to have greater control over her own learning goals. Examining her own practice is something she finds personally rewarding. She is fulfilled by PD experiences that offer more than the opportunity for dialogue; she craves PD that offers the prospect of intellectual challenge. At times, however, she feels oppressed working within a profession characterized by passive acceptance and mere tolerance of the way things are. She does not extricate her sense of self from the achievements of her students; thus, nearly all of her motivation is rooted in a search for the path to improved student learning. PD experiences that offer these things have the potential for remarkable effects on her sense of self and her teaching practice.

My Conception of “Authentic Learning”

The PT offers scathing criticism of what constitutes a superficial learning experience. For example, she recounts school improvement planning days as merely an exercise in “let’s repurpose some bits and make it look pretty in the table” (PT1). She also has a keen sense of when a PD presenter seems to be going through the motions. The PT wants a presenter to be passionate about the topic, yet also willing to admit when they don’t know all the answers. To her, authentic learning must include job-embedded learning at the school level (PT2). The PT is able to articulate the
shortcomings and attributes of PD with exceptional precision. Her view of an authentic learning experience is represented in Figure 4.

*Figure 4.* PT authentic learning conception
Like the OT, the PT characterizes most of her PD experiences as an imparting of information. She states: “we just get the information given to us for whatever the initiative is, and it’s framed for us, and here’s the reasons why you should do it, and here’s the research behind it, here’s some examples of it, do with it what you will. And you take your handout and you walk out of the room” (PT2). She resents the lack of follow-up and continuity from one PD experience to another. Even more, she has complete disdain for the train-the-trainer model of PD. Her words need no explanation:

Maybe it works in the corporate world, I don’t know, but it does not work in teaching...where you send one teacher off to learn something and then come back and give us the watered down version in a five minute staff meeting. COMPLETELY ineffective...my feeling is that if you VALUE that information, that we all need to have it, then you’re going to put your money where your mouth is, and give us the time to all learn it. (PT1)

*PD must honour my desire for collaborative endeavours*

The PT’s desire for collaborative opportunities is just as strong as her opposition to the transmission model of learning. It is the topic foremost in her mind when she thinks about effective PD. But the divide between reality and her ideal is vast. The PT’s typical PD experience follows a formula: “it’s usually a big keynote speaker…a lot of teachers together from all different schools. And some inspirational message, and maybe a laugh or two. And then a series of workshops where you get a lot of information and new ideas, but there’s really no TIME to ADAPT them or work on them, or try them out” (PT3). She views this PD as a “crash course in something that usually takes years and years, or a lifetime of teaching to work on and develop” (PT5). This contrasts with what she wishes her PD to be: “I always look at hoping PD becomes more of a collaboration…and working with others who are like-minded in whatever subject it is, or theory…and work together and hopefully come up with
something that we can all use in the classroom” (PT4). She believes that working with others who “ALL want to know something…all want to learn from each other, and really are there because they WANT to be there, that is a really powerful thing” (PT2). The PT recognizes how difficult it is to turn her moments of reflection into action in the absence of collaboration and support. She believes that would be asking too much of a teacher (PT2).

Interestingly, what she considers her “own” ideal PD is often done informally: “It’s talking with colleagues, maybe reading a chapter out of a book with another colleague, and then talking about it over lunch, going off trying something, coming back ‘hey, how did that go?’ and trying to find a focus within the division that we work” (PT5). The large scale sessions with high powered speakers are never the ones she cites as most memorable or most lasting. It appears more important to her to be on equal footing with those who facilitate her PD. She recounts a learning team experience with the researcher: “when we did that small group at school X and you came…it wasn’t like you were the boss…you came, you had information, you had resources, you asked really good questions…it was sort of like ‘we’re all colleagues’” (PT3). Thus, a PD facilitator who is credible and makes the learning genuine and accessible is the criterion on which she bases her judgements.

The glint of hope for the PT is that some of her more recent PD experiences have taken a more personal and collaborative slant. She hopes her school board will more readily take its direction from the voices of teachers. But she sees there is more work to be done to achieve this end:

I think we need to get that voice out there a bit stronger as well. And I think DLC has been great for that, but I think we shouldn’t be afraid of saying to
administration or saying to the board ‘listen, I’m not really happy with how this is going for me, how can we work together and fix this and change this?’…you know what, to hell with politeness, I mean this is our career, this is what we’re doing, and we have a right to have some level of happiness and satisfaction at the end of the day as well. (PT5)

The depth of her devotion to professional growth is immense.

*PD must be recursive in nature, not linear*

Through the DLC, the PT has come to realize “now I know what I don’t know” (PT4). She depicts her own learning as never-ending; not as a ladder, like the C-BAM, but as something much more recursive and in flux: “It’s not so much about me going up a ladder. It’s about me going up a step, and then learning something new, and going back down a step, and then going up a step…” (PT1). Her view of learning as cyclical means that she may never reach the pinnacle: “I don’t want to get there…because if I get there, what happens next? That’s my question…what happens next?” (PT4). She embraces the idea that her learning is not finite. Contrast this conception with the PD she experiences, and it is no surprise that she is reticent to participate. She suggests:

*It’s very rare that it’s linked to ‘this is what we’re doing now, and let’s REFINE that or make it better, or look at our own practice’. It’s always ‘we’re going to SCRAP that, and now we’re going to try this…it’s very rare that we look at what we’ve already done and build on it, we always try something new, or get something new laid onto what we’re already doing. (PT2)*

Literacy PD offers all kinds of examples of this phenomenon. The PT recalls initiatives such as *First Steps*, where “we were trained in it and then we never mentioned it again” (PT2). She laments that “I don’t think that any of my kids learned anything more than they would have without using that, because there was no follow-through” (PT6).

According to the PT, even the successes have not been given the attention they deserve:
“When professional development does start to work, a case in point is shared reading, which for the most part is working really well across the board…we never revisit it or celebrate it” (PT2). The PT seeks an opportunity where the learning becomes a cycle of doing, reflecting and refining. A PD experience that is faithful to this over the long term receives her wholehearted commitment.

*PD must follow its own lesson about effective teaching and learning*

One of the ironies that the PT identifies in her experience with PD is that it seldom reflects what is considered good teaching practice. First, it is rarely aligned with what she needs or deems important. Thus, she is much like the student in a classroom who fails to see the relevance in what he or she is learning. Second, though it is widely accepted that learning occurs when the learner is amenable to the idea, the PT still finds herself in PD where she has been made to participate. Next, her PD is often ill-timed or lacks a focus appropriate to her needs, such as “telling me in April that I need to focus on math, when my school’s focused on literacy” (PT1). Lastly, the learning is not constructed for the unique needs of its learners. The PT uses terms such as “cookie cutter” (PT1) to typify her common PD experiences. Though differentiated instruction methods are touted in the education arena, they are often not employed in her PD. Consequently, the PT feels “we don’t follow our own lesson” (PT2). She states: “I mean, I can understand how some of the students feel…you know, if I taught them the same way that I’m taught at the board office…I might start throwing paper…maybe someone will throw me out” (PT5).

*PD must respect that we exist on a continuum of learning and understanding*
The PT recognizes that one-size-fits-all PD will never meet the needs of all learners. She asserts it cannot be a “cattle call, because this is not going to be the thing for all the people in the room just because we all teach for the same board, the same grade” (PT1). Even a relatively short teaching career provides her with numerous experiences on which to base this belief. She also recognizes that while most PD is a “flash in the pan” (PT3), she and her colleagues need time, “and not a month of time and not five months of time” (PT2) to get better. Truly, she views PD as progression along a continuum, a manner of learning not unlike that of her students. Interestingly, the PT appreciates the power that one person can have in helping others who may be at a different point on the continuum, acknowledging that the excitement they exude helps to encourage others to consider change (PT2). Conversely, she understands that not all people are ready to adopt new ways of thinking and doing. Her attitude is that you must focus on the ones who are ready, while maintaining avenues for others to join later (PT5). This degree of reflection about the continuum of learning was not shown in the OT perspective.

Appreciate the change process within PD

The PT’s conception of teacher practice hinges on a teacher’s ability to be versatile and adaptable to the needs of his or her learners (PT5). Therefore, the PT sees acceptance of change as not only a necessary and valued attribute in a teacher, but as an outright pre-requisite for professional growth. PD, then, is the enabler of change. It provides the supports required to make change come to fruition. According to the PT, reflection without support for change will lead nowhere (PT2).
The PT recognizes that while some people are ready to embrace change, others are not. Fixation on the resistors is unproductive: “You have to go with the go-ers, you have to go with the people who want to change things” (PT5). Thus, to her, PD should be the catalyst; it should provide a source of excitement about change. Part of the excitement the PT derives from PD is when everyone is willing to embark on the learning journey together. She is empowered by this sense of community. By understanding the continuum of learning, she is able to accept that others may have different needs than her or be motivated by other factors. However, she is fueled by a sense that she is surrounded by a group of people who feel change is necessary (PT5).

*My PD must stay grounded in the realities of the classroom*

There is a discernable perception by the PT that those in higher levels of the educational hierarchy do not understand the true needs of teachers or the realities of their work. She expresses disappointment in the PD facilitated by her school leaders. Her overall impression of school-based PD has been “the administration doing administration stuff, which was a WASTE of our time” (PT3). She comments that the lesson study observations caused her to be much more nervous than any performance appraisal by her administrator because her colleagues came with a much firmer grasp of teaching methodologies (PT6). The PT who contemplates a move into an administrative role is concerned that she will lose the professional learning opportunities that keep her grounded in the improvement of teaching. She declares: “I’m honestly afraid of becoming that person” (PT2). She doesn’t lay all of the blame with administrators, however. Her plea “allow our principals to make good decisions for their schools” (PT5) is recognition that they, too, face limitations to what they can
do. While the disconnect between the school board, administration, and those on the front lines is upsetting to her, she is motivated to break down the barriers that exist between the levels of the hierarchy (PT4).

*PD should liberate me to do what I know is important*

If those in higher levels of the organization are distanced from the realities of the classroom, the PT sees this as further ammunition for why she should have greater say in crafting those PD experiences. But this goes beyond mere choice. It means she should be given the latitude to maintain a focus in one area, rather than juggling competing demands. But she hesitates to make such decisions without endorsement from her school leaders. For her, permission is the missing link (PT1). It not only allays her fears of getting her “wrist slapped,” but alleviates her personal struggle with “robbing Peter to pay Paul” (PT1). As a committed professional, she wants her actions legitimized, “instead of me feeling like I need to be somehow cheating, or, you know, compromising my own integrity to make what I know is a good teaching decision for my students” (PT1). Once she receives that endorsement, she is spurred into action. When this occurs, she indicates: “I have colleagues to talk to, and it’s valued by our administrator, and we’re given permission to put some other things on the back burner, so that we can devote energy and time into this one goal” (PT1). Fortunately, she states, “recent experiences have refocused me to see the value…in talking with people and sharing with people, and getting ideas from people, and seeing people teach” (PT2). This results in “validation for talking with colleagues being professional development” (PT2).
Overall Summary of OT and PT

The profiles of the OT and PT demonstrate more similarities than differences, which is to be expected. First, both the OT and PT have tremendous need to be trusted and respected as professionals. These factors, or the lack thereof, have significant bearing on their feeling of value to the organization within which they work, and to their very being as teachers. PD is a vital source of that trust and respect for both participants. Regrettably, though, both the OT and PT have experienced feelings of inadequacy thanks to their PD experiences. The two participants also share a need for self-determination, though how this manifests itself is different for both. The OT and PT sense of self is strengthened by PD that is based on collaborative and social relationships, whether with colleagues or facilitators. Perhaps most important, rewarding PD elicits feelings of renewal and fulfillment in both participants. In this respect, the impact of PD cannot be underscored enough.

The profiles of both participants also highlight a few differences. While both seek autonomy, the OT desires more choice over her PD, while the PT is more likely to seek liberation from the confines of traditional ways of doing. She is more likely to experiment with innovative approaches or to challenge the status quo. This is connected to another difference, which relates to the OT’s greater need for reassurance and a non-threatening PD atmosphere.

If the OT and PT profiles elicit both similarities and differences, it is not surprising that their conceptions of authentic PD do as well. Both were vehement that their PD be based on a cyclical, differentiated learning model. Both want to learn with
and from their colleagues in an interactive atmosphere, and neither participant is particular about who facilitates their PD, provided that person has credibility and is attuned to their needs. On the other hand, the OT is more concerned with having her immediate learning needs met while the PT is more likely to gravitate to PD that challenges conventional ways of doing. The OT offers a scathing criticism of her PD experiences, whereas the PT talks more in terms of potential solutions to the barriers in PD. When it comes to feelings about the institution of schooling itself, there appear to be key differences between the two participants. While the OT expressed a greater sense of futility about bringing about change, the PT took a more empathetic stance in her perspective and appeared to have greater confidence in her abilities to bring about improvements in the system. It should be noted that the similarities and differences between the OT and PT seemed to transcend their elementary or secondary teaching roles.

How Do The Composites Answer the Research Questions?

At the outset of the methodology chapter, I identified five research questions on which the study aims were based. Revisiting those questions serves to summarize the overall findings of this work.

The first question about conceptions of teacher practice seemed to elicit slightly different views from the OT and PT. While the OT offered a more mechanistic notion of teacher practice, the PT focused her ideas on the dynamic nature of the craft of teaching. The PT seemed more likely to have experienced a fundamental change in practice at some point in her career whereas the OT did not voice that same experience.
In the second question, the participants were asked how PD had impacted their practice. Both cited career-shaping experiences. Regrettably, both had experienced more disappointments than triumphs. Both conveyed a strong belief that the potential for PD to impact practice was enormous. Third, I asked what constituted effective and ineffective PD. The OT and PT were able to offer an infinite list of items for both categories with very little deviation between the two. Fourth, I explored how the OT and PT saw the institution’s practices as impacting her PD. Since this question was not asked outright, the answer was teased out of the participants’ responses. It became clear that the OT and PT both believed that the culture fostered in teaching in general, and in PD specifically, undermined attempts at free thinking and oppressed unconventional behaviours. Both the OT and PT recognized there were set ways of knowing and doing, though the PT seemed more attuned to the cultural forces responsible for the phenomenon. Lastly, I examined the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes valued by the OT and PT in a PD experience. There was no doubt that the impact on student learning was the most intrinsically significant factor for both of the participants. It was the source of inspiration and hope for both. The OT was also driven extrinsically by immediate results in the classroom, whereas the PT’s desire to work with likeminded people seemed to be a strong intrinsic factor for her. For both participants, there seemed to be a contradictory desire for improvement in the here and now, and a long-term, integrated learning experience. In summary, the OT and PT were similar in their characterizations of effective and ineffective PD and their views of its potential impact on their practice. However, their conceptions of teacher practice varied, and the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they valued in a PD experience differed.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the themes that emerged from the study of Grade 7-12 teachers in a job-embedded professional development initiative. I used findings from self-evaluations, web-based surveys, and focus group discussions to portray the experiences of the participants in a modified lesson study model, and to create a composite of the OT and PT. I then related the responses from both groups to the research questions established within the study aims.

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast the OT and PT profiles, to situate those profiles in the existing literature, and to weigh the PD experience against current research. Further, this chapter serves to make clear the implications of the research in both practical and theoretical terms. The chapter closes with a discussion of the study limitations, and my own musings about areas that could be explored through future research.

Cross-case Analysis

While the OT and PT cases were similar in many respects, the independent examination of both revealed some differences. The OT and PT were much the same in their (a) conception of effective and ineffective PD, (b) perception of how the institution’s practices affected their PD, and (c) perception of how PD had impacted their practice. However, they differed in the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards valued in a PD experience, and in their notions of teacher practice.
The OT and PT both viewed effective PD as a differentiated, collaborative and socially-based venture. They also felt it must have relevance; that is, it must suit the context of the teacher and be timed when the teacher is most likely to benefit. The OT and PT were consistent in their perception of the institution and its impact on their PD. Both felt a significant divide between the people at lower and higher levels of the education hierarchy, and both believed those in positions of authority did not understand or appreciate teachers’ learning needs. They saw distrust from the institution as the reason they were not afforded choice in their professional learning endeavours. The result was PD that was disconnected from their learning goals, classroom practices, and other PD experiences. Lastly, the OT and PT agreed that, while most PD had little bearing on their teaching behaviours, some experiences had been instrumental in changing practice. All agreed that authentic PD had the potential for tremendous impact on their teaching.

The descriptions used by the OT and PT to define “teacher practice” demonstrated some subtle differences in conceptions. While the OT was more likely to think in terms of curriculum planning, lesson delivery, and student assessment, the PT described it as a ritual of reflection and action where the teacher served as a “vehicle” for student learning (PT5). In fact, she viewed curriculum as being outside of teacher practice altogether. And while both OT and PT placed great value in intrinsic rewards such as improved student learning, the OT felt greater need for immediate benefit from her PD experiences. The PT showed greater interest in challenging traditional ways of doing.
The OT and PT profiles, as well as the findings related to the research questions, exhibit both congruence and dissimilarity with what is purported in academia. For example, while the findings of this study consistently supported results from other PD research, they did not always appear applicable to the theoretical constructs on which the study was based. Those similarities and differences are described in further detail below.

Relationship of Findings to the Literature

*PD Literature*

There is a wealth of literature that claims what effective PD should be. First, Guskey (2000) asserts that effective PD should cause teachers to feel more personal responsibility for student learning and to feel more positive about teaching in general. The results of the present study suggest this occurred for the DLC participants. Many participants expressed feelings of excitement and inspiration when engaged in the lesson observations, and their responses to the lesson study model reflected increased motivation and a sense of empowerment. The quest for self-fulfillment figured prominently in the sense of self construct for the OT and PT. The impact of their perception of PD on sense of self should not be underestimated. Next, Guskey (2000) declares that meaningful PD does not occur as a discrete event in time. This is supported by the OT and PT characterizations of ineffective PD as “quick and dirty” and a “flash in the pan.” Furthermore, the work of Boyle et al. (2004) suggests that “one shot” approaches do not cause a change in what or how teachers teach. Mezirow (2000) also states that learners can go through the machinations of traditional learning
experiences without any resultant challenge to their fundamental ideas (p. 157). First Steps training and school improvement planning days are a few example from the OT and PT experiences that support these claims. Finally, the literature suggests that effective PD models should foster collaborative and social opportunities for learning, while still protecting individuality (Hargreaves, 1994). The OT’s and PT’s agreement with this perspective is undisputed, as demonstrated by the volume of data that emerged related to the themes of collaboration and autonomy.

The results of this study also align with what is believed about how adults learn best. For example, Knowles (1979) conceptualizes the adult learner as a self-directed organism that self-assesses its needs, seeks resources to meet those needs, then evaluates its own success. The lesson study model used in this research is in keeping with these ideas. First, the PD opportunity was voluntary in nature, not only because participants were self-selected, but because they determined the role they wanted to assume (OT or PT). Second, the participants were able to access print resources, but more importantly, human supports such as the facilitator or the colleagues they worked with in their PT or OT clusters. Lastly, the self-evaluation tool used at the mid-way and end point of the year helped participants to realize any changes in their practice. This model also aligns with PD proposed by Landry et al. (2006), who support a situated and collaborative model for learning.

Lee’s (2005) work showed that when participants had greater decision making power over their own PD, their attitudes and beliefs about teaching improved, and they perceived themselves more as reflective practitioners. The results of this study run parallel to Lee’s. The issue of self-determination was mentioned time and again in both
the OT and PT focus group discussions. Lack of choice or control over PD experiences diminished their sense of self and caused them to resent those they saw as responsible for crafting their PD. Both groups voiced the need for choice and frustration about not having it, but it was a more prominent concern for the OT. As a result, she expressed greater cynicism about the organization and its motives. There are a few possible reasons for this discrepancy. Findings from the surveys and focus groups showed that PTs had facilitated more formal mechanisms of sharing in their schools. If the OT had not experienced as many teacher leader opportunities, it is possible that she felt that much more removed from the levels of the hierarchy where decisions were made. Thus, the justification for those decisions may have been less clear to her than to the PT. Being in those positions may have broadened the PT’s perspective and caused her to empathize more readily with those in positions of leadership and authority.

Participants in this experience spoke of the power of learning together, but they also recounted mandatory PD in which “you get a roomful of people where 10 of them KNOW all this, and 10 of them have NO IDEA, these people aren’t feeling too good about themselves, and those people are saying ‘I’ve already heard this’” (PT2). The voluntary nature of the DLC cannot be emphasized enough as a factor in its success. While the participants’ teaching experience ranged from two years to over 20, their openness to learning was an immediate equalizer. This dynamic simply would not have been possible if they were “told” to participate. But it should be noted that there was a significant discrepancy between the OTs’ and PTs’ perceived benefit of the PD experience. Additionally, far more OTs than PTs stated they would recommend their role to incoming members of the DLC. There are a few possible explanations for these
results. First, it is possible that PTs may have perceived their learning to be less substantial because they already had a high level of comfort with the literacy skills and strategies that were modeled in the lessons. It is also possible that the PTs felt the lesson study experience assigned greater risk to the PT, but greater emphasis on learning for the OTs. This would be a fair and reasonable assessment. It could be that the time set aside for lesson collaboration with fellow PTs was not maximized as fully as they would have liked. This is an aspect of the lesson study format that could be analyzed for future consideration. Regardless of the reason, these results stress the need for any lesson study model to continue to evolve based on feedback from the participants.

The research cited in chapter two suggests that teachers view collaborative, job-embedded PD such as lesson study more favourably than traditional PD formats. The findings in this study support those beliefs. Roughly 90% of the participants believed their lesson study experience had an impact on their practice, and over 80% felt it had an impact on student learning in their classroom. This is compelling evidence of the perceived merit of job-embedded learning. Evidence also suggests that collegial sharing among teachers leads to increased confidence, greater willingness to take risks, and greater commitment to personal development (Hargreaves, 1994). The participants’ experiences in this study support these findings. The OT emphasized the reassuring and non-threatening environment of the lesson study model as critical to its success, and one even credited it as the reason she felt comfortable becoming a PT. To many OTs, the observations were a source of inspiration to go back to their own classrooms and try what they had seen. The results in their classrooms led to further motivation and
willingness to explore other teaching strategies. None of these emotional responses or occurrences would have been possible for the OTs without a collegial atmosphere and the willingness of the PTs to open their classrooms.

The lesson study model was deemed successful by the participants largely because of its social and collaborative aspects. This is consistent with the work of Joyce and Showers (2002) whose research suggests that collegial interactions are vital to the success of implementation. The lesson study model upholds the notion that job-embedded PD can facilitate significant growth for its participants.

Theoretical Constructs

The theoretical constructs on which this research was based can also be used to situate the findings. Some, like the constructs of the reflective practitioner and expert pedagogue, are pertinent to a limited degree. For example, Schon (1983) argues that a person who devotes him or herself to technical expertise is often incapable of practicing reflection. The PT’s definition of teacher practice aligns with this perspective. She believes curriculum to be outside of teacher practice, and that if a teacher engages in ongoing self-reflection, he or she will likely never reach the pinnacle of learning. But as expected, Schon’s (1983) construct of the reflective practitioner is limited in its applicability to this work. It fails to recognize the social and cultural forces such as collaboration that were so strongly presented in the teachers’ voices and so prominent in the research findings. Shulman and Shulman’s (2004) construct of the accomplished teacher was also limited in the scope of analysis that it provided to this research. Although relevant, it did not address with enough depth the
cultural underpinnings of how one becomes an accomplished teacher. For example, it did not address the impact of school environment on teacher change, nor did it explain the role of critical self-reflection in the development of teacher practice. Further, since many of the OTs and PTs did not view themselves as “master teachers,” the lesson study model seemed ill-suited to an analysis of the participants as experts.

The C-BAM was selected as a self-evaluation tool for this research because of its applicability to PD and teacher change. The theoretical premise of the C-BAM is that institutions cannot change until individuals’ needs and concerns are met. In this regard, the C-BAM proves useful and relevant. The beliefs of the OTs and PTs certainly reflected this point of view. However, the tool’s design did not accurately portray the process of change that participants felt they had experienced. Their position on the ladder differed depending on the literacy strategy they utilized as well as the level of reflection in which they engaged. The PTs spent significant time engaging in a critical analysis of the tool and felt their process of change was more like a spiral than a ladder. While the C-BAM depicts learning as linear and cumulative, many participants perceived it as something much more dynamic. It is here that the C-BAM ladder appears inappropriate.

Anderson’s (1997) views of change adoption also proved useful to this study. Within the change adoption process, the facilitator’s role is to provide PD interventions that align with an individual’s position on the ladder. This attention to individual needs necessitates a differentiated learning model. The OTs and PTs both described teacher learning as on a continuum. Recognizing that they were in different places on the continuum, they advocated strongly for opportunities to have their learning
differentiated. It is here that they described the DLC as unique because it evolved based on teacher needs and met people where they were on this continuum. No other PD experiences were described in these terms. Furthermore, Joyce and Showers’ (2002) theory of transfer purports that new knowledge will be assimilated into practice more easily if it is in close proximity to what one already knows or can do. They advocate for training that resembles the classroom as closely as possible. The participants’ perspectives in this study concur with such a vision. OTs in particular desired a PD experience built around the practicalities of teaching. In fact, it would appear that, for the OT, the theoretical grounding can and perhaps should come only after these practicalities are addressed. These practical needs are reflected more prominently in the early stages of the LoU described within the C-BAM.

There is one finding in this research related to change that demands further attention. The results of this study suggest that while the impetus for change must come from within an individual, the momentum and sustainability for change clearly comes from others. Many participants spoke about the power of working with like-minded individuals, and that “opportunity to share with colleagues through DLC has enabled me to be reflective and improve my literacy instruction.” Their words suggested that collaboration was not merely a perk of effective PD, but a pre-requisite. The PT in particular showed a willingness to embrace change. She discussed various change initiatives in which she had participated, and the feelings she associated with those initiatives. These experiences, coupled with her more numerous roles as a teacher leader, may have poised her for the prospect of change. But she also recognized that others can serve as either a catalyst or an impediment. She saw the value in surrounding
herself with people who wanted to change things. This finding has implications for school leaders, PD providers and teachers and will be addressed later in this chapter.

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) social practice theory is also very pertinent to this research because it challenges the notion that learning is merely a matter of internalizing knowledge. The OT and PT profiles and authentic learning conceptions support Lave and Wenger’s suggestion that learning is much more problematic and complex. Within the social practice construct, learning is not always the result of intentional instruction. This was true for the lesson study participants, who said it was through “casual dialogue” and “around the staff room lunch table” that much of their sharing took place. While the participants seemed to feel their most valuable learning came from casual interactions, some seemed to discount these unplanned exchanges with colleagues. Is it possible they did not regard these exchanges as learning because they contradicted the conventional notions of learning?

The responses of the participants also support Wenger’s (1998) definition of learning as co-participation. Wenger asserts that “learning is fundamentally experiential and fundamentally social” (p. 227). This was echoed by many of the study participants who stated how difficult it was to change practice in isolation and who more recently felt validation for talking to colleagues as being PD. One participant believed that turning acts of reflection into action would be impossible without the support of others, and another commented on the power that comes from a group of people embarking on a learning journey together. These ideas demonstrate the tenets of co-participation. At the close of the PT focus group, one participant commented: “I just wanted to say that I’m really going to miss having this professional development next year when I’m not
at school….Hopefully, whatever school I’m at, I’m still able to come back and join it…So don’t forget me while I’m gone” (PT4). Lave and Wenger state that learning itself is an evolving form of membership (p. 53). Her statement symbolizes the true sense of membership that developed in this PD experience, and the community of learners that evolved within it.

Mezirow’s theory of transformational learning offers perhaps the most robust explanation for the findings of this research. Though the theory examines how individuals negotiate their own meanings, it still presents many social and cultural implications relevant to this study. Mezirow suggests there are three perspectives that one brings to a learning experience. In the education context, they are knowledge of teaching and learning, knowledge of oneself, and knowledge of the cultural codes and social norms that shape teaching. The latter relates to Stigler and Hiebert’s notion of the “cultural script” of teaching. It is this third perspective in particular which helps to broaden the analysis of the findings.

Cranton’s (1996) characterization of a transformative experience runs parallel to the facets of the DLC lesson study model. First, a variety of perspectives were presented to the participants through their interactions with the facilitator and their observations and teaching demonstrations with fellow OTs and PTs. Within the large group sessions and lesson observations it was stressed that there was not one best way to teach. The post-observation discussions enabled participants to clarify their understanding and see things from other OT and PT perspectives. A critical attitude is considered a necessary part of transformative learning. This was emphasized through the participants’ analyses of sample lessons provided by the facilitator and on video.
The DLC was also based on practice, where participants reflected on their past practice as they experimented with the literacy strategies explored throughout the year. Within a transformative experience, the facilitator should be transparent about the assumptions on which she has based her own beliefs. I believe my own assumptions and critically reflective stance were apparent to others within the DLC. On many occasions I shared my own self-questioning about teaching decisions I had made and offered introspection about the beliefs on which I had made those decisions.

Cranton’s criticisms of conventional PD structures help to illuminate many of the themes that emerged within this research. She comments that:

traditional development strategies do not tend to encourage or even allow educators to have control over their own development. They may have a choice of which workshop to attend or which book to read, but it is often assumed that others know best what they need to learn. (1996, p. 51)

The OTs’ and PTs’ frustration about lack of self-determination is not surprising if we consider how oppressing this environment is to those who desire to engage in critical reflection. Additionally, the participants in this study expressed frustration that they were frequently unable to assimilate new learning into their practice when they returned to their classrooms. Even the lesson study did not increase the OT’s LoU as much as she felt it should have. These occurrences can be explained, in part, by Cranton’s suggestion:

What we tend to do is incorporate learning-by-doing activities into learning experiences that are actually isolated from the workplace or the rest of the life of the learner and hope that they can be transferred back to practice. This does happen, of course, but many factors can interfere, including the culture of the educator’s organization. (1996, p. 26)
Cranton (1994) extends Mezirow’s thinking into the PD arena within her framework for learner empowerment. She asserts that these perspectives cannot be changed without a transformative learning experience. Self-directed learning and critical reflection are the basis of transformative learning. The PT voiced a strong desire to be critically reflective and to challenge the status quo. Her lack of regard for the train-the-trainer model of PD makes sense because it leaves no room for a critically reflective stance on the part of the PD facilitator or the participant. Cranton addresses this model of learning:

Traditional train the trainer programs tend to view the trainer as a technician.....training itself is generally based on the underlying assumption that problems in an organization are caused by knowledge or skill deficits that can be remedied through instrumental learning. (1996, p. 38)

These ideas relate to the earlier notion of PD as a means of fixing the deficits of teachers. It would appear that, while she does not know it, the PT seeks a transformative PD experience. But when she states, “I don’t want to be the rude person in the room. So there’s really not a good avenue for critical thinking or questioning or discussion” (PT1) she shows awareness of the cultural “script” that governs her behaviour. This aligns with Cranton’s belief that the socialization of teachers works against the reformer role, and that such critical questioning cannot take place in an environment where there is a hierarchy of power in which the learner feels less powerful than others (1996, p. 141). The OTs and PTs were acutely aware of this hierarchy and how it stifled their ability to pose the tough questions.
The findings in this research suggest the participants experienced a change in perspective about themselves by means of the lesson study model. If the lesson study was, in fact, transformative, and if it did affect a change in perspective, the outcome was probably varied for the OT and PT as well. The lesson study appeared to have the most transformative effect on the OT’s perspective on teaching and learning, and the PT’s perspective on cultural and social norms. These findings have implications for those who design PD and those who facilitate it.

Summary of Discussion

In summary, previous research findings were supported by the current study, but the theoretical constructs that were expected to explain them ranged from somewhat relevant to significant. The conception of authentic PD constructed by both the OT and PT held many of the same characteristics seen elsewhere in PD research, and the features that participants valued in the DLC experience were supported by findings in other studies. While change theory gave clarity to the phenomenon seen within this study, the individual change perspective supported by the C-BAM framework did not align with the personal change process experienced by the participants in this PD. Some theoretical perspectives such as Schon’s notion of the reflective practitioner were limited in their pertinence to this study. However, the findings from other lesson study research aligned with the results seen here, and situated and transformative learning theories proved useful in the interpretation of the study results. The conclusions drawn from this work bring forth a host of implications for various stakeholders involved as producers and consumers of teacher PD.
Implications of the Research

*Implications for School Leaders*

The findings in this research suggest that school leaders must be courageous in making decisions that are in tune with their school and smart for their teachers. The participants’ comments about ineffective PD experiences show that timing and context are everything. In other words, precious PD resources will be wasted if the PD is not at the right time or is not the right fit for current school culture. Even PD that is meaningful will be overridden by these factors. Hamilton and Richardson (1995) suggest that “programs that focus on improving the skills of individual teachers away from the context of school and classroom have not been productive” (p. 368). The results of this study should also make school leaders wary of PD that does not honour a differentiated approach to teacher learning. School leaders have a responsibility to voice concern when “one size fits all” PD is presented as the only option for teachers. The thoughts of one PT summarize this thinking:

> in any organization, you can’t force EVERY single person to buy into something. And even literacy, I think it’s unreasonable that we’re expecting EVERYBODY to jump on this bandwagon, when some people, that’s not the bandwagon they want to be on right now. Now literacy SHOULd be the thread that ties everything together, but we’re all the converted, right? (PT2)

School leaders who prescribe to this type of PD risk their credibility with staff because even the “converted” recognize that the worthiest of causes will not be adopted by everyone. Lastly, school leaders must recognize that the development of collaborative structures within their schools will be pivotal to the success of any PD venture. Mezirow (2000) suggests that development of learning networks is critical to the
likelihood of a transformative experience and to the sustainability of the new perspectives that are gained. There is much that school leaders can do to facilitate this within their buildings.

*Implications for School Districts and Personnel*

The implications for school boards and school board personnel are numerous. First, school board leaders must appreciate that when teachers use descriptors like frustrated and angry to reflect their emotional responses to PD, no learning will happen in that frame of mind. To paraphrase one study participant, if it’s not working, why keep doing it? The temptations of “spray and pray” PD must be resisted. Mezirow suggests we must avoid these learning designs even if the PD offered is valuable to teachers and makes good curricular sense (2000, p. 67). Therefore, while job-embedded approaches to PD appear cost prohibitive, they should be seen as a sound business investment. The results of this study suggest the benefits outweigh the expense. But just like any investment, it takes time for those assets to mature. This is a challenging reality in a climate of data-driven and results-based school improvement efforts.

To accommodate alternative models of PD, school districts and the schools within them need to explore innovative ways of “doing” school. Job-embedded PD, for example, may require alterations to the school timetable so that pairs or groups of teachers have common planning and professional learning time. Creative ways of relieving teachers from their teaching duties will be necessary since the use of occasional teachers to cover release time cannot be sustained financially by school boards facing declining enrolment and reduced budgets. But even these structural
changes are not enough to sustain job-embedded learning. The research suggests that professional learning and growth will not happen by merely changing the structure of schools. Stigler and Hiebert’s (2000) notion of “changes at the margins” in American mathematics reform efforts is but one example of this phenomenon. First and foremost, the school must be regarded as a cultural entity. Those at the top and bottom of the education hierarchy must work together within this vision of schooling.

Implanting a job-embedded perspective to professional learning into the current structure and culture of schools is problematic. Research suggests this approach will fail (Hargreaves, 1994; Guskey, 2000). In the case of the DLC, it took four years working as a cohesive group before the members and I felt comfortable embracing such a model. Offering job-embedded learning opportunities will require school boards to look differently at how they present and monitor the PD experiences they provide to teachers. As one study participant noted, accountability has to be demonstrated in a different way than board office meetings with everyone in the same place at the same time (PT5). Further, much more PD must be offered to teachers on a voluntary basis. Such adjustments will require not just a change in actions, but a change in the culture of PD. This is not something that will be easy to accomplish.

Participants in this study noted that successful PD efforts often were not recognized or celebrated. It is incumbent upon superintendents, supervising principals and project leaders to value and protect the pockets of learning that are working, and shield those opportunities for those teachers, even in the face of competing demands. Teacher groups that are doing good things should be rewarded for their efforts, not penalized because others think it is time for someone else to have a PD experience.
Along with this, school boards ought to respect the history and culture that forms in PD initiatives like DLC, trusting the teachers within them to make sound decisions about their professional growth. School districts must invest in the teachers who are ready to embrace change and take risks. Social practice theory (Wenger, 1998) and the notion of peripheral participation support the view that their successes will have much more influence on fellow teachers anyway.

It should be observed that school board leaders are the buffer between ministry initiatives and the schools that are responsible for implementing them. They are the last defense against ministry directives that are put into operation without sound mechanisms for implementation. It is imperative that they maintain a classroom-level perspective and a critically reflective stance in their roles as district leaders, for if they do not challenge the assumptions on which macro level decisions are based, who will?

**Implications for Design of PD Models**

It is clear from the study findings that many assumptions that drive the design of PD are inaccurate. For example, Ewert (1991) asserts that “education systems are viewed as an input-output system, where resources and raw materials enter at one end and the finished product…issues from the other” (as cited in Cranton, 1996, p. 39). Cranton (1996) suggests training program design is governed by the same notion. Contrast this with the characterization that one participant gave of her DLC experience:

There were people…who were new, who didn’t know what we were talking about from the beginning, people who have been there already, and people who were there but still felt like they needed improvement. So there was a lot of sharing, we had opportunity for reflection, we did that a lot, but I think the biggest thing was we had choice…we were INVOLVED in the process. (OT4)
The dissimilarity of these two depictions confirms that the PD models of the past are obsolete. Teachers desire a tiered or differentiated learning opportunity implanted within real-life classroom settings. But that is a far messier, time consuming and expensive venture.

As seen within the study findings, the OTs and PTs offered similar conceptions of meaningful PD. This leads to one of the most significant implications of this study. Even though OTs and PTs were driven by different intrinsic and extrinsic factors and their perspective transformations differed, their characterizations of effective and ineffective PD were strikingly similar. In other words, the OT and PT desired the same things to be put “into” their PD experiences, but what they wanted to get “out” of them was different. This demonstrates that it is possible to meet the needs of different groups of learners within the same model, provided that their motives or comfort levels can be accommodated. A model that allows participants to assume differing roles seems fitting considering these findings.

Much can be learned about effective PD design from transformative learning theory. Cranton (1994, p. 182) suggests that participants should have time for discourse, critical questioning and sharing of past experiences. Further, they should be encouraged to use their own insights to plan their actions and be afforded multiple opportunities to test any new insights. Most importantly, attention should be called to the discrepancies between theory and their own practice. This was the essence of the DLC. Such a model represents a significant shift from most PD opportunities, but this approach could have considerable impact on the outcomes of PD experiences for teachers.
Implications for Teachers

The research presented here has implications for teachers who engage in PD models such as lesson study. First, the PTs in this study stressed the importance of classroom observations based on genuine lessons. Their experiences are proof that more can be gained from the everyday lesson that typifies teaching than the one crafted to impress others. The experience must be authentic to be of value. The participants also talked about risk taking as a necessary step in the process of learning. Whether it was opening their classrooms to fellow teachers, trying new strategies after their observations, or admitting their weaknesses and inadequacies to colleagues, all of the teachers in this study had to embrace risk. Finally, a high level of introspection and self-evaluation was required of the participants and was something not all of them were comfortable doing at first. But the teachers in this study demonstrated how important critical reflection is to the outcome. A teacher who is unable to do this might not be ready to fully benefit from a lesson study experience like the one in this study, for, as Brookfield (1990) notes, it is “a plunge from the reassuring warmth of believing that classrooms are ordered arenas governed by reason into the ice-cold reality of wrestling with the alarming complexities of teaching and learning” (as cited in Cranton, 1994, p. 214).

It should also be stressed that greater freedom and autonomy sought by teachers in PD comes with obligations. Cranton (1994) suggests that “educators should work to increase their involvement in professional development as well as to change the nature of professional development itself” (p. 229). This very sentiment was echoed by one of
the PTs in this study. Mezirow declares that those who are transformed by their experiences become more deliberate and competent in “carrying out the work of society” (2000, p. 167). The biggest implication for teachers is that they have a responsibility to themselves and their colleagues to ensure their PD is meaningful and truly transformative.

What is Unique to this Research

Before this study’s distinctive features are examined, it must be noted that what is shared as unique is based on a comparison to the research uncovered by the researcher. It is feasible that, unbeknownst to me, some of these research methodologies or findings have been replicated elsewhere. Hopefully I will not give undue credit to the findings presented herein. As indicated in the review of the literature, most literacy research is based on an examination of literacy acquisition by students, not literacy instruction by teachers. While this was an obstacle in one regard, the absence of literature in this area only furthered my inclination to conduct this work and contributed to the uniqueness of the study.

This study offers an analysis of lesson study unlike those found in existing research. First, its focus on instructional practices in literacy appears to be a new area of exploration in lesson study. It is not surprising that the seminal work of Stigler and Hiebert resulted in studies that added to the body of research in mathematics lesson study. Not only does my research digress from this focus on math, it is not based on one content area at all. The participants conducted their work in a variety of subject areas and a variety of grades. The diversity of teaching environments in which the
study took place appeared unparalleled in the research. The second difference between this and other research was the methodology employed. While qualitative research methods were used in other research on lesson study, the literature yielded none that used a character composite to present the findings. This study was based on the vicarious experience of the teachers within it. The OT and PT composites were unique when compared to what I encountered in my search of the literature. Further, since none of the literature examined lesson study in this manner, the depth and descriptive nature of the work was greater than other studies that were scrutinized. It is likely due to the use of this narrative technique that some study findings appear unique. For example, the development of the two teacher profiles illuminated how fundamental a differentiated learning model is to PD. This might not have emerged with such detail or so strongly had the OT and PT composites not been developed.

The findings in this study also offer a unique commentary on not only school and institutional culture, but PD culture as well. For the OT and PT, the institution manifests a culture of distrust and accountability. It operates on the belief that compliance naturally leads to improvement. Increased teacher autonomy is seen as a threat to that compliance. Within her own school, the OT or PT must challenge a culture of isolation, where “you sort of feel like you’re on your island of one with your kids” (PT1). If she is typical, she must contend with resistors, but if she is fortunate, she is able to “go with the go-ers.” Although she seeks out others who have similar learning needs, her PD experiences are entrenched in a culture that values what is to be learned over the learner. The primary purpose of the PD is to remediate beliefs or actions, and the teacher’s job is to be perpetually malleable and accommodating. And
so, the PD experience becomes an act of pretend learning. Stigler and Hiebert argue that improvement in teaching will only come about if we recognize and challenge the cultural assumptions which shape it. Mezirow suggests that transformative learning is important because its participants become “active agents of cultural change” (2000, p. 30). Both claims are supported by the findings in this research. This study underscores the need to explore further the influence of this PD culture on teacher learning. In this respect, it appears unique.

In summary, this work is unique in terms of its focus on literacy instruction, its deviation from other lesson study models, and some aspects of its methodology. The narrative style emphasized the participant experience as its primary purpose and elicited some findings that might not have emerged otherwise. In particular, the findings related to PD culture were enlightening, and present a unique perspective compared to the literature that was reviewed.

Study Limitations

Clearly, this study is limited in its scope because it examined the experiences of a group of Grade 7-12 teachers within only one school district. Therefore, the beliefs of the OTs and PTs cannot be applied universally to all teachers in the same school board, to teachers in other districts who may have participated in a PD model similar to this one, or even to all members of the DLC. Although survey results from all DLC participants were scrutinized, the focus groups included only those who chose to participate. It is possible that those who felt most positive about the experience were more inclined to volunteer. It is also possible that participants’ teaching experiences in
elementary or secondary settings may have influenced their responses in the focus
group discussions. However, I believe that this had little or no impact on their
responses. Another factor that may have had bearing on the results is the fact that I
began a maternity leave before the end of the implementation year. This could have
impacted my interpretations of the results because I was more immersed in the PD
experience at the beginning versus the end of the school year. Additionally, my absence
at the time the end-point surveys were administered meant that the survey questions
were not identical at the mid and end-point of the year. This limited my analysis
because I was unable to make direct comparisons of the results over time. These are a
few limitations, and probably not the only ones, that temper the study results.

Need for Future Research

Job-embedded learning appears to have the greatest potential of all PD models
to be transformative in nature. In terms of transformative learning research, there is
much more that needs to be done. Taylor declares that:

It is imperative, in this new millennium, that we set a new direction of research for
transformative learning theory that focuses on understanding with greater depth its
inherent complexities, that engages a wider range of research designs and
methodologies, and that investigates most thoroughly transformative learning as a
viable model for teaching adults. (as cited in Mezirow, 2000, p. 286)

More extensive study of job-embedded learning is necessary if it is to be endorsed
within the education community. Specifically, more research should be conducted in
the intermediate and senior grades, and within Canadian contexts. This study also
highlighted areas that could be explored further, such as the impact of institutional
practices on teachers’ perceptions of PD, and the impact of PD culture. Research that spanned an even greater period of time, perhaps even a teacher’s entire career, would be enlightening as well.

This study alone elicits many possibilities for future research. The ways in which this research could be expanded are posed as potential research questions below:

1. How does the conception of authentic learning look for teachers who have not participated in job-embedded professional development?
2. How does the conception of authentic learning change over the course of a teacher’s career?
3. To what extent do the OT and PT profiles align with those of teachers in other job-embedded PD initiatives?
4. To what extent do the OT and PT profiles align with those of teachers in other divisions, such as primary and junior?
5. What are the mitigating factors that impact a teacher’s decision to assume the role of OT or PT?
6. At what point does the OT teacher’s profile become more like the PT, and what are the factors that impact this change?

Closing Thoughts

Unfortunately, my involvement with the DLC and the lesson study model has ceased, so I am now an outsider looking in. Continuing members have kept me apprised of their work, and how the vision for the group has continued to change. Over time, the pressure for the DLC to demonstrate results has heightened, which is not
surprising considering the financial expense of the endeavour. If it has not happened already, there will come a time when it is felt that the PD initiative has run its course, and that funding should be redirected elsewhere. When and if this is the case, I will be saddened by this reality. Regardless, I have benefited from the transformative learning experience I acquired through the DLC, and I truly believe others have, too. Although I might not have the chance to be a part of it or something like it again, I remain hopeful for such a professionally enriching opportunity again in my career.
REFERENCES


Cranton, P. (1996). *Professional development as transformative learning: new*


Joyce, B. and Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.


Oaks: Sage.


APPENDIX A

Research Methodology Framework

September 2006  Literacy strategies training / Overview of lesson study model
                Video clip analysis / Critique of sample lesson plans
                PT lesson collaboration / OT additional training
                Reflective journal entries / Self-evaluation

October 2006  Lesson Study observations (PTs/OTs)
                PT lesson collaboration / OT lesson debriefing
                Reflective journal entries

November 2006  Lesson Study observations (PTs/Ots)
                PT lesson collaboration / OT lesson debriefing
                Video clip analysis
                Reflective journal entries / Self-evaluation

Initiation of research

January 2007  Letters of Information / Informed Consent forms distributed
                PT lesson collaboration / OT additional training
                Reflective journal entries / Completion of surveys

February 2007  Lesson Study observations (PTs/OTs)
                PT lesson collaboration / OT lesson debriefing
                Reflective journal entries

March 2007  Lesson Study observations (PTs/OTs)
                PT lesson collaboration / OT lesson debriefing
                Lesson videotaping with volunteer teachers

April 2007  Lesson Study observations (PTs/OTs)
                PT lesson collaboration / OT lesson debriefing
                Lesson videotaping with volunteer teachers

May 2007  Lesson Study observations (PTs/OTs)
                PT lesson collaboration / OT lesson debriefing
                Final reflective journal entries / Completion of surveys

June 2007  Focus group interviews
                Data analysis: artifacts, web-based survey results

Note: bold items denote research
APPENDIX B

Web-Based Survey

The following questions were included in an on-line survey using Survey Monkey. The survey was completed by teachers at the half-way (January 2007) and end point (June 2007) of the professional development initiative. Participants were informed that by completing the survey, they had provided consent for their responses to be used for research purposes. All responses were anonymous.

Likert Scale Responses (4 point scale from 1=low to 4=high)

How enriching has this professional development experience been for you?

Compared to other PD experiences in which I have participated, this PD experience has been…

I have benefited from working with my fellow PTs/OTs

How much impact has your work as a/n PT/OT had on your teaching practice?

How much impact has your work as a/n PT/OT had on student learning in your classroom?

I would recommend the chance to work as a/n PT/OT to other teachers

Open Response Questions:

Advice I would give to other PTs/OTs…

One suggestion or improvement I would make for this professional development model would be…
APPENDIX C

Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)
Levels of Use of an Innovation

Instructions:
Please read the descriptions of each of the eight levels related to adoption of literacy instruction methods in your classroom. Choose the level that best fits where you are in the level of use of this innovation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Level 0: Non-use  
I have little or no knowledge of literacy instruction methods, have no involvement with it, and I am doing nothing toward becoming involved. |
| 2 | Level 1: Orientation  
I am seeking or acquiring information about literacy skills and strategies and instruction methods. |
| 3 | Level 2: Preparation  
I am preparing for initial use of literacy skills and strategies in my classroom. |
| 4 | Level 3: Mechanical Use  
I focus most of my effort on the short-term, day-to-day use of literacy tools, but with little time for reflection. My effort is primarily directed toward mastering the tasks required to use literacy skills and strategies in my classroom. |
| 5 | Level 4 A: Routine  
I feel comfortable embedding literacy skills and strategies in my instruction methods. However, I am putting forth limited effort and thought to move beyond routine use and reflect on the consequences in my classroom. |
| 6 | Level 4 B: Refinement  
I vary the use of literacy instruction methods to increase the expected benefits within my classroom. I am working on using literacy skills and strategies to maximize the effects with my students. |
| 7 | Level 5: Integration  
I am combining my own efforts with related activities of other teachers and colleagues to achieve impact in the classroom. |
| 8 | Level 6: Renewal  
I reevaluate the quality of use of literacy instruction in my classroom, seek major modifications or alternatives, present innovations to achieve increased impact, examine new developments, and explore new goals for myself, my students or my school. |


Comment on the reason(s) for your selection of the level indicated above (optional):
APPENDIX D
Focus Group Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Rationale/Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’d like to get to know each of you a bit better before we begin today’s focus group/interview. This will give us a sense of the background and experiences that each person brings to today’s session.</td>
<td>To gain an understanding of the background and experiences of the teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Please share with us a little bit about yourself  
  ▪ name  
  ▪ grade and subjects you teach  
  ▪ how long you have been a teacher                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                           |
| Today we will be talking a great deal about the concepts of teacher practice and professional development. To facilitate that discussion, it is important for us to begin by sharing our understanding of those two terms.           | To gain insight into the teachers’ knowledge of various PD models, and the array of experiences they have had with these models.                          |
| 2. What does the term PD mean to you?  
  ▪ With what types of PD are you familiar?  
  ▪ In which ones have you participated?                                                                                                            | To gain an understanding of the teachers’ conceptualization of “teacher practice”.                                                                     |
| 3. How would you characterize the concept of “teacher practice” for someone not familiar with the teaching profession?                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                           |
| I’d like to focus the next part of our discussion on just professional development.                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                           |
| 4. If I were new to teaching, describe for me what I would see in a typical PD session.                                                                                                                     | To capture sensory data about the teachers’ PD experiences.                                                                                              |
| I’d now like to get a sense of your feelings about past PD experiences.                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                           |
| 5. Describe a negative PD experience that you have had  
  6. Describe a positive PD experience that you have had                                                                                                                                                    | Probe teachers’ opinions about “good” and “bad” PD experiences.                                                                                            |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Please describe a past PD experience that had a direct impact on your teaching practice.</td>
<td>To capture past influential PD experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How have your most recent PD experiences shaped or influenced your teaching practice?</td>
<td>To ascertain if teachers perceive PD experiences as impacting their teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. As a teacher, what do you believe are the most vital things that you should acquire through PD?</td>
<td>To gather data on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors valued by teachers in a PD experience. (e.g. material items, personal growth).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Describe for me a hypothetical ideal PD activity that would help you to become the best teacher you can be</td>
<td>Explore teachers’ opinions about who should facilitate PD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the essential ingredients?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who would facilitate that PD?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. If you were to offer PD providers suggestions about how best to impact teacher practice through PD, what would you say?</td>
<td>Gather data on institutional practices that influence teachers’ perceptions of meaningful PD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
District Literacy Committee
Request to Participate Form
2006-07

Name:

Home School:

Grade(s) and subjects taught:

Participants must be available for Wednesday full day sessions (8:30 to 3:30pm) on all of the following dates (please make note of these dates for supply coverage purposes):

- September 27th
- October 25th
- November 29th
- January 31st
- February 28th
- March 28th
- April 25th
- May 30th

Please indicate the role you would be willing to assume:

- PT (practicing teacher)
  collaborate with other PTs in lesson development and allow OTs to observe the lessons

- OT (observing teacher)
  observe lessons in action, participate in facilitated discussions, and try strategies in your own classroom

- Either role

I would be interested in lessons focused on the following content areas:

- Social Science (history, geography)
- Science
- Math
- other (please indicate): ____________________________

Each cluster of teachers may be arranged based on geographical area, family of schools, or by interest in a particular subject or emphasis. Please indicate if you have any preference in these areas:

Forms must be sent to Anne Marie McDonald at the board office no later than Wednesday, September 20th. Forms may be sent via fax (544-6321), board mail, or by email from your principal.

Principal Signature:
Date:
APPENDIX F
Sample Journal Questions

Rate yourself on a continuum of 1-4 for the following questions. Comment on those ratings.

- Where I put myself on the “literacy continuum”
- My comfort level with sharing my teaching practice with others
- Having frequent conversations about teaching practice with colleagues in my school

One thing about my own teaching that was reinforced today...

One thing about my own teaching that was NOT reinforced today...(something I would consider doing differently)

Adding more tools and strategies into your teaching can’t be a never-ending venture (otherwise, you’ll never have enough time). Examine one practice you engage in that could possibly ‘go’ (ie: taking up homework; worksheets; for me: mechanics lessons would be done differently)

Now that we are at the half way point of the year, take some time to critically reflect on what or how much you have changed about your practice-to-date as a result of working with the DLC. Rate on a 1-4 continuum. Write an honest response about any limitations that might be stopping you from changing more about your practice.
APPENDIX G

Observing Teachers
Guiding Questions

Use these questions as a guide for the discussion that follows your observation time. Please submit ONE copy of this sheet (on behalf of your OT group) when you meet at the board office in the afternoon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Site:</th>
<th>Observation Date/Time:</th>
<th>OTs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject(s):</th>
<th>Topic/Unit/Strand:</th>
<th>PT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identify which of the 10 literacy strategies and skills you observed in this lesson:
  e.g. Activating Prior Knowledge: use of K-W-L chart

What did you observe from the students during the lesson?

What aspects of this lesson could you use in your own classroom? (briefly summarize for each OT)

What might you do differently, or what might you alter to meet the needs of the students in your own class?

What will you attempt back in your own classroom this month? Think in terms of specific tools, but also in terms of instructional approaches and strategies...