Understanding Teachers' Professional Development:
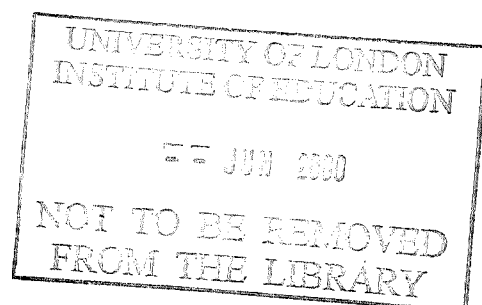
an investigation of teachers' learning and their learning contexts

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Abstract

The focus of my research is teachers' planned professional development experiences and the effect of context on teachers' learning and changes to practice. It seeks to understand effective approaches to teachers' learning, contribute to knowledge and identify implications for practitioners and policy makers.

The research begins with an investigation into young people's and teachers' perceptions of effective classroom work. A significant mis-match is found between what is experienced and what they perceive is effective. This is analysed in terms of inhibiting forces and contradictions influencing teachers' practice. An in-service programme is designed as a change strategy for the teachers involved. The research findings suggest this is only partially successful in bringing about change.

From a critique of theoretical perspectives of professional development an expanded approach is created. This approach forms the basis of another programme for teachers which includes working collaboratively and integrating personal and professional learning. The research findings demonstrate that this in itself is not enough to bring about changes to professional practice.

A typology of teachers' planned development experiences is created and a set of hypotheses used to investigate teachers' personal constructs of the effectiveness of professional experiences for change to professional practice. The significance of the learning context and subjective experiences emerge. This leads to the redesign of the programme to include an explicit focus on learning and the use of action research to bring about change within teachers' own contexts.

The research continues to focus on contextual influences in organisational learning. It analyses the effects of a change that contributes to organisational learning by tracking one organisation's revision of its appraisal scheme.

Key conclusions emerge: teachers' learning, the processes of learning and the organisational context have strong influences on one other. Effective professional learning for positive outcomes requires both a multi-dimensional and context specific view of learning.

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Introduction

The purpose of this introduction is threefold. It describes the aims of my research, sets out my epistemological standpoint and changing roles as a researcher, and provides an outline of the thesis.

a) The aims of the research

The aims of this research are to study the process and impact of planned professional development experiences, and to investigate how the work context affects teachers' ability to bring about changes to their professional practice. My main aim is to understand the complexities of professional development and change, and to identify which approaches are more effective in helping teachers learn and bring about changes to their professional practice. The thesis reflects the development of understanding at three levels:

* my own learning and changes to professional practice
* the learning of teachers with whom I work
* theoretical perspectives of personal-professional learning for teachers and their learning contexts.

Other aims include contributing to the emerging theory and practice of teachers' professional development, and identifying implications of the findings for practitioners and policy makers.

b) My epistemological standpoint

This work entails the development of an epistemological standpoint. It is informed by my educational values and philosophical views about learning and the importance I attach to collaborative ways of working. My position is not fixed; the work becomes more collaborative, cyclical and connected as it progresses. I did not set out consciously to undertake action research. I gradually realised the powerful contribution reflexive research can make in bringing about learning and change at different levels. By reflecting on the complexity of learning and change at individual and organisational level, I developed an understanding of the relevance of different forms of research to my situation and for different purposes. It was only through involvement in the process that I constructed meaning and understanding of the cycles of learning and research.

In carrying out my research as an educational practitioner, I came to understand the potential of action research to:

a) develop collaborative ways of working

b) understand professional practice and the context in which it occurs

c) contribute to knowledge in the field.

The research process began with issues arising from my initial research and teaching. These issues concerned factors that enhance or inhibit individual and organisational learning and different approaches to planned professional development experiences. From my experience of working in different educational roles, I know the value for educational change of listening to young people and teachers, working collaboratively with them, getting feedback, sharing power and seeing myself as a learner alongside them.

For collaborative educational change, I believe there needs to be congruence between my work with teachers and the methods I use for research, reflecting the values and principles of a collaborative approach where the teachers and I would learn together in a process of shared understanding and constructed meaning. This form of research matches the criteria for action research identified by Kemmis (1993) as carried out by practitioners into their own practices aiming: 'to improve the rationality and justice of social or educational practices, understanding these practices, and situations in which the practices are carried out' (p177).

My commitment to the improvement of my understanding and practice underpins the process of action research. It is used at different levels for different purposes throughout the study:

• to bring about changes to my own practice as an in-service education provider, M.A. tutor, and staff development facilitator

• to facilitate others' learning through their involvement as participants in my action research

• to facilitate others' action research and their learning from it

• to bring about changes to the staff development programme in my own organisation

• to provide direction and cohesion to the developmental nature of this thesis.

Following the initial investigation, described in chapter one, I adopt a cycle of planning, acting, self-reflection, evaluation and analysis. In each of the small scale studies I have chosen appropriate research methods. These are interpretive techniques which are more suited to the study of my practice. It is this research process that distinguishes my study. Working in different contexts with different groups of teachers research issues emerged.

These are discussed in each chapter, forming a developing argument for action research as an approach to professional and organisational learning.

When I began the research I had no idea where my learning would take me. My account tells an unfolding story, which has a developmental and autobiographical focus. This matches the stance of Somekh (1993):

> 'Action research presupposes a central role for individual reflection and self evaluation, and I would find it impossible to defend a methodology which emphasised the importance of others engaging in this kind of personal reflexivity without doing it myself' (p28).

Throughout this thesis I reflect on the research process. These reflections are presented at the end of each chapter. They include discussions about the value of the process and some methodological concerns.

My changing roles as a researcher

During the six year period of the research my role positions changed. At the start of this research in 1992 I was employed as a Lecturer in Pastoral Care, Personal-Social Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. In addition to this half-time appointment I worked as an independent education, research and training consultant.

The study grew from an independent research project I managed for a London Education Authority and District Health Authority in my role as free-lance consultant. I investigated the curriculum needs of students in the area of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education, and the management of cross-curricular co-ordination in schools and colleges. A report of the research was distributed to all the secondary schools and colleges in the authority and to all members of the governing bodies (Carnell 1992). My involvement in the initial research project was the springboard for further research.

One important outcome of the dissemination of my research findings was the extension of my contract with the Education Authority and District Health Authority. I was employed to advise on the professional development of teachers and other staff. To continue my research I subsequently designed an in-service education programme for the teachers involved in the initial research, on the management of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education in classrooms, schools and colleges. Through my experience as a training consultant, I was able to adopt the role of a researcher, working with teachers to help facilitate change, while at the same time reflecting on, and evaluating my own practice.

My research continued through my role of M.A. tutor at the Institute of Education. In 1994 as a result of my growing interest in investigating different approaches to teachers'

professional development, I created an open option module for the Institute of Education's M.A. programme. The teaching of this module, entitled 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development' and its subsequent redesign, forms an important element of the thesis.

In order to pursue my research into learning contexts, I took up the post of academic staff development facilitator at the Institute of Education in 1995. This was a half time post in addition to my lecturing role. The new combination of roles provided me with an opportunity to investigate professional development practice at an organisational level. The research at this stage focuses on learning contexts and how changes to organisational learning can be supported.

The thesis illustrates the inter-relationship of my work roles and research, and the development of my thinking over a six year period. (For a chronology of events and their relationship to the doctoral research see Appendix 1.1.) The thesis demonstrates how my consultancy, in-service education, Masters level teaching, and professional development activities are linked and supported by the research, and how action research itself forms part of the educational experiences for the teachers with whom I work. My ideas also draw on my previous learning with teachers over the last twenty three years, as an inspector for staff development, teacher centre manager, advisory teacher, action research project team member and classroom teacher.

c) An outline of the thesis

Chapter one

Chapter one outlines the investigative process I undertook as a research consultant - a policy research project carried out on behalf of an education authority and a local health authority. It starts to unravel some issues in relation to teachers' work in the classroom with young people in the area of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education. It concentrates on issues which relate to young people's learning and the teachers' role in facilitating learning.

The research described in this chapter:

• highlights young peoples' and teachers' views about effective classroom experiences
• identifies factors which affect teachers' classroom approaches
• examines health education paradigms to illuminate the mis-match that emerged
• addresses implications for change.

Chapter two

Chapter two examines the in service education programme I designed and managed for the teachers involved in the initial research and its impact on their work in schools. The programme, based on the recommendations from my report of the initial research, and the interviews I conducted with the teachers, is analysed. The research data collected reveal important learning about how teachers bring about change, and how different contexts support or inhibit the application of their learning. The chapter begins to explore some of the blocks to effective professional development of teachers including institutional constraints.

The research described in this chapter highlights specific issues:

• the extent to which INSET is effective as a change strategy
• factors leading to resistance to change
• the implications of developing collaborative work
• institutional constraints on teachers attempting to change their practice.

Chapter three

Chapter three creates an expanded view of teachers' professional development by focusing on different perceptions of professional development, teachers' views and different models in practice. The design of an M.A. module illustrates this expanded approach which includes work at a subjective level. It demonstrates the use of collaborative processes to engage teachers with concepts of professional development on a personal level.

The research described in this chapter:

• identifies different models of teachers' professional development
• reveals tensions in introducing activities for personal reflection and self understanding
• highlights the importance of a supportive context for collaborative learning
• identifies boundary issues related to the learning facilitator's role.

Chapter four

Chapter four focuses on the design of a typology of teachers' professional development. It examines different approaches and the theories from which they derive. Four approaches are developed, each of which has its own set of characteristics. This typology

is used to explore teachers' personal constructs of the effectiveness of planned professional development experiences. A set of hypotheses is tested.

The research described in this chapter highlights specific issues:

• professional development is more effectively located within institutions and groups
• professional development is more effective if it is directly related to everyday work
• change comes about more readily in collaborative contexts
• personal and professional learning and individual and organisational learning are
    inextricably linked.

Chapter five

Chapter five discusses the redesign of the M.A. module which incorporates key issues which emerged from the personal constructs analysis described in chapter four. These issues are used to develop a new conceptual framework for the module. It aims to impact on teachers' changes by including activities to promote learning about learning and action research.

The research described in this chapter highlights:

• how teachers become aware of the complexities of professional development
• the importance of action research as a catalyst for change
• how meta-learning processes, including action research shifts teachers' perspectives from intuitive to overt
• how aspects of the organisational context hinder professional growth.

Chapter six

Chapter six is concerned with learning at an organisational level. It explores the extent to which the culture of an organisation can affect staff development. It outlines blocks to change and the ways in which hierarchies limit development. It uses metaphors of organisation to illuminate change, and the role of action research in changing the learning culture. The re-introduction of an appraisal process is used to highlight issues and attitudes about individual and organisational learning.

The research described in this chapter highlights specific issues:

• how organisations support and block learning
• how professional learning is most effectively brought about within an organisation
• the extent to which action research can work towards organisational change
• how a focus on learning in the appraisal process can enhance individual, group and
     organisational learning.

Chapter seven

Chapter seven reviews the contribution of this study in identifying an expanded approach to teachers' professional learning. It reviews the main arguments and highlights the need for professional learning to be holistic and context specific. The uses and implications of the research are identified. The chapter concludes by highlighting the messages in the research and reveals some limitations in its application.

Chapter one

Young people's and teachers' perceptions of appropriate learning experiences - the mis-match begins

1. Introduction

Between April and July 1992 I was employed as a research consultant for an outer London Education and District Health Authority to conduct policy research into young people's classroom experiences of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education. A research report was written (Carnell 1992) drawing on student responses to their needs in the curriculum and teachers' concerns. Implications for the management and teaching of HIV and AIDS education were discussed and recommendations made for schools, colleges, the Local Education and District Health Authority. This policy research forms the starting point for my thesis and is the springboard for my subsequent research.

In this chapter I focus on some emergent issues from the research. I analyse young people's and teachers' concerns and their perceptions about appropriate classroom work. A mis-match emerges, not about perceptions; both teachers and young people agreed about effective approaches. The mis-match is between what is perceived as effective and what is experienced; didactic methods dominate while young people and their teachers feel these methods are inappropriate. Other research studies indicate this is a representative picture.

Explanations for this mis-match are discussed. I present an analysis of inhibiting forces, and contradictions facing teachers, in an attempt to understand factors that affect classroom approaches. An ambiguity of purpose, inhibiting forces and external contradictions, teachers' classroom control, organisational constraints, and inadequate in-service education and training contribute towards this. Four health educational paradigms are presented to illuminate the mis-match and implications for change are addressed.

My research reflections, presented at the end of the chapter, highlight the need for a different approach to subsequent research.

2. The initial research - young people's and teachers' perceptions of appropriate classroom experiences

I was employed for three months to carry out the research. I worked closely with the two project directors, the Senior Inspector for Health Education in the Education Authority

and the Chief Medical Officer of Health in the District Health Authority. The research aims had been written before my appointment (see table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Aims of the HIV/AIDS and sexual health education research project

To identify student access to HIV/AIDS and sexual health education in secondary schools and colleges

To identify key issues with regard to teaching methods and student attitudes to safer sexual relationships

To determine student awareness and access to statutory and voluntary counselling agencies

The Senior Inspector for Health Education contacted all 17 secondary schools in the authority and, consulting head teachers, selected six to be involved. These were two girls, two boys and two mixed schools, in different social areas of the authority. The sixth form and Further Education college were also involved. The interview schedules had been drawn up before my appointment (see tables 1.2 and 1.3).

Table 1.2 Interview schedule for young people

Description and view of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education received including teaching methods, what they had learned, how it had affected them

View of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education would like to receive in school

Attitudes to safer sex

Knowledge and use of other agencies, including the youth service, sources of information, support and advice

Table 1.3 Interview schedule for teachers

Role (curriculum, pastoral care/guidance/counselling, co-ordinating role)

View of current practice (policy, aims, methodology, resources, external support)

View of ideal practice

Involvement with other agencies (education authority/health education district/other)

View of in-service training

I conducted interviews with individual teachers and student groups in eight organisations (six schools and two colleges). Interviews were also carried out with staff from the Education Authority Inspectorate, Advisory and Youth Service, Health Promotion Unit,

AIDS Education Unit and other District Health organisations. I interviewed 150 students, between the ages of 11 and 20. Young people were interviewed in groups of four to six. The head teachers were given responsibility, by the inspector, to select the young people. The aim was to select a cross-section of students across year groups. Letters to parents/guardians were sent to seek permission for the young people to be involved.

The 50 teachers I interviewed had responsibility for managing or teaching HIV/AIDS and sexual health education. They included head teachers, deputy heads, personal-social and health education (PSHE) co-ordinators, religious education (RE) teachers, science teachers, heads of year and form tutors.

Interviews took place before the school/college day, at lunch time or after school. Senior staff were often available during teaching hours. The interviews lasted between half an hour and an hour. As my visits to the schools and colleges were frequent, teachers and young people often approached me to add further thoughts. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

For the purposes of this chapter, I am focusing on relevant areas of young people's and teachers' concerns about the curriculum and their views of appropriate learning experiences. In chapter two I focus on teachers' views about in-service training. The analysis of young people's attitudes to safer sex, knowledge and use of agencies, sources of information and support is not included in the thesis as it is not relevant to the overall theme (see Carnell 1992).

2.1 Selected findings

There was general agreement about the needs of young people in HIV/AIDS and sexual health education. Teachers and young people thought they were entitled to a planned, developmental programme, and a teaching approach based on participatory methods, open and frank discussions and skills development. There was not a mis-match over needs but a mis-match over provision.

There was evidence in discussion with young people and their teachers that existing work in schools and colleges on HIV/AIDS, sexuality and health education was important and of some benefit. However, young people said the work that they had done was too little and too late. The vast majority felt there was insufficient curriculum time. Young people perceived work to be mainly about providing information and the discussion of attitudes. They recognised the need for work to be done on personal, political and social issues, for example to combat prejudice, especially about gay lifestyles and people living with HIV or AIDS, negotiating safer sexual practices, and exploring power in relationships. The

major request from young people was for teachers to understand that these issues were of immediate relevance to them. Older students wanted teachers to take a more realistic view of them as sexual beings.

2.2 Learning experiences in classrooms

The majority of young people made it clear that an impersonal approach was unhelpful. Young people said it was much more difficult to engage with the issues when teaching was carried out in an 'objective' way, without relating it to the experiences of people's lives, or to social, personal or political contexts. It was apparent that young people appreciated open, explicit and relevant discussions. They felt entitled to this and said it was the school or college's responsibility to provide it. They had clear ideas about what made classroom experiences effective for them.

The need emerged for work with older students on skills development in relation to HIV/AIDS and sexual health education, including the exploration of power issues within relationships. Young people in year 11, and in the colleges, felt that there was a need for explicit 'adult' conversations for effective education and suggested role-play to practice talking about condoms and negotiating safer sex in relationships. There was no evidence that this formed part of any programme for students. Young people were critical of the emphasis on knowledge. I have selected some relevant views in table 1.4.

Classroom work was considered most effective when a range of participatory methods, including visitor sessions, drama, peer education, role play and small group discussions were used. On these occasions students reported they were able to engage more readily with issues. Young people, in several groups mentioned they would like lessons to be like the interviews I was conducting, where they were able to express their views openly.

Young people enjoyed the challenges of personal and political work, when for example, in one school, they carried out their own research tasks and were encouraged to make connections with other learning experiences, both in the school and outside. Such experiences for young people were best served when the programmes were planned, but flexible, developmental and co-ordinated across all school experiences.

It was striking that the teachers shared similar views about classroom work on HIV/AIDS and sexual health education. They had similar views to young people about what was effective and what the difficulties were. Teachers highlighted their need for appropriate training and support to help them move forward. I have selected some of the teachers' views in table 1.5.

Table 1.4 Young people's views about their HIV/AIDS, sexuality and health education experiences

Theme:	Young people's concerns:
Discussions more helpful than worksheets	• "They give out sheets and they don't help at all. It is just label this and label that which is boring. It just doesn't teach you anything. We need more discussions, they are far more helpful." (Male Year 9)
Information not given freely; some teachers embarrassed	• "They did tell us about which sexual practices were most risky, but only when someone was bold enough to ask. They won't volunteer information. A lot is glossed over because of the embarrassment factor. I have been much more informed by the TV and media." (Female Year 11)
Need to be accepted as sexual beings; relate issues to own lives	• "I think there should be a general acceptance of us as sexual beings. The way we are talked to about AIDS is as if it isn't relevant to us. It is talked about as something up in the air, something that we need to know about, and something that is not going to affect our lives. The dangers aren't stressed. It was just like you went away feeling, I am a nice middle class person and it won't happen to me." (Female Year 11)
Real life situations not medical information	• "Most people know how the virus is transmitted but they don't really know what happens if someone has the disease, or what it is like living with AIDS." (Male Year 9)
Combating prejudice; gay and lesbian issues	• "I think we should have more education about prejudices, about homosexuals. They don't say anything about that at all. There are still a lot of people who are prejudiced and I think we should be better educated about that." (Female Year 11)
Too little and too late	• "By the time we had work on AIDS, a lot of us were already having sexual relationships, so it was a bit late. Luckily we knew about it from other sources." (Female Year 11)
Planned rather than unplanned	• "When Freddie Mercury died everyone was talking about it. But then it wears off. So I think you should learn about it every year and not have to wait for someone famous to die." (Female Year 7)
An important role for school	• "You don't mention AIDS in my family, it is an absolute No-No. My parents would just flip. That is why talking about it in school is important but embarrassing." (Male Year 11)
Straightforward and direct	• "It is good to get someone who doesn't beat about the bush, but is straightforward with you, someone who is really direct so that it is not confusing." (Female College student)
Visitors and drama	• "In the fifth year we did lots. A visitor from Terrence Higgins came. We had a play, "Sex, Lies and Tricky Bits"; it was great. The 6th year also put on a play for us after they had their exams." (Female year 10)
Seen as everyone's problems	• "I was aware of some things before the drama session but the more they emphasise the heterosexual side of it you realise that it isn't just gays or drug users that are affected. It is everyone's problem. You can't think that it doesn't apply to you or affect you." (Female College student)
Open to feelings; insights into real experiences	• "A visitor makes the lesson more memorable. If someone comes in then I feel more open about what I feel and what I want to know. One visitor, she was a nun, is looking after people with AIDS. If a teacher had said the same sort of things it wouldn't have come across in the same way. It gave us more insights into AIDS and taught us about the risks." (Female Year 10)

Table 1.5 Teachers' views about HIV/AIDS, sexuality and health education experiences

Theme:	Teachers' concerns:
Teacher directed; too structured	• "The heads of year have produced a PSHE programme. This is taught by the form tutor and is rigorously planned. For a lot of students and form tutors, this is a turn off. I really think that there should be less of a tight structure with students contributing what they want to know." (RE teacher)
Unsure about approach and initiating discussions	• "I am unsure about the best way of raising sensitive issues in the classroom so I rely on the kids themselves asking questions. Then I'm willing to talk about the issues. Sometimes it raises difficult moral and ethical issues for us as teachers in this church school. There had been little opportunity to discuss and reflect on these issues with colleagues or with others outside the school." (RE teacher)
Role conflict	• "It is difficult to talk to a pupil one minute about sex and then have to tell them off the next about not doing their homework. It is hard to wear one hat for one lesson, and then put on another one five minutes later." (Form tutor)
Concerns about Section 28	• "A lot of teachers are worried about raising safer sex issues because of Section 28." (Form tutor)
Sexual orientation neglected area	• "There should be general advice on sexual orientation. This is a neglected area. Nobody mentions the fact that it is entirely possible there are gay young people in schools who are not receiving any help at all. That actually is a very sensitive topic but it is important. I don't think that teachers are necessarily the best people to give advice, but I do think that the AIDS unit can be very helpful in that area." (PSHE co-ordinator)
Inadequate training in effective teaching methods	• "I had training in Active Tutorial Methods and a whole range of other INSET related to PSHE. The younger teachers do not have this sort of experience. Acquiring the knowledge hasn't been difficult. What you need is good relationships. The methodology is essential. By negotiating the content the students have ownership and feel in control of the situation. Let the students identify their concerns and be able to talk to them about it. Not a sterile approach." (PSHE co-ordinator/deputy head)
Combined theatre work, discussions and follow up	• "The theatre group was excellent. It is a young group and afterwards they ran the discussions. The students can relate much more easily to people who are just a few years older than themselves. There needs to be more preparation and follow up work to get the most out of the experience." (College tutor)
Peer education	• "The older students in year 11 performed a play for the students in year 10. The students got a lot from this, writing the play and so on, and the younger students found it really useful." (PSHE co-ordinator)
Case studies	• "Through the use of case studies they think through their lifestyle and the implications for themselves. The whole issue of lifestyles is important." (Head of year)
Negotiation	• "We start with a very broad discussion of moral issues, then negotiate the programme. The students spend two or three lessons deciding what they want to look at and why it is an issue for them." (PSHE co-ordinator)
Promoting discussion	• "We use an article from a newspaper as a trigger. It is about the age of consent in this country compared to other European countries. This promotes terrific discussion including marriage, sex before marriage, contraception, abortion, safer sex and the use of condoms. Then we negotiate the content." (PSHE co-ordinator)

2.3 Comparable themes in other studies

The themes that emerged from my initial study, including provision, classroom approaches, teaching methods and content, were comparable to themes in other studies, although Oakley et al (1994) suggest research carried out in this area is insufficient. Most schools claim to provide health education (Williams and Roberts 1985) but not enough is known about it, about who provides it, what kind of training the providers have, or about the aims, methods or content (Oakley et al 1994).

The most common complaint is that the information schools offer is too little and too late (Woodcock et al 1992). Research findings indicate 'patchy provision' with most 16 - 19 year olds receiving no sex education (Turner and Hill 1993); 92 of 100, 15 - 16 year olds received some (Woodcock et al 1992); 86% of a sample of 500 young women received some (Thomson and Scott 1991). The following research findings reinforce the view that school approaches needs to match the needs of young people and be provided at the relevant time. For example, young people are more likely to have a positive reaction to school sex education if the information is their first source (Farrell 1978). However, it is more common to offer health education to older pupils (HEA 1989; Tones et al 1991); 60% of schools provide HIV/AIDS education for the first time during the 10th or 11th year (Clift and Stears 1990). Less than 10% of boys and girls aged 8 - 9 cited teachers as main sources of sex information (Balding 1994).

An important finding is that few interventions are based on listening to young people about their levels of knowledge, beliefs, understandings and self-perceived needs: only 44% of secondary schools ever consulted pupils about their self-defined health education needs (Miller and Moses 1990). An international workshop on youth and sexuality (Brandrup-Lakanow et al 1992) identified the collection of qualitative data on youth perceptions as a baseline for programme development; the need for programmes to be acceptable and appropriate to young people; and the desirability of involving young people themselves in designing, and implementing different sex education interventions.

Other research reports that young people demonstrate more interest in emotional and political issues whilst educators stress anatomical and moral issues (Schinke et al 1994). This highlights the further mis-match of lesson content in addition to the methods mis-match. In another study 81% of 16 - 19 year olds said schools provided them with some information (Radat and Speed 1994): the most widely covered topics were bodily development 87%; the least covered topics were lesbianism, homosexuality sexual feelings and emotions.

Other studies have highlighted a difference in young people's needs: young women tend to know more, discuss sexual health issues more and use informal networks more effectively than young men (Abraham et al 1991). In evaluating school sex education, Woodcock et al (1992) found that around one fifth of young people made favourable comments; reporting of deficits was differentiated by gender, with young women being likely to criticise the biological emphasis, and young men being more likely to identify gaps in factual information, particularly about contraception.

Studies have reported on the inappropriateness of the teaching videos used in sex education classes, and about young people's suspicions that teachers used videos because of their own embarrassment and lack of expertise in the area (Woodcock et al 1992). The Sex Education Forum's research (1992) identified issues relating to teachers' feelings of uncertainty and embarrassment as one of the three most important issues affecting the provision of school sex education.

Four years after I carried out my research, comparable themes were still emerging. Howieson and Semple (1996) reported that pupils were particularly negative about the way PSHE was taught, criticising lack of discussion, an over-reliance on worksheets and videos, large classes and inappropriate classroom layout. Pupils complained of limited or superficial and impersonal coverage of HIV/AIDS and sex education. The study highlighted how teachers focus on provision rather than needs.

These findings suggest the dominant paradigm in teaching about HIV/AIDS and sexual health education is didactic, medical and impersonal. In my study young people and their teachers agreed this approach is inappropriate and ineffective. Other studies of teachers' and pupils' perceptions of effective classroom learning show they prioritise active approaches such as group work and drama (Cooper and McIntyre 1993). In the next section I discuss explanations for the mis-match between what is perceived as effective and what is experienced.

3. Factors affecting teachers' classroom approaches

A set of inhibiting forces and contradictions, internal and external, prevented teachers from working with young people in ways they would like.

The majority of the teachers I interviewed tended to view HIV/AIDS and sexual health education as problematic. Sex education is often presented by teachers as fraught with difficulties and legal dangers (Massey 1993). In a situation where some teachers may be fearful, strategies may be adopted which McNeil (1986) identifies as components of 'defensive' teaching - teachers control students by controlling the knowledge and making

the work easy. Defensive teaching transforms controversial knowledge into 'reified' school knowledge (Everhart 1983) in which the right answer is presumed to be known. An attempt is made to make controversial areas non-controversial.

From my research I suggest there are several factors which might lead to defensive teaching including ambiguity of purpose, inhibiting forces and external contradictions, issues in teachers' classroom control, organisational constraints and inadequate in-service education and training.

3.1 Ambiguity of purpose

An analysis of the seven health education policies of participating schools and colleges (one school did not have one) showed they did not have clearly defined goals. The policies were considered by teachers to be unhelpful, often presenting lists of topics, rather than clear philosophy, goals or methods. According to Bell (1989):

> 'It may not be at all clear what the goals of the school are. Different members of the school may perceive different goals or attribute different priorities to the same goals, or even be unable to define goals which have any operational meaning. Thus while it is commonly expected that those who work in schools should have some overall purpose it is likely that the organisational context of many schools actually renders this either impossible or very difficult. Hence schools face an ambiguity of purpose, the result of which is that the achievement of goals which are educational in any sense cease to be central in the functioning of the school' (p134).

Although it is the school governors' responsibility to draw up a written statement of the policy, this task was often given to the PSHE co-ordinator to do alone, not in conjunction with others. Therefore teachers did not have the opportunity to consider their philosophical stance in relation to content or methods. As one teacher put it:

> "I know the Science, PSHE and RE departments are involved but there is no co-ordination or exchange of information. We need an overall policy that would give guidance, and a plan for all years showing what the different departments are doing and the ways they are working with the kids." (Form tutor)

Teachers' classroom goals were intuitive and focused on their teaching rather than on young people's learning. Most individual teachers described their goal as providing information, rather than providing information for a specific purpose. Others saw their role in helping young people make informed decisions. There is confusion and disagreement about classroom goals (Askew and Carnell 1995a). Some argue for a clear knowledge base, while others stress the importance of process:

'Those people who stress the importance of process argue that within the personal and social curriculum it is these interactions which form the explicit content; thus the process becomes the content' (Askew and Carnell 1995a p20).

Watkins (1991) suggests clarification of goals is needed as widely different notions of curriculum exist especially in the personal-social aspects. The diversity of views does not reflect clearly thought out rationales, but rather the product of confusion and 'knock-on effects' resulting from decisions made elsewhere in the school: 'The pastoral aspects of the curriculum are often under-organised, under-resourced and under-managed' (Watkins 1991 p86). Without a clear rationale practice within schools will be patchy and lacking in coherence (Askew and Carnell 1995b).

Ambiguity of purpose was also reflected in approaches to evaluation. Evaluating the classroom work was infrequently carried out by teachers, and when this was done it focused on knowledge gained and whether pupils enjoyed the lessons or found the work interesting. There seemed to be an assumption that enjoyment and interest were sufficient criteria to make judgements about success. Learning, other than knowledge gain, was not addressed. Bell's (1989) observation is pertinent:

'Teachers are often unsure about what it is they want their pupils to learn, about what it is the pupils have learned and how, if at all, learning has actually taken place. The learning process is inadequately understood and therefore pupils may not always be learning effectively' (p188).

The situation of unclear goals for the classroom and school was further complicated by ambiguity of purpose across the authority and between the district health service and local authority educationalists. This created tensions between the health promotion officers, school nurses and the teachers about classroom work. From my discussions with education authority inspectorate and advisory team members and the director and senior staff of the health district, conflict emerged about policies and practices across the authority. To staff working in the health authority, decisions about the curriculum, and teaching content seemed clear cut, as did the processes of policy making. They expressed frustration with teachers and educationalists who appeared unclear, indecisive and cautious. Those working outside schools and colleges were unaware of internal and external pressures and contradictions facing teachers.

3.2 Inhibiting forces and external contradictions

As well as the ambiguity of purpose facing schools and colleges, they are also 'subject to changing demands from their environments' (Bush 1995 p112). Mellanby et al (1992) comment:

'Teachers of sex education, a minority non-examination school subject squeezed in an already bursting curriculum, are being asked to prevent teenage pregnancies,

reduce the risks of AIDS, provide the Nation with a happier, healthier lifestyle and much more' (p449, cited in Oakley et al 1994).

Sex education continues to hold emotive, political potential. Oakley et al (1994) suggest that a rational response to health needs is clouded by emotion and by personal, moral and political values on the part of policy-makers, educators, parents, and by young people themselves. They argue this is not helped by recent government directives. For example, the Sex Education Forum (1992) reported that the high level of confusion and anxiety amongst those involved in the provision of sex education was 'overriding responses to the needs of the young people receiving the education' and point to the need of further research to establish what effective sex education actually entails (p4).

Misinformation about the law as it affects schools adds to the confusion for teachers about what is appropriate for the classroom. General advice is given in the DES Circular 11/87 'Sex Education at School' (DES 1987, paragraphs 19-22) which is ambiguous; teachers interpret the advice differently. In my discussions with teachers much concern was voiced over Section 28 of the Local Government Act (DES 1988a) which prohibits Local Authorities from "intentionally promoting ... homosexuality", and promoting "the teaching of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship". However, Circular 12/88 (DES 1988a) makes it quite clear that Section 28 "... will not prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality in the classroom, nor the counselling of pupils concerned about their sexuality" (Paragraph 20). Teachers, particularly in church schools, voiced their reticence to me about raising safer sex issues with young people.

Government legislation complicates teachers' responsibilities to their pupils (Hey 1997). All young people are affected but working class girls may be particularly disadvantaged, if locked within a culture which denies them rights to bodily and economic autonomy (Holland et al 1991; Holland 1993). Thomson and Scott (1991) state that young women are particularly badly served by both official and informal pedagogies:

> 'Until female sexuality is acknowledged within wider sexual discourse and is made accessible to young women themselves, the process of learning about sex and sexuality will necessarily continue to be confusing, contradictory and alienating (p44).

Others point out that young men receive substantially less attention; this absence has a role in shaping the cultural forms of male sexuality (Farrell 1978; Jackson 1982; Strong 1974).

Curriculum guidelines for schools and colleges are also contradictory. For example the notes accompanying the DES video 'AIDS: the reality and the myth' (DES 1991)

distributed at no cost to all secondary schools during the period of the research, argued that just because a sexual act is safe it does not mean to say 'it is morally acceptable or desirable'. The message was that sexual experimentation, albeit within the parameters of safe sex is wrong. Whereas materials coming into school from the district health services had different messages. These focused on the 'pleasures of experimentation' (Leaflet from the local DHA 1991). Oakley et al (1994) point to a paradox:

> '... at the same time as a reduced national policy commitment to sex education (referring to new arrangements for sex education in 1994) has taken effect, calls are being heard for a renewal of effort in the area as the only way forward in terms of improving the nation's sexual health' (p7).

In a time of increased uncertainty external contradictions are likely to continue. It is important for teachers and young people to discuss these contradictions together, in relation to their own values and experiences.

3.3 Teachers' classroom control

Discussions focusing on controversial issues were avoided by some teachers who were concerned about loss of classroom control. The learning process in the area of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education, is not straightforward and can trigger emotions in both teachers and young people:

> 'The process of learning about sex and sexual relationships, is not only a matter of receiving information, having it reinforced and finally assimilating it, but is complicated by the need to learn how to deal with complicated emotional feelings and how to cope with physical desire, to say nothing of learning to deal with the social implications of such behaviour' (Farrell 1978 p7).

Teachers are sometimes intimidated by the sexual knowledge of the students and sexual knowledge may be linked with status within the peer group (Thomson and Scott 1991). In attempting to maintain control, teachers might curtail the potential for participation in discussion and participatory activities and make the work easy, unemotional and non-controversial (McNeil 1986). The programmes of work I was shown by teachers involved in this research, were often highly structured with few opportunities for young people to negotiate the content or methods. One of the teachers said:

> "I avoid some topics of conversation because I am worried that I don't have all the information I need, and I don't want to look foolish. It is easier if certain things don't come up. These kids are street wise and I'm sure they know more than I do." (Form tutor)

This points to role conflict and role boundaries for teachers. The visitors to a class did not have this dual and seemingly conflicting set of responsibilities, for example, counsellor, disciplinarian, teacher, and tutor, and as an external researcher, neither did I.

3.4 Organisational constraints

The cross-subject nature of this work where teachers were trying to develop their own practice, while attempting to co-ordinate work across subjects was found to be particularly challenging. It appeared that the organisation of secondary schools and colleges inhibits collaborative work. School organisation raised many issues in terms of school/college management, time allocation, support and guidance from outside the organisation and in service training. Teachers were aware of the need for more co-ordination across the school, especially the need for PSHE teachers or co-ordinators, RE teachers, science teachers and tutors to work together to discuss, plan and clarify the particular contributions each could make.

Teachers acknowledged that optimum conditions were not in place because of the lack of time to co-ordinate work across subjects. Teachers were under pressure and talked a great deal about the range of competing, and sometimes conflicting, demands:

> "There is a bit of a legacy about not working across the curriculum, and it is interesting that there is still a confusion about cross-curricular working. When there was time for us to do that in school we didn't, and now that there is a more obvious need for it, there isn't the time." (Head teacher)

> "We do reproduction in year seven. I assume that in PSHE they will cover the social and emotional side. In school we need to sit down and think about what we are doing." (Science teacher)

Time constraints prevented subject teachers co-ordinating knowledge of separated specialisms. There was an assumption made by some subject teachers that PSHE would focus on the personal aspects of the work. Subject teachers suggested health issues were less relevant to their subjects and they had no time for discussion. However, in most PSHE programmes, work took on a similar pattern to subject disciplines, taking the status of a quasi-subject (Whitty et al 1994). Although PSHE is not examined by an external examining body, it is knowledge based and teaching techniques are didactic. This indicates deeply entrenched practice, creating a timetable where there is little continuity, and where the potential for learning about human relationships through social encounters is not exploited (Salmon and Claire 1984).

Congruence between programme aims and whole school/college experience of young people was an issue which some teachers were debating. It was clear to these teachers that the most powerful learning experiences of the students involve consistent messages about health, responsibility and decision making in all aspects of school/college life. In such an environment the personal, social and health development of students becomes a whole school/college issue and the concern of every teacher. In every organisation

involved in this research, the co-ordination of work in different subject areas proved problematic. Elsewhere, it was found that less than five per cent of schools across one region appeared to have provided HIV/AIDS education in a co-ordinated cross-curricular way (Clift and Stears 1990). The amount of time required to carry out this work was difficult to find in the climate of rapid change and demands of the National Curriculum.

3.5 Inadequate in-service education and training

Teachers regarded training in HIV/AIDS and sexual health education essential but few said it was adequate. They were sceptical about INSET and its potential efficacy in bringing about change. Previous experiences led to a cautious, almost negative perspective as the following comments indicate:

> "There is a back-log of things for the professional training days. There have been too many priorities, too many innovations; fatigue has set in. There is now a great unwillingness to take on new initiatives." (Head of year)

> "A number of teachers are disenchanted with INSET. The LEA training is variable and this has influenced teachers' views. Teachers want to know how the training will have an effect on the quality of work in the classroom. They want it to have immediate impact." (Deputy head)

> "We had an in-house evaluation of LEA training days. The teachers were complaining that they had to do it all themselves. The LEA gets a group of teachers together, then asks them what the problem is, and then asks them to solve it. It is the self help model and teachers are fed up with it. Schools are saturated with change. Staff want some real help." (Head teacher)

Other research indicates inadequate INSET and initial education. For example, Oakley et al (1994) found that untrained teachers of health and sex education are more common than trained. In state and independent schools in one region just over a third of teachers had received some form of specialist in-service training on issues related to HIV/AIDS (Clift and Stears 1990). In initial training less than 25% of teachers have sex education in their curriculum (Brock 1989). Initial teacher education courses are ultimately academically based; DfEE competencies allow little time for preparing teachers to attend to the social and emotional well-being of the students (Cleave et al 1997). The detailed criteria of requirements do not leave time for training in non-compulsory areas.

The data I have presented indicate a powerful set of inhibitory forces that surround the teaching of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education which might explain the prevalence of defensive teaching. This raises a number of important issues for supporting teachers' changes to classroom practice, including teachers' in service education and training programmes. These issues will be discussed in chapter two.

4. Illuminating the mis-match - health education paradigms

To illuminate further the mis-match between young people's needs and teachers' classroom approaches, I present four health education paradigms which highlight a dichotomy of goals between individual responsibility for health behaviour and radical social transformation.

Widespread agreement does not exist about what makes HIV/AIDS and sexual health education effective. Tensions are between preventative approaches, for example promoting safer sex practices and preventing the spread of HIV, and approaches which affect wider social change, for example, challenging stereotypes about people with HIV. These different approaches illuminate tensions between young people's needs and classroom provision.

Four paradigms are commonly drawn upon by health educators to explain different educational approaches: didactic; self empowerment; community-oriented; social equality (French and Adams 1986).

4.1 The didactic paradigm

There is ample evidence to suggest young people are dissatisfied with the mechanistic, reproductive approach within the didactic paradigm (Holland et al 1990; Oakley et al 1994; Schinke et al 1994; Woodcock et al 1992) although it is the most common health education paradigm. Its roots lie in early forms of hygiene education ' ... telling the rebarbative working classes about disease transmission ...' (Holland et al 1990 p18); a deficit approach. Later while the emphasis shifted from 'disease processes to personal behaviour' (Aggleton et al 1987) it remains preventative.

The didactic paradigm is hierarchical. Communication tends to be one-sided, expert to client. The role is to pass on information; messages are regarded as necessary and true. If people are perceived as rational decision takers, the rejection of the message is due to irrational behaviour (French and Adams 1986). People, not the social environment, are responsible for their behaviour. The expert/client relationship can be seen in the light of this ideology which stratifies society, producing a dichotomy between educator and learner which is reflected in the choice of medium used to transmit the message (Homans and Aggleton 1988); lectures, talks, or impersonal worksheets are used.

Problems associated with this paradigm:

• it fails to take affective and social needs of young people into account; it is content based. In a technological age where knowledge changes rapidly, young people need to learn about learning, to be able to make connections between their learning in one sphere and learning in another and most of all, will need to be able to apply their learning to different situations (Askew and Carnell 1998)

• it ignores connections between different bodies of knowledge; between knowledge and personal experience, and between personal meaning and understanding. Didactic sex education is counterproductive; the information is objective and impersonal, unrelated to people's lives (Warwick et al 1988)

• it is based on the out-moded theory of a direct relationship between knowledge and behaviour (Johnson et al 1990)

• it ignores wider social contexts and feelings (Holland et al 1990). It stresses the importance of rational thinking and specific, objective, abstract, logical thinking. The view of the learner and the learning context is incomplete (Askew and Carnell 1998).

4.2 The self empowerment paradigm

This approach breaks from the dichotomy between young person and teacher. There is a different role for each; the teacher does not lecture, but creates a learning environment. The young person takes more responsibility for learning. In this non-hierarchical approach boundaries become blurred; the teacher becomes a resource allowing young people to educate peers. The power dynamic shifts; learners have more freedom to determine content, processes and outcomes. Effective health education is less a matter of disseminating knowledge but of transforming social and sexual relationships (Holland et al 1990). This paradigm works towards individual empowerment.

Through the empowering process young people make their own changes in particular contexts. Messages relate to lifestyle. Effective health education requires the 'normalisation' of sexual knowledge and students' participation in its construction' (Thomson and Scott 1991 p13). Changes are determined by the learner, not the teacher.

My view of empowerment is developed from Holland et al (1991). It includes ways people can attempt, or take control over their own learning and lives. Holland et al (1991) suggests individuals may be experientially or intellectually empowered, but most likely there are elements of both. They suggest that empowerment ' ... is not a once and for all attainment, but a process, and a struggle' (p29). This highlights the importance of a transitional category which captures the contingent nature of empowerment in practice,

for example, in sexual encounters male power is exerted over young women's ability to experience and exert their own power.

Problems associated with this paradigm:

• it assumes people can attain their maximum potential given the necessary experiences in classrooms. It suggests once a person has developed particular skills, for example, autonomy, they will be able to exercise personal power in all circumstances

• it does not address societal constraints and inequalities which affect achievement of potential. The goal is to enable young people to fit in society rather than to challenge social injustice. It does not take the experience of oppression into account

• it assumes the person is responsible for their behaviour and does not address economic and social inequalities which structure society. Education may be seen to empower, but may not allow choices and changes to occur.

4.3 The community-oriented paradigm

This paradigm is based on the notion that groups of people can be more powerful than individuals in bringing about change. Since the 1970s, grass roots health education has been influenced by radical community education and to some extent by feminism (Holland et al 1990). This collective emphasis has encouraged community action as a way of working for a healthier society (French and Adams 1986). Local pressure results in changes to social and economic circumstances, for example, resources are reallocated to particular groups in the community.

This paradigm suggests that emancipation involves a reflective process of learning involving critical investigation, a reconstruction of social and moral values, and sharing subjective experiences. Personal meanings and constructs can only be understood in their unique social and political context.

The role of the educator in this process is to enable the group to identify their needs and decide what actions they want to take. The role of young people is to actively engage in the process. Relationships are less boundaried than in the didactic and self-empowerment paradigms.

Problems associated with this paradigm:

• the authority and power of the teacher, particularly those of power based on race, class, and gender, are not addressed

• it places too much emphasis on group responsibility for change rather than social transformation

• community-oriented paradigms aim to strengthen group solidarity as a defence against social inequalities. This may be insufficient in that fundamental conditions of social inequality and injustice remain the same

• it is difficult to conceive of this paradigm being adopted in any form within the current educational climate, since teachers and schools have less autonomy, and are faced with increasing direction on how and what to teach. Students are expected to be less challenging, and more conforming, in a climate of decreasing resources.

4.4 The social equality paradigm

Homans and Aggleton (1988) outline a paradigm which attempts to affect changes by social transformation in contrast to didactic, self-empowerment and community paradigms: ' ... socially transformatory paradigms have the potential to enhance individual health and well being and to bring about far reaching social change throughout society' (p168). Aggleton and Homans (1988) stress four interrelated areas: ideas, social relations, political processes and resource allocation.

This approach challenges existing ideologies and systems of social control, including patriarchy and capitalism (Holland et al 1990). Feminist critiques of education have highlighted how inequalities in society are reinforced in school (Holly 1989; Szirom 1988) and Baker and Davies' research (1989) found that lessons about equality were undermined by the teacher's own theorising and methodology. The social equality paradigm attempts to address these inequalities.

The goal of this paradigm is to bring about far-reaching social change. It starts with a critical evaluation of society, but the strategy for achieving change is different from the community-oriented paradigm. It does not view change as dependent upon individual change, individual responsibility or self-reflection, but on political action; education involves critical evaluation of injustice in society as a step towards political action. For example, by an exploration of issues such as inequality, power and resource allocation. The curriculum is knowledge based but may include the teaching of political skills, for example, through organising petitions or demonstrations.

Problems associated with this paradigm:

• as with the community-oriented paradigm, it is not possible to develop the principles of the social equality paradigm within educational organisations as their function is to act as major socialising organisations; schools are not in the business of promoting radical change

• some aspects of the knowledge base of this paradigm were previously incorporated into the curriculum, for example, through political education and sociology. Since the 1980's such areas of the school curriculum have diminished

• it ignores the emotional domain; the view of the learner is incomplete.

The four paradigms can be located on a two-way continuum suggested by Beattie (1990). This health education classification is mapped on two continua from objective to subjective and from individual to collective (see figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 A two-way continuum mapping four approaches to health education

Objective

Individual ——————|—————— Collective
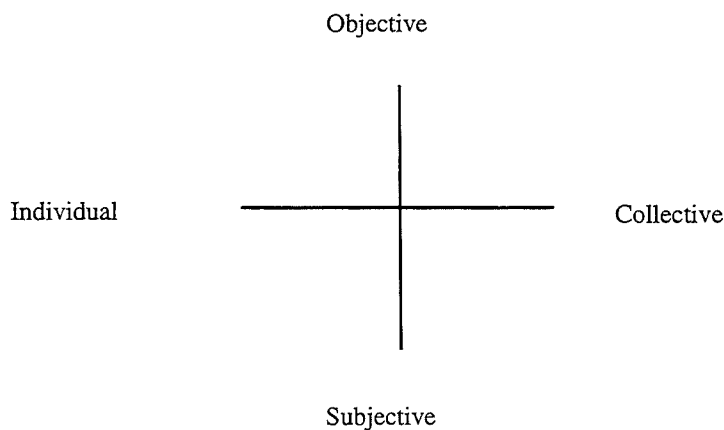
Subjective

The four different paradigms can be located in the four quadrants. The didactic paradigm is located in the individual/objective quadrant, the self empowerment paradigm is located in the individual/subjective quadrant, the community-oriented paradigm is located in the collective/subjective quadrant and the social equality paradigm is located in the collective/objective quadrant. All approaches are about change, but the manner of the change differs in each quadrant.

My research indicates the dominant classroom paradigm was individual/objective. Young people and their teachers wanted to increase the experiences of the collective/subjective type.

4.5 Implications for change in the classroom

The paradigms discussed above do not accurately represent practice. Classroom work does not match theoretical mappings, but the paradigms are useful in illuminating the mis-match between young people's perceived needs and classroom approaches. Tensions described earlier suggest a shift is required from the didactic paradigm to more appropriate classroom experiences, drawing on ideas underpinning the empowerment, community-oriented and social equality paradigms. There are examples where a shift occurred from the individual/objective approach to the collective/subjective approach and this happened most revealingly in the visitors' sessions. I draw on Biggs and Moore (1993) who contrast learning in and out of school (see table 1.6) to indicate how sessions with visitors matched those which the young people felt were more relevant and engaging.

Table 1.6 Learning in and out of school

In school	Out of school
• decontextualised • second hand • needs motivating • tends to be individualistic • assessed by others • formal structure	• has real context • first hand • comes easily • co-operative, shared • self-assessed • few structures

Learning with visitors when the experience is participatory, indicates a shift from the didactic approach. It can be seen to be empowering, in that young people can express feelings, relate issues to real situations, and relate messages to their own lives. Young people construct meaning from practical examples, consequently have more control over their learning. The focus on political and social issues works towards equality.

There is growing evidence that schooling may not contribute in a direct and obvious way to performance outside school, or that knowledge acquired outside school is used to support in-school learning (Resnick 1987). If visitors are used effectively in schools they can bridge this divide, providing relevant experiences for young people and preventing work in school becoming isolated from the rest of what young people do. I have developed this idea (see table 1.7) to consider the contrast young people identified between traditional classroom learning (individual/objective) and the effective learning experiences with visitors (collective/subjective).

Table 1.7. Learning in the traditional classroom and participatory learning with visitors

Traditional classroom learning	Participatory learning with visitors
• focus on clinical facts	• focus on political and social issues
• unfamiliar language	• familiar language
• didactic, limited outcomes, clear boundaries, hierarchical	• open, encouragement of open-ended discussion, blurred boundaries, non-hierarchical
• distant, remote from experiences, removed from real life	• real life situations used as practical examples; feelings are aired
• worksheet-based	• talk-based
• theoretical, biological, mechanistic	• practical, holistic
• individualistic	• socially oriented
• formal structure	• fewer structures

I do not suggest visitor sessions are the only effective experiences in which young people can learn about personal-social and health issues, but classroom experiences based on these principles would be more appropriate. Such changes have major implications for the professional development of teachers. My research develops from this perspective.

5. Research reflections

The interviews I carried out with 150 young people and 50 teachers provided invaluable data. The attention given to young people was important, given that student perspectives are often missing in discussions about strategies for confronting educational issues (Nieto 1994, cited in Pickering 1997).

This initial research honed in on one specific aspect of school life. There were many occasions when the project's narrow focus was frustrating. I had to disregard important issues, which may have helped illuminate organisational life which had a bearing on teachers' professional development. I was an outsider and did not know the school or people working in it. I focused on one small aspect of a total situation and did not attend to the wider context.

As this was policy research, it was not surprising that the paradigm mirrored some of the emerging issues and problems of hierarchy and power. I was in an hierarchical position working for two employers who were giving contradictory messages. I experienced similar dynamics to that of teachers and young people. As a consultant working on a

short-term contract I had little power to affect decisions about the research focus and how to report the findings, just as in school there is an hierarchy of decision making.

Hierarchy in schools was evidenced in head teachers' decisions in selecting teachers and young people for interview. In the classroom, teachers made decisions about young people's learning. The research was tightly boundaried; the report focused on one aspect of the curriculum and other information was disregarded. This mirrored how the school curriculum is organised with knowledge tightly compartmentalised; affective and social aspects of learning disregarded. As a research consultant I was seen as an 'expert', just as teachers in school are viewed as 'experts'. On reflection an approach that would have been more conducive to young people and teachers reflecting on their experiences would have been one where the research would have been integrated into the curriculum. As an external consultant I could have facilitated the teachers carrying out this process.

Being an outsider did, however, have advantages. The young people viewed me as a visitor, saying they talked more openly to me than they would in the classroom. It was striking the number of times the young people said that they would like their lessons to be like the discussion we were having. My role was to encourage them to talk and make sense of their experiences. While I recognised that this was an important outcome of being an outsider, I realised how this form of enquiry would lead to more opportunities for learning if facilitated by teachers in the classroom in a non-didactic way.

I also came to realise the research methods mirrored the didactic paradigm outlined in this chapter and had similar problems. I came later to realise this research intervention, carried out by an external consultant, had the potential to be de-skilling and disempowering, having a negative effect on teachers' professional development. It did not facilitate teachers' personal or professional learning through their experience and reinforced the view of research being carried out by an external agent. The teachers saw me as the 'expert', in a privileged position to gain access to the views of young people in their schools, and to write a report which made recommendations for their professional practice. This presented a contradiction since in the report I encouraged a shift from the didactic paradigm. I decided that if an alternative paradigm of HIV/AIDS and sexual health was to be adopted in schools, there must be congruence between this and any research in the area. This theme of congruence between professional practice and research will be discussed at different stages of the thesis.

My goal following the initial research was to move away from a research paradigm which put me in an 'expert' role with teachers, to one in which I was examining and improving my own practice, whilst at the same time encouraging teachers to carry out their own research. Such an approach would challenge the assumption underpinning notions of

educational research which separates the participants into two groups - 'the researchers and the researched' (Aspland et al 1996). I began to explore alternative ways of thinking about research. Action research appeared a way forward. I was seeking an alternative way of knowing and a valid rationale for this form of understanding. This would be in opposition to a culture that suggests expertise must be external, abstract, scientific, and technical (Winter 1994).

I believed that the principles and processes of action research would be congruent with the way in which I wanted to work with teachers in the future: incorporating self reflection; collaborating in social situations; improving the rationality and fairness of practice; understanding practice and the situations that surround it (Carr and Kemmis 1983). I also believed that the outcomes of the action research process would be congruent with the substantive issue of the research: leading to personal development; better professional practice; organisational and social change (McNiff et al 1996). In asking the question "How do I improve what I am doing?" action researchers engage in a form of professional development (McNiff et al 1996 p11).

My goal was to develop a form of research that was congruent with the principles which underpinned my work with teachers. I had the opportunity to do this when the education authority commissioned me to plan, organise and run an in-service education and training (INSET) programme. This was specifically designed to address the needs of the teachers I had been working with, to provide the necessary skills to begin to make changes in the management of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education in schools and colleges. The publicity for this programme coincided with the research report sent to all secondary schools and colleges in the authority. The design, implementation and evaluation of this INSET programme is the focus of the next stage of my research.

Chapter two

Change through in-service education and training -
the mis-match continues

1. Introduction

The local education authority which initiated the research, described in chapter one, extended my consultancy contract, to implement some of the recommendations I made in my report (Carnell 1992). One recommendation was to offer in-service education and training (INSET) to the teachers involved in the research, as a strategy to bring about changes to classroom and school practice. My task was to design, manage and evaluate the INSET programme.

My research interests emerging from the initial research, described in chapter one, concerned:

• ways INSET programmes can be designed to enhance change
• the extent to which INSET can support teachers in bringing about change
• furthering my understanding of teachers' professional development.

In this chapter I analyse the teachers' perceived INSET needs, describe the design features of the INSET programme, review the programme and analyse teachers' accounts of its impact. I draw on Lewin's (1947) force field analysis exercise to identify positive forces promoting change and inhibitory factors causing resistance. My findings suggest the INSET programme was only partially successful. This led me to review my approach to planning professional development experiences and search for an alternative practice in an INSET programme.

In order to move away from a research paradigm which separates the researcher and researched, I wanted to talk with teachers over time and get to know them and their working contexts. I wanted to extend and understand learning in a collaborative and reciprocal way, to respond to teachers' concerns and discuss their interpretations of what was happening. I believe there needs to be congruence; data collection needs to reflect the values and principles of a collaborative approach where teachers and researchers learn together through a process of shared understanding and constructed meaning. These considerations informed my choice of research methods. I saw the data as providing illuminative insights into particular situations, not as representing generalisable evidence of a quantitative sort. I conclude the chapter with reflections on the research process.

2. The design of the in-service education and training programme

The stages in the design of the INSET programme included: an analysis of the data I had collected during interviews with teachers involved in the initial research about their INSET needs; the identification of the teachers who would attend the INSET programme and the identification of the design features of the programme, its rationale, aims and programme outline.

2.1 Identifying teachers' perceived needs

An analysis of the teachers' comments about their INSET needs suggested three levels of training (see table 2.1).

Table 2:1 Teachers' INSET needs

Theme	Teachers' comments
Level one: Classroom management, interpersonal skills, collaborative learning	• "Classroom management, building relationships and interpersonal skills, these are neglected areas. We are storing up a number of problems. We spend all the time training on National Curriculum issues and assessment but what teachers need is how to teach effectively and how pupils learn collaboratively." (PSHE co-ordinator) • "The tutors and the heads of year need training to develop confidence, so they will be able to promote discussion around sexuality and sexual behaviour." (Head of year) • "My training needs include handling difficult, sensitive issues, the process as well as the content, how to lead into the area of HIV and AIDS and be sensitive to the children." (Form tutor)
Level two: Working with colleagues	• "Insufficient time is given to train people to overcome their own bias. Time to explore attitudes with colleagues is most important." (PSHE co-ordinator) • "We need work on leading teams and co-ordinating PSHE" (Science teacher) • "I feel there is insufficient time to talk with colleagues about what they were doing in their classrooms. I see training events as an ideal opportunity to share ideas and good practice." (Form tutor) • "Weekend residentials are ideal as you can build up relationships with colleagues." (Form tutor)
Level three: Working across the organisation	• "There are so many management issues to address in this cross curricular area, for example, how resources should be distributed, how heads of year work with their form tutors and how the whole staff need to be informed about what is going on. " (Deputy head) • "We don't really know about writing policies, getting everyone together across the board to contribute their views. Most co-ordinators I have spoken to are give the task to do on their own. I don't think that's on. We really need to be up to date on the legal issues." (PSHE co-ordinator)

Level one included classroom skills, for example, running small group discussions, collaborative learning and activity-based methods. Level two included working with colleagues, for example on personal issues and team development. Level three included working across the organisation, for example management issues, formulating policies and co-ordination. The three levels of need expressed by teachers, classroom work, working with colleagues and working across the organisation are reflected in the INSET programme I designed.

2.2 Identifying teachers to attend the INSET programme

There were key issues about identifying members of staff to attend the HIV/AIDS and sexual health education INSET programme. There were mixed views amongst teachers about who should attend; all staff, a small specialist group or form tutors (see table 2.2).

The selection of staff to attend INSET has major implications. For example, identifying a small team reinforces HIV/AIDS and sexual health education as a specialist subject. The resources required for all tutors to be trained are too prohibitive. No single solution or policy can be enforced by an education authority. At the time the senior inspector and advisory teacher felt that PSHE co-ordinators and senior managers would be in a position to develop the work. Their combined experience would enable them to be agents for change in their schools. The participating teachers would have experience including:

• theory and practice of health education/PSHE
• HIV/AIDS awareness
• experience of teaching health education and co-ordinating PSHE across the organisation
• experience and training in group work or activity-based learning methods
• theory and practice of the management of change.

The course title 'The Management of HIV and AIDS Education in Schools and Colleges' indicated an emphasis on management issues and work across the organisation for teachers who held a post of responsibility for the area. The inspector encouraged two teachers from each of the authority's 17 secondary schools, including two teachers from the eight institutions (six schools, the 6th form and F.E. college) involved in the initial research to attend. I designed the INSET programme on these assumptions.

Table 2.2 Identifying appropriate staff for the INSET programme

Theme	Teachers' comments
Training for all	• "I don't think that many other staff have had training. I think that there should be INSET days for the whole staff and I think we need to see all form tutors dealing with relationships and HIV/AIDS. Each year group has asked for two days training for tutor groups around collaborative learning. This is in the School Development Plan; the aim is to enhance the role of the form tutor." (PSHE Co-ordinator)
Training for subject teachers	• "I feel strongly that subject teachers have proper training. It wouldn't be appropriate for all the form tutors to be teaching it. The disadvantage for me, because I have been trained, is that responsibility for PSHE is mine. It is seen as a specialist subject and not seen by subject teachers to be their responsibility." (PSHE co-ordinator)
All form tutors	• "There are now so many initiatives, National Curriculum and assessment. New teachers don't feel well equipped enough to be form tutors. Their personal skills are not lacking but they haven't had the training for the form tutor role. All form tutors need training. Let's raise the status of the form tutor's role." (Deputy head)
Small group of teachers	• "I think it is unreasonable for every form tutor in the secondary school to feel comfortable talking to students about HIV and AIDS. The wrong person talking about AIDS in a clinical way would do more damage than good. I would prefer to see a small group of tutors or teachers who have come forward as committed people, volunteers, opinion makers, who would teach it and they can influence attitudes across the board." (PSHE co-ordinator)

2.3 Design features of the INSET programme

The design features for the INSET programme (see table 2.3) was drawn from my previous experiences of working in the ILEA advisory service between 1979 and 1990, and informed by the work of Button (1974) Drummond and McLaughlin (1994) Easen (1985) Honey and Mumford (1986) and Joyce and Showers (1980).

Table 2.3 Design features of an INSET programme

• Participants' existing knowledge, skills and experiences are acknowledged. Teachers are encouraged to integrate skills into classroom practice; support for change is given over time

• Reflection is inbuilt, to enable participants to make connections, and to consider action to improve classroom and school practice; time is structured into the programme to review and evaluate learning, through private reflection and public discussion

• Structured sessions provide security to encourage risk taking and increase learning. Over time structure is reduced as the group develops a way of working together and takes more responsibility for learning

• Collaborative tasks provide opportunities to share common experiences and build a trusting climate. Collaborative approaches are used to challenge and encourage divergent thinking, ask new questions, and explore taken for granted assumptions, without attacking the teachers' existing practices

• Attention is paid to personal and well as professional experiences. Communication is open and non-hierarchical

These design features are embedded in the INSET rationale, aims and outline (see table 2.4) providing the conceptual framework in planning and implementing INSET which Fullan (1979) suggests is lacking in most in-service programmes. The framework was included in the advertising sent to all school and colleges in the authority.

Table 2.4 'The Management of HIV and AIDS Education in Schools and Colleges': rationale, aims and programme outline

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INSET rationale:

The course is designed for senior teachers and PSHE co-ordinators involved in HIV/AIDS, health and sexual health education in secondary schools and colleges. The course provides practical and theoretical support to carry out a piece of development work in teachers' own organisations. A range of perspectives will be introduced to provide the basis on which the teachers' practical work could be planned, monitored and evaluated. Participants will work collaboratively over a period of two terms with other teachers in the authority.

The programme takes a whole curriculum view and examines provision for student-centred, collaborative learning. It examines cross-subject dimensions and co-ordination of tutorial programmes, specialist guidance work, specialist courses such as health education, timetabled PSHE, and relevant personal and social aspects of all subject lessons. Processes of school-based curriculum development are addressed.

Programme aims:

- review and analyse recent developments and research
- explore theoretical perspectives
- consider processes of co-ordinating institutional approaches and policies
- share good practice
- demonstrate small group work and collaborative methods for use in the classroom
- develop links with HIV/AIDS and health agencies.

Programme Outline:

Working with young people in the classroom

- collaborative learning / small group discussion methods / classroom management
- negotiating programmes with young people
- introducing work on HIV/AIDS and sexual health
- handling difficult and sensitive issues
- group building and interpersonal skills

Working with colleagues

- exploring attitudes to HIV/AIDS and sexual health topics
- leading teams and developing collaborative approaches

Working across the organisation

- managing HIV/AIDS and sexual health education across the curriculum
- co-ordinating PSHE and cross-subject work
- working with governors to formulate sex education policies
- working with parents and governors.

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3. Review of the INSET programme

Fourteen teachers attended, four pairs of teachers from the same school, one pair from the sixth form college and four individuals. Two were experienced PSHE co-ordinators, one was a senior teacher, seven had recently been given responsibility for co-ordinating PSHE (five from schools and two from colleges) four were science teachers who were interested in the HIV and AIDS content of the National Curriculum science programme. Twelve of the 14 teachers had not attended any training on HIV/AIDS, sexual health education, group work or collaborative learning methods.

This highlights a mis-match between the programme and the teachers' needs. The programme was designed for teachers experienced in the area. Only five teachers involved in the initial research attended. It turned out to be a very mixed group in terms of experience and roles. This indicated that priorities for schools and the inspectorate did not match. This experience mirrors Fullan's (1979) findings, that topics are frequently selected by people others than those for whom in-service programmes are intended; one reason why most INSET fails.

A more appropriate course for 12 of the 14 teachers attending would have been an introductory programme, exploring health concepts, approaches to health education, appropriate teaching methods, evaluation and issues in cross-subject work. In attempting to address differing needs some negotiation took place and the programme was modified.

In attempting to overcome other problems contributing to failure such as 'lack of follow up support and evaluation, and lack of focus on individual's needs' (Fullan 1979 p3) the programme was structured over two terms. It began with a residential weekend, plus six twilight sessions. I visited all INSET participants in their schools and colleges twice, during the week after the programme ended, and again between eight and ten weeks later. The purposes of my visits were to evaluate the course and to support teachers in their changes to classroom practice or school development. Discussions were designed to enable understanding about factors which helped support or inhibit change, rather than attach blame if changes had not occurred. I drew up an interview schedule for these visits (see appendix 2.1). All interviews were taped and transcribed.

3.1 Teachers' views of the INSET programme

Some comments showed there was a match between intended and actual learning outcomes, for example:

"I thought the course was well organised. It had a feeling of progression and the outcome built in that people would take away something concrete and tangible. A safe forum was built for sharing ideas and frustrations. It helped me approach a lot of things differently." (PSHE co-ordinator)

"It showed us that we were isolated. It was good to work with people who were in a similar situation. A support group for sex education teachers would be good, but this would need resourcing." (PSHE co-ordinator)

"The delivery was good and you gained lots of information in novel non-didactic ways, modelling good classroom practice. The delivery is as useful as the content. The values continuum exercise was interesting; it exposed myths and put you in the same situations as a class of kids." (PSHE co-ordinator)

The teachers' comments reflect the differing needs and experiences of the course participants. It was interesting however, that some teachers found the course useful, but what they learned did not relate to my intended learning outcomes:

"It also made me think that I should not be so arrogant, but there were teachers there who seemed to know so little, but I need to be more humble rather than dismissive. I did not feel that people's mixed level of knowledge had an effect on the course. I was surprised by what people had said - things that would have expected a child to have said, not an adult. I have made assumption about teachers - that was a good lesson to learn in itself." (PSHE co-ordinator)

"Perhaps it needed to make more specific that it is more important to think about the process rather than the content. I was slow to catch on. It was good how it worked out in the end. People are at different levels. It might have made it clear what the visitor session was about even though you had explained what it was about." (Science teacher)

An individual's learning may not match the teachers' intentions. This has important implications for the evaluation of planned learning experiences, and for learning facilitators and learners to understand the learning process.

The course was designed on collaborative principles and the group was involved in activities and exercises considering a range of collaborative methods, small group discussions and experiential learning. These activities were reviewed and teachers had the opportunity to consider how they may be adapted for the classroom. I attempted to model a collaborative approach, where participants were responsible for their own learning and I avoided requests from them to give 'correct' answers. I encouraged research between sessions for participants to provide their own answers.

I felt there was a mis-match in my role. I was seen by the teachers as the expert who had all the answers, not as someone who was also learning; the roles between me as a tutor and the participants were differentiated, boundaried and hierarchical - the didactic paradigm was evidenced within this scenario. On reflection I could see that differentiated activities had not been built in to the programme to take account the participants' different

needs. Peer assisted work was not part of the programme; I did not involve more experienced teachers in the tutoring role. The mis-match between the planned programme and participants' needs could have been avoided if I had been able to talk to participants beforehand. This reinforces my view that INSET cannot be effective if participants have not contributed to the planning process.

Two exercises were particularly illuminating. The first involved a planning exercise for classroom work. This demonstrated a process for planning part of a programme around collaborative principles. Two issues emerged. Many pairs of teachers planning together, resorted to familiar techniques and strategies. They focused on medical issues using didactic methods. They suggested including worksheets and videos for this part of the programme. I had underestimated the difficulties for teachers in changing their practice. The second issue that emerged from this activity, was around the process of planning. Many members of the group wanted to complete the plans for their programmes, so they could return to school with a finished product, rather than taking away a process of working:

> "It was a bit frustrating that the planning activity did not get too far. We were shown a process. It needed to be stressed that it was a process rather than producing a product and therefore would have felt that we had achieved that. I did not realise at the time that the completion of tasks was not as important as the thinking around the issue." (Science teacher)

The second exercise involved receiving a visitor. During the second day, a Health Promotion Officer from the local HIV Unit in the District Health Authority joined the group. I had identified two goals for this exercise. Firstly, to experience a collaborative process integrating school and out of school experiences. Participants planned the agenda, took responsibility for the session, reflected on the experience of collaborating together and identified the key learning points. Secondly, it aimed to show how the content of a session could be determined by a group, and how the knowledge of a visiting 'expert' could become more accessible and relevant to a group. This exercise was offered as a model for collaboration in the classroom.

Although all the members of the group felt that it was a useful exercise and much to be recommended for their organisation, there was conflict about the way the visitor challenged some questions put by the teachers. The visitor was critical when teachers said they were unable to introduce some areas of work into the classroom (for example about safer sex and gay issues). His opinion was that they censored knowledge and failed to provide relevant, useful information for young people. After the session one teacher commented:

"I felt the visitor was quite aggressive. He jumped on things people said. Some people had little experience of talking about sexuality so perhaps he could have been more aware of where people were starting from. He was too severe on people who did not know much. People had mixed experience - beginners needed more information, especially medical information." (PSHE co-ordinator)

In the light of these comments I talked to the visitor to discuss his response:

"I was shocked that these teachers had such a censoring approach. How on earth are young people supposed to learn about their sexuality if teachers' attitudes are so moralistic. I am amazed that teachers hide behind Clause 28 as if they had no responsibility to discuss these issues in an open and direct way with young people. I thought things had changed in schools. It has opened my eyes to the sort of education kids are getting. I think as a unit we need to be more proactive in the community so that we can offer an alternative source of information. Sex education shouldn't be left to teachers." (Health Promotion Officer)

This session raised important and controversial issues about the constraints of school contexts and provided an opportunity for teachers to review their practice. It also helped me reflect on the balance between support and challenge. I believe it is important to work with people in a non-alienating way. The learning climate needs to challenge, encourage divergent thinking and 'explore taken for granted assumptions, without attacking teachers' existing practices' (Drummond and McLaughlin 1994). While some teachers were angered, other teachers felt the session useful, but needed more encouragement to take action:

"It would have been nice to develop stronger links with the Unit visitor - maybe if that had been pushed a bit on the course, I would have got round to contacting him. I think he could talk with the pupils in a way I can't." (Science teacher)

On reflection I felt it would have been helpful to spend more time debriefing the visitor session, working on the feelings that it aroused. Without individual and group reflection and discussion some teachers may have left the course feeling their individual practice had been attacked, without considering the powerful inhibitory factors of the context in which they operate. I also felt that further group discussion about individuals' values and philosophical stances was needed as some teachers' resistance to recommendations in the research report surfaced:

"When should we teach about sexuality? I think it is important to protect the innocence of young people. From your research it sounds as if young people want to have discussions earlier, but for me I think that we should be trying to protect them from all the worries and responsibilities of sexual relationships. I am not convinced about this at all. I think it is really difficult to work in a class, where children are at such different levels and have such different needs. I am not sure that I can cater for them. I think that it is really difficult to get right." (Science teacher)

The issues this teacher raised did not emerge during my initial research, nor on the course even when the notion of censorship had been raised by the visitor. It was raised during

my second visit to the school. Discussion amongst peers would have been valuable to understand the constraints that the ethos and organisation of school can produce. On reflection, I felt the personal dimension of teachers' learning, and the principles of collaborative approaches, had not been addressed adequately. I needed to reflect on the most effective ways of including these areas within my teaching.

3.2 Teachers' views of the outcomes of the programme

During my follow-up support visits to schools and colleges it was interesting to discover how attempts to change classroom practice varied (see table 2.5). I used a 'force field analysis' exercise (Lewin 1947) in the interview (see appendix 2.1) and subsequently to structure and display the teachers' responses.

Table 2.5 Teachers' changes to classroom practice following INSET

Theme	Teachers' comments about positive classroom changes
Involving students	• "Two special things, I've included the idea of involving students about what goes on. In PSHE I did activities to find out what they already know." (PSHE co-ordinator)
Changing the classroom approach	• "I rewrote the human reproduction work in science as last time it was very clinical. I had one hell of a shock when I introduced it. I asked year seven and most kids have had sex education in their primary school - most knew about the process of reproduction. I assumed they didn't know anything. For next year it needs more PSHE type collaborative activities in terms of attitudes and so on." (Science teacher)
Confident in approach	• "I felt more confident in introducing group work and actually talking about the subject with the girls. I was able to admit that I did not know everything." (Science teacher)
Peer education established	• "Last week we had the first peer education session. The students set the agenda in what they wanted to be trained in - personal problems, eating problems, family relationships, HIV. Now five pupils from year 12 have been trained. They want to focus on peer pressure and HIV. They will be in year 13 next year and will work with year 10 in small groups and go on and train others." (PSHE co-ordinator)
	Teachers' comments about inhibiting classroom factors
Fear of not knowing; need to keep control	• "What bothers me is that, although I try to keep up to date with information, I fear giving young people false information. In my own subject I feel really confident, but in work to do with sexuality I really don't know some of the things that the kids know. As a teacher this is strange, because I feel that the kids are always looking to me for the right answer. I suppose this is inhibiting things. I feel that I want to keep the agenda firmly under control. I am not really prepared to say that I don't know. I feel that it will affect my status with them." (PSHE co-ordinator)
Inhibited with colleagues	• "When my head of department comes into the classroom sometimes when I'm addressing sensitive issues with the class, I freeze. I feel that I shouldn't be dealing with these sorts of issues. Of course, the kids pick this up." (Science teacher)
Confident in expert role; PSHE has lower status	• "I have used a lot of the activities you introduced on the course in my geography classes but not in PSHE. I am confident about collaborative group work when working in an area when I am expert, but I still use the work sheets and handouts with my tutor group. It takes some thinking about and I don't really have the time to prepare the PSHE lessons and it doesn't seem so important as it is only one lesson a week. (College tutor)

Again in my follow-up support visits, I observed differences in ways teachers were able to bring about changes to their learning contexts (see table 2.6). The comments in these tables indicate the way in which the teachers were able to bring about changes were enhanced or inhibited by their contexts, both at classroom level and across the organisation. The INSET programme involved teachers from nine different organisations. My two follow up visits to these schools were important in helping me recognise and understand the 'differential impact of positive and negative forces within the systems' to which teachers must return (Fullan 1979); ignoring this differential is a reason why INSET often fails.

Analysis of the data

The analysis of the data suggested the INSET programme was only partially successful in bringing about change to classroom practice and working with colleagues, as the contextual factors had not been sufficiently stressed. Some teachers were still working in isolation; setting up collaborative ventures takes time to develop and may require external support, as the teachers indicated. Collaborative work requires a climate of trust, openness, shared goals, and a commitment to that way of working, including the breaking down of barriers and hierarchies.

The majority of teachers attending the INSET programme had not identified their priorities. Collaborative methods had been identified by the teachers I interviewed in the initial research and only two of these teachers attended the INSET. Modelling collaborative ways of working was not sufficient to help teachers bring about changes. I suggest that in order to work collaboratively with young people and colleagues, course participants as well as experiencing collaborative methods for themselves, must understand the principles embedded in its approach, be committed to the paradigm shift required and work in a context which supports this approach.

The shift towards a collaborative paradigm, means a shift in the role of teacher and learner, sharing responsibility and decision making. This is particularly important for peer education projects in school. This shift involves 'changes in conceptions and role behaviour' (Fullan 1991). The same principles apply to the work with young people in the classroom as well as working with colleagues across the organisation.

Table 2.6 Change factors in teachers' learning contexts

Theme	Teachers' comments about a positive change context
INSET and research report was motivating	• "Because I had been on the course I could go back into school with substance; it gave a reason for looking at what we are doing. The fact that other schools were looking at the same things was motivating. The research report supported the changes we have been trying to make and this provided the impetus for us to take off." (Senior teacher)
Course prompted collaboration	• "Since the course I have talked to form teachers to find out who was going to do what. This worked well in some cases, but it has been unofficial. Hope next year it is seen as part of the programme. Definite beginnings of collaboration." (Science teacher)
Follow-up support kept things going	• "I liked the follow-up sessions because it kept the momentum up and kept me aware of things during the following terms. Kept ideas going once the course had finished. Although it was difficult to come in the evenings it was worth it." (Science teacher)
Collaborating with a colleague	• "It is tremendous working collaboratively with a colleague from a different subject area and from a different school. I had not worked with him before the course. I now ask him to run workshops with me for my students. Making contact with someone who you can work with is invaluable. Lots of courses do not provide this." (PSHE co-ordinator)
Support and pressure from outside	• "The fact that you ring up is important, and also because I work with a teacher in a neighbouring school. It gets me to do things. Things would happen, but less quickly. It is definitely useful to have that pressure, the embarrassment factor - you could work on your own, but the whole school issues need external carrot and stick." (Science teacher)
	Teachers' comments about contextual factors that inhibit change
Felt junior; role changed	• "I have talked to a colleague but nothing really happened. I sensed resistance then my role changed and was not longer in charge. Someone more senior might have been better. I did not feel I could present a case to the governing body." (Ex PSHE co-ordinator)
Piecemeal approach	• "It is all terribly piecemeal and I do not have a formal responsibility for it. I could build it up - putting all the bits together to make a coherent programme as I go up with my year. But because it is not an official role I don't feel I can do anymore." (Science teacher)
Need for co-ordination	• "No one knows what goes on because there is no co-ordinator. We never talk to one another about what we really feel about the work we are doing." (Science teacher)
Conflict of interests	• "We are getting together a working party to respond to the draft guidelines. We were going to have a meeting this week but other things got in the way." (PSHE co-ordinator)
Isolation; prejudice	• "I'm gay and I feel that if the other teachers or pupils found out, then they would think that I'm jumping on this band-wagon for political reasons. I'm worried that there are other gay teachers and young people who will remain isolated like me. I sometimes feel that we should be working together to change this, that we should be changing the climate in schools so that gays could be more open, but it is a terrible dilemma." (Science teacher)
Internal politics	• " We had a meeting with governors using ideas from the course. All nine governors were positive, including two members of staff. From this I set up working party but this has been blocked in that most staff were angry about the governors' decision on an unrelated matter and they would not work with the governors on PSHE policy making." (PSHE co-ordinator)

4. The search for an alternative practice in an INSET programme

In the INSET programme design there was a shift to a collaborative approach but in practice I found some teachers resisted and placed me in an expert role. I needed to consider in more depth the implications of such a shift and why there may be resistance. I felt further understanding would help to develop my practice and help teachers move forward.

4.1 A further consideration of collaborative learning

Important democratic principles such as trust, equality and fairness underpin collaborative approaches (see table 2.7). I use this table in part to suggest that saying to teachers the course is based on collaborative principles is not enough. There are important shifts indicated in this table, for example the roles of teacher and learner are non-hierarchical and the power base shifts.

Table 2.7 A consideration of collaborative approaches

Collaborative approaches:

• make pupils' frames of reference central and remove the absolute priority of the teacher's frame of reference
• free the teacher from an authoritarian role, enabling more open communication, enlarging the sphere of shared meaning
• allow for possibilities of idiosyncratic meanings
• allow openness to change
• encourage negotiation of change
• presuppose different frames of meaning
• stress social and emotional issues as much as cognitive areas
• provide opportunities for the construction of meaning and understanding
• achieve commonality and sociality between teachers and pupils and pupils and pupils
• widen commonality by sharing and exchanging personal experience
• share understanding of aspects of the curriculum and its wider meaning and value
• overcome barriers to mutual personal recognition, avoiding stereotypical roles and polarities
• endorse the existence of social relationships and extend positive feeling by offering the chance that teachers and pupils will encounter each other more personally

(Table developed from Salmon and Claire 1984)

Within a didactic paradigm teachers may assume control and take responsibility for what happens, learners have little say about what they are to learn and how things are organised (Miller and Moses 1990). When introducing collaborative approaches, uncertainty and unfamiliarity arouse emotions. Because a collaborative approach has the potential to be more stimulating than a didactic approach, it may be challenging at a personal level; different viewpoints, answers, interpretations and values may be exposed. In a situation where learners' experiences are perceived to be different but equally valid the work may be more challenging. Within a collaborative setting, discussion about

intimate, personal and sexual behaviour adds potential risk for teachers' loss of classroom control. I had underestimated the significance of personal and emotional challenge when planning the INSET programme and needed to understand the implications for teachers in order to move forward.

It is not surprising that teachers retreat to safe 'defensive' styles (McNeil 1986) when they find themselves in uncomfortable situations. Defensiveness discourages open discussion which limits learning and the construction of meaning. As Senge (1990) reminds us, the original Greek meaning of 'dialogos' is the sharing of ideas and meaning within a group, to enable insights which are not attainable individually. The discipline of dialogue also involves learning about group processes that support or undermine learning. This understanding would inform my future planning.

I needed to develop practice which made the goals for working in a collaborative classroom more explicit. I identified the following list which I saw as possible outcomes from working collaboratively.

There is potential for learners in collaborative settings to:
• construct their own knowledge
• make sense of experience within their everyday worlds
• negotiate with others
• connect political, personal and social issues
• develop responsibility for own learning
• develop a sense of personal power and challenge the misuse of power
• develop understanding of social justice, fairness and democracy
• understand how emotions affect learning
• recognise and manage emotions appropriately
• determine and develop appropriate styles and skills of communication with different people in different circumstances
• challenge stereotypical roles and polarities
• bring about actions for change.

Practical implications follow especially concerning the teacher's relationship with learners, language and communication. The shift from didactic to collaborative approaches required a deeper understanding of these implications than I had assumed at the time of planning the INSET programme.

4.2 Implications for the teacher's relationship with learners

In collaborative learning classrooms the role of the teacher is seen to be radically different. The didactic model views the teacher as 'expert'; the relationship is hierarchical. The teacher transmits knowledge; their power base is superior knowledge. Collaborative approaches have different goals and outcomes with social, personal, and political implications. Working in small groups without the teacher present has the

potential of giving learners power and responsibility to set their own agenda and manage their learning.

The freedom which arises from working collaboratively in groups brings responsibility. Learning is necessary to manage such situations. This requires a view of learners as active decision makers; continual reference to others in the group is required to negotiate, make choices and give and receive feedback (Askew and Carnell 1998). The view that learning is social fits with Kelly's personal construct theory; people are striving to make sense of their lives (see Bannister and Fransella 1986).

In collaborative approaches teachers enable others to become reflective and critical. Within this approach the teacher needs to be seen as a learner and to encourages peer learning. Delors (1996) writes:

> ' ... school should impart both the desire for, and pleasure in, learning, the ability to learn how to learn and intellectual curiosity. One might even imagine a society in which each individual would be in turn both teacher and learner' (p21).

The view that teachers are learners is not normally stressed. It brings a profound shift in our view of the teachers' role. The dominant model of teacher education focuses on how to teach rather than how to facilitate learning:

> 'While we commonly assume that teaching leads to learning, it is the experiences which teaching helps create that prompt learning, not primarily the acts of the teacher. We have all had the experience of being exposed to countless hours of teaching which had no discernible effect on us, but from time to time we are engaged by something which the teacher says or does which touches our experience, has meaning for us and moves us on to further work. The teacher creates an event which the learner experiences and may learn from. In fact, the event is an important learning experience for the teacher as well' (Boud et al 1993 p9).

In collaborative contexts teachers support learners in managing their own activity. Through social interaction people make sense of their experiences and may reframe these experiences in the light of feedback from others.

4.3 Implications for language and communication

Within a collaborative setting the style of communication is different and the language used is more closely related to language used in non-academic settings. When talking with the young people in my initial research I found they wanted to be recognised as themselves, wanted teachers to avoid the use of technical language and for the subject matter not to be treated in a mechanical way. Personal learning depends on freer and more open kinds of communication (Salmon and Claire 1984). Traditional, didactic

teaching can alienate pupils whereas small group talk can facilitate personally meaningful learning (Barnes 1976; Barnes and Todd 1977).

By thinking aloud, acknowledging uncertainty, formulating tentative ideas, comparing interpretations and negotiating differences, learners can shape meanings for themselves and others and thereby arrive at a shared understanding (Salmon and Claire 1984). Communication in a collaborative group is central to the empowering process. Restricting communication between people inhibits personal learning. Didactic teaching, with its explicit demand for the 'correct' answer, is constraining. A free, active, exploratory climate is desirable.

Language used for everyday talk is not often allowed in classrooms; specialist language is used in formal learning situations, unconnected with language used in everyday life. The significance of different types of communication in secondary schools has been highlighted by Whitty et al (1994). Whitty et al (1994) drew on Bernstein's theories of the framing and classification of knowledge to analyse the relationship between cross-curricular themes and National Curriculum subjects. Bernstein (1977) suggests different contexts are identified by different recognition and realisation rules. Recognition rules are the clues young people use to determine what is a 'proper' school subject; realisation rules tell pupils how to demonstrate knowledge, for example, what is accepted oral communication.

Whitty et al (1994) found that one of the main issues lies in the rules that relate to the use of talk in different contexts. Pupils drew a strong distinction between subject discourses and talk. Chat in lessons had an illicit feel to it, associated with being off task. It belonged to the world outside. Some subject teachers in virtually all the schools in Whitty's study, intimated that it was not their role to teach cross-curricular themes such as health education, as they lowered the status of the subject and were potentially threatening to the subject's integrity.

This suggests some reluctance both for teachers and young people to use everyday language in the classroom and the difficulty that teachers may have in suggesting to young people that using everyday language for learning is valid. Relatively free talk among young people in the classroom has similarities with that of having a visitor present, in that it has the potential for extending narrow boundaries of classroom knowledge and classroom talk/vocabulary. Salmon and Claire (1984) suggest:

'Since children often inhabit similar everyday worlds - worlds typically unlike that of the teacher - their out-of-school experience is likely to form part of their common currency. Without being anchored within real-life situations and concerns, educational knowledge is bound to remain encapsulated and academic - if indeed, it is assimilated at all' (p3).

Within the didactic paradigm, relationships and emotional learning are not valued, even viewed as a source of potential disruption in the classroom. In alternative approaches learning about personal interactions and the emotional dimension of learning is central and inter-personal communication is the basis for the development of social relationships.

4.4 Implications for teachers' professional development

From the teachers' accounts and from my own reflections it emerged that particular issues, including communication, reflecting on emotional factors, and making collaborative work explicit, were not sufficiently stressed in the INSET programme. Because of the nature of my working contract there was little likelihood of my offering sufficient in-school support for teachers. My view of the potential changes teachers could make were over-ambitious, both inside the classroom and across the school. The sources of ideas for potential changes were predominantly identified by me and not developed with the teachers. In that sense the change was imposed. It was not based on a collaborative model of professional development. There was a mis-match between the principles embedded in the suggested changes and the way in which the course was conducted.

It is evident from the teachers' accounts of their work that many organisational factors inhibited the changes that they would have liked to make. There were powerful social influences. Where senior staff were relatively sympathetic to innovative teaching and learning methods the teachers made the changes which fitted with the ethos of the organisation. The different outcomes demonstrate the importance of the teaching and learning contexts which either support or inhibit change. It is clear from this study that change attempts will be inhibited where a non-collaborative ethos prevails across the organisation. Salmon and Claire (1984) observe:

'As long as collaborative learning models are confined to a few isolated, innovative classrooms within schools, their impact is likely to be marginal and transient ... It would, however, be naive to suppose that such changes are an easy matter ... schools are not independent of society; and within our own society are powerful forces against the political implications of these educational methods. Yet to the extent that teachers are able to resist such forces, and extend the use of collaborative learning approaches, schools themselves may be points of leverage for wider social change' (p239).

Teachers need support for change but the role that an external consultant can play in facilitating change in organisations is limited as Brookfield (1987) suggests:

> 'It is naive in the extreme for trainers or outside consultants to presume that they can enter an organisation and conduct a one-day or weekend workshop on critical thinking or trust building that will transform how people behave at work. Only if this openness and trust are evident in how people in power behave towards those beneath them will the climate for success in such a workshop be established' (p249).

At the time this research was taking place I underestimated the significance of the context in which the teachers were operating. Brookfield (1987) suggests being contextually aware is when there is a realisation that 'actions, values, beliefs, and moral codes can only be fully understood when the context in which they are framed is appreciated' (p16).

In the INSET programme I had not paid sufficient attention to the significance of making changes within particular contexts, teachers identifying their own changes, constructing their own understanding and meaning and taking away processes of reflection and critical thinking which would enable them to maintain a new perspective on what was happening in their classrooms and schools. Where teachers already worked with others in supportive conditions and had the opportunity to maintain the support, effective changes were more likely to be longer lasting. I felt that these aspects of the work, such as developing opportunities for reflective and critical thinking, examining subjective experiences, emotional influences and philosophical standpoints and considering collaborative contexts could form the basis of a new approach to professional development.

Developing an expanded approach to professional development would be the focus for the next stage of my research (see chapter three).

5. Research reflections

At this stage, I wanted to move away from the policy research I conducted in the initial research, described in chapter one, where I carried out the research, disseminated it and then expected practitioners to put the recommendations I had made into practice. I believe this research process disempowers teachers and has a negative effect on their professional development. I wanted to be involved in a democratic process that would provide me, and the teachers with whom I work, an opportunity to learn together in a more collaborative manner.

My research reflections here relate to my experiences as a practitioner researcher and my experiences of interviewing teachers as part of this process. These included one

interview to evaluate the INSET programme and another to discuss with the teachers what helped and hindered them in making changes to their professional practice. I was concerned in the interviews to build on my relationships with the teachers which had been established during the INSET programme. I wanted the interviewer/interviewee relationship to be supportive, non-hierarchical and was prepared 'to invest my own personal identity in the relationship' (Oakley 1981) in the belief that the interview process itself can be a useful learning experience for both. I encouraged discussion during which the teachers frequently asked me questions and I was prepared to answer them. For example, they asked what the other teachers from the INSET programme were doing in their schools, what my views were on HIV/AIDS and sexual health education and for advice on running INSET in their schools. The interviews led to an exchange of ideas and information which I saw as moving towards a more reciprocal relationship than might be expected in more traditional forms of interviewing.

I noticed advantages in the process of interviewing the teachers a second time, which included deepening relationships, more openness, a feeling of being involved in a joint endeavour and more understanding about teachers' work and their working contexts. Laslett and Rapoport (1975, cited in Oakley 1981) call this 'interactive research' where an attempt is made to generate a collaborative approach to research which engages both the interviewer and interviewee in a joint enterprise. I was intent on developing a non-hierarchical relationship, but was aware that this was not entirely possible. This was evident from the perceptions teachers had of my role as an external consultant and their expectation that I would provide expert knowledge and solutions. I was struck by the way in which my research facilitated my own learning through reflection on my practice, but did not facilitate the teachers' reflection on their practice in the same way. They often looked to me for answers. I was becoming more aware of the value of reflection on practice as part of professional development.

Throughout the research described in this chapter, I attempted to review my own learning alongside the learning of the teachers with whom I worked. I have drawn on subjective experiences to construct meaning and understanding, as well as considering theoretical and social interpretations of the INSET programme and changes to school practice. I attempt to be 'self reflexive' in a way that Hall (1996) suggests, deliberately attempting to:
a) monitor and reflect on how I have carried out the research, my research methods and my influence on the setting
b) act responsively as the study proceeds
c) be self-conscious about how I am doing the research, and about what I bring to the research, and how that shapes the way I interpret and use data
d) incorporate this awareness into the way I write up the account.

In this way, my research documents some aspects of my reflections, which helps 'establish the validity of the research' (Somekh 1994). The involvement of myself as a full participant in the situation under study adds to the complexity of this process. At this stage it was becoming clearer and more explicit.

I question my everyday practice and try to generate 'situational understanding' (Elliott 1993). I attempt to check the validity of my research by examining its impact; a continuous process of data collection, reflection, analysis and interpretation (Altrichter and Posch 1989). This process was extended through discussions with colleagues and the teachers with whom I worked, presentations at academic conferences, at my own and other universities and by publishing my findings at various stages of the research. In these ways others have assessed my research and have given valuable feedback, which has informed my next steps.

I have tried to understand my practice as well as bringing about changes to practice. In this way action research methodology bridges the divide between research and practice (Somekh 1994). This mirrors the view that practitioner-researchers have 'a felt need ... to initiate change' (Elliott 1991) or 'a moral responsibility to act' (O'Hanlon 1994). At this stage my goal was to facilitate others' learning through their participation in my research, not to facilitate the teachers' action research into their own practice. I encourage teachers' own action research at a later stage (see chapter five).

My research continues in the process of reflection, analysis, interpretation, and action around many of the elements emerging from this chapter. I wished to develop an expanded approach to teachers' professional development in which there would be a more explicit focus on creating a collaborative context, facilitating reflection on practice and valuing teachers' subjective experiences. I wanted to develop my own understanding of teachers' professional development and to work with teachers on the same theme. To this end I designed an M.A. module which would incorporate a study of different approaches to teachers' professional development.

Chapter three

Creating an expanded view of teachers' professional development - including the personal

1. Introduction

Two key issues emerge from the research described in chapters one and two. The first concerns the mis-match of both teachers' and young people's perceptions of appropriate learning experiences in the area of HIV/AIDS and sexual health education, and what actually happens in the classroom (see chapter one). The second concerns the mis-match between the planned in-service education experiences for teachers and the actual outcomes of those experiences (see chapter two).

The educational experience of the INSET programme for the group of teachers who took part in the research, did not lead to the changes in practice I had anticipated. From the evaluations it emerged that the course did not succeed in helping participants make many changes to their classroom or school practice.

The aim of this chapter is to examine teachers' perceptions and different models of professional development in practice. From this examination I argue there is a missing dimension which relates to teachers' own understanding of themselves. I examine different purposes and goals and what helps and hinders professional development. Contrasting models are highlighted: the competence-based, personal development, and collaborative/social community models.

An M.A. module is created, illustrating an expanded view of professional development. I argue this approach is more effective because it integrates the personal and professional dimensions within a collaborative setting, and enables teachers to bring about changes to practice. Tensions in running the module are identified. The chapter concludes with research reflections.

2. Issues in teachers' professional development

In this section I examine contrasting views of teachers' professional development, goals and purposes, and factors helping and hindering professional development.

2.1 Views about the teaching role and implications for professional development

Wise et al (1984) suggest the way we view professional development is a direct outcome of the way we view teacher roles (Wise 1984, cited in Blackman 1989). Blackman (1989) identifies the functionalist and professional view:

> • if we view the teacher as an applier of a craft, we will focus professional development primarily on methods
> • if we view teachers as functioning in isolation, we will focus professional development on classroom activities
> • if we view a teacher as a functionary, then managers of schools will provide the agendas of professional development (p2).

The focus is on what the teacher can do, rather than what the teacher is, and can become. Alternatively:

> • if we view teachers as professionals, we will address issues related to decision-making, practice and professional knowledge about human development, learning, and school purposes
> • if we view teachers as members of school staffs, and members of the profession at large, we will address not only matters of classroom practice, but matters to do with the school and its sphere of the education programme, matters related to the school system including questions involving long-range planning and issues of concern to the profession-at-large
> • if we view teachers as professionals, we consider them capable of creating their own agendas for professional development (p2).

Changing our view of the teacher's role, from technician to professional, the focus of the agenda for professional development is changed; the locus of concern is broadened, the source of agenda changed. The view of the teacher as professional, permits us to get beyond the technologies of teaching, to gain a fuller understanding of what we seek to do in schools and why (Blackman 1989).

Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) suggest it is the 'person the teacher is' and their subjective experiences that shapes classroom work. This has more impact on young people's learning than knowledge and skills:

> 'It is what teachers think, believe and do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning young people get ... The quality, range and flexibility of teachers' classroom work are closely tied up with their professional growth, with the way they develop as people and professionals. Teachers teach in the way they do not just because of the skills they have or have not learned. The ways they teach are also grounded in their backgrounds, their biographies, and the kinds of teachers they have become' (p ix).

On reflection I suggest that the planned INSET programme I designed for teachers (see chapter two) predominantly reflected the view of teacher as technician. It focused on skills and knowledge of classroom work. I wanted the new M.A. module to extend the view of professional development to include the personal dimension and the collaborative context.

My developing interest in identifying different perceptions of professional development led me to analyse further the interview data I collected from the teachers in the initial research. I was interested to see if there was a difference between their explicit view of professional development needs and what they were actually telling me about their concerns.

2.2 Teachers' perceptions of professional development

My first analysis of the initial research data examined teachers' perceptions of their needs, in response to prompts about professional development (see chapter two). Three broad categories emerged: pedagogical skills, working with colleagues and working across the organisation. In part these perceptions of need relate to the functionalist view. Personal and emotional issues do not feature. Teachers used mechanistic language to describe their professional development needs, 'co-operating in their own deprofessionalisation' (Bottery and Wright 1996).

In a further analysis of the data, I looked for teachers' concerns that were expressed during other sections of the interview. Other issues were expressed: their fears, fantasies, lack of confidence, feelings of isolation, confusion, constraints, worries about what other teachers think of their practice, and how young people view them. While on the one hand their answers to questions about professional development needs were in a technical language, for example "classroom dynamics", personal issues were expressed in other sections in the interview or when the interview had ended. For example "I'd like to find out what teachers think and what worries they have about their own knowledge or lack of it and how this influences what they do in the classroom." These personal concerns were not identified by the teachers as legitimate agenda items for discussion in a professional development context because they were not stated as professional 'needs'. During the INSET programme I encouraged teachers to share their concerns. In their review they suggested these discussions had not been structured into the programme but happened spontaneously. They devalued their talk about personal concerns saying they were 'off task'. There are parallels here with Whitty et al's research findings (1994); discourses unrelated to subjects or 'chat' is seen as illicit.

This raises important issues about teachers' perceptions of professional development and what approaches are seen as legitimate and effective. I was prompted to ask:

- In what ways are perceptions of the term professional development formed?
- How do teachers' perceive purposes and goals of professional development?
- Which models are most effective in bringing about change to professional practice?
- How does the context in which teachers work shape their understanding of professional development?

2.3 Goals and purposes of professional development

I have suggested schools often appear to operate without specific, explicit goals in mind; there is often an ambiguity of purpose (Bell 1989). Teachers attending planned professional development experiences may have different goals from each other or 'attribute different priorities to the same goals' (Bell 1989). As I discovered this can lead to a mis-match of participants' needs and course purposes. Teachers may attend professional development courses for different reasons, they are sometimes directed by senior colleagues to attend, have different experiences from one another while on the course, construct different meanings and come away with different knowledge and intentions. Therefore, goals and purposes need to be explicit to enhance understanding.

I began my planning for the M.A. module by examining the literature on purposes of professional development. I found Howey's (1985) 'expanded imperative' for professional development useful in order to move to an expanded view by outlining a wider range of goals. Six purposes are highlighted in Howey's analysis (see table 3.1).

Another way of considering goals is to view the end-point one is seeking. For this purpose I reviewed the literature on characteristics of 'professionally developed teachers'. Table 3.2 below, summarises some of the literature under four themes which seemed important for an expanded approach. These themes include a commitment to: learning and change; collaborative work; increasing the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and an holistic, multi-perspective view of teaching, young people and relationships.

Another important distinction informing my view is highlighted by Holmes (1989): a critical difference between developing and being developed. Underpinning the M.A. module, which is designed on the principles of an expanded view of professional development, is the recognition that the one person cannot develop another. The responsibility for learning lies with the learner. As Salmon (1989) puts it: 'Understanding locates the arbitration of experience within learners themselves' (p 238).

Table 3.1 Purposes of professional development

Purpose	Observations by Howey (1985)	My observations
Pedagogical development	Identified with curriculum and teaching strategies usually associated with INSET programmes: 'brief, atheoretical, and lacking in personal relationships to the life and teachers and their classrooms' (p58).	This matches the functionalist view. My perception is this is the most dominant form of professional development and the least effective in bringing about change.
Understanding of self and others	This is based on the importance of human inter-relationships in teaching. Lortie (1975) suggests that teachers develop and use the self as a tool of the trade. Self-knowledge 'enables people to grow and relate to other people in more productive, richer ways' (Mertz 1987 p30)	The approach is becoming squeezed by the demands of more functionalist training to match the changes of the Education Reform Act (DES 1988b). My perception is that it is one of the more effective approaches in bringing about change.
Cognitive development	Piaget, Kohlberg, Loevinger, Hunt and other theorists argue that human development, personality, and character are the results of changes in underlying cognitive and emotional structure. The implication for teachers includes the ability for imagining alternative possibilities or multiple perspectives, formulating hypotheses, reflection, judgement, flexibility, and interpersonal sensitivity (p60).	This suggests a model of professional development, based on the view of the teacher as an autonomous, thinking, decision maker. I argue this is concerned with a particular approach to learning, focusing specifically on the processes and skills of learning itself - meta-learning.
Theoretical Development	Teachers do not have a tradition of articulating and examining the personal or formal theories that drive their practice, which calls for reflection, experimentation with alternatives, analysis and theory development. If it were the case, it would lead to a more rational and coherent practice to enhance student learning as well as to encourage a deeper understanding of practice, theory and research.	Action research provides a vehicle for merging theory with practice. Action research is most effectively carried out in groups. Within a collaborative approach the organisation becomes a community of learners (Sarason 1990; Talbert 1993) linking practice and theory.
Professional Development	Howey uses the term to refer to the professionalisation of teachers. Unlike other professionals, teachers are not characterised by their ability to make informed judgements grounded in specialised knowledge, rarely contributing to professional research in education.	The publication of collaborative action research by teachers would enrich the profession. This form of professional development sits well within an expanded approach.
Career development	This includes addressing leadership roles for teachers, for example, mentor, team leader, curriculum co-ordinator, inquiry into what is known about how teachers learn and develop, inquiry into how schools and classrooms affect the learning and development of teachers, and enquiry into what is known about the organisation, management, and delivery of in-service teacher education.	Within an expanded view of professional development, teachers' personal and career development is addressed through activities such as the use of autobiography and time lines. Such activities lead to a clearer understanding of career patterns, choices, risk-taking and professional learning.

Table 3.2 Characteristics of 'professionally developed teachers'

Theme:	Summary of findings: 'Professionally developed teachers' ...
... have a lifelong commitment to learning and change	A commitment to learning and change is evidenced in teachers' willingness to take risks (Gardner 1981) and promote new ideas (Leithwood et al 1988). There is also concern to seek out ways to improve their professional growth (Campbell 1988, cited in Collinson 1994) which includes evidence of a system for continuous renewal, inquiry and complex decision making (Gardner 1981). Professionally developed teachers keep up with professional knowledge; master new conceptions within their profession; continue to study disciplines supporting their profession; and grow as persons as well as professionals (Houle 1980, cited in Willie and Howey 1980).
... work collaboratively with young people and colleagues	In creating collaborative working relationships with other teachers and students teachers demonstrate the ability to experience open and supportive relationships with students and colleagues (Willie and Howey 1980). They are able to maintain collegial support groups (Campbell 1988, cited in Collinson 1994), assist colleagues and manage the classroom in collaboration with students (Leithwood 1990). They are able to demonstrate reciprocity, self disclosure and mutual respect (Willie and Howey 1980).
... have a commitment to increasing the effectiveness of teaching and learning	Commitment to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning is exhibited in teachers' belief in the importance of teaching (Campbell 1988, cited in Collinson 1994), their strong motivation to be involved in things they care about (Gardner 1981), their ways of creating more adaptive ways of teaching (Heath 1980) and in their ability to reflect and understand assumptions, beliefs, and values (Leithwood 1990). Heath (1980) suggests this commitment includes understanding, caring for and respecting the diversity of their students.
... have an holistic, multi-perspective view of teaching, young people and relationships	Taking an holistic view of teaching and learning requires seeing students as whole human beings (Campbell 1988, cited in Collinson 1994) and in understanding interactions of physiological, psychological and social aspects in human development and the impact of that interaction upon one's self and others (Willie and Howey 1980). Self knowledge and the ability to think critically is important (Gardner 1981). Teachers who take an holistic view exhibit empathy, flexibility and high levels of humane and democratic values (Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall 1983), appreciate multiple possibilities, multiple perspectives, and interdependency of relationships and encourage complex learning (Leithwood 1990).

2.4 What helps and hinders professional development?

In my earlier research I had been interested in understanding factors which enhanced or inhibited teachers' changes to practice in the classroom and working with colleagues. I wanted to extend this aspect of my research through other literature. Table 3.3 summarises some of the extensive research on factors which help or hinder teachers' professional development.

Table 3.3 What helps and hinders teachers' professional development?

What helps?	What hinders?
• Self-knowledge, acceptance, and openness to experience; understanding teaching as complex, human and social (Jersild 1955; Lortie 1975) • Knowledge of human development - child and adult - for understanding ourselves and students, and as a basis for building personal relationships, an integral part of teaching - with colleagues, parents, and community members (Holly and Walley 1989) • Environments where collegial discussions centre on professional matters (Little 1982) • Time and support to focus on teaching to a conscious level; becoming active critics (Holly and Walley 1989) • Self understanding in the form of reflection on one's personal and practical knowledge of teaching (Connelly and Clandinin 1990) • When it is self initiated (Raymond et al 1992) • Open negotiation (Woods 1984) • Teachers regarded as experts with respect to their own classroom reality; personal styles seen to have value (Lieberman and Miller 1984) • Collaborative school cultures (Hargreaves 1992)	• Isolation (Lortie 1975) • A pervasive culture of individualism (Hargreaves 1983) • Poor social relations and poor communications (Raymond et al 1992) • Defensiveness (Knoblock and Goldstein 1971) • Lack of intellectual stimulation (Nias 1984) • Lack of self-awareness resulting in teaching through own biases and distortions (Jersild 1955) • Top-down, bureaucratic, technically controlled and characteristically masculine school cultures (Hargreaves 1992) • Sexism and the cellular organisation of the school; lack of leadership positions for women (Spender 1982) • Separating theory and practice (Calderhead 1988) • Contexts that are characterised by constraints leading to survival-based patterns of teaching and an emphasis on coping, pupil control, routinization and habit (Hargreaves 1988) • Separating the personal from the professional self (Nias 1981); Neglecting the teacher as a person (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992)

Some comparable factors can be seen in the findings from the teachers with whom I worked. I was interested that some hindering factors, identified in the table, were either mentioned by teachers or had emerged from my observations when visiting their schools. For example, those most often mentioned or observed were the culture of individualism and isolation, lack of effective channels of communication across the schools, organisational constraints and survival-based patterns of teaching, which I described earlier as defensiveness. These factors suggested that a focus was necessary on a collaborative context which could enhance communication and encourage a culture of openness to new experiences. My aim was to address these factors in creating an expanded approach to teachers' professional development.

Other factors in the literature, not mentioned by the teachers in my study, highlight the importance of self knowledge and self understanding, personal reflection, personal

relationships and critical awareness to enhance professional development. The absence of any reference to personal issues by the teachers reinforces a perception of professional development as being mechanistic and functional. This suggested reclaiming a focus on the personal within an expanded approach to professional development.

3. Models in practice for teachers' professional development

The next stage in planning an expanded approach to professional development involved the identification of models of professional development which are identifiable in practice, to consider their purposes, strengths and shortcomings. From my experience and from literature I have mapped three contrasting models: competence-based, personal development and collaborative/social community models. I believed this analysis would help clarify my thinking and move my ideas a stage further.

3.1 The competence-based model

The competence-based model can be seen in many areas of education for example, the National Vocational Qualification (NVQs) which the Government set up in 1986. In 1989, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) was invited to extend the framework to include qualifications at the professional level. Set out in the DfEE circular 9/92 (DfEE 1992) was the requirement that by September 1994, all courses of teacher education must use competence statements in assessing, recording and developing the student teachers' capabilities.

Competence-based training is aimed at improving teaching performance. Attainment targets are defined, rather like the National Curriculum assessment procedures in school, so that outcomes can be precisely defined in such a way as to make them measurable. The term competence is used to mean 'the command of pertinent knowledge and/or skill' (Short 1984, cited in Eraut 1994), as opposed to 'competency' which refers to specific capabilities (Eraut 1994).

It is important to consider the benefits and difficulties in such an approach, rather than focus only on the 'the restricted notions of professionality that have seemed to underlie recent competence initiatives' (Hustler and McIntyre 1996). I found Whitty and Willmott's (1991) ideas helpful. In considering competence-based approaches in initial teacher education they suggest that:

Benefits include -

• demystification of teacher education
• clearer role for schools in the training process
• greater confidence of employers in what beginning teachers can do
• clearer goals for students

Difficulties include -

• leads to reductionism
• shift of emphasis toward outcomes at the expense of learning processes
• reaching agreement on a definition of competence
• specifying which competences should be included
• arriving at valid and reliable criteria for assessment.

Within a rationalist and prescriptive approach teacher education courses have the potential to conform to a certification rather than a learning process; the tendency being for beginning teachers to demonstrate a narrow range of contrived competencies for assessment purposes. This gives rise to the suspicion that the government wants to deprofessionalise teaching, by ensuring teachers focus on the development of craft skills rather than professional understanding (Whitty 1994). This matches the technicist/functionalist approach discussed earlier. Such a perspective:

• expresses outcomes in terms of technical competencies or skills
• sets out to assess objectively
• gives no place to professional values
• replaces wisdom by expertise
• is free of a moral dimension
• conceives professionals as uncritical subjects (Rowland 1993).

The last point does not recognise that professionals select from available techniques and choose to do so in the context of the values in which they work (Rowland 1993).

Parallels can be made here with the criticisms of the didactic approach to classroom work with young people (see chapter one). Criticisms appertaining to both are they focus on the cognitive and skills dimensions associated with the teachers' role; ignore social, emotional and political dimensions; assume that all people's needs are the same; suggest hierarchy and individualism; are remote from personal experiences and ignore the learning context.

There is a strong temptation to dismiss the competence-based perspective, but Hustler and McIntyre (1996) warn of over-dramatising '... fighting a rearguard action against powerful and effective enemies', and suggest instead, creating practical alternatives in how to construe and assess competence and expertise in teaching. Rowland (1993) also warns of the danger in outright rejection, suggesting that in refusing to recognise the political power of the language of competence, other approaches become marginalised.

A number of schemes attempt to distinguish between competences and professional characteristics, provide examples of creative ideas, and acknowledge the complexities of professional practice (for example, Elliott 1996; Schostak 1996; Winter and Maisch 1996). I was impressed by the way in which the core assessment criteria were written for the 'Asset' programme (the development of a competence-based honours degree in social work, Winter and Maisch 1996) which focus on the understanding of professional values; reformulating a conception of professional competence in non-technicist terms (Rowland 1993). For example in relation to continuous professional development:

> 'Demonstrates commitment to and capacity for reflection on practice, leading to progressive deepening of professional understanding. This involves demonstrating: a willingness and capacity to learn from others, including clients / supervisors / colleagues; recognition that professional judgements are always open to question; an ability to engage in self-evaluation, recognising and analysing one's strengths and limitations' (Winter and Maisch 1996 p165).

Schostak (1996) refers to professional discourse in which participants discuss context, choice of strategy, theoretical perspectives and evidence to justify learning claims, while Elliott (1996) draws attention to broad, generic competences and personal qualities; for example, 'tolerates and accepts ambiguity, takes moderate risks in deciding upon a course of action (pp195-196). Such examples suggest life-long learning, reflexive practice, forming judgements about situational contexts and appropriate responses, moving away from ' ... the atomistic, check-list, fragmented, narrowly skills-based and potentially de-professionalising approaches' (Hustler and McIntyre 1996 p5).

It is worth pointing out that these examples are taken from social work education (Winter and Maisch 1996), police training (Elliott 1996) and midwifery professional practice (Schostak 1996). Education and school situations are different. Arthur et al (1997) suggests a lack of government dialogue with teacher educators has led to a competency-led teacher education which has 'the potential to reduce teachers to little more than 'technicians' and this has deprofessionalised both teachers and teacher educators' (p27). They compare the situation in England and Wales with Northern Ireland where they suggest greater dialogue has led to a more sophisticated and realistic view of the professional development of teachers. Here competences are viewed as developmental, and underpinning and unifying the development of competence are the professional characteristics of the successful teacher (DENI 1993). Competence-based approaches need to be based on such views and include reflexive practice if professional development is to be enhanced.

I argue the competence-based model is inadequate because it:
a) is imposed externally rather than being congruent with the values of those affected
b) is not based on the personal understanding and meaning of the learners

c) invites learning at a 'surface' rather than a 'deep' level (Marton and Säljö 1976)
d) is not context specific.

The competence-based model is implemented because it is linked to external resourcing and inspection, and supports the belief that change is happening; 'innovation without change' (Hoyle 1988).

During my 22 year involvement in education the most striking debate has revolved around the competence-based and personal development perspective. Competence-based models are fashionable again. This reflects political change over the same period.

3.2 The personal development model

The personal dimensions of teachers' lives and professional growth have been addressed by a number of writers, including Ball and Goodson (1985) Bolin and Falk (1987) Goodson (1992) Holly (1983) Mertz (1987) Salmon (1988; 1995). Their focus is towards a personal orientation of professional development, a model that focuses on the individual as actively seeking meaning, and where all aspects of development (cognitive, social, emotional) are considered (Holly 1983). This model is based on the assumption that teachers cannot separate what they know from what and who they are, and what and how they teach; the 'personal stance' of a learner is a crucial but neglected part of what we define as learning (Salmon 1989). The personal development model is central to Diamond's (1991) work with teachers. His model of teacher education is based on 'transformation' as opposed to 'reproduction' derived from and extending personal construct psychology. This places teachers at the centre of their own learning, acknowledging the crucial role played by reflexivity leading to 'emancipatory' knowledge: 'Schooling and teacher education may need to be reconstrued as revolving not around the authority of politicians and educational researchers but around that of teachers and their students' (Diamond 1991 pxiii).

I argue that through a personal development model teachers are more likely to bring about change as the model involves understanding - a deep level of learning - related to 'changing the meaning of experience' (Novak and Gowin 1984) and a personal commitment. There are differing views about ways change comes about. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest self understanding in the form of reflection on one's personal and practical knowledge of teaching, comes before meaningful and substantial changes in teaching, while others argue that changes in behaviour can precede changes in beliefs (see Fullan 1991). Whatever the case behaviour and beliefs are bound together. My research findings (see chapter two) suggest that focusing on classroom skills alone without

promoting the consideration of personal standpoints is likely to be ineffective (see page 47).

Approaches arising from a personal development model are significant in that they:

• stress the power of being constantly engaged in a process of reflecting, learning and change
• assume this process becomes part of the learner's way of being
• challenge creative capacities necessary for adults' growth
• develop self-awareness and self-knowledge.

If we wish to understand teachers we must attempt to learn more about their personal dispositions ... 'the deeply held substantial view of self' (Nias 1989 p268). I believe this is true for teachers themselves in understanding their own development.

There are criticisms of the personal development model which I have summarised, drawing on Holly (1983) and Raymond et al (1992). Such practices:

• can become indulgent (disguised therapy)
• can be slow, time consuming and costly
• have unpredictable outcomes, or outcomes that cannot be guaranteed
• play down the skills required for reflection or critical thinking, and how these are acquired; self reflection is hard to clarify and difficult to achieve
• overemphasise personal responsibility for change, side-step controversial questions about how context inhibits personal and professional development.

Concerns about personal development approaches suggest professional development may be more effective if work-based, set within a collaborative culture where teachers work together to support changes to practice.

3.3 The collaborative/social community model

The collaborative/social community model embeds a process of working in organisations with 'on the job' support. The culture of teaching is a key focal point for improvement and change (Hargreaves 1992). The development of collaborative cultures in which teachers routinely support, learn and work with each other, is related to successful implementation of educational change, a strong record in school-fostered improvement, good practices in professional development and positive outcomes in pupil achievement.

Collaboration is the norm in effective schools (Rosenholtz 1991). It assumes that improvement in teaching is a collective rather than individual enterprise, and that collective analysis, evaluation and experimentation, are conditions in which teachers improve. North American and British research implies that collaboration among teachers is a key factor linked with effective pupil learning (Reynolds 1992; Smith and Scott 1990). Sarason (1990) asserts that within a school context you cannot have students as

continuous learners and effective collaborators, without teachers having these same characteristics. This view is echoed by Hilt (1992):

> 'Teachers must model teamwork and innovative behaviour ... adopting a focus of teaching thinking through team learning, requires a commitment by the school staff to group problem solving, and self-development, at the very same time it encourages these activities for students ... Some schools and teachers already understand this concept: restructuring at a school wide level parallels restructuring at the classroom level. ... As teachers invest time and effort to develop further their own collaborative skills, they will enhance their ability to teach thinking through co-operative learning. What teachers do outside the classroom will benefit them in the classroom and vice versa' (p263).

Collaborative work overcomes the culture of isolation which typifies teachers' practice; intercollegial relations have a significant impact on teachers' work (Raymond et al 1992). For example, in collaborative communities there is some evidence to suggest making and implementing decisions is better, there is a higher level of trust and morale, adult learning is energised and sustained, the motivation of students rises, and when adults share and co-operate, students do the same (Barth 1990 p31).

Collaborative/social community models are important in that they:

• take place within the teachers' working context and are more likely to impact on practice
• are geared to groups of staff and may involve working collaboratively with young people
• are based on the needs of young people, the school, and sometimes the wider community, linked with the school's development planning process
• can take place within the school day and are less disruptive than those based off-site.

Problems associated with this approach are:

• the responsibility rests with teachers and schools
• wider social and political issues may be ignored
• within schools there are few vehicles for collegiality
• few schools sustain strong norms of collaboration
• developments may be atheoretical.

There are often risks in collaborating with others. To interact can open the door to accountability, value difference, criticism and lack of agreement. Many teachers, therefore, choose social isolation to maintain and defend their sense of self (Nias 1989). Hargreaves (1992) cautions against contrived collegiality. This makes collaboration:

- compulsory rather than voluntary; forced rather than facilitated
- formal and scheduled rather than informal and evolutionary
- directed towards administrative priorities more than teacher concerns
- predictable rather than unpredictable in its outcomes, and because of all these things
- predominately masculine rather than feminine in its orientation and style (Hargreaves 1992).

It is interesting to note that in my earlier research teachers felt collaborative work was more likely to continue if supported by external agencies like researchers or local advisory staff (see chapter two). In my experience, the setting up of initiatives by particular groups or individuals may be seen to be 'contrived'. However, these often bring about successful collaborative ventures. I see a major difference between contrived beginnings and coercion. Teachers need support to change classroom or school practice, an approach which allows them freedom to identify their own changes, rather than have change imposed. Within this model action research can play a central role in developing a critical community in professional development (Carr and Kemmis 1986) and allow teachers to determine the changes they wish to make.

3.4 Searching for alternative approaches

The difficulties associated with competence, personal development and collaborative models of professional development leads to the search for alternatives approaches. This is overdue as most approaches to teachers' professional development are ill-suited to either teachers' needs or society's interests (McLaughlin 1991). Arguing for a different way of thinking, McLaughlin's (1990) vision is of teachers' professional development locally constructed, a product of an active professional community that is responsive to teachers' immediate professional concerns as well as their professional identity more generally; a strategic site for professional growth, enabling professional community. There is potential for a fourth model of professional development - a social/political model. Elsewhere, I have argued, the study of teacher development needs to be 'combined with wider social and political influences on teachers and schools, as actions for change are limited' (Carnell 1997 p353).

Radical views of professional change, for example, Freire (1972a, 1972b, 1974) suggest people can achieve empowerment only through a grasp of the themes that are critical to the current social epoch. To become capable of acting upon, rather than simply being subject to, social events, requires a very particular kind of understanding. Freire's emphasis is on 'praxis' - action and reflection upon the world in order to change it. This kind of reflection, understanding, and political action has not been part of professional development within schools. As I suggested in chapter one, radical educational approaches do not sit comfortably within school settings.

Radical professional development approaches would only succeed if teachers' learning contexts were built on similar principles. In this vision of democratic organisations teachers create their own professional development programmes and construct their own knowledge through experience, action research and dialogue. This vision of democratic organisations is set out by Apple and Beane (1995) and includes these principles:

• the participation in communities of learning, where diversity is prized
• a sense of shared purpose
• the central feature being the common good
• an emphasis on co-operation and collaboration, rather than competition
• the helping of others to improve the life of the community
• an emphasis on structural equity to eliminate arrangements that deny access by any individuals or groups
• democracy on a large scale, the school is just one site
• the creation of permeable boundaries between the school and the larger society.

Reforms that recognise these principles are likely to make a lasting difference; many school reforms have failed because of the social conditions surrounding the schools (Apple and Beane 1995).

Young people and adults learn about democracy through experience. They have a right to fully informed and critical participation in creating school policies and programmes for themselves. Two lines of work are involved - to create democratic structures and processes and to create a curriculum that gives democratic experiences (Apple and Beane 1995). Such a curriculum for young people and adults, recognises that people acquire knowledge by both studying external sources and engaging in complex activities that require them to construct their own knowledge: ' ... teachers and other educators have a right to help create their own programmes for professional growth based on their perceptions of problems and issues in their classrooms, schools and professional lives' (Apple and Beane 1995 p18).

A system is undemocratic when it ignores teachers' views. Teachers are de-skilled when their role is redefined to the implementation of others' ideas and plans. Teachers and young people have a right to construct their own curricula. In democratic schools knowledge does not only come from 'elite' sources located outside the school, such as academic researchers: 'Of more interest is the knowledge that teachers produce for their own use through action research and local dialogue' (Apple and Beane 1995 p19).

This undertaking is filled with contradictions, conflict and controversy. There is conflict with the dominant traditions of education and with those who 'benefit from the inequities of schools and those who are more interested in efficiency and hierarchical power' (Apple and Beane 1995 p12). This view has major implications for individual learning, action research, organisational learning and the education system as a whole.

4. An expanded view of professional development

In designing an expanded approach to professional development I believed that a complementary focus on personal aspects and the work context of teaching was important. This section describes an M.A. module which I designed and taught at the Institute of Education, University of London. This module was run the first time in the summer term 1994. In designing the module my goal was to meld individual, personal, emotional, social and collaborative dimensions, overcoming the disadvantages of a uni-dimensional perspective. The module would merge these dimensions, while satisfying the academic requirements of advanced studies. The module would work on three levels: the personal, professional and theoretical.

Although the module has limitations in that it removes teachers from their own work contexts, its aim is to develop a collaborative learning community and focus on aspects about teachers' own contexts that help or hinder development.

4.1 The design of an M.A. module

Drawing on my previous experiences of professional development and course design, and the issues that emerged from the initial research (see chapters one and two), I drew up a list of key questions that could form the basis of exploration (see table 3.4). From these questions I drew up a module outline to structure the learning experience (see table 3.5).

Table 3.4 Exploratory questions for the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development'

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• How do teachers learn?
• How can theories of adult learning and professional development help our understanding?
• What makes successful learning experiences for teachers?
• How do teachers make professional changes?
• What are the influences on teachers to change and not to change?
• What can teacher autobiographies offer our understanding?
• How do teachers' learn with their colleagues and how are collaborative communities fostered?
• How do teachers make use of a variety of knowledge?
• What helps and what hinders professional growth: how might teachers be supported?
• Which models of professional development are most effective?
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The title of the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development' reflects some aspects of the personal development perspective. Its raison d'être is to help participants develop understanding of their own personal and professional learning as a starting point, and to relate their experiences to theoretical concepts: 'Whenever teachers

build bridges between concrete, everyday ideas and more abstract, academic concepts, they are fostering critical thinking' (Meyers 1986 p77).

The goals I had identified (see table 3.5) led me to develop practices which focus on aspects of the personal development and collaborative perspectives, emphasising academic enquiry:

* fostering individual learning within a collaborative community
* promoting reflection, critical thinking and understanding
* examining subjective experiences, emotional influences and philosophical standpoints
* developing self-awareness and self-knowledge
* clarifying working practices
* developing a sense of empowerment
* encouraging intellectual and emotional openness and pleasure in learning
* encouraging ownership, trust and support, individual and collective risk taking.

Table 3.5 Module Outline 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development'

Goal for each session	Focus	Processes	Perspective	Questions
1. To consider our own professional development and influences on professional learning	Group building, effective learning experiences	Reflective journal, course agreement, time-line, autobiography, linked reading	Autobiography as a research technique	What influences us as teachers?
2. To consider factors which help and hinder our professional learning	Force field analysis	Pair interviews, concept mapping	Theories of learning and theories of teaching	What do we know about adult learning?
3. To clarify our views about different approaches to professional development and to consider effective learning strategies	Constructing models of professional development	Writing and analysing definitions, model building	Theories of professional development	Which models of professional development are most effective?
4. To consider how we make changes to our practice and identify barriers to professional learning	Processes of change	Theory carousel, research	Theories of change	What helps/ hinders professional learning and change?
5. To explore planning strategies for effective experiences within the context of the organisation	Planning professional development experiences	Critical review and planning	Continuous learning in learners' contexts	How are individual teachers supported?
6. To explore teachers' knowledge and to examine teachers' decision making strategies	Developing knowledge and expertise	Decision-making, identifying professional knowledge	The nature of knowledge and theories of decision making	... in managing teaching and learning?
7 and 8. To identify and develop individual areas of study	Tutorials/ preparing for presentations	Teachers' own studies	Teachers' choices	Decided by participants
9 and 10. Individual presentations to the group and set targets for change	Presentations	" " "	" " "	" " "

The grid indicates the structure for the learning experiences, focusing on three principles:

• ideas about professional learning develop from a personal level, drawing on participants' experiences to a theoretical level, drawing on related literature and research

• the group is a resource; collaborative activities form the group experience. Contact time is spent processing participants' ideas and experiences

• participants' learning is enabled through collaborative processes. The shift of responsibility from the teacher to the group is seen in the ten week structure.

It is difficult to describe a learning process to someone who has not experienced it. Participants would experience activities differently, depending on a whole range of previous experiences, expectations about learning and so on. Participants from the outset would be taking risks; any learning from any experience always involves entering into unknown territory. It is also difficult to describe a module which will be influenced by the participants themselves, their differing interests, differing needs, and different ways of working with others. It would be challenging at a personal level and required participants to work in a different way from other M.A. modules. A fine balance needs to be struck, as Rowland (1993) suggests:

> ' ... the course booklet will describe a context of growing trust in which such personal issues can be explored, but also in which individuals can maintain the right to protect themselves from unwanted aspects of personal enquiry. It is an opportunity for the course tutor to clarify the ethical stance of the course as providing a balance between challenging participants to explore issues in depth while at the same time providing a secure environment in which the individual's privacy is respected' (p146-147).

As this was an open option M.A. module, the participants were drawn from various M.A.s: Primary Education, Personal-Social and Health Education, Economics Education, School Effectiveness and School Improvement, and Health Education and Health Promotion. I had worked with five of the participants on another M.A. module. I interviewed the other six before the module commenced to discuss the style of work and module requirements before the teachers made a commitment.

Of the 11 participants, one was a classroom teacher in a primary school, one a primary head teacher, six worked in secondary schools, three worked outside schools as teacher advisers; an advisory teacher; a head of support centre, and a visiting support tutor. All were registered on the M.A. course.

4.2 Review of the M.A. module

I interviewed the 11 participants when the course ended. I wanted to find out about the impact of the module. I asked them to focus on their general impressions of the module, their views of the learning processes and implications for practice. I have included

extracts from the interview transcripts and extracts from the teachers' course work assignments to illuminate what emerged to be the main issues: integrating the personal and professional domain; creating a balance between a safe, structured environment, and risk taking; creating a collaborative context.

Integrating the personal and professional domain

The integration of personal and professional helped some teachers:

> "The connections with personal and professional at the start of the course really did strip me of a certain aloofness that I would otherwise have had. This helped me in making me be less aware of myself and it worked positively to bolster my confidence and a sense of being appreciated. It helped me feel positive throughout the course. These points make me realise one can get things done in a class without undue stress on the students. It is all a matter of style and belief that learning can be enjoyed and once committed, it works!" (Teacher adviser)

The most striking exercise designed to integrate personal and professional issues was autobiography. When writing autobiographies, which formed a central part of the work, teachers engaged in the process of reflection and evaluation at an emotional level, as a way of understanding the influences on them, their learning, their motivation, their relationships with others and their changes. This was followed by an analysis of the literature relating to autobiography, assessing the value of autobiography for learning. Through autobiography, teachers explore how their learning can be applied and used to bring about actions for change. One teacher explained:

> "The processes have led me through numerous stages of uncertainty, to an understanding of who I am, and the reasons that underpin my views and beliefs. ... I never dared to analyse the effect of a difficult professional period. My denial of the past was kept unchecked until I was required to write an autobiography. The impact made me realise just why my beliefs about equality and racism are so powerful and why I am doing the work I am. I am aware that teacher development is a process of personal development. ... I have been able to 'lay the ghost to rest' on some painful experiences in my development. Now my focus must be to look at how my own learning can be put to use by looking at the transition for beginning teachers, a time of uncertainty and vulnerability." (Secondary teacher)

Teachers valued the activities. One observed:

> "There was a personal shift triggered by the time line and autobiography. These exercises were very painful for some and they articulated the pain very well. They were able to see how it influenced their life and the career choices they made. They were able to come to terms with the past which they were not able to face before. It made them realise too, in particular, that they thought that by completely avoiding thinking about painful issues the pain would go away. With the aid of everyone around them, they were able to articulate it, and move on. Some associated their pain with feelings of failure, which once they started talking about it, realised it was not. So they were able to let go of that association and realise that they are in control of their lives." (Primary head)

This powerfully underlines the importance of a growth environment for teachers if they are to provide for pupils' growth (Eisner 1985). Another said:

> "I got a sense of achievement through talking with others, and the processes of looking at positive and negative learning experiences. I realised that I had moved considerably. This has made me think about what I had achieved and how much success I have had as a teacher and as a head teacher. I also feel relaxed with the staff and I sit with staff and get them to talk about how we are going to solve problems together. I am not worried about getting the right answers anymore."
> (Head teacher)

The writing of the autobiographies was particularly significant as the process invites personal change. It proved to be significant in illustrating the tension between providing learning experiences which some teachers found to be powerful but uncomfortable. This experience was referred to during the course many times, and was mentioned in the evaluations as being a vital part of the module, as it led to self-understanding and critical awareness of behaviour. Brookfield (1990) argues in favour of autobiography, claiming that 'aspects of generic processes are evident in single acts' (p39):

> ' ... the phenomenological truth of an insight does not depend on the number of people who report its occurrence. Aspects of many teachers' experiences can be embedded in one teacher's actions. One person's formulation of a problem, or exploration of a dilemma, may contain many points of connection to others' experiences' (p39).

Others highlight criticisms:

> 'Autobiography remains, in much conventional academic discourse, a disputed, even a suspect, element. Its particularity, its (purportedly) unrepresentative and ungeneralizable nature as data, the temptation it offers for narcissistic indulgence or fantasy reconstructions, are all familiar pitfalls' (Andresen 1993 p60).

The teachers discussed the therapeutic value of writing their autobiography. While it can be a therapeutic exercise at the reflection stage, the important outcome is gaining insight into learning. Like reflection, autobiography in itself, may not lead to change in professional practice. It is the learning following reflection that is important. hooks' (1994) point is relevant here:

> 'While it is utterly unreasonable for students to expect classrooms to be therapy sessions, it is appropriate for them to hope that the knowledge received in these settings will enrich and enhance them' (p19).

Their autobiography was to remain private. What was public were teachers' thoughts about the learning process, insights gained and what they had learned from it. I had not stressed this sufficiently. There was a tension. The teachers wanted to stay in the reflection stage, sharing their experiences, while I was pressing them to move into the area of new insights about professional development, recognising learning patterns and devising strategies for courses of action.

Although a valuable experience, the different levels and purposes of reflection and learning were unclear. I had underestimated the importance of clarifying, and distinguishing between the purpose of reflecting and learning. I was not aware of the significance of making explicit different stages of autobiography that I had identified to integrate personal and professional learning:

Stage one: Writing the personal account and reflecting on the process
Stage two :   Sharing the reflections with others
Stage three: Identifying insights, recognising learning patterns
Stage four: Devising new strategies for action
Stage five: Considering the value of the autobiography as a learning experience
              Identifying the different stages, and the different dimensions of learning,
              for example, the emotional and cognitive
Stage six: Considering the place of autobiography in professional development
Stage seven: Identifying the underpinning rationale for the activity, and its position in a
              range of models of professional development.

From my experience it appeared that participants were not used to moving from the reflection stage to the learning stage.

Creating a balance between a safe, structured environment, and risk taking

Participants were required to reflect on their subjective experiences through autobiography, time lines, reflective journals and other activities which provoked emotions and uncertainties in their own lives. Activities provoked suggestions for change to their working practices which created dilemmas for some. D'Andrea (1986, cited in Brookfield 1987) notes from her research with teachers: 'Emotions such as frustration, depression, love, shock, elation, hatred and fear, interacted with cognitive components, throughout the reflective process' (p258). At times the style of work raised high anxiety levels. From the outset, reassurance was sought about the course requirements, for example, if the homework tasks, which required a subjective account of the teachers' own professional development, would form part of the assessment. I learned that I needed to provide detailed information about the purposes of the tasks and activities. I assumed that the teachers would understand the underlying reasons for the tasks and activities as I had given all the participants details of the course beforehand. Anxiety was highlighted when participants raised their suspicions about hidden agendas, and covert reasons for them to be involved in certain activities:

> "There was part of me that felt there was a hidden agenda. I felt I was being
> observed to see how I would respond to activities. That feeling passed after a
> while. I think it was to do with my own sense of insecurity and a feeling that I
> was different coming from outside London." (Secondary teacher)

> "I was surprised how easily intimidated I am by working with adults, and how
> others too are affected by group dynamics." (Secondary teacher)

Frequently individual teachers asked to see me on a one-to-one basis, to seek reassurance, either before or after the sessions, or sometimes during the week. The module itself focused on teachers' professional development and the issues revolving around anxiety and learning became the content of course discussion both at a theoretical and personal level. The interaction between risk taking, safety, shared power and responsibility, trust and defensive behaviour were explored experientially and theoretically.

The subjective experiences of teachers and their beliefs about themselves as learners, their fears and their frustrations are important to articulate. Salzberger-Wittenberg et al (1983) maintain the dread of helplessness and of being lost is harboured by all adults, no matter how capable and mature. The more unfamiliar and unstructured the situation the more disoriented people feel. Teachers spoke of the difficulties of adjusting to the style of the module:

> "It was a bit judderey at first in comparison with the other modules, but the way of working has enabled insights." (Secondary teacher)

> "The impact personally has been upsetting at an emotional level; I needed more support in the beginning to get through the turbulence. In my view the course was most effective, although perhaps more personal support could have been given." (Secondary teacher)

The module encompassed a developmental planning process, similar to that described in table 2.3, providing structure at the beginning, giving teachers time to discuss their feelings. During interviews some teachers commented that more discussion of the purposes and goals would have provided clarification and would have given them more security. It was insufficient to have the goals written at the top of task sheets. This was an important learning point for me and prompted me to question if the teachers were reducing complexity in the guise of reducing anxiety:

> 'New understanding is potentially threatening ... where what is presented seems to bear no relation to any of one's ways of making sense of things, there is no possibility of grasping it, no sense of its connotations ... to genuinely move forward, and reconstruct the basis of our knowing, represents the 'deepest kind of learning' (Salmon 1988 p29).

Although some teachers found the personal processes unsettling, they were important experiences for self reflection. There is a danger of trying to provide too safe an environment for learning (Salmon 1988). Personal work which maps out teachers' subjective experiences like autobiography are useful, not only in influencing the teacher's response to context and opportunities, but can also help select and guide the search for particular professional development opportunities (Raymond et al 1992).

Creating a collaborative context

The style of work was based on collaborative principles. Participants worked in small groups and shared their experiences. This was fundamental to the module. Collaboration was explored at two levels: the experience of working in collaborative groups with peers, and reflecting on the experiences of working collaboratively within an organisation. During interviews some participants indicated that their individual learning was enhanced by the collaborative context:

> "A lot of responsibility was given to participants, for example, when we had to present papers. It didn't become competitive, but we tried to present papers in different ways, in the style of the work we were discussing. It was a more encompassing approach. Instead of just reading a paper, our group presented it in the style of the theme; it was a practical experience. Working with others you can gain more of an insight." (Teacher adviser)

> "It was a stable group. It felt safe; we could make mistakes. The group gradually built up a relationship and we were able to get a lot more feedback from others about how you were getting on." (Secondary teacher)

> "The process developed confidence; it was affirming. I felt encouraged to work so as not to let the group down. The module has reinforced my already held belief of the powerful effects of small group learning, but especially in two and threes. I think the impact on the individual has been greater than what I have been used to." (Primary teacher)

> "No matter how much reading for other classes I had, I always managed to read this class's prior readings before I came. This was mainly because the success of the class depended on people reading and discussing their views. It is irritating and frustrating when one individual is not able to contribute - the work does not seem complete." (Teacher adviser)

This highlights the importance of addressing the needs of teachers as learners which promotes a safe climate in which teachers can take risks (Valencia and Killion 1988) and where there is an open, trusting atmosphere where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning (Holly 1983):

> "I am more ready to take risks, although I had before, perhaps unconsciously. I am now more aware that risk taking is easier in a safe situation, when working with others, when it is expected and there isn't a fear of failure." (Primary teacher)

The value of sharing professional experiences is well documented (Fullan and Connelly 1990; Grimmett and Erickson 1988). Working in pairs or small groups, teachers can take on the role of critical friend (Day 1994) to explore risk taking, change and problem solving. These processes are effective in changing practice (Cooper and McIntyre 1993) and within a collaborative context the process is enhanced.

Collaborative learning processes open up possibilities for change within the teachers' own contexts. However, some teachers expressed concerns about change within their contexts:

> "I have become much more tolerant of the differences in other people's professional development. I believe that everybody can move forward. However, professional development is closely related to power, one's own power and the power authority figures have over one. Working alone means that there is not enough people to discuss thoughts with. I am becoming more interested in listening to understand the emotional response of why people do and do not take things on board. The school climate can work in favour of collaboration but there is not enough time to share reflections about what happens in classrooms."
> (Secondary teacher)

Another observed:

> "One of the teachers did not really understand what you were trying to achieve. It is because his school is not a happy school, it is autocratic and into accountability. He could not see a better way. Our school philosophy is empowering, and gives a sense of worth and achievement. His school system has a different culture. He had difficulty relaxing into the philosophy. He is stuck in the culture of his own school and it may not be what he wants to hear." (Primary head)

These comments highlight some possible conflicts in relation to organising collaborative learning in teachers' professional development. Teachers find it harder to learn, take risks, and bring about actions for change, if they are working in a 'stuck' school (Rosenholtz 1991) where there is no structure to support collaboration.

Collaborative cultures are highly sophisticated (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992), are created over time, and combined with strong individual development:

> 'We have seen the debilitating effect on the tradition of individualism in teaching. All successful change processes are carried out by collaboration' (Fullan 1991 p349)

This approach to teachers' learning is associated with two claims. Firstly, that the quality of teachers' class work is closely related to their growth as people as well as professionals (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992). Secondly, their 'moral purpose' (Fullan 1991) that is, their ability to connect, care and differentiate is as essential to good teaching as subject knowledge and skills.

5. Research reflections

Designing, running and evaluating the M.A. module came to form part of my action research. This element of my teaching contributed to my own professional development, as it provided the opportunity for me to reflect and learn alongside the participants. I was learning at different levels: developing conceptual, process and research knowledge, to improve practice and bring about actions for change. This learning combined my

different roles, as a new M.A. tutor and as an action researcher. The process of data collection, analysing and writing distinguishes the role of researcher, although data collection and analysis may be carried out in an informal way in the tutor role.

The research reflections focus on my role as an M.A. tutor in creating an expanded approach to professional development which included a personal dimension. My goal was to facilitate teachers' learning in collaborative setting and to engage in the process myself as a learner and action researcher. The discussion of the emotional aspects of learning in such a setting developed a relationship with the participants unlike any learning I had experienced before. The role of the facilitator in creating conditions for effective learning where learning can 'most deeply and intimately begin' (hooks 1994 p13) involves sharing in the process of personal, emotional and intellectual growth. This is the antithesis of the exercise of power and authority. This role was problematic at times and raised boundary issues. The boundary issues were those which surrounded the role of tutor. There were fewer tensions for me in being a tutor and researcher on this occasion. The roles became intertwined.

I wanted to demonstrate the characteristics of a collaborative learner and be open and honest about my research. I was taking risks; the module was new, I had a lot to learn, I wanted to be open and to provide a secure environment. I shared feelings akin to those described to me by teachers in the initial research (see chapter one) thinking I needed to know more than the participants. hooks (1994) suggests:

> '... students are not the only ones who are asked to share ... Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers ... are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks' (p20-21).

I understood more clearly the concept of 'defensive teaching' (McNeil 1986) but was prepared to take risks and acknowledge the situation. Rogers (1980) calls this 'realness' in facilitators. Beidler (1986) believes that 'being a model of intellectual and personal honesty will save you from the expectation that you need to know everything and will save students from shirking the responsibility of their own learning' (p78). The participants reacted to this style of role differently; some of the group members supported the stance, while others challenged it:

> "Sometimes, not often, I've found myself wondering, "What does Eileen think about this? What is her stance/beliefs?" But then, I can probably work them out. Maybe it's the old leadership/teacher debate. ... Experience of both learning and teaching has been shared by the group - each member has had a lot of ideas and experience to offer the group." (Teacher adviser)

> "The single most important area of learning for me has been the distance/involvement of the tutor. The teacher resists giving answers and too

much guidance. I have noted you can finish a session (as a teacher) without giving an exact answer." (Teacher adviser)

"When I presented my own model of professional development I did not receive any feedback from the course tutor. According to the tutor there is no right or wrong answer. I - and I believe that there are other learners - feel that there is a certain area of doubt about certain areas of the module." (Secondary teacher)

Although I wished to be a learner alongside the participants, my role of assessor could not be ignored. It was not an equal position. Peters (1966) makes a useful distinction between two states of authority: that of being 'in authority' and that of being 'an authority'. A teacher is 'in authority' as the representative of the educational establishment, concerned with, for example, assessment. I was also 'an authority' in being placed in a position to run the module, provide direction, make decisions, facilitate learning, and keep the group on task. It was an imbalance of power and could not be ignored.

While recognising my role in relation to authority I nevertheless attempted to work in a non-hierarchical way. In my interactions with the group I tried to adopt the principles of facilitator outlined by Rogers (1980) termed 'unconditional positive regard'. Key aspects include empathy, respect, genuineness and concreteness. Each learner is valued, respected for their thinking and actions, and asked to assist in learning tasks. I drew on Heron (1973) Perls (1969) and Schutz (1975) who suggest a variety of techniques and strategies designed to help learners be aware of their potential and capabilities. The module provided a structured experience while being non-didactic. I felt the non-hierarchical, non-didactic research stance I adopted was congruent with the learning principles, as opposed to those described in chapter one.

Identifying the next stage of my research

My aim in designing the M.A. module was to create an expanded approach to professional development enabling change to practice. Two important factors emerged from the evaluations. Firstly, the teachers reported personal change rather than any changes to classroom or school practice. This indicated the module dwelt too much on developing a supportive, collaborative climate which alone would not enable change. I wanted to carry out further research with teachers to identify types of professional development which were successful in bringing about changes to practice (see chapter four). Secondly, when interviewed, the teachers expressed difficulty in talking explicitly about their learning. On reflection I felt this was not surprising since the module itself had not explicitly addressed learning about learning. Later in my research I redesigned the module to address this issue and to encourage teachers in a process of action research themselves (see chapter five).

Chapter four

A typology of teachers' planned professional development experiences

1. Introduction

My experience of working with the teachers on the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development' (see chapter three) indicated the more insights were gained from personal reflection, the more teachers realised the complexities of professional development. It took a long period of reflection, on my part, to identify and understand the issues. This process inspired me to develop a typology of professional development, not to order, boundary or simplify, but to provide a coherent picture of teachers' professional development.

The M.A. module was developed from my expanded view of professional development. This included integrating the personal and professional domain and creating a collaborative context to help extend teachers' learning. While teachers indicated the value of the course, changes to professional practice were not evident. I wanted to continue working with this group to investigate their perceptions of effective professional development experiences - effective in terms of bringing about changes to their professional practice.

In this chapter I create a typology of planned professional development experiences. Four approaches are presented, each with their own set of characteristics. The theories from which they derive are examined, together with the goals and philosophy underpinning them to illuminate issues and clarify why one approach dominates.

I use my typology to draw up a set of hypotheses to investigate teachers' personal constructs of the effectiveness of professional development experiences. The analysis of these results indicates the dominant approach to planned professional development experiences is the least effective.

Mechanistic and organismic views are drawn on throughout the chapter, to help explain the different approaches to professional development identified within the typology, and identify links between organismic views and action research. While this chapter is not investigating my practice directly, the data collected informs the next stage of my action research. The discussion contributes to the development of an expanded approach to teachers' professional development.

2. Developing a typology of professional development

In this section I describe the stages of developing my typology, highlight the characteristics of the four approaches contained within it and present a theoretical explanation.

2.1 Creating a typology of planned professional development experiences

At this stage of the research I thought the method of classifying the four health education paradigms (see chapter one, figure 1.1) would provide a useful way of creating a typology of teachers' planned development experiences. My aim was to develop a framework within which to set out different approaches to planned professional development experiences, rather than provide a rigid categorisation to handle complexity (see figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 A two-way continuum of planned professional development experiences

```
                            Objective

          'Didactic'           |        'Co-operative'
                               |
                               |
 Individual  ──────────────────┼────────────────  Collective
                               |
                               |
          'Empowering'         |        'Community'
                               |

                            Subjective
```
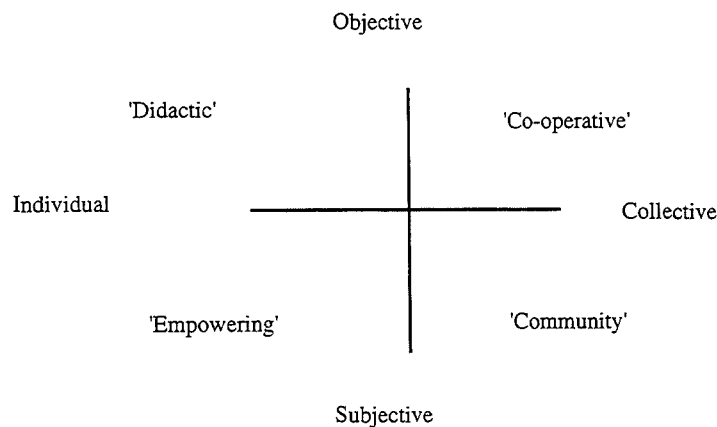
The continua are about change. The individual/collective continuum is to do with the process, or dynamics of change, that is, how change comes about. The objective/subjective continuum is to do with knowledge which will cause change. Four quadrants are formed, each representing a different approach to professional development.

The four quadrants, within the typology are identified in terms of fundamental purpose, power base, and focus (see table 4.1). It is important to point out that I do not believe that one approach is necessarily more valuable than another, *per se*. I do suggest, however, that the 'didactic' individual/objective approach is dominant and less effective.

Table 4.1 A typology of planned professional development experiences

Individual/objective	Collective/objective
• fundamental purpose: bringing about change through analysis of individual needs and directing teachers action	• fundamental purpose: bringing about change through analysis of organisational needs, based on external demands
• power base: decisions made by 'experts' about individuals' needs	• power base: decisions made by 'experts' about the organisation's needs
• focus: individual achievement through the acquisition of knowledge and skills	• focus: organisational achievement through the application of knowledge and skills
Individual/subjective	**Collective/subjective**
• fundamental purpose: bringing about change through individual, personal development and facilitating individual development	• fundamental purpose: bringing about change through collective, whole organisational development
• power base: decisions made by individuals about their own needs	• power base: decisions made collectively about the needs of the organisation
• focus: individual improvement through understanding	• focus organisational development through collaboration

In creating this typology, I do not want to over-simplify. I suggest, in practice, approaches may overlap and may not easily 'fit' into any of the four quadrants. But I find theoretical models important in constructing explanations, clarifying rationales and drawing up educational goals.

2.2 Constructing explanations using mechanistic and organismic world views

I have suggested the 'didactic' individual/objective approach to planned professional development is dominant. To construct an explanation of why this might be the case I draw on two theoretical models. The models explored in this chapter are the mechanistic world view and the organismic world view (Reese and Overton 1970). The mechanistic view sees the universe and people as machine-like. From this perspective:

• the universe is a machine composed of discrete pieces
• movement and change in one part of the machine causes a chain-like reaction in the others
• effects of change can be predicted and measured
• people are seen as reactive, passive, robot-like, empty and inherently at rest
• activity is viewed as a result of external forces
• thinking, wanting, perceiving are all reactions to external cues, rather than the result of internal changes within the person.

The organismic model presents a more holistic view which stresses interaction and development of the person. From this perspective:

• the universe is perceived as organic rather than mechanical in nature
• the whole constitutes the condition of the meaning and existence of its parts
• substance in the universe is perceived as active rather than static
• the person is perceived as inherently active and spontaneous, rather than reactive
• action is not initiated by external forces, but the person is the source of acts
• the person is perceived as an organised entity
• the inter-relationship between personal and social dimensions for bringing about change is important (Reese and Overton 1970).

The mechanistic view and its relation to learning

In Western society the mechanistic view has dominated science, education, medicine and all major disciplines. The way we organise knowledge into distinct disciplines is itself an example of a mechanistic view. This is reflected in the specialist subject-based secondary school curriculum and in recent calls for changes in subject timetabling in primary schools. In chapter one, I describe the difficulties the teachers experienced in attempting to integrate HIV/AIDS and sexual health education as a cross-curricular theme, suggesting the powerful and undesirable influence of boundary divisions, and the high status of discrete discipline areas: 'The present system favours the development of the dread disease, referred to by Kelly as 'hardening of the categories', rather than the elaboration of a network of meanings' (Bannister and Fransella 1986 p77).

The mechanistic view has underpinned most theories of learning in the twentieth century. Traditional teaching approaches, especially the didactic paradigm, derive from the mechanistic view. Behaviourist theory investigated learning from a mechanistic perspective. The basic assumptions of behaviourism are that behaviour is shaped by environment and learning consists of a change to behaviour measured in terms of a change in the response to stimulus.

Behaviourist theories of learning are problematic for a variety of reasons. For example, they do not view the person as creating, choosing between options, or acting on the environment to control it. This theory is limited as learning is measured by an external agent in terms of observable changes in behaviour rather than by, for example, personal reflection on the part of the learner.

A move away from the mechanistic view

A shift from the mechanistic towards the organismic view is apparent in the developmental model; perhaps the best known is that of Piaget (see Gruber and Voneche 1977). Piaget's theory of development was very influential in terms of how learning was organised in schools. Piaget's model suggests the child develops thought through interaction with the environment. This shifted opinion away from the view that child development is predetermined by biology to an interactionist approach. Piaget suggested:

- intellectual growth develops through a regular series of stages
- ideas are not innate; they are not present at birth and change as children get older. Ideas are not learned in the behaviourist sense; they are not taught by adults nor are they a reaction to stimulus in the environment
- children construct their view of the world by acting on it, internalising what is learned from experience and developing new mental concepts which enable them to adapt intelligently to reality
- the child is innately predisposed to develop into an intelligent being, but this can only come about through interaction with the environment
- children are self-regulating systems and learn to think in an abstract way because they can adapt to their environment
- the human organism constantly strives to achieve stability or equilibrium; imbalance or conflict is an unpleasant state (see Gruber and Voneche 1977).

This model is associated with some difficulties in that: '... this was widely interpreted as meaning that it is not possible to teach young children some things until they are 'ready', that is, there are limits to their capacity to learn' (Gipps 1992 p2). This view was disputed by Bruner (1966) but this reading of Piaget has been linked with low expectations of primary aged children (Alexander 1984, cited in Gipps 1992). Other researchers seeking to explain cognitive processes have gone beyond Piaget's view to show how children come to understand the social world, the world of other people and their feelings, meanings and intentions. For example, Donaldson (1978) argued that contrary to Piaget's view, social and intellectual aspects of development are intimately connected, and that all the tasks which Piaget used with children had important social dimensions. She claimed that young children have an awareness of perspectives other than their own and that children must be able to make sense of any task socially before they can fully understand it.

Related to my research is Bruner's (1966) question about why school learning is difficult. He suggests it is because school learning is separated from children's real lives. This links importantly with my findings discussed in chapter one. Bruner incorporated children's understandings of the situations in which they are asked to perform or learn into his constructivist model: 'For Bruner the essence of learning is that individuals actively select, retain and transform information to a psychological frame of reference (that is, an internal model or system of representation on the basis of which we understand the world)' (Gipps 1992 p3).

The 'constructivist' model assumes:

• people actively construct knowledge for themselves
• knowledge is based on categories derived from social interactions not observations; it is the way you come to look at things as much as what you are looking at
• people determine their own knowledge (Biggs and Moore 1993).

This contrasts to the 'transmission' model which assumes:

• the teacher transmits knowledge
• the learner is an empty vessel
• learners learn what they are taught (Gipps 1992).

As teachers, our view determines our approaches to classroom work.

Two important claims about learning are made by Vygotsky (1962; 1978). He suggests it is helpful if young people speak aloud about what they are doing. Vygotsky suggests this speech is internalised, developing into inner speech and eventually into thought. The child then becomes capable of carrying out mental operations more subtle than anything which he or she can put into words; if speech in childhood lays the foundations for a lifetime of thinking the implication for pedagogy is enormous (Britton 1989, cited in Gipps 1992). The second claim is that children have a zone of proximal development: a spectrum of achievement attainable only with the support of an adult. Vygotsky was interested in what children can do with help, and with the ways in which adult-child interaction structures the development of children's thinking. The implications for teaching are that it involves a social exchange in which shared meanings are built through joint activity. The teachers' role is to make the classroom a rich, interactive learning community (Britton 1989, cited in Gipps 1992) introducing some tasks in the next zone. What is crucial to this idea is that interaction with another person is required - whether teacher or peer - to help in this moving on process (Gipps 1992).

Important educational implications arise from these theories. I shall discuss how these relate to approaches to professional development later in the chapter.

The organismic view and its relation to learning

One criticism of Piaget, Bruner and other theorists (Jones 1968) is the over-emphasis on cognitive skills at the expense of emotional development. Novak and Gowin (1984) challenge conventional wisdom about learning, as well as the neglect of feelings. They write: 'Human experience involves not only thinking and acting but also feeling, and it is only when all three are considered together that individuals can be empowered to enrich the meaning of their experience' (Novak and Gowin 1984 page xi).

The organismic model presents an holistic view of learning, stressing social interaction and emotional development. The term holistic comes from the Greek holos - whole - the concept refers to an understanding of reality in terms of integrated wholes, whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units. Learning for the twenty-first century needs to be holistic and organismic as Boud et al (1993) suggest:

> 'Much writing about learning has treated it as if it existed in different domains which are separated from each other. A common division is between the cognitive (concerned with thinking), the affective (concerned with values and feelings) and the psychomotor (concerned with action and doing). Although it can at times be useful to think of the different aspects of learning, no one aspect is discrete and independent of the rest and no one aspect should generally be privileged over the rest' (p12).

The organismic view focuses on planned and unplanned experience rather than merely training, in bringing about change within the person; rather than measuring change it emphasises the quality and process of change:

> 'The individual who accepts this model will tend to emphasise the significance of processes over products and qualitative change over quantitative change ... in addition he (sic) will tend to emphasise the significance of the role of experience in facilitating or inhibiting the course of development, rather than the effect of training as the source of development' (Reese and Overton 1970 p134).

This is important in relation to the quality and process of change in education. Such views help our understanding in relation to reactive and proactive views of change and development. In the mechanistic view, external forces initiate change and the individual will be seen as needing training for particular functions identified outside the organisation. The external force will be seen as having an 'expert' role and will be the more powerful agent. The individual will be reacting to external pressure. Individual needs will be identified in relation to specific, easily identifiable, easily measurable and evaluated areas.

In the organismic view, the initiation of change is proactive. The context in which the individual is working suggests change. Individuals as part of the organisation are the 'experts' in coming to understand needs. Power lies with the individuals within the context of change. Pressure for change is owned by the collection of individuals. It is the complex set of relationships around the individuals which defines need. The needs are more complex, harder to define, more general than specific, harder to measure and evaluate. In the organismic view, the person makes judgements, thinks, feels, has choices, takes actions, reflects, learns from experiences, plans future learning and prioritises goals. Bannister and Fransella (1986) put it this way:

> 'Educational growth is not the accumulation of more and more pieces of information, but the development of an increasingly complex structure for organising and interrelating ideas. If this notion were followed then some of the traditional boundaries between 'subjects' at school would cease to exist' (p76-77).

A break with behaviourism and cognitive theories came with insight learning in Gestalt psychology (see Koffka 1935; Kohler 1969). Gestalt theories suggest experience is always structured and that people react to a complex pattern of stimuli, not to a mass of separate details. Stimuli need to be seen in organised wholes not in disconnected parts. Gestalt psychology is generally classified within the family of field theories. These theories propose that the total pattern or field of forces, stimuli or events determine learning.

Lewin (1951) developed field theory. Lewin places more emphasis on motivation than any of the preceding theories. He conceptualised each individual being in a life space in which many forces are operating. The life space includes environment features to which the individual reacts. This includes material objects which the person encounters and manipulates, people in the environment, goals, fantasies, tensions and thoughts. Behaviour is the outcome of an interplay between all these forces. Learning occurs as a result of changing cognitive structures which are in turn a result of two types of forces: change in the structure of the cognitive field itself or change in the internal needs or motivation of the individual. Lewin was interested in group and organisational dynamics because he believed other people to be the strongest forces affecting an individual's psychological field.

Another branch of psychology which signifies a shift towards an organismic view is Humanistic psychology. It emerged in the 1950's and its founders include Kelly (1969), Maslow (1972) and Rogers (1980). Humanism emphasises individual experience and attempts to understand personal motivation. It explores possibilities for action and the potential for change and personal growth. It stresses the sense of self-awareness and the capacity to reflect. Humanism stresses that for effective understanding in psychology we need to take into account:

• the significance of conscious awareness - this requires a focus on subjective awareness - an experiential approach

• the human capacity for personal agency - this stresses our power to choose. We can play a part in creating the kind of person we become. The best way to do this is to become as aware as possible of our feelings, motivations and what influences us. This process is called personal growth

• the person as a whole - there are many aspects of our sense of self and we need to consider them all (an holistic approach). These include physical awareness, spiritual commitment, the social context, our feelings and thoughts (Askew and Carnell 1998).

Maslow's (1972) perspective focuses on the healthy personality. In his theory of motivation, Maslow argues that human needs form an hierarchy which reflects their emergence both in terms of evolution and in the life of the individual. These needs are physiological (food, drink, sex), safety (physical, emotional, economic), need for love and belonging (affection, intimacy, roots in family or group), need for esteem (competence,

adequacy, self-respect and respect of others) and the need for self-actualisation (becoming what one is capable of becoming). According to Maslow (1972) the goal of learning is self-actualisation. He sees growth towards this goal as being determined by two sets of forces operating within each individual:

> 'One set (of forces) clings to safety and defensiveness out of fear, tending to regress, hanging on to the past ... the other set impels him (sic) toward wholeness, to self and uniqueness of self, toward full functioning of all his capacities ... we grow forward when the delights of growth and anxieties of safety are greater than the anxieties of growth and the delights of safety' (Maslow 1972 p44-45).

Critics of Humanism say that it gives insufficient concern to the social context and overemphasises personal agency.

2.3 The relationship between the typology and mechanistic and organismic views

My typology is based on the assumption that the objective approach to knowledge and change mirrors the mechanistic view and the subjective approach to knowledge and change mirrors the organismic view. To develop these links I have constructed two tables. The first table draws on the broad headings of the relevant interests of my research on planned professional development namely, views of the person, organisation, values and change (see table 4.2). The second focuses on aspects of learning (see table 4.3).

Table 4.2 The relationship between the objective and subjective approaches and mechanistic and organismic views

	Objective/mechanistic	Subjective/organismic
view of the person	- reactive - passive/static - empty	- proactive - active/dynamic - experienced
view of organisation	- sum of its parts	- inter-relation of its parts forms complex and powerful whole
values	- expertise - boundaries	- everyday experience - inter-relationships
view of change	- specific, in response to pressure - predictable, specific outcomes - quantitative - product based	- continuous development, organic - unpredictable outcomes - qualitative - process based
source of change	- external forces	- internal and external dynamics
outcome of change	- problems solved and questions answered	- discovery of principles, meanings and new complexities
evaluation	- uses quantitative measures	- uses qualitative measures

Table 4.3   The relationship between the objective and subjective approaches and aspects of learning

	Objective/mechanistic	Subjective/organismic
view of learning	- change in behaviour measured in terms of a change in response in stimulus	- change in the meaning of experience
view of teacher	- teacher seen as technician	- teacher seen as thinking, reflective decision-maker
view of learner	- learner's behaviour shaped by environment	- learner's behaviour shapes and controls and interacts with environment
values in learning	- knowledge and expertise - discrete parts - rewards - cognitive outcomes	- experience - organised wholes - achievement - cognitive and affective outcomes
learning processes	- imitation and reinforcement - didactic	- self-awareness and reflection - experiential
view of learning context	- little influence on the learner - aspects of the organisation remain disparate - autonomy prized	- major influence on the learner - connections and patterns made across the organisation - social exchange important
source of learning	- external forces	- internal and external dynamics
purpose of learning	- change meeting external needs	- change meeting internal and external needs
goals of learning	- problems solved and questions answered	- self-growth, continuous reflection and improvement
evaluation of learning	- hard observable data, measurable events - measured by external agent (input-output model)	- soft unobservable data, personal insights and feelings - own meanings and understandings reflected on and evaluated

The two objective quadrants are congruent with the mechanistic view: separateness rather than integration; discrete parts rather than a meaningful whole. The two subjective quadrants integrate a focus on the learner, the learning process and the context. These quadrants shift from an individualistic view of learning to a view of the learner and the learning organisation affected by and affecting the learning context, and the wider social context. I argue that planned professional development experiences based on these approaches can be more effective in bringing about change.

The individual/objective approach is congruent with the mechanistic view of the person; value is placed on rational, cognitive development. The individual/subjective approach is most closely aligned with Humanistic theory in that it is about complex inter-relationships. This approach stresses the centrality of self in learning and recognises the importance of emotions in learning. It sees self-growth, continuous reflection and improvement as the learning goal.

The collective/objective approach sees the organisation in terms of a collection of individual members working in distinct and separate ways, fulfilling different roles; hierarchies are distinct. Change results from external pressure. The collective/subjective approach stresses the centrality of organisation in learning and recognises the importance of complex inter-personal relationships in learning. It sees self-determined change and renewal as the learning goal. The collective/subjective quadrant recognises the importance of the group and social context in the learning process. In this respect it is influenced by Lewin 's work (1951) on social and organisational dynamics. However, unlike field theory, this quadrant also attempts to recognise that social inequalities and power imbalances affect learning.

3. Teachers' personal constructs of the effectiveness of professional development

The next stage of my research was designed to explore teachers' personal constructs of the effectiveness of professional development experiences. In chapter three I discussed different approaches to professional development and examined the issues in relation to teachers' learning, within the context of an M.A. module. On this module I worked with a group of teachers over one term. After the module had ended, I met these teachers again individually to conduct interviews designed to test the following set of hypotheses (see table 4.4).

Table 4.4 A set of hypotheses to explore teachers' personal constructs

The perception of the effectiveness of professional development is influenced by the extent to which teachers' experiences:

• relate to everyday work

• are subjective and allow meaning to be constructed

• provide balance between professional/personal challenge and support

• provide opportunities for learning together

• are supported by the organisational context.

Interviews were designed to explore the teachers' personal constructs in terms of the effectiveness of professional development experiences. I believed teachers would see subjective experiences as more effective than objective experiences, and value aspects of the constructivist model to be effective for their learning and change to professional practice.

I hoped the research activity would extend my learning and be a useful occasion for teachers to reflect on their experiences. To this end I designed a range of participatory activities based on the repertory grid, developed from personal construct theory.

3.1 Personal construct theory

I chose to base my research on Kelly's theory of personal construct psychology (1955; 1977) as it is in line with the organismic approach, seeing people as self-inventing explorers and interpreters of their world. Personal construct theory is: ' ... an attempt to understand the way each of us experiences the world, to understand our 'behaviour' in terms of what it is designed to signify and to explore how we negotiate our realities with others' (Bannister and Fransella 1986 p27).

A number of fundamental ideas are at its core. It:

• sees the person as a unity; the irreducible unit
• sees the person as perpetually changing
• has an integrated view of the person, seeing emotion as neither more nor less than construing in transition
• emphasises the importance of the person's interpretation of its environment; each person builds a unique model of what the world is like
• is concerned with the development of psychological processes, rather than arbitrary stages or traits; psychological processes are challenged by the person successively construing events
• rejects the notion of an end product; the term 'development' is misleading if seen as an end-product, personally meaningful 'change' is more appropriate (Bannister and Fransella 1986).

A construct is essentially a discrimination which a person can make:

> 'To represent an event by means of a construct is to go beyond what is known. It is to see that event in a way that could possibly happen again. Thus, being human and capable of construing, we can do more than point realistically to what has happened in the past; we can actually set the stage for what may happen in the future - something, perhaps in some respects, very different. Thus we transcend the obvious!' (Kelly 1977 p4, cited in Bannister and Fransella 1986).

Kelly suggests that constructs are hierarchical - those near the top of the hierarchy are called core constructs. Constructs can be elicited in many ways, for example, from conversations, poetry, journal articles. He considered qualitative and quantitative methods of measurement equally valid ways of enquiring into people's views of the world. One of Kelly's devices for mapping constructs is called the repertory grid technique whereby relationships between constructs can be obtained, for example, "How are two the same and one different?"

The repertory grid technique appealed to me as it focuses on the subjective views of participants, is a method for 'going beyond words' (Kelly 1955) and is a process of seeing how one idea links with a number of others. I considered it a valuable process for the exploration of different approaches to professional development.

3.2 Designing the research method

In line with my research approach and congruent with the organismic view, I wanted to engage teachers in the research, rather than conduct research on them. Research needs to be a process whereby people come to make sense of things, involving working with, and not on subjects (Salmon 1978). I wanted to continue to work with the 11 course participants from the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development' to extend their learning. I hoped an active participation in an analysis of their personal constructs would contribute to increased understanding. The organisation corollary of Kelly's theory is that:

> ' ... for each individual, constructs do not form a chaotic jumble but are related into an integrated system. If it were not for this system, a repertory grid testing would not be possible. A grid is a way of getting individuals to tell you, in mathematical terms, the coherent picture they have' (Bannister and Fransella 1986 p48).

Designing the research using Kelly's repertory grid

The first step was to identify examples of planned professional development experiences that would match the four quadrants of my typology. I drew up a list which included three examples of planned professional development experiences for each quadrant, making a total of twelve elements (see table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Examples of planned professional development experiences which form elements for the personal construct grid

Individual/objective	Collective/objective
A. Observing experienced and highly regarded colleague teaching	G. Target setting for whole school after a local authority or OFSTED report
B. Listening to invited speaker talking about, for example, guidance for new assessment procedures	H. Whole school preparing a policy following an external directive
C. Local adviser giving feedback on performance following observation of lesson	I. Whole day school training on, for example, discipline or achievement, run by outside facilitator

Individual/subjective	Collective/subjective
D. Keeping a personal diary or journal in which day to day experiences are reflected on	J. Being a participant in a staff support group which meets to share experiences as a basis for bringing about change to the school culture
E. Regular staff review to identify individual skills and qualities and how to build on these	K. Exploration of personal communication styles as part of whole school policy on developing more effective communication
F. Reflecting on personal teaching style in response to peer or pupil feedback	L. Whole staff developing collaborative ways of working together

• The individual/objective (A, B and C) and collective/objective (G, H and I) are mechanistic in that the knowledge affecting change is seen as discrete, hierarchical and external to the teacher; the processes are didactic.

• The individual/subjective (D, E and F) and collective/subjective (J, K and L) are organismic in that knowledge is seen as internal to the teacher and the processes are experiential, encouraging self-awareness and reflection.

• The individual/objective (A, B and C) and individual/subjective (D, E and F) reflect the view that change will come about by individual learning experiences.

• The collective/objective (G, H and I) and collective/subjective (J, K and L) reflect the view that change will come about by collective or collaborative learning experiences.

The interview procedure

The interview had three distinct stages. I began by explaining to each teacher the procedure for each stage of the process.

Stage one: Open-ended question

I asked the teacher to identify three professional development experiences, two which have been effective in bringing about change, and one that has not been effective. I asked them to identify the reasons why they considered them to be either effective or not and recorded

the examples and the key ingredients. I described effectiveness in terms of bringing about change to professional practice. This stage was designed to put teachers at their ease; aiming to focus teachers on their own professional development.

Stage two: Personal construct grid

The principle of the repertory grid is to elicit constructs by offering three elements at a time. For this stage of the process I had 12 sets of three elements to which the interviewees had to respond. Each set was composed of two elements from the individual/objective category (columns A - C) and one element from the individual/subjective category (columns D - F), or one element from the individual/objective category and two elements from the individual/subjective category. The interviewees had six sets of cards for the individual/objective, individual/subjective category and six sets for the collective/objective, (columns G - I) and collective/subjective category (columns J - L). I handed the teacher one set of cards at a time, making a total of 12 tasks. The grid below (table 4.6) shows the groupings of elements used for comparison in twelve different sorts. Letters A - L indicate the elements, and the numbers 1 - 12 indicate the sort:

Table 4.6 Elements used to elicit personal constructs

		Elements											
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Sort	1	x	x		x								
	2	x			x	x							
	3	x		x	x								
	4		x		x	x							
	5		x		x		x						
	6		x	x			x						
	7							x	x		x		
	8							x			x	x	
	9							x		x		x	
	10									x		x	x
	11								x		x		x
	12								x	x			x

I did not create sorts which included both individual and collective. This decision related to the hypotheses I was investigating, that subjective experiences would be more effective than objective, in both the individual and collective domains.

The question put to interviewees was "In what significant way are two of these similar and one different, in terms of how effective you think they are in bringing about change in school?"

From three pilot interviews I noticed participants selected two experiences they said were effective and one they said was less effective, rather than one effective and two less effective. Consequently, I prepared a card which gave the question and added: these could be sorted into two that are effective and one less effective or, one that is more effective and two that are less effective. The grouping of two effective and one less effective was a trend that continued.

Stage three: Frequency and effectiveness

I predicted that there would be a mis-match between teachers experiences of professional development described as being more effective, according to my typology. My prediction was that teachers will have experienced professional development in the frequency of the following order: individual/objective, collective/objective, individual/subjective, collective/subjective, and that effectiveness would be seen in the reverse order.

The next stage of the process was designed to test this out. I gave the participants an envelope with the same statements and a frequency grid. Individually the participants looked at the frequency of their personal experiences in relation to the statements, and wrote the corresponding letter in the grid - most often, often, occasionally, seldom/never. I then gave the participants a second grid. Again individually the participants sorted the statements according to how effective these experiences were in relation to bringing about change.

Teachers interviewed

I was only able to interview eight of the 11 teachers. It is interesting to note that five of the 11 teachers made changes to their professional life at the end of the academic year. One went overseas, one became a full time PhD student, and three others took on new posts of responsibility (two of whom moved out of London). I was unable to interview the three who had moved away.

3.3 Analysis of the data

The analysis of the data is presented in three stages:

Stage one: Analysis of the effective and non-effective professional development experiences identified by the interviewees: the occasions and the characteristics

Stage two: Analysis of the personal construct grid
　　　　　　　a) Summary of more effective versus less effective experiences
　　　　　　　b) Reasons for more effective versus less effective experiences
Stage three: Frequency and effectiveness comparison

Stage one: Analysis of the effective and non-effective professional development experiences identified by the interviewees: the occasions and the characteristics

I did not give a definition of professional development, but asked teachers to use their own understanding of the term. The most striking trend was for the teachers working in schools (numbers one to five, in table 4.7) to identify work embedded experiences as the effective professional development occasions. These occasions were either in the classroom or working with colleagues in school as part of curriculum development, or in facilitating INSET (see table 4.7).

Of the ten effective examples given by teachers working in schools (numbers one to five) there were only three non work-embedded examples: applying for a new post, an M.A. course and a weekend conference. Of the five non-effective examples, given by teachers working in schools, three of these were occasions in school when teachers felt isolated. The other two examples mentioned were an experience of leaving teaching and attending a short course.

For the three teacher advisers (numbers six to eight, in table 4.7) all nine effective examples were to do with courses. This was interesting as it indicated the importance of their own work context. The positive experiences arose from longer courses, especially when they had been involved in facilitating the course. The non-effective experiences identified were short courses. The length of courses was significant for both the teacher advisers as well as the classroom teachers. Longer courses were more effective; shorter courses less effective.

All the examples of non-effective occasions fell into the same category of my typology, namely, of individual teachers either working alone in their place of work, or attending short courses, where, although in the company of others, they were not working collaboratively. These experiences fall on the continuum of my typology individual/objective, typified by one-off, short term, reactive, didactic, hierarchical experiences.

Table 4.7 Occasions and characteristics described by teachers for effective and non-effective professional development experiences

	Effective	Effective	Non-effective
1. Primary classroom teacher	Facilitated INSET Helped me reflect, had to be organised, was challenged, gave support and guidance	Day to day experiences New experiences, built confidence, personal relationships strengthened	Difficult meeting with parent It felt pointless, disappointed that parents may not be supportive
2. Secondary classroom teacher	Applied for new post Pro-active, deliberate and conscious change	Developed assessment Involved students in giving me feedback, led to more satisfaction; students given value and I felt more valued	Left teaching A professional disaster lowering my self-esteem and confidence. It was a reactive rather than proactive measure
3. Primary classroom teacher	Worked with NQT Worked closely together; felt valued; someone coming to me for help gave me confidence; it was a reciprocal arrangement. She carried on teaching as a result	MA course Met new people; took me out of my school; took stock of my beliefs in teaching and classroom practice; reassessed the curriculum from the child's point of view	Developing the National Curriculum Hours invested and pupils and teachers have not benefited. Quick fix solutions don't work
4. Secondary classroom teacher	Talking with other teachers Useful to talk with others when you are experiencing difficulties, to see how they would approach it	Own initiated support Got support from other staff when having difficulty; got suggestions; help does not come to your door, you have to seek it; teachers will allow you to observe their lessons	Isolated classroom teaching Induction wasn't helpful; it takes five to six years to look back on what you are doing. Without reflection it takes years to improve
5. Secondary classroom teacher	Working with other teachers Used visitor to help with curriculum development; involved concrete, practical experience; came away feeling confident: working together, common focus	Weekend conference Worked with people who have a common role, understanding of common issues, listening to people with knowledge and experience was affirming	Two-afternoon course Tutor unprepared, too much material, couldn't digest; inappropriate; watched video but wouldn't use it in school, not relevant. No follow up
6. Teacher adviser	Diploma course I could use the ideas straight away, therefore it was meaningful. It was active, stable group. I felt safe and felt I could make mistakes	Facilitated course Learned about participants need for sharing and that I had the flexibility to change; learned to value my own experience	Short course Didactic lectures, tutors changed, rooms changed, unstructured, didn't take on people's previous learning; patronising
7. Teacher adviser	One day course developing a network Structured, personal; it achieved its goals; met colleagues and built up a supportive network which lasted two years	Residential three day course Personal benefits, opportunities for reflection and using key ideas; about ethos and about processes being dynamic; exciting and new	Professional Training day Secondary teachers visited primary feeder schools; no follow up; lost opportunity; networks already existed
8. Teacher adviser	B.Ed. course Group gradually built up relationships so got more feedback about progress; good discussions	Longer course Lots of responsibility given to participants; practical experiences; gained insights through giving presentations	One day conference Too much information; too wide an audience; pitch wrong; didn't learn anything new

What is distinctive about the positive experiences is that they are either developmental/long term, involve working with others or that teachers are proactive in giving or seeking support from others. This falls into the collective/subjective category. Although one example of a one-day course is included, the interviewee pointed out that it was effective because a support network of teachers built up from this experience.

A picture emerged of effective planned professional experiences being proactive, collaborative, reciprocal, where teachers were developing personal understanding, making deliberate and conscious changes, involved in reflection, engaged in activities where they were evaluating and increasing the areas of the curriculum. Such experiences were helping develop teachers' confidence, satisfaction, feelings of value and being valued and developing closer relations and interactions with young people and colleagues.

A picture emerged of non-effective experiences as one-off, didactic, lacking in support and continuity, patronising, and unrelated to previous learning. Such experiences increased feelings of isolation. These findings supported my hypotheses.

Stage two: Analysis of the personal construct grid

a) Summary of more effective and less effective experiences

From an analysis of the teachers' personal constructs (see table 4.8) the following pattern emerged: the subjective experiences (elements D - F and J - L) were identified as more effective than the objective experiences (elements A - C and G - I). These results are in line with my predictions. The figures show:

objective   45 more effective
                 99 less effective

subjective   121 more effective
                 23 less effective

Table 4.8 A summary of the results of the personal constructs enquiry

Elements	A	B	C	Total	G	H	I	Total
more effective	15	0	11	**26**	4	8	7	**19**
less effective	9	24	13	**46**	21	15	17	**53**
Elements	D	E	F	Total	J	K	L	Total
more effective	21	20	23	**64**	23	17	17	**57**
less effective	3	4	1	**8**	1	7	7	**15**

As I mentioned earlier the grouping of two effective and one less effective was a dominant response. I referred the interviewees to the card explaining how the sorting could be done during the process. However, out of a total of 96 sortings, 72 had two elements grouped together as effective and one as less effective; 24 of the sortings had one as effective and two elements grouped together as less effective. This seemed significant. I am unable to say if this was a possible flaw in the interview design, perhaps the phrasing of the question led to this response, a social tendency to identify positive experiences, or other reasons.

b) Reasons for more effective and less effective experiences

I now examine each sorting. I start with my predictions and compare these with the responses highlighting emerging patterns. I summarise reasons given and report findings.

First set of sortings: 1 - 6, comparing individual examples of objective and subjective experiences

Sort 1: Elements A, B and D

My prediction was that A and B (individual/objective) would be grouped together as less effective and D (individual/subjective) identified as more effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
A	Observing experienced and highly regarded colleague teaching	8	
B	Listening to invited speaker talking about, for example, guidance for new assessment procedures		8
D	Keeping a personal diary or journal in which day to day experiences are reflected on	8	

I was fascinated that all participants selected the same grouping, but not the grouping I had predicted. This was the first indication of the trend for two elements to be grouped together as more effective. In all of the eight sortings A and D were selected as more effective because of the teachers' levels of participation. For example: they are participatory activities; ways of reviewing practice; developmental; more difficult and taking place over time.

As table 4.8 shows B is always selected as less effective in all of the sortings in which it appeared. B is seen as passive, didactic, lacking in interaction, and absolute.

Sort 2:   Elements A, D and E

My prediction was that D and E (individual/subjective) would be grouped together as more effective and A (individual/objective) identified as less effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
A	Observing experienced and highly regarded colleague teaching	3	5
D	Keeping a personal diary or journal in which day to day experiences are reflected on	5	3
E	Regular staff review to identify individual skills and qualities and how to build on these	8	

It was interesting that all eight had E as more effective. There was less agreement overall about the reasons. When teachers grouped E and D as effective (five times), teachers mentioned levels of participation as important; involvement with others; reviewing and reflection; identification of skills; long-term development; the need for development for individuals and the organisation over time; focus to move things forward; developing confidence and trust; encouragement. When teachers grouped E and A together (three times) it was because of the benefits to the individual and the organisation, structure, support, giving encouragement and working co-operatively.

When D was identified as less effective it was because it was an activity that was done alone, that it would require discipline and although it would be good for personal change, would not bring about school change. When A was identified as less effective it was seen as passive: 'change will only come about from action', threatening and deskilling, there is less opportunity to interact and a suggestion of lack of involvement in decision making: 'do what he does and you will be alright'.

The trend for grouping two elements together as more effective continued.

Sort 3: Elements A, C and E

My prediction was that A and C (individual/objective) would be grouped together as less effective and E (individual/subjective) identified as more effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
A	Observing experienced and highly regarded colleague teaching	4	4
C	Local adviser giving feedback on performance following observation of lesson	4	4
E	Regular staff review to identify individual skills and qualities and how to build on these	7	1

Seven out of eight chose E as more effective. The reason given for E as less effective was lack of trust. It depended on the individual involved in the review process.

When A and E were identified together (three times) the reasons included their importance for change, continuity and progression; whole school change; and that individual development needs to be part of institutional development; a value in the practical; a focus on teaching. Whereas the other combination, C and E together (three times) suggested action, trust and respect; being acknowledged, visible and recognised; useful to have someone independent and positive to review with; regular reviews important for change.

When A and C were given as less effective examples (once) the teacher mentioned lack of impact. When A was cited as less effective (three times) it was about the passive nature of the occasion, the teacher would be 'invisible', and there would be no positive interaction. When C was cited as less effective (three times) the reasons mentioned were that it was less likely to bring about whole school change; local advisers may be out of touch; feedback may be unrealistic; and that an outsider can present a threat.

For the first time in one sort, two elements were grouped together as being less effective.

Sort 4: Elements C, E and F

My prediction was that E and F (individual/subjective) would be grouped together as more effective and C (individual/objective) identified as less effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
C	Local adviser giving feedback on performance following observation of lesson	2	6
E	Regular staff review to identify individual skills and qualities and how to build on these	5	3
F	Reflecting on personal teaching style in response to peer or pupil feedback	7	1

Seven of the eight identified F as more effective. A teacher adviser identified F as less effective stating that he would have selected this element as more effective if he still worked in the classroom. This was the only occasion in all the sorts that F was mentioned as less effective (see table 4.8). This reinforces the importance of professional development being context specific. When F was identified on its own as effective (twice) teachers stated that this was a continuous process; more 'natural'; related to classroom practice and therefore practical and relevant. Whenever F was mentioned as effective all suggested the value of pupil feedback for learning and bringing about change to practice.

Where E and F were identified together as more effective (four times) teachers suggested that assumptions may be made about young people and it was important to take notice of what they said. It was also mentioned that peer support was less threatening than hierarchical support. Where C and F were linked together (once) it was noted that constructive feedback and reflection can lead to effective change. Where C and E were linked (once) it was noted that the people and atmosphere need to be right; hierarchy is uncomfortable.

When C was mentioned alone as less effective (four times) comments indicated that the local adviser may be out of touch and not have the same understanding of the situation as the teacher. When C and E were linked as being less effective (twice) it was because individuals giving people feedback may not have the same understanding about what teachers are aiming to do.

Sort 5: Elements B, D and F

My prediction was that D and F (individual/subjective) would be grouped together as more effective and B (individual/objective) identified as less effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
B	Listening to invited speaker talking about, for example, guidance for new assessment procedures		8
D	Keeping a personal diary or journal in which day to day experiences are reflected on	8	
F	Reflecting on personal teaching style in response to peer or pupil feedback	8	

Unanimous! The results matched my prediction in all eight cases. The reasons why D and F were identified as more effective were: that it is integral to teachers' work; more is gained from trial, error and reflection; there is flexibility; teachers have more control; discussion with others and reflection on your own is important; there is change and you are part of it; getting feedback from everyday work is important; reflecting on practice in a focused way with respected people; individual development with peer support; need reflection with a partner; getting feedback can be a hard experience, but you have to listen; good to record the positive and negative - it helps the thinking process.

The less effective included that the 'outsider' may not relate to the school context; visits are ineffectual; there would be no change; teachers may not have been consulted; it may not be relevant; may be imposed; people don't learn after listening for seven minutes; it is not challenging; individuals may switch off.

Sort 6: Elements B, C and F

My prediction was that B and C (individual/objective)would be grouped together as less effective and F (individual/subjective) would be more effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
B	Listening to invited speaker talking about, for example, guidance for new assessment procedures		8
C	Local adviser diving feedback on performance following observation of lesson	4	4
F	Reflecting on personal teaching style in response to peer or pupil feedback	8	

An interesting pattern emerged. F was always seen as more effective; B always less effective. C was combined with F as more effective four times and combined with B as less effective four times. Where F was placed on its own as more effective, teachers mentioned being in control of the change; initiating change; learning through peer support. Where C and F were together as more effective, teachers identified value in feedback

whatever the source; the process works towards development; it was relevant and focused; action learning - doing something and then reflecting; an accumulation of small changes more significant than one big event; individuals thinking far more about what they are doing; picking up on feedback.

Identifying reasons why B was less effective, teachers highlighted imposed change; people with power and status will override people's views; individuals will resist as it won't be appropriate; no progression; no staff discussion; no ownership. Where B was linked with C comments included losing time; not interested if it is forced or it is something that can be read; didactic; feeling threatened.

Second set of sortings: 7 - 12, comparing collective examples of objective and subjective experiences

Sort 7: Elements G, H and J

My prediction was that G and H (collective/objective) would be grouped together as less effective and J (collective/subjective) identified as more effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
G	Target setting for whole school after a local authority or OFSTED report		8
H	Whole school preparing a policy following an external directive	3	5
J	Being a participant in a staff support group which meets to share experiences as a basis for bringing about change to the school culture	8	

All eight had J as more effective and all eight had G as less effective. When J was mentioned alone as more effective (five times) the reasons stated were that beneficial changes would result if it was initiated internally; proactive; shared aims; working with colleagues with a focused agenda; there was active participation and teachers would want to change, rather than seeing it as something forced upon them. When H was grouped with J (three times) these reasons were similar: as a positive way of developing the ethos; teachers would be involved and there would be acceptance if the whole school was involved in decisions about change.

It was interesting to note that when H was identified as effective (three times) the participants interpreted this to mean the teachers in the schools were making decisions about the policy. When H was identified alone as less effective (five times) there was a different interpretation. Here it was seen as imposed: this can create conflict and staff may 'kick against it'; external directives won't work; it may get things done quickly but will not bring

about lasting change; it is the least desirable form of change; it is more about teaching and less about learning.

In every case the example of the OFSTED report in element G provoked a heated response in all the participants. Rather than focusing on target setting teachers focused on the OFSTED inspection and voiced concerns about the negative impact that it had on teachers and schools. The teacher advisers' responses were just as heated as the classroom teachers. The participants rejected element G because of the mention of OFSTED, not the target setting aspect.

Sort 8: Elements G, J and K

My prediction was that J and K (collective/subjective) would be grouped together as more effective and G (collective/objective) identified as less effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
G	Target setting for whole school after a local authority or OFSTED report	2	6
J	Being a participant in a staff support group which meets to share experiences as a basis for bringing about change to the school culture	8	
K	Exploration of personal communication styles as part of whole school policy on developing more effective communication	5	3

Again, all eight identified J as more effective. It was interesting that G was mentioned twice as more effective. Here the target setting aspect was focused on by the two participants rather than the OFSTED report. In both cases it was grouped with J as more effective against K which was seen as less effective. This was seen as more likely to bring about change as it was important to see where you are going and target setting needs to be arrived at by a group rather than by individuals.

Where J and K were grouped as being more effective (five times) the communication development linked with overall effectiveness was highlighted as being important: planned change involves working with others in a sensitive way to find out if people share interests and common goals; communication is part of learning and communication includes how we interact together, this would lead to 'fantastic' management.

J was identified alone, once, as being more effective. Effectiveness was seen in terms of sharing experiences, setting common goals, and having a stake in bringing about change.

G was identified five times alone as less effective: driven by external forces; artificial and difficult to monitor, becomes clinical; hierarchical, managerial approach. G and K were grouped together once as less effective: paper exercise, implies power, doesn't mean

anything changes. K was identified twice alone as less effective: discussion alone will not result in change; 'some people will find it threatening if it is personal'.

Sort 9. Elements G, I and K

My prediction was that G and I (collective/objective) would be grouped together as less effective and that K (collective/subjective) would be identified as more effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
G	Target setting for whole school after a local authority or OFSTED report	3	5
I	Whole day school training on, for example, discipline or achievement, run by outside facilitator	4	4
K	Exploration of personal communication styles as part of whole school policy on developing more effective communication	6	2

No clear pattern emerged for this sort.

For effective change teachers spoke about the value of target setting and review, the need for effective communication, opportunities for practical work in small groups and that teachers' needs should be linked with the school development plan.

When G was mentioned alone as less effective (three times) it was because 'OFSTED creates chaos'; it is imposed; there is no active participation. When G was identified with K as less effective (once) it was because these activities were paper activities and had no relevance. When G was identified with I (once) it was that it may not satisfy everyone because it was imposed. When I was identified as less effective alone (twice) it was because a one-off training event would not make any impact. When I was grouped with K as less effective it was because a whole day INSET or personal reflection will not result in change.

Sort 10. Elements I, K and L

My prediction was that K and L (collective/subjective) would be grouped together as more effective and I (collective/objective) identified as less effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
I	Whole day school training on, for example, discipline or achievement, run by outside facilitator	1	7
K	Exploration of personal communication styles as part of whole school policy on developing more effective communication	6	2
L	Whole staff developing collaborative ways of working together	6	2

K and L were grouped four times as effective. Collaborative forms of working together led to better relations and a feeling of being valued. Greater change can be achieved using peer reviews and lead to higher achievement for young people in school. Process oriented development is more effective than content oriented development. Where L was mentioned as effective it was considered at the heart of change and was based on shared values. I was only identified once as more effective. It was grouped with K because of the importance of collaboration and structured forms of working together.

When I was identified as less effective it was because such experiences do not lead to change. The expertise of outside facilitators was questioned. Such an experience would 'stand no chance of succeeding if it took place on the first or last day of a term'.

Sort 11. Elements H, J and L

My prediction was that J and L (collective/subjective) would be grouped together as more effective and H (collective/objective) identified as less effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
H	Whole school preparing a policy following an external directive	2	6
J	Being a participant in a staff support group which meets to share experiences as a basis for bringing about change to the school culture	7	1
L	Whole staff developing collaborative ways of working together	5	3

J and L grouped together (four times) as more effective produced the response that it was part of the school situation; people know each other; evaluation is needed to put things into place; working with a group of people will bring about change in a supportive atmosphere.

When H and J were grouped together as more effective (twice) it was because there was no option but to change and that it is sometimes easier to respond to something from outside.

This was the only occasion in all the sortings that J was identified by one person as less effective (see table 4.8). The reason given was that J combined with H (as the less effective grouping) would lead to 'conflict and division'. Reasons given for H being less effective included that it was not part of the 'nitty gritty' of teaching; only a few members of staff would contribute to the process; such an exercise is seen by teachers as 'jumping through hoops'.

Sort 12. Elements H, I and L

My prediction was that H and I (collective/objective) would be grouped together as less effective and that L (collective/subjective) identified as more effective. Result:

		More effective	Less effective
H	Whole school preparing a policy following an external directive	**3**	**5**
I	Whole day school training on, for example, discipline or achievement, run by outside facilitator	**2**	**6**
L	Whole staff developing collaborative ways of working together	**6**	**2**

In this sorting H was identified three times with L as more effective. Here it was seen as the whole staff identifying needs; working as part of the whole school in collaborative ways would bring about change. L was identified three times as more effective. Working together over time will achieve a manageable purpose. Such a strategy can be initiated in ways that will suit the school and will allow lots of feedback; everyone is part of the process.

H and I were grouped together three times as less effective. It was stated that any outcomes of a one-off event cannot be sustained; it is someone else's idea therefore staff feel no ownership. H and L were grouped together on two occasions as less effective because these are not learning experiences or models of change that will work; staff will not follow a directive. If staff do not see the validity it could be a paper exercise.

A summary of the teachers responses follows the analysis of the third stage of the interview.

Stage three: Frequency and effectiveness comparison

My prediction for this stage of the process was that the individual/objective and collective/objective would be more frequent in teachers' experiences than the individual/subjective and collective/subjective, and their view of effectiveness would be the reverse. Overall, the teachers' responses for frequency are not completely in line with my prediction (see table 4.9) but are for effectiveness (see table 4.10).

Figure 4.9 The frequency of professional development experiences

Individual/objective				Collective/objective			
Most often	Often	Occasionally	Seldom /never	Most often	Often	Occasionally	Seldom /never
3	5	1 2	4	1	11	9	3
Individual/subjective				Collective/subjective			
Most often	Often	Occasionally	Seldom /never	Most often	Often	Occasionally	Seldom /never
4	4	1 1	5	5	2	4	1 3

Figure 4.10   The effectiveness of professional development experiences

Individual/objective				Collective/objective			
Very effective	Quite effective	Not very effective	Not effective	Very effective	Quite effective	Not very effective	Not effective
4	7	9	4	5	3	6	1 0
Individual/subjective				Collective/subjective			
Very effective	Quite effective	Not very effective	Not effective	Very effective	Quite effective	Not very effective	Not effective
1 6	8	0	0	1 5	5	4	0

These figures suggest that:

• the teachers' experiences of professional development are mixed. Taken together 'the most often' or 'often' categories show that individual/objective, individual/subjective and collective/subjective are similar in numbers: eight, eight and seven respectively. Whereas the collective/objective category totals 12. My prediction was that individual/objective would register the highest number. It appeared that teachers perceive professional development experiences happening more often with colleagues than alone, for example

when they are on INSET courses or attending school-based programmes of the objective type.

• the individual/subjective and collective/subjective elements were seen to be far more effective than the individual/objective and collective/objective. Only four of the subjective elements were placed as not very effective and were never stated as being not effective. Whereas 14 of the objective elements were seen as not effective and identified 15 times as not very effective. This is in line with my prediction.

3.4 Summary of findings

The findings of the three stages of process support my hypothesis in that:

• teachers' views of the effectiveness of professional development experiences are linked inextricably with their day to day work context. This view of effectiveness came across during each of the three stages of the interview process. Teachers' conceptualisation of effective professional development encompasses learning embedded within the work setting. Teachers value opportunities for learning together within the context of their own organisation. The most effective professional development is carried out either in the classroom or working with small groups of colleagues in the work place and is directly related to their everyday work

• teachers' levels of participation were seen as crucial factors in deciding whether professional development was effective or not. The more they were engaged in activities and the more interaction there was with colleagues, the more effective the activities were seen to be. A mix of practical and relevant activities with opportunities for reflection were identified as being important. The development of confidence in a trusting, non-hierarchical environment was seen to be crucial for effective professional development. Pupil and peer feedback was valued. Passive, didactic forms of professional development were always seen to be less effective in bringing about change. External expertise was not valued. Advisers were frequently identified as being out of touch and not having the same understanding of the situation as the teachers in schools

• experiences which were seen as challenging, developmental and taking place over a long period of time were seen as more effective. There was frequent mention of the importance of feeling in control, having ownership, developing shared aims and reciprocity - supporting and being supported by respected colleagues

• teachers' accounts suggested subjective experiences are more effective than objective experiences, for example, when teachers are working together in social exchange, reflecting, planning and developing actions for change

• teachers highlighted the damage that inappropriate experiences can bring, for example, intrusive inspections, external directives and one-off training events. Teachers considered that while these may produce quick results they will not bring about lasting change and may be counter-productive

• research is not seen by teachers as central to their professional development.

From these discoveries it appears that professional development and the learning context are most usefully seen as linked. The learning context must be taken into account as it is so influential in how teachers can bring about changes into practice.

These results challenge approaches to professional development and teachers' learning which stress individual, cognitive development. I have argued that for more effective individual and organisational development other approaches to learning are necessary. These take into account the learner's experiences and emotions, their learning contexts, the work setting and social context. These factors are vital ingredients in providing the necessary conditions for actions for change.

4. Research reflections

Working with the teachers from the M.A. module

Because all the teachers were involved in full time posts and part time study, I wanted to make the interview as convenient, non-threatening and useful as I could. I conducted the interviews in teachers' own chosen location. Four teachers chose to come to my work place. I was invited into three schools. In one primary school I was invited to observe classroom work in the afternoon, prior to conducting the interview when school ended. I spent time talking with the teacher about his classroom work. Another teacher invited me to her home and we discussed her career development. I saw reciprocity as an important factor in this research relationship. It was a way of ensuring the teachers were not exploited or treated as research subjects. I did not find the blurring of roles difficult, neither it appeared, did the teachers.

I was pleased that the teachers found the exercises useful and relevant. The teacher educators considered how they might adapt the processes for use in their own work situations. Subsequently, one described how she created an activity from the personal

construct grid to use as a team building exercise. One of the primary teachers who subsequently became a full time PhD student used the personal constructs exercise as the basis for his research into reading strategies in primary classrooms. We met regularly to discuss our research, although at the time I felt unable to act as his supervisor.

The research process - its value and limitations

The data yielded fruitful results although I was only able to interview eight of the 11 teachers who had attended the M.A. module. The first stage of the interview was intended to put teachers at their ease and refocus on professional development issues. The results of this open-ended aspect of the process had unanticipated outcomes. I had not expected the information gained from this stage to be useful and had not intended to use it in the analysis. However, it yielded more interesting data than I expected, especially in terms of teachers' conceptualisation of professional development and the value they placed on context-specific experiences.

I was prepared for initial enquiries about my definition of professional development. This emerged when I carried out the pilot interviews. I was also prepared, thanks to my supervisor, for teachers wanting to use the M.A. module as an example of an effective professional development experience. I insisted they used another example to avoid the possibility of their wishing to 'please the teacher' although two were extremely reluctant to do so.

During the period of the research I became increasingly dissatisfied with some of the elements I had chosen for the four quadrants. Teachers interpreted them differently, for example, in relation to element H, 'Whole school preparing a policy following an external directive'. My interpretation was that this was imposed from outside and therefore this element was placed in the 'collective/objective' quadrant. When teachers interpreted it in this way saw it as less effective. However, others interpreted this as teachers making decisions themselves collaboratively. This interpretation shifted the element into the collective/subjective quadrant and it was seen as more effective.

The 'subjective' elements were more difficult to identify than the 'objective'. This indicated that these experiences were less frequent in practice. I was concerned that the teachers would have limited experience of the 'subjective' experiences and they would be discounted. This anxiety was unfounded. Although teachers had fewer experiences of this type they did not disregard them.

The emotional response of the teachers appeared to effect their decisions. The most notable was in relation to element G which mentioned OFSTED: 'Target setting for whole school

after a local authority or OFSTED report'. In some sortings the teachers focused on OFSTED inspection, rather than reading it as one example of target setting, and this triggered strong opinions about the negative nature of an OFSTED inspection. On reflection it was an inappropriate example to use. However, it reinforced the subjective nature of the exercise and the powerful effects of emotions in decision-making.

Studies, exploring teachers' personal meanings, are criticised on the grounds of small samples and methodological weaknesses (see Hargreaves 1977, cited in Bannister and Fransella 1986): the underlying assumption is that all significant typifications are necessarily transcontextual, and that the test can tap the constructs on a context free basis. As illustrated by some responses in my research, constructs elicited from teachers which are not related to any specific context may be used differently (Hargreaves 1977). Bannister and Fransella (1986) suggest that the classroom is itself a social context within which a teacher's superordinate constructs (personal values) must be examined. This raises important issues. One of my main conclusions is that effective individual and organisational learning must take account of the learner's experiences and emotions, their learning contexts, the work setting and social context. The research method needs to be congruent with the message. The examples I gave were context free. The participants set these examples in a context which was meaningful to them. It is not surprising therefore, that the results for the classroom teachers and the teacher educators were different and that the participants' interpretations varied.

I was not aware of the growing patterns while conducting the interviews. It was only when I displayed the results that patterns emerged. Creating matrices and networks to display data, added an important dimension to my research in extending a narrative text (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Action research, data collection and rigour

Carrying out the personal construct research raised issues in relation to data collection as part of action research. In action research both qualitative and quantitative techniques can be employed as action research is a style rather than a methodology. Kelly (1955; 1977) also supported mixed methods. Action research can be described as a process of reviewing and reflecting on one's own practice, learning from practice, deciding on actions for change which encompass thinking, feeling, and understanding. Different forms of data can be used to inform this process. Within action research, unlike other forms of research, personal reflections are important as it is the nature of the research to be critically concerned with change to one's own practice. The responsibility for judgements belongs to the action researcher; with that responsibility comes the necessity for clear, explicit reasoning. Rigour

'derives from the logical, empirical, and political coherence of interpretations in the reconstructive moments of the self-reflective spiral' (observing and reflecting), and the 'logical, empirical, and political coherence of justifications of proposed action in its constructive or prospective moments' (planning and acting) (Kemmis 1993 p185).

The action researcher does not work in isolation. The views of others with whom the action researcher works, provide important evidence which the action researcher uses to inform judgements for decisions. In developing understandings the action researcher will be informed by research and related literature. Theoretical underpinnings will help make sense of the developing picture and can be used to make connections with the researcher's own understandings and others' understandings. This inter-related set of connections can be seen as important additional data.

The relationship between action research and mechanistic and organismic models

My work focuses on personal and professional relationships, contexts for learning and the interconnections between them. I found it difficult to develop the typology, especially to select elements to illuminate the four quadrants; in practice they overlap. Teachers' responses reinforced this.

My research was developing in an organismic way; aspects of my teaching and research became so inter-related that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between them. Systems thinking helped me make sense of an organismic way of working. In terms of connectedness, relationships, and context it offered an important explanation.

Systems thinking is 'contextual' which is the opposite of analytical thinking (Capra 1997 p30). In the analytic, or reductionist approach, the parts themselves cannot be analysed any further, except by reducing them to still smaller parts. Analysis means taking something apart in order to understand it; systems thinking means putting it into the context of a larger whole. According to the systems view:

• the essential properties of an organism, or living system, are properties of the whole
• the properties arise from the interactions and relationships between the parts
• these properties are destroyed when the system is dissected, either physically or theoretically, into isolated elements
• the parts are not isolated, and the nature of the whole is always different from the mere sum of its parts
• the properties of the parts can be understood only from organisation of the whole (Capra 1997).

Systems thinking does not concentrate on basic building blocks but rather on basic principles of organisation: 'The great shock of the twentieth-century has been that systems cannot be understood by analysis. The properties of the parts are not intrinsic properties, but can be understood only within the context of the larger whole' (Capra 1997 p 29). This understanding gave me confidence to continue my research in developing a holistic and organismic approach to teachers' professional development which is congruent with systems thinking in terms of connections, relationships and contexts.

Identifying the next stage of my research

The challenge to me at this stage was to see the extent to which I could make professional development experiences outside the work place more effective. As a consequence I redesigned the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development' in an attempt to highlight ways in which teachers' learning can be enhanced. I identified principles underpinning effective course design and examined ways the principles are put into practice.

I was surprised that research, especially action research, was not mentioned by any of the eight teachers as a process for effective professional development. All the teachers in this group were involved in the M.A. course which contains a research element, but none mentioned that aspect as being effective. The data analysed in this chapter reinforces the view presented by Knowles (1978) that adults are more receptive to learning if it can be applied directly to their personal/professional life. Perhaps the research the teachers engaged in was insufficiently related to their professional lives; there being few mechanisms in schools to promote research by teachers (Little 1987). Within the re-designed module I wished to include action research as a form of professional development and explore ways in which research itself can be a vehicle for learning at individual and organisational levels.

Chapter five

Use of subjective professional development experiences - examples in a course

1. Introduction

There are two main findings from the research in chapter three I wished to act upon. First, on the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development', teachers suggested that examining subjective experiences was significant for personal learning, but in itself may not be helpful in bringing about change to professional practice. Second, teachers expressed difficulty in describing their learning. They indicated the course had been helpful, but were unable to state clearly what they had learned.

The research data analysed in chapter four, conducted with the same group of teachers, provided evidence that effective professional development experiences were embedded within schools or classrooms - teachers working collaboratively within their own working contexts. Teachers suggested that subjective experiences far outweighed objective experiences as effective for bringing about changes to their professional practice. They were able to engage with the issues and act upon them. Interestingly, research was not highlighted as an effective professional development experience. Teachers appreciated longer courses where teachers worked with others to reflect on practice and be stimulated by ideas, but these experience were not as helpful in bringing about change.

These findings led me to question the role of the taught module and the goals for my work with teachers undertaking M.A. courses. The challenge for me was to redesign the module to address these issues. I wanted to retain the personal elements which the first cohort of teachers identified as being particularly significant in developing their understanding of teachers' professional development, while encompassing actions for change within the teachers' own work contexts. My aim was to make a more significant impact on teachers' learning.

This chapter focuses on the redesign of the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development' which I first created and taught in 1994 (see chapter three). I had the opportunity to use the knowledge gained from my research when redesigning the module for the summer term 1996. In 1994, I felt that the first module was well constructed and provided useful learning experiences, both for myself and the participants. However, two years on I was able to draw on my learning from various

aspects of the action research process, observing, reflecting, analysing, and evaluating to redesign the module.

There are two important differences in the new module which address my research findings - the inclusion of learning about learning and action research processes. Learning about learning helps participants understand and articulate ideas about learning in connection with professional development. Action research helps participants initiate and learn about change within their own organisation, itself a meta-learning process.

I began by creating a concept map of the module to incorporate key principles. I then drew up a framework of strategies and processes translating the principles into practice. These are described in this chapter to provide the overall picture of the redesigned module. I then focus on the rationale for including the two new aspects of the redesigned module. The issues discussed in this chapter reflect the discussions we had on the module, for example, questions about learning and action research. I include my own and teachers' reflections on the redesigned module, which highlight the creation of disturbance and complexity and the dynamic relationship between learning and change.

The participants

Those participating in the redesigned module in 1996 were a heterogeneous group in respect of years of teaching experience, different positions of responsibility in their organisation, different roles, sex, and race. There were 12 people in the group whose roles ranged from classroom teachers in primary and secondary schools, senior teachers, head teachers, advisers, and classroom support team members. Two were full time students, 10 were part time. As it was an open option module, participants were studying different M.A. courses including School Improvement and School Effectiveness, History of Education, Economics, Primary Education, and Personal-Social and Health Education. The teachers brought a wealth of experience, expertise, and interests to the group.

2. Redesigning the M.A. module

This section examines the stages in redesigning the M.A. module, identifies the key concepts, processes and strategies and sets out the rationale and background of the new elements.

2.1 Concept mapping

To improve the module, and the learning of the teachers, I felt that the principles and processes needed to be made explicit. To this end I drew a 'concept map' (Novak and Gowin 1984), which would form the basis of a discussion at the start of the course (see table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Concept map 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development'

Goal: Learning for change

involves:

Integrating personal-professional development

The self is central in the learning process
An holistic view of the person empowers
individuals

Learning about learning

Complexity is increased by considering the
relationship of the learner, the process and the
context. Cycles of learning include meta-learning

Developing collaborative learning contexts

Developing a climate of trust, openness and
challenge encourages risk taking and shared
responsibility for learning

Learning about action research

Action identifies factors which help or hinder
change. Learning from action research empowers;
the researcher learns about self, process and context

and brings about:
Actions for change at individual, group and organisational levels

The construction of this map helped me clarify the key concepts that form the focus for the module and provides a schematic summary of the learning plan. The concept map is limited for illustrating an 'organismic' model (Reese and Overton 1970) and does little to illustrate the inter-connectedness of the processes and experiences. It is not presented as an hierarchy of concepts as Novak and Gowin (1984) suggest for concept mapping.

In an attempt to make the learning experience for teachers more effective I focused on the experiences required to bring about actions for change through the development of four specific principles:

• Integrating personal and professional learning. The emotional, social, and cognitive domains are explored and integrated with personal and professional learning. Concepts of personal and professional development are explored at a theoretical and practical change level. The goal is to understand the inter-relationships between all aspects of learning and their importance in bringing about change

• Collaborative learning contexts. Participatory learning processes and group work activities are used to analyse collaboration in groups and change in the work place. The goal is to increase understanding of learning contexts and the dynamic relationship that exists: the effect of learner on context and context on learner.

Two new principles were included in the redesigned module:

• Learning about learning. This is an explicit focus on learning, using action learning cycles, meta-learning processes, and action research techniques. The goal is to increase understanding of the complexities of the learning process, the learner and the learning context, and to develop frameworks for planning

• Learning about action research. Teachers are invited to carry out small scale action research in their organisation, during the term. Working with other colleagues, if possible, and involving young people where appropriate, the aim is to understand change processes in 'action', and to identify enhancing and inhibiting change factors.

This combination of principles is designed to be an empowering process providing necessary conditions for individual learning to be most effective, encouraging risk taking, identifying actions for change and reviewing the learning. There is work at a personal level (an exploration of subjective experiences) in relation to the teacher's own self, and work at a organisational level (an exploration of contextual factors influencing teachers). The goal is to increase understanding at several levels - personal, theoretical, and

practical change, and a change in perception of self, as teacher in action. Attention is also given to contextual factors influencing teachers beyond their organisation.

I argue it is the inter-connection of these levels of understanding, in relation to the four principles, that creates a powerful base for teachers' professional development.

2.2 Processes and strategies used to incorporate the principles

Table 5.2 outlines examples of processes and strategies used to incorporate the four principles. While two of these - integrating personal-professional learning and collaborative learning contexts - were discussed in chapter three, they were further refined. Some of the processes and strategies under these headings, were embedded in the first module, but were either included at an intuitive level, or not made explicit, either in the planning stage or during the module. There were also omissions, which seemed obvious when I came to redesign the module. This indicates important learning from the action research process, and the way I am able to apply my understanding in future action.

In order for these processes and strategies to have impact, the key goal in the redesigned module was to develop a community of reflective learners, who would draw on their own experiences to construct meaning, and incorporate characteristics of group experience in which critical thinking is being developed:

- identifying and challenging assumptions
- exploring alternative ways of thinking and acting
- encouraging diversity and divergence
- discouraging attempts to bring matters to some form of artificial resolution
- welcoming flexivity of format and direction
- valuing risk taking and spontaneity
- modelling openness and critical analysis
- discouraging the presumption that perfection is the chief characteristic of successful facilitation
- being sceptical of final answers (Brookfield 1987).

For the purposes of this chapter I now focus on the two new principles of the redesigned module: learning about learning and action research.

Table 5.2 Processes and strategies to incorporate the four principles

Integrating personal-professional learning
• engagement of participants in personal learning through the use of autobiography, time lines • relating concepts to all aspects of professional development to the teachers' own lives • work at a personal level, for example, conversations about non-work aspects of the person • cognitive and affective domains of learning and their inter-relationship explored, for example, reflecting on ways in which learning is helped and hindered by feelings • professional and personal experiences used as triggers for the study of specific foci

Collaborative learning contexts
• group contract and course agreement is made explicit, to develop commitment to learning and joint endeavour • variety of individual, small group work and whole group collaborative tasks • concepts of trust, challenge and risk explored • linking work with own contexts, and with external contexts • the exploration of the concept of collaboration; exploring group dynamics and learning in groups

Learning about learning
• valuing teachers' learning, using their experiences as a starting point, reflecting on this learning • cycles of learning used to reflect, analyse, make connections and apply learning • concepts of meta-cognition introduced, for example, concept mapping; learning made explicit, for example, application of learning discussed and acknowledged • previous learning examined to pinpoint successful and unsuccessful strategies; identifying learning situations to try out new strategies • reflective journals used to record thoughts, feelings and experiences of learning and change

Learning about action research
• learning about action research and the effectiveness of collaboration • participants engage in own action research; learning reviewed • hindrances to change discussed; risk taking encouraged • participants make presentations to the group about their research; feedback given • exploring the possibilities and limitations of school settings as collaborative work contexts

2.3 Rationale and background of the two new elements

a) Learning about learning

To be effective in the future, teachers must deepen their knowledge of pedagogy, and develop a much more sophisticated understanding of teaching and learning (Fullan 1993). People need to be effective learners who can 'enhance and transfer learning' and 'learn in an increasing range of contexts' (Watkins et al 1996). Teachers must acquire learning and thinking skills, including learning to manage change and diversity, as well as developing the skills to be self directed learners. Learning about learning is a central element of my expanded approach to professional development.

Processes to enhance learning are included in the module, to help teachers understand the complexities of learning, provide a vocabulary to discuss learning, and learn about learning itself - meta-learning. I use the term meta-learning to mean a reflexive process of learning about learning, as distinct from 'learning how to learn' (Nisbet and Shucksmith 1986). I have identified useful stages in becoming a meta-learner:

Stage one: talking about learning

Stage two: using the action learning cycle to learn from experience

Stage three: using the action learning cycle to reflect and learn about own learning

Stage one: talking about learning

The first stage aims to develop a vocabulary to talk about learning, differentiate between different terms about learning, phases of learning, and possible learning and change outcomes. This stage is not necessarily reflexive.

The following questions trigger discussion at the first stage, for example, "What do we understand by learning?", "What is the difference between learning and development?", "What is the difference between learning and change?", "What is the value of reflection?" Readings and tasks facilitate such debates. As in the earlier module there were no lectures; participants engage with the issues using their subjective experiences. All contributions are valued. I wanted to be seen as a learner and to express my ideas alongside group members. This would make the M.A. module an exciting and innovative experience for me.

Discussions at this stage focus on the idea that learning cannot be assumed. There needs to be a specific focus on learning about learning, what is learned, how learning takes place, and how that learning can shape future practice:

> 'It is a common belief that learning is automatic and without effort, and that it is continuous and cumulative over life. Yet we have reason, and some evidence, to doubt this belief. Learning has been confused with development, and the biological metaphor of autonomous developmental growth is so powerful that it permeates our thinking' (Novak and Gowin 1984 p10).

Novak and Gowin's distinction between development and learning is important for discussion; both development and learning involve change, but the quality of the change is different. Development is rooted in the biological model. It takes place over time and can happen without self-reflection or self-awareness. It is not a conscious process. Learning, as opposed to growth or development, is conscious and deliberate change which requires reflection: 'Learning ... that reflective activity which enables the learner to draw upon previous experience to understand and evaluate the present, so as to shape future action and formulate new knowledge' (Abbott 1994 pviii).

Perceptions and experiences of learning using trigger activities form part of the process, addressing the features of learning highlighted by this process definition:

> '• an active process of relating new meaning to existing meaning, involving the accommodation and assimilation of ideas, skills, thoughts etc.
> • making connections between past, present and future which do not always follow in a linear fashion: un-learning and re-learning play a part
> • a process influenced by the use to which the learning is to be put, and whether the learning may be effectively retrieved in future situations' (Watkins et al 1996 p1).

This contrasts with some prevalent views of learning - a passive process of knowledge acquisition, with predictable and measurable outcomes (Watkins et al 1996) and the recollection of own perspectives of learning, contrasting with: increasing knowledge; memorising and reproducing; applying; understanding; seeing something in a different way; changing as a person (Marton and Booth 1997). Definitions of learning and differing perceptions of learning outcomes, are compared during sessions, for example the differences between reflection and reflective learning: 'Reflection ... a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciation' (Boud et al 1985 p3); 'Reflective learning ... the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective' (Boyd and Fales 1983 p100).

On the module this is compared with Schön's (1987) suggestion that reflection is triggered by a recognition that something needs attention, for example, an unexpected outcome or an intuitive feeling; what began as routine is perceived as problematic. We would also look at Schön's distinction between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action and compare our teaching experiences of the on-the-spot reflection that happens during practice with deliberate, retrospective contemplation.

I hoped such discussions about learning would enable course members to differentiate more easily between reflection, understanding, learning and change. For example, in the first M.A. module cohort, I noticed that teachers were reluctant to move from reflection to reflective learning (see chapter three).

The idea of 'critical thinking' was raised on the module. Brookfield (1987) suggests this begins when people conceive a contradiction between how the world is supposed to work, and their own experience of reality. Brookfield (1987) relates this perception of anomalies to others' definitions such as perspective transformation (Mezirow 1977), and emancipatory learning (Apps 1985). Mezirow (1977) writes of the disorienting dilemmas of adult life such as bereavement and redundancy that trigger self-examination. Rather than leave such triggers to chance, I wanted to set in motion the processes of reflection, critical thinking, learning and bringing about actions for change through the use the action learning cycle.

Stage two: using the action learning cycle to learn from experience

The second stage in learning about learning involves reflecting on experiences. Central to the M.A. module was the process model of learning - reflective learning and critical thinking leading to understanding and change. Weekly sessions were structured using Dennison and Kirk's cycle of learning (1990), a process of reflecting, analysing, evaluating, making connections and planning action for change (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 An action learning cycle
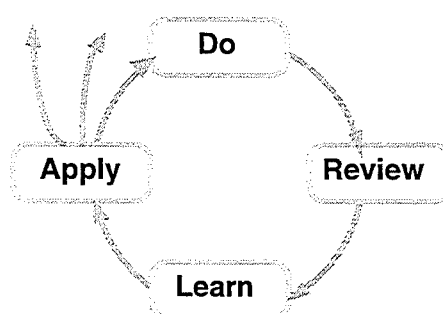
This cycle highlights activity in learning (Do), the need for reflection and evaluation (Review), the extraction of meaning from this review (Learn) and the planned use of learning in future action (Apply). By following and focusing on the action learning model during sessions, learning became explicit. Teachers were encouraged to use their subjective experience from activities on the module and previous learning experiences.

The following set of questions highlights the process (see table 5.3). I encouraged group members to reflect on their learning each week both during sessions and during the week, recording their thoughts about the connections they made between our work together, their professional practice and their learning about themselves. I encouraged reflection and discussions about feelings. As discussed in chapter one, the expression of emotion in the classroom is generally discouraged. My experience suggests we often circumvent a valuable learning opportunity.

Table 5.3 Trigger questions promoting the action learning cycle

• Recollect the activities and processes we used in the session - what did we do?	
Review -	What aspects of the session did you find particularly useful? What aspects did you find unhelpful? What feelings emerged? Was there anything significant about the way in which you approached the tasks? Was there anything significant about the way in which the group worked?

Learn -	What new insights have you gained from the session -
	       about professional development?
	       about your own learning?
	       about collaborative learning?
	 What connections can you make between the issues raised in this session and previous learning?

Apply -	How will you incorporate new insights into your own practice? Are there any aspects about the way in which you work in this group that you would like to change?

Time was built into the module to allow participants to talk about their experiences of attempting to apply their learning from the cycle and to reflect on their changes. This is because application of learning in the cycle may not be automatic or immediate; connections made between past and present do not always lead to change in the future, so we examined our strategies for keeping safe, acknowledging the difficulties of 'unlearning' old patterns, and 'letting go' established and safe structures. We also related these issues to power dynamics, social positions and organisational constraints.

The importance of such work taking place in a supportive climate cannot be overestimated. For this reason time was built into the M.A. module devoted to trust building activities, and working in small groups, for as Brookfield (1987) suggests belonging to a peer support group where one's experiences are recognised by others is: '... a powerful psychological ballast. It makes the painful process of admitting that one is confused, uncertain, and not in control of every aspect of one's life a good deal less traumatic' (p25).

The module was designed to provide effective learning experiences. Watkins et al (1996) suggest the term 'effective' can only make sense when context and goals are specified. My view of effective learning is that it involves the learner in specifying the changes they want to see - if change does not result learning has not occurred. The learning needs to be applied; the cycle needs to be completed and repeated, and the learning reviewed each time.

Stage three: using the action learning cycle to reflect and learn about own learning

The third stage uses the action learning cycle, but applies it in a reflexive manner to participants' own learning - the process becomes meta-learning. Watkins et al (1996) explain:

Promoting learning about learning

Do: using particular learning tasks, attention is focused on a learning process

Review: learners evaluate the process of learning they have gone through. This includes affective as well as cognitive aspects, that is, how emotional aspects help or hinder the learning process

Learn: a range of aspects may be identified and learners' strategies compared

Apply: each learner identifies learning situations in which they wish to try out new strategies and approaches.

The set of questions I prepared highlights this process (see table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Personal learning and the 'Do, Review, Learn, Apply' cycle

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Approaching your between sessions tasks using the learning cycle

a) Do: The 'do' part of the cycle was to write your autobiography, identify the key concepts in the readings and connect these with your experiences

b) Review: What thoughts do you have about how you approached the tasks?

- did you allocate different times, or did you complete the tasks at one sitting?
- did you allow yourself the time to complete the work out without interruptions?
- was there anything that struck you about the way you carried out the tasks?
- what emotions were aroused?
- can you identify which tasks you readily engage with?
- can you identify anything you found difficult?

c). Learn: What did you learn about yourself as a learner?

- do you recognise any patterns?
- have you learned about what sort of tasks motivate you, and why this might be?
- what helps you keep on task?
- how did your emotional response affect your learning?
- what strategies have you developed to help you persevere?
- have you learned about what enhances your learning?
- have you learned about what inhibits or blocks your learning?

c). Apply: How will you apply your learning to carrying out the between session tasks this week:

- would you approach the task differently, if so, in what way?
- how might you make the experience work more effectively for you?
- what support might you need from others; how are you going to get it?

This strategy works towards more effective learning. This happens when learners have learned about their own learning which Watkins et al (1998) claim bring a number of benefits:

> '... increased engagement in their own learning; more positive feelings regarding their learning; a better sense of ownership and responsibility; improved use of feedback; better links across their present context; better preparation for the future in which learning will occur in a greater range of contexts' (p3).

Opportunities for learning about learning were built into the M.A. module at both the individual and group level. While meta-learning can be carried out by an individual working alone, in a collaborative group setting it proves to be more effective. There is also value in giving and receiving feedback by analysing contributions to group tasks, and the collaborative group may offer emotional support in bringing about actions for change at individual and organisational level.

b) Learning about action research

Teachers involved in the research, described in chapter four, indicated the most effective professional development experiences leading to change were part of day to day practice in their own organisation. This often involved getting feedback from young people and colleagues and bringing about changes as a result. This suggests elements of an action research process, although teachers did not identify it as such. They indicated such processes were more effective than other forms of professional development because they involved action, reflection and change, unlike, for example, inputs from outside experts, which they regarded as less effective because they did not engage with the facilitator, the issues were often irrelevant and the experience did not lead to change.

From my research findings discussed in chapters three and four, I now believe it is important to set learning within the context in which teachers' work. In the redesigned M.A. module this is achieved through involvement in action research. The possibilities for involving participants in action research were overlooked when I first designed the M.A. module. By providing opportunities for reflection, learning, and action as part of the research process, the redesigned module highlighted professional development as an on-going process.

In practice teachers regularly involve colleagues in implicit processes of change. In the redesigned M.A. module I wanted to encourage teachers to initiate action research to help make their changes explicit and systematic rather than ad hoc, and take decisions based on practical and theoretical evidence rather than on hunches or intuition. There is evidence that, despite the constraints of day-to-day work situations, teachers can and do involve themselves in action research (Cooper and Ebbutt 1974) especially when generated by award bearing courses and higher degrees (Falkner et al 1992; Frost 1995).

As with learning about learning, I have identified useful stages in learning about action research:

Stage one: clarifying the role of teacher as researcher
Stage two: carrying out action research in teachers' own work place
Stage three: using action research as a learning process.

Stage one: clarifying the role of teacher as researcher

The first stage includes discussing teachers' experiences of research and discussing ways of overcoming inhibitory factors in carrying out research in school, examining action research as a form of professional development, and exploring the relationship between action learning and action research.

In discussions on the module about the teachers' role as researcher, participants identified inhibiting forces which they said prevented them from reflecting on their practice and carrying out research. These included lack of time, working towards whole school priorities, and preparing for OFSTED inspections. Other research findings are comparable. Teaching is overwhelmingly a 'doing' activity (Hancock 1997); classrooms are busy places (Doyle 1990). One of the results of working in busy, complex and stressful environments is teachers and young people act to reduce ambiguity and risk, and therefore limit academic work (Doyle 1983). This links with the concept of 'defensive' teaching (McNeil 1986).

Providing teachers with support for conducting their action research experiment is clearly important at the beginning. I would argue that once the idea of reflecting, learning and applying that learning is understood, a continuous cycle can become established. The role of the facilitator is important: 'If most teacher research depends upon outsiders in order to get off the ground then there is reason to question whether even the alternative methodologies are feasible in the classroom situation' (Hancock 1997 p 91). My experiences as an action research project member, between 1979 and 1983 (Carnell 1983), and more recently as a research consultant (see chapter two) suggest that where a university lecturer or external facilitator initiates change in school the changes do not become embedded; when the facilitator leaves, the project stops. If teachers are supported to initiate change, and most importantly to decide what the change is, the project is more likely to continue. In other words, teachers knowing their own area of research and their own context are trusted to make decisions. As Rudduck (1991) suggests: 'Professional learning is ... more likely to be powerful in its engagement with fundamental issues in education if teachers have constructed their own narrative of the need for change' (p97). Continuous support is important. Elliott (1991) highlights the role of academic teacher educators in leading and sustaining school-based action research.

In the redesigned module research issues were included within the readings. These took the form of articles, extracts and definitions. They included discussions about different aspects of action research. It was stressed that the methodology takes widely different forms 'grounded in the values of the individuals or group who are carrying it out,

(chosen) on the basis of careful judgement and contextual knowledge' (Somekh 1994 p2). The focus and context of action research was stressed highlighting the importance of a collaborative approach: '... the research community becomes the central focus, while the school culture itself becomes the context for collaborative efforts. Such an approach informs theory as well as practice' (Aspland et al 1996 p93). This has the potential for developing research approaches which are empowering and have value as professional development experiences:

> '... it suggests new types of communication amongst teachers; dynamic networks of relationships to assist them in taking responsible action in the face of complexity and uncertainty. This kind of collaboration implies exchange processes among teachers or between teachers and other groups in which there is a symmetry, rather than a hierarchy of power; it is often teacher initiated and not bound to any prespecified procedures' (Altrichter et al 1993 p202-203).

On the M.A. module the relationship between the action learning cycle and action research was explored. Action learning is a process involving reflection and learning about an activity and then applying the learning to a new context (do, review, learn and apply). Action research uses action learning to bring about changes to practice by gathering and analysing data to inform each stage of the cycle. This was important clarification as familiarity with the learning cycle reinforced the spiralling nature of the process of action research and the different aspects of learning at different stages of the cycle.

Stage two: carrying out action research in teachers' own work place

The second stage involved the module participants in a short piece of action research in their schools directly applied to the work they would normally be doing. First, to develop understanding of the action research process and its value for professional development. Second, to reflect on learning and develop understanding of organisations by carrying out research within a particular context, using action research as a meta-learning technique. I believed action research would promote an understanding of the complexity of learning, an understanding of inter personal relationships, an understanding of organisations as learning contexts and an understanding of change processes.

I encouraged teachers to work with colleagues - some chose this option. However, not all projects are suited to the collaborative approach, nor is less collaborative research necessarily less adequate (Johnston 1991). If teachers were not in a position to carry out action research, for example, if they were full time students, they were invited to carry out an action learning assignment, where they could retrospectively review, reflect, and identify what they had learned about some aspect of professional practice and suggest how their learning would influence future action.

Research and staff development can be one and the same enterprise; a phenomenon that can be practical and emancipatory for all participants (Day 1991). I suggest action research is enhanced when it is viewed as a meta-learning vehicle, where teachers learn about research, their role, and their learning context through the learning cycle.

Stage three: using action research as a learning process

The third stage involved discussing the learning from action research with the group and writing a report of the research for course work assignments. At this stage, action research is used to learn about the difficulties of bringing about change in organisations and the inter-relationship between the learner, process and context. By carrying out action research in their own organisation and then discussing the learning gained from the experience with others on the module, the experiences of teachers from varied backgrounds and different organisations provided an insight into the different ways in which organisations facilitate or inhibit change and learning.

It was important to view the action research not as an end in itself, but to use the experience for learning. The process provides a structure for reflecting, observing, and discussing learning. Jennings and Graham's (1996) observations are helpful:

> 'Rather than tight solutions then, action research might reflect upon the need to struggle without end or resolution, indeed to deconstruct, construct and reconstruct meanings in 'making sense' of the world. ... Post modernism then, provokes us to reconceive the concept of 'action' research in terms that integrate it into a study of power. Thus it requires us to consider meaning in terms of relationships of struggle embodied in everyday practice, and it demands that we view our actions in local contexts related in specific ways to historical conjectures' (p272).

This implies a new conception of research which Barnett (1997) suggests is the 'production and management of uncertainty'.

Action research can also be applied at a meta-learning level, requiring reflecting on the learning resulting from attempts to bring about change to practice - including what we have learned about ourselves, for example: how we react to things working well or not working; how we approach problems; how we interact with others and situations which trigger debilitating emotional responses. In action research the researcher is not normally expected to use the process as a meta-learning technique to learn about themselves as learners. I see this as a contribution to an expanded view of professional development and of action research.

3. Reflections on the redesigned module

During the weekly sessions teachers reflected on their learning and the impact of the module, using their reflective journals. At specific points these reflections were collected in a more formal way, after the mid-term review and during the final session. On both occasions I gave teachers trigger questions to reflect on their learning and changes, as part of their between sessions tasks (see appendix 5.1). I have used their contributions to this process as illuminative data for inclusion in this chapter. Individual interviews took place with participants. These followed their individual tutorials, arranged to discuss feedback on their draft course work. The interviews focused on their views of the module, their learning, and the action research process (see appendix 5.2). I have included extracts from these and from teachers' course work assignments.

3.1 Teachers' reflections

I have selected particular extracts from the data to illustrate particular themes which illuminate the redesigned module. Participants commented on the two areas of the module, integrating personal and professional learning and collaborative learning contexts which I have not included; chapter three focused on those elements of the module. I have included comments about learning about learning and learning about action research in this chapter - the two new aspects of the module.

a) Learning about learning

The focus on learning throughout the module suggested the creation of complexity and disturbance. Professional development is neither simple nor clear. 'Learning is messy. We rarely learn anything by proceeding along a single path to predetermined outcomes' (Scottish CCC 1996 p9). My research revealed that teachers became more aware of the complexity of learning and professional development as a realisation of: a) the complexities of their own behaviour, motives, relationships, reactions and blocks, and b) the complex contexts in which they were working.

The data shows some teachers moving from the intuitive to the explicit. Instead of working on hunches, teachers are informed:

> "The module has enabled me to synthesise several ideas that have been in my mind, moving them towards coherent concepts that I am able now to articulate."
> (Teacher adviser)

Periods of quiet reflection were built into sessions during which aspects of the learning process could be considered. These included identifying insights, new understandings, ambiguities, and different feelings aroused:

> "The use of journal writing as a vehicle for reflection, I found stimulating, but occasionally unsettling. As I became aware of how my own emotions either enhanced or inhibited my learning, I began to consider how these experiences might be mirrored by other colleagues in professional development contexts and also by students in the classroom. I therefore decided to investigate the impact of emotions on people's capacity to learn and at the role of reflective thinking and writing. ...

Later in her course work this teacher disclosed:

> ... I found it immensely disturbing to do (writing about the impact of the time line), very uncomfortable to recognise how much of a roller-coaster the highs and lows of my career have been. Everything is either wonderful or dreadful. We (the teachers she was working with) agreed this form of reflection was powerfully stark in recording positive and negative phases of professional development."
> (Secondary teacher)

As a pre-module task I asked the participants to reflect on the question "What have we already learned about teachers' professional development?" indicating that I valued their prior learning. During the module other related questions were raised, drawing out participants conceptual, process and research knowledge. Teachers welcomed this approach. As one teacher put it:

> "I liked the clarity of purpose and the way we have come to the module as the knowledgeable learner." (Secondary teacher)

Another disclosed in the mid-module review:

> "The pre-course reflections were very good in several senses - making me aware of what this course is about and clarifying my previous knowledge of the field for myself. Making the contact with you before meeting, made you close when we met." (Teacher adviser)

The combination of learning approaches seemed to have been effective for some:

> "The between session tasks were wonderful in some respects; they were interesting and not too difficult. I learned a lot from the activities, not just for the module myself, but for my whole professional development. The variety of ways we had to deal with the literature, enhanced the understanding of the texts, and I am sure I will apply those ways in the future, because they seem to be very effective. The course combined theory and practice perfectly." (Teacher adviser)

> "My mind has been opened. I am in a constant state of reflection - either on what has been discussed or said during the evening or in the bar afterwards. I am therefore in a constant state of learning - the process continues in school." (Secondary teacher)

Some teachers spoke of the value of the action learning process:

> "What really struck me was that even doing really small exercises which in themselves were not particularly meaningful, by using the Do, Review, Learn, Apply model, I realised a lot about my learning patterns. It made me think about the most useful way to approach learning, and whether I want to change my patterns for some situations." (Teacher adviser)

> "Before I act I reflect and analyse. I feel that I have become more rational, more able to distance myself from a situation in order to reflect on it, and most importantly, more able to act upon or confront a situation. ... Had I not attended this particular module, perhaps I would not have had the professional maturity to stand back, reflect and take on board a problem area. I believe I gained the respect of the Head of Department and that of the Senior Management team. This was a determinant in my recent promotion." (Secondary teacher)

I noticed how module participants were able to use the learning cycle to talk more easily about their learning compared with the first cohort of students. By focusing on learning, teachers gain a new vocabulary, and confidence, to talk about learning. This reinforced my view that we need to learn how to talk about, and practice talking about our learning. The following observation reveals the teacher's understanding of the complexity of the relationship between learner and teaching characteristics, contexts and processes:

> "The context has been supportive, striving, enthusiastic, comfortable and effective for learning, but the learner needs to be open and emotionally ready to learn. Experiential learning creates a type of process which creates a particular type of learner. Therefore the learning process is not value free. The learner is part of the process and the learner also helps to create the context. They all impact on each other. The learning and teaching process has become united. We are all resources for each other." (Secondary teacher)

Through the processes of meta-learning, participants develop understanding of the complexities of the learning process, the learner and the learning context. My aim was to help teachers understand issues in teachers' professional development generally, and illuminate their own learning patterns. This explicit focus on learning appeared to be useful for some participants:

> "It changed my approach to how adults learn, and it has radically affected team meetings. I now get the teachers to do the work, and get them to think and make conclusions. Before I felt responsible for what happened and controlled things. Now there is an air of open-endedness." (Primary head)

Some shared concerns about the emphasis on learning and the inclusion of so many different aspects of learning:

> "Emphasise the professional development: sometimes it is drowned by other issues." (Secondary teacher)

> "Make the course longer: I feel we have touched important issues, but there is so much to explore." (Teacher adviser)

The learning cycle was repeated many times during the term. While teachers saw the significance of the process, nevertheless they indicated how change was not easy or automatic, as the cycle might suggest:

> "Even though I have become aware of my patterns, I go on repeating the same old things. I feel now I should be able to change but something stops me. It is a bit like giving up smoking. Change has a huge emotional component." (Primary head)

> "The course has exposed me to and enabled me to experience some methods that were novel to me or I had been sceptical about. In some ways I suspect I am too set in my ways and am unlikely to use many of them in my personal learning in the future." (Teacher adviser)

Change, as the above quotations suggest, is not easy. Being aware of our learning patterns does not mean that we can easily change them. Patterns of behaviour are embodied within us and learning can be difficult and unsettling:

> "Another key learning point is that although it might be expected that drama teachers, because of their pedagogical stance, should come readily to reflection on their practice, they, like anyone, can feel exposed." (Secondary teacher)

On the module the individual is supported emotionally and socially in bringing about change:

> "This was the third module of my M.A. course - an experience which I initially found strange to say the least! The approach was democratic (we chose our own agenda), the group was small and secure, the tutor's presence was unoppressive but reassuring. There were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and all contributions were validated. A process of osmosis began. I overcame my hesitance to 'speak out', I gained confidence and began to experience a sense of personal worth. I became, in fact, much more assertive - not aggressive - but quietly assertive. ...

This teacher continued by suggesting the module was congruent with a 'woman friendly' way of working:

> However, not all participants would endorse my very positive experience of the module, which I now realise has been formulated on 'woman friendly' lines. One participant was particularly disgruntled by the 'limited' role of the tutor and the absence of 'rights' and 'wrongs'. Tellingly this participant was a man." (Secondary Teacher)

The teacher to whom she was referring wrote of the need to develop his own learning strategies and understanding rather than rely on the tutor:

> "Since the role of the lecturer/tutor has changed into a facilitator only, learning will take place only when the learners are made aware of the ways in which they can develop their own learning strategies. As an independent learner, I have to develop my skills in organising and managing time for reading selected papers, chapters and textbooks. I have also to rely on my own interpretation of a text and so develop my ability to bring my own understanding, knowledge and experience into the text. ...

... As a result of this module, I have realised that learners vary in their attitudes to learning, much wider than I believed. This has led me to explore the role of reflection and debriefing in a professional development programme in order to adopt a flexible approach so that teaching would match learning approaches. Focusing on learning has had a tremendous impact on my professional development and understanding of the learning process." (Teacher adviser)

The experiences of these teachers highlights the importance of recognising that all learners have different experiences of the same event:

'The meaning of experience is not a given, it is subject to interpretation. ... When different learners are involved in the same event, their experience of it will vary and they will construct (and reconstruct) it differently. One person's stimulating explanation will be another's dreary lecture. What learners bring to an event - their expectations, knowledge, attitudes and emotions - will influence their interpretation of it and their own construction of what they experience. In general, if an event is not related in some fashion to what the learner brings to it, whether or not they are conscious of what it is, then it is not likely to be a productive opportunity' (Boud et al 1993 p11).

Learning is subjective in the sense that only the learner can identify, and therefore evaluate, what they have learned from any particular experience. Personal change which results from learning can only be in control of the learner. How meaningful any learning experience is will depend on previous experience, an openness to learn and a willingness to take risks. The two quotations from the participants (above) suggest that the course did not match up to either of their expectations and they were affected differently by the experience.

b) Learning about action research

Knowing it to be most empowering when undertaken collaboratively, I encouraged teachers to work with colleagues. A sense of empowerment experienced and acknowledged by the participants, demonstrates the emancipatory potential of action research (Smith 1993). Teachers spoke of the value of working with colleagues and involving others in the school:

"An important thing for me was that the school is doing a visual representation of the mission statement. This was a direct result of my action research. I got back more information and positive feedback than I ever got before. It is involving the whole school community. This would not have happened before. It came about because on the course, we did so much about visual representation of learning and about the importance of collaboration." (Primary head)

"It is important that professional development finds a balance of challenge and support in an atmosphere of courtesy. All learners need to trust the learning situation which is particularly important in an historically hostile situation. Balanced with this was a colleague's pleasure at being able to discuss and reflect *their* work, to listen to *each other* and to *think* about ideas. (Secondary teacher)

It was interesting to note how action research helped teachers develop collaborative cultures and supportive networks within their organisations, a form of professional development that facilitates wider change in schools. One teacher in her course work assignment explains:

> "By discussing together the observations made of pupil behaviour in their own lessons they are able to pinpoint areas of responsibility and need. They are grappling with the professionally painful and frustrating phenomenon of classes that repeatedly manifest unco-operative and sometimes, aggressive behaviour and trying to understand it. Via the channel of the observer they can look at this problem in detail and as a whole. Each teacher, although aware that the problems did not manifest in, or belong only to, their lessons, had been reflecting in the midst of their own actions. ... The problem was manifesting itself across the school and it needed to be addressed in the wider school context." (Secondary teacher)

From teachers' comments it could be seen how initiation at school level normally happens when an individual or small group become enthusiastic to try out new ideas. As Fullan (1993) suggests: 'The individual educator is a critical starting point because the leverage for change can be greater through the efforts of individuals' (p12).

Course participants were invited to write about their experiences of action research for the M.A. module assignment. The process of writing helped clarify their ideas and examine the complexities of learning and change at different levels. Insights gained through self reflection provide a greater understanding of change processes that effect individuals and organisations. One teacher discussed the result of using action research with her team:

> "I always thought change was rather technical. I focused on systems rather than people. I now realise the importance of working with teachers in a very personal way. As a team leader, for example, the way I relate to my team is very much based on thinking about how they are feeling, getting reports back from them on an almost daily basis. This seems to have increased their openness and confidence. It has altered the way I operate on a day to day basis. There hasn't been a huge change, but the small shifts are really important. ...

and the result of involving young people in her action research:

> ... We have discovered that our students respond very seriously and have made very observant, analytical and constructive contributions. They most definitely helped us by sharing their feelings about their achievement and learning." (Secondary teacher)

Interestingly, this teacher described the changes in her team, and subsequent openness and confidence as "a small shift". I argue this is a fundamental shift. In carrying out action research teachers engage in 'second order changes' (Fullan 1991), seeking

fundamentally to 'alter structures and the way in which they perform their roles' (Cuban 1988 p342) rather than improving the effectiveness of what is already happening.

Some teachers wanted to remain in the doing and reflecting stage, rather than move to the learning stage. During the sessions teachers were able to make presentations and were able to receive feedback from other course participants on ideas as well as their practicability. Initially teachers were too ambitious, discussions helped teachers progressively focus, tying down over-idealistic projects.

One of the problems I noticed is once teachers start the action research process it is difficult to start writing about their experiences. This meant that some teachers deferred handing in their assignments because data collection took longer than they anticipated. Some teachers wanted to produce an 'end product' rather than seeing their learning as an on-going process. This is an indication that using action research as a meta-learning process is subtle and sophisticated, and needs more discussion, although its significance was appreciated by some. One teacher wrote:

> "Completing this assignment has given me a completely new insight into action research as a very effective form of experiential learning. It has given me a structured forum in which to explore my previously intuitive beliefs and I have been surprised at how much more potent it has been than just academic writing. I am confident that these outcomes have influenced my thinking about my own and others' professional development and children's classroom learning. I have already begun to incorporate some action research and reflective writing techniques into my teaching." (Secondary teacher)

Drawing on Stenhouse's (1975) vision of teachers integrating research into their classroom practice, Aspland et al (1996) suggest: 'It is everyone associated with schools who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it critically, collaboratively and transformatively' (p101). As a result of the teachers' discussions on the M.A. module I am also optimistic. Through collaborative action research and meta-learning processes teachers become more confident in bringing about changes to their practice. It is difficult to predict if participants on the M.A. module will be more likely to sustain the research, but from the course work assignments, some teachers indicate continuing research interests:

> "As this particular example of action research continues, it begins to raise another question: What benefits might there be, and how would the school as learning organisation develop, if the pupils became participants in the action research. Perhaps this is another assignment." (Secondary teacher)

Teachers need to be aware of the organisational circumstances, positive and inhibitory forces, to understand professional change. Action research provides a vehicle for such understanding. Through a collaborative process, participants learn about the demands of

action: risk taking, commitment, and unanticipated outcomes, a process which evolves knowledge, skills, insights and understandings.

One criticism levelled at the subjective approach to teachers' professional development is the over-emphasis on individual personal change. As I outlined in chapter three a focus on the person and not the context, overemphasises personal responsibility for change, avoiding controversial questions about the ways in which contexts enhance or inhibit professional development. Little (1982) highlights the importance of the school context by arguing that teachers can be helped in their professional development simply by moving to another school. For example, a teacher working in a 'stuck' school will have few opportunities for collaboration. Whereas in another school where collaboration is the norm, professional development will be very different. One teacher explained:

> "It is easier to be objective with hindsight. We have become more aware of how we have been driven by a sense of inadequacy into further professional development. However, in reflecting we have become aware that we are not inadequate. The process has built self-esteem and raised confidence. The school context in which I work has been frustrating. I get excited about ideas but somehow things go on as they always do." (Secondary teacher)

This highlights the assertion that teachers may find it difficult to bring about actions for change if the internal conditions of the school are not conducive (Rosenholtz 1991), and if teachers are not involved in goal setting and decision-making and the collegiality of group learning (Bell and Day 1991). However, there is still potential for learning. Using action learning as a meta-learning technique, participants can learn together about change processes and organisational constraints and about themselves as action researchers.

3.2 My reflections on the rationale in practice

a) Learning about learning

Teachers' expectations of the module were mixed. Many expected a procedure of passing on knowledge or about acquiring skills, a process of certainty and safety, rather than disturbance and uncertainty. The pre-course tasks proved useful in triggering teachers' perceptions. Discussing expectations at the beginning of the module immediately focused on different views about learning, and the roles of learner and tutor.

The different views of teachers about pedagogical styles and learning outcomes proved stimulating. Conflict soon arose about subjective experiences of learning between group members. Barnett (1997) suggests:

'Teaching sessions should see the abolition of the lecture as such and see it replaced by interactive modes of engagement in which students are required to handle conflicting ideas and perspectives. Debates and structured workshops of all kinds should be explored so as to generate contained arguments among the students' (p20).

Although some teachers found the experience "initially strange to say the least!" they valued the learning opportunities, once they understood the rationale. Others were frustrated. In the post-module reflection exercise one teacher spoke of confusion and disappointment :

"The aspect that I have found disappointing is the tutor input - according to the tutor there is no 'right or wrong' answer." (Teacher adviser)

The learning goal was to develop critical thinkers and reflective learners, who would draw on their own experiences to construct meaning, explore alternative ways of thinking and acting and be sceptical of final answers. This view of learning does not always match with the expectations of participants. Unlearning has to be a feature of the process. Barnett (1997) suggests the main aim of teaching in a university is that of creating disturbance in the mind of the student and of enabling them to handle that disturbance. In structuring the learning activities I wanted the group to provide support, inspiration, spark off new ideas, and provide challenge when individuals appeared stuck. I wanted the group to be seen as sharing these functions, rather than them residing in the tutor role, as groups thrive best when the leadership functions are democratically shared; the 'teacher as helper' role may stifle individual growth (Jaques 1995):

'There is a feeling in groups where visible authority is present that the ultimate responsibility for each person's actions and its consequences resides in the figure of authority ... Many of us respond to a student's sense of helplessness by offering to meet it and without questioning its nature. The problem here is that the teacher who is an incurable helper, in satisfying one of his or her basic needs, may fail to develop the student's capacity for self-growth into greater autonomy and responsibility' (p17).

In my own reflections on my learning, I was aware of the shift in my own role. In the redesigned module, my increased confidence and understanding allowed me to let the group take on more of the support role. I deliberately adopted Abercrombie's (1979) suggestion of the tutor's role of seeing group members as capable of change. I like the concept of the 'connected classroom' (Belenky et al 1986); the development of thinking undertaken in small groups, where participants accept the process will be tentative, evolving and uncertain.

Learning in a collaborative group can be more enjoyable and act as an antidote to the sense of isolation that may accompany individualistic approaches to learning:

'Four important words seem to be missing in most academic courses: support, commitment, enjoyment and imagination. The first three may be created in a group where a climate of open communication, involving trust, honesty and mutual respect, takes place. Imagination should blossom in this climate. It might also create it' (Jaques 1995 p11).

Teachers' accounts of repeating the learning cycle show an apparent shift of perspective from intuitive to overt, from personal to professional. Buchmann (1983) describes two categories of experienced teachers - self oriented and role oriented. She believes self-oriented teachers focus on personal beliefs, feelings and experiences and those with role-oriented responses indicate awareness of common experiences, dispositions, and duties within the profession of teaching. I conclude that the action learning cycle described earlier, encourages both self-oriented and role-oriented reflection. Both are important in making learning explicit and encourage the process of making professional judgements and actions for change.

It is this overt and recognisable understanding that helps teachers feel more confident of the sorts of changes they wish to make and plan accordingly. They are able to make choices. Teachers were more aware of the work and effort which had led to success, instead of thinking they were 'lucky' to be where they were. Instead of thinking they have a 'good' class, they are aware of the important work of building relationships. Instead of thinking that the group works well together, they are aware of the processes that encourage collaboration. Insights are built from reflective processes and articulated within the group. Once made public they are made self-aware. Keiny's (1994) explanation seems most pertinent:

'The social interaction within the group, the exchange of ideas that stem from the teachers' practice, leads to the decontextualisation of personal experience, and construction of knowledge of a more abstract nature. Reflection of ideas within the reflective group, ... turns strategies into meaningful pedagogic knowledge' (p165).

The redesigned M.A. module bridges the divide between academic, analytical work normally expected in higher education courses, and the subjective, introspective work normally expected in personal development courses. The use of meta-learning processes demonstrates the value of subjective experience in the construction of knowledge and develops understanding of an expanded view of teachers' professional development.

b) Learning about action research, including research reflections

Action research was included in the redesigned module to initiate and learn about change and about the inhibiting and promoting factors for change in organisations.

My commitment to educational collaboration has meant that throughout my research I wanted to be involved in a learning process with teachers. This supports the growing trend for university researchers to view teachers as participants in research, rather than seeing them as research subjects (Feldman 1993). Circumstances have encouraged different 'facilitatory' action research roles at different stages of my research. In introducing the action research element to the M.A. module, I felt the teachers and I were researchers together, more than at any other time during my six years conducting this research. We had similar problems and ethical issues to discuss. We helped each other in joint problem solving. It overcame the role dilemma, described in chapter three where one teacher expressed concern about the possibility of 'hidden agendas'.

In my role as university tutor, I wanted to avoid some of the problems associated with action research being facilitated by an 'outsider'. Although I was supporting the teachers in initiating action research, I did not influence them in either setting up the process in their schools, or suggesting areas of study, avoiding the situation Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe: when 'facilitators' work with teachers 'they often create circumstances in which project control is not in the teachers' hands' (p202).

Different 'facilitators' roles establish different kinds of action research: 'technical', 'practical' or 'emancipatory' (Carr and Kemmis 1986). From my experience of working with teachers, particularly as a project team member of an action research project (Carnell 1983), I wanted to move away from a role which had the potential of being disempowering, what Carr and Kemmis (1986) refer to as 'technical' action research where practitioners investigate issues raised by outsiders. My role was neither to facilitate 'practical' action research, where outsiders work with groups of practitioners on 'common concerns but without any systematic development of the practitioner group as a self-reflecting community' (p202) or emancipatory action research, in which the 'practitioner group takes joint responsibility for the development of practice' (p202). I saw my role as a facilitator who encourages teachers to initiate their own research and use it as a meta-learning process, avoiding the possibility of undermining teachers' attempts by 'continued dominance' and taking over the teachers' responsibility of the process and learning.

Sometimes during the process of supporting teachers in planning their action research I felt a tension. Subsequently, when reviewing my own learning, I realised I was also attached to an end product rather than valuing the learning process for itself. Using action research as a meta-learning process means that a context in which teachers find making changes difficult can be a source for learning, certainly at individual and classroom level, if not the whole organisation level. Even in a 'stuck' school teachers can learn - about negotiating with colleagues, dealing with conflict, accepting challenge, learning about own perspectives and values. Conflict can be creative; what can change in this situation is the way individuals talk to themselves about problems - the internal messages they give to themselves.

Perhaps some comparisons can be made between teachers' learning in schools and learning in psychotherapy. Smail (1980) states that clients too often reject the idea that their 'problem' is anything to do with their own agency and suggests seeing the person as agent rather than 'victim' of circumstance:

> 'This is not to say that circumstances cannot exert powerful effects on the individual, nor to suggest that he (sic) is necessarily to blame ... but to make clear that his reasons for actions are his reasons, good or bad, and nobody else's ... when a person sees that he had ... good reasons for acting ... it is possible for him to accept new ones. Reasons ... are not formed in advance of action ... but form an integral part of action' (Smail 1980 p178).

Meta-learning processes can enhance understanding about the interaction between the person and the context. Action research was included within the module to empower participants by helping them understand through the cycle of learning and the meta-learning process:

• their contextual reality
• the processes of change and barriers to change
• the role of action research as a change agent
• themselves as learners
• the value of these processes for professional development.

I wanted to develop my understanding of these ideas further in the next stage of my action research. My work with the teachers on the M.A. module inspired me to think further about how learning in an organisation comes about. I had the opportunity to do this in my own organisation when I took on the role of staff development facilitator for academic staff. My goal was to develop my own understanding of the organisation in which I work and the complexity of factors which impact on professional development. This stage of my action research will be discussed in chapter six.

Chapter six:

Understanding organisations as a context for learning and staff development

1. Introduction

In the last chapter it emerged that, through the processes of learning on the M.A. module, teachers were becoming increasingly aware of the complexity of the interactions between the learner, process and context. The significance of action research as a change process was recognised, while at the same time, awareness of the powerful effects of organisational context on the extent to which teachers could apply their learning, was increased.

From the research I carried out in chapter five, I developed the view that for professional learning to be effective there needs to be organisational learning as well as individual learning. Through action research I wanted to understand organisational learning. This led to my appointment in the role of staff development facilitator in my own organisation, taking up Lewin's (1952) suggestion that to understand a system, one must try to change it. My goal was to develop my understanding of what enhances and inhibits learning at individual, group and organisational level. I examine this through the organisation's revision of its appraisal scheme. I wanted to track the reintroduction of appraisal to see what happened when a change was introduced that contributed to individual, group and organisational learning and to identify what enhanced and inhibited organisational learning.

The research in this chapter focuses on my practice as staff development facilitator, and the context in which I work, helping me come to a better understanding of effective learning practices as a basis for action. This self-reflective spiral (Carr and Kemmis 1986) continues through a further stage of reflecting, planning, and acting, consistent with the learning cycle described in chapter five: do, review, learn and apply (Dennison and Kirk 1990).

Within the organisation I have several roles: a teaching role, including responsibility for the M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development', a staff development role and a research role. These are separate yet overlap. In research reflections from this chapter, I discuss the tensions that arise from the multiplicity of roles I fulfil.

2. Understanding organisations through metaphor

In attempting to understand organisational learning, I needed to develop my understand of organisation. I use metaphors of organisation (Morgan 1986) to examine issues and help clarify ideas. I examine views about one particular vision 'the learning organisation', and relate these to professional development and organisational learning. I attempt an organismic view - illuminating how learning at individual, group and organisational level is an inter-related and dynamic process.

2.1 Background to the choice of metaphor

My view of the learning process was changing. I was seeking to increase complexity and understand interactions between the organisation and the people who work in it. Metaphor offered a new way to construct meaning.

In chapter four, I developed a typology of planned professional development experiences. At that time it was an important aspect of the research, as it clarified fundamental differences, and highlighted unique features, in different approaches to teachers' professional development. I was tempted to use the typology again, to understand organisational possibilities and constraints, but I favoured an expanded, mutual and multiple approach for these reasons:

• I was becoming increasingly aware of the trap in identifying a typology which had the potential of suggesting 'good' versus 'bad' polarisations

• I was aware of growing complexities; the typology suggested that different approaches to professional development were more simple than they are

• the approaches had only a limited use, in that, when these were related to complex classroom practice, the models ceased to provide a framework for further analysis; there were aspects of the approaches which overlapped

• my interest grew in developing an organisational perspective, using an organismic approach. I wanted to move away from a mechanistic, reductionist approach and develop a renewed sense and understanding of interconnections (Capra 1997; Senge 1992).

The typology used in chapter four, was a limited element in what I was committed to achieve in practice. As Morgan (1986) suggests, 'decomposing does not do justice to the phenomenon'. I have not rejected the typology I developed. However, I see its usefulness in relation to Bush's view (1995) that the multiplicity of competing models means no single theory is sufficient to guide practice. A range of theoretical perspectives should lead to 'the wise manager making the most informed and appropriate selection of the multiple 'truths' available' (French 1989). There is a need to develop 'conceptual pluralism' (Bolam and Deal 1984) in order to select the most appropriate approach to particular issues.

2.2 Metaphors of organisation

Morgan (1986) reminds us that the word organisation derives from the Greek 'organon', a tool or instrument, loaded with mechanical or instrumental significance. Morgan coins the word 'imaginisation' to break free of this mechanical meaning by symbolising the close link between images and actions. He believes we can create revolutions in the way we organise, by being aware that we are always engaged in imaginisation. One of the basic problems of organisational management is 'the mechanical way of thinking is so ingrained in our everyday conceptions of organisations that it is often very difficult to organise in any other way' (Morgan 1986 p14). The real challenge, according to Morgan, is learning to live with complexity.

Organisations can be seen as many things at one and the same time; different dimensions are always intertwined. As a counterpoint to a 'machine-like' view, organisations can simultaneously be seen as:

• a species of organisation that is able to survive in certain environments and not in others
• an information-processing system that is skilled in certain kinds of learning but not in others
• a cultural milieu characterised by distinctive values, beliefs and social practices
• a political system where people jostle to further their own ends
• an arena where various subconscious or ideological struggles take place
• an artefact or manifestation of a deeper process of social change
• an instrument used by one group of people to exploit and dominate others, and so on (Morgan 1986).

I find these metaphors of organisation useful because they highlight complexities and paradoxes which a study of organisation raises. (I have summarised Morgan's metaphors in table 6.1.) I use metaphors to illuminate organisational learning and resistance through the planned reintroduction of appraisal. I use three of Morgan's metaphors 'machine', 'organism' and 'brain' as they are the most relevant to my study. In discussing effective learning I noted the shift from the mechanistic to organismic; the 'machine' and 'organism' metaphors provide a useful connection. Elsewhere I highlight the importance of making

learning explicit for effective change to professional practice; the 'brain' metaphor is another useful link.

Morgan (1986) does not use the term 'learning' organisation. His metaphor 'brain' focuses on information processing and a frame of referencing for understanding. I choose 'learning organisation' and 'organisational learning' as a vision, rather than a metaphor. This draws attention to effective learning for bringing about change and is different from the way Morgan describes learning in his 'brain' metaphor. My earlier discussion of effective learning suggests a broader definition. It extends the perception of learning from that of knowledge processing to one which involves reflection, developing insights and understandings and bringing about actions for change. Such learning is complex; it is a dynamic process effected by the interrelationships of the learner, the learning process and the learning context.

Table 6.1   A summary of Morgan's metaphors of organisation

Metaphor	View - The organisation ...
Machine	... is mechanistic and bureaucratic; made up of interlocking parts that play a clearly defined role in the functioning whole
Organism	... draws attention to how the organisation grows, develops, and declines and how it is able to adapt to changing environments
Brain	... draws attention to the importance of information processing, learning, and intelligence, and provides a frame of reference for understanding and assessing
Culture	... resides in the ideas, values, norms, rituals, and beliefs that sustain socially constructed realities
Political	... has different sets of interests, conflicts, and power plays which shape its activities
Psychic prison	... draws attention to its people becoming trapped by their own thoughts, ideas, beliefs. Favoured modes of organising manifest an unconscious pre-occupation with control, or a desire to minimise or avoid anxiety-provoking situations
Flux and transform-ation	... rests in understanding the logics of change shaping social life: organisations are self-producing systems that create themselves in their own image; produced as a result of circular flows of positive and negative feedback
Instruments of domination	... the essence of organisation rests in a process of domination where certain people impose their will on others. This metaphor is particularly useful for understanding how actions that are rational from one viewpoint can prove exploitative from another

2.3 A learning organisation

The term 'learning organisation' gained prominence in the late 1980s (Hayes et al 1988) to describe changes and learning processes experienced by businesses which were commercially successful. In the 1990s the term was increasingly used in educational circles. Of the many definitions of the learning organisation (Garvin 1993; Hayes et al 1995; Leesem 1990; Pedler et al 1988), one author in particular highlights its complex nature.

The learning organisation is where:

• people are continually learning how to learn together and expanding their capacity to create the results they want
• new and expansive patterns of thinking are encouraged and supported
• collective aspirations are released (Senge 1990)
• people are continually discovering how they create and change their reality (Senge 1992).

Common indicators of learning organisations from the many definitions, include transformation, change, participation, innovation, altering the way people work, adapting, and fostering involvement (Jones and Hendry 1992). Learning and change in organisations follows from learning and change in individuals and groups. This is a dynamic relationship; the organisation influences people's learning, and people influence the organisation's ability to learn.

Senge (1992) identified related disciplines which are necessary for the generation of a learning organisation by helping people think about organisations in new ways: 'systems thinking', 'personal mastery', 'mental models', 'building shared vision' and 'team learning'. Jones and Hendry (1992) build on these disciplines adding 'changing power structures', 'leading change', and 'expressing concern for social and ethical issues'. In the next section I consider how these disciplines can be used within a learning cycle to encourage organisational learning.

Organisational learning is not the same as individual learning (Argyris and Schön 1978). For organisational learning, the learning of individuals must be:

> ' ... encoded in the individual images and shared maps of organisational theory-in-use from which individual members will subsequently act. If this encoding does not occur, individuals will have learned but the organisation will not have done so' (Argyris and Schon 1978 p19).

From this a crucial point can be made, there is no organisational learning without individual learning; individual learning is a necessary but insufficient condition for organisational learning. Senge (1990) concurs; individual learning is not sufficient in order to become a learning organisation. Value must be placed on group learning. My research findings suggest placing a value on learning is not enough. People's learning, the processes of learning including collaborative strategies, and the learning context itself need to be made explicit. These are essential elements of organisational learning and together create a learning organisation.

2.4 What helps and hinders organisational learning?

In this section I identify the factors that help and hinder organisational learning, focusing on the learner, the learning process and the learning context, and identify implications for leadership and management styles. In a review of the literature of the factors helping and hindering organisational learning there are parallels with my findings from the research with teachers on the M.A. module, including the complexity of the dynamic inter-relationship between the learner, the learning process and the learning context. The connection between effective individual learning and effective organisational learning supports my argument for congruence at all levels.

The learner

The learning organisation is based on the assumption that learning is the responsibility of everyone; the main goal being to create a climate in which learning is valued and encouraged at all levels. This is related to concepts of lifelong learning (Candy 1991) and the learning society (Ranson 1992; 1994). Learning organisations are possible because, deep down, we are all learners; not only is it in our nature, but we love to learn, teams can learn and organisations can learn (Senge 1992).

A 'people first' approach has been associated with successful learning organisations (Hayes et al 1988). In such an approach certain assumptions are made which are congruent with the assumptions I make about teachers as learners, for example:
• people inherently want to learn
• learning is more effective if people are challenged but not threatened
• people enjoy helping others learn and learn themselves through this process
• removing artificial differences and hierarchies in the ways people are treated will result in better relationships and more effective learning
• real responsibility increases learning opportunities
• people learn more effectively when they work together in a collaborative fashion
• people's social and emotional learning is enhanced when they learn together (Hayes et al 1988).

Added to these assumptions is the idea that people will share their learning if they feel the organisation will respond appropriately. This has implications for leadership and management styles.

Successful organisational learning stresses, as I do, a wider perspective than the cognitive. Handy (1994) underscores the importance of applying a portfolio of intelligences. Kingsland (1986) suggests a combination of cognitive, affective and behavioural activity

for innovation and learning, using the overlapping sets of 'Feel, Think, and Do'. This has important implications for encouraging multi-dimensional learning at the organisational level where people may be resistant to alternative ways of working. Again, this has implications for leadership.

Argyris and Schön (1974) highlight social obstacles to learning in organisational settings. They argue that the most common theories-in-use guiding interpersonal relationships were based on four values - unilateral control, maximising 'winning' and minimising 'losing', suppression of negative feelings and the pursuit of 'rationality' through the defining of clear objectives - which lead to defensive personal stances, low commitment and avoidance of risk taking. Such behaviour inhibits learning; individuals cover up rather than expose and explore problems. This links with the inhibitory state of 'defensiveness' and 'defensive teaching' (McNeil 1986) I identified earlier in my research. Organisations often encourage defensiveness, dependence and submisiveness which is in direct opposition to the needs of mature individuals (Argyris 1957). People protect themselves from the pain of appearing uncertain or ignorant, a process which blocks out any new understandings (Senge 1992). Argyris (1990) calls avoidance of learning 'skilled incompetence' in that teams of people may be incredibly proficient at keeping themselves from learning. This needs to be challenged if organisational learning is to be effective.

The learning process

Organisational learning at an individual, group or whole organisational level requires explicit learning - learning from experience (Kolb et al 1991). Handy (1991) and Kingsland (1986) indicate broad learning perspectives which support an holistic cycle for organisational learning. Day to day work practice needs to include structured reflection as this stresses the importance of explicit individual reflection for learning, and developing new understanding to bring about change within organisations (Hawkins 1991; Henson 1991; Nevard 1991). The practice of reflection and exploring ideas is as important for organisational learning as it is for individual learning.

Associated with successful organisational learning has been the process of organisation review, double loop learning and reviewing organisational goals (Morgan 1986):

> 'Double loop learning depends on being able to take a "double look" at the situation ... : the process of sensing, scanning and monitoring the environment; the comparison of this information against operating norms; the process of questioning whether operating norms are appropriate; the process of initiating appropriate action' (p88).

The ability to achieve proficiency at double loop learning proves elusive; some organisations are successful in institutionalising systems of review that challenge basic norms and operating procedures by encouraging ongoing debate while many fail to do so (Morgan 1986). This may be because of bureaucratic procedures and accountability, defensiveness and the gap between what people say and what they do: 'espoused theory' (Argyris and Schön 1974); and diversionary behaviour (Morgan 1986).

Many of these resistances could be overcome if there were systems of review and processes of learning which become established within the workplace. I believe the model I identified in chapter five for helping individuals learn about learning, action research and meta-learning could be applied to organisational learning. Just as my model incorporated an explicit focus on individual learning, the applied model could incorporate an explicit focus on organisational learning:

• Stage one: talking about learning. For example, what do we understand about organisational learning. This is a conceptual not a reflexive stage. This stage would be appropriate for building a vocabulary for organisational learning and developing conceptual awareness of such ideas as mental models, systems thinking (Senge 1992) and metaphors of organisation (Morgan 1986).

• Stage two: using the action learning cycle to learn about processes and structures within the organisation. During this stage team and organisational learning could be reviewed. Here visions could be shared and mental models built (Senge 1992), for example, to focus on the organisation's review meetings. The team's vision of effective reviews could be identified and compared with how they are structured at present. This could be followed by decisions about how present practice could be improved. The cycle could continue to incorporate an analysis of trends and patterns across the whole organisation.

• Stage three: learning about learning. For example, identifying how the organisation approaches learning and strategies for change. Here power structures could be identified in blocking learning and change (Jones and Hendry 1992), for example, are people open or defensive in meetings and what is it about the organisational structures and processes which encourages this?

Action research could occur at any time within these stages and itself contribute towards meta-learning. Instead of action research arising from a concern to change individual practice, the focus for action research would be a concern to change practice at organisational level. For example, action research could focus on how external pressures can be managed, how learning can be prioritised over performance, how the organisation can promote organisational learning.

The learning context - internal and external

Successful organisational learning attends to the internal context as well as the external environment (Hayes et al 1995). For example, Little and McLaughlin (1993) highlight the importance of context in that locally shared interpretations of practice triumph over abstract principles. The ability to think across and beyond the boundary of the organisation, Senge (1992) says, is the important difference between segmented initiatives which may not be as effective as an holistic approach.

I have indicated earlier that work-embedded learning, may be more effective in bringing about learning and change than others forms of professional development. To make work-embedded learning effective the internal learning context needs to:
a) demonstrate the will to manage change and the capability to do so
b) improve its performance on a continuous basis; everybody is expected to add value, and is supported in so doing
c) value, recognise and reward a general learning culture (Garratt 1987; Hayes et al 1995). This suggests the development of a professional learning community where all members of the organisation are in a process of review, reflection and improvement (Louis and Kruse 1995).

External pressures have potential positive and negative effects on the organisation's ability to change and learn. For example, as I found in my earlier research an appropriate balance between support and pressure can enhance learning and change. However, political pressures on schools, mechanistic, institutionalised patterns of organisation and the view of teachers as technicians, limit organisational learning (Rait 1995). There is a vital difference between change and learning. Organisations and teachers are changing all the time, but they may not be learning. To make change an effective experience for learning, those who are involved need to feel a sense of ownership and commitment. As Casey (1993) suggests, change:

> '... if it comes from within feels good, if it is imposed from outside it can feel like a threat, because it is unknown and outside one's control. It should be no surprise that people (and organisations) are defensive in the face of perceived threat ... it is not the change we resist, it is the threat that fills us with fear' (p89).

The threat that causes fear can be managed if positive action is taken for change and learning, including an acknowledgement of how feelings can inhibit learning.

Throughout my study I have emphasised the importance of developing collaborative learning contexts. At the level of the whole organisation, collaboration is significant in bringing about change through action research. Collaboration is also found to be significant between organisations when, for example, it is used to subvert central government pressure for educational organisations to compete against each other as a means of raising educational standards (Hall and Wallace 1993).

Implications for leadership and management

Those in leadership and management positions have an important role in developing organisational learning. There are several key roles for leaders in creating a context in which learning is encouraged. I focus on two which I believe to be the most important: building a commitment to learning and adopting a management style which is conducive to learning.

The role of leaders is to build a commitment to learning (Ulich et al 1994). Part of the strategy to generate ideas which make an impact on learning include: making learning visible; measuring and tracking learning; generating ideas through experimentation and boundary spanning; sharing values; promoting people known as learners; creating a setting which encourages learning (Ulich et al 1994). An inspiring idea is presented by Barth (1990) who suggests the head teacher adopts the title 'head learner' to indicate commitment to learning. If heads ask "What do we learn?" from every policy and action taken, they are likely to find the majority of policies and procedures are redundant (Barth 1990). This form of questioning gives learning a high priority. Others highlight the need to make learning explicit in order to help create a learning society. By repeatedly asking "What did you learn today?" Barber (1996) suggests raises the priority society gives to learning. Rather, it might be more helpful to ask "What are you noticing about your learning?" which focuses on the process of learning rather than the product. Making learning about learning explicit is a key role for leaders.

The requirements of management in a changing context are similar to the processes of learning (Leesem 1991). This indicates that management philosophy needs to be underpinned by learning principles. Working with staff collaboratively 'instead of imposing changes managerially upon them' (Hargreaves 1997) creates a learning context. Collaboration is non-hierarchical, encourages openness and discourages defensiveness. In a non-hierarchical context managers reward people who enquire into complex issues rather than those who excel in advocating their views (Senge 1992).

Leaders who are building a commitment to learning need to acknowledge and make explicit the complex relationship between learning and the organisational context. This has implications for leadership style. Emphasising complexity risks giving an impression of chaos (Little and McLaughlin 1993). There is a danger for leaders in that a view of 'chaotic complexity' feeds the emphasis towards a management style of social control and regulation, the antithesis of what is required in a learning organisation. However, Little and McLaughlin (1993) emphasise that complexity is 'patterned' rather than 'chaotic' and is inevitable. This view of 'patterned complexity' feeds the emphasis towards a management style that is unfamiliar and unpractised. It demands risk taking, an open approach, flexibility and acquiring new skills. This fits with the assertion that learning comes from welcoming change, rather than trying to control or avoid it, and from thinking of new ways of approaching the unfamiliar; developing 'mindsets which can help us manage the unknowable' (Stacey 1992). Such a style of management reinforces the view that leaders are learners alongside other colleagues; learning is shared and risks are taken. Leaders are prepared to acknowledge their mistakes rather than be defensive and encourage this approach in others. Leaders question and challenge, and encourage others to do the same in a supportive, non-competitive way. There is time built in to all meetings for private structured reflection followed by open discussion about learning to ensure that opportunities for learning are not missed.

3. Staff development in a learning organisation

To illustrate how the principles of organisational learning can be applied in practice, I draw on aspects of the development work I have carried out in my own organisation in my role as academic staff development facilitator.

Effective organisational learning depends on a wide range of structural, cultural and leadership factors; ultimately the capacity for learning and adaptation must be embedded in every aspect of organisational practice. Staff development contributes to organisational learning alongside programme and organisational development. An organisation cannot be transformed by a single intervention. Staff development alone cannot transform, nor create a learning organisation. However, the philosophy on which it is based, the way in which it is conceptualised, the way in which it is integrated with other structures and systems, the way in which it is valued and resourced, and the way it utilises its own resources, provides an indication of the organisation's approach to learning.

3.1 Staff development and organisational learning

Three staff development perspectives have been identified by Fullan (1992): as a strategy for implementation, as an innovation and as organisational development. Fullan suggests the first two perspectives are useful for certain limited purposes, but only the third makes continuous staff development and improvement a way of life. Staff development is a central strategy for improvement, 'but it is frequently separated from the institutional and personal contexts in which it operates' (Fullan 1992 p97). The perspective of staff development for organisational learning which I wish to develop, has similarities with Fullan's third perspective - increasing capacities and performance for continuous improvements, but is different in that it focuses on learning rather than performance, at individual, group and organisational levels. Staff development needs to be integrated into existing practices, for example, within cycles of review and planning, to exploit the opportunities for learning at every level as 'the culture of an organisation is too strong to be influenced for any length of time (or at all in some cases) by single, passing projects - no matter how well designed' (Fullan 1992 p104).

Factors effecting approaches to staff development depend on, for example, the educational philosophy of the organisation, its history and culture. I view staff development as an organisational system to encourage professional learning through processes contributing to:

• whole organisational meta-learning, scanning, monitoring and reviewing goals
• group learning through planned experiences, initiated by the group to match needs
• individual learning through planned experiences, identified by individuals to match needs, including planned structured activities of various kinds in various locations, work embedded, centrally or locally organised.

This underscores an approach which sees learning as a continuous process, integrated with people's everyday work. In a learning organisation ' ... training and personal development are an integral part of the organisation and where learning is a continuous process rather than a bolt-on activity at various stages in the individual's career' (Jones and Hendry 1994 p155). I wanted to avoid an emphasis on central training programmes which tend to be prescriptive. Central programmes define acceptable learning as that which ' ... supports the organisation's structure and how people should act within it' (Jones and Hendry 1994 p158). Such training programmes do not transform organisations. Wider forms of learning need to be encouraged, channelled more directly and effectively into organisational processes. There are layers of learning; learning at the individual, group and organisational level (see table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Some examples of current staff development practices which support organisational learning

Level	Practices encouraging learning in my own organisation
Collaborative approaches for individual learning which contribute to organisational learning	• **Action research for individual learning** For example, lecturers meet on a regular basis to investigate their teaching. The emphasis is on personal learning and change to individual practice. As part of the investigation the organisational context is explored. The group makes recommendations to managers of the organisation about changes in structures which will facilitate more effective teaching and learning. • **Central programmes** Role development: for example, 'research supervision'. These provide opportunities to share expertise and raise organisational issues which are fed back to the management team. Personal development: for example, 'communication and counselling skills'; 'balancing your life and avoiding burnout' including exercises to identify organisational constraints.
Group, sub-group and cross group	• **Support networks on specific issues** For example, ongoing PhD support groups; other support groups set up to extend learning from central courses, for example, women's management courses; support networks set up to establish working practices of particular roles, for example, staff development correspondents. These networks operate on both face to face levels and by electronic mail: discussion groups run using the facilities of the Internet. A process of tracking, monitoring and review is carried out. • **Specific task groups** Appraisal workshop teams, composed of lecturing, research and support staff who work with academic groups and support departments to re-introduce the appraisal scheme. • **Staff development embedded in the workplace** For example, sub-groups are formed for collaborative writing projects and skills swapping occasions. • **Group staff development programmes** For example, 'away days' to review and plan actions for change and learning.
Organisational learning	• **Action research for organisational learning** For example, an action research group exploring the effectiveness of staff development practices. This is led by a department head, who runs a discussion group on the Internet. The emphasis of this work is on organisational learning. Regular feedback is given to the staff development facilitators who use the information as part of the review process. • **Reviews** For example, data collected by staff development facilitators is analysed and presented to the organisation's staff development committee. Recommendations from the committee are presented to the management group.

The central themes in these practices are involvement; collaboration; empowerment; individual, group and organisational responsibility. These principles are based on the assumptions that learning is happening at all levels as well as learning feeding into all levels, where everyone has a staff development entitlement and is expected to participate.

3.2 My role as a staff development facilitator

My main goal as a staff development facilitator was to encourage strong collaborative cultures for organisational learning, as my research with teachers demonstrated the value of collaboration and work-embedded learning opportunities. I wanted to encourage the view of the organisation as a place for collegial learning (Little 1982; Rosenholtz 1991), attending to structures to help people make connections, and designing tasks to increase capacity and opportunities for learning; an approach which spreads learning across the entire organisation (Hargreaves 1997).

I saw my role as an agent of change. My previous experience and research findings indicated such a role was complex and difficult; planned educational change does not often work. I found it useful to relate such change to the metaphors discussed earlier. Mechanistic and bureaucratic strategies alone may fail, as organismic and cultural aspects of change will be under-emphasised, political positions will be overlooked as a source of conflict, and people's feelings and emotional responses to change will be ignored.

If change is seen as a process, not an event (Fullan 1991) each stage of the change process can provide the opportunity for the organisation to learn about itself. This becomes a cycle of development. I saw my role in encouraging learning at different levels and at different stages of the process.

I wanted to use action research and meta-learning processes in order to understand the organisation as a context for learning and staff development. This would extend and inform my staff development role and bring about changes to my professional practice. I wanted to ensure my own practice as a staff development facilitator was congruent with the principles I had identified for organisational learning. To this end I drew up an aide memoire (see table 6.3), drawing on Bolam (1986); Fullan (1991; 1993); Oldroyd and Hall (1991); Lippett et al (1958); Morgan (1986); Schmuck et al (1977). This table is presented in three sections: the organisational context; the learning and change process; the role of agent for learning and change.

Table 6.3   An aide memoire for a staff development facilitator

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The organisational context

- have organisational learning as the goal; understand the difference between organisational culture change, and the implementation of single innovations

- start where the system is; recognise the importance of multiple perspectives for analysing the organisation; use organisational metaphors

- understand and recognise different political strategies; avoid subversive factionalism, coercion and positional power

- attend to individual people's feelings and different group cultures

- build flexible, dynamic, matrices, and exploit different forms of inter-organisational relationships

- fight for resources; encourage the organisation to make a public commitment though resourcing; keep resourcing issues public; use resources to back value decisions and strategic action

- be aware of the changing external environment; predict the implications for the organisation

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The learning and change process

- recognise and guide different phases of the change process; initiation, implementation, continuation and outcome, and highlight organisational learning opportunities at each phase

- value the individual, the group and the organisation in the learning process; apply meta-learning processes

- ensure change strategies are congruent with the values of the organisation

- do not expect change to happen quickly; it may be years between initiation and institutionalisation; implementation happens developmentally

- analyse the forces in the organisation which have positive and inhibitory influences on learning and change; recognise insoluble problems and do not waste energy on them

- be aware of feelings and different levels of disturbance provoked by change; do not assume everyone will change

- encourage mutual adaptation in which groups and individuals develop changes; recognise the needs of different groups; encourage involvement and responsibility

- support strategies for change with practical work-embedded experiences and collaborative learning events; integrate these within existing practices

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The role of agent for learning and change

• analyse own standpoint and values; do not assume you are implementing your own view; exchange your reality with others

• have a vision and evolutionary plan but do not be blinkered; be prepared to learn and unlearn

• develop a theoretical perspective to inform practice

• analyse action; carry out regular reviews; get feedback from others; take time to reflect on what is being learned; make learning explicit

• take risks; see disappointments as positive opportunities for learning; make decisions for action using intuition, knowledge, and political awareness

• choose appropriate ways of working with others which are congruent with own values; recognise the need for support; work collaboratively with others in the organisation; share ideas; seek public commitment of managers

• build resources; set up support networks; find and work with reliable people who are committed and enthusiastic; establish and maintain helpful relationships; build for success; often celebrate with others, and praise others for their contributions

• manage how you would like to be managed, based on principles that are congruent with the work; make decisions based on values; anticipate and welcome conflict; use it to challenge your perspective and strengthen arguments

• work on different aspects at different levels; kindle interest in different areas

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3.3 Appraisal - a case in point

I have selected the re-introduction of the appraisal scheme to illustrate the inter-connections of individual, group and organisational learning for the following reasons:

• the re-introduction of appraisal has been the single most problematic issue on the staff development agenda, since my appointment to the staff development role

• strong feelings and concerns emerged, associated with the history of previous experiences

• in the appraisal task group, which was set up to re-introduce a new appraisal scheme, a wide range of views were expressed, reflecting fundamental issues on different approaches to staff development and attitudes to organisational management; divisions emerged

• the mechanistic view dominated meetings and planning sessions. Bureaucratic styles dominated the preparation of the documentation.

Appraisal is the one process which affects every member of staff in the organisation; each has a role either as appraiser or appraisee. Some staff have both roles. Everyone has a stake and therefore it is most important that concerns around appraisal are:

a) recognised
b) given a pivotal place in the organisation's future development plans, and
c) tackled with enthusiasm and commitment at all levels.

At the organisational level, appraisal outcomes can reveal overall professional learning patterns; this may include circumstances which help or hinder learning and management procedures which indicate the value placed on staff members' professional learning. Professional learning can be systematically encouraged through the appraisal process, it can be transparently accountable, and can not only record but stimulate organisational learning.

Re-introducing the appraisal scheme

The principles and values which I had identified as important to inform the re-introduction of the appraisal scheme were similar to those for other aspects of staff development:

• an organismic approach - loose boundaries - on-going, developmental; linked with existing planning cycles; helping make connections, designing tasks to increase capacity and opportunities for learning

• a focus on organisational, group and individual learning; encouraging impact on all levels, increasing the organisation's ability to learn; spreading learning across the entire organisation

• mutual adaptation. For example, arranging workshops in support groups or academic departments so that the programme, timing, duration and activities meet the needs of the group; a flexible approach in which the group contributes to decisions about the appraisal process and future direction; involves the head of group in discussions about taking the appraisal process forward

• individual responsibility and control; the appraisees choose their appraiser; appraisees set the agenda; appraisers act as a learning facilitator, rather than as manager

• responsibility for professional learning is placed on individuals; the appraisal interview is seen as a conversation which is challenging, supportive and forward looking. This necessitates preparation and follow-up - producing the outcomes of the conversation together

• the focus is on personal-professional learning; individual learning to enable decisions for change, avoiding at one extreme appraisal as therapy or at the other a focus on performance. The appraisee is in a learning role; the appraiser's role is facilitative and enabling. This approach attempts to 'enrich conceptual understanding by improving the quality of dialogue and reflection' (Sanger 1996 p192)

• a move towards openness. For example, no differentiation is made in workshops between appraisers and appraisees in an attempt to combat power imbalance - there is no hidden agenda; in the process there is parity in the principles and procedures for all participants, including managers, lecturers, researchers, support staff, and whether on full or part time, fixed or short-term contracts

• the recognition of pluralism in building teams of tutors. For example, using in-house expertise of all categories of staff. This emphasises a non-hierarchical approach, where support staff facilitate workshops on an equal basis with academics.

I saw part of my role in monitoring these principles and values in practice through learning reviews which I introduced at every meeting or workshop. Such discussions were valuable in making the values and principles explicit.

The reintroduction of the appraisal process has potential impacts - causing disturbance at all levels of the organisation. From the documentation (Institute of Education 1997) I have identified the levels of expected involvement (see table 6.4).

The major differences from previous schemes for the organisation are that appraisers and appraisees attend workshops together; the emphasis is on learning rather than performance; workshops occur in groups and departments and are planned specifically for the group in collaboration with the head of group.

4. Tracking an organisational learning process

As part of my action research I tracked the re-introduction of the appraisal scheme to develop my understanding of organisational learning. I focus on three areas, which highlight significant issues. These include reflecting on my own experience of the appraisal interview, analysing the perspectives of staff to assess the potential impact of appraisal in groups and departments, and identifying factors which enhance or inhibit learning.

Table 6.4   Levels of expected involvement indicated in the appraisal documentation

Level	Change attempt: Reintroduction of the appraisal scheme
At individual level	Every single member of the organisation is effected by the change. Either as appraiser or appraisee, or both, staff members are expected to: • become familiar with the principles, objectives and procedures • take part in the workshop programme • arrange, prepare and take part in the appraisal interview • take responsibility for their own learning • prepare the outcome record and action sheet • take follow up action
At group level	Every academic group, and support department is effected by the change. Each group and department: • arranges and modifies the group/department workshop programme to match its culture and organisational structures • matches appraisees with appraisers • analyses the individual records and action sheets • prepares appropriate group/department follow up • uses data to inform group/department staff development provision • uses data to inform development plans
At organisational level	On behalf of the organisation the staff development committee and the personnel department: • analyses group records and action sheets • provides an appeal process • uses data from group/department development plans to inform the management group • monitors and evaluates the process and brings about change to procedures • uses data to inform central staff development provision • provides an overall report of learning at the organisational level

4.1 Learning from my own appraisal

Taking part in my own appraisal was an experimental process designed to help me trial the revised documentation prepared by the appraisal task group (of which I was a member), and for the Head of Group to explore the reintroduction of the scheme in our academic group. The appraisal conversation focused on learning. The broad prompts, identified by the Head of Group, included:

• Tell me about your profile of activity. What have you been learning about that?

• In each element of your profile, what have you been learning: about yourself, about the content and context, about your effectiveness as a learner?

• Have you been involved in active, collaborative, responsible, meta-learning occasions?

• What do you want to develop in / about your learning?

• In what ways may the context help / hinder?

These prompts which focused explicitly on aspects of my learning were particularly challenging. I was encouraged to be specific and give concrete examples to indicate my understanding of the complexities of my learning. I was also encouraged to make connections between my learning and the learning context. This inter-relationship was helpful as I could look at my own responsibility for learning and what enhanced or inhibited my learning. My appraiser and I came up with some strategies to overcome the hindering factors and to enhance the positive factors. This process took on elements of the force field analysis exercise (Lewin 1947) which I have found helpful elsewhere.

Through the appraisal process, with its specific focus on the context, my awareness was heightened of the effects of the changing context in which my learning was taking place. I became aware of the new skills and knowledge that I was acquiring as a result of my changing roles. My new roles had come about because of the changes within the organisation and from wider social and political changes external to the organisation. These changes had important effects on my roles within the organisation and had led to risk taking and decisions for change which increased my learning. My widening repertoire of skills was also addressed, including a greater understanding of my role within the organisation, my increased effectiveness in my ability to identify important priorities for my work in the organisation.

I welcomed the opportunity to talk about my own learning and changes to practice. I drew on the understanding that I had developed for the work on the M.A. module (see chapter five), my extended vocabulary and new insights and understandings about learning. I was encouraged to take risks in the conversation and examine issues on a personal and professional basis. On reflection I could see that this form of appraisal with its focus on learning was congruent with my expanded approach to professional development. Through the form of questioning it became a meta-learning process in itself. I could see its potential for further development as part of an action research spiral.

4.2 Staff perspectives of appraisal

From my own appraisal I became more aware of different aspects of the metaphors operating, particularly the organism and brain metaphor. I was also aware of the shift from the mechanistic 'machine' view. In my development role I saw the importance of encouraging a shift from a mechanistic (machine) approach to appraisal, to one that incorporated aspects of the changing environment (organism) and developing understanding, learning and actions for change (brain), and the interconnection between the context and learning. I created three approaches to appraisal in the form of thumb nail sketches (see table 6.5) which I wanted to use with colleagues to trigger discussion.

Table 6.5 Three perspectives on appraisal

> **Approach A: (Machine)**
> The function of appraisal is to assess how well individual's skills and performance meet required standards, and to help them do their work efficiently
> The appraisee is seen as playing a clearly defined role in the functioning of the whole organisation
> The outcomes will be improvements in individual's performance to make the organisation more efficient
> Plans to achieve the desired outcomes include individual target setting, the identification of skills training and competencies; setting up management structures for action

> **Approach B: (Organism)**
> The function of appraisal is to identify what has helped or hindered individual development; to develop understanding about how the organisation is adapting to changing environments
> The appraisee is seen as evolving and changing in relation to the changing organisation
> The outcomes will be new initiatives, new contributions, new responsibilities, new roles and opportunities, experimentation, new risks
> Plans to achieve the desired outcomes include identification of joint initiatives, new work groupings, identification of healthy factors in groups and across the organisation, new partnerships with others, inside and outside the organisation

> **Approach C: (Brain)**
> The function of appraisal is to look at individual, group and organisational learning and to find opportunities for individuals and groups to extend their growth and development
> The appraisee is seen as contributing to the learning of the organisation, by informing the organisation about what has helped and what has hindered learning
> The outcomes will be new opportunities for learning; reframing issues and problems; to find out if there has been increased complexity of work for individuals and if goals been appropriate
> Plans to achieve the desired outcomes include strategic management designed to further facilitate learning about learning at all levels: individual, group and organisation

I planned to use these perspectives for the next stage of my research. The aim of the investigation was to understand staff perspectives, identify forces for change and chart constraints. One of my goals was to overcome the cynicism attached to previous practice, by encouraging flexibility, experimentation and involvement; ensuring the workshops would be congruent with the philosophy and principles of the staff development programme; that workshops would provide the opportunity to air anxieties and feelings; and to accommodate aspects of the organisation that had moved on since the previous appraisal scheme.

The investigation was carried out with 'staff development correspondents'. When I became the staff development facilitator I resurrected this role; each academic group and support department had a named correspondent who distributed staff development information, but I hoped correspondents would be proactive in future. I worked with the correspondents and engaged them in my action research. The responsibilities of this role were drawn up by the correspondents at our first meeting. These included supporting staff development initiatives in their groups/departments (including appraisal), raising staff development items on the agenda at meetings, disseminating information, liaising between the staff development facilitators and their groups and providing feedback to the staff development facilitators. The correspondents played a crucial role in getting staff development issues on

the agenda at group and department meetings, identifying group needs, and planning group development events.

In all other phases of my research I explore aspects of my practice with the groups I am working with at the time. The investigation on appraisal and organisational learning was carried out with staff development correspondents during the summer term 1997 in the regular termly workshops. The purposes were to: identify the range of feelings within the organisation about appraisal; identify views about the purpose of appraisal; to consider different responses to the different perspectives of appraisal. This would inform the planning of the appraisal workshops. Thirty staff development correspondents took part.

The research centred on participatory exercises and was conducted in three stages:

Stage one - an introductory exercise in which individuals listed two words that came to mind to describe their feelings about appraisal

Stage two - to complete the sentence "What do you think are the expected outcomes of appraisal for individuals, groups and the organisation ... "

Stage three - to consider three different perspectives of appraisal. Each person considered the three perspectives, based on the three metaphors, and were asked to identify the one which was:

- most like your experience of appraisal
- most like your ideal view
- most like how appraisal will be in future
- most like your group/department's view.

An analysis of the data

Stage one - words describing feelings about appraisal

I grouped the 58 words given into three categories - positive, negative and neutral or questioning (see table 6.6). I was interested in considering the range of feelings as I believe subjective meanings are crucial to understand how an organisation operates: 'Since organisation ultimately resides in the heads of the people involved, effective organisational change implies cultural change' (Morgan 1986 p138). Given that half the words were negative it was interesting that the analysis of the purposes of appraisal at individual, group and organisational level were all positive (see table 6.7).

Table 6.6 Feelings about appraisal

Positive sounding words about appraisal (17)	Negative sounding words about appraisal (29)
• valuable (3) • positive (2) • purposeful (2) • useful (2) • necessary (2) • very necessary indeed • hope • beneficial, if carefully handled • essential • excellent principle • great - let's get on with it **Neutral or questioning (12)** • time consuming (7) • anticipation • ambiguous • ambivalence • is time spent on it worthwhile? • who is listening across the board and monitoring?	• waste of time (2) • extra unrewarded work (2) • too complex (2) • chivvying • a wasted opportunity • apathy • unsatisfactory • not effective • shame so many are sceptical • antagonistic • hassle • boring • long winded procedure • sceptical • low expectations • outcomes not dealt with adequately • limited outcomes for individuals • deja-vu • irrelevant • fear - your job is being looked at • threatened • awkward • frustration - let's get on with it • little more than lip service • critical • concern

Stage two - Expected outcomes

Table 6.7   Summary of responses on the purposes of appraisal

Level	Comments - typical examples
Expected outcomes of appraisal for individuals	• Stop - get off treadmill; evaluate where you are now; evaluate where you would like to be (both realistically and unrealistically); see how to get there within work framework • Recognition of contribution; identification of career paths; making explicit those feelings which may not be apparent • Opportunity to receive additional training/support and opportunity for more responsibility • Opportunity for employee and employer to look at job, ways of improving what you do, improving skills. It should be a two-way process and should cover your needs, aims etc. and identify problems
Expected outcomes of appraisal for groups	• A more efficient group, with greater job satisfaction • More effective work, job satisfaction; better teams; improved climate among the group • For head of group to know, systematically, what each member is planning (often unexpected). Better able to cross fertilise; also able to afford an occasion to encourage (lean on) those who are underachieving • Improved coherent strategic planning; team working; possible re-defining roles • Identify common needs and strengths across the group, including unused potential; examining aspects of the group's functioning which promote/inhibit development
Expected outcomes of appraisal for the organisation	•A more aware, active (not frenetic) work force • Enhancement of commitment and capabilities of individual staff and whole department which in turn benefits Institute as a whole • Better performance on the whole and service the community well • Shared understandings, leading to clearer sense of direction; relationship between individual, group and Institute • Inform staff development procedures; identifying helping /hindering factors • Higher productivity/effectiveness/skills. Changing organisation able to cope with external change/market place

Stage three - perspectives on appraisal

It appeared that for the majority of people, previous experiences of appraisal most resembled the 'machine' metaphor (see table 6.8). Twenty-one individuals identified the 'machine' metaphor; five mentioned the 'organism' metaphor; two the 'brain' metaphor, and one identified a combination of the metaphors 'organism' and 'brain'. This contrasted

to the ideal view. Two identified the 'machine' metaphor; 11 the 'organism' metaphor; 13 the 'brain' metaphor, and three identified a combination of the metaphors 'organism' and 'brain'.

Table 6.8   Staff perspectives on appraisal

	Machine A	Organism B	Brain C	Joint	Don't know	Total response
Most like my previous experiences of appraisal	21	5	2	B/C 1	1	30
Most like my ideal view of appraisal	2	11	13	B/C 3	1	30
Most like how I think appraisal will be in future	9	8	6	A/B 1	6	30
Most like my department's or group's view	10	6	4	A/B 2	8	30

What I found most interesting from this stage of the exercise was the identification of future appraisals. Although only two people identified the 'machine' metaphor as their ideal view, nine thought this was how it would be in future; eight identified the 'organism' metaphor, and six identified the 'brain' metaphor for future experiences. One identified a combination of the metaphors 'machine' and 'organism'. Interpretations could be that individuals do not think they have sufficient control of the agenda, the documentation dominates the process or because of the prevailing culture of their group or department. Ten people thought the 'machine' metaphor was most like their group/department's view; six the 'organism' metaphor; four the 'brain' metaphor and two identified a combination of 'machine' and 'organism'.

Following the workshop I sent my analysis to the correspondents. At the next workshop we focused on some of the emergent issues. We discussed the implications for the appraisal workshops which would be organised for each group and department. Priorities for the workshops were identified including how a more positive view of appraisal could be generated. Three different reactions emerged representing different views about learning. The suggestions were: a) to ignore participants previous experiences and tell them that appraisals in future would be different, b) for the workshop facilitator to ask participants to write down their previous experiences but not allow negative feelings to be aired and c) to acknowledge participants' experiences and feelings and encourage discussion on how positive outcomes at individual, group and organisational levels could be realistically achieved. My approach to learning matched the third view.

There were also discussions about how to ensure the agenda is in the control of the appraisee so that the appraisal experience would match the appraisee's ideal view, how to focus on learning and actions for change and how to cut down on needless bureaucracy. An appraisal working group had been set up to produce the documentation. This group continued to work together to identify a structured, but flexible format for the workshops, addressing the issues that had been identified by the staff development corespondents.

4.3 Identifying organisational factors which enhance or inhibit learning

The tracking process included monitoring the appraisal workshops. I facilitated ten academic group and support department workshops (which were either a day in length, or two half day sessions). Following these occasions I worked with the different colleagues who had co-facilitated the workshop, to identify factors which enhanced and inhibited learning. We discussed the participants' responses, analysed their evaluation forms and talked informally to staff after the workshops. There were also two review meetings of the appraisal working group where our experiences were discussed and where we reviewed the analysis of the evaluations.

There were a number of significant factors which enhanced or inhibited learning. For example the approach taken by the head of group or department, the culture of the group, and the group's cohesion in terms of its goals, staff contracts and working conditions.

The head of group or department often played a significant role in the effectiveness of the workshop. The way in which the head of group or department enhanced learning was evidenced by public commitment before, during and after the workshops; co-facilitating or taking some active role in the workshops; helping in making the exercises relevant to the group context; providing a balance between clear leadership and a willingness to take risks and try new approaches; demonstrating a non-hierarchical approach by, for example, listening to group members and taking their views into account; explaining how the appraisal process would fit into the group's ongoing structures and procedures; welcoming the group members to the workshops and being present and involved throughout the workshop.

Alternatively, heads of group's or department's hierarchical approaches created an atmosphere which did not allow open discussion, free expression of ideas, choices or risks. Dependency seemed to be generated by an hierarchical structure: 'Dependency is an inexorable conditioning factor in all hierarchies. Staff, both managers used to wielding authority and subordinates used to receiving it, can find this type of democracy very unappealing' (Sanger 1996 p186).

The dependency I observed was in individual's reluctance to take responsibility for learning; wanting an 'off-the-peg' approach rather than take responsibility for constructing their own - "Why can't we use another university's scheme?"; a perception that appraisal is something that is done to me - "Why ask me for my agenda - I don't have one"; misgivings about choosing one's own appraiser - "I'm sure my line manager knows best" and seeking reassurance - "I want feedback from my line manager about how well I'm doing."

Hierarchical management practices appeared to contradict some principles of organisational learning. These included an emphasis on performance or under performance, avoiding conflict and expressions of emotion in favour of power games and micro-politicking; valuing hierarchy over autonomy; a bureaucratic view. One example was that senior managers were prepared for the personnel department to analyse the appraisal scheme quantitatively rather than qualitatively. This would result in data which could be analysed in terms of how many individuals had been appraised rather than what could be learned about the organisation as a learning context. Hierarchical management principles gave rise to a suspicion by colleagues that appraisal is an exploitative management tool used to motivate reluctant staff - "If this is something that has come from management, I want nothing to do with it."

By tracking the reintroduction of appraisal through the action research process I became aware of the significance of leadership issues. I have developed Bunning's list (1992, cited in Zuber-Skerritt 1996) to include aspects which I feel are particularly pertinent:

• the degree of courage and vision of the leader
• understanding the process of empowering people, believing in it and actually doing it
• knowing how to design and manage change
• knowing how individuals learn
• designing learning cycles for individuals, sub-groups and the whole group
• valuing learning and growth in the medium term, over pain avoidance, traditional benefit and ego, in the short term
• understanding that what you have taken on is not limited to organisational learning, but a new way of life. The goal is never to be the same again.

Related to these leadership issues and the success of innovation is the organisational culture of the group. I have selected from, and applied Zuber-Skerritt's summary (1996), to the necessary conditions within the academic group to facilitate organisational learning:

• more receptivity to new ideas
• faster approval, less bureaucracy
• more collaboration
• appropriate praise and recognition
• acceptance that change is always happening; we should always be prepared for it
• open circulation of information
• the attitude that we are always learning.

These leadership and group issues are significant for developing a culture which encourages learning. For example, the way in which professional learning can be systematically encouraged and stimulated through appraisal was unfolding within my academic group. This highlighted aspects of the importance of group culture. The group was newly established and in its formation the group members discussed the importance of the name including the term 'effective learning'. It was therefore not surprising that the way the group approached appraisal was through continuous reflection and action. Time was devoted to a review of the appraisal process at each following group meeting. Peer appraisal was adopted. Pairs of appraisers and appraisees, reported back on their experiences; the group examined what was enhancing the process and what was blocking it. The process was continuous; the group was learning at each stage about what helped and hindered the learning process. Rather than seeing appraisal as a one-off exercise, the group was developing a continuous learning cycle. There was no coercion as decisions were made collectively. Insights emerged about individual, group and organisational learning. This approach contrasted with the culture in other groups where, for example, there is a high staff turnover, the majority of staff are on short-term research contracts, there are external pressures to complete projects and research reports and the focus is on product rather than process.

My experience of working with a number of support departments and academic groups highlights the importance of language to enhance learning. I was sensitive of the use of terms such as 'education' rather than 'training'; about 'teaching' rather than 'delivering', and 'workshops' as opposed to 'training sessions'. The language of learning and leadership is important to develop rather than the language of teaching or management, as this effects how individuals perceive and respond to the experience. The language of a learning organisation needs to be congruent with the underpinning values. These include responsibility for one's own learning, collaboration, trust, and openness. A fundamental shift is required in language use which is not constrained by mechanistic and bureaucratic approaches and does not imply a deficit model. It is a language of learning.

Although the appraisal task group was convened to cut down on the mindless and unquestioning bureaucracy, it was striking to observe resistance in making major changes to the previous scheme, especially the documentation. The 'machine' view of the world means that there is difficulty in adapting to changed and changing circumstances of the organisation. There were attempts to treat the scheme as straightforward by ignoring changes in the environment, and to introduce an inflexible scheme and training policies, which pay little attention to the different cultures and structures within the groups and departments.

From these observations it seemed that within the appraisal process there may be a danger of overlooking important conflicts between the requirements of learning and self-organisation on the one hand, and the realities of power and control on the other. For example, I was introducing the notion that the appraisee has a choice of appraiser, whereas in some groups or departments this would not work in practice as it contradicted the ethos of the group. My view of the process of learning requires a degree of openness which is not necessarily welcomed by some managers. My view is that in order to support effective learning, appraisal needs to challenge, encourage risk taking and identify blocks or patterns which are keeping the appraisee stuck. This may provoke discomfort, anxiety and a feeling of loss of control. Learning and self-organisation call for a reframing of attitudes that can only be achieved over a long period of time. It is frustrating for agents of change like myself, when attempting to bring about a shift from bureaucratic to learning approaches, as the machine view of the world is so deeply engrained in structures of the organisation. Bureaucratic structures and processes are established to promote hierarchical control and suppress competing interests and values.

In chapter one I presented a powerful set of factors which inhibited change in classrooms and schools. I believe higher education organisations are being subjected to pressures similar to schools which limit organisational learning and change. These internal and external pressures such as funding arrangements, league tables, anxiety about the organisation's public image, constrain individuals and groups. Consequently, I do not take a blaming stance but look to historical and current pressures to understand contextual inhibitors.

5. Organisational learning - emergent issues

Some educational literature suggests to me a view of organisations as entities in which learning is uniform. For example, the use of terms such as 'stuck', 'failing', 'moving', 'succeeding', 'turning schools around' or 'empowered' schools. My experience indicates that this is not the case; one part of an organisation may be very different in its activities and thinking than another, or cohesion in groups may be high or low and independent of organisational learning. This group learning can be evidenced in approaches to tasks, ways in which the group works together, provides feedback to itself and the organisation. It may demonstrate qualities similar to those which individuals portray when they are learning, for example, risk taking, self-reflection, collaboration, welcoming change. Actions are taken on the basis of constructed meaning and shared understandings.

My research leads me to believe that no uniform organisational approach should be enforced, as different parts of the organisation learn and change in different ways and at

different rates; collaboration, rather than coercion, is more likely to be successful. However, a relevant question is posed by Somekh (1993):

> 'Does the collegial model of change, which enables discussion and exploration until individuals are able to reconstruct their routines and incorporate the innovation in their value system, simply take too long? Does it sometimes mean trading vision for compromise beyond the point where any real change occurs at all' (p264).

My positive experience of working within an academic group committed to a collaborative model of change highlights the importance of focusing explicitly on learning. I am coming to understand that this focus on learning can counteract some of the problems Somekh has identified in the above quotation. Through my action research I believe organisational learning can be achieved through an approach which encompasses action learning and action research. This may give the appearance of taking longer than coercive methods, but it is effective for organisational learning.

The rhetoric of learning organisations can often exceed reality; there are difficulties in setting up structures and systems that encourage learning at all levels of the organisation (Senge 1992). Garvin (1993) poses some questions to ensure that the concept of the learning organisation has practical value, including "How will people know when their organisation is learning?" and "What concrete changes in behaviour are required?"

I argue that just as individual learning needs to be explicit, so does organisational learning. This can be achieved through continuous processes of reflection, identification of new insights, constructed meanings and action. Senge (1992) suggests that a number of things change when organisational learning occurs. These include: systematic structures, the mental models that lie behind those structures and the thinking and interacting skills that allow tacit mental models to be surfaced, tested and improved. Again these changes need to be made explicit; structures, models and different forms of thinking and interacting need to be shared, clarified and acted upon. Changes in behaviour are significant. These include working collaboratively, being open, trusting, challenging, taking risks and celebrating success.

6. Research reflections

This section examines the tensions and conflicts that arose for me in my role of researcher attempting to bring about change in my own organisation. In carrying out this research a number of issues emerged. These were to do with the contextual impact on my role, tensions between my development and my research role and issues to do with the nature of action research and organisational change. I also make some general observations about practitioner research and its role in bringing about change.

The contextual impact on my role as researcher

My research and development roles are complementary, dynamic and complex. The research element informed my action through a process of systematic reflection, identification of insights and new learnings. My developing understanding of the importance of context strongly influenced my approach to facilitating change and my choice of research methodology. In my staff development role, rather than determining strategies centrally, I encouraged different approaches to staff development within academic groups. This mirrors Handy and Aitken's ideas (1986) of tailoring innovation to different cultures, and developing support mechanisms which build on the positive aspects of that culture. I believe the uniqueness of each context requires different strategies to take the change through a process of introduction to becoming accepted and developed. I encouraged groups to develop their own strategies in line with their own values and group culture. This approach has similarities with action research which stresses democracy and participant control. This also mirrors Elliott's theory (1991) of enabling change through practitioners' understanding and development of tacit theories and values which underpin their professional action.

Role tensions

The model of change for my research role and my staff development role highlights the importance of developing personal meaning and 'ownership' of change (Fullan 1982; 1990). However, tensions and conflicts arose between my development and research role which made my position difficult. There were multiple attitudes to staff development and appraisal across the organisation, from enthusiastic support through indifference to hostility. Although my development role was not a senior management post, some colleagues viewed staff development as a management tool, and did not want to be associated with it. Others who saw staff development as a process for changing the culture of the organisation, influencing management style and contributing to organisational learning were enthusiastic about playing a part in it.

In carrying out my development role which spanned the whole organisation, I became aware of the differences in perceptions and approaches to leadership and management and the role staff development plays within an organisation. Tensions emerged around conflicting views of leadership and management within the organisation. Some of these tensions were context specific. For example, there were striking differences between the perceptions of leadership and management held by the heads of academic groups and the heads of support departments. Professional autonomy and academic freedom meant less emphasis on line-management in academic groups which contrasted with support

departments' practice. In my research role I was an academic member of staff; with this role came academic autonomy. My academic group provided a supportive culture of collegiality, challenge and learning. In my staff development role I was a member of the support staff; this role was set within a culture of accountability and a strong emphasis on line-management. As the academic staff development facilitator, I was aware of the need for staff development to be congruent with the values and practices of academic life. In my staff development role I was coerced into adopting a coercive approach with others. This put me in a difficult position as it conflicted with my research findings, my values, and the sort of relationships I wanted to develop. I wanted to avoid divisions, hierarchical approaches and coercive strategies which I believe block individual and organisational learning. I wanted the organisation to view internal and external demands as shared problems. In carrying out the staff development role, I wanted to create a view of how best we could react to pressure together, rather than add pressure. I felt I was walking on a tight rope, trying to placate coercive managers while working collaboratively with colleagues. I identified with Bush's (1986) picture of heads of schools: 'sandwiched uncomfortably between the conflicting pressures of bureaucracy and professionalism'.

Some ask if coercion is necessary for organisational change: 'Will-nilly, institutions coerce those who work within them to some extent; it is the unavoidable result of decisions needing to be made on behalf of a large number of people who do not all share the same values and purposes' (Somekh 1993 p262). My view is that it is the people and the culture within organisations that coerce, not the organisation itself. Coercion by individuals or the culture can produce change, but it blocks organisational learning. People become defensive and alienated, the antithesis of openness and involvement which enhances learning. I believe that approaches to organisational change need to be congruent with organisational learning. My emphasis was on supporting staff development experiences embedded within academic groups rather than through central staff development initiatives. Staff development experiences in groups, I believed, would evolve and match the needs of the group. Others saw the purpose of staff development differently and felt initiatives within groups would be difficult to monitor and slow to take off. This suggested a lack of trust. These differences in views was a source of conflict around the pace of change and diversity of approaches.

Practitioner research and organisational change

This study has revealed that the principles embedded within an expanded approach to professional development including learning about learning and action research, can play an important part in organisational learning, bringing about greater understanding of professional practice and actions for change. Action research can encourage organisational change while concurrently facilitating organisational

learning (Zuber-Skerritt 1996). I have also shown that action research can have a positive impact on those aspects of organisational life which effect organisational learning, namely professional relationships, professional openness, types of communication, organisational arrangements and collaborative work.

I learned about the limitations of action research and agree with Burgess-Macey and Rose's (1997) view that action research is not necessarily emancipatory and may not lead to changes in the institutional power structures:

> 'Although working in teams can stimulate a collaborative action research process, it can also act as a brake on one individual having an impact or pursuing a particularly creative idea if the rest of the team do not support it. Professional development then becomes stilted' (Burgess-Macey and Rose 1997).

I was disappointed when the findings from my research were not taken seriously when decisions were made by senior managers. This can be discouraging as it is suggested sustained action research can work towards increasing social justice, providing individuals are given sufficient support. When I took the staff development role I was optimistic about the changes I wanted to make. I believed that using the action research process I would be able to work collaboratively with colleagues to change aspects of the ethos and culture which I believed inhibited organisational learning. In setting out to improve my practice as an agent of change, I saw action research rather as McTaggart (1996) describes, 'a series of commitments to observe and problematise' and, 'a series of principles for conducting social enquiry'. I was expecting the process to be easier than it was.

My research suggests that for researchers who are investigating their own practice within their own organisation, the way they approach the identification of issues needs to acknowledge their unique context and possible conflicts around their role. I believe the questions which arise when carrying out research into one's own practice are different from other forms of research. For other forms of research Guba (1990, cited in Skeggs 1994) suggests three fundamental research questions:

• Ontological questions: what is knowable? These deal with the assumptions one is willing to make about the nature of reality

• Epistemological questions: what is the relationship of the knower to the known? The assumption that one makes about this process depend on how one conceives of reality

• Methodological questions: how do we find things out? How this is answered depends on what decisions have been made about ontology and epistemology. The ways in which these different questions are answered or ignored in the research process will demonstrate the different theoretical positions held by the researcher (p77).

Within action research these questions may not be as appropriate. From my involvement in action research within my organisation I believe other questions are important. I suggest five areas of questioning:

• Focus questions: What is it about my practice that it is important for consideration. What is it that needs to change? Am I the best person to judge my own practice - how can I interact with others who are affected by my practice so they can help me learn /judge my own practice?

• Action questions: How can I improve my practice? How can I bring about the changes I have identified? How can I merge the gap between theory and practice? What strategies do I employ to achieve the goals arising from my focus questions? How can I demystify knowledge and break down the interrelationship between knowledge and power?

• Collegiality questions: How can others help me in the changes? How might there be reciprocity? What effect will my changes have on others? How do I avoid the exploitation of colleagues? How do I involve others in my research? How may my understanding of my role conflict with other's understanding of my role?

• Contextual questions: How is the context in which I am working supporting or inhibiting the changes? How are my changes effecting the context in which I am working? How is my work a catalyst for others' action research? What outside forces define my learning and how should I respond to external pressure? Does it matter what the outside world thinks? How much is my learning shaped by events or other factors beyond my control?

• Meta-learning questions: What am I learning about my own learning? What am I learning about the way in which I respond to change, disappointments and others' reactions? What am I learning about how the context affects my learning? What am I learning about how the context supports and inhibits learning?

Questions also need to be asked about whether action research is achieving the goals identified. Questions for evaluating action research depend on purpose and context. McTaggart (1996) criticises the assumption that emancipation is some ideal state to be achieved and suggests participatory action researchers ask: "Are things better than they were? ... Action researchers must simply ask regularly whether things are a little more

rational (or reasonable), coherent, just, humane and satisfying for participants and others than they were" (p245). I find this helpful as it highlights a genuine attempt to improve things, rather than bring about revolutionary change.

The tensions and conflicts which I experienced in my role as staff development facilitator were specific to my particular context, however, I believe my learning contributes to the role of practitioner research generally. For action research to be effective within an organisational context it needs to be:

• carried out by a group working collaboratively

• initiated from within the organisation to be context specific, with clear and public goals

• supported by a learning facilitator, who is not part of the collaborative group, perhaps an external consultant, who would help the review process using the focus, action, collegiality and contextual questions discussed above. Using this approach action research then becomes a meta-learning process.

Chapter seven

The contribution of this research - transforming professional learning

1. Introduction

This thesis makes a contribution to knowledge in identifying an expanded approach to teachers' professional learning. The creation of my expanded approach evolved from a six year period of research with teachers in a number of different learning settings and in a number of different educational organisations. This study reveals that effective professional learning leading to change in practice is much more complex than I previously recognised. I now realise this complexity is a reflection of the complexities and inter-relationship between teachers' personal and professional lives, the learning process, the change process, classroom life, the effects of learning contexts, the wider social, political and cultural contexts, and the current climate of change and uncertainty.

Effective professional learning to bring about actions for change requires both a multi-dimensional view of learning and a context specific view of learning. My expanded approach is both holistic and context specific. In chapter five, I draw on Watkins et al (1996) to argue 'effective' can only make sense when context and goals are specified. Judgements about the effectiveness of professional development experiences will be made within that particular context. Any planned professional development experience is related to educational goals, whether explicitly or implicitly. Judgements about the effectiveness of these experiences will be related to the goals.

In this final chapter, I review the key research evidence from this project that leads me to these conclusions. I set out the contribution of this study and highlight some uses and implications. As I am involved in a research process that primarily focuses on my own practice, the recommendations are presented tentatively. However, there is evidence in the literature to support the desirability of different features of my expanded approach to teachers' professional learning, for example, the importance of collaborative learning cultures (Lieberman and Miller 1984; Rosenholtz 1991; Salmon 1995) and the importance of action research in bringing about learning and change (Altrichter et al 1993; Aspland et al 1996; Somekh 1994).

2. A review of the main arguments

In this thesis I identify three models of teachers' professional development - the competence-based, the personal development and the collaborative/social community models. To review the key arguments, I extend my analysis of these models to include my research evidence. This demonstrates important insights and understandings about how teachers, learning, the learning context and effective professional development are viewed. I argue that these models fail to recognise the complexities of professional learning and the importance of context specificity. At this stage of my research, I refer to my expanded approach as professional learning, not professional development. This shift signifies the importance of the focus on learning itself.

2.1 The competence-based model of professional development

In the competence-based model the focus is on knowledge and the development of skills for teachers to function well in the classroom. In this model effective professional development therefore, is functionalist. It is characterised by didactic methods of teaching, an acceptance of the teacher as expert, unquestioning learners and an individualistic stance. In the narrow competence-based model which dominates school education, for example that which underpins current government documentation (DfEE 1997; 1998; OFSTED 1995; TTA 1996; 1997; 1998a; 1998b) teachers are viewed as technicians; transmission modes of teaching are prevalent.

Current competence approaches are narrow because they do not address the social, emotional, ethical and moral aspects of teachers' lives. They do little to raise professional status as teachers are not encouraged to be autonomous decision makers. Their curriculum is defined centrally, with little consultation. There is a move towards centrally defined initiatives. Contextual factors are ignored. These propositions are confirmed by evidence I drew together in my work as an educational consultant during the early stages of my research (see chapters one and two) and later in my investigation when I asked teachers to describe more and less effective planned professional development experiences (see chapter four). I have shown how teachers feel de-skilled when their role, their learning and their professional development is defined by others and how systems are undemocratic if they do not reflect the views of teachers and young people (Apple and Beane 1995).

If the competence-based model underpins teachers' education, then it has serious implications for teachers, how they see themselves as professionals and how they see teaching and learning. If an approach does not facilitate teachers' understanding of learning, either at the initial stages or later in their careers, teachers will continue to focus on teaching rather than learning. Teachers will continue to identify their needs using mechanistic language, continue 'to collude in their own de-professionalisation' (Bottery and Wright 1990) and see their role confined to transmitting knowledge. My research findings suggest this dominant mechanistic approach underpinned by a narrow, competence-based model is as prevalent in young people's classroom learning as it is in teachers' professional development experiences. The competence approach reinforces and perpetuates this view of education, teaching and learning.

The young people I worked with in my initial research expressed dissatisfaction about their classroom experiences because they were not active participants in their own learning, their emotions were not engaged, the work did not relate to their everyday experiences, and they did not have a say in planning, choice of content or methods. This finding is supported by other studies (for example, Holland et al 1990; Oakley et al 1994; Schinke et al 1994; Woodcock et al 1992). The dominant mechanistic approach to classroom work is hierarchical (communication one-way, expert to client; the role is to pass on information and to influence behaviour); it stresses the importance of rational, objective and abstract thinking; it is separated from young people's lives (Biggs and Moore 1993; Bruner 1966); emotional, social and political issues are limited (Holland et al 1990; Schinke et al 1994). It is an approach which leads to an expert/client relationship; it produces an hierarchy between educator and learner (Homans and Aggleton 1988). In such an approach the potential for learning about human relationships is not exploited (Salmon and Claire 1984) and the view of the learner and the learning context is incomplete (Askew and Carnell 1998).

This dissatisfaction was not confined to young people - teachers express similar unease; adult learners are not often involved in the planning process of their own learning, roles tend to be hierarchical and methods didactic and impersonal. My research also suggests that learners' views and experiences are undervalued, whether young people or adults. Few opportunities are provided for learners to inform educators about their levels of knowledge, beliefs, understandings and self-perceived needs (Brandrup-Lakanow et al 1992; Miller and Moses 1990). There is a focus on provision rather than on need (Schinke et al 1994) and on teaching rather than learning.

This research identifies a powerful set of inhibitory forces to explain the dominance of the mechanistic approach in the classroom. These include ambiguity of purpose; unclear philosophy, goals or methods (Askew and Carnell 1995a; 1995b; Bell 1989; Watkins 1991); issues in classroom control such as 'defensive' teaching (McNeil 1986), 'reified' knowledge (Everhart 1983); inadequate understanding of the learning process (Bell 1989); external contradictions (Bush 1995); unhelpful Government directives (Oakley et al 1994); and organisational constraints. These constraints include the organisation of secondary schools and colleges where cross-subject collaborative work is inhibited and teachers feel under pressure to meet conflicting demands. Teachers are identified as experts in their particular field, resulting in little structured time or motivation for learning together.

The competence-based model, which underpinned my INSET programme (see chapter two) underestimates the importance of context and tends to take a 'blaming' stance when change does not occur. This became apparent to me in the early stages of my research when I under-estimated the 'differential impact of forces within school systems' (Fullan 1979). Through my research experiences of two follow up support visits to the teachers in the seven schools and two colleges who had participated in the INSET programme, I was able to understand how some teachers were able to bring about the changes I had recommended, whereas others could not. This happened because, at that stage of the research, I was defining the change, rather than the teachers. Without visiting the teachers in their particular schools or colleges, I would not have appreciated the powerful effects of their teaching contexts, and would have assumed, as others did, that teachers' ability, or lack of it, to bring about change was due to individual competence. Lack of attention to these important differences - context specific factors, an holistic approach to learning and giving teachers' responsibility to define changes to their own practice - emphasises the limitations of the competence-based model. A focus on competencies alone fails to address the complexity of teachers' professional learning and changes to professional practice.

2.2 The personal development model of professional development

The personal development model has never dominated teachers' professional development. It is characterised by personal and inter-personal reflection, understanding self and values, self-analysis, confidence building, cognitive, social and emotional development. Learning in this approach is based on a constructivist model and viewed as a process of empowering the individual teacher, drawing on subjective experiences to

create meaning and understanding. Through this process, individuals make changes appropriate to their own particular contexts. Like the competence-based model this is still individual; collaborative work may not be addressed. In this approach teachers are viewed as autonomous, decision-makers.

If personal development had been the dominant model in my INSET programme (see chapter two) rather than a competence dominated model, I would not have recommended changes. Teachers would have defined their own changes to practice, as effective professional development in this model works towards individual empowerment. Through the empowering process people affect their own changes in particular contexts; changes are determined by the learner, not the educator. This empowerment is on-going; learners become empowered by taking control over their learning and their changes to practice. This results in a more democratic learning context. More recently, policy changes and government directives have resulted in a reduction of this approach.

From my research with teachers on the INSET programme, I recognised that work on the personal dimension of teachers' learning had been neglected. I believed it had value as part of an holistic approach to teachers' professional learning. I incorporated an aspect of this approach into my M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development'. Participants highlighted the impact of the integration of personal and professional learning through such reflective activities as autobiography (see chapter three).

However, when evaluating the M.A. module, I found this approach also has limitations. I detected an assumption in this approach, that teachers, through the processes of reflection and analysis are able to bring about changes to their professional practice. Teachers may feel empowered in the supportive learning climate, but this does not guarantee change. Their context may inhibit action. This highlights the limitations of this approach, in that too much emphasis is placed on personal development, and insufficient support to bring about change to practice. This means the approach may not have sufficient impact on the learning of young people.

While attention is given to teachers' own understanding and construction of meaning, the wider social and political context is ignored. As with the competence-based model, personal development places responsibility on individuals to bring about change. Personal development approaches overemphasise personal responsibility for change and neglect the increasing importance of contexts which can inhibit or foster risk taking, learning and change (Barth 1990; Hilt 1992; Rosenholtz 1991; Sarason 1990). I

discovered through my research with teachers using this approach, that it lacked a specific focus on learning, like the competence-based model. Teachers were unable to identify clearly what they had learned on the module. There was a reluctance to move from the reflection process to the analysis of learning and identifying changes to practice. There was appreciation of the experience, but as module tutor, I did not engender a sense of critical thinking or contextual awareness.

This lack of attention to the importance of a) context specific factors and b) a specific focus on the development of teachers' learning for changes to their practice, reinforces the limitations of the personal development model. A focus on personal development alone is inadequate to address the complexity of professional learning and change to professional practice.

2.3 The collaborative/social community model of professional development

Unlike the competence-based and personal development models, the collaborative/social community model shifts from an individual to a collective emphasis. In the late 1980s and early 1990s this model gained ground alongside the school improvement and school effectiveness movement. Teachers are viewed as collaborators, giving support and challenge to improve the organisation by developing shared goals. As with the personal development model the learning is based on a constructivist perspective, but here learning happens 'on-the-job'. Teachers routinely support and learn together, drawing on their collective, subjective experiences.

Effective professional development in this model is collegial, set in its unique social context, with positive outcomes for pupil achievement. It is characterised by a focus on shared organisational goals, team developments, shared responsibility and whole organisational improvement through collective analysis, evaluation and experimentation. This model is context specific and its strengths are in providing relevant and on-going professional development experiences for teachers. Emotional connectedness, moral support, reciprocal help and mutual trust in pursuit of a common cause are central to strong professional cultures (Little 1990).

In the collaborative/social community model, school cultures build and develop strategies for challenge and support within the notion of teacher autonomy. The model recognises the need for teachers to retain a high degree of control over the direction of their work, while at the same time having access to appropriate critical support. This proposition was

borne out by my findings when asking teachers to identify effective professional development experiences (see chapter four). While teachers recognised the value of learning within a specific context, such an approach can also be insular. Teachers spoke of the need to attend external courses for intellectual stimulation and challenge. Alongside the context-based approach teachers recognised the need to meet with others outside their own organisation. The teachers suggested they were less likely to be challenging of their own practices when there was no stimulus of this sort. Visitors to their organisation helped them view their school from a wider and more critical perspective. The teachers in my study also identified the need for continuous external support and pressure for initiatives to be maintained.

External forces can inhibit these wider collaborative practices. For example, Helsby and Knight (1997, cited in Hargreaves and Evans 1997) found that since the 1988 Education Reform Act (DES 1988b), very little professional development or in-service provision has enabled teachers to exchange ideas or generally interact with colleagues in other schools. Access to professional development has excluded many classroom teachers, disproportionately concentrating in management.

To focus on the importance of collaborative contexts for professional learning, I incorporated aspects of this approach in the adapted M.A. module (see chapter five). The module highlighted teachers' learning contexts through such activities such as force-field analysis and collaborative action research set in teachers' own organisations. I attempted to focus teachers' learning on the factors which enhanced and inhibited change within organisations. This practical development work was extended through theoretical analysis of the literature to encourage contextual awareness.

To experience for myself the significance of context for professional learning, I undertook research within my own organisation. As staff development facilitator I drew on action research practices which highlighted both the strengths and limitations of this approach (see chapter six). My findings support the view that the collaborative/social community model may not provide an holistic learning experience as multi-dimensional aspects of learning may not be addressed. For example, personal and organisational learning may be undervalued and historical, social and contextual factors ignored. The emotional domain and individual difference may not feature and so the view of the teacher as learner is incomplete. Wider social and political issues may be ignored. Although Eraut et al (1998) found the most common form of learning in the workplace took the form of consultation and collaboration within the immediate working group,

work-embedded professional learning can be problematic. My investigation in my own organisation highlighted some difficulties, reinforcing the view that there may be few vehicles for collegiality (Sarason 1990) and that the role of the manager as learning facilitator is not appreciated (Eraut et al 1998).

The collaborative/social community model underestimates the difficulties in establishing norms of collegiality and collaboration. In my study I found that some groups in an organisation can sustain strong collaborative practices, while others are far more competitive and hierarchical. This diversity results in unequal learning opportunities. Some members of staff felt empowered by the culture of their particular group, while others were disempowered. Some were discouraged and deflated by central management practices when external competitive pressures encouraged a 'naming, shaming and blaming' response. In such cases central management practices can work against collaboration in other parts of the organisation: 'Climates in which teachers are blamed for every educational failure, and shamed into putting them right, are absolutely contrary to every principle of organisational learning' (Hargreaves 1997 p113-114). Such management practices may be seen to be destructive. It is interesting that a further mis-match has emerged. Educational organisations may publicly challenge central government's 'shaming' practices while at the same time fall into such practices themselves. This could be interpreted as hypocrisy or a form of management practice which undermines the declared values of managers. For organisational learning to be effective those who hold management positions need support to review their management practices and the philosophical stance on which those practices are based. This will work towards congruence between educational theory and practice and enhance the emotional health of the organisation.

Developing congruence of culture and learning opportunities across the organisation is difficult and highlights the importance of monitoring the emotional health of an organisation. Professional cultures are built on emotional as well as intellectual strength (Hargreaves and Evans 1997); attention needs to be paid to the affective dimension of learning. My research evidence suggests this aspect of organisational context is mostly ignored; attention to emotional dimensions of learning is seen as 'soft'. I draw on Fullan (1991) Nias (1987) Salmon (1988) Salzberger-Wittenberg et al (1983) and Smail (1984) to support my argument that change is an emotionally challenging, subjective process. During periods of difficult change individuals and groups benefit from the support and challenge of collaborative, supportive approaches.

While the collaborative/social community model recognises the importance of context specific factors there are limitations. Such approaches alone fail to address the complexity of individual and organisational multi-dimensional learning. They underestimate the need for appropriate external challenge and support and are vulnerable to powerful contradictory competitive forces, both internal and external.

3. The contribution of this study

I argue that there are strong links in the perceptions that are held of teachers, learning, the learning context and professional development. My own perceptions have changed as I have developed my understanding of the complexities of teachers' professional learning. I am now more conscious of the assumptions I hold about teachers and young people as learners and how these assumptions effect practice in the classroom. My own practice has changed as a result of my research. The identification of the limitations of the different models to professional development, described above, encouraged me to create an expanded theoretical approach and to develop this approach in practice, as part of my action research. My extended approach to teachers' professional learning emphasises the importance of the integration of personal and professional issues, collaborative contexts, learning about learning and action research. I present the approach as a contribution to knowledge in this field.

3.1 An expanded approach to professional learning

My expanded approach to professional learning draws on my findings from my research with teachers, including their perceptions of effective planned development experiences. These findings forcefully demonstrate that subjective approaches have greater impact than objective approaches. Teachers value collaborative learning with colleagues, especially when this is directly related to their every-day work. They also see more benefit in a constructivist model of learning, engaging together in social exchange, reflecting and planning together. Part of this process includes understanding learning and career patterns and choices through an analysis of their biographies and influences on their work contexts. These findings have influenced my practice as a professional learning facilitator. I draw on meta-learning processes to raise awareness of what makes professional learning effective.

Central to my expanded practice is the way I work with teachers. I encourage teachers to view themselves as learners, help to engage them in processes of reflection, developing

understanding, gaining insights into practice, and making important professional judgements about change. Teachers then see themselves as learners alongside colleagues and young people operating in complex classrooms, within complex organisations. Most importantly, my practice encourages teachers to undertake their own research enabling them to learn and adapt in constantly changing conditions and contexts, facing ambiguities and external contradictions. The principles of my practice focus on an holistic view of the teacher, incorporating personal, professional, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions to their learning. I include a study of how teachers' beliefs, biographies and backgrounds influence them. This holistic approach sees teachers in relationship with young people, colleagues and adults in a learning community, therefore professional learning addresses interpersonal relationships within a collaborative context.

In my expanded approach to planned professional learning experiences, teachers engage in an on-going developmental process, developing skills and insights into collaborative work, action research, meta-learning and personal reflection on emotional, social, and cognitive dimensions of learning. Understanding the effects of context on their learning and changes to practice is paramount.

Learning is facilitated from a constructivist perspective and is about developing complexity, not about accumulating knowledge. Learning as a two-way process is encouraged; the teacher learns alongside learners and the teacher becomes a resource allowing learners to educate peers; learning is less formal. Its language includes a vocabulary which supports the shift towards a non-hierarchical, non-didactic approach, reinforcing the view that learning for the twenty-first century needs to be holistic and organismic (Boud et al 1993).

3.2 Professional learning through reflexive research

During the six year period of study my knowledge and understanding of research grew and my research methodology changed. The role of consultant researcher described in chapter one invited me into a method which reflected policy research. My role as researcher was that of 'expert'. In my work with teachers on the INSET programme, described in chapter two, I was still seen as an 'outsider'. Role pressures encouraged a didactic 'expert' approach to professional development. In my work described in chapters three and four, I distanced myself from such a didactic role and took a more exploratory methodology. My research became cyclical; my reflections led to insights and new understanding which informed my practice. Earlier research findings led me to create an

expanded view of professional development which informed my teaching. This was based on a constructivist approach.

Steier (1991) suggests that if researchers and scholars are to take the principles of constructivism seriously, the same principles must be applied to researchers themselves and to their research. This supports my epistemological standpoint that methods of research need to be congruent with the work that is researched. It would be incongruent to carry out research into teachers' professional development if the research itself did not contribute to my own learning or to the learning of the teachers with whom I worked.

Consequently, I redesigned the M.A. module to highlight ways in which teachers' learning can be enhanced - using meta-learning and action research strategies to focus explicitly on learning about learning, including the learning context. My commitment to action research as an effective approach to professional development led me to adopt the same processes for understanding learning and facilitating change in my own organisation. The research process itself: 'must be seen as socially constructing a world or worlds, with the researchers included in, rather than outside, the body of their own research' (Steier 1991 p2).

I view action research, not just as a process for professional change, but as a meta-learning strategy. This is partly how Steier (1991) views the process: '... if we begin to examine how we as researchers are reflexively part of those systems we study, we can also develop an awareness of how reflexivity becomes a useful way for us to understand what others are doing' (p3). I suggest that we can learn about ourselves, our learning and our learning context if we reflect on the research process. While carrying out research, I encourage teachers to keep a reflective journal, as I do. Not only does this provide a focus for learning, highlighting actions for change, but it can provide a shared focus for discussion about developing knowledge and understanding of the reflective process, its value, what we are learning about ourselves as learners and the way in which the learning context supports or inhibits our learning. Steier (1991) draws on Geertz (1973) and Gudeman and Penn (1982) to suggest that we understand and become aware of our own research activities as telling a story about ourselves. This is parallel to what Turner (1981, cited in Steier 1991) refers to as social reflexivity: 'Perhaps we need to think of research as constituted by processes of social reflexivity, and then, of self-reflexivity as a social process (Steier 1991 p3). The conversations I have with teachers triggered by our reflective writing mirrors this social process. The discussions of teachers' written

reflections prompt further insights which teachers then record. This adds a further level of understanding of self and context.

Throughout the thesis I have identified different levels of understanding and learning which underlines the importance of an organismic approach stressing inter-relationships, contexts and organisation. This study is ending but my research continues. The knowledge and understanding gained from my research has led me to work with teachers and schools in a different way. I attempt to promote professional learning through processes which support and challenge. I want to provide support for teachers' changes that they themselves have identified. For example, my current work as a consultant in a school enables teachers to plan professional development programmes for colleagues and to involve young people in their collaborative action research on learning about learning. This is a more complete perspective of the institutional role and hierarchical power position which underpinned my earlier research.

My current approach allows flexibility, the blurring of boundaries and shared learning. This works towards the transformation of social and organisational relationships and is characterised by shared responsibility between learner and educator and a focus on learning. The power dynamic shifts and learners have more freedom to determine content, processes, outcomes and knowledge in their unique social contexts. This non-hierarchical, non-didactic approach contributes towards addressing societal constraints and inequalities which affect achievement of potential (Carnell 1997). I argue that this is achieved by working towards democracy in the learning group. This democratic way of working contributes towards empowerment and may lead to the challenging of un-democratic and unjust practices elsewhere. Teachers who learn in democratic classrooms using meta-learning processes will be more conscious of how they approach learning situations when they are in the teaching role.

My findings suggest the more effective planned professional learning experiences are ones that are complex and sophisticated. For example, when the complexities of learning are addressed; when connections and inter-relationships are examined; when personal and professional learning is integrated; when action research is used as a means to increase understanding about the learning context, and when teachers are expected to take on sophisticated thinking at a meta-level about their own learning and the changes they wish to make to their own classroom or school practice. This is achieved through processes of critical thinking and contextual awareness (Brookfield 1987), reflective journals, autobiography, learning cycles (Dennison and Kirk 1990), action research and meta

learning experiences (Watkins et al 1996; 1998). These processes help promote a vocabulary and a language which enables new perceptions about learners, learning processes and learning contexts. This approach necessitates a collaborative context. The multi-dimensional view of learning supports Fullan's (1993) view that teachers need a more sophisticated understanding of teaching and learning, but Fullan does not extend this learning to incorporate a multi-dimensional and context specific, meta-perspective of learning, as I do.

3.3 Implications for higher education

The way I now work with teachers and schools suggests a shift from the hierarchical to collaborative, in line with my expanded approach to professional learning. This style offers support, partnership and opportunities for joint learning. It encourages a role which enhances 'the knowledge creation capacities of individuals and professional communities' (Eraut 1985 p117). It differs from the notion of hierarchy implied by traditional role definitions between universities and schools which is antithetical to the equity, parity and mutuality required for collaboration (Clift et al 1995; Zimpher 1990).

The differences between schools and universities are often represented as the cause of conflict and sometimes the demise of collaborative projects (Heckman 1988; Stoddart 1995). The traditional power positions of those in higher education mean that some ideas carry more authority than others. This was the situation in my earlier research and one from which I wished to move. Carrying out action research, rather than policy research, and encouraging teachers to be involved in their own research was significant. One of the aims of action research is to reverse an hierarchy of credibility (Messner and Rauch 1995). The practitioner rather than the theorist is the expert of practice.

My expanded approach to professional learning avoids a dominant teaching stance, helping achieve a form of parity alongside practitioners in schools which is less likely to offend (Sanger 1996). My research helped me to be clear about my goals, the circumstances and guiding principles of the relationships between me and teachers from schools, in line with Sanger's (1996) recommendation for university lecturers or educational consultants to question how they work with teachers and schools.

Breaking down this hierarchy as a university lecturer and consultant was problematic. Initially I wanted to be in an equal role, learning alongside teachers from schools. At first, I did not articulate the different roles that partners could take in a collaborative

process. I learned from Kerper and Johnston (1997) that it is a naive position to try to give up power. This ' ... does not empower teachers as much as it limits our ability to participate collaboratively' (p64). Sharing my learning of the action research process helped to break down the hierarchy. I found that focusing on learning rather than knowledge, interrupted dependency and avoided a power imbalance.

Barnett (1997) calls for a reconstruction of the university in order to be adequate to new challenges. He suggests four terms around which the university should be rebuilt: 'unpredictability'; 'uncertainty'; 'contestability' and 'challengeability'. The central tenet of Barnett's argument is that the university is faced with 'supercomplexity' in which frames of understanding, action, valuing and self identity are continually challenged. The university has to generate uncertainty, help us live with and even revel in uncertainty.

There are a number of conditions which Barnett (1997) describes in realising the university, in an age of 'supercomplexity', which complement my expanded approach to professional learning. Barnett (1997) points out that this strategy is unsettling as it carries risks, just as my expanded approach to professional learning does. This strategy includes:

• critical interdisciplinary - the site of multiple discourses to create new forms of knowing

• collective self-scrutiny - frames of action, knowledge and self-identity are rendered problematic by being exposed to criticism

• purposive renewal - continuing conversation over ends, over dominant assumptions, and over the ways in which we relate to each other and how we understand ourselves

• moving borders - finding ways of making borders transitory and transcending those in place

• engagement - engaging with multiple communities becoming a site of the production of multiple and contending perspectives

• communicative tolerance - maximising opportunities for different voices to have a hearing.

This vision is persuasive, but I found from my investigation of organisational learning, such a vision is difficult to put into practice (see chapter six). I suggest the university

needs to take a lead in demonstrating the importance of making learning explicit. Universities need to review and demonstrate their commitment to their own pedagogical change, appraisal processes, innovations, action research, and the extent to which action research is used to impact on organisational learning, as Sanger (1996) suggests. Those involved in higher education need to see themselves as learners alongside those they seek to support. The role of staff development has a crucial role to play in higher education for its own staff in bringing about learning at individual, group and organisational levels.

3.4 Professional learning and the organisational context

A consistent theme in this research has been the complexity of context. I have argued for the importance of an organismic approach to professional learning within the workplace - the organisation as a learning community. This key finding mirrors Rosenholtz' (1991) view: ' ... if the school is a rich learning environment for students, it is also likely to provide learning opportunities for staff' (p171). The quality of teaching and learning inside the classroom is shaped by relationships teachers have with colleagues. From my experience both in schools and higher educational establishments I would argue that practice varies in different parts of the organisation. In sub-groups or departments where there is a focus on providing a rich learning environment for students there may be a similar focus on providing learning opportunities for staff. This focus is not necessarily universal across whole organisations, except perhaps in small primary schools. To create strong professional cultures there is a need for collaborative working practices and supportive inter-personal ways of working within and across the organisation.

For effective organisational learning, including individual and sub-group, learning cannot be left to chance. There needs to be an explicit focus on learning for all in the organisation and on the organisation itself. There needs to be an explicit philosophy about organisational learning and the learning of all people within it. This philosophy must encourage everyone to see themselves as learners, to learn with and from its students. Barth (1990) refers to the crucial role of head teachers in this process, believing they should be seen as the head learner. He emphasises the importance of head teachers' behaviour in connection with modelling and passing on implicit and explicit messages to pupils and staff. In this way heads set a climate conducive to learning for both adults and pupils. Recent research carried out by Eraut et al (1998) reinforces the importance of the informal influence of the manager and the micro culture of the workplace. In addition to a variable contribution from formal education and training, the most important sources of

learning were the challenge of the work itself and interactions with other people in the workplace. These were most affected by the micro culture and the manager.

It became increasingly apparent when I carried out investigations in my own organisation that professional development programmes and initiatives alone cannot bring about organisational learning. Formal education and training provide only a small part of what is learned at work (Eraut et al 1998). Organisational learning depends on a wide range of factors including structure, leadership and management practices.

Management practices within organisations need to be congruent with its learning philosophy. I recommend that heads or principals and senior management teams reflect on their own learning and professional development and consider how their own individual and group practice can be enhanced, and how the management practices themselves contribute positively to the learning and professional development of staff. This would include integrating staff development processes in structures and systems, making staff development and organisational learning an integrated reality and incorporate a more holistic view of the personal and professional lives of individual members of staff. This is reinforced by Eraut et al (1998). They conclude that of all organisational mechanisms used to promote learning, the most significant is likely to be the appointment and development of its managers. They suggest comparatively little attention is given in management development programmes to supporting the learning of colleagues or creating a climate which facilitates informal learning. If this were attended to, Eraut et al (1998) suggest, much more learning could ensue. Managers are also teachers. Therefore, it is not just management practices but styles of teaching that enhance or inhibit learning. Effective management styles and by implication effective teaching styles are required to facilitate learning.

In my investigations in my own organisation, I developed my understanding that at the organisational level hierarchies lead to defensiveness. Hierarchical approaches can be evidenced in management styles or in the style of teaching that managers are adopting. Defensive management leads to division, it re-emphasises hierarchical structures and a wider gap is created between the managers and others. Defensive management, like defensive teaching, leads to defensive learners and defensive organisations. Effective learning cannot take place in such a context.

In order to address problems associated with defensiveness McNeil (1986) argues that new processes and ways of knowing need to be legitimised. For effective organisational

learning we need to be able to question, explore, and offer new ways of thinking (McNeil 1986; Morgan 1986; Senge 1992). We need to look, not so much at how much is learned, but at the nature of what is learned (McNeil 1986). We need to examine the language we use to facilitate thinking about learning, an empowering rather than a condescending language. I agree with Hargreaves and Evans' (1997) suggestion: 'Perhaps we should be talking of professional learning instead of continuous improvement and of organisational learning instead of school improvement' (p8). Effective organisational learning emphasises learning in preference to performance, process as much as content and long-term outcomes rather than short-term benefits. This emphasis is central to a mindset for managing change, both at individual as well as group and organisational levels.

I highlight, in chapter three and six, the important difference between contrived beginnings and coercion, in bringing about organisational learning. I argue for support to be given to teachers and schools to identify the changes they wish to make. Professional learning can provide a more effective experience through collaborative action research. For example, setting up collaborative action research helps overcome the problems inherent in teachers' isolation and provides a vehicle for multi-dimensional learning, including social and emotional dimensions: 'In Kellyan terms, the situation of teachers is typically one in which sociality is not easily developed ... there are few occasions in which it is possible to talk together openly, freely, and at length. Within the narrow constraints imposed by institutional expectations of proper teaching behaviour, there is little freedom for the expression of real feelings' (Salmon 1988 p121).

Collaborative action research provides teachers with a potentially new way of communicating with others about their educational practices, the values embedded within their practices and their feelings about the change process. In the interviews I undertook with teachers some stated how hard it was to think about their feelings about education and change, and how seldom they are called upon to do so. Routine teaching situations rarely present opportunities to reflect on the personal assumptions that underlie our practice (Salmon 1988). Collaborative action research and meta-learning processes provide opportunities to analyse basic assumptions from which we act and provide meaning about our practices. From my experience of working with teachers I know some educational experiments may be short lived; lasting change comes about through a deep approach to learning (Marton and Säljö 1976) and where change is embedded because of personal understanding and congruence of values.

Habermas (1984, cited in Ruiz De Gauna et al 1995) states that a social science can be called critical if it goes beyond criticism to include critical praxis. In this form of praxis learning directly results in an action of social transformation. Therefore theory and practice have to be integrated in a dialectic process of reflection, learning and political struggle; a process which social groups carry out in order to achieve their own emancipation (Gonzalez 1992, cited in Ruiz De Gauna et al 1995). This leads to questions such as "What kind of school do we want? Which organisational structure and identity should it have? Which structures condition us when taking decisions?" (Ruiz De Gauna et al 1995 p192). We start to talk about reasons and purposes of education - exposing teaching philosophy to critical reflection and negotiation. In a process of open and democratic negotiation everybody has the opportunity to express their views and be involved in identifying the educational programme and consider themselves to be part of a school they have helped to define.

This approach may be difficult to establish and sustain within the current education climate as there is a shift towards centralisation and standardisation. Increasingly, teachers and schools have less autonomy. Schools and other educational organisations are not independent of society and there are powerful forces against the implications of collaborative, empowering methods (Apple and Beane 1995; Salmon and Claire 1984). However, within the expanded approach different forms of learning and research create learning experiences which trigger change. Educational organisations may promote wider social change by extending the use of collaborative and democratic methods (Apple and Beane 1995; Askew and Carnell 1998). I have argued that this can be achieved through the introduction of different forms of learning and research. The view of the learner in this approach is that of 'knowledge producer not knowledge reproducers ... active agents of his/her own education and learning' (Ruiz De Gauna et al 1995 p185).

At best professional learning is voluntary, self-directed, in the control of teachers, and not identified by external agencies. Such an approach leads to professional and personal empowerment. To teacher-researchers who constantly probe and question, listen and observe, 'professional development is driven by the vision, knowledge, and ambition generated by their research' (Van De Weghe 1992). An organismic view of change, as is suggested by action research, places greater emphasis on the complexity of the individual's relationship with others and the context in which they operate. Support and encouragement, rather than coercion has to be provided from others. The whole organisation, and any funding body, needs to share the underpinning values that are central to action research, including professional autonomy.

This research has an important and timely role for a review of thinking about professional learning. I challenge what is happening at the national level and critique the Teacher Training Agency, OFSTED and the General Teaching Council in their approaches to teachers' professional learning (see appendix 7.1 'The current context and influences on teachers' professional learning'). I argue that government legislation, school inspections and other initiatives need to support teachers' professional learning in ways that are congruent with the principles underpinning my expanded approach.

3.5 The messages in this research and some limitations in its application

Throughout this thesis I have identified the limitations of different models of professional development. This analysis has developed my understanding and helped me move forward. I now review my own position and present the limitations of my approach in practice. This critical review increases my learning, highlights the possibilities for further investigations and contributes to knowledge about teachers' professional learning. Important tensions emerge. The messages of my research are complex and application will meet difficulties.

It is important to recognise the powerful forces against the political implications of this educational approach (see appendix 7.1). Schools are not independent of society and teachers face difficulties in bringing about changes they wish to make. Recent government initiatives have increased direction on pedagogy and curriculum content. Teachers have less autonomy. In promoting the principles underpinning this research teachers and schools need continued support to work against the tide.

The expanded approach to professional learning is underpinned by an educational philosophy informed by my research. This philosophy is grounded in an holistic and connected view of the learner, the learning process and the learning context. It suggests that effective professional learning comes about as a result of the integration of four key areas: the personal and professional dimensions of learning, collaborative contexts, learning about learning and action research. This approach may not be fully realised in practice within the present political climate of rapid change and consequent time pressures. The perception of teachers, their roles and professional development portrayed in recent government documentation is neither holistic nor connected. It focuses on the teacher as technician rather than as person/professional. Consequently provision for individual teachers and organisations may have limited learning goals. Formal professional development activities may not integrate fully the four areas outlined in my

approach. There may be a narrower focus on knowledge and skills. The personal learning and collaborative dimensions may be missing.

Nevertheless, there are important findings from my research which teachers can and do put into practice, especially in less formal work-embedded experiences. One of these areas is the integration of research and teaching to enhance personal/professional learning. I have argued that through self-reflexivity teachers will come to understand their practice, themselves as learners and the context in which they work. Collaborative action research is encouraged as self-reflexivity as a social process adds a further level of understanding of self and context. My findings illuminate the positive contribution that action-research can play in enhancing personal development, professional relationships, communication and collegial practices.

However, within this approach there is a danger of overlooking important conflicts between the requirements of individual learning and self-determination on the one hand and the organisational realities of power and control on the other. Organisational and social constraints affect the possibility of learning and change as my research has demonstrated. In chapter six I highlighted the difficulties of being a practitioner-researcher within an organisation. As an agent of change I acknowledged the powerful effects that the organisational context had on the application of my learning. This view was reinforced by the teachers who participated in this research. Action research can have a limited role in bringing about changes to the organisation's power structures.

I now see the usefulness of action research as a meta-learning process. This helps individuals and groups identify the learning at individual, group and organisational levels. As such it is a powerful process in learning about learning rather than a process for organisational change. This is important given the current constraints in other professional development provision. Action research can be used as a vehicle for integrating personal and professional learning at a meta-level. In this way it can be seen to provide a more comprehensive professional learning experience.

The expanded approach is based on the ambitious view that effective learning requires change to professional practice while acknowledging the power of organisational constraints in influencing the possibility of change. Practitioner action research has major limitations in altering organisational power structures. This highlights the need for changing the conception of the role of leaders and managers to promote individual and organisational learning.

Within the expanded approach I believe the role for leaders and managers of organisations to be part of the organisational learning process and to be seen to be learners too. In this way some resistances to organisational learning can be overcome, for example, in challenging hierarchical and competitive practices and providing supportive and collaborative frameworks instead.

In bringing about organisational learning a key research focus has been the inter-connections between individual, group and organisational levels. These connections are complex. For example, there may be a tension between the goals of individual and collaborative learning and between the value of private and public learning. Further questions and research foci are raised. How can the connections between individual and collective learning be made explicit and what impact does this have? What can be learned about group learning and how does the learning of groups impact on organisational learning? How can leaders bring about effective changes to their practices in promoting individual and collective learning?

I have demonstrated that professional and organisational learning is a complex area. It is increasingly recognised as important but is not well understood. This thesis contributes to the task of building a better understanding within the professioanl community.

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Appendix 1.1

A chronology of events and their relationship to the doctoral research

The data collected for this thesis were not part of a conventional, planned research study. During the six year period that I was registered for the PhD I took advantage of different professional opportunities and events and used the experiences of those events to construct a growing body of knowledge and practice that allowed me to build a model of teachers' professional learning. These events included work associated with my different roles:

• as a consultant to a local education authority in planning, teaching and evaluating an In-Service Education programme for teachers

• as a lecturer at the Institute of Education, University of London, in planning, teaching and evaluating a new M.A. module entitled 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development'

• as a staff development facilitator at the Institute of Education, University of London, in establishing a staff development programme and re-introducing an appraisal scheme throughout the organisation.

In 1992 I was employed as a research consultant to a local education authority. This policy research into effective classroom practices with young people and their teachers, was the springboard for the subsequent investigation (see chapter one). In 1993 my consultation contract with the local education authority was extended. My role was to implement some of the recommendations contained in the research report that I had written.

It was at this point that I registered as a PhD student. From this stage all the events listed here contributed to the growth and understanding and review of practice which the PhD records.

In 1993 I designed, managed and evaluated an in-service education and training programme for the teachers in the local education authority. I collected data from interviews with the 14 participants (see chapter two).

In 1994 in my role as a lecturer at the Institute of Education I designed an expanded approach to teachers' professional development. This approach informed the

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construction of an M.A. module 'Understanding Teachers' Professional Development'. This programme was evaluated to identify the impact of this approach with the 11 participants who enrolled as the first cohort of students (see chapter three).

In 1995 further investigations to identify the characteristics of effective professional development continued. Eight of the 11 teachers who participated in the M.A. module took part in the research (the first cohort). An analysis of the research findings highlighted further areas for investigation (see chapter four).

In 1996 I redesigned the M.A. module in the light of the unfolding complexities of teachers' learning and change processes. Research data were collected from interviews with the 12 participants who enrolled as the second cohort of students for the M.A. module, and another research focus was identified (see chapter five).

Between 1997 and 1998 in my new role as staff development facilitator, I conducted research into the ways in which an organisation enhances and inhibits learning at individual, group and organisational levels. The research data were gathered through a series of investigations with 30 representatives from the academic groups and support departments and from my work with ten of these groups (see chapter six).

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Appendix 2.1

Interview schedule for the INSET programme

1. To evaluate the course

• What are your feelings about the course?

• What do you feel you gained from the course?

• Were there any disappointments?

• Were there any surprises?

2. To support teachers in their changes to classroom practice or school developments

Think about the factors that have brought about changes to your classroom or school practice (on the following levels):

Positive factors >>>>>>>>>>   <<<<<<<<<< Inhibiting factors

individual

group/department

whole school

external

Appendix 5.1

Trigger questions for the redesigned M.A. module

1. Mid-module review

• In what way has the module matched your expectations so far?

• Note what you are learning.

• Note any unanticipated outcomes.

• In what way is the module helping your professional practice?

• What skills, knowledge and experience have you been able to offer the group so far?

• What aspects of the module have you found difficult? Were these the ones you anticipated as being difficult?

• What has helped your learning on the module?

• What has hindered your learning on the module?

• Can you identify any emotions affecting your learning? Describe this process. Describe your response to the module.

• Consider what you might need to address in order to get the most out of the next half of the module. How are you going to approach the second half of the module?

2. End of module review

Write a short account to make connections between:

• what you have learned about your own learning

• what you have learned about the collaborative group as a context for learning

• what you have learned about your experiences of professional development

and how this learning relates to some of the theoretical perspectives we have been examining on the module.

Appendix 5.2

Interview schedule for the redesigned M.A. module

• What effects have the processes had on you as a learner - including learning about learning and learning about action research?

• What changes have you made as a result of being on the module and being involved in action research?

• What has been the effect of the context in which you work in helping or hindering your learning

• What skills, knowledge and understanding have you been able to offer the group?

• Which aspects on the module have you found difficult?

• Which aspects have you found disappointing?

• What has helped or hindered your learning on the module?

• Can you identify any emotions affecting your learning? Have these changed over time?

• Note any surprises.

• What changes would you suggest that would make learning on the module more effective?

Appendix 7.1

The current context and influences on teachers' professional learning

The Teacher Training Agency and teachers' professional development

The government funded Teacher Training Agency (TTA) attempts to address issues of teachers' professional development. Its aim is to promote well targeted, effective and co-ordinated continual professional development 'to ensure professional development has a more direct impact on raising standards of pupils' performance' (TTA 1996 p28). The TTA is working towards achieving national consistency and direction, local relevance and follow through in continuous professional development, as well as establishing and resourcing pilot projects in school-based teacher research. Clear and explicit expectations of teachers and schools are defined to set targets for professional development and career progression.

While these initiatives seem laudable, Hargreaves and Evans (1997) suggest the principle that 'an appointed and anointed body', such as the TTA, consisting mainly of non-teachers, can create professional development and build a stronger sense of professionalism *for* teachers, is deeply flawed. They point to the difficulty of 'a body appointed by government to improve professional development *for* teachers will always have difficulty separating teachers' own long term and continuing professional needs (and the structures and processes needed to fulfil them) from short-term in-service training priorities that are attached to the implementation of particular government policies' (p12).

My concern is with the TTA's perception of teaching, its view of teachers as professionals and its view of professional development. The approach to professional learning which I adopt contrasts with that of the TTA which has different purposes and different values. For example, an analysis of the language used in the National Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Head teachers (TTA 1998a; 1998b) reveals a functionalist approach; the vocabulary stresses 'improving' rather than learning, 'training' not education, and skills rather than understanding. Teachers are not described as learning facilitators or learners themselves, but as knowledge experts who have a 'didactic' role. A multi-dimensional view of learning is absent. In seeking to provide national consistency the crucial importance of the specific learning context, personal development, diversity and pluralism is ignored.

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If those who are making decisions about teachers' learning have a functionalist view of the teacher and a narrow, competence-based perspective of professional development, their approach ignores the complexities of the professional learning process. I agree with Hargreaves (1997) who suggests professional learning can no longer be an optional luxury for course-going individuals, nor a set of add-on workshops to implement government priorities: 'Professional learning must be made integral to the task of teaching, to dealing effectively with the numerous new challenges that teachers face in their work' (p116).

Perceptions held by the TTA of young people's learning are also worrying. Responsibility for learning is the teacher's rather than the learner's. For example, included in the description of effective pedagogy are phrases such as clear objectives for what is to be learned by pupils, clear targets, clear methods of assessing '... at no time is the good teacher not teaching the pupils, whether that means providing information, explaining concepts, questioning and challenging ... ' (TTA 1996 p8). The focus is on 'raising pupils' standards of achievement' (p7) rather than making their learning more effective. If this is their view of effective pedagogy for young people, their view of professional development for teachers is congruent. The impact of such views from professional development agencies may be considerable, and may encourage teachers to act in passive and dependent ways when they are involved in professional development occasions. This is commonly part of the professional socialisation of teachers (Messner and Rauch 1995). Embedded in my approach is an alternative view which avoids this dependency. Here teachers are seen as active learners responsible for their own professional development. The focus is on the processes of learning rather than on teaching.

However, the strategy outlined in the TTA's corporate plan (TTA 1996) to promote teaching as a research-based profession is welcome. This research shows, teachers value opportunities to reflect on their practice, identify new insights and make changes as a result of their learning. The purpose of the TTA research grants (TTA 1997) is 'to increase the stock of high quality, small scale classroom research carried out by teachers, to raise the profile of such work amongst other teachers and to extend the debate about the role of teachers in classroom research' (p1).

Early indications reveal this funded research has led to further professional activities which may have some practical and scholarly outcomes. An independent evaluation of the TTA research grant scheme with 25 teachers (Jones 1996), indicated:
• 16 teachers arranged INSET sessions
• three produced curriculum materials

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- three produced training videos
- four indicated they were involved in school-based networking and collaboration
- nine were involved in regional development activities; two at a national level
- five produced a journal article
- eight attended, or gave a paper at, a relevant conference
- seven had plans to publish articles with ten planning conference presentations.

While I support this strategy, I am mindful of the necessary conditions for action research to flourish: if teachers work collaboratively; if they volunteer, rather than being co-opted or manipulated; if they are open to change, critical review, reflection and self-evaluation and if they are supported by managers (Zuber-Skerritt and Howell 1993). These conditions highlight the importance of involvement, collaboration and openness to change which are central principles in my expanded approach to professional learning. Action research, like all other forms of professional learning, needs to take place within a context of support rather than coercion. Burgess-Macey and Rose (1997) discuss the inappropriate introduction of action research which, if it were to become part of established organisational practice, may turn it into a traditional, top-down model of professional development. Centralised intervention and formal initiation might suggest teachers coerced into training, and organisations coerced into particular ways of working (Burgess-Macey and Rose 1997).

The fundamental goals of action research need to be explicit. For example, in my expanded approach to teachers' professional learning the role of action research has a different emphasis to that of the TTA. It is without restrictions or boundaries. It is used as a meta-learning process focusing on: learning about learning itself; the teacher as a learner; what encourages or inhibits change to professional practice; the significance of learning context. It is also a vehicle for social enquiry: 'The teacher as researcher is not only enquiring into his or her own practices but is problematising the underlying values that inform that practice. He or she is essentially engaged in ideology critique' (Groundwater-Smith 1991 p53, cited in Tinning et al 1996). In my approach teachers are encouraged to initiate action research and are supported in carrying it out but the impetus for their enquiries needs to come from themselves. In pointing out factors that mitigate against teachers' action research, Tinning et al (1996) suggest significant contextual considerations which need to be considered if using action research as a process for professional development. They ask how action research might be compromised in a context which is not congruent with the goals of collaborative research.

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I consider the TTA's position a paradoxical phenomenon in that, on the one hand, it supports local teacher collaboration through its action research funded programme, while on the other, is shifting towards centralisation and standardisation through other teacher 'training' interventions. This paradox is also highlighted in relation to the TTA's position on initial teacher training (Whitty 1994).

Elsewhere (Carnell 1998), I challenge the TTA's narrow competence-based model of professional development and suggest the possibility of broadening this approach. There are three ways of conceptualising the nature of competence (Gonczi 1994). The most widely held conception is in terms of discrete behaviour associated with the completion of atomised tasks. This underpins the TTA's approach to teachers' professional development. It is mechanistic in that it is not concerned with the connections between tasks and 'ignores the possibility that the coming together of tasks could lead to this transformation' (p28). Evidence for the possession of the competency in this model, is based on direct observation of performance. 'It is positivist, reductionist, ignores underlying attributes, ignores group processes and their effect on performances, is conservative, atheoretical, ignores the complexity of performance in the real world and ignores the role of professional judgement in intelligent performance' (Gonczi 1994 p29).

The second conception of competence concentrates on the general attributes of the practitioner that are crucial to effective performance and concentrates on underlying attributes, for example, knowledge or critical thinking capacity. These are thought of as general attributes, ignoring the context in which they might be applied. There is no certainty that generic competencies exist: expertise is domain specific since individuals demonstrate little capacity to transfer expertise from one area of activity to another (Gonczi 1994). Important to my findings is the point that these general attributes are of limited help for those involved in development for specific professions. 'The logic...is that one would use the same educational activities to develop critical thinking or communication skills in a medical course as in a legal course. What would be more useful would be the identification of what critical thinking and communication in the practice of medicine and law are like .... even in different branches of medicine and law' (Gonczi 1994 p29).

The third conception seeks to marry the general attributes to the context in which these attributes will be employed. This approach looks at the complex combination of attributes (knowledge, attitudes, values and skills) which are used to understand and function within the particular situations in which professionals find themselves. That is, the notion of competence is relational. It brings together disparate things -

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abilities of individuals and the tasks that need to be performed in particular situations. Thus competence is conceived of as the complex structuring of attributes needed for intelligent performance in specific situations. This incorporates the idea of professional judgement - an 'integrated' or 'holistic' approach to competence (Gonczi et al 1990, cited in Gonczi 1994). This third conception allows the incorporation of ethics and values as elements in competent performance, the need for reflective practice, the importance of context and the fact that there may be more than one way of practising competently.

This 'integrated' or 'holistic' approach goes some way to satisfy my emphasis on the need for professional development to be context specific. It does not, however, address the emphasis on learning about learning. Watkins and Whalley's (in press) model does. They present an hierarchy of competences from a lower order performance level to a higher order learning level. The latter level includes - being an effective learner, handling ambiguity and complexity, flexibility and self reflexivity. Watkins and Whalley (in press) argue that teachers of the future, who will need to be able to cope with knowledge and situations that we cannot know about now, will need to demonstrate the qualities of the 'meta-teacher': a teacher who has a complex connected understanding of learning, context and role to inform her/his action.

This has implications for the role of assessment in the competence-based approach. Gonczi (1994) points out that competence cannot be observed directly; it can only be inferred from performance. He suggests we need to think about the sorts of performances which will enable us to gather evidence of sufficient quantity and quality to make sound judgements about an individual's competence. This may prove to be tedious and counter-productive. Watkins and Whalley's (in press) model encourages self-assessment which would reduce bureaucratic practices and enable greater reflexivity and learning. Meta-learning competences can only be assessed by learners themselves. Professionals need support for this form of self-assessment such as through a staged approach to learning about learning (see chapter five).

I recommend that the TTA's approach to teachers' professional development be expanded to become developmental, and include understanding of the professional characteristics of the effective teacher (DENI 1993), encourage reflexivity and meta-learning practices. This would include an understanding of the processes of learning and the social, emotional, ethical and moral aspects of teachers' lives. This, I argue, would go some way towards an holistic view of the teacher. I also

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recommend a context specific approach which involves teachers' own self assessment, with feedback from peers.

Teachers' professional learning needs to be viewed as long-term and developmental, to overcome the present tendency to regard education as 'training', to be achieved in short, sharp bursts, directly related to policy implementation (Gilroy and Day 1993). I argue (Carnell 1998), that as well as opportunities to integrate personal and professional learning and reflection on practice, professional learning must extend beyond classroom work. Support from higher education organisations is crucial to support the personal and long-term professional needs of the teacher, in focusing on learning about learning, action research, collaborative contexts and organisational learning.

I underscore the importance of policy makers being made aware of the significance of the contexts in which teachers are working - a realisation that the actions, values, beliefs and moral codes can only be fully understood when the context in which they are framed is appreciated (Brookfield 1987). Effective professional learning programmes, in my definition, attend to the significance of change within particular contexts. Teachers need to identify their changes, construct their own understanding, understand themselves in relation to the change to enable a new perspective on their own learning and change requirements.

My research suggests that professional learning experiences need to enable teachers to be active agents rather than passive recipients of change. I believe it is also important to focus on teachers' constantly changing social reality in relation to their own values and experiences. In a period of increased uncertainty, external demands and contradictions are likely to continue. Current change can be considered to be one of the most important features of the world in which we live (Ruiz De Gauna et al 1995). Rapid social and educational change and its consequent confusion and uncertainty, puts teachers in positions for which they are unprepared (Schön 1987). My recommendations (Carnell 1998) parallel the view that educational reform must create the necessary conditions, support and initiatives if teachers are to pursue positive educational change themselves (Darling-Hammond 1995) and be seen as autonomous, responsible and accountable professionals 'who implement, rather than mediate, the curriculum' (Gilroy and Day 1993 p300).

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The General Teaching Council and teachers'
professional development

The power and influence of the TTA is considerable. It is timely that other bodies are forming to overcome the conflicts of interests between government initiatives and the professional interests of teachers. Self-regulating bodies aim to be independent sources of professional theory and practice and be self-regulating. A self-regulating profession 'must set, maintain and constantly look for ways to raise its own standards of practice, rather than having other people's standards imposed ... (giving) teachers the privilege and responsibility of establishing their own collective profession, so they are truly champions of educational reform' (Hargreaves 1997 p115).

The General Teaching Council (GTC) could be such a self-regulating body. The idea is not new. There has been a GTC in Scotland since 1965 and a GTC company (England and Wales) has been preparing the way. However, Aldrich (1998) warns of a problem. In terms of its composition and functions it has 'all the appearance of being another creature of Government' (Aldrich 1998). Even if teachers are in the majority, and have the right to appoint their own chair, Aldrich (1998) suggests that if its agenda is restricted, it may have no real power and will not be taken seriously.

I recommend the GTC takes an active role in challenging and informing national developments in teachers' professional learning. In order for this to be successful, members of the GTC themselves need to develop understanding of learning processes and have their own assumptions about teachers, the teacher's role, the learning process and the learning context challenged. I recommend that the GTC has a dual role in educating policy makers and teachers. From my research I found that within the present climate of increasing standardisation and functionalism, teachers themselves may adopt the discourse of competence-based professional development in identifying their needs, yet they identify complex problems and concerns which do not enter such a discussion. Therefore, the GTC has a role to play in expanding teachers' views about professional learning, supporting an holistic approach.

The GTC needs to take an inclusive stance towards teachers by addressing and representing their concerns through initiating research which draws on teachers' accounts of effective work-based and external, planned professional development experiences. Rather than taking a polarised position against government initiatives,

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the GTC needs to, for example, inform and work in partnership with the TTA and take an active role in accrediting Initial Teacher Education programmes, inform induction and other professional learning programmes; encourage the promotion of stronger intellectual preparation of teachers within universities 'as an antidote to the rampant utilitarianism of solely practical training' (Hargreaves and Evans 1997); and encourage radical and wide-ranging diversity of professional development experiences to suit local contexts.

From my research I have identified competing discourses of professional development and their underpinning assumptions regarding professionalism. The GTC has a specific role to play in creating and establishing:

• respect for teachers' autonomy
• radical new frameworks for professional learning
• professional standards for teaching
• codes of conduct.

This would mirror other non-teaching professional groups, such as medicine and law which have greater power in resisting government-led initiatives.

Inspection of schools

My research suggest that teachers think the OFSTED inspection has a negative impact (see chapter four). This mirrors other research findings in that the impact of intrusive official inspection processes 'contribute to teachers' deprofessionalisation and teacher stress' (Bridlecombe et al 1995). Excessive stress and loss of control mitigate against risk taking, yet these have been the effects of educational reforms in England and Wales (Cooper 1994). The manner in which inspections are carried out need to be congruent with a learning and educationally empowering philosophy.

Inspecting professional development provision is part of the inspection procedure identified in the handbook for the inspection of schools (OFSTED 1995). The new edition of the handbook is written in the light of evaluation and wide consultation and claims to set out the fundamentals of good inspection practice. It aims to produce better reports which are less of a burden to schools. The guidance on professional development in the handbook is narrow and reinforces the view that professional development is functionalist, focusing on the adequacy of induction for new staff, arrangements for teachers with new roles and responsibilities and appraisal. It further draws attention to the effectiveness of the staff development
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and INSET programme in motivating staff and in identifying and meeting individual and corporate needs. It suggests inspectors look for evidence of the contribution of professional development to the quality of teaching, rather than learning. This emphasis on teaching is consistent throughout the handbook. The only reference to 'learning' is to 'learning resources'. Individual, group and organisational learning is not mentioned.

It is unlikely that the form of inspection will change in the near future. Teachers and schools need to find ways in which they can support each other, so it can become a positive learning opportunity mirroring that which is proposed by Hargreaves and Evans (1997) 'a new process of rigorous and thoughtful conversation and dialogue, not one of incontestable judgement and hierarchical critique' (p5). Some aspects of the inspection could change. I recommend the OFSTED handbook is revised to reflect the complexity of professional development, learning and change. Inspectors could seek evidence in a variety of school documents in the way a school acknowledges learning complexity, for example, in policy documents, minutes of meetings, professional development plans and evaluations of professional learning experiences. Documents could be analysed for an explicit focus on: the school's approach to individual, group and organisational learning; the importance of the school as a context for professional learning; the value of different approaches to professional development, including those embedded in the workplace, such as action research; and the importance of collaborative approaches in all aspects of professional learning.

Through such analysis teachers would be treated as professional learners, not as technicians. Their professional expertise will be highlighted, and collaborative contexts will be valued. Traditional notions of teacher professionalism will be redefined through a breaking down of traditional individualistic cultures (Day 1994): 'Government and school policy may thus, through continuing dialogue between stakeholders, become at all times, although not always, at one with individually defined needs and supportive of teacher autonomy. In this way the move towards treating the teacher as technician may be prevented' (p300).

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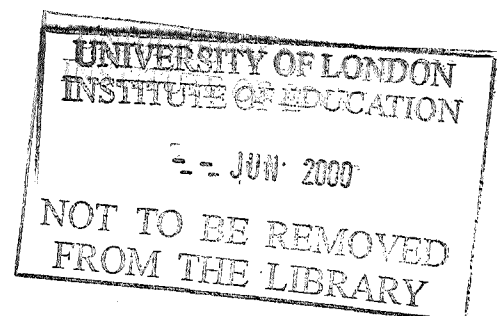
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