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Professional learning communities for inclusive pedagogy: What teacher talk in professional communities reveals about teacher professional identity and agency

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Professional learning communities for inclusive pedagogy: What teacher talk in professional communities reveals about teacher professional identity and agency

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A thesis submitted to the School of Education,
Faculty of Humanities,
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Supervisors
Prof. Elizabeth Walton
And
Prof. Karin Brodie

Johannesburg, September 2023

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Declaration

I, Wacango Muguro Kimani, declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and School of Education. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Signed: *WacangoKimani*

Date: 12 September 2023

Abstract

In-service teacher learning for inclusive pedagogy seeks to address the perceived lack of capacity for teaching in inclusive classrooms in South Africa. Research suggests that teachers feel underprepared for this task, and that the prevalent delivery models for this learning, workshops, and short courses, have done little to enable sustained inclusive practices.

This study took a new direction, arguing that simply acquiring knowledge and skills for inclusive teaching misses the need to focus on teacher professional identity and agency. The professional and institutional change required for teachers to be pedagogically responsive to a range of learners, demands that professional learning address teachers' immediate realities, be a long-term, school-based professional learning programme.

A three-year study in a full-service school in Johannesburg, South Africa, investigated teacher talk within professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs are situated in practice and can promote and sustain teachers' learning over an extended period. Wenger's (1998) theory of *learning as social practice* and Sfard and Prusak's (2005) theory of *identity as narrative* provided analytical insights into identity and agency in the PLCs. The subject focus of the PLCs was inclusive pedagogy, and the analysis was based on the Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Using a Critical interpretivism perspective, teacher talk in the PLCs and individual teacher interviews were analysed.

Analysis of teacher talk in relation to the IPAA revealed two themes of talk: Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. "Difference Talk" showed that the enactment of inclusion cannot be rigidly defined and demarcated in advance in every situation or in every instance or be abstracted from time and place. A nuanced interpretation of difference may help researchers avoid the binary distinctions about inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy and deficit interpretations about teachers' practices.

The findings show that even though teachers talked about enacting inclusive pedagogy they did not consider themselves inclusive educators. They implied that since they had not had 'special

education training' they could not consider themselves as inclusive educators despite saying that they had taught in an inclusive manner. Participation in the PLCs enabled teachers to negotiate meaning and create a coherent community. A coherent community allowed teachers to challenge their perspectives about teaching inclusively and to share their experiences.

This study contributes a conceptual understanding of the interplay between teachers' professional identity and the sociocultural contexts of PLCs, and how teacher talk can mediate teacher learning for inclusive pedagogy. The findings could be of interest to teacher educators in designing professional learning communities for inclusive pedagogy.

Key words: Professional learning community; Inclusive pedagogy; Teacher professional identity; Teacher professional agency.

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Publications emanating from my PhD study and experience

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Walton, E., Carrington, S., Saggers, B., Edwards, C., & Kimani, W. (2019). What matters in learning communities for inclusive education: a cross-case analysis. *Professional Development in Education*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2019.1689525: Published online: 11 Nov 2019.

Kadenge, E., Dison, L., Kimani, W., & Namakula, H. (2019). *Negotiating new ways of developing writing in disciplinary spaces: The changing role of writing consultants at the Wits School of Education Writing Centre.* Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus (SPiL Plus), 57, pp. 169-182.

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Abbreviations

CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOE	Department of Education
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
EU	European Union
FSS	Full-Service School
IPAA	Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action
ITE	Initial teacher education
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
PL	Professional Learning
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SBST	School-based support team
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
UN	United Nations
VVOB	Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance
WP6	*Education White Paper Six: special needs education - building an inclusive education and training system*
WSOE	Wits School of Education

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

> "You always look at us mothers...When we were doing a topic on birth rate and death rate, you changed the topics, and you speak about school-girl mothers. You said that you never trained to teach school-girl mothers. Do you know how offensive it feels? We feel out [ostracised]. You're making us feel left out of school while you are supposed to encourage … You're supposed to make us feel part of school. We are mothers, but we are still learners." (Kimani, 2014, p. 82)

These are the words of a young schooling mother. She was a participant in my previous research on inclusive education in two high schools in Johannesburg, South Africa. In this quote, the learner was expressing her frustrations about how a teacher treated the young schooling mothers in her school. In one school, one female teacher was responsible for helping all young mothers when they returned to school after having their babies. I was struck by the learners' experience with teachers who had a specific mandate to ensure the inclusion of the young mothers. The learners reported that teachers often said they were not 'trained'[1] to teach young mothers. Even though the young mothers had returned to school after delivering their babies, they experienced "school as constantly changing experience of inclusion, exclusion and marginalisation" (Kimani, 2014, p. 94).

Investigating educational exclusion and marginalisation is the starting point to implementing inclusive education (Slee, 2011). Inclusive education, which was established in South African in 2001 as a quest for justice and equal opportunities in education for children with disabilities, has broadened to mean the inclusion of any learner at risk of exclusion. This includes bridging the gap between numbers of school-age children and children enrolled and attending school. School enrolment and attendance in South Africa – the number and percentage of children aged seven to 17 attending an educational facility – is high. Most children – 98% or 11.3 million children – attended an education facility in 2018, but many would not complete their schooling (Hall,

[1] This thesis uses teacher learning rather than teacher training unless as a quote or citation.

2019). While this figure is a useful indicator of the state of education, it does not show how regularly children attended school, how they progressed through school and the quality of teaching and learning. 232,000 children aged 7 – 17 years were not attending school (Hall, 2019). The main reasons for non-attendance related to the quality of education, financial constraints, disability, and young pregnancy. These indicators have a bearing on the progress and state of inclusive education in the country. Legislative obstacles, policy imprecision, inadequate resources, and discriminatory attitudes towards children with disabilities are among the obstacles to realising the ideals of inclusion (Equal Education Law Centre, 2021; Engelbrecht et al., 2016; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007).

UNESCO (2005), which has promoted inclusive education as a strategy for Education for All (EFA), provided a framework that details how large numbers of children can be included in the school system. The framework defines inclusive education in relation to vulnerable, marginalised and excluded learners. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), and the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) formalised inclusive education as part of a social justice and rights agenda. Article 24: Education of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (UN, 2006) obligates nations to "ensure an inclusive education system at all levels" is accessible to persons with disabilities. Recognising that persons with disabilities were still excluded from education, United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted General Comment No. 4 to Article 24 that specifies what inclusive education means and provides guidance on how inclusion can be achieved (UN, 2016). The ratification of these international instruments indicates that a human rights approach to inclusive education is widely accepted internationally.

Teachers' fundamental role in the success of inclusive education is recognised in many countries (Engelbrecht & Savolainen, 2018). The teachers' role in the pursuit of educational inclusion and in mitigating marginalisation and exclusion of any learners can also be a declaration by teachers about how they identify themselves and the choices they make about their teaching practice. The young schooling mothers in the research I conducted previously, identified and acknowledged their own marginalisation and how the teacher contributed to their marginalisation. By telling her learners that she was not "trained to teach young mothers," the teacher seemed to indicate who an

inclusive teacher is and how such a teacher is 'trained.' The voice research with young schooling mothers also showed that the oft-cited conclusion about inclusive research in South Africa, that teachers need 'training' (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019; Stofile, 2008) continued to be relevant. Even though many organisations, including civil society, universities, and government departments, have responded to this need, the observation continues to be made (Materechera, 2020). The constant recommendation indicated that the need may not have been adequately met.

I was motivated to conduct this study on teacher professional learning for inclusive pedagogy after completing my previous study. I was motivated by the need for a different form of, and focus on, professional learning that could encourage teachers to become more inclusive. Firstly, I wondered whether professional learning could yield long-lasting results because teachers were reported not to embrace inclusive practices even after attending professional learning workshops (Walton et al., 2014). Secondly, among recommendations from my previous research was that inclusive education research needed to pay particular attention to "hidden" voices (Allan, 2007). While in my recommendation to listen to "hidden voices" primarily referred to learners whose voices are often omitted from inclusive research, I also considered how teacher voices could be heard in an unrestricted manner. I chose to examine teacher talk about inclusive pedagogy in professional learning communities (PLCs). Listening to teachers' relatively unhindered talk in PLCs enabled me to gain insights into teachers' experiences with inclusive pedagogy, and to capture perspectives that may not be articulated in any other way. With this apparent insider perspective, it is hoped this study will contribute an understanding of teacher professional identity and agency in the context of professional learning for inclusive pedagogy in South Africa.

1.2 Problem Statement

Teacher professional learning as a significant element in developing inclusive education systems has been identified globally as a vital lever for teachers to teach inclusively (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Teachers need to respond to the diverse educational needs of learners and enhance teaching and learning for all (Florian & Linklater, 2010). In South Africa, the *Education White Paper Six: Special Needs Education* (WP6) (Department of Education [DOE], 2001) states that teacher professional learning is a priority for the implementation of inclusive education in the country. More recently the *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and*

Development in South Africa (ISPFTED) (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011) has emphasised that inclusive teaching is critical in improving education in the country.

National and provincial departments of education, non-governmental organisations and universities have provided teacher professional learning for inclusion through workshops and short courses (Materechera, 2020; Walton, 2016b; Lessing & De Witt, 2007). The professional learning approaches, such as workshops and short courses, are relatively simple to implement and the providers are expected to equip many teachers for inclusive teaching in one offering. The content for many professional learning programmes for inclusion focuses on the barriers learners face in accessing education, with particular attention to the implementation of the Policy on *Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* (DBE, 2015). Some professional learning programmes have educated teachers on specific teaching strategies, such as curriculum differentiation and universal design for learning, which have been considered professional learning on inclusive pedagogy (Ayaya et al., 2021; Kempen & Steyn, 2016; Dalton et al, 2012). These programmes have paid attention to increasing teachers' skills and knowledge, including knowledge in special education (Materechera, 2020).

Research on teacher professional learning for inclusion showed that teachers were not taking up inclusive teaching (Walton et al., 2014). Immediately following some of the in-service learning workshops in South Africa, teachers responded positively, saying the learning programmes were valuable and that they were in support of the principles of inclusive education (Kempen & Steyn, 2016; Walton et al., 2014; Lessing & De Witt, 2007). Local and international research had also shown that there were teachers who have negative attitudes towards teaching inclusively even after attending short courses and workshops (Mamabolo et al., 2021; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). Some teachers in South Africa reported that they lacked the competence to teach inclusively (Walton et al., 2014) and that they needed more skills to be able to teach learners with diverse needs (Materechera, 2020). It appeared that workshops and short courses were not making a long-term difference to teachers' classroom practices in South Africa (Walton et. al., 2014, Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). Elsewhere, Woodcock and Hardy (2017) had showed that knowledge alone – especially knowledge on special education – did not necessarily engender inclusive teaching that considers all learners in a classroom.

Professional learning and research on inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy in South Africa had considered teacher perceptions and experiences, teacher attitudes and self-efficacy (Savolainen et al., 2012; Walton et al., 2014; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007; Lessing & de Witt, 2007). Studies had also shown that teachers' attitudes and identity had been shaped in collaborative learning in special and inclusive schools in South Africa (Kempen & Steyn, 2016; Swart & Oswald, 2008). PLCs had been recommended for professional learning in general (DBE, 2015) and as a possible model for inclusion (Walton, 2016b). Recent studies that continued to note the inadequate change in teachers' inclusive practice (Ayaya et al, 2021) indicated that a different approach to professional learning and a different research focus were needed for professional learning of inclusive pedagogy in South Africa.

Research on professional learning has more generally revealed that conventional professional learning approaches, such as workshops and short courses, are inadequate and fragmented (Walton et al, 2014; Borko, 2004). Locally and internationally, it has been established that teachers need extended periods of professional learning, especially in collaborative learning programmes, to understand and accept new concepts and practices (Walton, 2016b; Ainscow & Miles, 2011). On content of professional learning for inclusion, Florian and Walton (2018) argued that one way that the teachers could change their misconceptions about inclusive education and teach more inclusively would be to collaboratively learn and engage with inclusive pedagogy. Teacher professional identity and agency had been recognised as important focus in professional learning programmes that could enable teachers to learn new practices (Eteläpelto et al., 2014). Teachers' professional identity influences how teachers incorporate new knowledge into their classroom practices. Studies conducted on teacher agency (Lyons et al., 2016) and on teacher identity (McKay & Carrington, 2014) related to inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy, suggest that professional learning with such a focus could help teachers make choices to change in their classroom practices.

Teachers in South Africa teach in an education system that has gone through multiple and complex changes (Carrim, 2019). They have had to participate in several professional learning programmes, including workshops on inclusive pedagogy (Engelbrecht, 2020; Dalton, 2012). Inclusive

pedagogy as a relatively new approach to teaching and learning in South Africa was not part of the initial teacher education for many in-service teachers. Therefore, many teachers did not perceive themselves as educators capable of teaching inclusively, and recommendations indicated that collaborative professional learning for inclusive pedagogy is needed (Walton, et al, 2014). Therefore, I concluded that research on teacher professional learning needed to consider teachers' professional identity and agency in teachers' specific teaching context.

All professional learning influences teacher professional identity and agency to an extent (Eteläpelto et al., 2014), and as such professional learning for inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy that had been provided to teachers in South Africa could have influenced teacher professional identity and agency. However, there was scant evidence that research in South Africa had been focused on understanding teacher professional identity and agency for inclusive pedagogy in a collaborative learning programme. Since inclusive pedagogy as an approach was new in the country (Florian & Walton, 2018), understanding teachers' professional identity and professional agency for inclusive pedagogy required attention in research on professional learning. This could be a means to progress professional learning that would enable teachers to make inclusive choices about their classroom teaching practice, potentially helping them change their teaching approach for the benefit of all learners.

PLCs are a collaborative learning approach in which teachers can reflect on their classroom practices and will consequently influence how they perceive themselves and how they teach. PLCs are related to the teachers' immediate realities as they are school-based and are long-term professional learning programmes. PLCs have enabled teachers to reflect on ways of working together that support teachers to develop inclusive classroom practices in the Republic of Ireland (Brennan & King, 2021). Similarly, in South Africa, PLCs have been shown to influence teachers' professional identity and agency, and to help them improve their classroom practice (Chauraya, 2013; Pausigere, 2014).

Inclusive pedagogy as an approach, rather than as distinct classroom practices, could "disrupt" (Florian & Walton, 2018, p. 171) the assumptions and practices about inclusive teaching and learning in three major ways: thinking differently about learner difference; that difficulties in

learning are professional challenges for teachers; and that teachers can learn collaboratively about how to cooperate and teach inclusively. The Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) (Florian, 2014), a framework for understanding inclusive teaching, conceptualises inclusive teaching as being achievable by in-service teachers.

Teacher professional identity and agency are important focus for professional learning for inclusive pedagogy (Lyons et al., 2016; Swart & Oswald, 2008). Therefore, rather than focusing on understanding teachers' acquisition of knowledge and skills about inclusion, this thesis took a different approach to research on professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. I argued that teacher professional learning for inclusive pedagogy needs to be implemented as a change and collaborative learning process in PLCs. Such an approach would enable research of teachers' professional identity and agency in relation to inclusive pedagogy. The findings of such an investigation could be used to redesign professional learning and could enable teachers to implement an inclusive pedagogical approach. The collaborative learning in PLCs would present inclusive pedagogy as an approach attainable by all teachers, including those who have a mainstream initial teacher education (Florian & Walton, 2018).

1.3 Purpose Statement

Full-service schools in South Africa are expected to be the frontrunners for inclusion in the country (DBE, 2009). City Primary School[2], a full-service school in Gauteng, was the site for this research. The school had learners with diverse educational profiles, including learners identified as having special educational needs. PLCs on inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy, had been established in the school, as part of a project with the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The project that was built on shifting the professional learning content from identifying and mitigating the barriers to education to considering the pedagogical solutions that considered the learning of all children. The project had also shifted the form of professional learning from the workshops to PLCs.

[2] 'City Primary School' is a pseudonym. All proper nouns mentioned in this thesis, including in the Appendices, are pseudonyms.

The professional learning project at City Primary School provided the context for research on inclusive pedagogy and teacher professional identity and agency. I argue that data on teachers' professional identity and agency gathered in PLCs at City Primary School could reveal cogent information on professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. From my knowledge, no research had been carried out in a full-service school that had investigated teacher professional identity and agency in PLCs that discussed inclusive pedagogy. Therefore, this research will provide new insights that could be used promote inclusive pedagogy in full-service schools. This study will fill the gap in research related to professional learning for inclusive pedagogy in South Africa.

This study investigated teachers' talk related to inclusive pedagogy in PLCs and considered what that talk revealed about teachers' professional identity and agency during and after participating in PLCs. The purpose of this research was to examine teachers' talk in PLCs and considered:

- the nature of PLCs for inclusive pedagogy in terms of Wenger's (1998) dimensions of community;
- how teachers engaged with inclusive pedagogy, in relation to Florian's (2014) IPAA; and
- what the talk revealed about teachers' professional identity and agency.

The study was not undertaken with a naive notion that change, especially teachers' renegotiation of their professional identity and agency, would be an easy proposition. Korthagen's (2004) advice was therefore taken seriously that "identity change is a difficult and sometimes painful process", and often there seems to be little change at all in how teachers view themselves (Korthagen, 2004, p. 85). As such, the investigation was carried out after PLCs at City Primary School had run for three years. Specific details of this process are provided in Chapter Four.

1.4 Research Questions

The aim of the study was to analyse teacher talk over three years in PLCs at City Primary School. Three research questions guided the study:

1. How do teachers talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?
2. What does teacher talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy reveal about teacher professional identity and agency?
3. What is the nature of PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?

1.5 Research Methodology

Inclusive education originated from a critical perspective to reveal, challenge and disrupt assumptions that reinforced an exclusionary status quo that marginalised and excluded various learner populations (Slee, 2011). A critical stance that connects schooling to the wider historical and societal contexts was an important consideration to analysing teacher talk in professional learning communities. The perspective enabled attention to teacher talk about practices that may impede access, participation and achievement of all children (Walton, 2016b). Pedagogy is the "frontline" for inclusive education (Slee, 2011, p. 161). When inclusive education is discussed from its roots as a critical endeavour, it is a drive to ensure that ***all*** children are provided with quality education (Walton, 2016b; Slee, 2011; Brantlinger, 1997). Therefore, teachers speaking about their pedagogical practices in relation to assumptions that may foster marginalisation and exclusion were an important analytical lens.

Using a Critical Interpretivist perspective, I interpreted teachers' talk in PLCs as lived experiences of how they made sense of their world. With a reflective approach, I aimed to reveal and disrupt assumptions that reinforce an unequal status quo that was antithetical to inclusive education. By so doing I interpreted teachers' talk about their classroom practices within broader educational structures. Critical Interpretivism, which draws from both the Interpretive and Critical Theory paradigms, responds to criticism that interpretivism needs to move beyond understanding lived experiences to questioning the origins of agents' interpretations, with educational change as a goal.

Interpretivism's "use of language and subjective consciousness" and Critical Theory's "social critique of power structures" (Pozzebon, Rodriguez & Petrini, 2014, p. 295) are linked by textual interpretation. The texts in this study included transcripts of PLCs and individual teacher interviews. To be critically interpretive, I also sought to understand teachers' talk about their pedagogical practices drawing on individual teacher's interpretations and included my reflective account. The teachers' interpretations and my own reflection connected to the broader factors of schooling structures and research.

1.6 Definition of commonly used terms

The following terms, which have varying definitions in literature, are defined here to indicate how I use them in this study.

1.6.1 Inclusion and inclusive education

"Inclusion" and "inclusive education" are used interchangeably in this thesis to broadly refer to the presence and education of *all* children in regular/mainstream schools. The WP6 defines inclusion and inclusive education separately but uses the two terms similarly. Inclusive education comprises "acknowledging that all children and youth can learn" (DoE, 2001, p. 16) and inclusion involves "supporting all learners… so that the full range of learning needs can be met" (DoE, 2001, p. 17). Similarly, Slee (2018) uses the two terms interchangeably. In discussing what inclusive education entails, Slee (2018) states that, "inclusive education refers to securing and guaranteeing the right of all children to access, presence, participation and success in their local regular school" (p. 8) and concludes: "Put simply, inclusion of all children and young people is a prerequisite for an education in and for democracy" (p. 9).

1.6.2 Inclusive pedagogy

Various authors have used the term inclusive pedagogy. In this thesis I use the term specifically with Florian's (2014) IPAA framework.

1.6.3 Person first language

The preference for person first language, such as learners with disabilities is used in this thesis. This is in line with the CRPD (UN, 2006) (This language is also used instead of learners with special needs).

1.6.4 Teacher Education and Professional Learning

Teacher education is used as an all-encompassing heading for all forms of teacher learning. This covers the continuum of teacher education comprising initial teacher education for pre-service teachers, induction of beginning teachers, and professional learning for in-service teachers.

In the teaching profession, teacher education is noted to be in a life-long, professional continuum (McMahon, Forde & Dickson, 2015). All teacher education engages student-teachers and

participants in professional learning across the continuum of teacher education. Pre-service and untrained teachers, beginning teachers and in-service teachers are all engaged in professional learning. There are various terms used to refer to the learning for in-service teachers:

- In-service teacher training
- In-service teacher professional learning
- Continuing/continual/continuous professional development
- Teacher training
- Teacher learning
- Teacher development.

The different combinations indicate the "conceptual underpinnings of the various endeavours" (Walton, et al., 2014, p. 320). This study uses "professional learning" to refer to in-service teacher professional learning, and to an active process in which teachers "refresh or upgrade their professional knowledge, skills and practices in the course of their employment" (UNESCO, 2019, p. 119). Professional learning covers initial teacher education, induction of beginning teachers and in-service teacher education. Initial teacher professional education may be offered to pre-service teachers and to untrained teachers who are already teaching. In-service teacher professional education is offered to teachers as continuing professional development.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The study is divided into nine chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter outlines the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and purpose of the study. It begins with a background to the study, related to my previous research with young schooling mothers.

Chapter Two: Teacher education for inclusion

Undoubtedly, the teacher's role in implementing inclusive education in South Africa is vital. In discussing professional learning for inclusive education in this country, I discuss the predominant approaches, including the content, format, and focus for/on teachers in professional learning for inclusion. The discussion of findings from previous research on professional learning on inclusion

theory informed this study.

Chapter Three: Professional learning for inclusive pedagogy – A Conceptual Framework

"The conceptual framework is a theory" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 40) that informed the design of my study. Ravitch and Riggan's (2012) explanation of the conceptual framework is used to present the theory and the relationships between my epistemological worldview, the key concepts, and the theories explored in the study. The conceptual framework argues that teachers could shift their professional identity and agency are important concepts in research on professional learning for inclusive pedagogy.

Chapter Four: The PLC Project at 'City Primary School'

This chapter details the content of each PLC, provides an overview of teacher interviews and describes my engagement at City Primary School. I also discuss my positionality and reflect on my identity and my experience teaching inclusive classrooms.

Chapter Five: Methodology

The philosophical underpinning of the study begins Chapter Five, with a discussion on how a critical perspective of inclusive education led to framing this study with a Critical Interpretivist perspective. I also discuss the concept of "framework". The data collection methods and the process for data analysis are presented. The ethical considerations, the measures of validity and trustworthiness, provide readers with the processes with which to attest the study.

Chapter Six: Teacher talk on inclusive pedagogy

Data analysis begins with findings about how teachers talk about inclusive pedagogy. I describe the two elements of teacher talk, Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk, as a counterpoint: two voices that complement each other and also develop independently. From this finding, I point to ways the IPAA could be considered in the South African context.

Chapter Seven: Teacher professional identity and agency

This chapter looks at teacher professional identity and agency as understood and interpreted from how teachers talk about themselves when they discuss inclusion. Another metaphor, a productive

dissonance, captures the way teachers see themselves as not inclusive educators but also state they did make efforts to teach inclusively.

Chapter Eight: Teacher learning in PLCs

This chapter explains how the Wenger's (1998) dimensions of community: mutual engagement, shared repertoire and joint enterprise, were observed from the PLC interactions. A coherent community was observed because teachers created an "indigenous enterprise" (Wenger, 1998, p. 19) that had a collective intention to identify as a community and was committed over time to collectively negotiate learning.

Chapter Nine: Discussions and recommendations

The conclusion presents the limitations of this study, including how they were mitigated to safeguard credibility of the findings. The three research questions that guided the study are answered with a summary of the findings of the study. A musical term, an imperfect cadence, end the chapter, after I state the unique contribution of the study and give suggestions for policy, practice and further exploration.

Chapter Two: Literature Review – Teacher Education for Inclusion

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter One I argued that professional learning for inclusive pedagogy would be a vital lever for the advancement of inclusive education in South Africa. Government departments, academic institutions and civil societies have developed and offered teacher education programmes for inclusion. Accounts of the programmes and subsequent research have been published. In this chapter, I review a selection of published literature on teacher education for inclusion to determine how my study contributes to the conversation on professional learning for inclusive education.

Among the goals of professional learning for inclusion has been bridging the gap between what inclusion is and what teachers need to know, do and be (Rouse, 2008) so that inclusive education can be achieved. However, there are different definitions of inclusive education, and they determine the content, focus and form of teacher education for inclusion. The various definitions also mean that the expectations of teachers' practice and their learning needs are wide-ranging. Therefore, this review will begin by exploring the different ways inclusion has been defined. To link the ideals of inclusive education to the expectations of teachers and teacher education, I discuss the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE), 2012) in relation to other teacher education frameworks and how I use it to review teacher education literature. A discussion of teacher education for inclusive education traces the international trends, followed by the trends in South Africa. The conclusion presents the key concepts identified from the review and comprise components of professional learning for inclusive pedagogy that may not have been specified or been a focus in previous literature. The gaps and recommendations identified from the literature review informed the conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017), which is discussed in Chapter Three.

2.2 Inclusive education

Inclusive education began as a response to perceived discrimination against children with disabilities learning in special schools. The disability movement was the impetus from which inclusive education developed. Parents, teachers, and advocates for learners with disabilities called

for access and full participation of all learners with disabilities in regular schools (Armstrong et al., 2011). From the late 1960s, educationists in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia began to question the premises for segregated education of learners with disabilities. Initially, they called for integration of such learners into mainstream schools rather than be educated in special schools (Graham, 2020). However, integration was not widely implemented because necessary changes were not being made to the educational system in order to make learning effective for learners with disabilities (Topping & Maloney, 2005). The request for changes gave rise to the development of inclusive education and debates about how best to educate learners with disabilities. In the 1990s, the concept of inclusive education was broadened. The debate between supporters and opponents of inclusion of children with disabilities and others categorised as having special educational needs into mainstream schools (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Brantlinger, 1997) expanded to being also about all children seen as vulnerable to exclusion and the 'Education for All' movement (Ainscow et al., 2006).

The 'Salamanca Statement' (UNESCO, 1994) formalised inclusive education as the ideal for education systems worldwide (UN, 2016). Since 1994, inclusion has been developed through changes in national educational policies, and expanded in research and practice. The Statement indicates that educational exclusion and discrimination, especially against children with disabilities, can be tackled by transforming mainstream/regular schools into inclusive schools. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN, 2006), in particular Article 24, has further promoted inclusive education. Article 24 of the CRPD covers "the right of persons with disabilities to education" and "the right to an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning" (UN, 2006, p. 16). The core features of inclusive education include a whole-systems approach, support for teachers and respect for all members of the learning community (UN, 2016).

Even though the UN conventions and declarations have driven and guided national policies, research and practice, there are ongoing debates about what constitutes inclusion as well as what counts as an inclusive school (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). These debates arise from the absence of a single definition of inclusive education that is universally accepted. Inclusion has been defined and described in various ways, including as a "notion", an "ideology" and a "concept" (Walton,

2016a). The varied definitions of inclusion reflect different ideological positions (Walton & Ruszynak, 2017) or discourses (Dyson, 1999). Dyson names two discourses: the discourse that justifies the need for inclusive education as a right to education for all; and the discourse that focuses on the implementation of inclusion, discussing pragmatic considerations on the characteristics of programmes. Both discourses call for the critical analysis of special education. Inclusive education has also been discussed along various other discourse paradigms including social justice discourse and disability discourse (Phasha et al.,2017).

There is evidence that from whatever stance is taken, inclusive education is an international and national ideal. Most countries around the world have embraced inclusive education as a vision for education (UN, 2016). The multiple meanings of inclusive education range from mere placement of learners with disabilities in a general education classroom to the "transformation of the philosophy, values, and practices of entire educational systems" (Artiles et al., 2006, p. 260). Slee's (2009) tracing of the development of inclusive education as not just about the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their neighbourhood school states that it is about the "reconstructions of schools to reflect and represent the diverse identities within their communities" (Slee, 2009, p. 179). Ainscow and Miles (2008) state that inclusive education needs to be viewed as a principled approach to education that fosters the presence and participation of learners, the restructuring of policies and practices, and the achievement of all learners, in particular those vulnerable to exclusionary pressures. This conceptualisation pays attention to the factors that marginalise and exclude any learner and a responsiveness of schools to ensure that learners have formal and epistemological access (Morrow, 2007) to school and schooling. This is a stance to counter the injustice against children who are not "smiled upon" (Slee, 2011, p. 42), those children who do not perform and behave as expected and children who are othered, when we refer to regular schools for the undefinable "normal" child (Baglieri et al., 2011). The broader definition of inclusion considers the schooling of learners with disabilities and learning differences, and other marginalised groups in regular classrooms while paying attention to a learners' individual needs so that no child is marginalised, alienated, shamed, embarrassed, rejected or excluded (Forlin, 2012).

Inclusive education is now globally accepted as a necessary concept in educational development (UN, 2016). However, in the past, many countries did not align policy and practice, and inclusion was described as a "buzz-word in social and education policy" (Evans & Lunt, 2002, p. 2). As governments respond to international conventions that call for accountability on the progress of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reduction in educational inequality and inequity, they have not concomitantly matched their response with the necessary fiscal allocations (Forlin, 2012). There has been concern that school systems focused on standards and competitive "league tables" could be neither inclusive nor could they adequately teach learners with disabilities (Sharma et al., 2013; Slee, 2011). International assessments and calls for improved learner outcomes have also not matched the need to focus on educational inequality and inequity. Instead, the focus of national educational strategies has been on international ratings such as on the PISA (Slee, 2011). Florian (2019) calls for a reorientation of special education from individual assessment based on a normative centre to thinking of special education as a response to individual difficulty by "extending what is ordinarily available to everyone" (Florian, 2019, p. 11). She notes that exclusion and marginalisation is not only about disabilities but a wide range of individual and societal circumstances that a learner could be exposed to.

The long-standing debates about defining inclusive education may have in recent times been assuaged with an acceptance that a context may determine how inclusion is defined. There is now a shift to accept the contextual interpretations and definitions of inclusive education, including theorising the unique African context (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018; Phasha et al., 2017). Inclusive education has been considered largely a Western concept (Sharma et al., 2013) and discussions in South Africa state that "dominant conceptions of inclusive education in high-income countries should not be uncritically introduced elsewhere" (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018, p. 9). Definitions ought to align with the context in which, and the community by whom, the concept is defined (Ainscow et al., 2006). Nonetheless, the contextual understanding of inclusion have also been contested, with Goransson and Nilholm (2014) stating that the different understandings of inclusion should be linked to specific schools and their reasonable accomplishments in terms of inclusion.

Inclusive education as the right to safe, quality education and learning throughout life is an approach that takes a stand for a more just and equitable society. This requires commitment to identifying structures and power that exclude children, with particular attention to those in vulnerable situations (Slee, 2018). Therefore, to successfully implement inclusive education requires systemic changes and cultural transformation involving teachers, administrators, parents, learners and communities (Subban, 2006). This approach calls for change in schools, to make the "physical, social, cultural and educational arrangement" suitable for all learners (Slee, 2011, p. 13). Among the key features of an inclusive school is ideally a neighbourhood school with a "zero-rejection" policy, that accepts all children to learn in regular, heterogenous classrooms with same-age peers (Slee, 2018). Other features include a curriculum that is adaptable and can be modified so that all children follow a substantively similar programme of study (Slee, 2018). Teachers also enable learning with varied and responsive modes of instruction. Inclusion needs to be discussed as a process for transforming mainstream schools to support all learners by removing barriers in the environment, communication, curriculum, teaching socialisation and assessment at all levels.

2.2.1 Measuring inclusive education

When the starting point to inclusive education is the right of all children to quality schooling with their peers then the need to know how many children have been registered and have accessed school is one measure for the progress of inclusion. But because inclusion involves more than access to school grounds, various frameworks to assess the implementation and success of inclusion have been developed. At the international level, UNESCO's (2017) *Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education*, provides criteria for ongoing evaluation of national educational systems aligned with all pertinent UN conventions and Sustainable Development Goals. At a national level Sharma et al., (2017), developed indicators not only to assess progress but also as a catalyst for inclusive education in the Pacific Islands region. The indicators include national policies and enrolment to employment of people living with disabilities. At a school level, the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) has been used to develop and evaluate inclusion and has also been used to assess institutional culture in a South African university's school of teacher education (Moosa & Bekker, 2022). To guide teacher education the European-developed *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) has been described as "sufficiently generic" for varied

contexts including South Africa (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018, p. 183). A discussion of the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* will be presented under 'Teacher education for inclusion'.

Quantitative and qualitative indicators on the progress and impact of inclusive education include being a lever to transforming societal attitudes towards people with disabilities (Sharma et al., 2013) and as a catalyst for enrolment to higher education and improved life outcomes for learners with and without disabilities in Europe (EASNIE, 2018). A teacher's positive attitude to learners of varying abilities is an important factor in promoting inclusive classroom practice. Support to teachers with appropriate learning programmes and resources in their classroom practices leads to positive learning outcomes for all learners (Florian, 2019).

Challenges to inclusion as a "Western concept" (Loreman et al., 2014) have generated discussion for contextual parameters to locally assess inclusion (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018). While contextual histories and environments determine how inclusion is defined and practised, teacher educators are however still urged to identify international examples for use in their specific contexts (Wray et al., 2022). The influence and tensions of international perspectives in local contexts creates challenges in Africa's schooling and inclusion practices (Phasha, Mahlo & Dei, 2017). In the next section, I discuss how inclusion has been conceptualised in South Africa.

2.3 Inclusive education in South Africa

During the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns regarding the exclusion of learners prompted the publication of a disaggregated figure that over 750,000 children aged 7 – 17 years old were out of school in South Africa (UNICEF, 2021). While this figure was revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when exclusion was inordinately high, the exclusion of learners from the South African school system compares unfavourably with the 98% official enrolment in primary school (Majoko et al., 2018). They added that statistics are inconsistent but need to be considered when discussing the state of inclusive education in the country. Other indications that impact the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa include legislative obstacles, policy imprecision, inadequate resources and discriminatory attitudes towards children with disabilities (Mamabolo et al., 2021; Equal Education Law Centre, 2021; Donohue & Bornman, 2014 ; Englebrecht, 201; Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007).

Inclusive education was formally launched through the WP6 in 2001 (DoE, 2001) and has been supported by various guidelines (DBE, 2008, 2009; 2010). The policy guides a unified education system to address the previous racially segregated apartheid education system, with particular reference to the inclusion of learners with disabilities and special educational needs into mainstream/regular schools. In South Africa, inclusive education policy acknowledges that all children can learn, and all need support and the education system should foster attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and learning environments that meet the needs of all learners (DoE, 2001). Even though the policy has bound inclusive education in South Africa, its idealism and contradictions have been challenged as not being realistic with the contextual complexities in the country (Engelbrecht et al., 2016; Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

While the WP6 and other guidelines frame inclusion in South Africa, research and practice have defined inclusive education with varying "accents" (Walton, 2016a, p. 61) including as school improvement to ensure access to all and a responsiveness to all learning needs; as system-wide restricting to meet the diverse needs in the general classroom and provide appropriate support to learners; and as a concern for equity through addressing the impediments to access, participation and belonging (Walton, 2016a). The original view of inclusive education as being concerned with the inclusion of learners with disabilities and special educational needs in mainstream schools is still prevalent in South Africa (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, Tlale, 2015).

WP6 seeks to combat educational exclusion through a continuum of schools and the placement of learners in different schools based on the level of support that a learner may need. Learners needing low to medium support may be schooled in mainstream schools that have been converted into full-service schools. Full-service schools are regular/mainstream schools that have a range of resources and professionals to support a diverse school population, including learners with mild and moderate disabilities (DBE, 2010). Special schools are meant for children with high support needs and also serve as resource centres to support full-service and mainstream schools.

While Slee (2011) argued that special education is based on a deficit model that marginalises learners, Taylor (2014) posited that special schools in South Africa provide tools and necessary

support to learners who struggle academically and could provide the only opportunity for children with disabilities to be in school. Another arrangement for learners who require additional support is to be taught by remedial or special-needs teachers in separate classes from their peers (Walton et al., 2009). These arrangements are meant to mitigate and overcome barriers to learning and development. Barriers to learning and development, the preferred terminology to "special needs", puts a focus on identifying conditions that prevent learners from participating and succeeding in school. This concept emphasises that the education and training system must change and accommodate all learners' needs rather than look for what is wrong with the learner (DoE, 2001). The barriers can include extrinsic barriers such as an inflexible curriculum, discriminatory attitudes and poverty, or intrinsic barriers such as disabilities and impairments.

Even though contestations concerning definitions and interpretations of inclusive education are also evident in South African literature there is acknowledgement that children are excluded and marginalized. This has led to investigating practices that impede access, participation and achievement of all children (Walton, 2016). Among the principles that guide the WP6 are "human rights and social justice for all learners, equal access to an inclusive education system, equity and redress" (DoE, 2001, p. 5). These principles are meant to address exclusion and marginalisation, fitting inclusive education within its historical development as a critical engagement with educational injustice. This position starts with identifying and examining how schooling excludes and marginalises children. The literature on inclusive education in South Africa is often concerned with the inclusion of learners with disabilities (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). There has been a disproportionate and excessive use of the Bronfenbrenner's (bio) ecosystemic theoretical framework and the medical model in the continuum of support for learners who require additional support (Engelbrecht, 2020). The research models do not address the power and equity concerns in local contexts. The broader understanding of inclusion as an equity concern covers the intersectionality of disadvantage and educational exclusion, in and out of school, and goes beyond children with disabilities to all individuals and groups who experience barriers to access, participation and achievement. By applying different methodologies, researchers can deepen the understanding of exclusion, including how the intersectionality between social institutions and identities shows the "dynamics of exclusion and inclusion" (Slee, 2018, p. 45). The dynamics of schooling and identities affect a wide range of schooling populations, such as scholarship

recipients attending affluent schools (Geyer & Walton, 2015), and young schooling mothers (Kimani, 2014).

The foregoing exploration covers many concepts meant to promote and establish an inclusive educational system. The manner in which teachers and teacher educators can use the concepts has been debated and discussed locally (Sayed et al., 2020; Savolainen et al., 2012) and internationally (Florian, 2020; Forlin & Sin, 2017). In the following section, I will begin with a background of general teacher education, identifying how the need for reform was addressed, followed by a discussion on the *The Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) and how it informs my discussion on teacher education for inclusion.

2.4 Teacher education: General overview

Teaching as a profession indicates a specialised and technical knowledge base; a service ethic and standards that are published by national governments; "a collective identity and a level of professional autonomy" (Stoll & Louis, 2007, p. 2). As a professional pursuit, teaching is guided by national goals and values, with politics, history and culture playing a decisive role in how it is structured (Craig, 2016). Teacher education is conceptualised as a professional learning continuum from initial preparation for pre-service teachers, to induction for career entry, newly qualified teachers and early-career teachers and finally, continuous learning throughout a teaching career for in-service teachers (Fieman-Nemser, 2001). While pre-service learning imparts the necessary knowledge and skills to start a career, it is but a foundation for future learning (Beck & Kosnik, 2017). Teacher learning for in-service teachers has often been referred to as continuous professional development or professional learning for learning opportunities offered throughout a career to meet the demands of continual reforms in education (Timperley, 2011).

Professional learning "promotes the attributes of the profession" (Walton et al., 2014, p. 320). This study uses "professional learning" to refer to in-service teacher professional learning, and to an active process in which teachers "refresh or upgrade their professional knowledge, skills and practices in the course of their employment" (UNESCO, 2019, p. 119). A professional learning programme is multifaceted, comprising participation of individual teachers, teacher educators and institutions and includes policy, planning and design of learning activities. Professional learning

aligns with the conceptualisation of teachers as agents of their learning. It "implies an internal process in which [teachers] create professional knowledge through interaction with professional [information] in a way that challenges their previous assumptions and creates new meanings" (Timperley, 2011, p. 4-5). Teacher professional learning implies teachers' "motivation to know rather than someone else's desire to tell" (Timperley, 2011, p. 5). As teachers learn, they increase their focus on improving the learning and well-being of their learners.

The complex nature of professional learning throughout the continuum is fragmented by insufficient linkages between the stages in the continuum (Menter et al., 2017). Even though teacher educators have been more focused on providing initial teacher education the changes to policy has meant a growing need for reform for professional learning for in-service teachers. The continuum is often broken at induction of newly qualified teachers because this area has received very little attention. Internationally, induction has not been a "political priority" and forms a "missing link in the continuum" (Mayer et al., 2021). The fragmentation creates gaps between theory and practice and the contextual realities of the profession (Mayer et al., 2021). As teacher professional learning has not functioned as a continuum, learning to teach has been described as an iterative process that is also messy and recursive (Mayer et al., 2021).

Teacher education is a social and political construct (Placier et al., 2016) and is a complex and fast-moving field (Florian, 2021). As an ongoing process, the professional learning continuum is a wide area of study. Teacher education has been aligned to different learning theories that determine design, content, and activities (Kennedy, 2015). In addition to varying theoretical and conceptual underpinnings, there are other factors that are used to ascertain the quality and effectiveness of teacher education programmes. Parameters set by government priorities can include teacher employment rates and retention and accountability measures such as learner success in national examinations (Mayer, 2017). Being cognizant of the contextual and conceptual complexities avoids making simplified recommendations for change, such as wholesale copying the policies and practices of other countries (Placier et al., 2016). A comparative analysis of five disparate nations, including South Africa, has value. Comparing and learning from other countries shows up commonalities, such as the value of teachers for political leaders to achieve their ends, but also highlights differences (Placier et al., 2016). An international comparative study of the

history of teacher education in five countries, including South Africa, Finland, the USA, Chile, and Singapore, selected for their variation and one country per continent showed that South African teachers who have struggled with the political structures have reproduced inequality.

In the following section I present some pertinent issues in South African teacher education that have had a bearing on the nation's teacher education for inclusion.

2.5 Teacher education in South Africa

Teachers in South Africa teach in an education system that has gone through multiple and complex changes (Carrim, 2019). Since 1994, several legislation and policy statements have had a hand in restructuring a fragmented system of many disparate colleges of education that fostered racial inequality with different teacher education curricula. The legislative and policy frameworks that guide teacher education range from the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996) and the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a), to the White Paper on Education and Training (RSA, 1995), the Norms and Standards for Educators (RSA, 2002), and the most recently revised Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) (DHET, 2015). Most recently has been the revision by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) of the national professional teaching standards (SACE, 2018) to respond to the societal and schooling changes in the country. Noting that the country's education system is "hampered by persistent inequality, high learner drop-out rates, and variable teaching quality, the standards provide a common understanding for professional teaching practice" (SACE, 2018, p. 5).

The various reforms and revisions to the national school curriculum have placed far-ranging challenges on teacher education. These include a critique of the dichotomy of knowledge and practice. With very few teachers being taken through a formalised programme of induction (Kadenge, 2021), newly qualified teachers are apparently inadequately prepared for the real schooling world (Venkat & Osman, 2012). Moving teacher education from local teacher training colleges to universities has been described as a loss to the profession (Lemmer & van Wyk, 2010) and is cited as a reason for the disconnection between teachers' academic learning and the realities in South African schools (Venkat & Osman, 2012). Institutions, such as provincial departments of education, can provide courses with the South African Council for Educators' (SACE) approval

(National Planning Commission, 2011). SACE has developed standards for teaching practice for institutions to abide by (SACE, nd).

Results from international and national learner assessments have been used to assess teachers and measure teaching in many countries (Craig, 2017) including in South Africa (Taylor, 2021; Kanjee & Moloi, 2014). Such gauges do not take account of the significant inequalities among learners and schools, teacher shortages and the low content knowledge of some teachers (Venkat & Osman, 2012). Since many teachers currently in service were educated during the apartheid era, the legacy of poor education for African teachers impacts their performance today (Chisholm, 2012). Two policies that were prevalent during the apartheid era, the inferior Bantu Education for Africans and Christian National Education, had a profound influence on teacher education, as teachers were educated to reinforce the separatist ideology of the era and to teach learners to remain in the status the regime accorded them according to their race (Placier et al., 2016).

The constant calls for in-service teacher education, the "well-worn complaint" (Walton, 2015, p. 175) because of the paradigm shift towards inclusion (Forlin, 2010) does not only stem from general education reforms. Prior to 1994, teacher education locally and internationally, was provided for the "generalist teacher" and the "special education teacher" (Forlin, 2010). The latter was provided to only white teachers in South (Engelbrecht, 2020). While the bifurcation of teacher education was apparent the world over, reforms for inclusion in South Africa, disrupted this division with the introduction of integrated teacher education models and providing separate inclusive education courses in both initial and in-service teacher learning programmes (Sayed et al., 2020).

In the next section, I discuss the development of teacher education for inclusion, providing both international and South African perspectives.

2.6 Teacher education for inclusion

Research on inclusion and on professional learning, constantly recommend teacher education for inclusion (Florian & Camedda, 2020; Slee, 2018). National educational systems have responded to the urgent need to address increasingly diverse classrooms by revising legislation, redrawing

policy, and implementing varied school and teaching practices. Policy changes for learners with disabilities in Australia, the USA and the Pacific regions have increased awareness among educators. Yet, policy changes have not made significant improvements to the education of learners with disabilities (de Bruin, 2019; Sharma et al., 2016). Teacher education has been identified as a significant lever for implementing inclusive education and for the successful practice of inclusive pedagogy (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). It is also one of the keys to developing inclusive schools. The Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) highlights the potential of inclusive schools to counter inequity and discrimination, especially towards people living with disabilities. Teacher education for inclusion has been among the enactments and has meant the re-evaluation of all teacher education models to reflect political and policy commitments with new theory and methodological approaches, teacher competencies and attitudes, and school practicalities of inclusive education (EASDNE, 2012). New school and classroom approaches have been developed with the collaboration of teacher education institutions (Florian, 2012). To this end, many countries have enacted legislative changes on national minimum requirements for initial teacher education and requirement for professional learning at induction and for in-service teachers to include skills and knowledge regarding learners with disabilities and inclusion in general (Forlin, 2012).

Inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy reframe the outdated reasoning in curriculum and teaching practice that "one-size-fits-all". The aims of teacher education for inclusive education should include equipping teachers with necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to think pedagogically in order to address diverse learners' needs. Florian and Rouse (2009) suggested that teacher education needs to "prepare people to enter a profession, which accepts individual and collective responsibility for improving the learning and participation for all children" (p. 596). The main challenge is to develop teachers with the "understandings, skills, critical sensibilities and contextual awareness" that would ensure access, acceptance and participation and the optimal achievement of all learners (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013, p. 320). Teacher education for inclusion has involved programmes on valuing learner diversity, learners' support, and working with specialist professionals with goals to develop inclusive teachers that align with inclusive education goals (EASNIE, 2019). Teachers also need to act as agents of change (Pantić & Florian, 2015),

even though this is “a delicate and contested process because it involves values” (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018, p. 182).

Pre-service and in-service teacher education for inclusive education has received attention with research into the content, pedagogy and format necessary for inclusive teaching (Florian & Camedda, 2020; Waitoller & Artilles, 2013; Forlin, 2012). Improving teacher education has required considering how changes to national education curriculum, pedagogy and the practical aspects of delivering courses will address key competencies. Teacher educators debate the competencies necessary for a teacher to be a successful inclusive teacher. Profiles of an inclusive teacher indicate the values, competencies, knowledge, skills and abilities that an inclusive teacher needs to learn, do and have. Loreman’s (2010) essential attributes for inclusive teachers and the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012), developed in Canada and Europe, respectively, have been used in different contexts to research teachers’ inclusive practices and professional learning for inclusion (Finkelstein et al., 2021; Walton, 2016b).

Teacher education for inclusion faces several challenges. There are debates about the content of courses including what distinguishes special education from inclusive education (Florian, 2019). Contextual matters that impact providing teacher education for inclusion comprise few practical opportunities in schools. Institutional challenges include low priority in fiscal allocations to develop courses (Wray et al., 2022). This means that contextually relevant inclusion curricula that require research are not prioritised (Florian, 2020). Universities have also designed courses for the employment market and fiscal gains. Teacher education is not as lucrative as courses linked to entrepreneurship (Forlin, 2012).

Inclusive teacher educators have to contend with the systematic challenges and with teacher attitudes. Even though teachers are aware of silent exclusionary and marginalisation pressures that learners face within the classroom, they perceive that the changes mean increasing their level of support for individual children (Forlin, 2012). This perception has been attributed to teacher reluctance and negative attitudes towards inclusive education (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). In addition to meeting the needs of the diverse classrooms, teachers are being held more accountable for learners’ outcomes than previously expected. National and international tests are placing

teachers at the centre of better performances from learners (Slee, 2011). The pressure has made teaching an increasingly challenging and demanding profession (Forlin, 2012). Teachers' learning needs have been identified as addressing attitudes and promoting greater commitment to inclusion.

2.6.1 Profile of an inclusive teacher

The need for teacher educators for inclusive education is acknowledged as pressing (Wray et al., 2022). Nevertheless, questions abound about what constitutes the best professional learning for inclusive education that is appropriate to meeting the needs of teachers in specific contexts. Cross-national and regional research on teacher competencies for inclusion has produced generic profiles that could be used in various countries. They have, however, been critiqued for failing to provide clear directions that can be successfully implemented (Sharma et al., 2013; Engelbrecht et al., 2016). Teachers' concerns play a role in determining the knowledge, skills and values that are needed to effectively teach diverse groups of learners. However, their concerns may not be a reliable source of content in teacher education for inclusion (Walton & Rusznyak, 2017). Therefore, different sources for content may serve to critique literature on teacher education for inclusion.

Questions have been asked about teacher education for inclusion. Forlin and Sin (2017) ask what constitutes best-practice professional learning for upskilling teachers about inclusive education; and what teacher education can be linked to learner benefits (Florian, 2012). *The Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (see Appendix A4 for a full presentation) seeks to expound on the kind of teachers needed for an inclusive society in a 21st-century school; and the essential teacher competences for inclusive education. While the developers acknowledge that the Profile may not be exhaustive (EASNIE, 2012), Oswald and Engelbrecht (2018) regard it as sufficiently comprehensive and flexible for teacher education for inclusion in general, and specifically for Southern Africa.

The *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) offered a guide for the design and implementation of initial teacher education (ITE) and ongoing professional learning for inclusive education (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018). To research teacher education for inclusion, I used the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) to guide my analysis of literature on professional

learning for inclusion. My major categories are content, focus and form of professional learning for inclusion in published and unpublished literature.

Before analysing the content, focus and form of literature on teacher education for inclusion, I compared *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) with other teacher education for inclusion frameworks. I consulted Waitoller and Artiles (2013), Florian and Pantić (2017) and Walton and Rusznyak (2017) and found that *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) appeared to be a consolidated framework that included aspects discussed in the three articles. From the three articles I found that different definitions of inclusive education have framed teacher education. The various definitions of inclusive education determine the content, focus and form of professional learning for inclusion. To make progress in teacher education for inclusive education, an established definition of inclusive education is necessary (Florian, 2012). Waitoller and Artiles (2013) corroborated Florian's statement in that upon analysing 32 publications of professional development research they found varied conceptualisations of inclusive education and teacher learning which produced a fragmented knowledge base. Consequently, my combination of different definitions is an imprecise categorisation of content, focus and form of teacher education.

The three categories for my analysis of teacher education – content, focus and form – are not rigid categories and have overlaps. For example, from Oswald and Engelbrecht's (2018) list of requirements I divided 'content' as: skills to respond to learner diversity and solid theoretical and practical knowledge; 'focus' as: confidence and self-efficacy; positive attitudes; knowledge and skills; and 'form' as practical knowledge, as this could imply both a practicum and "recontextualised practical knowledge" presented in textbooks for inclusive education in ITE (Walton, 2017, p. 108). Pantić and Florian (2015) argued that inclusive teachers should be agents of inclusion and social justice by adapting an inclusive pedagogical approach that includes teacher agency. Woodcock and Hardy (2017) discussed the inclusive pedagogical approach of Pantić and Florian (2015) as content of a course. Therefore, I placed literature using the inclusive pedagogical approach as both content and focus, in relation to teacher agency.

Within the three major categories that I analysed the professional learning literature, that is content, focus and form, and also identified further groupings. These include inclusion as an issue about

the whole school and society which seeks to present inclusive education as not just an educational goal but also a methodology that can be used to "identify and dismantle barriers to education for all children so that they have access to, are present and participate in and achieve optimal academic and social outcomes from school" (Slee, 2018, p. 2). Therefore, teacher education unpacks the philosophical ideals that frame inclusion and also ensures that new teachers and practising teachers learn how to teach in inclusive classrooms.

Content

In the content of professional learning programmes, inclusion is covered with various topics. The following topics are listed in professional learning literature:

- Inclusion in schools and society
- Identifying ability differences
- Special Education
- Adapting curriculum with pedagogical practices in heterogenous classes
- Working with others
- Professional Learning

The human-rights perspective of inclusive education is a unifying definition across different teacher learning systems (Florian, 2021). The previous and widely used narrow definition that inclusion as about learners and their diversity and meaning placing children with disabilities into mainstream/regular school, still influences some teacher education curricula. Many courses continue to focus on the teaching and learning of different kinds of learners, perpetuating a belief that inclusive education is about special needs that require additional and specialist knowledge (Florian & Camedda, 2020). As "pedagogy is the frontline" for inclusive education (Slee, 2011, p. 161), professional learning programmes that emphasize inclusive strategies, such as universal design for learning (UDL) and differentiation are intended to move beyond identifying the barriers that learners face to focusing on learning for all learners. Professional learning and working with other professionals have also become important topics that inclusive teachers are expected to engage.

Focus

Focus Areas in Professional learning for inclusion courses comprise:

- Theory and Knowledge
- Skills and Abilities

- Dispositions, Confidence and Efficacy, Agency
- Attitudes and beliefs

The definition of inclusive education determines the focus, the telos, and the unit of analysis that a programme intends to achieve (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Knowledge and skills are a predominant goal of professional learning programmes (Beaton et al., 2021). Professional learning for inclusion is understood as reflective practice with personal development. A key area of research has been teachers' dispositions and attitudes as these are instrumental in improving learners' and teachers attitudes towards inclusive education (Wray et al., 2022). Sokal and Sharma (2022) indicated that the 3H model, which involves the head (knowledge), the heart (attitudes, concerns, and efficacy) and hands (intentions and behaviours) frames inclusive teacher education.

Form

An important prerequisite for effective inclusive practice is engagement in meaningful, relevant and impactful learning. The *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) does not describe *how* the areas of competence should be learnt but notes that "teachers can develop as lifelong learners and reflective practitioners through experiential learning and action-based research" (EASNIE, 2012, p. 19). There are several configurations for pre-service and in-service teacher education (Walton & Lloyd, 2012; Forlin, 2010; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). Approaches for teaching initial/pre-service teachers have included an infused approach, in which inclusive education is integrated into all education studies, or a stand-alone/separate course (Forlin, 2012; Walton & Rusznyak, 2016). It is challenging to providing teachers with authentic practice for the inclusive classroom practice as there are limited schools offering placements to demonstrate inclusive methodologies (Forlin, 2012). Notwithstanding the critique on the theory-practice binary/dichotomy in teacher education for inclusion, with suggestions that new approaches avoid the binary (Walton & Rusznyak, 2020), proposals on how to the bridge the gap between theory and practice have usually focused on in-school learning programmes for in-service teachers and practicums for pre-service teachers.

The *Profile for Inclusive Teachers* (EADSNIE, 2012) fits the Content, Focus and Form framework discussed above. It fosters the content, focus and form through four core values: valuing learner diversity; supporting all learners; working with others; and continuing personal professional development. Each core value has corresponding areas of competence, attitudes and beliefs;

essential knowledge and understanding; and crucial skills and abilities. For example, for the Content, the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) recommends that teachers' different attitudes and beliefs be fostered through knowledge and understanding of an "approach for all learners" and "learner difference". On learner difference teachers are expected to view difference as normal. In addition to the attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and understanding, The *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012) prescribes crucial skills and abilities such as "coping strategies that prepare teachers to challenge non-inclusive attitudes" and "identifying the most appropriate ways of responding to diversity in all situations". In the following section I present my review of the literature for inclusion as guided by *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (EASNIE, 2012).

2.7 Professional learning for Inclusion

Lifelong learning along the professional continuum is stated in policies and guidelines for teacher education for inclusion (UN, 2016). With changes in school demographics and consequent requirement of different teaching and learning practices, teachers need professional learning beyond their initial teacher education. For in-service teachers, professional learning routes have included school-based and externally based courses at universities and other higher learning institutions that are initiated by individual teachers, by a school, government department or learning institution (Sayed et al., 2020). Other forms of professional learning include action research, online courses and publications from special educators (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). How a course is constructed, what skills, knowledge and values are fostered and how it is delivered reveals the epistemological and ideological values of teacher educators and how they define inclusive education.

In the next section of this review, I present international and South African perspectives on professional learning. The literature I selected included research and reports on specific professional learning programmes and literature on inclusion that has a professional learning focus.

2.7.1 Literature with implications on professional learning: International Perspectives

The Profile of Inclusive teachers (EASNIE, 2021) was used to categorise literature according to the content, focus and form of professional learning.

Content

Research on professional learning is limited and fragmented with emphasis on developing teachers' technical skills in differentiated teaching to include learners with special educational needs and disabilities (Makopoulou et al., 2022). Even though the broad view of inclusion beyond learners with special education needs is well known, many professional learning programmes still define inclusion about learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms (Beaton et al., 2021). This has created the idea that there is a specialist knowledge for some learners (Florian, 2020). Teachers' resistance to implementing inclusive education could stem from the psychological interpretation of inclusive education, which is often conflated with special education. Woodcock and Hardy (2017) demonstrated that knowledge alone – especially knowledge on special education – did not engender inclusive teaching that considered all learners in a classroom.

Focus

Teachers' negative attitudes towards practicing inclusive teaching persist even after attending relevant short courses and workshops (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). A key requirement for teachers of inclusive classes is a positive attitude towards inclusion (Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma, 2014). Forlin et al., (2014) collated international literature and state that the prerequisites for positive attitudes towards inclusion include prior positive experiences while teaching learners with disabilities, and professional collaboration. Subsequently, using a mixed method approach, Forlin et al. conducted research in Hong Kong and sought to determine the impact of a professional learning course on participants' attitudes towards inclusion. They concluded that even though there was a small positive impact on attitude, self-efficacy and concern about inclusive education, the positive outlook would not be sustained. Using Bandura's (1974) theory of reciprocal determinism, Forlin et al. (2014) argued that among the things that could be attributed to teachers' behaviour – that is, practicing what they learn in the course – was their school environment. Therefore, unless the environment embraces inclusion, the lessons learned from the course would not be implemented. The pre-training and post-training investigation of teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy and concern about inclusive education points to the need for a different professional learning approach. Studies conducted with an agentic perspective (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2017; Lyons, Thompson & Timmons, 2016) and on teacher identity (McKay &

Carrington, 2014) related to inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy, suggested that professional learning with such perspectives could help teachers make choices to change their classroom practices.

Form

The contexts of professional learning have been promoted as key to teachers' understandings about inclusion, critiquing their attitudes about diversity and expanding their responses to learner differences (Makopoulou et al., 2022). Makoupoulou et al., found that even with practical aspects to courses in their study, including face-to-face interactions with teachers and professional learning tutors, the tutors' vocabulary was often slanted to special educational needs and disabilities. Makoupoulou et al appreciated that collaborative partnerships between schools and universities that include dialogic approaches delivered positive outcomes including ownership of inclusion by teachers and support to schools to respond positively to learner diversity. Even so, their research found that one-day courses were limited as teachers could not apply, critically engage and reflect on content. While they recommend extended case-study research, their focus is on knowledge with innovative approaches. A mentoring-relationship developed for induction of new teachers is a close connection to develop an acceptance of learners' diversity (Angelides & Mylordou, 2011).

While collaboration is a different concept to collaborative learning, studies discussing collaboration are included in this review because collaboration is a stepping-stone to collaborative learning (Loreman, Deppeler, Harvey, 2005). Real-life professional dilemmas and collaborative exchange need to be at the start of professional learning provision (Beaton et al., 2021) to foster collaboration, collaborative learning and focus on what teachers can do or be convinced to do (Florian and Spratt, 2013). On-site collaborative learning engages teachers and could enable them to implement inclusive education. Collaborative approaches to course development have expanded the perspectives about what is needed for teacher education for inclusion. The varied and contested definitions of inclusive education and the complex nature of professional learning were among the issues that have informed collaboration in professional learning, such as Scotland's Inclusive Practice Project (Florian, 2012) and the evaluation of European professional learning for inclusion (Beaton et al., 2021).

Recommendations

Criteria for judging the effectiveness of in-services teacher professional learning has depended on teachers' current skills and knowledge, and their teaching experiences measured against the outcomes on learner achievements (Deppeler, 2010). However, Waitoller and Artiles (2013) suggested that research into professional development needs to move away from only outcomes-based studies that gauge teacher behaviour and attitudes to examining teachers' interactions with other colleagues by grounding research on teacher learning and identity formation. As professional dilemmas are complex and multifaceted and require teachers to exert their professional agency and seek solutions which are often beyond the boundaries of their own profession (Beaton et al., 2021), research into teacher agency and building professionally appropriate relationships is recommended (Florian & Pantić, 2017). "Sustained, job-embedded, collaborative teacher learning strategies" that do not "take a deficit view of the knowledge and skills" of the teachers when they state that they are experiencing professional challenges in inclusive classrooms are recommended (Beaton et al., 2021, p. 2167). Collaboration would include combining communities of practice with boundary brokers such as university faculty (Waitoller & Artiles 2013). "Boundary brokers connect two communities of practice" which have mutual engagements, such as a teacher learning programme and a public school (Wenger, 1998, p. 114).

2.7.2 Literature on professional learning in South Africa

From 1994 professional learning has been a priority in the country's education system "through a comprehensive reform and re-direction" as "the most direct way of raising the quality of learning and teaching" (DoE, 1995, p. 26). Since 2001 when inclusive education was formally established, professional learning for inclusion has been specified in WP6, the ISPFTED (DBE, 2011), MRTEQ and several guidelines related to WP6, such as *The Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning* (DBE 2010b) which serves as a learning text. ISPFTED emphasises that inclusive teaching is critical in improving education in the country (DBE, 2011). WP6 and accompanying policies, with the SIAS policy as a key learning document, have guided professional learning for inclusion. WP6 states that teachers "need to improve their skills and knowledge, and develop new ones" (DoE, 2001, p.18). National and provincial departments of education and non-government organisations have developed and offered in-service learning programmes. Recognising teacher education for inclusion is crucial in achieving an equitable education system an EU-funded

Teaching and Learning for Inclusive Education project worked with the universities, non-governmental organisations and the DBE to develop materials for inclusive teaching and learning and run four national symposiums on teacher education for inclusion held between 2015 and 2019 (Sayed et al., 2020; VVOB, 2019a).

Content

The *WP6* (DoE, 2001) frames inclusion as both individual barriers and social justice perspectives and these have shaped professional learning in contradictory directions (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Pather, 2019). Professional learning on understanding and mitigating the barriers to learning and special education, as the means to transform teachers' classroom practices, is recommended following mixed or inconsistent success with practicing inclusion. de Jager (2013) maintained that teachers need continuous professional learning to achieve this goal.

Special education as the historical basis of inclusive education in South Africa, continues to determine teacher needs for professional learning. There is an oft cited statement that what is "needed is for training to meet the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning" (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, & van Deventer, 2016, p. 529). The SIAS policy has framed professional learning so that teachers learn how to identify learners' difficulties (Fourie & Hooijer, 2015; Lessing and De Witt, 2007). Surveys conducted after the programmes indicated that even though teachers were satisfied with lessons learned, they still cited ignorance regarding barriers to learning and said that they could not implement inclusive practices. The negative responses to implementing inclusive education could imply that teachers consider inclusive education to be the same as special education with teachers expressing frustration with "this remedial thing" (Walton et al., 2014, p. 328) and suggesting that "*weak learners should attend separate remedial classes"* (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, & Tlale, 2015, p. 6). The association of inclusive education with special education is also evident in documents such as WP6 and its confusing title: *Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system*. Further, textbooks used in learning for inclusion in describing how to deal with physical, cognitive and behavioral challenges (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013) presents inclusive education as a "problem *of* learners" and a problem *for* teachers (Walton, 2016, p. 97).

Teachers participating in a year-long professional learning pilot programme learned how to differentiate lessons for learners through collaborative forums or learning circles which helped the teachers create strong professional relationships (Nel, Kempen & Ruscheinski, 2011). Although the teachers complained about the workload, they found collaboration both personally and professionally beneficial for sharing ideas and encouraging one another. While the Nel, et al. (2011) study reflected a similar orientation to Dalton et al. (2012), that focuses on an inclusive strategy rather than on barriers that learners face, the professional learning programme was based in a special school and the strategy was used in only one topic, that of fire prevention. When inclusive education is defined as primarily a concern about learners' diversity then teachers learning needs have been specified as being able to identify the barriers that learners experience (de Jager, 2013). The content for many professional learning programmes for inclusion focused on the barriers learners face in accessing education, with particular attention to the implementation of SIAS (DBE, 2014). The DBE report on the status of inclusive education in South Africa states that teachers in all provinces had been trained in inclusive education and in specialised competencies and in disability. "Radical and urgent steps" were being taken to realise Inclusive Education" which include "to capacitate schools to identify and address barriers to learning" using the SIAS (DBE, 2015a).

Professional learning programmes that focused on specific teaching strategies, such as curriculum differentiation and universal design for learning also defined inclusion as identifying learners' specific needs (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012). These programmes have paid attention to increasing teachers' skills and knowledge, particularly in special education (Materechera, 2020). Oswald (2019) specified scientific knowledge on learning support associated with pedagogical knowledge and specialised content knowledge is necessary for teachers to manage learning in a classroom with diverse learning needs and be able to identify and address barriers to learning.

Inclusive pedagogy is practised with varying conceptualisations. Some professional learning programmes have educated teachers on specific teaching strategies. These include curriculum differentiation and universal design for learning (Ayaya, Makoelle, & Van Der Merwe, 2021; Kempen & Steyn, 2016; Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012) that have been considered as professional learning on inclusive pedagogy. Curriculum modifications and flexible classroom

arrangements characterise differentiation as an approach to teaching that addresses learners' different needs, abilities, interests, and learning profiles (Subban, 2006). The DBE has promoted differentiation as "strategy for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning styles and needs" for teaching the CAPS curriculum (DBE, 2011). It is a key topic and skill in professional learning (VVOB, 2019b). Curriculum differentiation and universal design for learning have been considered as professional learning on inclusive pedagogy (Ayaya, Makoelle, & Van Der Merwe, 2021; Kempen & Steyn, 2016; Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012). Despite its widespread presentation in professional learning, there are indications that differentiation is not enacted efficiently (McKenzie & Dalton, 2020).

The understanding of inclusive education influences how schools and teachers respond to implementing inclusion. The interpretation and practice of inclusive education in South Africa has been heavily influenced by the medical and psychological basis of special education (Engelbrecht, 2020). This perspective may, over a long period, have disempowered teachers from practicing inclusive education consistently (Walton et al., 2014).

Focus

Various professional learning programmes and research on professional learning for inclusive education have touched on aspects related to identity and agency, such as: competence (Williams, Olivier & Pienaar, 2009.), self-efficacy (Savolainen et al., 2012), identity and agency (Swart & Oswald, 2008; Walton et al., 2014), and confidence and motivation (Lessing & de Witt, 2007; Kempen, 2013). These aspects are important because they have had a bearing on teachers' understanding and acceptance of inclusive education. Research on professional learning for inclusive education has considered teacher perceptions, attitudes and experiences about implementing inclusive education (Majoko et al., 2018; Engelbrecht & Savolainen, 2018).

Teachers participating in a year-long professional learning pilot programme in a special school in Gauteng learned how to differentiate lessons for learners through collaborative forums or learning circles which helped the teachers create strong professional relationships (Nel, Kempen & Ruscheinski, 2011). The study, framed within inclusive education, evaluated teachers' grasp of differentiation on the topic of fire prevention. Although the teachers complained about the

workload, they found collaboration both personally and professionally beneficial for sharing ideas and encouraging one another.

The focus for teachers has been on changing attitudes and acquiring knowledge and skills. Research on teacher attitudes has been an important topic since the start of inclusion in the country (Mamabolo et al., 2020; Engelbrecht & Savolainen, 2018; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007; Lessing & de Witt, 2007). While initial research indicated negative attitudes, recent studies have evidence of positive attitudes. All studies cited the challenge of overcrowded classrooms. Nevertheless, teachers were resilient. Some notwithstanding few resources at hand, implemented inclusive education (Themane & Thobejane, 2019).

Collaboration as a skill and an orientation among teachers in professional development initiatives is emphasised as an effective approach towards learning support and curriculum planning (DBE, 2010). Working collaboratively had positive impact on teachers' attitudes and their efficacy to proactive inclusion (Themane & Thobejane, 2019; Engelbrecht & Savolainen, 2018; Swart & Oswald, 2008), found that teachers could shape their professional identity and agency for inclusive education when they collaboratively learned about inclusion. Themane and Thobejane (2019) and Swart and Oswald (2008), focusing on teacher identity and agency, found that some teachers practiced inclusion as an individual initiative rather than as institutional directive. This occurred even though teachers said that they had not been provided with adequate training and resources to implement inclusive education effectively and confidently. This implied that some of teachers who are enacting inclusive strategies had done so from personal agency. Teacher agency indicates that a teacher takes personal initiative to provide a classroom environment that enables all learners to succeed. The studies on teachers' response to inclusive education differ in their recommendations on approaches that could enable them implement inclusive education. Yet a common theme is the need for teachers to work collaboratively. Collaboration was identified as a core skill necessary for the successful enactment of inclusion in Europe (Ainscow, 2005). Hence, Savolainen et al. (2012) recommend that teacher education programmes in South Africa should pay attention to teachers' confidence in establishing support networks. Walton et al. (2014) stated that workshops alone cannot enable teachers' inclusive practice and recommend PLCs as a means for continued professional development.

Passionate teachers develop an identity as an inclusive teacher through a conscious process "to become an apprentice" and acquire the appropriate practices required to respond to the diverse needs in an inclusive classroom (Swart & Oswald, 2008, p. 92). The apprenticeship, which was a self-directed, intentional, and incremental process involved experimenting and risk-taking. Participating teachers indicated that colleagues "gave advice" and "encouraged them" (Swart & Oswald, 2008, p. 101) when things were difficult and also gave them recognition for their endeavours and successes. One teacher extended her support network and initiated *peer-learning groups* that met regularly and discussed specific issues that they had to deal with then shared strategies to support each other in a learning model that is "reminiscent of Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice (COP) where learning is seen as a social and collective activity" (Swart & Oswald, 2008, p. 107). Swart and Oswald (2008) concluded that social interaction was a key aspect of the learning process. Kempen and Steyn (2016) sought to establish how a collaborative professional development model, situated in practice, would influence the professional capacity of teachers in a special school. They concluded that collaboration afforded teachers high levels of motivation, increased professional dialogue and would develop professional identity. While they note that special education teachers need different professional learning from teachers in mainstream schools, their findings are valuable in showing the link between collaboration and teachers' identity and agency.

Teachers have participated in professional learning programmes on inclusive pedagogy (Engelbrecht, 2020; Ayaya, Makoelle, & Van Der Merwe, 2021). South Africa's "Teaching for All" project (Sayed, Salmon & Balie, 2020) went beyond knowledge and skills, to also focus on dispositions. The project sought to improve attitudes towards inclusive education, increase teachers' self-confidence and their belief in their ability to use inclusive classroom practices for in-service teachers. A *Teaching for All* project, which the British Council managed, aimed to embed inclusive education in ITE at eleven higher education institutions. They developed professional learning courses through a collaborative process (Sayed et al., 2020). National policies framed the curriculum with contributions from various stakeholders including teacher educators and in-service teachers. The project aimed to ensure that "every teacher becomes an inclusive education teacher" (Sayed et al., 2020, p. 9).

Teachers' negative attitudes have been identified among the factors that undermine teachers' inclusive practice (De Boer et al., 2011). Teachers report negative attitudes towards practicing inclusive teaching even after attending short courses and workshops (Mamabolo et al., 2021) While teachers express positive attitudes towards inclusion in general, they state that they are doubtful about their capacity to practice inclusive pedagogy even after attending professional learning workshops. However, teachers in different contexts, with high self-efficacy toward inclusive education have relatively positive attitudes. Savolainen et al, (2012) conducted research in South Africa, while Sharma et al., (2011) concluded the same in Asia. Although inadequate resources and over-crowded classrooms have contributed to teachers' difficulties with practicing inclusion (Fourie & Hooijer, 2015), professional learning programmes have also been ineffective in changing teachers' perceptions and uptake of inclusion. Teachers have expressed their inability to incorporate inclusive strategies even after in-service learning regarding themselves as "novices" who lacked capacity and needed "to be trained again" (Walton et al., 2014, p. 329).

Form

Teacher professional learning for inclusive education in South Africa has been provided predominantly through workshops and short courses. Walton et al. (2014) who conducted a two-fold investigation in a full-service school in Gauteng found that workshops alone are ineffective in equipping teachers for inclusion. They suggest that collaborative programmes, in particular professional learning communities, would provide teachers with the much-needed on-going support and the potential to change the culture of the school.

Off-school programmes require teachers from different schools to travel to a central location (Fourie & Hooijer, 2015). Some teachers have found such programmes difficult to attend, especially those held during school holidays (Lessing & De Witt, 2007). A similar complaint was echoed in another study which noted that teachers do not want professional learning during the weekends and holidays or at venues that are difficult to access (Fourie & Hooijer, 2015). These findings indicated that workshops produce mixed results. While they immediately provide skills and foster positive attitudes, their scheduling away from teachers' practice – on Saturdays and off-site – could erode the positive outcomes.

There is growing shift to using long-term embedded professional learning in professional learning communities and participatory action research for inclusive education (IESA, 2020; Walton, 2016; Ayaya et al, 2020).). Walton (2016) mapped out how PLCs relate to inclusive education. Walton (2016) consolidated Loreman's (2010) eight "Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attributes for Inclusive Teachers" or learning outcomes for pre-service teachers into four broad needs that can guide teacher learning for inclusive education. She argued that the features of PLCs and suited to meet the four needs for teacher development of inclusive education. The four needs for teacher development for inclusion include positive attitudes towards inclusion and learner diversity, classroom practices that support inclusion, developing collaborative relationships and lifelong learning. Walton observed that Loreman's (2010) outcomes for initial teacher education programmes link to the positive attributes of PLCs, demonstrating that the PLCs are suitable for professional learning for inclusive education. In a professional learning study in South Africa teachers were offered participatory action research to determine if such a programme would change the common conclusion that there was inadequate change in teachers' inclusive pedagogical practice (Ayaya et al, 2020). Whilst teachers found the collaborative process beneficial, they could not articulate what it meant to be an inclusive teacher in a full-service school.

Recommendations

The reforms needed in teacher education for teachers to support learners with diverse educational needs and have the beliefs and values that support inclusive education systems are "not clear-cut" (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018, p. 181). Programmes for professional learning for inclusive education for in-service teachers are insufficient (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). Additionally, the absence of a unitary definition for inclusive education is an impediment to successful practice of inclusion (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018). Newly qualified teachers have also stated they were unprepared for inclusive classrooms (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018). This feedback has implied that teacher education institutions may be out touch with reality of how to prepare new teachers and how to upskill in-service teachers. Preliminary findings of a university-primary school collaboration on PLCs for inclusive pedagogy in South Africa indicated benefits for the parties: the university team and the teachers at the primary school (Walton, 2016). From the first year of the collaboration, the team from university undertook various research and the teachers stated they

had learned from interacting with their colleagues in the PLC discussions. The dilemma and concerns regarding learners with disabilities can be resolved by paying attention to both inclusive and special education (Walton & Rusznyak, 2019; Florian, 2019). However, Florian (2019) urged considering learners with disabilities within a broader rights-based framework which would mean moving from the ableist perspective of special education and the normalist centre of 'bell-curve thinking'. This shift would mean special educators would support inclusive education by designing pedagogies for *all* learners rather than *most* and *some*. An inclusive pedagogical approach, such as Florian's (2014) IPAA, and PLCs have been recommended as viable professional learning content and model for inclusion (Florian & Walton, 2018; Sayed et al., 2020; Walton et al., 2014).

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review has noted the components of successful professional learning that could foster teachers' inclusive practice. The review discussed the models and approaches to professional learning. The varied definitions of inclusion and the complex nature of professional learning have made professional learning for inclusion a difficult undertaking, with mixed and inconsistent success. Teachers' responses following professional learning have been mixed. While teachers during professional learning programmes initially indicated they were supportive of inclusive education, they later said they need more skills to be able to teach learners with diverse needs (Thompson et al., 2015; Materechera, 2020). There has been a focus on teachers' changing attitudes and acquiring knowledge and skills related to barriers to learning and special education, as the means to transform teachers' classroom practices. Recommendations from research on inclusive education have called for collaboration in professional learning, which would offer a different form of teacher learning. Locally and internationally, it had been established that teachers needed extended periods of professional learning, especially in collaborative learning programmes, to understand and accept new concepts and practices (Walton, 2016; Ainscow & Miles, 2011). PLCs had been recommended for professional learning in general (DBE, 2015) and as a possible model for inclusion (Walton, 2016). The complexity of change necessitates a situated, participatory and inclusive learning approach to ensure inclusive education is sustainably implemented. Situated learning acknowledges teachers' contribution to the teaching and learning process whereby the teachers actively construct new knowledge. Teacher learning is both an

individual construction and as participation in a community facilitated through social interaction. Such a community of practice would be PLCs.

The educational reforms in South Africa have aimed to nurture teacher identity. This had been an identity that teachers are knowledge producers, who could engage in research and lifelong learning and are agents in transforming schools (Venkat & Osman, 2012). The value of teachers in implementing inclusion is undisputed. The tone in research may imply that there is an inordinate weight placed on teachers' role for the implementation of inclusion without a balanced regard to historical and immediate teaching and learning contexts. To consider teachers' individual practice and collaborative learning in context could engender teachers' agency positively towards an inclusive pedagogy.

Research on professional learning for inclusion had not considered teachers' professional identity and agency within a long-term collaborative programme. Data on teachers' professional identity and agency gathered in PLCs could reveal cogent information for professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. This would be a learning process that presents inclusive pedagogy as an approach achievable by teachers in service including those who had had a mainstream initial teacher education (Florian & Walton, 2018). For inclusion, teachers needed extended periods of professional learning to understand and accept new concepts and practices.

Inadequate teacher education has constantly been blamed for the hampered implementation of inclusive education and inclusive teaching in South Africa (Materechera, 2020; Walton et al., 2014; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). The terms inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy are overall too broad and denote many practices. If inclusion can be perceived as an approach, teachers may not perceive inclusion as an impossible ask. From a critical perspective of inclusion, I will argue in the following chapter that teachers are agentic, and as critical thinkers, they make decisions, plan changes, and implement new practices.

Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework – Professional learning for inclusive pedagogy

3.1 Introduction

From the review of literature in the previous chapter, I have identified that professional learning for inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy had not sustained change in teachers' inclusive practice. Teachers' perceptions concerning teaching inclusive classes appear to reflect an attachment to a professional identity as a mainstream/regular education teacher. Research has shown that this attachment may impede teachers from exercising their agency to teach inclusively. Many teachers consider inclusion, especially teaching children with disabilities, as the work of special educators. The review showed that inclusive pedagogy as an approach, as conceptualised by Florian (2014), had been found to be achievable by in-service teachers. My conclusion was that Florian's (2014) IPAA framework would be best suited as the content for professional learning. I also concluded that if the focus and form of professional learning were changed, there could be different outcomes on teacher learning. The focus would be on teacher professional identity and agency, as key concepts necessary when implementing a new practice. The content and focus could be studied where learning is effected as a change and collaborative learning process, namely in PLCs that discussed inclusive pedagogy as an approach.

It is possible that the professional learning for inclusive pedagogy that has been provided to teachers may have influenced their professional identity and agency. However, there is no evidence that research on professional learning for inclusive pedagogy in South Africa had studied teacher professional identity and agency in PLCs. The findings of studies conducted elsewhere that have considered teacher agency (Lyons et al., 2016) and teacher identity (McKay & Carrington, 2014) in relation to inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy, had generated interest and further research on to professional learning (Li & Ruppar, 2021). In this chapter I will show how PLCs for inclusive pedagogy could facilitate the study of teachers' professional identity and agency. The findings of such an investigation could be used to redesign professional learning for inclusive pedagogy in full-service schools in South Africa.

This chapter presents the Conceptual Framework which involves discussing "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs" a study (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39). The key concepts and their interrelationships, based on a critical perspective of inclusion, are explained with Wenger's (1998) theory - learning as social practice; Sfard and Prussak's "identity as narrative"; and Florian's (2014) IPAA. The Conceptual Framework facilitated data collection and analysis and provided the language to answer the research questions and explain the findings.

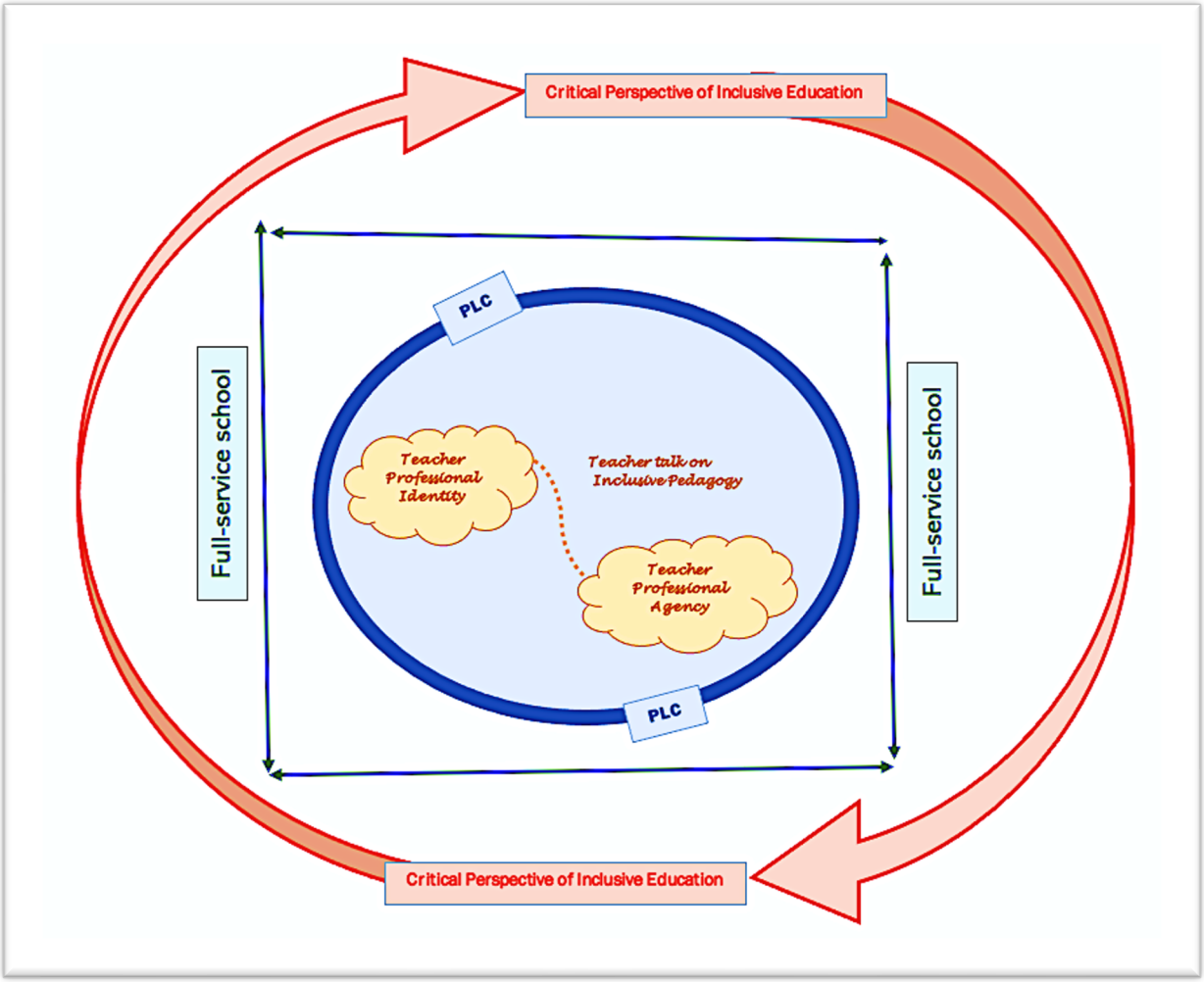
3.2 The Conceptual Framework

Professional learning providers have assumed that teacher learning would be successful after providing professional content through various learning activities (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Opfer and Pedder (2011) show that teacher learning is "overwhelmingly multicausal, multidimensional, and multicorrelational" and is mediated by "the individual and school orientations to learning systems" (p. 394). While this study did not investigate teacher learning, Opfer and Pedder's conceptualisation of teacher learning was an important consideration in arguing for a different perspective for the content, focus and form of professional learning for inclusive pedagogy in a full-service school in Johannesburg.

A different form on teacher learning was necessary in place of workshops and other conventional methods which do not consider how teachers learn and are considered intellectually superficial (Borko, 2004). Professional learning that could contribute to changes necessary for teachers to practice inclusive pedagogy require teachers to be engaged in their learning. The knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired during the professional learning need to be understood and enacted in ways that solve current teaching and learning challenges. Teachers' learning is more likely to occur when teachers consider the specific needs of their learners in the specific context of their classrooms. Thus, they receive helpful feedback to experiments and innovations; they collaborate with professional peers within and outside schools so that they gain expertise from research; and they have an influence over the substance and process of professional development so that there is personal ownership (Robinson & Carrington, 2006).

The Conceptual Framework, which underpins this study, is presented in Figure 3:1. It portrays the "territory" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 20) which I investigated. It shows the relationships that I considered important to research professional learning for inclusive pedagogy.

Figure 3.1 – The Conceptual Framework



The Conceptual Framework is based on the claim that teachers' professional identity and agency in relation to inclusive pedagogy are a necessary focus in professional learning for inclusion. A critical perspective of inclusive education and a full-service school are the context of the Conceptual Framework. Teachers' professional identity and agency are interrelated and can be understood through teachers' talk in PLCs. The relationships shown in the Figure 3:1 will be explained after discussing the context, key concepts, and theoretical perspectives that make up

the Conceptual Framework. The relationships in this Conceptual Framework are explained and further developed through the chapter.

The Conceptual Framework comprises three main aspects: context, key concepts and theoretical perspectives. I will discuss these aspects, their respective components and their interrelationships in this chapter. Then in the final section I will illustrate the relationships. The chapter will begin with an overview of the context: a critical perspective of inclusion and full-service schools. This will be followed by a discussion of the key concepts namely, PLCs, teacher talk, inclusive pedagogy and finally teacher professional identity and teacher professional agency. In the third section I will present two theories that underpin the Conceptual Framework and a framework that imbibes the theories. The main theory, Wenger's (1998) "learning as social practice", is complemented with Sfard and Prussak's (2005) "identity as narrative. Florian's (2014) IPAA framework would serve as the content for PLCs and the tool to investigate teacher talk on inclusive pedagogy.

3.2 The Context

As discussed in Chapter two, inclusive education has been conceptualised in varied ways. The context of this study includes a critical perspective of inclusion education and full-service schools. These play a role in how professional learning is conducted and in how teachers' new practices can be sustained or curtailed during and after professional learning.

3.2.1 A Critical perspective on Inclusive Education

A critical perspective of inclusive education seeks to reveal, challenge and disrupt assumptions that reinforce a status quo which marginalises and excludes various learner populations (Slee, 2011). A critical perspective connects to the wider historical and societal context with considerations about power, dominance, and ideology (Walton, 2018; Slee, 2009). It involves identifying educational injustice and the exclusion of many learners but particularly children with disabilities. Apple et al., 2009) state that inclusive education is a subset of critical education/critical pedagogy because inclusion is counter hegemonic. The struggle to dismantle "established and evolving forms of exclusion" (Slee, 2011, p. 153) means that inclusive

education must ask questions about the power relations of schooling and put a spotlight on educational injustice.

"The conceptual influences for inclusive education attach broadly to critical theory" (Slee, 2009, p. 179) and stem from protests against the medicalised treatment and view of disabled learners as defective persons to be schooled in separate settings. Slee (2009) argued for an irregular school: a school that does not conform to the prevailing schooling arrangements, which are exclusionary. The irregular school involves the "reconstructions of schools to reflect and represent the diverse identities within their communities" (Slee, 2009, p. 179). Therefore, inclusive education, initially as an endeavour to include learners with disabilities in their neighbourhood school, involves all other learners that are excluded, such as young schooling mothers (Kimani, 2014) and refugee and displaced children (Walton et al., 2020).

The acknowledgement of exclusion and marginalisation of children enables consideration of practices that impede access, participation and achievement of all children (Walton, 2016). Ainscow and Miles (2008) stated that inclusive education needs to be viewed as a principled approach to education. It fosters the presence and participation of learners; restructures policies and practices, and promotes achievement by all learners, in particular those vulnerable to exclusionary pressures. This conceptualisation pays attention to factors that marginalise and/or exclude any learner. It obligates schools to be responsive to all learners by ensuring that learners are physically welcome in the school and have access to the curriculum. This is a broad interpretation of inclusive education, which considers all learners, rather than the narrow interpretation which mainly considers the education of children with disabilities. It is a social justice perspective that involves taking a stand for a more just and equitable society. Inclusive education thus calls for change in schools, to make the "physical, social, cultural and educational arrangement" suitable for all learners (Slee, 2011, p. 13).

The need to conceptualise inclusion broadly is dubbed "circuit breaking" (Graham & Slee, 2006, p. 5). The critical goals of inclusion are compromised when tied only to "reductionist notions" such as special education (Slee, 2011, p. 138). The aspirations of inclusive education are ambitious, and "should be seen as everybody's business" (Slee, 2011, p. 172). It is a move away

from normative discourses and deterministic perspectives that have made classrooms places for some or most learners, rather than for all learners (Florian, 2008). Normative and deterministic perspectives on learning place artificial limits on learners' abilities.

Acknowledging that inclusive education is difficult and complex, Florian (2019) lamented that reports documenting low levels of satisfaction with the types of support that inclusive schools provide to learners with disabilities are among the reasons for the undue focus on learners with disabilities. However, she asserts that the inconsistencies in satisfaction should not be used to justify the claim that inclusion is a failed policy. Ensuring that policies of inclusive education are implemented in ways that support the social and academic well-being and progress of all learners is necessary, although it is hard work. A social justice and rights-based perspective – rather than only a disabilities perspective – of inclusive education examines exclusion and marginalisation and rejects deterministic views about what any child can learn.

Slee's (2011) proposed four ways to "circuit-break" the discourses of exclusion and to approach inclusive education in ways that dismantle established and evolving forms of exclusion in education (Slee, 2011, p. 153). One proposition is a call to "re-right" language because the language used for inclusive education has been constructed in ways that are unclear, often manipulated to cover-up exclusion and exercised for dominance. Language is an instrument of power. It should reflect and promote equity and quality education for all learners. By 're-righting' language inclusive education can restore and embed a vocabulary of rights and justice in education. In so doing inclusive education will reaffirm its "values in community, the recognition and representation of difference and foster interdependence across constituencies" (Slee, 2011, p. 155).

The value of considering inclusion from a critical perspective is that it serves its objective to be transformative. Slee's proposition to 're-right' language can be used to articulate the language in professional learning programmes in ways that could transform teachers' perspective about practicing inclusive pedagogy. The perspective concurs with Florian (2014) that teachers can be convinced that they are qualified/capable of teaching all children and accept that difference in learners as a natural human characteristic and not as a problem in learners. Florian (2014),

whose Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) was the basis from which to understand teacher talk in the PLC's in this Thesis, states in her philosophical position that inclusive education is "both a human right and a means of achieving human rights" (Florian, 2014, p. 14).

3.2.2 Full-Service Schools

Inclusive education from a critical/social justice perspective was the impetus to create full-service schools (FSS) in South Africa. FSS in South Africa are the frontrunners for inclusion in the country as they should strive to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education. (DBE, 2010, 2009). Inclusive education in South Africa is implemented as a continuum of services. It has a range of special education services that include FSS. Special schools are meant for children with high support needs and also serve as resource centres for ordinary and full-service schools. FSS are ordinary or mainstream schools that are expected to be provided with a range of resources and professionals to support a diverse school population. This would include learners with mild and moderate support needs (DBE, 2010).

> A FSS "is a school with good leadership that sees itself as a beacon of the transformation process in education by developing cultures, policies and practices that celebrate diversity, respect difference and value innovation and problem-solving… should strive to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education" (DBE, 2010, p. 8).

The physical facilities in full-service schools would be designed to enable movement and learning for learners with low to moderate support needs. Health and educational professionals, as are appropriate, would be available, where possible. The vision for inclusion in South Africa is to convert all mainstream school into full-service or inclusive schools.

In 2019, The DBE suspended the designation of more schools into FSS because a majority across all provinces were not functioning as expected. By 2019, 848 public ordinary schools had been designated as full-service schools. This exceeded the target of 624 full-service schools for 2018 (DBE, 2019). But following an audit of full-service schools, a DBE circular highlighted the findings of Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) that included "several shortcomings and weaknesses in the functionality" (DBE, 2019). The circular noted the need to ensure that the

schools that had been designated as FSS were "adequately capacitated to fulfil their roles and responsibilities" (DBE, 2019). The AGSA recommended an assessment of resources, the development of a business plan with a roadmap on how FSS can function as required. However, the Circular S4 of 2019 gave provincial education departments leeway to determine whether to suspend designation depending on the FSS in each province. More recently there has been a call to abandon the concept, and instead revert to the original plan to have ordinary schools to function as inclusive schools (Equal Education Law Centre, 2021).

Despite the misgivings about FSS, the collaborative support structure between teachers, counsellors and learner support teachers provides access for learners who would be marginalised in mainstream schools (Makhalemele & Payne-van Staden, 2018). As the front runners for inclusive education in the country, full-service schools are the sites to develop inclusive teaching skills, for the teachers in the school and to share skills and resources with neighbouring ordinary schools.

3.3 Key Concepts

Defining the key concepts and how they are understood in this study is the second aspect of the Conceptual Framework. The concepts and their inter-relationships in this study enable understanding of the varied events and situations in professional learning. Even though I discuss each concept separately, all the concepts are inter-related. The relationships are particularly evident in teacher professional learning. The relationships are encapsulated in Figure 3:1 and will be discussed at the end of the section. The discussions begin by defining PLCs – the form of professional learning in inclusive education. This is followed by teacher talk, which was the medium of studying teachers' interactions in PLCs. The discussion covers the content of discussion in the PLCs – inclusive pedagogy – and close with the focus: teacher professional identity and teacher professional agency.

3.3.1 Professional learning Communities

PLCs are a special form of community of practice that can provide teachers a supportive, safe and engaging environment to learn and improve their teaching practice for stronger learners' learning in their classrooms (Brodie & Borko, 2016). The three words in PLC independently

provide meanings that contribute to defining PLCs. The word professional indicates a specialised knowledge base. Learning within a professional community means collective improvement of the specialised knowledge. Ideally, as a community, members of the PLC learn as a cohesive group, drawing on the knowledge base and contributing their own, context-specific knowledge.

The PLC brings together teachers to learn and improve their practice for the benefit of learners. Criteria for successful PLCs include being long-term and supportive interactive networks, building trust and open communication; and have a focus on a specific practice (Brodie & Shalem, 2011). PLCs enable teachers to engage critically with issues related to the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment that challenges established practices (Brodie & Shalem, 2011). The ISPFTED (DBE, 2011) highlights the important contribution of PLCs to "design and create responsive curricula based on the needs of teachers and the system, focusing particularly on the skills, practices and content knowledge required to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom" (DBE, 2011, p. 77).

PLCs are responsive to local, contextual issues. They usually take place in schools, but they may not be in an individual school; they can work across schools. PLCs have a knowledge focus with which teachers discuss current, on-going lesson plans, school matters and classroom challenges and successes. Successful PLCs are developed on an ethic of interpersonal care (Stoll & Louis, 2008, p. 2). Through mutual trust, the PLC allows for a challenging focus, rigorous enquiry, and professional conflict (Katz & Earl, 2010). Professional conflict relates to disagreements about the content being discussed and can also arise from personal conflict. Personal conflict is mainly associated with the nature of inter-personal relationships. These characteristics enable teachers to work on specific professional practices that are informed from data (Brodie, 2013), which can be gathered from teachers' classrooms, for example test results or classroom videotapes (Brodie and Borko, 2016). These data can provide a basis to challenge and reflect on teachers' practices. In PLCs, teachers work together for collective and individual change.

While PLCs have shown success through learners' improved outcomes, they may not always be productive. Their success is built on immense planning, skill and expertise which require considerable time to coordinate and realise (Brodie, 2013). Brodie (2013) argued that PLCs need

dedicated facilitators to guide the focus on professional learning based on actual data from teachers' own classrooms (Brodie, 2013, p. 15). A major challenge in establishing and sustaining PLCs, particularly in high schools, is the regrettable professional culture in schools, whereby high school teachers teach subjects rather than learners (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2007), and prioritise test results rather than deep and broad learning (Hargreaves, 2007). The challenges of sustaining productive PLCs could be navigated by thorough planning, commitment to learner outcomes and by listening to teachers' voices to understand teacher agency for choosing to engage in the PLC (Brodie, 2021).

A successful PLC is a community of teachers who value the diversity that every member brings to the community. It encourages risk taking and active participation. Within a PLC, teachers might be comfortable to share their challenges and be willing to reflect on their practice when the community espouses mutual respect and trust. In a PLC teachers can identify and set goals for themselves and their learners. They can also create partnerships with other professionals whose expertise ensures that their learning is focused and achieves the desired goals. They generate information about the progress they are making so that they can monitor and adjust their learning. Through the PLC teachers develop key relationships. They can articulate a shared vision and show high levels of professional competence which earns them respect and can inspire others to join a PLC programme (York-Barr et al., 2005, p. 205).

Professional learning that accords teachers opportunities to learn collaboratively and renegotiate their professional identity is a complex process and is not an event (Walton et al., 2019). The process can be a threat to teachers' professional identity (Walton & Nel, 2012) and has been associated with feelings of "panic, fear, inadequacy, frustration, loss, anxiety, sadness and incompetence" (Swart & Oswald 2008, p. 98). The adoption of new practices can also be impeded by entrenched habits; perceived threats to a teacher's expertise and identity; lack of understanding for the reasons for change, and the fear of the unknown (Zimmerman, 2006). Teachers' anxieties include beliefs that they lack the skills and knowledge to implement the concept and practice of inclusive education. Teachers have anxieties that show their need for support to learn a new concept and manage change. Walton and Nel (2012) advised that professional learning for inclusive education be considered a process which acknowledges that

teachers could find difficult. Teachers need to feel nurtured and supported in a caring and inclusive learning community in order to deal with the feelings of distress (Swart & Oswald, 2008, p.104).

PLCs can provide an environment in which teachers can share their concerns and fears about inclusion. Therefore, the process should be sensitive to teachers' concerns and attitudes. Possible positive orientations for inclusive education can be developed in PLCs and could build relationships among colleagues (Causton & Theoharis, 2014). PLCs afford teachers opportunities to re-negotiate their professional identity and agency (Chauraya, 2013) and could be a support for teachers to learn inclusive pedagogy.

Research in South Africa has shown how PLCs have promoted continuous learning and are suitable for the varied educational realities in the country (Brodie & Borko, 2016). The success of the PLCs in the country contrasts with the commonly organised workshops in which learning is not sustained. PLCs are recommended to promote inclusive participation between teacher, provincial education officials, teacher organisations and subject-based professional teacher associations at their local level (DBE, 2015). Elaborating on previous discussions of the value of PLCs, in the ISPFTED, and the *Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools*, the DBE (2015) published *Professional Learning Communities: A guideline for South African schools*. The PLC Guidelines indicate that research has shown the value PLCs in improving "teacher and learner learning and morale" (DBE, 2015, p. 4) as well as teacher practice and learner achievement. The PLCs Guidelines list the activities of PLCs to include discussing, critiquing and adapting the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) to a school's circumstances. The DBE's vision in encouraging the formation of PLCs includes promoting ownership in teacher learning, critical and systematic reflection, teacher professionalism, accountability and collective participation.

Research on PLCs in South Africa has been published that offers "theoretical, empirical and practice-based" knowledge that would indicate the conditions that PLCs could thrive in the country (Brodie & Borko, 2016, p. 2). In their overview of research on PLCs in South Africa, Brodie and Borko (2016) note that while changes to teachers' pedagogical practices have been

evident following participation in PLCs, the changes take considerable time and teachers require significant support. Subject specific PLC have enabled teachers to develop pedagogical content knowledge (Marimandi, 2022) and to develop identities that supported group coherence (Chauraya, 2016). Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter Two, Walton (2016) argued that the features of PLCs match the expectations of professional learning for inclusion. Despite facing bureaucratic, individual and collective challenges (Brodie & Borko, 2016), PLCs in the country are providing space for teachers' professional learning.

Teachers' learning in PLCs can be facilitated by their interactions and their conversations. Teachers have opportunities to talk and work together to develop their knowledge of the content focus of the PLCs, to consider their own thinking about themselves and their learners (Brodie & Chimhande, 2020). Even though teacher talk is not an indication of teacher learning, as learning goes beyond their talk in PLCs, teacher talk is an important aspect of study in understanding the value of PLCs.

3.3.2 Teacher Talk

Teacher talk in professional learning communities can support teacher learning as re-negotiation of professional identity and agency. "Collegial conversations" in professional learning communities can create learning opportunities for the participating teachers (Chauraya & Brodie, 2018, p. 8) because conversations about teaching practice are necessary for "sustained growth and transformation" in "ongoing, onsite professional development" (Routman, 2002, p. 4). As a key factor in teacher professional learning, talk is used to construct understanding through agreement and disagreement, consensus in discussion, and critique and question (Hales, 2017). Analysing teacher talk could lead to a "better understanding of teachers' purposes for interacting" and to an appreciation of the ways teachers learn and collaborate (Hales, 2017, p. 34). Research has shown that sustained participation in teacher talk in a collaborative professional learning environment can also lead to changes in teachers' beliefs of practices (Tasker, Johnson, & Davis, 2010). This is useful for professional learning for inclusion where choices about teaching learners with diverse learning profiles are associated with the belief that such learners ought to be taught in separate special schools.

Teacher talk in this study was framed within Slee's (2011) proposition to re-right the language of inclusive education. I considered whether dominant discourses that include coupling inclusive education with special education, continue to be reflected in teacher talk in PLCs. The coupling of inclusive education with special education has created the impression that inclusive education is difficult for teachers to practice and also keeps intact the power and structures that maintain inclusion on the margins of educational practice (Slee, 2018). The coupling stirs up normalising discourses that marginalise and exclude learners who can be taught adequately in a full-service school. Slee's proposition seeks to halt misleading language by analysing how language could uphold an ideology of separateness. It is important to deconstruct the language used to label learners. It could be concealing the real issues of justice. The way teachers talk is important in determining how they practice inclusive pedagogy. Teacher talk is not mere words. It is a selection and ordering of words that constructs reality. There is value of analysing teacher talk in PLCs for its role in teacher learning and as an indicator of what PLC activities foster deep learning.

Teacher talk is an analysis of PLC conversations. Brodie and Chimhande's (2020) investigation of four PLCs of mathematics teachers over two years measured the depth of teachers' talk by considering all conversations and coded them into different depths, ranging from descriptive and evaluative, to analytic. They found that different activities supported learning different PLC content. Their investigation also raised questions about the appropriate balance of content that would support the depth of teacher talk. The value of analysing teacher talk in PLCs is also noted in research on teacher identity. Chauraya (2016) noted that teacher talk during and after PLC sessions indicate shifts in teachers' identities. A common feature in PLC conversations was teachers' appreciation of learning together. This was considered a reference to the negotiation of new understandings. The focus on teacher talk in PLCs provides a range of insights including teachers' learning and teachers' engagement with PLC content - aspects that relate to the possibilities of PLCs to impact teacher identity.

3.3.3 Inclusive Pedagogy

Inclusive pedagogy is conceptualised in varied ways. Just as what constitutes inclusive education is debated and contested, the definitions and tasks of inclusive pedagogy are accordingly diverse

and debated and few are universally accepted (Makoelle, 2014). There are different understandings about how to conduct teaching and learning in inclusive classrooms. A discussion of inclusive pedagogy also raises various terms, such as: inclusive teaching (Walton, 2011); inclusive pedagogic practice (Makoelle, 2012); pedagogy for inclusive education (Loreman, 2017); and radical inclusive pedagogy (Greenstein, 2016). Ravet (2011) stated that a rights-based perspective on pedagogy is a "single inclusion pedagogy for all learners" (Ravet, 2011, p. 7). Norwich (2013) discussed Ravet's (2011) rights-based approach as the "for everybody approach" and as an adoption of the social model of disability. This position rejects "special pedagogies." (Norwich, 2011, p. 85). The variety of terms notwithstanding, inclusive pedagogy is commonly conceptualised as a way to attain social justice when teachers mitigate educational inequality (Pantić & Florian, 2015).

The debates in Europe and America about what inclusive pedagogy entails, include whether there is specialised pedagogy for children with special educational needs. Proponents of special education insist that there are special teaching practices for children with special educational needs (Cook & Schirmer, 2003). Analysis by Lewis and Norwich (2005) found scant evidence of unique pedagogic strategies that are specific to particular special needs. They argue that there is particular knowledge on various diagnostic categories, but no special pedagogy. Rather there are generic strategies geared to "difference by degree of deliberateness and intensity of teaching" (Lewis & Norwich, 2005, p. 213). Moreover, specialised pedagogy is also described as ordinary pedagogy that is done under exceptional circumstances (Norwich, 2013). Norwich (2013) distinguishes 'specialist' teaching from 'specialised' teaching. Specialist teaching focuses on who is responsible for teaching. These would be teachers "who focus their work directly or indirectly with children identified as having disabilities and difficulties, whether in separate settings of in ordinary classes" (Norwich, 2013, p. 77). Specialised teaching refers to teaching/pedagogy that is done by specialist teachers in separate settings of in ordinary classes. Norwich's (2013) analyses indicate that there could be specialised pedagogies for some learners but notes they are about "intensification and personalization" (Norwich, 2013, p. 90), in particular for learners with dyslexia or specific literacy difficulties.

In South Africa there are various expectations of teachers in full-service schools, including having qualifications in special education needs (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). 'Specialist' teaching and 'specialised' teaching are expected of teachers in full-service schools (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). The DBE offers courses on Curriculum Differentiation and Multilevel Teaching as a means to make inclusivity a central part of the school and to provide teaching approaches that meet the needs of all children (DBE, 2010). The DBE *"Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning"* (DBE, 2010) and "Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements" (DBE, 2011) are used for professional learning in mainstream and full-service schools (DBE, 2015). Both Guidelines give teachers strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classroom, focusing on curriculum adaptation and curriculum differentiation. However, the professional learning for differentiation requires teachers to recognise and address barriers to learning, and how to plan for diversity (DBE, 2010). The two Guidelines also categorise common disabilities and learning difficulties and lists education strategies to address these intrinsic barriers. Even though this approach to inclusive pedagogy does not mean to target a specific category of learners and is about Education for all (DBE, n.d.), the human rights and social justice perspectives expressed in WP6 are not obviously evident. While teachers agree that inclusive education is a human rights perspective, their professional learning does not include human rights pedagogy (Materechera, 2020).

Inclusive pedagogy, as an approach, rather than as separate pedagogical strategies, has also been fostered as a paradigm shift that embraces a social justice and human rights approach to disability and difference. It is not concerned with learner categories and labels. As an approach it embraces notions of equality of opportunity and participation of all learners in learning and in the cultural communities of mainstream and full-service schools (Liasidou, 2012). It is concerned with confronting oppressive social structures (Greenstein, 2016). As a rights-based approach, inclusive pedagogy may not require specialised learning in traditional special education (Ravet, 2011). It involves teaching methods, approaches, forms, and principles that enhance learning and school participation for all learners. Liasidou (2012) adds that inclusive pedagogy is a "complex model that consists of a plethora of interactive elements that go beyond the classroom and the teacher". It includes "institutional resources, school ethos/vision and communities' values" (Liasidou, 2012, p. 37). This definition is also about the relations and interactions between

various school structures, such as school boards and management and not an individual teacher responsibility. This definition is framed from "schooling that adopts socially just pedagogies" that diversify and change curriculum, teaching methods, cultures, and practices of schooling in order to meet learner diversity (Liasidou, 2012, p. 35).

3.3.4 Teacher Professional Identity

Identity is an important concept, but theorists debate precise definitions of identity. It is seen by many as dynamic, changing and dependent on context (Bleakley, 2006; Cribb, 2005). Identity has been defined as the individual self-positioned in the social and cultural world (Olsen, 2008). As we understand our world and learn to operate in it, we are, and we become. Identity is both a product and a process of being a "kind of person" (Gee, 2001, p. 99). Although there is not one unified definition of professional identity (Eteläpelto et al., 2014; Sfard & Prusak, 2005), principal aspects among the definitions of identity are that identity is multi-faceted and dynamic (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Teacher identity integrates personal subjectivities with the professional and cultural expectations about what it means to be a teacher. Teacher professional identity is a situated identity position that weaves together various discourses and the associated subjectivities (Alspup, 2006, p. xv). Professional identity is contextual and includes the professional environment and interactions with learners and other professionals. The contexts reflect both prescribed professional characteristics, responsibilities and knowledge of the profession and personal values, thoughts and behaviour. The teachers' contexts that are beyond the school environment reflect the multiple identities a teacher would have because of his or her membership of different communities. Teacher identity can be defined as a sense of teacher self that results from a productive combination of key personal and professional subjectivities, identity positions or beliefs (Alsup, 2006). Identity shifts and develops when an individual "experiences discursive tension and cognitive dissonance" (Alsup, 2006, p. 205). These tensions enable a meta-awareness that differentiates the individual's personal and professional subjectivities.

Teacher professional identity in South Africa has been characterized in relation to the different changes to the curriculum since 1994 (Carrim, 2019). The changes to the curriculum were meant

to reflect transformations into a post-apartheid and democratic nation. The political and educational reforms have created "complex times" and research on teacher professional identity has broadened assumptions about what it means to be a teacher in South Africa (Carrim, 2019, p. 48). In tandem with the changes, teachers have been positioned within a class structure as working class and also tagged in relation to their race, gender, learner abilities, religion, sexual orientation (Carrim, 2019). While this thesis does not study all these descriptions of teacher professional identity in South Africa, the varied descriptions reflect the complex times and conditions that teachers currently face in their work. Teacher professional learning provision needs to be cognizant of these complex times and conditions to enable teachers to develop "professional knowledge."

The foregoing discussion has pointed out the contextual, discursive, and dynamic nature of identity. This portends Wenger's (1998, p151) conceptualisation of identity as "the constant work of negotiating the self", where meaning and reality are created rather than discovered. This thesis associates with and adopts Wenger's conceptualization, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. In this thesis, identity is an individual's sense of self, with the subject as an individual possessing conscious experiences and as an agent engaging with others and social structures.

3.3.5 Teacher Professional Agency

Similar to the concept of identity, the discussions of agency began with the Enlightenment concept of the free agent. Building on historical arguments about agency, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) defined agency as an "embedded process of social engagement" (p. 963), informed by the past and oriented toward the future. It is also a "calculative conception of action" (p. 964), by which the agent rationalises action or inaction. The temporal aspects of agency and the outcomes of action and inaction form the analytical dimensions of agency. Huffer (2007) considered that agency has two aspects. First, there is the manner in which an individual – agent – embarks on a particular course of action or inaction. Second, there is the relationship between the agent and the outcomes of the courses of action on which the agent embarks. The rationalisation that an agent considers and the relationship an agent has to outcomes, implicate the contextual, structural, and social relations that may constrain and afford the practice of agency. Agency is

practiced, resourced, constrained and bounded by contextual factors including material conditions and the cultures of social interaction with others.

The agency literature is filled with arguments about relationships between agency and structure. Historically agency has been seen, on one hand, as the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices, while structure, on the other hand, is the social situations that influence or limit their independent action (Barker, 2005). The structure versus agency debate questions the independence of an individual's agency; whether individual action is the outcome of free and independent choice or if individual action is the outcome of structural influences such as social forces and/or organisational structures including leadership and policy. More recently, arguments for a dialectical relationship between agency and structure articulate that structure is both a constraining and enabling factor for agency (Whittington, 2010). Therefore, all forms of agency are related to structure.

Teacher professional agency constitutes engagement with the structures of an education system. Vähäsantanen (2013) defines agency in education as decisions, choices and actions that include the exertion of power and influence. This means taking a position within a social context and in relation to work practices. But agents' power and influence can be limited by the nature of the agency-structure relations. Agency in education is also directed at teacher practices and could be directed to achieve change (Lasky, 2005). Priestly et al., (2012) define agency as the "capacity of actors to critically shape their responses to problematic situations" (Priestly et al., 2012, p. 1).

The time-based concept of agency, first developed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), as an engagement for making decisions is influenced by temporal elements. Priestly et al., (2016) conceptualised the temporal elements for teacher agency and Li and Ruppar (2021) made further revisions specifically in relation to inclusion. Teacher agency is a dynamic interplay between the three time-based elements, each comprising different characteristics. In Table 31 the temporal factors in teacher agency for inclusion which Li and Ruppar established were adapted for this study. Li and Ruppar's (2021) research using the expanded and adapted model for agency for inclusive education also considers Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal concepts of agency. They add that local contexts are important considerations when studying inclusive teacher

agency. In adapting Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal features of agency for inclusive education, Li and Ruppar (2021) maintained the original terms for the three time elements: iterational, practical-evaluative and projective. The terms refer to influences from the past, engagement with the present, and orientations towards the future (Priestly et al., 2016).

Table 3.1 – Temporal factors in teacher agency adapted from Li & Ruppar (2021)

Iterational	**Practical-evaluative**	**Projective**
Personal histories Biographical histories Professional histories Teacher education experience Professional development experience Years of teaching experience Years of teaching experiences with learners with disabilities	Structural (rules and policies implicated in the production of systems) Schools' organizational set-up of education system structures Partnership beyond schools Relationships within schools Parallel operation of special education, general education, and second language education Cultural (ideational contexts and traditions) School cultures or broader societal views of ability Heavy-duty accountability mechanisms Culture of performativity based on high stakes testing results Societal and institutional views of inclusion School and social perceived professional roles Material Resources (e.g., curricula, books) Physical space Teaching assistants Assistive and augmentative technology	Visions of their learners in mainstream higher education institutions, inclusive job fields, and independent living communities Visions of their professional work around inclusive education

The iterational elements of agency, and in particular teacher agency for inclusion, are historical. A teacher will connect with her/his biographical and professional histories before and while considering taking action. The practical-evaluative time frame is about present, current matters. For teachers these are a school's organisational set-up which include relationships within school and beyond the school and policies that govern the administration of the school and educational systems. The practical-evaluative considerations also include cultural ideas and traditions around the school and educational system that could determine a teacher's action. The third aspect for the practical-evaluative time engagement, are the material conditions and resources. These

include the physical space in classrooms, support from other teaching staff, books and the curriculum, have often been the most prevalent consideration for inclusion by teachers (Materechera, 2020; Walton et. al., 2014; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). The projective time engagement involves considerations about the future. The visions teachers have of their learners beyond school and their visions for their own professional work play a role in teachers' determining their action. The temporal aspects of teacher agency reflect Wenger's (1998) models of belonging. The iterational corresponds to alignment; the practical-evaluative with engagement; and the projective with imagination. Discussion on Wenger's modes of belonging will follow later.

3.3.6 Teacher agency for inclusive education

Teacher professional agency can be both towards acceptance or rejection to change directions that are defined in policy and presented in professional learning programmes. Developing from Giddens (1984), who defined human agency as action to intervene and exercise power, Pantić and Florian (2015) stated that agents purposefully engage, or refrain from engaging, in acts which they know, or believe, will have a particular outcome. To know the direction agents are trending towards, which could either maintain or transform structures and cultures, requires a distinguishing between agency and agency for change. In the case of teachers' professional learning, teacher-educators would best specify and articulate the nature of change required and then make the necessary preparations. However, conflict may arise between the teachers' own sense of purpose and the influence imposed on their beliefs and practices by an external agenda. For professional learning programmes to support teachers to engage towards social justice then an empowering change process would be required. This combined model of teacher agency and inclusive pedagogy (Pantić & Florian, 2015) has been adapted and combined with nine international empirical studies about teacher agency for inclusive education to develop a definition of teacher agency for inclusive education (Li & Ruppar, 2021).

Li and Ruppar (20201 defined teacher agency for inclusive education as:

> a temporal, individual, and collective engagement (Priestley et al., 2016) in active decision making on curriculum, assessment, and every-day inclusive education practice, mediated by given educational contexts, to negotiate the benefit of

> inclusive education and to work against practices that perpetuate norms of ability and differences (Li and Ruppar, 2021, p. 52-53).

From this definition Li and Ruppar (2021) built on Pantić's (2014) four units of analysis for agency in inclusive education with amendments and context-based agentic actions for each unit. Pantić's (2014) four units of analysis including purpose, commitment, autonomy, and reflexivity. Li and Ruppar (2021) maintain three of Pantić's (2014) units of analysis, professional competence, autonomy, and reflexivity and add inclusive teacher philosophy and inclusive teacher identity. These units are discussed in section 5:7. of Chapter Five.

Research on teacher agency considers how teachers respond to efforts geared towards educational transformation and that knowledge and competence are fostered as the impetus towards a sense of purpose (Pantić, 2014). Even if teachers resist transformation, they are still agentic. "Resistance" is a theme in the literature on teacher professional agency (Brodie, 2021; Long et al., 2017), including literature on inclusive education in South Africa (Themane & Thobejane, 2019; Walton, 2016). Teacher professional agency has been characterised as objecting to educational progress in the country (Long, et al, 2017). However, arguments to the contrary state the teachers need to be accorded their professionalism, and their voices heard about the complex educational environment they work in (Long, et al., 2017; Brodie, 2021). Resistance in the context of teacher professional agency is a teachers' engagement with their context and is a form of agency. School structures and cultures could constrain or enhance teacher capacity to engage with the system. Therefore, agency is not only about engaging in support of a required change. It could also mean engaging contrary or in opposition to a desired outcome of professional learning (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). When teacher engagement to a context is not as anticipated yet still considered a form of teacher professional agency, the response to that agency should not be to dismiss or negatively judge teacher engagement. Rather the agency should be considered as a valid response that requires critical analysis and understanding. Inclusive education literature has noted that teachers are reluctant or resistant to practicing inclusion (Materechera, 2020; Walton et. al., 2014; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). Teachers' so-called "resistance" is an act of agency (Brodie, 2019) about changing their practice and may indicate the structural issues that teachers consider when they make decisions.

Challenging the status quo is one of the goals of professional learning for inclusion, and in particular using the IPAA (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Despite agents' potential to transform existing structures and cultures, they may reproduce or maintain the status quo, if they fail to bring about their desired changes. This results in a further conflict between teachers' actions and the intended transformation from professional learning. Professional development for inclusion achieves its intended purpose when teachers are involved in challenging the constraints around their practice, even while they themselves are subject to the same constraints (Howes, Booth, Dyson & Frankham, 2005).

When teachers' professional learning embodies the critical dimension of transformative change, such learning necessitates that teachers interrogate their attitudes and ideological underpinnings about disability and difference. The intended outcome of critical thinking is in taking informed action. Teachers thinking critically would be expected to take informed actions such as changing their classroom practice once they understand how their practice excludes and marginalizes learners. To foster agency for inclusion, Li and Ruppar (2021) advocated for teacher learning where teachers engage in critical discourse on various topics including learners' marginalisation. When professional learning inscribes a social justice discourse around teachers' practices rather than learners' profiles, such learning could be key to enabling teachers to use an inclusive pedagogy approach in the classroom teaching. If teachers disagree with the content and/or focus of professional learning, researchers and inclusive teacher-educators would consider the disagreement seriously, since teacher agency involves all responses towards professional learning.

The foregoing discussion presented the key concepts in my study: professional learning communities, teacher talk, inclusive pedagogy, and teacher professional identity and agency. In the following section, I discuss the theories and a framework that will situate the relationships among the key concepts and within the theories and the framework.

3.4 Theoretical Perspectives

The overarching theory guiding my study is the theory of learning as social practice which Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) developed. The theory provides an analytical perspective

for learning in PLCs and provides the theoretical context for understandings of professional identity and the exercise of agency. In addition, Sfard and Prussak's (2005) theory – identity as narrative – was linked with Lave and Wenger's theory of learning as social practice to elaborate identity and agency in learning and in talk in PLCs. Wenger's theory, learning as social change, and Sfard and Prussak's, identity as narrative, support understandings of the collaborative learning activities in a community of practice, where teachers share and critically reflect on a practice to support their learning and improvement of the practice. In my study, teachers learned and shared their experiences in practicing inclusive pedagogy in PLCs. Inclusive pedagogy, the learning content in the PLCs was based on the IPAA (Florian, 2014) and the IPAA was also tool used to analyse teacher talk in PLCs in this section, I describe the theories and how they assist in understanding the relationships between learning inclusive pedagogy, identity and agency.

3.4.1 Learning as social practice

Meaningful teacher learning is "a slow and uncertain process" (Borko, 2004, p. 6) and involves a change process. Change is an individual and social process in which some elements of teacher knowledge and practice are more easily changed than others. The evidence of any change is not always obvious or immediate. Brown et al., (1989) cautioned that "by ignoring the situated nature of cognition, education defeats its own goal of providing useable, robust knowledge" (Brown et al., 1989, p. 33). In this framing Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal work, Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation and Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice, theorise learning as a social practice connecting the learners, the activity and the setting (Brodie & Borko, 2016).

Lave and Wenger's theory of learning as social practice was developed to counter the general assumption that learning "has a beginning and an end; that it is best separated from the rest of our activities; and that it is the result of teaching" (Wenger, 1998, p. 3). Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) challenged the separation of learning from other social activities and argue that learning happens everywhere and is a social process of participation. This theory was developed from Lave's anthropological research with tailor apprenticeships in Liberia. Their research showed that learning was becoming a member of a "sustained community of practice" (Lave, 2009); of people who engaged in a "shared domain of human endeavor" (Wenger &

Wenger-Trayner, 2015, para. 4) The communities of practice have a shared area of interest – a practice; and are also practitioners of the practice.

Hanks (1991) explained that Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory emphasised participation as key to the definition of learning, and not just mental representation as previously argued in cognitive theories of learning. Participation is not the outcome or the process of learning. By definition, learning is participation. Hanks' distinction between the cognitive study of learning, i.e., learning as representation and the situated study of learning as participation is further explained by Sfard (1998) who characterises traditional learning theories with an acquisition metaphor and the situated theories with a participation metaphor. She states that the newer conceptualisation of learning shifts the focus of learning to a social process comprising "evolving bonds between the individual and others" (Sfard, 1998, p. 6). Lave (2009) confirmed that, traditionally, learning research studied learning as if it were a "process contained in the mind of the learners" and these researchers ignored the "lived in world" (Lave, 2009, p. 202). She adds that because "learning is not a product, it happens in unmarked, unintended ways" and therefore happens everywhere (Lave, 2009, p. 201). Therefore, an analysis of learning is an analysis of peoples' involvement in social activities. Social activities are an act of participation and the engagement is learning: "participation is learning [...] a process of changing understanding in practice, that is, as learning" (Lave, 2009, p.201). One individual's participation in a social setting enables other members to learn, not only from what the individual member does, but also because of what all members 'do' together. The community learns from individuals participating in community.

Learning as social practice has four components: community, practice, meaning and identity (Wenger, 1998). Each component in the social context is learning: community is learning as belonging; identity is learning as becoming; meaning is learning as experience; and practice is learning as doing. The four components are "interconnected and mutually defining" (Wenger, 1998, p. 5) meaning that any component can be a starting point in a process that is continual. Therefore, any of the four components of the theory can be the starting point in discussing learning as each component relates to the others and because learning is not hierarchical or linear.

Figure 3.2 below represents this view and the four components are discussed below in an anti-clockwise approach beginning with community.

Figure 3.2: Components of Learning as Social Practice (Wenger, 1998, p. 5)



Community- Where do we belong?
Practice - What are we doing?
Meaning -What is our experience?
Identity - Who are we becoming?

Community: The community is identified by its practice and consists of people who are engaged in a common practice and learn to do the practice better through regular interactions. Learning, which is the participation of members in a community, is not dependent on the effectiveness of a "master" to influence learning as a reproduction of the master's performance (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 56). In a master-apprenticeship relationship there are newcomers and old-timers in a community, every member who participates is a legitimate participant and learns at and from her/his own position. The participation of a newcomer begins at a peripheral level and with engagement, becomes complex and the newcomer eventually can become an expert, an old-timer and a master. By virtue of being members belonging to the community, learning happens for all members but the kinds of learning may differ and some learning may be more generative than others.

Communities are distinguished by members' mutual engagement, shared repertoire and joint enterprise. Mutual engagement is "the ability to take part in meaningful activities and interactions in the production of sharable artefacts, in community building conversations and in

the negotiations of new situations" (Wenger, 1998. p. 184). The shared repertoire includes the "narratives, symbols and artefacts that the community produces" or adopts in the course of its existence (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). Wenger explained the concept of joint enterprise as a common purpose with a collective process of negotiation of what the joint enterprise entails. The negotiation includes responses to situations the community faces, and the pursuit of a goal for which members are accountable.

Practice: The practice is a "living curriculum" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015), namely the doing within the social structure into which the newcomer can be accommodated. Practice is the action taken by the community and/or its members; what is actually done in the community. Practice involves the explicit "tools, language, documents, symbols, well- defined roles, procedures, regulations" and the implicit "theories, ideas, ideals, relations, underlying assumptions, and shared world views" (Wenger, 1998, p. 47). A practice belongs to a community, 'defines' the community and is the way the community inducts a member into the community, that is the joint enterprise. Competency in the practice provides a learning trajectory for each member. Learning occurs in the tension between a socially defined competence and a member's personal experience. Through the performance of, and engagement in, the practice or skill, learning takes place. The changes and progression of the practice are determined through social processes in the community.

Meaning: Learning as meaning is a member's experience of engagement with, and interpretation of the practice. As a member of a community an individual has a specific and peculiar experience of the practice. Meaning is the member's ability to interpret the world and interpret the experience of the practice in a particular way. A member expresses her/his experience in a way that makes sense to the member. Meaning is social because social interaction constructs meaning for and in the community. Understanding is found in and through the increased access of the member to participating in the practice of the community.

Identity: Learning as social practice entails becoming a certain person. Learning as becoming is undertaken through engagement in the practice of a community and shapes a person's experience of self. Learning and identity are faces of the same coin. Identity is a negotiated experience that

entails a social co-construction through participation in the community. A member's identity is also defined by a trajectory of transformation, namely 'who I am becoming' and the individual's trajectory in the community. In contributing to the discourse of the community, an individual is engaged in a process of becoming. Wenger's concept of identity is linked to my discussion above of the key concepts of teacher professional identity and agency as dynamic and effected by context.

Wenger (1998) conceptualised identity through three modes of identification, also referred to as "modes of belonging": alignment, engagement and imagination. Alignment relates to a context, including following the norms of the community. The alignment is a negotiated process in which an individual coordinates perspectives and interpretations with those of the community. Alignment involves the negotiation of meaning and allows for an experience of agency in learning. Wenger (2010) stated that the production of a community – its practice – through participation, is a notion of agency. Compliance and passive acquiescence by members of the community are attributes of agency. These attributes are established in relation to the expectations of alignment. Below I present how Wenger relates his theory to Critical Theory and the links to the structure-agency dichotomy.

Engagement relates to a person's direct experience and competence or incompetence in the practice, which leads to developing an identity of participation or non-participation. Wenger further describes engagement as the "active process of involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning" (Wenger, 1998, p. 173) which then expresses the relationship between identity development and the exercise of agency as "mutually co-shaping" (Chauraya, 2013, p. 21). Therefore, as members of a community are engaged in processes of negotiating meaning, their exercise of agency is learning.

Imagination is the teachers' self-images and the images the teachers envision about their learners. Imagination entails teachers' construction of the world that helps them understand how they belong or do not belong to that world. By creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space, teachers would be extrapolating from their own

experiences, images of possibilities, images of the world, images of the past and the future and images of themselves.

Members of a community learn through sharing and creating knowledge. The benefit of viewing the negotiation of meaning as a dual process of participation and reification is that members can question the production of meaning in the community, allowing members to understand. Understanding is found in and through the increased access of the learner participating in the practice of the community. A community learns through and by participation. Members of a community as active participants in the practice of a community, develop identities as an aspect of learning. "Identities as becoming a certain person" develop from participating in a community and involve different kinds of relations, including conflictual, harmonious, competitive and cooperative (Wenger, 1998, p. 55-56).

Wenger-Trayner (2013) advised that within the theory of learning as social practice the dichotomy of agency and structure does not apply, because the aspects have mutual constitution. Taking from Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, Wenger-Trayner stated that social structure is both the "input and output of action" (Wenger-Trayner, 2013, p. 104). This is linked to the theory of learning as social practice in which the community of practice is a "locus of structuration where learning involves a direct interaction between the structure and the people whose experience is shaped by it and which shapes it in turn" (Wenger-Trayner, 2013, p. 112). Wenger-Trayner explains that the individual and the social have mutual constitution. This is through agency's engagement in the negotiation of meaning in two ways: at the collective and at the individual level. At the collective level, the theory defines agency as competence that is negotiated by the community through participation. Regardless of any constraints, practice, the production of a community, is also agency. At the personal level, the theory characterizes agency in the processes of identification. At this personal level, an individual's identification with a community necessitates individual accountability to the community's competence, denoting agency as identification in a relationship that can be adapted. Therefore, with this definition of competence as agency, the theory does not distinguish between the social and the individual. "[T]here is no relation of subsumption" (Wenger-Trayner, 2013) p,110).

While acknowledging that the theory 'learning as social practice' is "not critical in the traditional sense" of Critical Theory, Wenger (2010) defends the theory as having important aspects of Critical Theory because of his theory's "underlying commitment to agency and to social learning capability" as a social good (Wenger, 2010, p. 192). Since the theory determines if the value of what is learned is for the learner or for society it bears the hallmarks of Critical Theory and is consistent with it. A stance for critiquing social arrangements can be pursued through the theory's "commitment to agency and to learning capability as essential characteristics of social systems" (Wenger, 2010, p. 190).

While the theory of learning as social practice provided an analytical perspective for teachers' learning in community, its use was strengthened with the theory of identity as narrative (Sfard & Prussak, 2005). This facilitated an explanation of how teachers' learning and identity are operationalised in teachers' talk.

3.4.2 Identity as narrative

Sfard and Prussak's (2005) theory – identity as narrative – links to Lave and Wenger's theory of learning as social practice. It elaborates on the role of talk in learning that enables learners to shift their professional identity and agency. The theory builds on previous conceptualisations of identity, including Gee's (2001) "a certain 'kind of person' in a given context" (Gee, 2001, p. 99). Sfard and Prussak concur with Lave and Wenger's (1991) who link learning and the construction of identites and respond to reductionist critiques regarding identity and narrative and note Wenger's (1998) position that "words are important" (Wenger, 1998, p. 151). For Sfard and Prusak (2005), identities are stories about persons.

Identity is the narrative a person speaks about self to self, and to others; and what others narrate to the person, and to others, about the person. Identity is a discursive activity that is socially situated and relationally constructed. Identities are socially negotiated as they are "constantly created and re-created in interactions between people" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15). They are "discursive counterparts of one's lived experience" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 17). Identity is constantly changing and being recreated as it is shaped in social and discursive activity through "collective storytelling" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15).

Sfard and Prussak defined identities as "collections of stories about persons that are 'reifying, endorsable and significant" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15). Reification relates to the verbs "be, have or can" (Sfard & Prussak, 2005, p. 16). An example of reification could be teachers narrating stories with, I am an inclusive educator. would indicate, for example, that "Stories that are endorsable are those that people would say reflect the state of affairs in the world (Sfard & Prussak, 2005, p. 16). A story is significant "if a change in a story is likely to affect the storyteller's feelings about the identified person (Sfard & Prussak, 2005, p. 16-17). They argued that a person's stories about themselves are profoundly influenced by the stories that important others tell about that person, providing a social context for identity development. Teachers make their stories significant by defining the features of their practices and defending the practices with expressions about themselves in relations to their classroom practices.

Identities as collections of stories about persons are expressed in current experience. A teacher's stories could reify her/his identity by saying that they are teaching all learners. As endorsable (as true or false), the stories reflect a state of affairs. And as significant as the stories are about a person that affect feeling. Feelings and a change in feelings would accompany significant stories. Sfard (2006) advised that if we want to understand why people learn the way they do or how they engage in the processes of identity development, we need to pay attention to narratives. These, in essence, are identity because they accompany, inform and result from the processes of learning. Identity is a trajectory, where every learner has a current identity and a designated identity. The current identity consists of present-tense stories. The designated identity is recognised by future-tense stories. Learning happens when stories about a learner close the gap between the present and designated identities. The story an individual tells self is the most likely the pivot for action. It is a key indicator of whether learning has occurred.

3.4.3 Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action framework (IPAA) (Florian, 2014)

The IPAA allows for the exploration of how to enact inclusive pedagogy as an approach that any qualified teacher can practice. The IPAA framework served two purposes. First, some of the learning content in the PLCs was based on the IPPA. Second, the IPAA was used to investigate

teachers' talk regarding their experiences with inclusive pedagogy. Developed from theories of teaching and learning, the principles of inclusion and transformability and social justice, the IPAA is a "framework designed to capture evidence of inclusive education in action" (Florian, 2014, p. 286). The IPAA was also developed from research that had responded to critiques that the varying definitions of inclusive education had not offered evidence of inclusive education in action by classroom teachers and school managers. The Framework provides a deeper understanding of the ways teacher enact inclusive pedagogy by linking theoretical ideas of inclusion to the enactment of inclusion (Florian, 2014).

The Framework links the principles of inclusive pedagogy with the assumptions that underpin the principles, and these are aligned to actions and challenges that facilitative and inhibitive inclusive practices. As every classroom is particular, with complex and varied situations that teachers need to contextually respond to across different subjects, the Framework has also been a reflective tool for student teachers. Florian and Spratt (2013) confirm that the Framework also meets Rouse's (2009) suggestions that inclusive teachers should know "about theoretical, policy and legislative issues"; turn the knowledge into action and believe in their capacity to support all children. Florian and Spratt (2013) stated that "the inclusive pedagogical approach is based on the belief that teachers must be aware that the choices they make, and actions they take in the organisation of learning, convey messages and values reaching well beyond the formal focus of the lesson" (Florian & Spratt, 2013, p. 122).

As an approach to teaching that does not categorise learners as different types of learners, the IPAA challenges conventional professional knowledge and responsibility about the support for different learners. The approach encourages collaboration with specialist teachers with sensitivity that does not alienate and create negative outcomes for learners needing additional support. Teachers take responsibility for all learners and find ways to support all learners in a collective classroom community. Support to all learners means providing a range of options to all learners rather than teaching the whole class in only one way. By offering options, a teacher would have an "open-ended view of every learner's potential to learn" and removes common understandings of an individual's potential that are based on the learner's current achievement (Florian & Spratt, 2013, p. 121). As a research tool, the IPAA leads research to move beyond

observable actions, such as the use of specific teaching strategies identified as inclusive, to understanding the principles a teacher fosters to enact inclusion.

The IPAA is a teaching and learning approach. It is also a collective concept that incorporates teachers' inclusive practice and strategies. It is an approach to teaching and learning that supports teachers' responses to learner diversity. When teachers understand inclusive pedagogy is about everyone in the class, they might provide options for learners to choose their own level of work. They may also create the conditions that support learners to work in mixed-ability groups rather than in ability groupings that remain the same at all times. Teachers might feel more able to trust learners to make good decisions about their learning (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012).

The IPAA is undergirded by three key principles: difference as an essential aspect of human development; teachers' belief in their capability to teach all children; and the development of the profession through collaboration among teachers and other professionals. These principles relate closely to Slee's (2011) principles for action for, and values of, inclusive education. These are "community, the recognition and representation of difference, and fostering interdependence across the school's professional and social constituencies" (Slee, 2011, p. 155). Florian (2014a) notes that the inclusive pedagogical approach fosters collaboration among mainstream teachers and specialists to support of all learners and not only those identified as needing additional support.

Teachers who make inclusive pedagogical decisions believe that all children will make progress, learn and achieve. Believing that ability is not fixed and pre-determined, they view diversity as a positive characteristic of the classroom. Black-Hawkins and Florian (2012) found that a teacher who seeks inclusion will find ways to teach inclusively and extend what is ordinarily available to all learners rather than segregate the teaching of some learners from the rest of the class. Such teachers find ways to teach inclusively from their own fund of teaching strategies and assist children with learning challenges without isolating them from their peers (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012; Swart & Oswald, 2008). When teachers are convinced that they can teach learners with special educational needs they may also show a commitment to supporting all

learners. Such a position could similarly indicate teacher agency in acknowledging their role as inclusive educators (Li & Ruppar, 2021) and teacher identity in engagements that are related to practice (Wenger, 1998).

This thesis took Florian's (2014) argument that because the IPAA focuses on learning and the relationships between learners and teachers it minimises discussions and arguments around what inclusive education truly is and the differences with special education. The IPAA allows for the exploration of how to enact a principled approach to education. This approach requires teachers to interrogate their practice in relation to their own context. When teachers accept underlying assumptions, they do not focus primarily on how to meet individual needs. Rather, they first focus on what is to be taught and how best to present the content for everybody in the class. Collaboration among teachers and other professionals fosters an environment to find creative solutions to teaching and learning challenges.

Inclusive pedagogy, as an approach and not as a practice or a particular teaching strategy., based on Florian's (2014) IPAA is "a principled stance [that] is enacted" (Florian, 2014, p. 293). The key features of the IPAA framework are presented in Table 3:2. The comprehensive framework, including examples of its enactment is presented in Appendix A1.

Table 3.2 – IPAA framework: Key Features and Associated Concepts (Florian, 2014)

IPAA Principles	Associated concepts
1. Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning.	Replacing deterministic views of ability with those that view leaning potential as open-ended.
2. Teachers must believe (can be convinced) they are qualified/capable of teaching all children.	Demonstrating how the difficulties learners experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within learners.
3. The profession must continually develop creative new ways of working with others.	Willingness to work (creatively) with and through others.

The IPAA Framework links three key principles of inclusive pedagogy with the assumptions that underpin them. The first principle considers that there will be differences among learners and intends to counter the deterministic view about learners' abilities. Florian (2008) states that when teachers accept difference between learners as an ordinary aspect of human development, they begin by making decisions about what is being taught and by whom. Secondly, with teachers who are responsive to diverse learner and learning needs. The second principle recognises the thinking that only teachers will specialist education can teach all learners. This perception is disputed by demonstrating that learning is a teacher problem and not a learner problem. Florian (2012) noted that when inclusion is conceptualised broadly, teachers identify the way they teach, and their teacher's craft (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012), as being inclusive. The third principle indicates that current knowledge and skills are not enough, and teachers also need to work in collaboration and with other professionals to find creative ways of working together. Following guided professional learning such teachers who take on collaboration for inclusion feel empowered with vocabulary that explains what they already practice (Swart & Oswald, 2008). Indeed, some teachers may already be adopting inclusive practices but do not yet realise it or are unable to articulate what they do (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012, p. 573).

The Principles of the IPAA could "disrupt" (Florian & Walton, 2018, p. 171) the assumptions and practices about inclusive teaching and learning along its three principles. The IPAA which provides a framework for inclusive teaching, was conceptualised from inclusive teaching by qualified in-service teachers (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Florian and Walton (2018) argued that if teachers would engage with inclusive pedagogy, it could be one way that could change teachers' misconceptions about inclusive education and support them to teach inclusively. The approach considers classroom teachers as qualified to teach all learners and therefore they are empowered to work with their colleagues to teach all learners (Florian & Walton, 2018).

The inclusive pedagogy approach is not easy or straight-forward (Florian, 2019). There are many obstacles that teachers often face that cannot simply be disregarded. Teacher professional learning requires to consider these obstacles in a way that empowers teachers to practice inclusion. There are critiques to IPAA's tenet that teaching everyone does not involve something different. Some take the position that inclusion has divergent meanings. It does not mean the

same thing for all. Brennan et al. (2019) state that "complexities of difference" (Brennan et al., 2019, p. 4) among learners in one classroom who "experience significant challenges" (Brennan et al., 2019, p. 12) mean that "who" is being taught may take precedence to what is taught and how to teach. Similarly, Lindsay et al. (2014) found that teachers also struggled to avoid approaches that singled out learners with special educational needs. Teachers find that the "intrinsic barriers" to learning are real and cannot be overlooked. Florian (2019) acknowledging that the work of inclusive education is "difficult and complex" notes that learners' differences should be the reason to find support for all learners, particularly for learners with disabilities.

The use of the IPAA in professional learning for inclusive pedagogy has been found to shift teachers' thinking in all three principles of the framework Klibthong and Agbenyega (2018). Teachers saw positive changes in learner outcomes after implementing the IPAA. This shifted teachers' thinking on deterministic beliefs about learners' abilities, increased their efficacy for inclusive practice and successfully improved their collaboration skills on problem-solving, lesson planning and co-teaching (Brennan et al., 2019). The IPAA values flexibility in teaching and learning. . However, differentiation where learners were allowed to choose their learning preference, was not a successful strategy for all learners. Another critique of the IPAA has been its inflexibility in giving teachers options when some learners are identified as have special learning needs (Brennan, King & Travers, 2019; Lindsay et al. (2014). The IPAA responds to this critique. It states that as an approach, teachers can be flexible in their use of strategies, rather than deciding that a particular learning strategy is solely for use with certain individual learners (Spratt & Florian, 2015). South African research has established the value of collaboration with other professionals as is specified in principle three of the IPAA (Nel et al., 2014; Savolainen et al., 2011).

To practice inclusion in the classroom teachers are expected to be agents of change (Pantić, 2014). Pantić (2014) argues that teacher agency needs to be articulated in relation to a particular purpose and direction for change. Incorporating the IPAA Pantić (2014) developed the model of teacher agency for social justice. It articulates the concept and processes of teachers as agents of change. It elaborates how to work purposefully with others to challenge the status quo – the ubiquitous exclusion and marginalisation of learners. Framing the IPAA with teacher agency,

Florian and Pantić (2015) challenge the ways in which teachers work in isolation. They contend that it is important expand teachers' competence and capacity to work purposefully with other professionals. Edwards (2010) attested collaboration as a professional value that enables professionals to interpret problems of practice. By working in collaboration teachers are empowered to perceive obstacles as surmountable. Initiating inclusive practices implies the need for transformation – an act of agency – to improve learning outcomes for all learners. The IPAA therefore also works together with Wenger's theory which indicates that learning happens when members of community work together. Inclusive pedagogy as an approach fosters teacher professional identity and teacher agency as classroom teacher responsible for teaching, learning and assessment of learners in their classrooms (Florian & Beaton, 2018). Teachers using the approach have adopted an identity as a learner that listens to what learners in the classroom say about their learning.

3.5 The relationships in the Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework is an argument and theory (Maxwell, 2013) for research on professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. The "simplest form of theory consists of two concepts joined by a proposed relationship" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 49). The foregoing discussion on each aspect of the Framework has indicated that there are relationships between the key concepts and the theoretical perspectives, based on a critical perspective of inclusion. Figure 3:1 shows how the concepts are interrelated and how PLCs for inclusive pedagogy facilitate the study of teacher professional identity agency. The two theories, Wenger's (1998) learning as social practice and Sfard and Prussak's (2005) identity as narrative, and the IPAA framework, support the argument by providing ways to explain the relationships concepts and give an indication of possible outcomes of the study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017).

The context of the full-service school enables a critical perspective of inclusion to have links to the key concepts and the theoretical perspectives. The full-service school constructed from a social justice and critical perspective of inclusion links to the values of PLCs which are congruent with the values of inclusion. When teachers learn using the models that they will teach with, they are more likely to implement those models in their classrooms. Therefore, if they have developed their knowledge of inclusive education through inclusive models, they are

more likely to implement the same. Among the values of inclusive education include a sense of belonging. To this end Chauraya (2013) stated that "the sense of belonging in community with other teachers provides group cohesion to the community and supports teachers' agency to participate in the activities of the professional learning communities" (p. 44). Walton and Lloyd (2012) agreed with Ainscow et al., (2003) that context-specific professional learning needs to be directly related to teachers' work in schools. PLCs are related to the teachers' immediate realities as they are a school-based and are a long-term professional learning programme. PLCs are a collaborative learning approach which have supported teachers to reflect on their classroom practices and influenced how they perceived themselves and subsequently how they taught.

Teacher professional identity and agency are interrelated in PLCs through teacher talk. Teachers' professional identity influences how teachers incorporate new knowledge into their classroom practices. PLCs have been shown to influence teachers' professional identity and agency. They helped teachers improve their classroom practice in South Africa (Chauraya, 2013; Pausigere, 2014). PLCs have enabled teachers to reflect on ways of working together that support teachers to develop inclusive classroom practices in the Republic of Ireland (Brennan & King, 2021). Built on Wenger's theory of learning as social practice, the PLCs make "profound connection between identity and practice" (Wenger, 1998, p.149) and learning happens when individuals are immersed in the social and cultural practices of a community. The community provides learning and practical knowledge that is required for teachers because their participation is facilitated by discussions – teacher talk.

In this Conceptual Framework, comprising a context, key concepts and theoretical perspectives and the presumed relationships among them (Maxwell, 2013), I have theorised the relationships among the aspects that would enable research on professional learning for inclusive pedagogy.

3.6 Conclusion

The conceptual framework theorised how to understand teacher professional identity and agency as teachers talk in professional learning communities that focus on inclusive pedagogy as an approach. Wenger's (1998) theory of "learning as social practice" provided the basis to research teacher talk on inclusive pedagogy in PLCs. The theory was expected to reveal features of

teacher professional identity and agency in collaborative and discursive learning contexts. As an argument about why the study matters, the conceptual framework contributes a conceptual understanding of the interplay between teachers' professional identity and the sociocultural contexts of PLCs, and how teacher talk could mediate teacher learning for inclusive education. Applying the Conceptual Framework as a guide ensured that the research methods the thesis/study utilised were appropriate and sufficiently rigorous (Ravitch & Riggan 2017).

This study's conceptualisation of teachers as agents of inclusive pedagogy as social justice requires teachers to develop their capacity for working with other teachers in order to improve learning, participation and achievement. Teachers could shift their professional identity and agency for inclusive pedagogy when they participate in Professional Learning Communities that focus on inclusive pedagogy. Teacher talk could show the shifts in teacher professional identity and agency in PLCs as a trajectory in learning inclusive pedagogy.

Chapter Four: The PLC Project at City Primary School

4.1 Introduction

This study was part of a university-led community engagement project at City Primary School a full-service primary school in Johannesburg. City Primary School is a pseudonym. The National Research Foundation financially supported the project. A senior lecturer from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) was the project leader and led a team comprising three postgraduate students, one of whom was also a university staff member. The Directorate Inclusion and Special Schools (ISS) of the GDE gave clearance to the university to develop PLCs for inclusive education. This was one of the project's aims. An additional aim included shifting professional learning focus from mitigating barriers to learning of some learners identified as having special education needs to a focus on pedagogical solutions that considered the learning of all children in classrooms. This chapter gives an overview of the project and my involvement in the project and at City Primary School.

4.2 Wits School of Education community engagement

Wits School of Education (WSOE) community engagement was an initiative (hereafter referred to as 'the initiative') that followed an international precedent for university involvement in inclusive education through the modelling of collaborative inquiry with teachers in schools. It addressed the university's responsibility for community engagement along with teaching and research (Walton, 2016). The Initiative began in 2013 between the WSOE, the Directorate: Inclusion and Special Schools (ISS) of the GDE, and City Primary School (Walton, 2016).

WSOE staff and post-graduate students, including myself, were involved in researching different aspects of inclusive education and PLCs at City Primary School. Permission to conduct the research from the GDE was renewed annually while ethical clearance from the Wits Ethics Committee were secured for the full duration of the project. Members of the WSOE team conducted research within three themes:

1. Knowledge about inclusive pedagogies in PLCs;
2. Development and operationalising PLCs; and

3. The role of a university in developing PLCs.

My investigation of teacher professional identity and agency in PLCs was part of the Initiative under theme one. A study on the role of PLC facilitators was conducted by Matanhire (2017) and Walton (2016b) published an overview and early findings on the project.

4.3 The Context: City Primary School

The GDE selected City Primary School-a full-service school in Johannesburg to participate in the project. It was selected for the project because it did not have the benefit of a near-by special school to serve as its resource centre. The learners in City Primary school included children who speak different first languages and children with mild to moderate support needs. At the time of the study PLCs were held with 36 teachers of grades R – 4, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Teachers per grade in the full-service school

Grade	Number of Teachers
R	9
One	4
Two	9
Three	10
Four	4
Total	36

City Primary School's administration supplied me the tally shown in Table 4:1. From the PLC sessions it was clear that most of the teachers were female. All 36 teachers were expected to attend the sessions as the school administration required them to sign an attendance register at the beginning of each session.

4.4 PLC Topics

PLCs involve teacher learning and developing classroom practices as a joint process that generates new and common understandings in a particular knowledge area (Stoll, 2011). The topics were developed from teachers' concerns and suggestions. The Wits team initiated two sessions, number 10 and 11, that explained inclusive pedagogy guided by Florian's (2014) inclusive pedagogical approach in action (IPAA). The WSOE team prepared discussion guidelines were aligned with the principles of the IPAA and according to the needs the teachers had expressed. For example,

teachers indicated that learners do not listen to them when they are teaching. Therefore, one PLC meeting discussed factors that enable or constrain how learners hear and listen. The teachers discussed the physical limitations that they were aware of that affected learners' hearing and the different ways they could assist learners to listen. At subsequent meetings teachers were introduced to 'whole body listening.' They discussed the link between inclusive teaching and listening. The focus of the discussions was on what teachers could do with the resources they had available. The WSOE team developed guides for the facilitators and handouts for the teachers.

Table 4.2 PLC Sessions and Topics

Year	Month	PLC Session	Topic
1	February	1	Effective Listening
	June	2	Whole Body Listening
	August	3	Building Vocabulary for Comprehension
2	February	4	Inclusive Teaching and Learning
	May	5	Cooperative Learning 1
	July	6	Cooperative Learning 2 -Think-Pair-Share
	August	7	Cooperative Learning 3 -Write-Think-Pair-Share and Pair-Coaching
3	February	8	Sentence Starters
	May	9	Meaningful Engagement
	August	10	Bell-Curve Thinking & Inclusive Pedagogy 1
	September	11	Bell-Curve Thinking & Inclusive Pedagogy 2

Table 4.2 lists the titles of the topics discussed over the three years. Three PLC sessions were held in Year One, four in Year Two and four in Year Three. The WSOE team would, most certainly, have preferred to have more PLC sessions. However, this was not possible because the teachers had to attend to other school activities. While monthly meetings are the ideal (Walton, 2016), the preparation, format, and facilitation of the eleven PLC sessions may appear as if they were eleven workshops. However, the sessions were not "transmission-type 'training'" (Walton, 2016, p. 38). As PLCs, the sessions were site-based, and as ongoing collaborative learning sessions, the teachers' discussions were related to the teachers' specific school and classroom experiences, and each session built on the knowledge of the previous session.

Prior to starting the PLCs teachers had expressed that learners did not listen to them when they are teaching. Therefore, the first year of the project was dedicated to topics related to listening and understanding: one PLC meeting discussed factors that enable or constrain how learners hear and listen. The teachers discussed the physical limitations that they were aware of that affected learners' hearing and the different ways they could assist learners to listen. Other PLCs in year one covered the different components for effective listening and building vocabulary from comprehension. In the second year and in two sessions of the third year, discussions on inclusive teaching and learning included how teachers could use specific strategies and also offer learners with options on how to engage with the lesson content. In the last two sessions, teachers discussed the IPAA framework. To the extent it was possible, the text in the PLC discussion guidelines avoided academic jargon and technical terms. It set out statements and questions that related to classroom realities. Commonly used terms in inclusive education discourse such as "barriers" were excluded from the PLC discussion guidelines. Appendix C provides an overview of each session. Since the meetings were only one hour long the discussion guidelines carried questions that could be adequately discussed within that time.

4.5 PLC Facilitation

Effective leadership and facilitations are among the key features of effective and sustainable PLCs (Brodie & Borko, 2016). The principal of City Primary School selected teachers to serve as PLC facilitators. The WSOE team would meet with facilitators a few days before the PLCs to acquaint the facilitators with the topic of discussion. For most meetings we would, for an hour, go through the facilitators guide and the teacher's discussion guidelines a few days prior spend to the general PLC meeting. The facilitators were given two handouts. One was a guide meant to assist the facilitator to conduct the PLC session and keep the discussions focused on the topic of the session. The facilitators' guide had detailed instructions on how the discussion was to be conducted. This included giving the exact questions that they would ask teachers. A second handout with questions specific to the topic of each PLC guided the teachers' discussions. The teachers' handout also served as a reference for teachers after the PLC meeting. The teachers' hand-out was often in the form of a worksheet with several questions and spaces for teachers to record their understanding. The sessions in the second year started with a short video before discussions. Teachers enacted role-plays to before discussions in the last two sessions.

The facilitators played various roles that contributed to developing cohesion in the PLCs and guiding discussion on inclusive pedagogy among the PLC group members (Matanhire, 2017). They were crucial to keeping group participants focused on the topic of discussion. During the facilitators' meeting, the facilitators had opportunities to ask questions about the content of forthcoming PLC meetings and seek clarification over whatsoever matter. The facilitators' meeting also served to polish the teachers' handout. At the facilitators' meetings, the WSOE team would request facilitators to share ideas that would help create a productive discussion while ensuring that teachers did not feel over-burdened. During the PLC facilitator's meetings, the facilitators and the WSOE team discussed how the PLC is different from workshops. However, not every facilitator attended all meetings. Also, over the research period, there were different facilitators. Sometimes post-graduate students or a WSOE staff would step as a facilitator where a group did not have a teacher facilitator or a facilitator that had not attended the facilitators' meeting. The changes in PLC facilitation and difference in group membership as not all teachers attended all sessions meant that the WSOE team had to be flexible about PLC meeting ideals. The continuity and rigour of PLC engagement was ensured by a deliberate review of previous sessions.

4.6 PLC Sessions

The dates for PLCs sessions were determined at the beginning of the year. A meeting was held once a term. The PLC sessions were scheduled at the beginning of the year, giving teacher adequate notice. Even though there is little tradition of collaborative professional learning in South Africa (Brodie & Borko, 2016), the advance notice enabled the collaborative learning because there was more chance that more teachers attended the PLC sessions. Meetings were held after the teaching and learning hours, but still within the teachers' contracted hours to be at school. Light refreshments were provided. On the PLCs meeting day, the WSOE team set up the staffroom, making it ready for teachers to gather after their school day and sit at tables with audio-recorders. The WSOE team's initial expectation was that that teachers would sit according to the grade they teach facilitated by a colleague from the same grade. However, teachers were concerned that they could be identified if they sat at a table with their grade-level colleagues. Despite confirmation from the WSOE team concerning confidentiality and anonymity, the teachers preferred to sit in mixed grade-level groups and among different colleagues at every PLC meeting.

A facilitator for each grade conducted the discussions in their grade's PLC. The WSOE team would be present in the room to provide clarification, where necessary. Each group's discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed with the teachers' permission. The recordings and transcriptions were the data for the study and were all analysed. At the start of each meeting, the teachers reviewed the previous meetings' discussions. They were also invited to share how they incorporated what they had learned in their classrooms. The facilitators encouraged teachers to express their feelings, successes and challenges of teaching learners with diverse needs. As a member of the WSOE team, I participated in preparing the topics for discussion. I was also present during PLC meeting days.

4.7 My Involvement at City Primary School

Before teaching at City Primary School, I had taught a grade four class at a well-resourced international school. The international school was also my first experience teaching a class that included learners with disabilities and learning challenges. The year before I joined the school, the teachers of the grade level had placed the children they considered problematic or with additional support needs in one class. That was the class that I was assigned to teach. The class included learners with a range of health, learning and behavioural challenges. To add to these profiles, the children were from different countries: Ghana, Botswana, South Africa, USA, China, India, England, Argentina and Scotland. This conglomeration made my experience both exciting and challenging. No day resembled the other. Every day had a different set of learning and teaching challenges. Even though I felt I was out of my depth the support structure was my saving grace. I would also spend many hours on the internet finding ways to teach my inclusive class. I found teaching this Grade Four class a challenging yet possible task.

From my experience of teaching the Grade Four class at the international school, I knew that teaching an inclusive class did not always require specialised knowledge about the learners' disabilities. My pre-service teacher education did not include any special education. However, I had been successful with teaching Grade Four. Collaboration with other teachers and weekly joint lesson-planning meetings contributed greatly to my success. The meetings provided me with insights from other teachers who may have had experience and professional learning on children's

learning difficulties and disabilities. Thus, I started this study, framed by my experience, and with the knowledge that my experience had enabled me to teach children with diverse needs.

My experience teaching an inclusive classroom had convinced me that a qualified teacher could teach all learners. I was later shocked, when conducting research for my master's degree in inclusive education, to encounter a teacher who would berate young schooling mothers telling them she was not trained to teach "mothers" and "pregnant girls" (Kimani, 2014). Sadly, this teacher was a member of the school-based support team (SBST). One of her responsibilities was to help pregnant learners and schooling mothers to cope with their studies. That study had sought an insider's perspective of young schooling mothers' experiences of inclusion (Kimani, 2014). In the course of that study, I learned from my learner participants that teachers marginalised them because they were schooling mothers. From the young schooling mothers, I gained an insider's perspective about inclusion in high schools. I therefore decided to also get an insider's perspective about teaching in a primary school.

Prior to conducting this study, I had no teaching experience in a primary school in Johannesburg. I decided that I needed to understand the teachers' classroom experiences. Therefore, I wished to embed myself in City Primary School before I conducted the semi-structured individual teacher interviews and one group interview. I requested the school principal to authorise me to do this. The principal obliged as I was not a stranger to the school, having been part of the WSOE team for the PLC project. I spent five months in the school. I was formally assigned to assist Mrs. Malinda[3], a grade four teacher and also the head of the English department. I also served as a substitute teacher. Therefore, ultimately, I also taught English in two grade four classes, a grade three and two grade five classes. I participated in school activities, which included helping learners prepare for school assembly performances, break-time and end-of-school supervision and assembling and supervising learners at school mealtimes.

My involvement with the NRF project and as a substitute teacher at City Primary School gave me an insider perspective of teachers' classroom experiences (Themane & Thojebane, 2019). Graven (2014), as quoted in Long et al., (2017) warns against educational researchers who may have

[3] A pseudonym

limited engagement in the actual teaching in a school and who present analysis that could undermine the teaching profession. This quotation was in the context of according teachers the "full protection of their status as professionals, rather than be subjected to the blanket criticism of un-nuanced opinion or to a bias from the perspective of testing" (Long et al., 2017, p. 17). Graven (2014) argued that in many studies the voices of teachers are largely absent. And recommends that researchers "seek to tell stories of educational opportunities and success in relation to…low socio-economic status schools…to counter the pervasive message of hopelessness and inevitable failure that permeates correlation studies" (Graven, 2014, p. 1048).

I took Graven's (2014) challenge seriously. Even though I needed to be 'objective' as a researcher, I had to drop any judgment I may have had about teacher attitudes towards various learners and decided to 'walk a mile in their shoes'. Within the course of this study, my identities as an inclusive educator and an inclusive researcher have been in flux. I have had to question my assumptions about why I was who I was, especially in the light of wider educational challenges, such as #fmf and the COVID pandemic and my experience as a teacher at City Primary School.

The social construction of knowledge and meaning is not devoid of the cultural and social contexts of the research (Behari-Leak, 2016). Omitting the personal experiences surrounding the research process could weaken a study's findings as some findings, such as the findings of this study, are not derived from a laboratory-controlled investigation. The findings that come from an interpretivist lens are informed by a researcher's social, cultural and political events and experiences. This narrative indicates my positionality. Even though traditional theses present positionality as a clinical concept "locating the researcher in relation to the subject, the participants and the research context and process" (Savin-Baden & Howell Major 2013 p. 71), Denzin (1986) indicates that a personal angle is necessary because "interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher" (Denzin 1986 p. 12). Ravitch and Riggan (2012) state that research requires personal reflection of the researcher's identity as such reflection informs the researcher's biases and perception of the world. Additionally, Allan (2005) insists that inclusive education is not something done to a "discrete population of children, but rather something we must do to ourselves". In this vein, Slee (2011) "invites us to think about the nature of the world we live in, a world that we prefer and our role in shaping both of those worlds" (p. 14).

My aim in presenting this personal narrative is to foreground the critical challenges that inclusive education faces, the flux in my identity, and the non-linear learning in PhD research. In becoming a certain kind of identity (Wenger, 1998) as an inclusive education scholar and researcher, I also intend to show the reality of the social construction of meaning rather than give lip-service to the concept. In capturing her personal experiences in her PhD research, Mary Hanrahan supported by her co-authors, makes a strong case for breaking out of the "shackles of traditional experimental notions of research" (Hanrahan et al., 1999). The breaking out of shackles implies that there is an identity crisis that post-graduate students feel as they have to become someone they are not or that they simply do not fit in (Ivanic, 1998). Ivanic (1998) noted that the "discoursal self" is the mediating mechanism in the social construction of identity (Ivanic, 1998, p. 17). By engaging in the discourse of research and through speaking and writing a new identity is manifested.

4.8 Conclusion

The PLC-University engagement project afforded scholarship and partnership for the WSOE team and the teachers at City Primary School. The three-year-long project not only provided me with data for this PhD study, but also gave me an opportunity to learn about, and teach in a full-service school. My immersion in the school gave me a teachers' perspective of teaching and learning in a full-service school and also facilitated the qualitative research. The research methodology and methods are described and discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This was a qualitative study that aimed to make meaning of social phenomena – PLC discussions – that were conducted in their natural setting – the City Primary School. I sought to understand teacher professional identity and agency in professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. My aim was to interpret the PLC discussions using methods that immersed me into the social world of the teachers who participated in the study (Ritchie et al., 2013).

A throughline, that runs from the research problem and questions to methodology and research design, is required in research. It enables credible interpretations that arrive at trustworthy conclusions. The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss both, the philosophical underpinnings of the study – "the bigger picture" (Newby, 2014, p. xxvii) – and the decisions I made regarding collection and analysis of data. The big picture will justify the methodology I adopted whilst and the details entail the methods I used to ensure the coherence of the study. The choices for the methodology and the methods were based on the Conceptual Framework presented in Chapter Three.

This chapter begins with an overview of the methodology – Critical Interpretivism. Thereafter will follow a section overview that links Critical Interpretivism to the context discussed in the Conceptual Framework and the focus for PLCs, the IPAA and Wenger's theory of learning as social practice. Then, the study's design and the basis for data collection and analysis will follow. Penultimately is an expounding of the ethical considerations that guided the research. Finally, the chapter will end with a discussion on the rigour of the study that determined the reliability of the findings.

5.2 Philosophical underpinnings

All research is based on beliefs and underlying assumptions about reality and knowledge, which determine how a problem is identified, what methods will be used to collect data and how data will be analysed. Research paradigms guide researchers on the boundaries that align beliefs and

assumptions, which include the ontological and epistemological assumptions that guide a study. Paradigms support, clarify and organise the thinking about the research. The most commonly labelled paradigms – positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, post-modernism and critical realism –are defined by their distinguishing ontologies and epistemologies. Their fixed definitions are increasingly contested. Lincoln and Guba (2013) credit Geertz (1973) for forecasting the blurring of the divisions between the paradigms. Complementary to this and in response to Geertz's (1973) blurred genres, Guba and Lincoln (2013) demonstrated a blended genre, "interpretive critical inquiry", that draws from both interpretivism and critical theory paradigms, responds to Geertz's blurred genres. Decades ago, Deetz (1982) discussed this paradigm as Critical Interpretive research. It is also named Critical Interpretivism (Pozzebon, 2004). This blended genre, that blurs the fixed distinction between interpretivism and critical theory, has guided this study. Critical Interpretivism is an appropriate paradigm to study inclusive pedagogy within a sociocultural context. The following discussion begins with an overview of Critical Interpretivism followed by the affordances of interpretivism and critical theory and closes with the rationale of the paradigm for this study.

5.3 Critical interpretivism

Critical interpretivism is a worldview that combines critical theory and interpretivism. The combined worldview is necessitated by the shortcomings of interpretivism. Interpretivism aims to understand the lived experiences of research participants but stops short of questioning how their world is so (Lincoln & Guba 2013). With Critical Theory, "lived experiences are not only understood, but their origins and causes are interrogated", with the aim of social change (Lincoln & Guba 2013, p. 89). In addition to describing naturally occurring phenomena, Critical interpretive research aims at uncovering perceptions of reality that are taken for granted because "the rightful value of all knowledge is the improvement of human existence" (Deetz, 1982, p, 139).

Interpretivism and Critical Theory paradigms are tied together by their common features as paradigms in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (2013) enumerated the expectations for qualitative research and the expectations for critical interpretivism. Qualitative research accepts lived experiences as valid truths. Therefore, there is no one objective truth. Components of qualitative research include locating a researcher as an observer in the social world, not privileging

any single methodological practice over another, and the world becomes a series of representations, such as field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, "attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

Interpretivism affords Critical Interpretivism an understanding of phenomena by interrogating how people make sense of their world. Central to the interpretive approach is the premise that human existence cannot be separated from its context. And since individuals have varying ways of interpreting their world, there is not one way of understanding phenomena. Interpretivist research is concerned with the meanings that people attach to norms and values, and how the norms and values regulate their interactions from the research participants' point of view. To investigate these different perceptions, research using an interpretivist paradigm uses methods and instruments which also uncover how cultural contexts shape perceptions and inform peoples' actions (Pozzebon, Rodriguez & Petrini, 2014).

Critical Theory, originally associated with the Frankfurt School, looks at meanings beyond the written text and surface meanings, by providing more than explanations and enabling "change towards a more just and rational society" (Gibson, 1986, p. 2). It rejects the natural state of things that science puts forward. It contests that facts cannot be taken on face value. In so doing it provides an enlightenment on the actual conditions of social life. There are dominant features of the modern world that are considered the natural state of affairs. These dominant features are determined through mechanisms of power and knowledge. Those who control knowledge have power to determine what will be the "dominant discourse" and the "distinctive worldview" about what is important, and what knowledge is legitimate and what knowledge is unreliable (Brookfield, 2005, p. 138).

Critical theory explores how power and authority inhibit the freedoms of groups and individuals providing insights into how they can have greater autonomy (Gibson, 1986). To critique and challenge the dominant features of the modern world, means exposing the irregularities that constrain groups and individuals from acting on their own free will and disclosing the true interests

of individuals and groups who are especially advantaged by the apparent natural state of things (Gibson, 1986). It is, for instance, apparent that dominant perspectives on education marginalise many learners. A Critical Theory perspective offers critique which help reveal factors that prevent individuals and groups from making decisions that affect their lives and in so doing take control of their lives.

The rationale for this study to adopt a critical interpretivism paradigm was based on the critical historical origins of inclusive education. Additionally, there has been unrelenting educational exclusion of many learners. The critical origins of inclusive education sought to tackle the exclusion of children with disabilities from mainstream education. This critical perspective is still relevant today as exclusion and marginalisation still affect many learners, including learners with disabilities. Slee (2011) has argued that inclusive education research to return to its critical roots as an emancipatory project requiring scholars and practitioners to constantly examine the schooling and educational structures that include and benefit some learners but marginalise and exclude many others. From the beginnings of inclusive education research in South Africa, Naicker (2006) suggested a paradigmatic change from interpretivism to a critical perspective to examine the ideological influences on teachers' practice. He contended that the psychological perspectives of special education, which categorised learners by their pathology and followed the medical model of disability, was discriminatory. Further, that it was inappropriate for inclusive education. Allan and Slee (2008) discussed the benefits of combining different perspectives when conducting research in inclusive education and Critical Interpretivism has been used to study inclusion in specific subjects (Berg Svendby, 2016) and in teacher education in South Africa (D'Amant, 2009).

Both Critical Interpretivism and Critical Theory paradigms are linked by textual interpretation. Interpretivism has "use of language and subjective consciousness" whilst Critical Theory is a "social critique of power structures" (Pozzebon, Rodriguez & Petrini, 2014, p. 295). For this study the texts included transcripts of PLC recordings and individual teacher interviews and one group interview. The two perspectives both emphasise a communicative orientation and an interest in human understanding. To be critically interpretive, Pozzebon et al. (2014), contend that a researcher does not only understand a given phenomenon from various interpretations, but the researcher will also foster reflective accounts that connect their interpretations to the broader

factors of social power and control. The researcher using a combined perspective of Interpretivism and critical Theory, engages in dialogues with research participants, creating social consciousness that can lead to emancipation of participants from oppressive social, cultural, political, economic, gender, sexual, ethnic, or racial situations (Guba & Lincoln, 2013). The research text needs to activate readers to re-examine assumptions that underlie the work under consideration. Therefore, the researcher needs to consider how the text includes the possibility for readers to critique the current social conditions and power formations (Pozzebon, et. al., 2014). In this study, I question the framing of professional learning for inclusion. Professional learning for inclusion is the well-worn response to the challenges of teaching inclusively. Even though teacher professional learning is crucial, I question the familiar framing of learning as mainly the acquisition of knowledge and skills from experts. Using Wenger's (1998) theory, I discuss learning as social practice, a process of participants immersed in a community.

Critical Interpretivism is fostered by dialogical principles that bridge the two perspectives and compromise between the too universal and too particular of knowledge in context (Pozzebon, et. al., 2014). The compromise of Critical Interpretivism involves subjective and relative perspectives when studying and interpreting texts (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). Qualitative research is subjective, meaning that different views of reality are acceptable. The relativist ontology of this study accepted multiple realities and accepted that teachers' utterances were valid records of reality. I consciously adopted a critical and reflective stance and engaged in critical reflection on texts that were produced, in particular the transcripts of PLC meetings.

5.4 Critical Interpretivism for PLCs and Inclusive Pedagogy

Social justice is one of the principles that underpinning the IPAA. The IPAA framework connects to the principles of inclusive education in South Africa, such as "the demand for justice" and "human rights and social justice for all learners (DoE, 2001). The framework also articulates teachers as agents who work purposefully with others to challenge the exclusion and marginalisation of learners. As agents for inclusion, teachers' identity is as inclusive practitioners. This is similar D'Amant's (2009) study of teachers' identity construction as inclusive practitioners. She argued that a critical interpretivist approach to inclusive research for teacher education not only allows teachers to be critically reflective of educational arrangements. That approach

additionally investigates and more. It employs a language of analysis that provides for political implications in the recommendations.

With critical interpretivist perspective, a researcher explores how power and authority inhibit the freedoms of groups and individuals providing insights into how they can have greater autonomy (Gibson, 1986). Critical Theory perceives individuals as being agentic, and not mere puppets of wider powerful forces. It is concerned with the realisation of individual power, and the consequent formation of identities with concurrent power over individual and group lives. Teachers have expressed being constrained, including in relation to practicing inclusive education. D'Amant (2012) identified teachers in South Africa as a constrained group. She found that teachers have difficulty in becoming inclusive practitioners because they are "named by others and their selves are externally defined within a deficiency framework, leading to their continued disempowerment" (D'Amant, 2012, p. 59). The study with 'African teachers" in rural South Africa concludes that the imposition of directives from departments of education based in urban areas perpetuate "unequal urban-rural power relations" that constrain teachers' practice (D'Amant, 2012, p. 59).

The teachers' perspective as a constrained group has been established from research that begins from the premise that teachers are recipients of attitudes, skills, and knowledge from other experts (Brantlinger, 2006; Materechera, 2020). Brantlinger (2006) critiqued the advantage specialists have over teachers and their practice. Additionally, the de-professionalisation of teachers constrains them with prescriptive curricula and oppressive regimes of testing and inspection (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2012). The realisation of individual power fosters an identity of influence over personal and professional life. Using a critical perspective research begins with a perspective that teachers are agentic, and analysis of teachers' agency also included examining how the teachers' exercise of agency might disadvantage some learners and consequently create learners as a constrained group.

Critique aims to enlighten and emancipate constrained groups. By critiquing and unpacking assumptions and challenging many conventional practices, Critical Theory provides a framework to unpack uncomfortable discussions (Gibson, 1986). Critical Theory fosters critical thinking by helping hunt assumptions (Brookfield, 2011). Hunting assumptions is made possible through a

reflective process that espouses open-minded thinking and a willingness to consider different perspectives and an acceptance that long-held beliefs can be erroneous. Critical thinking probes taken-for-granted assumptions of the current arrangements of school and schooling (Brookfield, 2011) and raises questions about who benefits from the current school arrangement (Slee, 2011). In uncovering the current arrangements, inequalities and injustices are exposed with the aim of seeking or proposing remedies (Gibson, 1986). Critique about the assumptions about teachers' professional learning and about inclusive pedagogy is facilitated by the reflective nature of PLC discussions that may provide teachers with opportunities to identify their own power over their teaching practices.

Critical interpretivism and communities of practice both engage a dialogic approach to knowledge. Negotiation of meaning in communities of practices, is an active and dynamic process (Wenger, 1998), where participants construct dialogue and argument, which can be confronted, compared and could lead to discoveries (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The power of participation and belonging is also the locus of social power in identity construction. Participants in a community of practice have "the power to belong and to be a certain person" and therefore exercise control to be a legitimate member (Wenger, 1998, p. 207). This conceptualisation of identity and power takes account of participants' ability to "get things done" and "to live meaningfully" (Wenger, 1998, p. (p. 208).

Wenger (2010) responds to the criticism that his theory does not respond to issues of power. He notes that even though the focus of the theory is learning, learning as social practice happens in context and therefore incorporates issues of power. Power must be exercised for a community to form and produce a practice. The negotiation of meaning is an issue of power. As participants contribute and claim competence, they are making power moves that legitimise their competence and membership to the community. Identity as becoming also indicates power plays. As a participant accepts accountability as a member of the community, she/he displays the empowerment and the efficacy of their power.

In considering the teachers' world, I critique some of the dominant features about teachers and inclusive education. The critique seeks to unpack the reasoning that serves the dominant

worldview. “Reclaiming reason” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 56) promotes an agentic perspective by emphasising that individual effort is powerful. The rationale for enlightenment and emancipation is a claim that individual endeavours have power for the individual and can foster societal change (Gibson, 1986). The critical features of my research included placing teachers’ decisions in their specific school context. This meant I was able to critique research that had reported that teachers were non-agentic towards inclusion. The analysis also identified how teachers’ PLC discussions may be influenced by the hegemony of normalcy (Baglieri et al., 2011). A critical interpretivist perspective promotes uncovering normative assumptions about learners and learning, such as questioning how schooling is structured in a manner that preserves the assumptions about differences among learners, and pathologises some learners’ differences as a problem of the learner. The social justice perspective of inclusive education also questions the teaching of most learners which excludes and marginalises any learner that is not considered among the “most”.

In the foregoing section, I have discussed the contribution of critical interpretivism to research in general and the paradigm’s value to inclusive education research. In the following section, I present the research design beginning with the research questions and the actions I took to answer the questions.

5.5 Research Design

The design determines what data are needed to help the researcher answer the research questions and the methods that will provide the data. This study investigated teachers’ talk in PLCs to understand their views about inclusive pedagogy and the meaning they ascribed to their professional identity and agency. To uncover meaning in teacher talk in PLCs three research questions guided the design:

1. What is the nature of PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?
2. How do teachers talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?
3. What does teacher talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy reveal about teacher professional identity and agency?

This study was part of a larger NRF funded research project, discussed in Chapter Four. Therefore, some aspects of design for this study were drawn from decisions that had already been made prior

to commencing this study. These included the establishment of the PLCs and the format and content of the PLC sessions.

5.5.1 Professional learning communities

The project discussed Chapter Four did not involve studying City Primary School to investigate how it fulfilled its mandate as a full-service school. However, understanding some of the "contextual conditions" (Yin, 2009, p. 18) was significant for this critical interpretivism study. This included noting the role of full-service schools in the inclusive education continuum that was set-up by the Department of Education (DBE 2010) (See Chapter three for details on full-service schools). Full-service schools are expected to have the necessary physical, material and human resources to support learners with 'moderate' learning support needs (DoE, 2001). The teaching staff at City Primary School included a child psychologist and a learning support educator, additional human resources not common in public mainstream schools.

5.5.2 Units of Analysis for Teacher talk in PLCs

Audio recordings and transcripts of PLC sessions were the primary data source while semi-structured interviews and one group interview provided both primary and secondary data that supplemented findings from the PLC sessions. These methods were appropriate for this study and have been used prior in similar studies (Chauraya, 2016; Themane & Thobejane, 2019). Brodie (2011) has established that teacher learning in PLCs is "collective knowledge" (Brodie, 2011, p. 26). Consequently, the group talk was the unit of analysis. The PLCs provided a 'real world' context of teachers in the full-service school and enabled an investigation of the phenomena – teachers' talk – in its natural setting. This data was considered real world experiences of the teachers' own context as the PLC sessions were mainly conducted by the teachers, among their own colleagues. This research had a focus on the affordances of PLCs for in-service teacher learning of inclusive pedagogy.

5.5.3 Semi-structured individual teacher interviews and one group interview

Even though learning in PLCs is theorised as a social group endeavour, individual learning is recognised as part of the goals of communities (Cox, 2005). Therefore, semi-structured interviews

and one group interview with open-ended questions were conducted. The interviews gave the teachers opportunities to tell their stories about their experiences in the PLC because they were not limited to any pre-set answers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were suitable because teachers had limited time as the interviews were conducted during school term but after classes. Even within the limited time teachers were able to answer my questions. Their answers gave me opportunities to explore in greater depth the perceptions that interested each teacher (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Probing techniques were used to elicit in-depth information but the follow up questions were asked with sensitivity. This was to avoid creating discomfort for the teachers or leading them to provide lengthy yet inaccurate information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Twelve teachers and two support educators participated in the interviews. This comprised at least one teacher per grade level. One group interview was conducted with two support educators. I developed the interviews questions from my preliminary review of the PLC transcripts to confirm and augment the information that I had obtained from the audio recordings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Only teachers who had attended at least five of the eleven PLC meetings were invited to participate in the interviews since they were in the best position to provide in-depth information. The sample is selected purposely (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Cohen et al., (2007) stated that purposive sampling can be used to identify "knowledgeable people" who are in a position to provide in-depth information (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 115).

5.5.4 Audio Recordings of PLC Sessions

All PLC group discussions were audio-recorded, and the recordings were transcribed. The group recordings were, on average, 45 minutes long. While audio recordings capture participants' talk, participants may fear exposure on being recorded and this could inhibit their expression (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). In this study teachers consented to being recorded. Digital Audio recorders were placed on tables and a teacher, often the facilitator of a group, pressed the record button once the discussion began and switched it off at the end of the discussion. The recordings of each meeting did not identify groups. They were downloaded and stored in a password protected computer and labelled according to the meeting date. The recordings were then sent to an external transcriber and transcriptions were further mixed giving no indication of the teacher identities.

5.6 Participants

All 36 teachers in the school participated in the PLCs. However, not all teachers participated in every meeting. This inconsistent participation sometimes interrupted the discussion of topic when a teacher would have to first get acquainted with a previous meeting's deliberations. While such interruptions offer data on participation, they affected the impact of the PLC 'lesson'. The principal had selected one teacher per grade to guide discussions in their respective grade's PLC. As mentioned in Chapter Four, membership of the PLC groups was different at each session.

Twelve teachers were individually interviewed, and the school's child psychologist and the learning support educator were interviewed together (Table 4.3). The names shown in the table are all pseudonyms. The interviews, consisting of at least one teacher per grade level, were conducted at the end of the three-year period. I used the semi-structure interview guide reproduced in Appendix A3. The interviews were conducted after a preliminary data analysis had been carried out.

Table 5.1: List of Staff interviewed

Grade	Teacher Pseudonym[4]	PLC Sessions attended
Grade R	Fatuma Sakaja	ALL
Grade 1	Nancy Mativu	ALL
Grade 2	Kalanga Njihu	ALL
Grade 2	Matrice Mulunge	8
Grade 3	Zebbedi Malonza	ALL
Grade 3	Mary Kayago	9
Grade 3	Namtuso Java	ALL
Grade 3	Kerry Tikolo	ALL
Grade 4	Senior Shakava	ALL
Grade 4	Sonya Kudu	5
Grade 4	Ntombi Nonto	6
Grade 5	Monica Mashairi	5
School Psychologist & Learning support educator	Sharon Kabanda Setlopo Maranda	5 5

[4] Not all teachers listed in Table 5.1 are quoted directly in the analysis and discussion chapters: Six, Seven and Eight. The pseudonyms are listed here for accountability purposes.

The interviews confirmed tentative conclusions that I had made in the preliminary data analysis of PLC recordings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Among the ways I integrated the interview data with the session transcripts was with questions on which session had made an impact on the teachers' practice. The interviews also clarified queries that had surfaced earlier and enabled me "to check for any researcher bias" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 249).

During my teaching stint at the City Primary School, I made announcements at the staff meetings and placed invitations on the staffroom noticeboard requesting teachers to participate in the interviews. I also followed-up these general requests by making individual requests, through conversations. The twelve teachers, the school psychologist and the learning support educator reflect over 33% of the teaching staff at City Primary School and over 45% of the teachers that met the criteria for interviews. The school psychologist and the learning support educator were included because they both had attended the PLCs and also taught learners who were referred to them by the school's library. The number of staff interviewed may have been a limitation if the interviews were my main source of data. While I acknowledge that the interviews were important, the numbers were not a limitation as the interviews were confirmatory sources for findings in the PLC discussions.

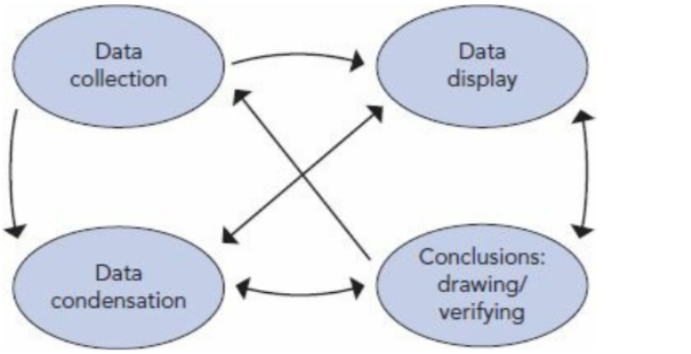
The overall school culture and values as well as the school's socio-cultural context could possibly have played a role in teachers' views of inclusive education. However, However, providing more on the school's socio-cultural context would compromise anonymity by making the school identifiable

5.7 Data organisation and analysis

To conduct thematic analysis, I employed processes that helped me make sense of the transcripts and audio recordings of PLC conversations and the teacher interviews by identifying and looking for patterns and themes that answered my research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Using the Conceptual Framework (Chapter Three) I adapted the phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and developed an analytical framework through which I was able to characterise teacher professional identity and agency in PLCs.

Data analysis involves organising, evaluating and drawing conclusions from data that have been collected. Qualitative data analysis follows an interactive model consisting of four major and intertwined activities (Figure 5.1). Data condensation, which involves organising and selecting data, is part of analysis that gives focus in relation to research objectives. Data display entails the various ways the data is compressed and assembled. Drawing and verifying conclusions is a constant activity at each stage. Data condensation, data display and verifying conclusion in the interactive Model of data analysis are also facilitated by thematic analysis.

Figure 5.1 : Interactive Model of data analysis



Source: Miles et al., 2014, p. 14

5.7.1 Thematic analysis

To choose from the varied approaches and procedures available for analysing qualitative data can be a confounding decision to make. Grbich (2013) explained that there are four types of analytic processes, namely iterative, subjective, investigative and enumerative. There are also approaches to qualitative data analysis that comprise theoretical lenses related to the purposes of the research, for example, Phenomenology and Discourse analysis. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) summarised qualitative data analysis as mostly assembling words, and clustering and reorganising them to allow the researcher to compare, contrast and construct patterns out of the words. Thematic analysis can be applied to qualitative data, regardless of whether the analysis is considered an approach, a process, and procedures (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012).

I chose Thematic analysis because I was able to combine my analytic approach with my analysis process. Thematic analysis follows an iterative process that allows the inclusion of the theoretical approach of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis can develop in an inductive and/or a theoretical, deductive process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes, individual pieces of data extracted from the data corpus, can be developed and assigned based purely from the data, or based on the questions and theories of the research, or from published frameworks of research that have studied concepts similar to the current study. After researchers assign codes to the data, they identify patterns of meaning and group the patterns under themes.

Teacher talk in PLCs is discourse. There are various analytical approaches that can be used to analyse discourse including Discourse, Conversation and Interaction analysis. These approaches examine performance, linguistic styles, the structure and sequential organization of conversation (Ritchie et al., 2013). Additionally, critical discourse analysis has been recommended by some scholars to foreground emancipation of research participants in Critical Interpretivist research (Pozzebon, 2004). However, I chose Thematic analysis because it can be used to reflect reality, and "unravel the surface of "reality'" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 9). These affordances suit the critical interpretivist perspective of this study.

Even though Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative studies, it requires care in use and interpretation. When thematic analysis is not well grounded on a theoretical framework, the interpretation of data may be limited. Additionally, if care is not taken in the analysis process a researcher could miss nuances in the data or create a disjointed progression and understanding of "reality" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). Braun and Clarke (2006) place reality inside single quotation marks because the representation of reality can depend on the assumptions of a particular theoretical framework. These disadvantages, notwithstanding, Thematic analysis is flexible, systematic and transparent and allows cross-referencing between various research instruments as themes evolve (Guest et al., 2012). In the following section, I explain how I adapted Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of Thematic Analysis and incorporated the key concepts of this study to develop an Analytical Framework.

5.7.2 Stages in Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis uncovers the meanings participants in a research make sense of their experience. Research is a "messy business" because the "real world is not as clearly defined as research templates require" (Newby, 2014, p. 29). Challenges also arise from the intertwined nature of the various activities of the study. Even though I number the stages of this study in Table 5.2, this was not a smoothly progressive process. There were overlaps in the activities. The stages of data organisation and analysis presented in Table 5:2 is a rational way of indicating the various activities that I undertook. These stages are essentially an interactive process as shown in Figure 5.1.

Table 5.2: Stages in Data organisation and analysis

Stages in Data organisation and Analysis	Description
1. Processing and preparation	Cataloguing and reducing Data
2. Familiarisation	Reading and noting initial ideas of 1st sample of data
3. Descriptive Codes	Systematic Coding of 2nd sample of data Translation
4. Analytical Framework	Descriptive and Conceptual codes
5. Analysing PLC transcripts and Teacher Interviews	Coding the full data set Identifying potential themes
6. Analysis with MAXQDA and naming themes	Confirming and defining Themes

Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

The stages listed above in Table 5.2 comprise two of the three overriding tasks of data analysis, namely: data reduction, coding and themes, and display and write up (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Stages one and two covered data reduction, and stages four to six covered coding and themes. These stages are discussed in this chapter, while the display and write up are discussed in chapters six, seven and eight.

Processing and preparation

Processing, as the first stage of data analysis, aims to find ways to manage and reduce the data without compromising research rigor (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Cohen et al., (2018)

listed ten ways that data can be organised and among them is by time sequence and time frame that was used in this study. The time sequence organisation involved creating a classification and cataloguing system for the PLC recordings and transcripts that facilitated retrieval of PLC session and group information. This cataloguing was necessary because PLC recordings and transcripts had previously been labelled in varying number formats that had been automatically assigned by different audio recorders. Transcribing is part of the initial processing of data (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). However, as this study was part of a larger research project the initial transcribing of PLC sessions was handled as an overall project activity.

In my PLC catalogue I organised transcripts chronologically by year and session number. Each PLC session comprised several groups discussing the same topic. The transcript from each group was labelled with the year, session number, and an alphabetical letter. For example, **Episode: Y1/01/A/i** is an episode from the transcript of Group A; in Session 1 of Year 1.

Year	Session	Group
2014	01	A

The findings presented in the analyses chapters are excerpts from PLC transcripts, different groups, and different sessions throughout the project period. I selected excerpts that are illustrative of my interpretations and conclusion.

A data processing template was used to summarise key ideas in an initial reading of all transcripts. There were two forms of processing: horizontal and vertical processing (Table 5:3). The horizontal processing was comparison of groups within each session including identifying significant differences, interesting exceptions and length and viability of recordings. Vertical processing gave me an overview of each session including number of groups per PLC session. While the vertical processing may seem redundant because Horizontal processing indicates how many groups, there was value in creating the two columns.

The display provided quick reference of the PLC groups per session. The composition of groups did not remain the same from one session to the next. Therefore, I was unable to track a particular

group's discussion over time. There were no clear distinctions between the groups in one session. Ethical considerations allowed participants to choose not to be recorded and some groups chose to switch off their recorders. This meant that the recordings available did not always reflect the number of groups that were present in a session.

Table 5.3: PLC meetings and viable recordings per session

Year	**PLC Sessions/Topics**	**Horizontal Comparison** -Comparison of Groups in each session -Alphabetical labelling for Groups	**Vertical Processing** -In-Session Comparison -Number of Groups per session
Y1	01/ Effective Listening	A + B	2
	02/ Whole Body Listening	A + B + C	3
	03/ Building Vocabulary for Comprehension	A + B + C + D	4
Y2	04/ Inclusive Teaching and Learning	A + B + C + D	5
	05/ Cooperative Learning 1	A + B + C + D	4
	06/ Cooperative Learning 2	A + B + C + D	4
	07/ Cooperative Learning 3	A + B + C + D	4
Y3	08/ Sentence Stems	A + B + C + D	4
	09/ Meaningful Engagement	A + B	2
	10/ Bell Curve	A + B + C + D + E	5
	11/ Inclusive Pedagogy	A + B + C + D	4
Years: 3	**Sessions: 11**		**Total Groups: 41**

Familiarisation

Different activities were undertaken during familiarisation with data. Familiarisation gave me an overview of the issues that the teachers had raised in the PLC discussions. In a second reading of

the transcripts, I was constantly memoing and also concurrently listened to the audio recordings to identify any nuances in meaning that the transcripts may not have revealed. Memoing can be a creative process that can help a researcher track the evolution of his/her analytic ideas (Newby, 2014). Memoing was critical in helping me to refine my interview questions.

I noted the relationships between the sessions; ideas and refrains that were emerging. The discussions move between moments of agreement and critique and criticism, with English interwoven with code-switching and translanguaging and laughter. Identifying the recurring elements also led me to consider data saturation.

Figure 5.2: Graphic of Recurring elements of a PLC discussion

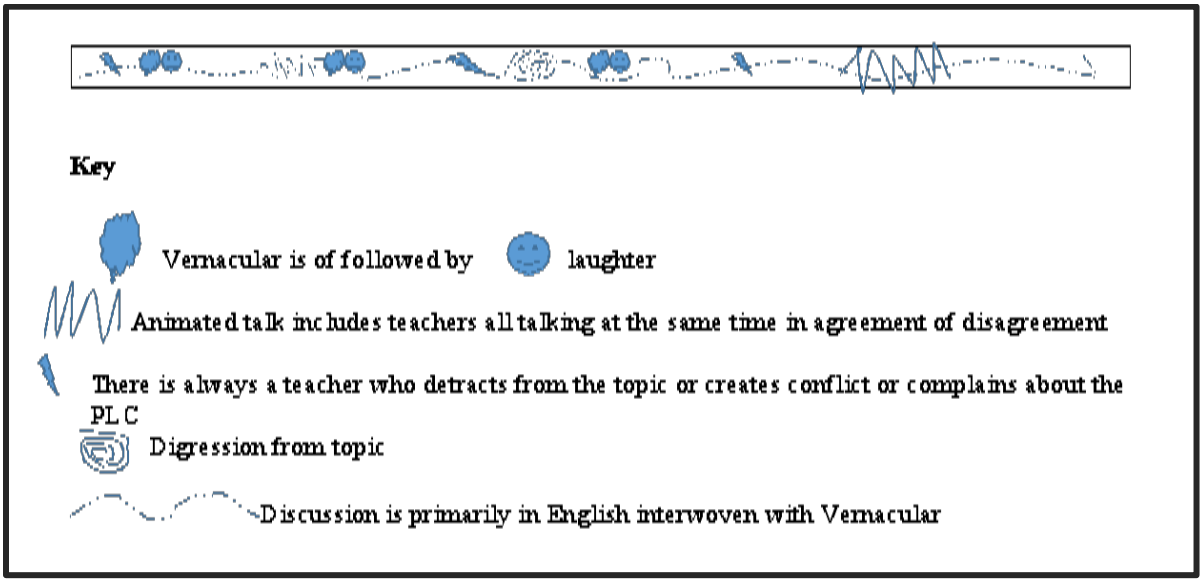


Figure 5.2 is a representation of the recurring elements in the PLC transcripts. The PLCs generally began with preliminaries such as greetings and a distribution of the PLC discussion guidelines. Discussions would begin with an overview of what the session will entail or a recap of the previous PLC session. Discussion would include agreement with ideas, debates and dramatisations of learner and teacher classroom interactions. While the discussions were mainly in English, in each PLC there were moments of code-switching and translanguaging and laughter. Disagreements included critique of ideas and tension was reflected when teachers many talked at the same time. There were also moments of side-talk or parallel talk that was not always related to the PLC topic, some indicating teachers' fatigue.

Each PLC session had varying number of groups; some session had transcripts from three groups and the largest number of groups in a session was six. I read all PLC transcripts from every session I found the general pattern in Figure 5.2 occurred in all groups. Additionally, because the groups followed the same PLC guidelines, two groups per session "generated enough data and therefore data saturation" (Cohen, et al, 2018, p. 224) was achieved. I therefore selected the two groups from each session that had the longest recorded discussions for the next phase of analysis. The recurring elements suggested ideas for further interrogation and informed descriptive coding in Stage Three.

Descriptive Codes

In this stage of analysis, I aimed to capture the world of the participants under study by initially staying close to the original data. I assigned codes to the data. A code could be a word, short phrase, paragraph and even a whole page to which a descriptive label is assigned that captures a salient idea or essence of the data (Saldana, 2009). A code captures a summative or evocative attribute for a portion of qualitative data and is specific to the research questions (Saldana, 2009). Some authors prefer the term indexing to refer to this stage of coding that signposts interesting data (Gibbs, 2007). Codes also provide "a classification system so that data that are similar are grouped together" (Saldana 2009, p. 8). Coding is an iterative process and the meanings given to data can change. A researcher needs to be open to change and not consider the codes assigned early in the analytic process to be the final codes, because being rigid may impede creative thought (Saldana, 2009).

The initial codes were descriptive, obtained 'in vivo' and captured surface features of the data. The codes were assigned from a sample of six transcripts representing two PLC sessions from each year of the study. The code names were terms that were evident from the data. I followed manual coding on paper with computer coding using MAXQDA, a computer-assisted (or aided) qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). The descriptive codes provided the basis for the next steps of analysis. The outcome of this process was a list of descriptive codes and analytical memos for each transcript in the sample. It gave me the opportunity to develop my thinking about the key concepts of my study and about how they can be identified in the data. These initial codes gave

me perspectives on the relationship between my key concepts, in particular how the codes of professional identity and agency related to the three principles of the IPAA.

The first descriptive codes that I generated were in relation to the three IPAA principles. The IPAA is undergirded by three key principles: difference as an essential aspect of human development; teachers' belief in their capability to teach all children; and the development of the profession through collaboration among teachers and other professionals. Some codes fitted the definition of the principles but there was also teachers' talk that appeared to contradict the principles. There were codes related to Principle One in which teachers talk fluctuated between viewing learners in apparently deficit terms and also with an obvious inclusive viewpoint. Similarly, in codes assigned to Principle Two, teachers discussed their own capabilities as both proficient and uncertain. I deliberated on the talk that was related to the three principles but also seemed contrary to the IPAA principles and created two elements of teacher talk: Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. The two elements of teacher talk also helped me develop the Analytical Framework (Stage Four). These findings helped to inform the boundaries of the key concepts in the Analytical Framework. Another major outcome of this stage was to have English translations for the local languages that teachers used in the PLC discussions.

Translanguaging and Translations

While the PLCs were largely conducted in English, teachers often used different South African languages to express themselves. Initial transcribing of the PLC discussions did not translate the local languages into English. The translanguaging included a few words or phrases that interlaced English. However, I still found translation was necessary. Santos et al., (2015) advised that for decisions to translate research, data should consider the competencies of a research team and the suitability of translation in the research process. Even though I do not understand local South African languages, I decided to first listen to the audio recordings with the English transcripts before requesting for translation. There were context clues in the audio recording that helped me interpret the meanings and my background as a Bantu language speaker helped me make approximate translations. This listening helped me get a sense of the meanings so that I could confirm my estimation once translation was done. Santos et al., (2015) also noted that translators need to be familiar with the cultural background and the subject matter for accurate translation. I

requested two final year Bachelor of Education students to translate the South African language transcripts to English. The students come from a "township" close to the City Primary School and therefore were familiar with the various languages spoken by the teachers, the phrasing and lingua franca. To protect the teachers' anonymity and preserve confidentiality the students only listened to specific units of conversation in the audio recordings and translated from local languages including some nuances of the context. The local language words and phrases give value to my analysis and proved consequential to my findings and conclusion.

Analytical Framework

The Conceptual Framework discussed in Chapter Three informed the analysis via an "analytic strategy" (Yin, 2009, p. 127) and an analytical framework. The processing of, and familiarisation with, data enabled me to refine my "analytic strategy" (Yin, 2009, p. 127) to develop the analytical framework. Even though I had detailed a plan for data analysis in my proposal, it is only after the first two stages that I could be more definitely structure my analysis. I found that a multi-layered approach would more accurately answer my research questions. I use the word multi-layer as a "progressing approach", in which different concepts are analysed at different times (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 304) and not in the way that that the term is used to describe the social world in critical realism. The multi-layer approach is also the Analytical framework that provided a systematic process to conduct data analysis and to capture the key concepts in this study.

The term Analytical Framework is defined variously. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) labelled their reflexive, iterative and inductive process to analyse qualitative data as a framework. For Ritchie and Lewis (2003) a "Framework" described a tool for analysing qualitative data in a deductive process. For Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) framework is a process, a procedure; while the Framework by Ritchie and Lewis (2003) is a structure, a product. A framework provides boundaries and specific tasks that a researcher could follow to analyse their data. A systematic set of activities that enable the researcher to answer their research questions could be called a framework. The systematic tasks or activities form the analytical framework as it provides guidance on how analysis of particular data has been carried out.

The analytical framework provided the structure to my analysis and the boundaries for the key concepts and facilitated deductive analysis using conceptual codes. The descriptive codes assigned in Stage Three displayed the surface ideas that I saw in the data, and they guided the development of the conceptual codes. The codes were informed by both the preliminary data analysis and the constructs from the theories that I am using in the study. The codes included "code identification rule(s) (descriptors)" (Essien, 2016, p. 180) that ensured the credibility and confirmability of my analysis. I listed codes for key concepts with descriptors to ensure rigour and consistency. Even though I identified talk that illustrated the different concepts, I do not imply that the concepts are mutually exclusive. One phrase in an episode could be coded with codes of different concepts indicating overlaps in the definition of concepts. These overlaps enabled me to develop a picture of the multidimensional nature of teacher talk in PLCs.

Descriptors for IPAA

From each principle of the IPAA I assigned codes to the two elements of teacher talk, Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. The codes for Inclusive Talk related to learners, teacher capabilities and working together indicated teachers' acceptance for inclusion aligned to the IPAA. The codes for Difference Talk related to learners, teachers capabilities and working together were assigned to teachers talk that did not fully align to the principles of the IPAA and that had caveats and challenges to how inclusion could be achieved in their classrooms. Table 6:1, in Chapter Six, gives examples of codes for Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk and their relation to the IPAA principles.

Descriptors for Teacher Professional Identity

Wenger's (1998) three modes of identification, also referred to as "modes of belonging": engagement, imagination and alignment formed the main coding categories for teacher identity. Engagement related to a practice and an individual's direct experience and competence or incompetence of inclusive pedagogy. Imagination entailed teachers' construction of the world that helped her/him understand how s/he belonged or did not belong. Engagement and imagination entailed an alignment with the context, including following the norms of the community. In Chapter Three I discuss the modes in detail and present examples of the codes for each mode in chapter Seven, Table 7:1.

Descriptors for Teacher Professional Agency

Li and Ruppar's (2021) teacher agency for inclusion provided the conceptual reference for coding data on teacher professional agency. In Chapter three, I discussed Li and Ruppar's (2021) framework which includes the temporal perspectives of agency and teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2016; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). The codes assigned to data to analyse teacher agency were guided by Li and Ruppar's (2021) *Conceptual Framework for Agency in Inclusive Education* which includes a list of context-bounded actions of inclusive pedagogical practice (p. 7). As teachers' actual agentic actions were beyond the scope of this study, I adapted Li and Ruppar's list of agentic actions to reflect agentic expressions in teacher talk. The adaptation involved changing the agentic actions with verbs that related to teacher talk. The actions that I adapted included coding data that showed teachers querying and expressing actions that they had taken. While in Li and Ruppar's Framework has five aspects of teacher agency, my presentation of findings entails four aspects. I excluded one aspect of the original framework, Teacher Identity, as my study used Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging to analyse teacher identity in PLCs. In Li and Ruppar's Framework, autonomy and reflexivity are separate aspects of agency. My analysis combined the two aspects. Table 7.2 in Chapter Seven, I present how I adapted Li & Ruppar's (2021) Framework and give examples of codes I used in my analysis.

Descriptors for Dimensions of Community

The format and content of the teachers' interactions in this study's PLCs were captured using Wenger's (1998) dimensions of a Community of Practice (CoP). The three dimensions of a CoP are mutual engagement, shared repertoire, and joint enterprise. Each dimension has categories and characteristics. The descriptors the dimensions, explained in detail in Chapter Eight, Table 8.1, consolidate Wenger's table on dimensions of community (Wenger, 1998, p. 73) and Wenger's narrative on the dimensions (Wenger, 1998, p. 74). The descriptors were interconnected and mutually defining (Wenger, 1998).

Analysing PLC transcripts and Teacher interviews

Two groups from each of the 11 sessions and all teacher interviews were analysed using the descriptors of the Analytical Framework. As mentioned earlier, data saturation was determined at the Familiarisation phase. Following the interactive model of data analysis meant that I referred to

the transcripts in each session several times to ensure that I did not miss anything of real importance that may have emerged in the other groups and that I had not "cherry-picked" the information that suited me. The analysis of the interviews enabled clarification and confirmation of issues discussed in PLC transcripts. To know if I had adequately completed the analysis, I used Bazeley's (2009) signs of sufficiency in data analysis.

Analysis with MAXQDA

MAXQDA software made it possible to perceive and understand the relationships between key concepts. Among the benefits of using the CAQDAS is its capability to visualise relationships that would have been difficult to establish if I had only coded data manually. I assigned different colours to codes that enabled visual representation of relationships. In this way MAXQDA promoted confidence in my analyses. With MAXQDA software I was able to the separate different levels of data analysis. Multi-layering in MAXQDA was possible because each code could be isolated or linked to other codes to determine if there is a relationship between different codes. For example, the relationship between teacher professional identity and teacher professional agency could be shown and this helped me interpret how the concepts interact with each other. This was possible by selecting the codes of the two concepts and creating tables that showed their interaction. The dimensions of community – Mutual Engagement, Joint Enterprise, Shared Repertoire – could be isolated and linked to codes for any other concepts.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

Adhering to ethical research protocols is an important criterion for credibility of research. When research is undertaken from an organisation and takes place within another organisation both organisations must give permission. Administrative and governance entities in both organisations were involved in granting permission. For this study, I first sought permission from my university. To gain entry to City Primary School – a public school – permission was required from the provincial DOE, the Principal and the school's governing board. The permissions required explicit details concerning the process of the research, any potential harm or risk to the participants, how the participants' confidentiality and anonymity would be protected and the how the data generated would be maintained and stored.

Ethical considerations for the overall project adhered to the research guidelines of The University of the Witwatersrand and the GDE as City Primary School is a public school under the jurisdiction of the GDE. Ethics clearance for the wider research project was therefore extended to this study, in particular the protocols for audio-recordings of PLC meetings.

To distinguish the research component from the staff development activities all staff were informed in a meeting that there was a research aspect of the staff development initiative, and they were invited to participate. They were told what participation involved: being part of an audio recorded PLC meeting and being interviewed about their experiences and learning in the PLC. Appendix B3 is a copy of the participation information letter. Any identifying information has been redacted.

Ethical research protocols require that every participant understands the nature of the research. Each year of the research teachers were invited to confirm their voluntary participation and were also informed that they could choose to refuse to participate without suffering negative consequences. It was stressed that participation of any kind was entirely voluntary. At a full staff meeting every teacher received a copy of an information letter, detailing the nature of the study. The Project lead from the University went through the letter and invited teachers to ask any questions or seek clarification. She invited them to consider participating, and all those willing, filled in the consent form. The teachers were requested to sign the letter to indicate that they understood the contents and agreed with it Each letter was signed by the leader of the research team. Each teacher retained a copy of his or her letter and a copy of all the letters were securely kept in the research office.

For the overall project all teachers in the school all teachers at City Primary School confirmed their consent for the following:

- Participation in PLC meetings and discussions as part of a staff development arranged in conjunction with the school SMT, the District office and staff at WSoE.
- Audio recording of PLC discussions

The audio-recording did not involve any extra time to their participation in the PLC meetings. At the start of each PLC session, the teachers were reminded about the research component of the project.

5.8.1 Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent

Participation in this research was voluntary. While the school's management required all teachers to attend the PLC sessions, that requirement did not extend to participating in my research. In Chapter Nine I note the requirement to attend the PLCs placed a limitation on my research. For my study I first sought ethics clearance to conduct individual teacher interviews from the University's Research Ethics committee before I requested the school Principal's permission. See Appendix B1 for my Wits Ethics Clearance letter. Once I received my research clearance, I requested permission from the Principal of City Primary School to conduct teacher interviews. The letter to the Principal is Appendix B2. I gave important details about my research, including the title and aims of my study and how it is related to the overall project that was coordinated by the Project Leader. The information letter requested permission from the Principal to allow me to use the audio-recordings of the PLC meetings and interview a minimum of two teachers per grade. The letter assured the Principal that all teachers would be invited to participate in the interviews and that the participation would be voluntarily and they would not be paid for participating. The Principal's information letter explained that teachers would be requested to give consent to have the interviews recorded and they would be assured of their anonymity and confidentiality in the recordings and in any subsequent documentation of the research.

Once permission was granted, I invited all teachers with a letter inviting them to participate in the individual interviews (Appendix B3). The letter informed them of the purpose and voluntary nature of their participation. They were also requested to give consent to the audio recording of the interviews. The invitation provided details about the research, informing the teachers that their participation was voluntary, and they would not personally benefit or be remunerated. I made announcements at a staff meeting and posted information about my research on the staff notice board in the staff room. In the invitation letter to all teachers, I introduced myself and informed the teachers that my research was part of my PhD degree and how it is related to the overall PLC

project. All teachers who accepted my invitation to participate in the research received a letter inviting them to participate in the interviews (Appendix B5) signed a consent form (Appendix B4).

5.8.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Every interviewee was assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation and that no identifying characteristics would be included in the thesis. All proper names mentioned in this thesis are pseudonyms, including names of learners and other persons that teachers mention in the PLC discussions. Steps were taken to prevent risk or harm to participants, such as avoiding questions that could cause embarrassment (Cohen et al., 2018). Teachers were also informed of their right to opt out of the interviews or refuse to answer any questions, without incurring any negative consequences. Teachers who accepted to be interviewed signed consent forms. Every teacher who filled in the consent form was be given a copy of their signed consent form for their own record. At the beginning of each interview, I repeated the ethical guidelines and asked the teachers to confirm their voluntary participation. The audio recording of every interview began with these ethical conditions and teacher's consent was recorded.

5.8.3 Interaction between participants and researchers

An aspect of ethical research to be cognisant of potential risks to participants. The risks include the potential to inconvenience, create discomfort or harm to the participant. To mitigate or minimize the risks research needs to be convenient and comfortable for participants. If participants are expected to discuss or answer difficult questions, the research needs to provide support for teachers, such as having counsellors available to help with discomfort or stress.

For this study, the Principal, teachers and the research team interacted for over three years. The interaction created a cordial relationship that benefited both groups. However, the power dynamics cannot be assumed as the University team were still considered outsiders and 'learned' experts. Such positioning may create sensitivities among the teachers that could threaten the teachers' sense of security. Among the sensitivities was that teachers feared exposure and being identified in the audio-recordings of the PLCs as not competent if they were honest about their knowledge and experiences; of. While the research team members were available to answer teachers' questions, they avoided sitting in the groups to allow free discussions among the teachers. To mitigate such

concerns the team assured the teachers at the beginning of each PLCs that their anonymity was guaranteed. Additionally, the research team reminded teachers that their PLC discussions were based on their teaching experiences, and they were therefore the authorities for the answers to the questions on the discussion guide.

5.9 Rigour

Rigour considers the different processes a researcher has followed to ensure the credibility and reliability of the study's findings and interpretations. An audit trail for evidence, peer debriefing, and participant validation contribute to rigour (Cohen et al., 2018). Although the study faced some limitations that are listed and discussed in Chapter Nine, I conducted the study with care to ensure that data interpretation and conclusions passed applicable credibility tests.

5.9.1 Trustworthiness

The four commonly used criteria to guide and judge the trustworthiness of qualitative work: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Guba and Lincoln (2013) expounded the criterion for Critical interpretivism with elements of authenticity and catalyst for action. Among the techniques to ensure trustworthiness are prolonged engagement, persistent observation and referential adequacy (Guba & Lincoln, 2013). A critical interpretivist study needs to be externally valid to persons wanting to apply the findings and interpretations. Pozzebon et al. (2014) built on the criteria of catalyst for action adding dialogical principles between the researcher and the audience of the study that include being persuasive and having respect for the context. They note that these are not new criteria which cover pragmatic validity (Kvale, 1995) and applicability (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). The dialogical principles bridge critical and interpretive premises and respect a vision of validity where knowledge is a context-situated construction. By dialogical, Pozzebon et al. (2014) mean principles that respect the context and the context's notion of validity need to be substantiated through a conversation between researcher and readers which could include participant checking.

The procedures I used to foster the trustworthiness of my study include collecting data with two different methods; following an iterative process of coding and re-coding; welcoming expert checking by my supervisors and feedback from a wider academic community. The extent to which

the goals of a study are achieved also ascertains the validity in research (Åkerlind, 2005). Receiving feedback from a research community also helped to check for validity and ascertained the usefulness of my research. An audit trail of all records and reflexive accounts of my process and positionality augmented the trustworthiness of this study.

5.9.2 Audit Trail and Thematic Analysis

I developed an audit trail (Nowell et al., 2017) which can be traced by another researcher to arrive at similar conclusions as this study. My audit trail consisted of keeping records of all data, including audio records, transcripts, data memos and my reflexive/identity diary. Using my library science knowledge, I developed a classification system, detailed earlier in section of 5.7.2: Stages of data analysis. The audit trail also enabled me to continually return to my raw data to compare patterns in my data in an iterative process that confirmed my themes and conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

First, I analysed data repeatedly for provisional themes. Then I referred to the codes I had developed in my analytical framework to further refine my analysis. Even though the PLC transcripts and the teacher interviews formed the whole data set, I also used the findings in the interviews to triangulate my findings in the PLC transcripts. I used memos in my analysis to help me track my thinking in the constant comparison process. Memos also helped me to critical reflect on my arguments – ensuring that I was not hasty in looking for confirmations of my thoughts but that I was being thorough with my conclusions. The Memo facility in MAXQDA software helped me track my reflections.

Additionally, since "producing knowledge claims is a social practice" (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 12) the cultural context and values of this research were critical to determining the rigour of my findings. I accepted the views of the participants as valid, and I acknowledged any of my own standpoints that could interfere with the research. As one of my supervisors had been project leader, she consistently reminded all attached researchers to be reflexive and to understand our position as knowers, and to note our "power" in relation to the participants, who are culturally positioned as knowers too (Scott & Usher, 2011).

5.9.3 Positionality

Qualitative research accepts the ontological position that the "world is constructed through meanings that individuals and groups attribute to events" (Cohen, et. al., 2018, p. 433). As such, the researcher's identity and positionality intersect with, and shape qualitative research. Therefore, I kept a reflexive/identity diary that reflected the social location as researcher, and how that location could influence the meaning-making processes and decisions I made throughout the project (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

My involvement in City Primary School (see details in Chapter Four) expresses Allan's (2005) claims (cited in Slee, 2011) that inclusive education is not something done to a "discrete population of children, but rather something we must do to ourselves" (cited in Slee, 2011, p. 14). This quest to guide our thinking (Slee, 2011) required my personal reflection of my researcher's identity because reflection informs the researcher's biases and perception of the world (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). The choice of what I think is important as it reflects who I am as a person. Additionally, the language I use to describe research, the methods I employ are a function of the social, political and professional world that I inhabit as a scholar (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). Slee (2011) invites inclusive education researchers to think about "the nature of the world we live in, the world that we prefer and our role in shaping both of those worlds" (Slee, 2011, p. 14). These are some of the sentiments that prompted my reflection and subsequent involvement in City Primary School.

Qualitative researchers cannot take a disinterested stance from inception to conclusion of a project and therefore their belief systems are implicated in the research. The meanings that teachers in this study attribute to their reality must be captured as close to their truth as possible. This required self-conscious critique and awareness of my personal beliefs to ensure that any biases did not interfere with the interpretation of teachers' reality. Walton (2016) suggested that one way to identify biases that we bring to inclusive research is by inserting oneself in the writing. Taking a critical perspective led to a reconsideration of my personal and academic identity through reflecting on dogmatic assumptions I help about the revolutionary aspects of inclusion. I have included some of the narratives that shaped my thinking and research. A part of my personal narrative presented in Chapter One revealed how embracing a critical perspective fostered my

uncovering the taken for granted assumptions that I held. In Chapter One I gave the rationale for using the first person and for including personal narratives.

5.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that a Critical Interpretivism is an appropriate paradigm to study inclusive pedagogy teacher professional identity and agency within a sociocultural context. The methodological perspective facilitated a research design and process that would uncover meaning in teacher talk in PLCs that discussed inclusive pedagogy. To confirm the findings on the PLC talk, various procedures were followed, and participants were protected by respectful ethical standards. The next three chapters will present the findings of the study.

Chapter Six: Teacher talk and inclusive pedagogy

6.1 Introduction

This study argues that teachers' professional identity and agency are critical considerations in teacher professional learning especially when teachers need to learn a new practice, such as inclusive pedagogy is in South Africa. The study, conducted at City Primary School, investigated teacher professional identity and agency in teachers' talk in professional learning communities (PLCs). The subject focus of the PLCs was inclusive pedagogy aligned with the Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) (Florian, 2014). Before analysing teacher professional identity and agency in teachers talk in PLCs, I first analysed the PLC talk in relation to the IPAA. A university team from the WSOE that partnered with City Primary School developed PLC guidelines for discussion in each PLC session that were aligned with the principles of the IPAA. Chapter Four is an overview of the school and the PLC programme. All talk in the PLCs was analysed in relation to the IPAA. This chapter answers this question:

How do teachers talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?

Analysis of teacher talk revealed two key elements: Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. The relationships between inclusive and difference are in counterpoint – presenting opposing ideas and also running alongside each other, in that Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk can each be identified separately but in relation to the other. The counterpoint provides insights into teachers' ideas about inclusive pedagogy, and how inclusive pedagogy relates to their context. Even though not all talk fitted the expectations of inclusion according to the IPAA, all talk in PLCs plays a role in understanding how teachers engage with, and respond to, inclusive pedagogy.

The chapter first presents how I undertook the analysis of teacher talk in relation to Florian's (2014) Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) framework. This is followed by a presentation and discussion of the key findings of inclusive and Difference Talk. In the final section I will synthesise the two elements and consider how they could inform a review of the IPAA and serve professional learning of inclusive pedagogy.

6.2 Analysis with the Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA)

The analysis considered how teachers talked about inclusive pedagogy in PLCs. All data pertaining to inclusive pedagogy were analysed according to the three principles of the IPAA. Principle One states that difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning. Principle Two says teachers must believe or can be convinced, they are qualified/capable of teaching all children. Principle Three is about collaboration expressing that teachers must continually develop creative new ways of working with others. I used the IPAA framework to develop codes and categories. Data and codes related to Principle One were categorised as Learners; data for Principle Two were placed in a Teachers category and data related to Principle Three were in a category labeled Working Together. See Chapter Five (Methodology) where I discuss how I developed the Analytical Framework for this study.

The IPAA framework is a detailed analytical tool, developed from studies in the UK to teach and recognise inclusive pedagogy an approach to classroom teaching. It is divided into three principles. Each principle is described with its related concepts and gives a researcher what actions and evidence to look for and what challenges might arise when teachers enact inclusive teaching. Florian and Walton (2018) contribute to the IPAA by relating the Framework to South African teaching practice. They state that a major consideration for teachers embarking on practicing inclusive pedagogy is the need for shifts from the dominant "bell-curve thinking" (Florian & Walton, 2018, p. 168) and from special needs categorisations. "Bell-curve thinking" ascribes different teaching and learning for learners performing at the "tail ends of a normal distribution" (Florian & Walton, 2018, p. 169). Therefore, learners are placed into the categories of "normal" and "special needs". The categorisations are a pervasive practice (Howell, 2018, p. 120) that involve identifying a "mythical normal child" (Baglieri et al., 2011, p. 2129). Thinking differently about learning and teaching is fundamental to creating an inclusive culture in schools (Howell, 2018; Graham, 2010).

The IPAA allows us to see if and how teachers "disrupt the assumptions and practices" (Florian & Walton, 2018, p. 171) about teaching and learning in an inclusive school. Thinking differently means disrupting the dominant ways of thinking about learners who would be categorised with labels according to their learning abilities and difficulties. Inclusive pedagogy as an approach,

rather than as distinct classroom practices, can "disrupt" (Florian & Walton, 2018, p. 171) the assumptions and practices about inclusive teaching and learning in three major ways: thinking differently about learner difference; that difficulties in learning are professional challenges for teachers; and that teachers can learn collaboratively about how to cooperate and teach inclusively. For this study, I also considered Florian and Walton's (2018) "thinking disruptions" when I developed the codes in relation to the three principles of the IPAA.

The IPAA Framework, presented in Appendix A1, shows the Associated Concepts/Actions and Evidence for each principle. The presentation also includes Florian and Walton's (2018) Thinking Disruptions and Key Challenges that are interpretations of the IPAA which are specific to South African context.

Principle One focusses on learners and what they can do rather than what they cannot. When learner difference was considered as an essential aspect of human development, teachers disrupt conventional thinking by accepting learners' differences. Thinking differently about learner difference means accepting that individual differences are not the only or foremost concern when making pedagogical decisions. Individual differences are important, but it is how they are thought about that matters. Therefore, teachers would not pre-determine learners' outcomes and would provide access to all learners all the knowledge that the curriculum offers (Florian & Walton, 2018, p. 173).

Principle Two considers teachers capabilities and how they express their belief in themselves to teach all learners. Teachers of an inclusive classroom could show their belief by first placing focus on what and how they teach rather than first and only about who is to learn. Teachers would consider the difficulties in learning as professional challenges that teachers can resolve. Teachers could disrupt their thinking about not being adequately trained to teach all learners by showing a willingness to try new ways of teaching.

Principle Three studies how teachers work jointly and with other professionals. How teachers considered their collaboration with other professionals, including the partnering with the university team, could reflect their openness to their own professional learning in developing more inclusive

practices. Teachers could disrupt their thinking by showing how they learn and collaborate so as to teach inclusively (Florian & Walton, 2018). Principle Three is not only relational but also includes how "teachers' practices are affected by external circumstances" (Kim, 2019, p. 126).

After the initial analysis of teachers' talk within the three principles, I found that not all teachers talk fitted the expectation for inclusion according to the IPAA (Table 6.1). There was also teachers' talk that appeared to contradict the principles. Teachers' talk that was seemingly oppositional, including talk about learners in deficit terms, was also not obviously exclusionary. When I considered this talk in relation to the teachers' description of their teaching context, the talk also appeared to have an inclusive element. Similarly, teachers discussed their own skills as expected of the IPAA as having the capacity to teach inclusively but also talked in a way that appeared that they were uncertain about their own competence.

I took this seeming opposition-to-IPAA-principles talk into consideration to expand the boundaries of each principle. I categorised all talk according the three principles, which I labeled learners, teachers and working together, respectively, regardless of whether the talk was clearly Inclusive Talk or seemingly not inclusive. Further analysis of teachers' talk within the three principles revealed that teachers talk along two different elements, that I named: Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. Inclusive Talk was talk that fitted the expectation of inclusion according to the IPAA framework. Difference Talk did not fit in the definitions of inclusion as per the IPAA. However, Difference Talk corresponded to, and was in relation to the Inclusive Talk.

6.3 Two elements of talk: A Counterpoint

While conducting the initial analysis of PLC transcripts, I noted that there were recurring features of teacher talk (See Figure 5.2 in Chapter 5) and talk that did not fit the parameters of the IPAA. I initially set the talk that seemed to be opposition to the IPAA into an inclusion-exclusion binary. However, further analysis revealed a Counterpoint of two elements of talk: Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. The elements had corresponding evidence in teachers' individual interviews. The word counterpoint in writing is used to describe the discussion of an opposing idea. In music, counterpoint is applied to situations where two or more lines of melody run alongside each other, where the different melodies can be relatively independent. The

independence of each line is not totally separate to the other lines; the melodies are related. In teachers' talk one element does not overpower the other. Combining the lines creates a complex composition and a statement that is larger than the individual element would present on its own. By labelling the apparently counterpart elements of talk as an adjective, inclusive, and as a noun, difference, does not hold fast to their grammatical definitions. The choice relates to initially listening to teachers from an inclusion perspective. But as the other became clear, I chose difference, to signify something dissimilar to inclusion.

Inclusive Talk was talk that fitted within the expectations of inclusion according to the IPAA. This talk was aligned to the IPAA principles. Even though the second element – Difference Talk – related to the IPAA principles and the talk categories, it did not fit as Inclusive Talk but was also not a rejection of inclusion. Even though the PLCs were guided towards discussing inclusive pedagogy, teachers also chose not to follow the guidelines or would choose to discuss the topic in ways that were different from the guidelines. Difference Talk expressed the difficulties teachers have with practicing inclusive pedagogy as discussed and/or suggested by the PLC guidelines within their current and prevailing classroom circumstances.

Even though the talk was varied, including some that seemed to oppose inclusive pedagogy, all talk in PLCs plays a role in understanding how teachers engage with, and respond to inclusive pedagogy. One teacher at the first PLC session lists the different languages she/he needs to think about in order to help learners understand a lesson and declares "it's a mixed masala" (PLC: 01/01/A, Pos. 344). Masala, literally a blend of ground spices, here denotes a situation that is tangled and cannot be disentangled and fully comprehended. The teacher's statement captures the essence of their teaching practice and by extension the nature of the two elements of talk – Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. On one hand teachers are trying their best to teach an inclusive classroom, and therefore speak with Inclusive Talk. But on the other hand, they speak in Difference Talk when their efforts do not adequately respond to the learners' needs and the teachers are confounded by how to teach or the teachers are frustrated by constraints and challenges that they perceived to be beyond their control

Discussing the two elements of talk, Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk as Counterpoint, which is loosely related to definitions of counterpoint in music and writing composition, helped me explain the relationships of the two elements. When I considered teacher talk as two seemingly disparate elements in complementarity, I was able to explain teachers' talk in greater depth. The interweaving of the two elements presented a textured effect with each element repeating its own feature, such as a recurring statement. A major feature of Inclusive Talk was "it works." Difference Talk was often started with "But" following by pronouns "they" or "we." There was agreement and disagreement during the PLC discussions, and the end of the PLC session merged the two elements into one 'composition.'

Even though there are overlaps in coding it was possible to identify the two elements of talk. The elements were not mutually exclusive. For example, in a discussion that acknowledged the strength of a learner and at the same time pitied the learners with deficit language, I considered such talk to be both Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. I did not choose to label expressions in deficit terms and avoided deficit descriptions about the teachers. When I considered talk in context of the PLC and in the context that the teachers described about the wider teaching environment, the talk did not show the teachers as being opposed to inclusive pedagogy. When talk conformed to the IPAA expectations, I identified it as Inclusive Talk. Difference Talk disagreed with, and/or gave conditionalities for inclusive teaching and could also be categorised as per the IPAA principles.

Table 6:1 shows the two elements of talk in relation to the principles of the IPAA.

In Principle One where I categorised data as learners, teachers talk focused on profiling learners. Profiling learners involved naming and labelling learners. Teachers profile them by discussing their classroom behaviour, personalities and other aspects that distinguish a learner from other learners and made judgements about the learners' abilities. This talk was about finding ways of supporting the learner. Inclusive Talk was when teachers acknowledged learners' differences with the aim keeping them in the classroom. I labelled talk as Difference Talk when teachers' talk profiled learners and said that the only way, they could help the learners was to send the learners to the learning support educator, and therefore out of the classroom.

Table 6.1: The IPAA and Categories of teacher talk

IPAA Principles	**Elements of Teacher Talk**	
	Inclusion Talk: **Codes** and examples of each code	**Difference Talk:** **Codes** and examples of each code
1. Learners Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning.	a. Profiling for inclusion -Learner Profiles -acknowledge learners' differences -accept difference b. Barriers to learning as teaching opportunities -diverse groupings -seeking solutions c. Everyone has value -belief in all children can make progress -respects dignity of child -all can make progress -value all learners -care for all learners	a. Focus on ability differences -learners needs confound teachers -deterministic -ability grouping b. Mixed messaging: Pity as inclusion -school as charity -value some over others -gossip about learners
2. Teachers Capabilities Teachers must believe (can be convinced) they are qualified/capable of teaching all children.	a. Pedagogical solutions for learners' differences -teachers' belief in their ability -teacher reflection -support all learners -focus on what to be taught b. Sharing Teaching strategies -accept capability -belief in own capacity -seek strategies -focus on how to teach -focus on whole child	a. Ability difference require separation -push-out strategies -focus on what the learner cannot do -insist on special education b. Is this inclusion? -decline capability -focus on who is taught -put a ceiling on learning and achievement
3. Working Together The profession must continually develop creative new ways of working with others.	a. Collaboration with teacher Colleagues -willing to learn -seek collaboration -model new ways -plan together -Holding others accountable b. Collaboration with other professionals and community -acknowledging the work of others -willing to work tog -find solutions -engage with structural issues	Yes, but … a. The knowledgeable other -prefer others take control b. Critiquing educational structures -structural issues beyond teachers' control

(Adapted from Florian, 2014; Florian & Walton, 2018)

When teachers stated that they needed to know the learner, and therefore profiled the learner, so that they could consider options for teaching the particular learner showed a belief in their own capacity to teach and such talk is related to Principle Two. Principle Two featured teachers' talk about their capabilities and indicated teachers' belief in their ability to teach inclusive classrooms. Inclusive Talk showed teachers sharing strategies that they had used in their classrooms to teach all learners. In Difference Talk teachers noted that there were certain conditions that prevented them from using an inclusive pedagogical approach even if they improved their capacity.

Teachers' acceptance and willingness to learn and change their teaching practice, are features of Principle Three. Inclusive Talk sought collaborative solutions, including asking if parents could be part of PLCs to help address learners' challenges. In Difference Talk teachers would accept their need to learn and not opposed to learning, but favoured another expert solve a problem – the knowledgeable other. Difference Talk also included critiques of educational structures as insurmountable hinderances to inclusion. Such critique was Difference Talk when teachers considered that there was no way around the challenge.

The following section presents examples of Inclusive Talk and discussions in relation to the three IPAA principles. The role of Inclusive Talk concludes the section, highlighting the value of PLCs in fostering discussion for inclusive pedagogy.

6.4 Inclusive Talk

Inclusive Talk is the category of talk that fitted the expectations of the IPAA framework. What I analysed as the Inclusive Talk aligned with Florian and Walton's (2018) thinking disruptions in the three IPAA principles. Teachers talked in ways that showed their concern for all learners. Inclusive Talk was evident in the PLCs throughout the duration of the project. Inclusive Talk showed teachers accepted inclusion as a desirable ideal. Inclusive Talk also showed that inclusive pedagogy was an approach that teachers would be willing to enact.

6.4.1 Inclusive Talk related to Learners

The first principle of the IPAA states that teachers believe that all learners can make progress, and do not pre-determine what a learner can achieve. Teachers accept all learners without being deterministic and inflexible about learners' potential, believing all learners are able to make progress. The principle calls on teachers to accept that every learner is different, and that difference is expected in every classroom and that the differences between learners are ordinary occurrences in a classroom. This includes accepting that differences due to additional educational and learning support are no different from other differences between learners. When a learner is not performing at the same level as other learners, teachers should not consider that the learner is holding back the progress of the other children. The object of this principle is to value every learner by creating classroom environments that give all learners opportunities to sufficiently participate in classroom life. The evidence of this includes having diverse grouping configurations rather than using ability grouping as the only grouping of learners.

My analysis shows that learners and learners' profiles are important to teachers. Teachers acknowledge learners' differences by naming learners and usually profiling the learners who are facing difficulties. There are various reasons for teachers to profile learners. Profiling that I analysed as Inclusive Talk was when teachers profiled learners and sought pedagogical, whole/in-classroom solutions to assist a learner who may be facing difficulties.

Profiling for inclusion

The teachers profiled the learners, and identified them with actual learner names, and according to academic ability especially noting learners who were not performing well. Learners were profiled with the following identifiers:

On support

Lower ones – meaning academically weak, or not performing similar to other learners.

Learners that are challenged

Struggling

Slow

Weak, weakest link

Disruptive and rude.

When teachers mentioned these profiles, they were seeking solutions for the particular learners they were discussing and the learners' learning challenges. Among the strategies that teachers stated were helpful for assisting learners who faced learning challenges was to pair such learners with learners whom the teachers profiled as performing well. Learners who performed according to the teachers' satisfaction were described as:

clever
capable
bright
talented.

In a discussion about Effective Listening teachers begin by detailing the problem of learners' who did not listen. Teachers gave in-class and pedagogical solutions:

T21: And another problem with our learners is that most of them are from other countries. You'll find that you'll give an instruction thinking that that child understood or whatever, only to find that they can't even understand English, they can't even understand Zulu. Like I'm in a Zulu class, that child just cannot understand the language that you are using. I've just discovered that, um, I think yesterday I had to call upon a child who is speaking Shona to translate to another child. I was telling that child in English; he was translating to this child in Shona because she couldn't understand a word that I said. So we, we can sometimes say okay… it's, listening [problem] but only to find that it's a language issue.

….

T29: […] after the 15th of January I started to form the group, realise that these are capable of helping other learners. (PLC 01/01/A, Pos.60 - 89)

These two teachers noting that some learners were different meant that there may have been challenges in teaching and learning. The learners' social circumstances such as their ethnic origin was one reason teachers gave for learners' difficulties in learning. The ethnic background was considered a language barrier. Their responses indicated that by profiling a learner the teachers were not only considering the learners' academic challenges but also showed that they were aware of other learners' strengths. For learners who were 'struggling', teachers also found out what other

talents a learner might have as a way to mitigate the learning problems and seek options that could assist the learner in the class.

Seeing Barriers to learning as teaching opportunities

The term barrier was not used in the PLC guidelines but was mentioned by teachers in the discussions. Inclusive Talk about learners was when teachers discussed barriers and did not find fault in learners. To focus the discussion on inclusion, some teachers would add their own knowledge of inclusion with reference to barriers. In the following two excerpts from two PLC sessions, the term was used in relation defining a full-service school and the purposes for the PLCs:

Excerpt 1

T1: Now among the reasons for this kind of, these sharing meetings that we've been having is the whole point of trying to remove barriers to learning, to create a more inclusive classroom. So, um, can you see how the listening and active listening is really connected to inclusive teaching and learning because people often look at inclusion as just being about, just being about disability. But can you see how listening is really about removing barriers, how, how, what kind of, how it is promoting all, teaching all.
(PLC 01/02/B JUNE – Whole Body Listening, Pos. 193)

Excerpt 2

T1: […]a full-service school is different of any other kind of schools because it caters for both mainstream learners and special needs learners. Eh, FSS admits 60 percent of mainstream learners and 40 percent of special need learners. […]

T 2: […] it's almost the same; I said, learners with different barriers are accepted in this school. […]

Group fac.: […] what makes you different from another teacher; being an inclusive teacher?

T1: it's because you can handle, uh different types of learners…

Group fac.: In what way?

Teacher 3: Although we've got big classes; but we are able to identify the learners with barriers. And come up with a strategy of helping those learners with barriers. (PLC 03/01/B FEBRUARY - Sentence Starters, Pos. 18-22)

In these two PLC sessions teachers mentioned barriers to focus attention on inclusion. In Excerpt 1 teachers were discussing how promoting active listening is a strategy of inclusive pedagogy.

None of the PLC guidelines included the word barriers; and addressing barriers to learning was not a goal of any PLC session. Discussing barriers to learning can be a problematic approach to teacher education for inclusive pedagogy (Walton, 2016a). Even though addressing barriers to learning is an approach to teacher education for inclusion that attempts to focus on barriers rather than on learners who may experience barriers to learning, learners' learning profiles nonetheless become the focus (Mamabolo et al, 2021). Additionally, barriers to learning could overlap in one learner, and two learners may experience the same barrier differently. The PLC guidelines fostered the IPAA approach which requires a focus first on *what* is to be taught and *how* it should be taught before considering *who* the learners are (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

In Excerpt 2 the group facilitator[5] was reading out questions from the PLC guidelines and directing teachers to identify the characteristics of a full-service school, which include being an inclusive teacher. The '40 percent' learners with 'special need' were learners with 'different barriers'. Teaching large classrooms meant a teacher was an inclusive teacher who looked for strategies to help all learners, including the learners experienced barriers to learning.

In the following excerpt a teacher presented various ways in which teaching a learner who experienced barriers to learning could be a challenge. The excerpt was from a discussion on how to use the Whole-Body Listening strategy.

T3: Ja, it helps because like we are saying that yes we are having a big number of learners in our classes, but up to so far we are able to identify those who are having those barriers, but we cannot diagnose, but we can see that there's a bit of a problem there. Sorry, like what we said last time that we can see most of the learners who are having some leakages out of their ears, then you can see that maybe there's something wrong with that child. And some who are like sort of not unhappy, being unhappy and something like that, then you can give them more attention, just to get to know and understand what is happening and do they really hear you in the class also. So it helps a lot for us to work with these learners with various, you know.
(PLC 2014_02_B JUNE – Whole Body Listening, Pos. 198)

[5] Even though I have highlighted the facilitator's role in re-directing talk in this excerpt, this study did not delineate the facilitator's talk from other teachers' talk in every session. See Chapter 4 on the facilitator's role.

This teacher indicated that a learner was suffering from a physiological condition when she/he mentioned "leakages out of their ears", alluding to ear infections. While the teacher acknowledged the structural challenges of large class sizes, she/he and reminded the group that in previous discussions they had agreed that they could not diagnose learners' problems, he/she nonetheless admitted that they would still wish to find out what could be in the way of a learner's progress. Noting further that there were various learners who appeared to have physical ailments, the teacher divulged that the attention they gave to such learners was to help the learners to learn. The teacher tried to find out if the learner understood what was happening in class. But even with this tally of difficulties the teacher indicated that searching out barriers was meant for the support of the learner and was a teacher's responsibility.

In the following excerpt a facilitator steered the conversation to understanding that inclusion was not only about learners with disabilities. Ahead of this excerpt other teachers had acknowledged the facilitator and directly asked the facilitator to define inclusion. The facilitator wanted teachers to understand that inclusion is not only about learners with disabilities.

> T1: So ja, so there are strategies. Well what am I, what I'm bringing here is for you to stop thinking of children with barriers, physical barriers, as the only thing about inclusive education. Inclusive education is being able to incorporate everybody in the class. *[chuckles]* (PLC 01/02/B, Pos. 229)

Using the term barriers showed that the teachers had been exposed to the language and policy on inclusive education or to other professional development opportunities. The term is a key concept in inclusion policy in South Africa and a part of the national discourse and understanding of inclusive education in South Africa. However, the term focusses on a disability/psychological approach (Engelbrecht, et al., 2015). This disability/psychological approach to inclusion in national discourse and 'official' terminology could influence teachers' classroom practice.

Everyone has value

When teachers sought options for some learners, they did so to give all learners the opportunity to make academic progress. Teachers noted that learners' performance was influenced by the time of

year. For example, in January at the start of the school year, some learners did not cope with their new class and content but would excel later in the year. Other considerations, such as code-switching so that learners can understand, expressed how teachers showed that they valued all learners. Even though code-switching for some learners could mark some learners as different, the teachers' intention was in finding ways to help learners.

In one PLC discussion teachers suggested that "low" performers be called geniuses to encourage them and "boost their confidence". Even when teachers identified how learners were labelled as 'excellent ones', 'poor ones', 'the weak link', 'poor performers', they also noted that other terms such as 'genius' for the 'slow learners" were misleading for the child and the parents. The euphemism option was challenged and the discussion concluded as follows:

> T3: All that we can say is that every child is special
> T5: Eh hê
> T3: And every child has got a gift
> T5: Yes
> T3: So let's just be patient with these learners and then one way or the other they will, their gift will be out, we don't know how but as teachers we will keep on encouraging them. (PLC 03/03/A, Pos. 704-708)

The purpose for learner profiles and learner profiling in Inclusive Talk was to acknowledge a learner's difference in the classroom because the learners' welfare was seen as a teacher's concern. Teachers named learners whom they considered to have learning difficulties. While teachers may have stated that they faced challenges teaching some learners, especially when they named specific learners and discussed the learners' problems, they did so to seek solutions to the learning challenges and they were not just complaining about learners. Teachers' inclusive focus appeared to be primarily about learners whose performance was unsatisfactory. Learners with satisfactory achievements, the 'clever', 'capable', 'bright' and 'talented' were mentioned in relation to helping the 'weak' learners.

6.4.2 Inclusive Talk related to Teachers

Principle Two of the IPAA states that when teachers believe that they are qualified and capable of teaching all learners, they consider learning difficulties as a concern for teaching rather than a

problem within the learners. Teachers whose first concern is what to teach and how to teach, followed by who the learners are, are more likely to find pedagogical options for all learners, and seek ways to teach all learners.

Teacher talk in the PLC that related to this IPAA principle was mainly in sharing teaching strategies. Teachers shared ways to improve teaching and learning. Teachers shared the strategies that they had employed in their classrooms that they had found to have been successful for teaching and learning. This was Inclusive Talk as it reflected teachers' belief in their capacity at being able to teach all learners and showed their concern for learners. Inclusive Talk was also evident when teachers asked for ideas on how resolve a dilemma or challenge. This willingness to learn and improve their teaching practice reflected teachers' accepting their capability to teach inclusive classes.

Pedagogical solutions for learners' differences

Teachers indicated that they accepted they had the capacity to teach all learners by discussing pedagogical solutions to different classroom situations. Additionally, teachers acknowledged that the PLC sessions were opportunities to learn, and therefore the acknowledgement reflected the teachers' acceptance of their capability to learn and improve their practice. The following excerpt is from the PLC session that discussed the cooperative learning strategy: Think-Pair-Share.

T5: […] Identify how you could use this strategy in your lesson to make your teaching more inclusive?
T5: 'Cos we are including all of the children
T4: Mmm. I think even the calling in groups maybe you can separate them according to abilities
T4: Ja, so that you can see, I don't know
T5: Yes, according to abilities.
T4: So that you pay more attention on this group.
T9: Or even if you can mix them
T8: And pair them
T9: Mix their abilities[…]
T9: You mix the slower one with the brighter one
T8: The brighter one
T9: They can learn from each other […]

T6: But honestly, we don't use this, this strategy […]

T9: We are using it but we are not actually aware[…]

T5: We are not consistent

T9: Ja […]

T9: Ja, we are just… It just depends on the activities

T4: On the topic, ja.

Some teachers: Mmm

T5: It's good because it involves every child

T8: Sometimes we don't use it intentionally

(PLC 02/03/A, Pos. 132-199)

This excerpt showed teachers' discussing their capacity, amidst doubts about their actual use of the strategy. Teachers acknowledged the strategy was inclusive and that there were options on how to use the strategy: grouping learners according to ability, or mix of abilities, 'the slower with the 'brighter'. One teacher's statement stating that they did not use the strategy, could have implied she/he was doubtful about the strategy. However, the other teachers' response saying that they *did* use the strategy, may be a difference in terminology. The teacher agree that the strategy was likely used unintentionally and inconsistently.

The PLC was considered an opportunity to learn: 'We're developing each other' (PLC 01/01/B, Pos. 209) and where teachers could discuss 'My challenges and your challenges and then we come up with the strategies' (PLC 01/03/B, Pos. 16). Even when they sought assistance in what strategies could work for them, they appeared to do so with an acceptance to learn and also with a belief in their capacity to practice the strategies. Because the strategy had worked for one teacher it could also work for other teachers.

Sharing strategies

I coded a recurring idea as "*strategy share"*. These were instances when teachers willingly shared the ways they taught and helped learners. Sharing strategies showed teachers' belief in their capacity. Strategy share showed how teachers may have been accepting their own capability to learn and their belief in their capacity to teach inclusively. When the teachers focused on some children when they shared which strategies had worked in the classrooms, they implied that the

learners they target with the strategy may not have otherwise learned. By identifying strategies for learners who might have otherwise be excluded, teachers were showing concern for all learners. They were taking all children as their responsibility when they singled out learners who may not have been achieving as well as other children.

Teachers sharing the strategies showed their intentions to help all learners. In so doing they also developed their confidence in sharing what had 'worked' for them. Strategy share defined inclusion for the teachers in pedagogical terms and was about helping some learners in ways that benefitted all learners. In the following are excerpts from different PLC sessions teachers shared how a strategy had 'worked'. Further discussion of this idea is presented in Chapter 7 in relation to teachers' professional agency.

The first below excerpt showed how discussing one strategy led to a presentation of the various ways teachers could enact inclusion. While noting there was an advantage for the 'slow learners', the strategies were for the benefit of all learners.

Excerpt 1

T1: So ma'am, what worked well with this Think and Pair-Share?

T8: Ah to me *it works* because eh those who are faster help the slow learner to think. They, think, they are challenged and they want to showcase that "even myself I can do it." If they are struggling this one they say, "You have to do it like this," then they tune in.

T1: So this shows that it motivate them in another way round […]

T1: because each and every one of them they want them to be shine. Okay, for me it *went well* because of remember we do have the learner that cannot write … And when we put that learner with one that can write better …. she automatically copy whatever that the stronger one is doing … So for me it *worked well.*

T10: Ja, and for me *it worked well*, but the problem is written. […]

T1: Whatever that they are doing they must think and share. So I've realised again on maths when you do the subtraction part … when I'm teaching that it's like they don't understand but when I pair them it's where they grasp the concept.

T10: Mmm

T1: They think and they agree about the answer.

T10: The answer, yes.

T1: And also *what didn't work well* when you put them together for a long time, they relaxed, they get used of each other and nothing, bad.
(PLC 02/04/B, Pos. 17-37)

I have highlighted references to strategy share in *italics*. The teachers repeated the word 'work' in different forms. The strategy share explained how to use a strategy for the benefit of learners learning and as a way to manage their classes. Teachers shared the strategies they had used in their classroom that have been effective in creating conducive learning environments, which helped with learners who did not immediately listen to teacher instructions, and for learners from different language groups and different countries. In the sharing what had worked, teachers also indicated how they had adapted a strategy to manage the teaching of different subjects. When a strategy did not work as a teacher had expected the teacher indicated their frustration by cautioning teachers on the limits of a strategy. Despite mentioning challenges teachers did not lose hope to try various strategies to help learners.

Teachers talking about the success of enacting strategies also benefitted the teachers and appeared to boost their confidence to teach inclusively. Teachers talked with confidence when they related what worked for them in their classrooms. When a strategy had worked well, a teacher spoke with a sense of fulfillment about the efficacy of his/her teaching. The sharing of strategies as an aspect of the IPAA showed as aspect of the quality of the relationship among teachers. When there was professional disagreement and critique on a share a teacher's confident stance about the success of a strategy was an indication of the teachers' belief in her/his ability to teach all learners. When teachers shared a strategy, they indicated they had succeeded in the practice and also showed their belief in their competence. A teacher speaking about the ease with which she/he had enacted a strategy, she/he could convince other teachers about the group's capability to learn the strategy and improve their inclusive teaching. The talking with confidence about what had worked for the teachers is discussed further in Chapter Seven in relation to teacher professional agency.

6.4.3 Inclusive Talk related to Working Together

Principle Three expects a teacher to be an active professional by continually developing creative new ways of working with others. This involves showing a willingness to work with and through

others. According to Florian and Walton (2018) the IPAA can disrupt the assumptions and practices that teachers have help about inclusive teaching and learning. Therefore, Principle Three could disrupt what teachers think about what it means to work collaboratively with colleagues and other professionals. An example of collaboration could be when teachers seek advice in during a PLC. In working together teachers project a willingness to find solutions and to model new ways of working with other adults and professionals.

Collaboration with Teacher Colleagues

At the first PLC session teachers were introduced to the meaning of each word of the PLC. They identified that working in small groups, that is in the PLC groups, was better than workshops because the groups were small, and teachers could share their personal experiences. The teachers noted that the workshops did not encourage participation.

> T13: …in small groups I think it's better because then it becomes personal. But when we are in a big group I can relax and not participate. But when we are in a small group we are able to participate, each one of us will be able to maybe say our views about whatever topic that we might have or whatever problems that we are encountering in the classrooms.
>
> […]
>
> T14: Yes, I agree. We can, we can go back maybe being encouraged even though we know that we are sitting with some challenges wherever we are working. But meeting like this in small groups I believe it can help us to improve our daily work, to improve in our profession as well and also know how to tackle some of the issues that we have encountered within the day with our learners.
>
> (PLC 01/01/A, Pos. 27, 29)

The idea that PLCs offered something different from other ways of working together could also be inferred when teachers gave each other compliments:

> "I like what you are saying"
>
> (PLC 03/03B, Pos. 254)

And

> "Did we train at the same institution? I'm doing the same things"
>
> (PLC 01/01/B, Pos. 234)

Teachers were enthusiastic about being on the same side. By accepting ideas that their colleagues had expressed a teacher indicated a willingness to learn from the colleagues and from their experiences.

Collaboration with Other professionals and community

I coded talk as 'knowledgeable other' when teachers mentioned another professional or adult in the wider community that teachers could be a possible support. Even as the teachers attempted different strategies, they cited instances when all their efforts did not get learners to make any progress. However, the teachers shared that they had not given up easily on the learners when they opted to seek external assistance.

In the following excerpt, a teacher's persistence with a strategy leads to seeking support. The teachers show that they do not give up on the learners easily but rather keep making efforts.

T2: 'Okay I'm picking this one …. But I found that there are children, there are some that will pick up very slowly but there's those ones that just sit

T79: Sitting there, ja

T2: And, and you are making an effort

T79: An effort, ja, shame, every day

T2: I'm making the effort. So that's why I asked this Matapelo lady can she come gives us activities because maybe the things that we are doing we think it's right [and they may not be right].

The talk regarding the "knowledgeable other", in this instance someone named Matapelo, indicated teachers took every learner's challenges into consideration and wanted to help all learners. When teachers talked about how to work with, and to learn from others, they also expressed the value of PLCs, and acknowledged how other professionals including parents could support them. By talking about working with and through other adults in ways that respect the dignity of learners as full members of the classroom community teachers showed their commitment to continuing professional learning as a way of developing an approach to inclusive teaching.

By accepting the partnership of the WSOE team and scheduling sessions for the year at the beginning of the school year, the Principal of City Primary School showed a commitment for the success of the PLCs in developing teachers' inclusive teaching. An orientation to PLCs, including understanding the meanings of each word in the abbreviation, and role of PLCs, were discussed in the first session. Additional information about the purposes of PLCs was provided in every facilitator's meetings as a reminder to the facilitator, who was expected to regularly share the reasons why PLCs were organised. The teachers in this study showed their willingness and capability to learn and improve their practice. They also sought ways to collaborate, including working with other professionals. There were features of the PLCs that played a role in fostering teachers working together that will be discussed in chapter 8 as dimensions of community. Other structures that may have supported the teachers to work collaboratively in the PLCs were the weekly planning meetings that all grade-level teachers attended to plan the lessons and grade activities.

6.4.4. The role of Inclusive Talk

Inclusive Talk showed how teachers' discussions in PLCs were positive in relation to inclusion. The features of Inclusive Talk included a willingness to share information, notwithstanding the challenges that teachers face or challenges that are beyond the teachers' ability to handle. Teachers willingly shared their knowledge and indicated they had practiced the strategies discussed in the PLC.

The individual teacher interviews confirmed the role of Inclusive Talk in teachers' PLC talk. Teachers indicated that they had begun to see the value of replacing their deterministic views of ability after participating in the PLCs. A grade two teacher confirmed this in his/her interview:

Grade 2 Teacher: Inclusive pedagogy I think eh, it help me, it taught me a lot because I'm no more stereotyped saying "these learners are good in everything" that [one is] uh, underperforming. [Before] I'd always [say] "Oh, they can't do it." You know, grouping of learners. So now I'm just repeating – because it never can be good in this chapter. (Interview/9/Grade 2, Pos. 20)

This Grade 2 teacher noted that she had appreciated the PLC discussion and had kept on learning: "I'm repeating". She said she would enact what she had learned in the PLC discussion, and she

was confident that with each practice she would improve. When teachers accepted to learn from each other they indicated a possibility to work together, leverage each other's strengths and become inclusive, rather than working as "loners" (Themane & Thobejane, 2019, p. 379).

When teachers talked about learners, they 'diagnosed' and categorised the learners so that they could help the learner and determine the best way to teach the learner in the classroom, while also teaching other learners. Teachers sought help in the ways they could manage a learner's behaviour, identify barriers to learning that the learner may be facing and locate learning support for learners. Teachers would make these considerations all the while acknowledging that every learner has value. Inclusive Talk showed that the teachers were considering what else a learner can do in the classroom with all other learners. Teacher talk about their work also drew in school, community and national discourses. Teachers talk on a topic could be related to individual learners in their classrooms, to the school at large, to the outside community, and to national discourse of teaching and learning (Versio & Adams, 2015). In spite of obstacles, teachers state that they found ways to be inclusive.

In the following section I discuss the features and role of Difference Talk. While Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk were superficially separated for this analysis, all talk was interwoven and related.

6.5 Difference Talk

Categorising talk as "Difference" talk did not indicate teachers' rejection of inclusion. It showed teachers' attempts to find solutions for their learners did not always correspond to the expectations of the IPAA framework. Difference Talk highlights how the teachers want the context of their practice to be an important consideration when discussing certain classroom practices that are shared in the PLC. Teachers show how the need to be familiar with the specific challenges in a classroom are important considerations before a teacher can take up suggestions offered in the PLC.

6.5.1 Difference Talk related to Learners

The Difference Talk related to learners suggests that considering everyone *also involves* something different for some. When teachers view learners in one classroom as a homogenous group they would consider teaching and learning practices that would be applicable to all learners. When teachers considered the differences among learners, they stated that there was need to practice different strategies for 'some' learners. However, some Difference Talk on learners categorised learners as a complaint about the learners; a problem that was sometimes more than a teacher could manage. In Difference Talk teachers did not always seek pedagogical solutions for a learner to access the same academic content as other learners. Difference Talk sometimes combined a complaint about a learner with a pedagogical response or with a deterministic view about a learner's ability. This was deficit talk that could be addressed in conceptual knowledge for inclusive pedagogy and I have included this recommendation for professional learning in Chapter Nine.

Focus on Ability differences

Learner profiling focused on learners' ability differences was considered an interruption to whole class teaching and learning. Teachers discussed learners who experienced difficulties with learning as problematic. Teachers noted the learners with learning difficulties were also disadvantaged by an inflexible curriculum which the teachers had to complete within a period that didn't accommodate learners who couldn't keep pace. Teachers generally agreed which learners' difficulties presented them with the most challenge. Unlike Inclusive Talk that profiled learners with the aim of finding pedagogical solutions for any learning difficulty, Difference Talk was discussion of learners' difficulties and abilities as a frustration. In profiling a learner, teacher gave names and expressed why the learners were difficult to teach.

> "They don't listen; I have a child in my class.."
> "These two always sleepy….maybe it's in the blood".
> (PLC 01/01/B, Pos. 239)

> "…like this child, I think she's from an abused [family] and she…
> You know [name] that child is really experiencing serious problems
> (PLC 01/02/A, Pos. 330)

Teachers said that learners did not listen and understand what was being taught in class because some learners have language problems and others have physiological problems. Other reasons for many learners' difficulties was that "most are from other countries" and therefore they do not understand the languages of South Africa. To solve the language barrier one teacher suggested that a South African learner could translate for the foreign learner. Otherwise, the teachers found language problems insurmountable even though the school had a multilingual policy. A consideration of the policy could have been cited as an option for the teachers. However even when teacher profiled learners, they did not indicate that they were against inclusion, but that they would need support in their classroom so as to teach learners with learning challenges.

Mixed messaging: Pity as inclusion

When teachers accepted to teach learners who they considered as having academic or socio-economic difficulties, the teachers portrayed a deterministic and pitying stance about such learners. In the first excerpt below teachers deemed their approach was inclusive by how they motivated the learners who were 'disruptive'. In the second excerpt, a teacher commiserated over with children from the low socio-economic neighbourhoods around City Primary School and stated that inclusion was an option for such children.

Excerpt 2

T4:	Just give them a scenario. Like in my class I will pick up one child or the one who's not doing that well and then I will tell them that, 'You know, if you are not good, you are not listening, you are not good, one day you'll be working for her.'
Teachers:	[chuckle]
T4:	'Do you want to work for her? Do you want to be her nanny?' And they will so no. 'And she'll be driving a big car, you know, you'll be doing her garden' – they don't like that.
Teachers:	[laugh]
T4:	… And then I'll tell them that, 'When you listen, this is what is going to happen to you. You'll have a big car, you'll have a beautiful house…' You know you encourage them like that. And then there will be some of them that will also think about their situation at home…. (PLC 01/02/B, Pos. 160-164)

Excerpt 2

T1: So inclusion, inclusion that is why we are keeping [Learner name] in our classes … Because we want her to try and cope with the normalities of life. We don't want to exclude her …You know, because already I can see she's already being assertive … If we took her out and put her in a different environment I don't think she would be the same [Learner name] that she is now, she would have been … intimidated.

T6: What I'm saying, you are straight on the point … I said because we come from a different background. Look at Pistorius and [Learner name]. Pistorius managed to excel … Because of the socio-economic background that was wealthy and supportive … [Learner name] comes from City Primary; due to the constraints she cannot be on the same level as Oscar Pistorius. (PLC 03/03/B Pos. 166-187)

The socio-economic background of the learners was a concern in many discussions. The teachers stated that children from poor socio-economic background needed to have their self-esteem boosted. The teachers pointed out that such learners needed to work hard so that they would not become a nanny. Such a statement aimed at motivating learners could also imply that the teacher was drawing from her/his knowledge of the socio-economic environment of the school. Therefore, when teachers asked learners if they wanted to be a nanny or gardener, the teachers considered that they were encouraging the learners to work hard. This is Difference Talk because it denied the value of domestic work and childcare, and portraying learners' parents are employed in such occupations. The comparison of one learner with para-Olympian Oscar Pistorius implied that the learner had a disability. Therefore, it appeared that the learner had been saved from a life of misery by being at City Primary School.

Even where strategies were also used to shield learners from being singled out for their learning difficulty, there was an exclusionary element that may not have been obvious to the teachers. Similar to the statement above that aimed at motivating learners to work hard and so avoid becoming a nanny, the following excerpt was double-edged: at first there is a positive embrace of the learner, but it ends with the teacher using an unpleasant word to describe the learner.

T1: They will have their own interpretation. What I do when I call them, those who cannot read, I actually take two who can read well and two who cannot read well so that they mustn't conclude that this is the domkoppe [sings and claps] Die domkoppe[6] (PLC 03/03/B, Pos. 323)

Teachers appeared to consider non-academic, informal and domestic work as inferior and such work did not require much schooling. Therefore, they said that they praised the children to work hard in school so that they could be engaged in work that required higher learning later in their lives. Secondly, some of the children attending City Primary School lived under difficult circumstances including some who lived in a nearby informal settlement. When the teachers saw their role as encouraging learners, they were cognizant of the school's context. This excerpt shows the complexity of engaging with inclusion. Teachers begin to move towards inclusion through motivation but also undercut their intention with residual prejudice about a stratified society.

6.5.2 Difference Talk related to Teachers

Difference Talk was evident when teachers talked about enacting teaching and learning strategies, but with conditions. Difference Talk highlighted the challenges that teachers faced. The challenges needed to be navigated in special ways. Teachers said that various structural issues limited their inclusive teaching practice. Even though teachers noted that learners with difficulties could be taught together with other learners, there was also talk about ability differences requiring teachers to separate learners. There were also queries about the definition of inclusion which teachers asked and showed that they had doubts about what constituted an inclusive practice.

Ability differences require separation

When teachers discussed a learners' ability differences and considered how best to teach the learner, Difference Talk suggested that only pull-out strategies would be successful. These strategies included the 'carpet' and sending learners out of the classroom to the learning support educator who taught in the school's library. While teachers called learners to sit on the 'carpet' was not a pull-out approach as described in the literature, I placed as a pull-out approach because the teachers indicated that they did this regularly for some learners, in particular learners who were not learning at the same pace as most learners. Learners who are sent out for remedial lessons miss

[6] Afrikaans word, literal meaning – 'the fools". Historically, a class designated of learners with special needs.

the lesson that the rest of the learners benefit from. Teachers noted that the pull-out strategies were necessary to help the teachers keep the class running smoothly, as a classroom management technique.

In the following excerpts from two different PLC sessions teachers discuss a pull-out.

Excerpt 1

T5: And … guys we mustn't forget the carpets …Carpet is a way of…Letting them come closer to you …Letting them feel relaxed….And it's also giving them that break from the chairs…Grade 4s are still babies. We mustn't forget that.
(PLC 02/03/A, Pos. 132-199)

Excerpt 2

T2: … you know what works for me to support those learners, if I really want to support them, I have to do group work. I could never work with the whole class. I have to have those children here.
(PLC 02/01/A, Pos. 230)

In the first excerpt the teacher noted that a strategy observed in a video viewed at the start of the PLC session was useful. In the second excerpt some teachers appeared to indicate that the only way to teach learners with difficulties was to have them move close to the teacher. The use of the carpet was discussed in the PLC as a strategy for introducing new concepts. The reminder above was meant to encourage teachers to have learners sit on the carpet that was next to teachers' desks, in front of the class. This was considered a good strategy especially for 'the slow learners'. However, teachers noted a draw-back to having learners on the carpet including learners being distracted by the teacher's clothing and learners touching one another. While the separation was deemed necessary so that the teacher would cover content specially for some learners, other grouping strategies were considered laborious as their arrangement took too much time to create. Sometimes teaching the learners a learning strategy, such as pair-share, took up too much time and compromised content learning time.

Even as the teachers attempted different strategies, they cited instances when all their efforts did not get learners to make any progress. While teachers appreciated sharing strategies, they also

identified constraints of using the strategies. Sometimes teachers spoke about the constraints in the PLC meetings before they had tried out a strategy. Teachers cited a problem with learning in pairs. When learners worked in pairs, one learner would mechanically copy his/her partner's work without understanding the concept that was being taught.

Other constraints with implementing strategies was the number of learners in one classroom and the seating configurations in the classroom. These impeded efforts to have different group-configurations. Learners' seating arrangements also made giving instructions difficult as some learners sat with their backs to the teacher. One teacher expressed the difficult to give instructions about Whole Body listening.

> T1: But then when we do group activities it's another hassle, we're taken back. And then we are trying to save space at the same time.
> T2: But she didn't say that we must, we must …rearrange the place
> T1: But she said it's challenge.
> T3: It is a… ja… a challenge.
> T1: Even when they push them they make them zig-zag ... Today I changed them to put them in groups.
> T3: Ja, because when they are facing the same direction the desks are always thrown everywhere.
> (PLC 01/02/A, Pos. 206-213)

Pull-out strategies are a regular suggestion for managing learners' behaviour and for teaching. While a teacher may accept that keeping learners in fixed groups could marginalise the learners, they defended such action as it helped manage the large numbers in a small classroom. Pull-out strategies may be exclusionary, but teachers defended the practice as a way to manage the class with less difficulty. The separation strategies may be a way for teachers to show concern for all their learners. However, a teacher's concern for a learner with disruptive behavior or a learner with learning difficulties may be accompanied with suggestions that would appear to marginalise the learner.

Referrals to the learning support educator or to a special school were other options that teachers suggested for learners with difficulties. The process for getting approval for a referral to a special school required evidence that the learner was unable to learn with the support available within the full-service school. In the following excerpt, teachers discuss a learner and conclude that referral to a special school was the only option for the learner. The teachers began by suggesting that the learner be given a device to help him/her to write.

T1: But the one who can talk and not write or type she or he needs a communication device.

T2: You, you know [what] we are gonna take, why we bring the device because we need the evidence … [But] I think we are wrong because we need the evidence. We, that child needs to learn how to write, isn't it important? […]

T2: Because we need the evidence we want to give the child the device. These children must learn how to write. They must learn how to write. They, they can't go through life without [writing]

T1: But I think first of all he needs to try that because with a child that will type in it will show the ability that he can write, it's just that he doesn't have the, the tempo. But I would say the child must write even if you can make it less. If it's ten sentences make it two sentences. […]

T2: …I can't, like [learner name] in my class, I can't give him a sentence to write. A sentence.

T47: He doesn't write?

T46: Even if he copies … from the board, he can't. Ay, maybe he can take how many minutes to write his name [learner name], four letters, [learner name] … It can take him 30 minutes.

T47: So that one, he's not right.

T48: He needs to be referred […]

T2: … but for me what I'll still say if a child doesn't know how to make any letters, that child must learn … otherwise.

(PLC 02/01/A, Pos. 153-199)

In this excerpt was discussion about a learner who was unable to write. The class teacher who brought up the situation insisted from the beginning of the discussion that the learner should learn to write. The teacher appeared to be quite fixed in his/her perspective about the learner – he cannot write, but he must learn to write. The teacher also seemed reluctant to collect the evidence needed to get the suggested communication device. Teachers did not initially suggest referral and there was discussion about how to help the learner – maybe give more time. While this gave the episode an inclusive perspective, the class teacher's inflexibility seems as though she/he is just complaining. The teachers concluded that the child needed a referral. The referral was not the end

of the matter for the class teacher, as she/he continued to mention other problems and appeared to agree with the referral, with 'that child must learn otherwise'.

Teachers expressed that they could not avoid using strategies to manage learners' behavior that the IPAA's analytical guidelines lists as exclusionary (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Teachers said that the fixed ability grouping helped them go through the set curriculum within the stipulated time. With the fixed ability groups the teachers said they were able to ascertain which learners understood the curriculum. They found the fixed ability groups were beneficial for learners and were unavoidable. In stating that the framework suggests that teachers should give learners choices, Florian (2014) implies that teachers can exercise choice and give learners options. Teachers made choices that would enable them to cover the curriculum and meet the needs of the learners.

Is this Inclusion?

Difference Talk showed how teachers questioned what could be considered inclusion and how to enact an inclusive pedagogical approach. There was confusion about technical terms which showed the teachers may have needed more conceptual understanding about inclusion. Teachers' views and understandings were important and the teachers took the opportunity to express them in the PLCs. The following excerpts reveal teachers questioning how teaching strategies actually promote inclusion. In the first excerpt a teacher would rather have focused on 'removing barriers' rather than what was being discussed in the PLC, and in the second excerpt teachers doubt that inclusive pedagogy is evident in a video on inclusive education in South Africa that they had watched at the beginning of the PLC session.

Excerpt 1

T1: … the fact that if you were to promote active listening of everybody regardless of [barriers], how [does] listening actually remove a barrier. I'm trying to think… How does listening active listening […] actually remove those barriers…
PLC 01/02/B, Pos. 200)

Excerpt 2

T1: Now what I saw on the video tape *[chuckles]* I'm not happy. I want to see the real thing in action. I didn't see anything bad […]

T2: Ja, ja, but basically it was just the narrator telling the story. There was no evidence of children doing anything.

T3: Yes, yes. We couldn't even see the children who, who were suffering there, who were having barriers.

T2: How they're helping them

(PLC 02/01/A, Pos. 204-208)

In both examples teachers continued to focus on identifying barriers. In the first discussion a teacher questioned how the continuous use of the listening strategy would help learners experiencing barriers to learning. The teacher's doubt about the value of active listening appeared to stem from an expectation that inclusive pedagogy was about 'removing barriers'. Another teacher responded to this query but indicated that by promoting active listening among the learners, teachers would help all learners become accustomed to the teacher's way of teaching and be able to follow the teachers' instructions. A similar doubt is shown in excerpt 2 where teachers noted that the images of the class shown in a video on inclusion in South Africa did not show inclusion, because there were no learners with obvious barriers to learning, possibly learners with disabilities. The critique of the video included how inclusive pedagogy could be successful without additional learning materials or other material resources. In both excerpts teachers showed misgivings about inclusion if inclusion did not involve how to specifically engage with or teach learners with disabilities.

From the start of the PLC project teachers grappled with when and how to use ability groups in their classes. Profiling learners in all the sessions that I coded as both inclusive and Difference Talk was an implicit indication of the challenge of teaching learners who appeared to stand out from the rest of the learners. Questioning inclusive pedagogy, in particular the "Bell-curve" thinking represented by fixed ability groups created intense debate. The following excerpt shows a range of issues. The main discussion was how "Bell-curve" thinking is evident in the teachers' practice. This session began with defining "Bell curve thinking", followed by faulting the premises of the IPAA, the value of ability grouping, the role of sending learners to the learning support

educator, working out the meanings of different technical terms, and ended with a conclusion about teachers making choices that suited their own practice.

T6: Bell curve thinking - is discriminatory. (Pos. 76) […]

T6: We are discriminating because if you look at […] the person who's doing this research says this is done based on the learners that are exposed to the same measure of socio-economic background. They are sufficiently coming from the same background, wealthy background. In XXX Primary – we have seen [Teacher's Name] daughter, we have [Learner name], we have [Learner name], they don't come from the same social background. So if we apply this then we are depriving them of the opportunity. They don't have equal opportunity. So we have to use the inclusive approach.

T1: So now can I ask <u>again</u> when I'm doing [teaching] shapes and I have a lesson plan but then I've got [Learner name], I've got [Learner name], I've got maybe the highly gifted child in one class; […] if [I have] differentiated teaching is it not discriminating again?

T6: No, differentiating it is not discriminative because you have mixed [learners] (231-232) […]

T2: But then ok when I do integration like I call them out from the rest of the others when the others are writing. Am I discriminating when I'm doing integration in this way sitting on the carpet? (319) […]

T3: …I like what you are saying. It's still the same concept, you are not discriminating him from the others learning a different concept from the others.

T6: Even though the activity is the same but you simplify it. Yes, so you are not discriminating (251)

T11: Exactly

T6: You're simplifying it for them.

[Teachers all talk at the same time]

T1: But when we take them out of the class and they are going to Setlopo are we not discriminating? (333)

T6: When they are going to Setlopo it's something else because they just go there, they come back Pos. 335) […]

T9: so [we] must always be with everybody (Pos. 344)

T9: So if they are with the group nobody knows that this one … I'll always sit next to them and we'll do an activity together - the rest are busy with the same activity but I'm asking questions and then we are talking like …[but] class already knows that this one… now with me they don't know that who am I supporting

T6: … not that a special colleague [or] you say ‘intervention’ you wouldn’t say, ‘All those who are failing’

T6: You can be strategic … So every teacher must have their own unique way, of applying this inclusive approach. According to knowledge, subject

T7: Because everybody does what works for them

(PLC 03/03/B, Pos. 76-460)

Ability grouping is something that many teachers do. This is a practice that teachers believe is a fitting response to learners’ differences. In the PLC sessions on the Bell-curve and Inclusive pedagogy (PLCs 03/03 and 03/04) teachers had the opportunity to think more deeply about ability grouping. There was animated discussion and at various times in these PLC sessions teachers all talk at the same time. Mixed ability grouping as a key aspect of an inclusive pedagogical approach to teaching and learning and Bell Curve thinking were considered unsuitable to the context of City Primary School. City Primary School was composed of learners from different socio-economic backgrounds while teachers maintained that the research conducted to develop inclusive pedagogy studied children with the “same background, wealthy background”.

To create mixed ability groups, teachers advised colleagues to be strategic. This would involve being surreptitious. Even if the class knew the learners that are ‘failing’, the teacher would not make that obvious by not showing up the ‘failing’ learner but by sitting near the learner that needed support. Practicing inclusive pedagogy could involve both ability and mixed grouping and therefore every teacher would determine what worked best for her/his class and in their own ‘unique way’.

Pull-out strategies also feature in this excerpt – ‘sitting on the carpet’ and ‘going to Setlopo’. As discussed earlier the ‘carpet’ was a necessary separation option for teaching learners with learning difficulties and differences. The other option was to send learners to the learning support educator, Setlopo. Both examples were not considered ‘discriminatory’ because they were not permanent or fixed teaching and learning strategies. The words ‘discriminatory’ and ‘discriminating’ were used as a negative and positive way to attend to learners’ differences. Discriminatory was used to mean that bell-curve thinking was a biased and unfair way of managing learners; while in

‘discriminating’ teachers were being discerning in how to differentiate learners who needed special attention.

In the above excerpt a teacher said that discriminating was differentiating. It was apparent that the teacher meant differentiation, the inclusive strategy for teaching and assessment that is discussed in the *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning* (DBE, 2010), for teacher learning for inclusion. According to the teacher, differentiating was about understanding the learners and their learning profiles. A teacher understood Bell-curve thinking as Integration. Another technical term – integration – was historically and inaccurately used to mean inclusive education. In this excerpt a teacher explained his/her understanding of mixed ability grouping as Integration.

Differentiation was discussed in the following excerpt as a strategy that could be used for learners who could keep up with the teacher’s pace. It appeared that the teacher considered differentiation as about simplifying the curriculum, which the teachers associated with education standards.

> T1 Our school is different from other kinds of schools.[…]
>
> T2 … about their disability…[*translanguaging*] *those other ones, that we know* they are struggling. When we do lesson planning, we have to lower the grade; the standard of their learning so as to suit all of those learners.
>
> (PLC 03/01/A, Pos. 17)

‘Our children are different’ was a common expression that denoted learners who were not learning as expected. The teachers’ ‘confusion’ over the terminology may show both insufficient theoretical knowledge and also showed general cultural confusion in using certain technical terms. Teachers in my study were not unique in grappling with how to teach all learners in their classrooms. In an English study, Williams-Brown and Hodkinson (2020) found that teachers supported inclusion and would have wanted to teach all learners but in practice they found it a difficult concept to operationalise. Similar to the teachers in my research, the English study noted that teachers were confounded with deciding if learners with extra educational support needs should take the national tests because preparation for the national tests was a significant barrier to inclusion (Williams-Brown & Hodkinson, 2020). There was also a misunderstanding that the curriculum for learners with learning difficulties would be dumbed down (Graham & Harwood, 2011). Graham and

Harwood (2011) note that the common confusion between "dumbing-down" and curriculum differentiation can cause disaffection among learners. My finding confirms "the pervasive influence of the deficit view of learning difficulties" even when teachers have participated in PLCs underpinned by the IPAA (Brennan et al, 2019, p. 13).

6.5.3 Difference Talk related to Working Together

The critical engagement by teachers about their working environment highlighted how success in teaching and learning was curtailed by structural challenges such as curriculum overload and limited time to cover the curriculum. This pushed teachers to seek other persons who could take charge of learners in the classrooms.

The 'knowledgeable other'

When teachers sought "the knowledgeable other" in Difference Talk, there appeared to be a tone of abdication or pessimism. Abdication seemed apparent when teachers sought the '*knowledgeable other*' to take over when the teachers faced difficulties in the classroom. This may have implied that the teachers believed that they did not have the special skills they believed were necessary to teach learners in full-service schools and that there may have been little value in working as a team with the 'knowledgeable other'. The knowledgeable other could also be a colleague in the PLC group who would share information and speak with confidence about the certain information. Such a colleague's sharing would not be questioned by the teachers in the group. For example, the 'autism presentation' discussed in Section 6.6.2 was an example of a 'knowledgeable' teacher sharing information without being challenged by members in the PLC group.

The following excerpts from PLCs and one interview show the apparent abdication, pessimism and confusion. The first and second excerpts were from two different PLC groups but in the same session – Effective listening. Teachers stated that they were unable to 'diagnose' learners who may have hearing problems. What distinguished this excerpt as Difference Talk, in particular as abdication, was because teachers freely and frequently profiled learners whom they suspected had an illness. In the following excerpt, the same PLC group discussed and listened to a 'presentation' about autism. The third excerpt was an example of pessimism when a teacher was frustrated by the facilitator's participation. In the particular group the facilitator was from the WSOE project

team. The teacher expressed his/her doubts about the role of the university team. The final excerpt from a teacher interview showed some limitations in professional learning.

Excerpt 1

T20: … sometimes you are not sure whether they're having a listening problem or they're not paying attention to what you are saying.

T20: So if this is a problem because we cannot …diagnose those kids to say it's a hearing problem or maybe they're too playful in the class. We end up being frustrated but explaining again and again and again until we get it here with them that they did hear you. But I don't think talking once works with them.

T34: But for the grade one's … you know they cannot read, pictures it works wonders…you don't know whether some of them they cannot listen, we're not doctors, we cannot diagnose, but through visual they can understand.

T34: And one other thing again…we've said, we're not doctors, I've seen another child …when I speak she's gonna give me the side. When I gave her instruction she will just turn her face like this, then I will realise that maybe there is a problem.

(PLC 01/01/A, Pos. 46-127)

Excerpt 2

T2: But then check how they listen to you when you, you're talking to them.

T1: But, you know, we're not doctors. How will you check that? We are not doctors.

T2: ...body language to say 'I can't hear you.'…So how will I identify if I don't even have the background of the child? …But maybe somebody trained in that field,

T1: medical field can realise that, but now I can't pick it, I'm a teacher, remember. So how will I realise that?

(PLC 01/01/B, Pos. 68-79

Excerpt 3

T1: … What are the strategies that we can use to just get them to, to really distinguish between hearing and active listening?

T3: I wish I can get development on that one […]

T3: You know I've become a bit worried. Are you also going to help us with some of the ways that we can use to help these learners in the class, because most of the time it's like us, us, us talking and you are not giving us any development *[chuckles]* or something. (PLC 01/02/B, Pos. 172; 220)

Grade 3 Teacher

Interviewer: How is the PLC compared to other types of workshops?

Teacher: For discipline … the Redcard. Is Redcard you?

Interviewer: No. Were there other trainings?

Teacher: Yes. … I took some. You cannot take everything.

Interviewer: Have you made any changes in the way you teach?

Teacher: Yes. You end up not knowing where do you take this information from. Like that time, I forgot the people –you're not the one. [Cheerful laughter]

(Interview/6/Grade 3, Pos. 46-62)

As the teachers built their professional repertoire on inclusion with questions and reflections about their practice, they also showed how difficult it may be to dislodge their beliefs about their capabilities, the traditional roles and expectations of learning in transmission-style courses, and about inclusive pedagogy. The topics for discussion were non-prescriptive but teachers requested tips and quick fixes for the challenges they faced with teaching large classes. There have been frequent changes in the South African education system that have been accompanied by teacher professional education. Teachers' confusion about lessons of the PLC with other professional learning programmes begs the question about how much teachers can learn without the traditional transmission mode of professional learning. Brennan (2017) discussing Kennedy's (2005) transmissive models of professional development, says that a "more knowledgeable other" (p. 52) is one who pre-determines the agenda and the participants have a passive role in the learning event. From the PLC discussion, the teachers' request for a knowledgeable other, may have been based on their need for more technical knowledge. While I note that there may have been a hint of abdication, I also note that the teachers' request for a knowledgeable other may be an indication that the teachers needed for more theoretical grounding in inclusive education.

Critiquing educational structures

The constraints of teaching and learning can be insurmountable. The overcrowded classrooms were a common challenge for teachers at City Primary School. This was evident in an earlier excerpt when a teacher complained that arranging and re-arranging desks to create different groupings produced disorder, and learners' desks and chairs became 'zigzag'. A harsher image of

the classroom was expressed in the following first excerpt. In the second excerpt discussing differentiation highlighted a dilemma when carrying out annual assessment tests that needed to be reported to the provincial GDE. The third excerpt was taken from the final PLC, Session four of year three. It closes the project on a rather cynical note.

Excerpt 1

T2: But one teacher wants in the foundation phase classes, [says] our classrooms should not look like prison cells, we should try as much as we can to, I wonder [how], to have as many learning aids as possible. (PLC 01/01/B, Pos. 472-473)

Excerpt 2

T2: How do you include the different abilities in it? … she said that planning is important […]

T12: And make sure that in your planning you accommodate all learners.

T17: Then when assessing also you downgrade with the learners who have learning difficulties […]

T18: But they are not assessed differently […]

T2: No but as far as I know, you know, downgrading the assessment from the learner, It's fine.

T2: Until it gets to ANA[7], then we can't do differentiation.

T2: And… the child is achieving and you know that this child really knows

T2: But when it gets to a common exam like ANA they expect them to, to do the same as everybody else.

T24: And the others who can't, who are not performing at all…Why can't there be a common assessment for them? […]
(PLC 02/01/A, Pos. 43-79/90-92/131)

Excerpt 3

T 5: … you know what, with the Bell-curve –I must admit, it works easier, not better. It works easier for a teacher. Because of only one thing, and that is because of the sizes of the classes. …Classrooms typically, in a non-fee-paying or in a government school is 40 plus. Which out of necessity, you end up going the Bell-curve. It's not necessar[ily] the correct way.
If you want to say [that the] correct way and what would we have in this utopia so [that] we could get flatten the Bell and make it inclusive to everybody:
- one-smaller classes;

[7] Even though the Annual National Assessment (ANA) were no longer in use when this PLC was conducted, teachers continued to use the term ANAs to refer to the annual assessments that replaced the ANAs.

- two-so that you've got classroom assistance;
- three-the learners that have been identified, that just… they… will want a better word than you've got there as slow, and
- that you've tried everything. You've changed, the content, the strategies. The way that you're teaching them. Then assessment.
- At that point, you're referring – and if I say refer, we've gone through everything. We've gone through…"

T1: all the procedures.

T 5: …additional support; everything. And…

T1: then, that's the inclusive [pedagogy]

T 5: …this is where you are. You're in Johannesburg now and I want you to get to Cape Town.

T1: At the end of the day, we want you to reach your [destination]

T 5: … Will you get in the car? Will you walk? Will you go on bicycle? Will you?

(PLC 04/04/B, Pos. 71;73-77; 186-188)

As much as the teachers would have liked to enact inclusive pedagogy, they faced challenges that were beyond their power to change. The 'prison-like' classrooms made enacting inclusive pedagogy a 'utopia'. Even when teachers follow the *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning* (DBE, 2010), their efforts to teach learners with learning difficulties became futile because the assessments for such learners were not differentiated. The *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning* (DBE, 2010) provide definitions and examples for differentiation and cooperative learning. The sense that some teachers found curriculum adaptations as counterproductive has been noted before (Walton et. al., 2014, p. 327). In the third excerpt, I have bulleted the list that teachers stated they were expected to meet before inclusive pedagogy could be enacted. Even though the teachers appeared "powerless in the face of curriculum demands, assessment requirements and systemic constraints; and as unsupported by the education department" (Walton et. al., 2014, p. 329), their listing of the requirements for inclusive pedagogy had a flip side: an awareness of what it would take for teachers to successfully incorporate inclusive pedagogy. These lists, from the teachers and by Walton et al. (2014) are evidence that with Difference Talk teachers made important statements about how their efforts to enact inclusive pedagogy required certain conditions to be met. The teachers were saying, yes to inclusive pedagogy, but there are certain conditions and expectations that were necessary for successful enactment.

Difference Talk in the PLCs disrupted the teachers' customary and familiar way of thinking about teaching and learning. Even though some may have continued to hold onto a fixed "bell-curve" thinking mindset, they were exposed to, and were challenged by how that mindset may have had a negative impact on learners. Decisions about inclusive pedagogy could be viewed on a continuum or a weighing scale. Based on the teachers' context and daily circumstances, teacher's conclusion about how they would engage with inclusion could have been based on what would best suit their teaching and learners at a particular time. The stance would only be determined as inclusive or as marginalising for a learner based on a teacher's interpretation of the value of an inclusive approach. A teacher's stance could also be based on his/her professional agency that would have been an engagement their individual teaching history, school community and national assessment considerations. Teachers made decisions in the light of competing demands. Their daily experiences reflected on-going challenges especially, the prevailing structural circumstances such as overcrowded classrooms, and rigid curriculum (Walton et. al., 2014). They incorporated their own ideas about teaching and learning; and made decisions that helped them manage the learners in their classrooms. They also presented ideas about inclusivity that show that they care and are concern about all learners even with the contextual exigencies that presented dilemmas in their everyday classroom practice.

6.5.4. The role of Difference Talk

Difference Talk, which at times seemed contradictory to inclusion according to the IPAA, showed teachers contending with what inclusion meant in their specific context. Difference Talk showed that teachers had ideas about inclusive pedagogy, which could be said to be an acceptance to enacting an inclusive pedagogical approach in their classroom teaching. Such an agreement, 'a yes', was accompanied with 'a but', signaling the conditions that are necessary before the enactment and/or highlighting the constraints that could impede the enactment. In the following extract from an interview of a grade three teacher with a University teaching qualification including 'additional knowledge' on inclusion, she/he clarified my conclusion:

Grade 3 Teacher

> Yes, [this is an] inclusion school. But I don't think it's functional as such. Maybe now they are starting to be functional because of the specialist. We were saying this is an inclusive school whereas teacher don't have knowledge of including learners with disabilities. … we do have those learners with

> disabilities but the teachers are not well trained with dealing with such a learners. And it's improving. [But] in a class where we are having maybe six learners with a disability problem, how can you help these learners, more especially if you're not well trained. Even if you're well trained, you cannot [attend] to your learners' physical disabilities whereas there are learners who are not –who need your attention also. How can you accommodate all?
>
> I think including is a good thing. But we are not applying it properly, as I understand it. … maybe in special school is fine – but this is a public school. They are not checking the numbers of learners. Maybe if 1 [learner has a disability] to 36 [in the classroom] is better. Now, my class is 54 mine and you're one teacher. You cannot accommodate all.
> (Interview/6/ Grade 3, Pos. 29-31)

Even when teachers talk can be described as deficit talk, I deliberately avoided labelling any Difference Talk as deficit talk. This position does not mean that there was no 'deficit' talk that would have negatively impacted teachers teaching inclusively. A blanket label may have suggested a deficit perspective about teachers and their learning. My intention was to focus discussion on talk and not create an impression of judging the teachers and their talk as deficient. Deficit talk is unacceptable: whether in regard to learners or in reference to teachers and their practice. Even though contextual constraints and teaching dilemmas may necessitate an adaptable conceptualisation of inclusive pedagogy in a given environment, not all Difference Talk was potentially inclusive.

Listening to teacher voice and acknowledging their ideas was an important part of understanding teachers talk about their experiences with inclusive pedagogy. However, not all ideas in Difference Talk were acceptable for enacting inclusion and some are outrightly problematic. When teachers understand the foundations for inclusion and inclusive pedagogy from a social justice perspective, they may have the important and conceptual benchmarks from which to gauge the acceptability of their ideas and practices. Such knowledge may have helped teachers to distinguish ideas offered in PLC discussions as special education, as inclusion and ideas that were definitely exclusionary, that would be discussed, challenged and discarded.

A key activity that gave Difference Talk a degree of inclusion was that teachers grappled with the issues and this appeared to a concern for all learners. Even though in Difference Talk some

teachers' talk about learners had a deficit slant, this did not mean that they objected to teaching learners with obvious learning support needs. The profiles that teachers assigned to learners were teachers' diagnoses of the learners even though they also said that they were not doctors and could not determine why a learner was not listening and learning. This was a real dilemma. Teachers' talk about learners' abilities spotlighted teachers' interest in classroom management (Savolainen, et al, 2012). This was the 'special teaching for special children' focus that first considered "who was being taught," while inclusive pedagogy intends to elevate "what is taught." While both 'who was being taught' and 'what was being taught' are important, the shift in focus to first consider 'what is being taught' intends to shift teachers' preoccupation with learners' profiles. The concern with learners was a special education element which could have meant that teachers may think that teaching in a full-service school required specialised knowledge about learners and therefore the need to know a diagnosis-specific pedagogy.

Teachers profiling learners may represent the "entrenched" attitudes towards learners with learning difficulties and disabilities in South Africa (Walton, 2016, p. 105). According to Savolainen, et al (2012) South African teachers have a less positive attitude to interacting with persons with disabilities compared to Finnish teachers because the inclusion of children with disabilities into general/mainstream classroom did have school children with disabilities. Even though there could be many other reasons for the less positive attitude, the scholars note that in general teachers seem to have positive sentiments towards persons with disabilities but are more critical towards teaching children with disabilities in mainstream schools (Savolainen, et al., 2012).

Difference Talk appeared to have a tone of frustration when the teachers said that they were not skilled to teach a learner and a learner needed a special educator or a doctor. Even though this element is similar to other research using the IPAA, I did not consider teachers talk that seemed to avoid responsibility for all learners as "not inclusive" (Kim et al., 2022, p. 1081). Such talk I coded as Difference Talk related to teachers related to collaborating with other professionals.

When inclusion is seen as something different for some, the view seems antithetical to the IPAA approach which expects teachers to extend what is ordinarily available to all learners, rather than using strategies for most alongside some 'additional' or 'different' strategies for some learners.

The additional needs perspective, fixed grouping and pull-out strategies may not foster inclusion (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012), but in the City Primary School context these strategies were difficult to avoid. Teachers justified using fixed ability groups by pointing out that that were the only way to teach learners who were not achieving at the pace of other learners. While there was no evidence of blatant refusal to help learners who did not fit the teachers' perception of who should be in their classrooms, there was irritation with some learners. When teachers talked about the 'difficult' learners they aimed to categorise learners to limit distractions to their teaching and to manage the learner's behaviour.

Difference Talk focused more on 'who was being taught' rather than first considering 'what and how to teach.' The IPAA does not diminish the need to pay attention to 'who is being taught' – it starts with paying attention to 'what is being taught.' The IPAA's expectation that teachers would first focus on the content to be taught, rather than on learners' diagnostic categories as a prerequisite for effective teaching, may not take into consideration the "complexities of difference" (Brennan et al., 2019, p. 4) among learners in one classroom, particularly learners who "experience significant challenges" (Brennan et al., 2019, p. 12). Similar research conducted by Lindsay et al. (2014) found that teachers also struggled to avoid approaches that singled out learners with special educational needs, in particular children with a range of difficulties such as, children with autism spectrum conditions. Teachers find that the intrinsic barriers to learning are real and cannot be overlooked. Florian (2019) acknowledging that the work of inclusive education is "difficult and complex" (Florian, 2019, p. 9), noted that learners' differences should be the reason to find support for all learners, particularly learners with disabilities.

Difference Talk also played a role in building "epistemic fluency" – the ability to participate fully in collaborative activities with others (Zenios, 2011, p. 261). Zenios (2011), building on Ohlsson's (1995) taxonomy of epistemic tasks, argues that epistemic fluency guides the construction of knowledge. One epistemic task that teachers used in the PLCs was arguing stating the reasons for (or against) a particular position which increased (or decreased) the discussants' confidence that their position was right (Zenios, 2011). In addition to building confidence, argument also helped give insight on how a practice could be developed. When a learning community facilitates a range of epistemic activities among its participants it helps to advance inquiry in reflective and

contextual ways and enables "reasoning, negotiating, comparing, exploring, clarifying meanings, and offering new perspectives in addition to, or in support of, the initial tasks" (Zenios, 2011, p. 266). The PLCs provided the environment for teachers to question and debate and that have could created new contextual understandings for how inclusive pedagogy could be enacted.

The nexus of Difference Talk and Inclusive Talk could help further inquiry into professional learning of inclusive pedagogy. A question that could be asked of professional learning research that had found that teachers initially accepted inclusion after professional learning but months later seemed to have turned back from their earlier commitment, could be, 'if teachers have the opportunity to debate and disagree in professional learning of inclusive pedagogy, what difference would such learning have on teachers enacting inclusion?' Even though there was a request for a transmission mode for learning, teacher talk showed that teachers considered the WSOE team as partners and therefore the teachers were not just recipients of knowledge. Teachers' critique of the learning material, for example the critique of the video shown in PLC 02/01 – see excerpts above in the section *Is this Inclusion* – could also be an important contribution to professional learning materials. The teachers noted that the schools shown in the video were too different to their own school and therefore the teaching examples shown could not have been replicated at City Primary School. While this pointed to teachers needing for conceptual knowledge regarding inclusive pedagogy it also gave teachers voice for input into learning materials. This opportunity to critique the learning materials may not be open to teachers in other forms of professional learning, such as workshops that are often conducted by "experts" away from school contexts. The PLC guidelines created opportunities for open discussion. The deviations from the guidelines were insights into teachers' dilemmas and some of their decision-making processes. The PLCs fostered critique, an epistemic talk that has be shown to promote transformatory learning (Brookfield, 2005). When teachers' discussions in the PLCs veered from the prepared guidelines by deviating into other discussions, could be an essential pointer of teachers taking charge of their own learning. Future success of learning in a PLCs could include teachers' critique of the PLC guidelines and hand-outs.

6.7 Revisiting the IPAA

The findings in this chapter confirm the theoretical and empirical basis for using the IPAA. These include the affordances of the IPAA as a tool to investigate and qualify empirical findings, and as an approach for professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. The IPAA describes the challenges that may arise when teachers enact inclusive teaching. It states that learning dilemmas that will arise need to be recognised as requiring pedagogical responses. In using the IPAA I was able to recognise the nuanced concept of difference and to find the relationships between my findings and other findings, such as Lindsay et al. (2014) who note the framework may not support "individualised (and somewhat exclusionary) practices" (Lindsay et al., 2014, p. 119). By acknowledging teachers' varied responses to how they discussed learning dilemmas and how they spoke about their responses to learners' differences, there were nuances in difference. These nuances afforded me insights on possible ways to re-look the IPAA so that my examination of teachers' talk about their practice may conclude without judgement when conclusions are contextualised.

The IPAA framework is a helpful tool to interrogate inclusive practices. The principles are broad, enable conceptual understanding of inclusion, which facilitates categorising teaching practices. Additionally, Florian and Walton (2018) give a contextual framing with the thinking required of South African teachers to disrupt their prevalent assumptions and practices so that they could enact an inclusive pedagogical approach in their classrooms. As an analytical tool, the IPAA framework enabled me to develop codes specific to the expectations of the IPAA's three principles and to identify teachers talk that embraced inclusion and inclusive pedagogy talk. The data presented the need to rethink the inclusion codes and led me to formulate codes for Difference Talk. Being able to delineate the two elements of talk, Inclusive Talk, and Difference Talk, meant that I did not pigeon-hole teachers talk as either inclusive or not inclusive. That perspective about teachers and teachers' talk, enabled me to offer a distinctive element to the talk that appeared to be oppositional to the framework but still in relation to the framework. This study finds that teachers talk in PLCs illuminates the affordances of the IPAA, the variances in teacher talk, the nuances of difference, and the possibilities for professional learning of inclusive pedagogy.

6.7.1 The affordances of the IPAA

The findings of this study contribute to a body of work on the IPAA. My findings confirm the affordances of the IPAA as a tool to investigate inclusive pedagogy and its value for research in South Africa (Mabasa-Manganyi, 2018; Sormunen et al., 2019; Mokala, 2020; Ayaya et al., 2020). I discuss these studies in Chapter Three. These and other studies respond to Loreman's (2017) observation that the IPAA has not undergone wide critical research into its efficacy and has only received conceptual analysis in respect to various school curriculum areas. This study also complements the varying conclusions that have been offered about using the IPAA in international studies, such as Brennan and King (2021) and Klibthong and Agbenyega (2018).

Teachers at City Primary School discussed the IPAA in PLC sessions 10 and 11. They noted that the context that gave rise to the framework was different from their own environment. Such findings partially correspond to the findings of Lindsay et al. (2014) and Brennan et al., 2019). These studies conducted in Canada and the Republic of Ireland, respectively, conclude that the IPAA is not open to the complexities of difference that would be inherent in any classroom. The framework states that teaching and learning strategies should avoid the "additional" or "different" approaches for some learners who experience difficulties and that learner groups should not be only based on ability. While noting that the IPAA is an ideal Lindsay, et al. (2014) state that in some contexts individualistic approaches are not only desirable but are often unavoidable. Individualistic approaches to teaching learners who were not learning in the same way as other learners in a classroom could be avoided by having several group configurations in a classroom (Florian & Spratt, 2013). This ideal may not work as it did when the IPAA was developed from empirical research in Scotland. Even where conditions in other environments may be similar to the original studies that contributed to the development of the IPAA, there could be some perspectives from the prototype that may not be possible to replicate.

Using the IPAA helped me to interpret what in teachers' talk was inclusive. This is valuable. When teachers talked about the ways they 'pull-aside' learners, they stated that the action was an act of care that they believed would be the best way to help some learners make academic progress. Teachers' talk about their context showed that teaching in their full-service school could not be reduced to an either-or notion about being inclusive or not inclusive. An action could have become

exclusionary if the teacher consistently considered the learners' differences were a disturbance, in every lesson, throughout the year. By considering teachers' contexts from their talk in PLCs, I could interpret their talk about enacting inclusive pedagogy differently from what an IPAA perspective may consider marginalising and exclusionary. If the learner was pulled-aside and their learning challenge became clear to the whole classroom a teacher's action could have been considered an act of marginalisation. With reference to Grenier (2010), Florian and Spratt (2013) explain how such an action is marginalising, noting that "...the very act of highlighting difference exacerbates the isolation and marginalisation of those children and contributes to the social construction of disability" (Florian & Spratt, 2013, p. 133).

As it is an approach and not a prescriptive strategy, the IPAA is flexible and gives room to adapt the tool. It provides the theoretical grounding and the means for interpreting data and therefore allows adaptation to explain the complexity of enacting inclusion (Kim, 2019). In light of the varied ways that teachers talk in PLCs, I used the IPAA framework to create the "Difference" element. Identifying this element also meant I sought to approach teachers' talk in ways that interrogated some traditional expectations of inclusive teaching and learning. I found that these two elements of talk in relation to the IPAA are important to consider in professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. Educators could enhance professional learning when they acknowledge that there could be two elements of talk that may be captured *in situ*. Such acknowledgment would also broaden researchers' perspectives on teachers' concerns about inclusion when 'listening' to teachers own words and within the teachers' own context.

Talk that did not fit the expectations of the IPAA in PLCs gave me the Counterpoint - the two elements of Inclusive and Difference Talk. Similarly, Kim (2019) found that the frequent "co-existence of inclusive and exclusive codes" was not unusual but that any one code did not define a practice, as a practice could have both inclusive and exclusive dimensions (Kim, 2019, p. 110). Kim (2019) also found that the consistent and "not unusual" co-existence of the inclusive and exclusive codes did not mean that the pattern of practice was entirely or consistently inclusive or exclusive (Kim, 2019, p. 127). Kim, et al., (2022) adapted the IPAA to enable coding of teacher interviews and created categories "inclusive, exclusive and neutral" and found that teachers take responsibility for all learners "under a mixture of inclusive and exclusive thinking" (Kim, et al.,

2022, p. 1078). While this corresponds to my findings, I chose to avoid binaries such as inclusion-exclusion or inclusion-special education that I found in deliberations about using the IPAA by acknowledging Difference and the nuances of difference.

6.7.2 Difference Talk and the nuances of difference

Difference Talk is an important finding. The category shows that the extent of inclusion cannot be rigidly defined and demarcated in advance in every situation, or in every instance or be abstracted from time and place. There are grey areas in which a teacher does not reject inclusion but accepts inclusion with caveats. The element reveals the need to consider teachers' decisions are influenced by professional, school, and wider educational circumstances. The IPAA is a means to interrogate teachers' practice within their own context (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Florian and Spratt (2013) note that "whether a teacher has adopted an inclusive pedagogical approach is not straightforward" (Florian & Spratt, 2013, p. 126). Using the Framework to interrogate teacher talk within their own context has provided an understanding about how teachers respond to the "individuality of all the children in their classrooms" (Florian & Spratt, 2013, p. 129).

There has been "a tendency to reify binary notions of inclusion and exclusion" (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015, p. 667) in pursuit of teachers enacting inclusion. Binary notions include mainstream/special education, inclusion/special, and inclusive/exclusive. Rather than applying binary notions to teaching, teachers and teacher educators could address the tensions of discursive dissonance (Li & Ruppar, 2021) by considering nuances in binary notions. Li and Ruppar (2021) list discursive dissonance as an aspect of teacher agency when teachers are reflexive. Teacher educators are called upon to create collaborative programmes that include professionals with diverse skills. Collaboration within professional learning that involves persons with diverse perspectives could help teachers manage the dissonances by considering the nuances and interrogating the tensions (Li & Ruppar, 2021). The IPAA and PLCs afford collaboration in professional learning and provide opportunity to consider nuances by interrogating binary tensions.

Acknowledging and attending to Difference Talk could qualify other empirical findings, such as conclusions describing teachers' classroom practices as "just being flexible" (Mokala, 2020, p. 84)

or as “middle-of-the-road” (Materechera, 2020, p. 776). Difference Talk confirms what other research has found and corroborates the need to have a “beyond the binary” perspective because “considering teachers’ practices as either inclusive or exclusive” may not be reflected in teachers’ varied understanding of, and responses to, what constitutes inclusive practice in a particular situation (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017, p. 667). Viewing teachers’ practices with a nuanced perspective on difference may be more helpful to developing teachers' capacity to enact inclusive pedagogy. Acknowledging nuances is an appropriate response that recognises and appreciates teachers’ professional agency in making choices that support of learners or for classroom management or for the teachers’ own well-being.

When teachers do not choose to enact inclusion according to the IPAA definition of inclusion, they may appear to choose teaching approaches that can appear to marginalise or exclude learners from participating as integral members of the classroom community. And using the IPAA definition without nuance, I may also appear to set up my analysis as a dichotomy of Inclusive-Difference. However, these are not fixed positions. I considered teachers diverse talk illustrated Minow’s “dilemma of difference” (1990). Minow (1990) presents the dilemma with questions:

> When does treating people differently emphasise their differences and stigmatise or hinder them on that basis? And when does treating people the same become insensitive to their difference and likely to stigmatise or hinder them on that basis? (Minow, 1990, p. 20)

Minow’s questions apply to how schools could manage children who are not learning at the pace or in the same way as others without stigmatising the children. Teachers who insist that ability groups are necessary and stand firm on bell-curve thinking highlight this dilemma. Norwich (2014) urges inclusion scholars to address the tension that the dilemma poses. When the tension is identified there is need to see if difference is stigmatising or protecting the learner. His position is to take a “plural value” perspective that is not “either/or but both/and” which provides a flexible way to address the tensions by (Norwich, 2014, p. 6). In distinguishing Inclusive Talk from Difference Talk, I acknowledge that there are nuances in teachers talk that may not always indicate a teacher’s opinion about a learner. But as discussed earlier, when a fixed position on any dilemma is taken it may not be considering the dilemma in its peculiar context. PLCs would offer teachers an opportunity to delve more deeply by discussing the dilemma in its peculiar context.

The dilemma of difference is discussed in inclusion literature (Vincent, 2012; Norwich, 2014) and

in research using the IPAA (Brennan, 2017; Akabor, 2015). While the dilemma of difference is noted in discussions in the development of the IPAA (Florian, 2008; Spratt & Florian, 2014), and the concept is included in the IPAA framework (Spratt & Florian, 2014), the framework does not explicitly indicate that difference can be nuanced and that there could be varied ways that difference is acknowledged. The nuanced ways of managing the dilemma of difference could be a useful addition in the framework, particularly for professional learning purposes. Such a proviso could help acknowledge and recognise that teachers' attempts at enacting inclusive pedagogy involves grappling with difference and occasionally seeming to be "somewhat exclusionary" (Lindsay, et al., 2014, p. 119). The proviso could also give teachers' ways of understanding their own practice rather than considering their practice in an inclusion/exclusion binary or in judgment (Kim et al., 2022; Mokala, 2020; Ayaya et al., 2020).

An explicit recognition of context may be a necessary discussion for the IPAA because grappling with nuances of difference and diversity may always be an on-going endeavor. The binaries of special and inclusive education, or inclusion/exclusion may not be unhelpful without reflection of context including teachers' perspectives, learners' needs, and the school environment. However, focusing on a resolution, or a perfect solution to resolve difference could create impasse. Therefore, allowing compromise and accepting that aporias are not "resolvable or reduced to one choice" may be a better way to live with uncertainty (Norwich, 2014, p. 9) could fulfill the IPAA's Principle Three: to continually develop creative new ways of working with others.

6.9 Conclusion

The finding that two elements of teacher talk on inclusive pedagogy – Inclusive and Difference Talk – existed in the PLCs, created a Counterpoint that provided valuable insights into teachers' ideas and their context. Inclusive Talk corresponded to the definitions in the IPAA while Difference Talk veered away from the definitions of the IPAA framework but were related to the framework. Understanding teacher talk as Counterpoint supported the analysis of teacher professional identity and agency. In the next chapter, I further interrogate the teachers talk in relation to their teacher professional identity and agency.

Chapter Seven – Teacher Professional identity and agency

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I described the different ways that teachers talked about inclusive pedagogy in professional learning communities (PLCs). Varied engagement in the PLCs indicated that teachers made choices about how to engage with the different topics of inclusive pedagogy. Exposure to, and engagement with inclusive pedagogy provided teachers with new knowledge. The new knowledge may have assisted the teachers in making choices about how to enact inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms. What teachers said regarding inclusive pedagogy may reflect teacher choices that could indicate who they were, who they may have been becoming and what they may have done in their classrooms, i.e., their professional identity and agency. Teachers' professional identity can be influenced by a professional environment that includes community interactions. Professional learning that targets teachers' professional identity could secure their commitment to inclusive education. PLC discussion guidelines provided the context for teachers to engage and possibly renegotiated their professional identities and agency.

This chapter will present the findings of teacher talk in PLCs in relation to their professional identity and agency. The discussion in the chapter are guided by the following research question:

> What does teacher talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy reveal about teacher professional identity and agency?

Participation in the PLC revealed aspects of teacher professional identity and agency for inclusive pedagogy. The findings showed that even though teachers talked about enacting inclusive pedagogy they did not consider themselves as inclusive educators. Teacher talk that took place in the PLCs that was focused on inclusive pedagogy revealed a productive dissonant relationship between teacher professional identity and agency. The productive part of the relationship was in teacher professional agency as the teachers agreeable to teaching their inclusive classrooms and spoke about how they were able to do so. The dissonant part was of the aspect of their professional identity as the teachers did not consider themselves inclusive teachers. Although they appeared

confident when sharing the classroom practices that they said they had successfully used to teach learners in their classrooms, by often saying 'it worked for me,' they also indicated that they were not inclusive educators. They stated that inclusive educators have special education training that helped such educators to 'manage learners with special needs' (PLC #8). This statement implied that since they had not had 'special education training' they could not consider themselves as inclusive educators despite saying that they had taught in an inclusive manner. This is a productive dissonance in teachers' talk between what they say about their professional identity and agency.

Even though teacher professional identity and teacher professional agency are not mutually exclusive but are related and interconnected, I chose to analyse the two concepts separately. The chapter begins by presenting my analysis and discussion of teacher professional identity using Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging. In the next section, I present my analysis and discussion of teacher professional agency using Li and Ruppar's (2021) consolidated framework for teacher agency for inclusive education. Following a presentation of the findings on identity and agency, respectively, I will discuss both teacher identity and agency using Sfard and Prusak's (2005) theory of identity as narrative.

7.2 Teacher Professional Identity

As I showed in chapter 6, the teachers' talk displayed characteristics of inclusive teachers (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018) as teachers who are concerned about all learners, including learners who needed extra support, a self-perception as caring teachers and a stand as life-long learners. These characteristics correlated with Wenger's (1998) identity modes of belonging, indicating descriptions of themselves as members of a learning community. Table 7:1 presents examples in the data that related to Wenger's Modes of Belonging. Columns one and two name and provide brief descriptions of each mode: alignment, engagement and imagination. Column three in Table 7.1 shows examples of codes that I assigned to the data using Wenger's three Modes of Belonging.

Alignment, shown in row two, was about coordinating teachers' activities within broader structures and enterprises and entailed connecting their reality to other enterprises and other communities of practice. This did not mean copying or being subsumed by others' practices but meant seeking some degree of coordination. I coded teachers talk on their school's common goals

concerning learners and how teachers were aligned with their association with their school as Wenger's Mode of Alignment.

Table 7.1: Wenger's Modes of Belonging with examples of codes

Modes of belonging	Description	Example of Codes
ALIGNMENT	*Common goals* Alignment with common goals and with the context, involves following the norms of the community. Teachers' coordinating their energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises -Discourses -Coordinated enterprises -Complexity -Styles -Compliance	"Our School"
ENGAGEMENT	*Direct experience* Engagement relates to a practice and an individual's direct experience and competence or incompetence in the practice. Active involvement in mutual processes of negotiating meaning -Shared histories of learning -Relationships -Interactions -Practices	Small groups are good
IMAGINATION	*Self and learner-images* Imagination entails teachers' construction of the world that helps her/him understand how s/he belongs or does not belong. Creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from teachers' own experience -Images of possibilities -Images of the world -Images of the past and the future -Images of ourselves	They're specially trained

Teacher talk that reflected their current realities and their shared histories I assigned to the mode of Engagement. The positive reception of PLCs as 'small groups' in which the teachers said they could actively engage in, I assigned as Wenger's Mode of engagement.

Imagination was about creating and sharing images of the world and seeing and making connections across time and space by extrapolating beyond the teachers' own experience. Wenger's mode of imagination is reflected in teachers' perception of what they need to learn. When teachers talked about future prospects for example learners' potential and when teachers

stated their impressions about what constituted an inclusive teacher, I placed such data under Wenger's Mode of Imagination.

In the following sections I present and discuss my findings. The sections are organised according to Wenger's three modes of belonging: alignment, engagement, and imagination.

7.2.1 Alignment

Teachers were cognizant of the broader educational structures as they discussed their classroom realities. As they sought a degree of coordination with the wider structures, they did not simply duplicate the practices of others. By discussing learners who experience learning barriers, teachers talked about their school's common goals as a full-service school and how they align with that classification. The teachers extended their concern about such learners from their learners' classroom performance to the learners' well-being beyond the school. They discussed the learners' home circumstances, sharing information about how the home environment impacted the learners' behaviour and achievements. They considered how to they could engage with guardians and parents.

In Session 8 teachers were presented with sentence starters and were required to define a full-service school.

> T1 Our school is different from other kinds of schools …
>
> T2 [S]o we can write about their disability… mentioning barriers … those other ones, that we know they're struggling. When we do lesson planning, we have to lower the grade; the standard of their learning so as to suit all of those learners. Right?
>
> (PLC 03/01/A, Pos. 16-17)

The PLC discussion guideline for this session served two purposes: it presented a teaching strategy (sentence starters) and also used the strategy for teachers to define a full-service school and what made an inclusive teacher. Teachers' definition of a full-service school not only profiled learners, but also indicated alignment aspects of teachers' identity. The from teachers responses reflect a common understanding about where they belonged, as teachers as being about addressing 'disability' and/or 'barriers' to learning that learners may have been experiencing.

7.2.2 Engagement

Teachers' talk related to Wenger's mode of engagement presented opposing views about who an inclusive teacher was. When speaking about themselves, teachers took a stand about who they were and who they were becoming or not becoming. The excerpts below indicate how teachers aligned with the expectations of teaching in a full-service school but the engagement indicated differing perspectives about who an inclusive teacher is.

Participating in PLCs was a welcome learning opportunity as the 'small groups' in which the teachers said characterised the PLCs afforded them opportunities to engage actively in the group's discussions. The teachers' guidelines in one session of each year of the project included questions and discussion points about professional learning communities. After teachers discussed the meaning of each word in the abbreviation PLC, they stated that learning in small groups, like the PLC groups, was better than attending workshops. The teachers felt that the workshops did not encourage participation. Teachers T1 and T2 made the following statements about their experiences:

Excerpt 1

T1 In a big group I can relax and not participate

T2 Small groups are good because you feel encouraged. Even though you're sitting with challenges you get ideas from others.

The teachers indicated that the anonymity that workshops afforded them meant that teachers may not actively learn; they could relax because their contribution/participation was not being assessed. Even though PLCs were not perceived as 'training' for inclusion or for teaching all learners, the teachers engaged with aspects of inclusion. PLCs made professional learning a serious experience, as the following excerpt illustrates.

Excerpt 2

T 3: Although we've got big classes; but we are able to identify the learners with barriers. And come up with a strategy of helping those learners with barriers.

T1: Great.

T3: And also to understand that [even] if you are not an inclusive teacher. If a child is acting out, you would think that maybe the child is being naughty but if you're an inclusive teacher, you'd

understand that there is a problem; that you need to interview the child and find out what exactly it is that umm, causing whatever, umm changes that the child has." (PLC 03/01/B , Pos. 21-23)

In excerpt 2 above, teachers engagement concerns how teachers made efforts to 'identity' and teach 'learners with barriers'. Acknowledging that their school has learners who have disabilities did not mean that the teachers saw themselves as inclusive teachers. While the teachers discuss ways, they would have managed a learners' challenges, they equally perceived 'an inclusive teacher' would manage the learner differently.

In the Excerpt 3 below, discussed in Chapter Six, related to Difference Talk, and coded as critiquing educational structures, is an example of teachers' engagement with their current realities. The teachers discussed the annual school-based assessments as the Annual National Assessments, even though the ANAs were no longer being conducted. This discussion of the inclusive strategy of 'differentiation' and how to teach 'learners with barriers' was an engagement that indicated shared histories about learners in full-service school.

Excerpt 3

T2: Until it gets [to ANAs], then we can't do differentiation.

T1: It's fine, I don't mind the differentiation

T2: Mmm?

T2: And for the sake of the child is achieving and you know that this the child really knows

(PLC 02/01/A, Pos. 75-77)

Excerpt 4

T2: And then, an inclusive teacher is different from us teachers because…they're specially trained.

T3 …which makes it easier for them to also identify these learners.

(PLC 03/01/A, Pos. 67-68)

Excerpt 5

T4: …an inclusive teacher is able to work with those kinds of children, who have different challenges.

(PLC 03/01/B, Pos. 15)

In the excerpts above engagement indicated what teachers considered were the skills of an inclusive teacher. The engagement was bounded which limited what it meant to be an inclusive teacher. There was a disconnection between who they were and who they believed an inclusive teacher to be. They believed an inclusive teacher was one that was specially trained and so, because they lacked the 'special training,' they did not think of themselves as inclusive teachers. Even though the teachers' perception of what inclusive education entailed was something they said they were enacting, they did not perceive themselves as inclusive educators. Their personal beliefs about what it meant to be trained as an inclusive teacher appeared to have resulted in a different perception about themselves as inclusive teachers (Vähäsantanen, 2015; Lasky, 2005). There seemed to be a perception that the PLC was not 'training' or 'development' to become an inclusive teacher.

The disconnection between what teachers did in the classroom and who they considered was an inclusive teacher was not echoed in individual teacher interviews. Although none of the teachers in the PLCs explicitly stated or used the expression 'I am an inclusive teacher,' during the interviews some teachers stated their confidence as an inclusive educator based on their experience as teachers in an inclusive school. The teachers were responding to a question about how they described themselves and the value of participating in PLCs and learning about inclusive pedagogy.

Grade 3 Teacher:

> I can say I am an inclusive teacher. Because, those learners who were very much slow, who were on support – most of them have improved [from my teaching]. That's why I'm saying I can call myself an inclusive teacher (Interview/8/Grade 3, Pos. 108)

Grade R Teacher:

> I think I can [say I am an inclusive teacher]. I think I can because it has shifted my mind; although, to be honest with you, I haven't yet… come across learners that are disabled. There I wouldn't know how to… manage those. I've, I've, I've never dealt with uh, with those kind of learners.
> (Interview/10/Grade R, Pos. 93)

In Chapter Three I discussed how teacher identity is linked to professional knowledge. These two teachers above considered themselves as inclusive teachers because of their experience and because they had gained knowledge. One teacher had engaged with the learners in his/her classroom and the other had engaged with knowledge in the PLCs. While the Grade 3 teacher perceived her/himself as an inclusive teacher, she/he appeared to consider that there was a different form knowledge required to teach of learners with disabilities. While the teachers were engaged in the PLCs, their perceptions about themselves differed from whom they imagined was a teacher for learners with disabilities.

7.2.3 Imagination

Imagination reflects teachers' self-perception and their self-images about the future. Imagination is about creating and sharing images of the world and seeing and making connections across time and space by extrapolating beyond the teachers' and learners' own experience. Imagination included teachers' impressions of what constitutes an inclusive teacher and their interest to keep learning.

When teachers expressed their difficulties in teaching some learners and requested help regarding how to teach those learners indicated a desire to keep learning. This interest in learning was also expressed in teachers' interviews and confirmed in other South African studies (Themane & Thobejane, 2019). The interest in learning reflects Wenger's mode of imagination. The disconnection between what they were currently doing with their learners, their type of school and their belief in being able to teach all learners was also evident when in a session a teacher reverted to a University team member to give them tips on how to teach the learners in their school. As the response from T3 below shows, the teachers expected the University team facilitator to provide instruction on how to teach learners who may have been having problems listening and hearing:

Excerpt 1

T1: … What are the strategies that we can use to just get them to, to really distinguish between hearing and active listening?

T3: I wish I can get development on that one […]

T3: You know I've become a bit worried. Are you also going to help us with some of the ways that we can use to help these learners in the class, because most of the

time it's like us, us, us talking and you are not giving us any development *[chuckles]* or something. (PLC 01/02/B, Pos. 172; 220)

Even though this request for 'development' came in the first year of the PLC project, the request for a demonstration may indicate the teachers' expectations that professional learning entailed 'experts' providing specific ways to teach. Some teachers did not consider what the PLCs offered as covering all aspects of inclusion. The request for direct instruction aligns with other requests to be "workshopped" (Walton, 2016a, p. 103) with the assumption that expertise comes from an external professional. While the teachers noted the value of learning in PLCs and acknowledged the University team as external experts, their request indicated the teachers wanted a different form of learning from the external experts. In a different context, teachers also requested for experts from outside their country, India, for professional learning for inclusive education (Das et al., 2013). The teachers in the Indian study showed greater confidence in foreign experts. The request at City Primary School did not curtail further discussion but it did highlight the importance of the teachers' believing in their capacity to draw on their knowledge and experiences.

Imagination offered another way for the teachers and the community to construct reality and an identity. However, imagination also offered the possibility of moving away from the present and losing touch with their sense of efficacy in the way they experienced the world. This may have caused the teachers to "interpret themselves as incompetent" (Wenger, 1998, p. 175). This was expressed by a Grade R teacher, in his/her individual interview.

Grade R Teacher

Teacher: What I can say about this whole PLC thing, taking it to my level, grade R teaching. You know most of it we do it but unaware that were doing it. So to me it was like em… an awareness to me. That what we do in the grade R level is very important. Like you know, the group, the, the group –what do we call that one?

Interviewer: The Cooperative groups?

Teacher: Yes. The group teaching. We do it, but, although we were not doing –I was not like, I never liked it a lot because I always think that the peers copy; in the group work. I always preferred the individual work. But now, with the PLC, it made me aware that it actually helps the, the, the slow one to pick up and to gain confidence as well.

(Interview/Grade R, Pos. 41-43).

This teacher's appreciates what s/he had gained by participating in the PLCs. Even though s/he knew about the strategies discussed s/he was not aware that s/he enacted inclusion. Prior to the PLC sessions on the strategy, the teacher had felt the strategy was not useful because learners would copy each other's work. While the teacher did not have the vocabulary to describe on of the inclusive strategy – Cooperative groups – s/he seemed pleasantly surprised that this strategy was beneficial for learners s/he considered 'slow'.

Imagination also entailed the teachers' images of their learners and what the learners could achieve beyond school. In Chapter 6: section: 6.5.1 Difference Talk related to Learners, I discussed teachers' mixed messaging about learners in the excerpt under the sub-heading *Pity as inclusion*. The teachers warned the learners that if they did not work hard, they would work as a nanny and a gardener. The teachers said they encouraged their learners to hard work so that they could own a beautiful house, a big car and not be employed as a nanny and a gardener. Teachers appeared to talk about the future prospects for some of their learners in terms of their current learners' socioeconomic status. Many learners at City Primary School lived in a low to middle income 'township' near the school.

Excerpt 2

T4: … And then I'll tell them that, 'When you listen, this is what is going to happen to you. You'll have a big car, you'll have a beautiful house…'
(PLC 01/02/B, Pos. 160-164)

Imagination entailed teachers' construction of the world and that helped them understand how they belonged or do not belong. In creating images of possibilities, they wanted to be able to teach and improve the living conditions all learners. The teachers' considering their possibilities appeared to be disconnected from their reality of actually teaching inclusively. This disconnection could have been because they did not have knowledge of inclusion, "the PLC, it made me aware" (Interview/Grade R, Pos. 43).

7.2.1 I am not an inclusive educator

Teachers learned from each other as they willingly shared their knowledge and experience. Actively sharing in a small group provided useful ideas, which helped teachers align with what it meant to be in full-service school and to engage with their current realities. However, as a trajectory with a temporal dimension that incorporates the past (alignment) in the very process of negotiating the present (engagement) the teachers' identity appeared to be disconnected from their vision of themselves as inclusive teachers. The teachers imagined what inclusive educator did but they could not imagine themselves inclusive educators. Their construction of the inclusive world meant a close link to understanding disabilities and the ability to identify learning barriers. But imagining what inclusive educators did they identified a gap between their current image of themselves and the image of an inclusive educator. This gap enabled them to seek a world in which they would learn and therefore appeared to develop an identity as life-long learner.

There was a tension between the imagination and the experience of an Inclusive Teacher. It was apparent that the teachers were aligned to the expectations of City Primary School as a full-service school. The teachers' engaged with each other and learn from each other in PLCs and spoke about their experience of teaching all learners in their full-service school. They imagined an Inclusive Teacher (capitals intended) to be a teacher with special training. The teachers did not imagine themselves as Inclusive Teachers because they had not been specially trained. The tension between the imagination and the experience reflects the messiness of shifting towards more inclusive teaching.

7.3 Teacher Professional Agency

I analysed agency as teachers' collaborative engagement in PLCs to make inclusive pedagogical decisions for all learners to participate and make progress. As a collaborative engagement, it was contextually negotiated and it invited accountability from members. Teachers' agency was demonstrated in their talk regarding their agentic actions. I adapted Li and Ruppar's (2021) conceptual framework for agency in inclusive education adapted, which I discussed in Chapter Three, section 3:3. Additionally, agentic actions are enacted within temporal elements: iterational, practical-evaluative and projective, as the past, present and future, respectively. In Chapter Three I presented the temporal factors in teacher agency in Table 3:1. The engagement

was the teachers' present-time decision-making process, which was built on past experiences and also considered future impacts.

To analyse teacher agency, I assigned codes to data based on Li and Ruppar's (2021) framework of teacher agency which includes aspects of inclusive pedagogical practice and I included the temporal factors that influence agency. In Table 7:2 I shows how I adapted Li and Ruppar's (2021) framework.

Table 7.2: A Conceptual Framework for Agency in Inclusive Education

Aspects of teacher agency	Examples of context-bounded agentic actions of inclusive pedagogical practice
Inclusive professional philosophy (attitudes and perceptions toward teaching, learning, and ability)	• Having a positive attitude toward inclusive education • Understanding learner achievement as always contingent on social contexts and home situations • Possessing convictions of the significance of social-emotional growth for academic learning • Challenging deficit views of fixed ability
Professional competence (knowledge and practice of inclusive pedagogy with social equity as its core)	• Actively developing knowledge about inclusive pedagogy • Having desire for more knowledge and learning • Seeking professional learning support • Adapting their pedagogy for inclusive practice • Intersectional understanding of ability/difference within inclusive pedagogy • Expressing a disposition to social justice • Creating mutual supporting space among learners to foster a sense of belonging • Querying testing accommodations
Autonomy (individual and collective efficacy, decision-making power, and active collaboration with other actors)	• Seeking collaboration with neighbouring schools, communities, and families • Open to enter disagreement with colleagues • Having high levels of resilience • Challenging problematic broader education policy and sociocultural contexts
Reflexivity (constant reflection, monitoring, and regulation of one's own actions and social contexts)	• Reflecting on their own practices and environments in seeking to accommodate all learners • Constantly monitoring of their own actions with respect to their commitments • Seeking ways to manage discursive dissonance • Articulating practical professional knowledge and justifying actions • Querying of the structures and cultures in their schools as sites for social transformation

(Adapted from Li and Ruppar (2021)

I analysed data on teacher professional agency using Li and Ruppar's (2021) four aspects of teacher agency. Column one lists the aspects of teacher agency, namely inclusive professional

philosophy, professional competence and autonomy and reflexivity. The corresponding example of agentic actions of inclusive pedagogical practice are listed in column two.

The first aspect teacher agency is an inclusive professional philosophy would engage attitudes and perceptions towards teaching all learners, including learners with disabilities and would challenge deficit views about fixed abilities. Agency as an inclusive teacher is informed by the knowledge and practice of inclusive pedagogy from a social equity perspective.

The professional competence aspect described in row three of Table 7:2 is about actively developing knowledge about inclusive pedagogy, seeking professional learning support and expressing a disposition towards social justice. However, depending on the level of autonomy and power within structures and cultures that agents may have, agency could be fostered or suspended. In a professional learning context, agents could act and transform their contexts as a result of interactions. The agentic actions of autonomy are listed in row four of Table 7:2. An aspect of agency for change is reflexivity through which agents monitor and reflect on their practices and their social context. Reflexivity would enable teachers to perceive alternatives especially when they collaborate with others to bring about transformation.

The findings and discussion of teacher professional agency are discussed in the following sections in the order of the aspects in Table 7:2. While in Li and Ruppar's Framework autonomy and reflexivity are separate aspects of agency, my analysis combined the two aspects as the data on the two aspects was intertwined.

7.3.1 Inclusive professional philosophy: Attitudes toward inclusion

Teachers' professional philosophy includes teachers attitudes and perceptions towards teaching and learning and learners' abilities. The agentic actions related to this aspect included having a positive attitude towards inclusion and challenging views about fixed ability. Teachers' perceptions towards teaching all learners included their desire for all learners to succeed academically. Even though teachers focused on learners who were not achieving at the same pace as other learners, the so called 'slow ones,' the focus was on the context of ensuring *all* learners were succeeding. Teacher talk may not have revealed the teachers' deeper beliefs about learners.

Further investigation would be required to identify the underlying beliefs and to match teacher talk to an individual teacher's enactment of inclusion. In following excerpt, a teacher found that cooperative learning would help all learners.

Excerpt 1

T2: … you know what works for me to support those learners, if I really want to support them, I have to do group work. I could never work with the whole class. I have to have those children here. (PLC 02/01/A, Pos. 230)

The excerpt relates to the earlier quotation from the Grade R teacher who learned in the PLCs how cooperative learning helped the 'slow one to pick up and to gain confidence as well'. Teachers' focus on learners with learning difficulties could indicate a positive attitude about inclusion. With the knowledge gained in the PLCs the teacher could have the made pedagogical decision for the benefit of all learners while specifically attending to 'those children'. This appeared to have been a sense fairness for all learners even though the teacher was only talking about 'those children'. The decisions indicated a favourable professional attitude towards inclusion. These decisions related to the 'iterational' aspect of agency, including professional experience with teaching learners experiencing barriers. Additionally, a projective aspect of their decision making is seen when the Grade R teacher noted the learners "pick up and to gain confidence as well". The 'iterational' nature, namely teacher's education and experience, and the teacher's positive attitude engaged the teacher's professional competence and actively sought and developed his/her knowledge about inclusive pedagogy.

7.3.2 Professional competence: Actively developing knowledge and modelling

Teachers' competence, according to the Li and Ruppar (2021), relates to knowledge and practice of inclusive pedagogy. The teachers' professional competency was reflected in how teachers negotiated meanings related to inclusion. This included debates and sharing what worked for their learners, which indicated a desire for knowledge and desire to learn. The acceptance of different viewpoints was an active engagement with new knowledge.

In Session 10 when teachers discussed the bell-curve, they deliberated the value of grouping learners according to the learners' abilities. In a debate about fixed groups one of the teachers defended his/her reason for the names she/he gave to the groups her/his classroom. The group that comprised 'slow learners' was called the 'genius group'.

Excerpt 1

T2: …we are grouping the learners in our classroom...the slow learners they, my genius … But mina I've given them like beautiful names all of them, encouraging names

[…]

T3: Ah ? please change the Genius

T2: These names, I think these names are giving them courage

T3: Ah?

T2: Serious - they are working very hard…I want them to feel comfortable in the classroom…I've given them beautiful names, all of them, encouraging names. These names, I think these names are giving them courage

[…]

T5: That's wrong - you are giving them the wrong message.

T3: False hope

T3: All right, all right, if it works for you it's fine.

T2: It's working for me.

While some teachers opposed the group names saying that they were misleading the teacher consistently motivated his/her decision. Teacher T2 strongly defended his/her choice with an autonomous position for what the teacher considers a supportive classroom environment, that is "comfortable" for all learners. Even though there are two sides of the debate, both positions articulated a projective element about the learners' future: a future with hope and courage.

Taking a stand on what strategies to use in the classroom reflected the teachers' self-perception as pedagogical experts who have the ability to manage different learning situations intentionally and responsibly (Toom et al., 2015). In the following excerpt taken from the PLC that discussed Whole Body Listening, teachers discussed the different ways that they manage their classrooms.

Excerpt 2

T3: Instead of using the chairs, remove them from the chairs, let them sit quietly on the floor and cross their legs: to avoid the kicking and the fiddling. Whatever you are presenting its best when you present it…while they are seated…in a C shape.… On the carpet, ja, So everybody's just around you there and then you sit in between.

[….]

T5: But mine worked like, … when they sit on the chair they must sit up straight. They need to maintain their posture. And once they get used to that there's no songs, no music.

T6: Oh, that's a military school. Military class.

T5: … No, I always refer them to the people they see on TV, Zuma and them. I say, 'Look at them how they sit. They maintain their posture. So you can't be a granny while you're still a baby.'

(PLC 01/02/A – Whole Body Listening, Pos. 166-178)

What teachers enacted in their classrooms that had been successful in managing learners' behaviour was an important discussion which teachers defended by detailing 'what worked' in their classrooms. While some of their defenses were justified for the sake of learners, others appeared as defensive statements, that teachers uttered to possibly shift focus away from their being blamed. The efficacy of a strategy could reflect a teacher's level of confidence and control. Teachers spoke about strategies they considered would work and in which situations. Teacher would state that they made a decision while considering learners' abilities *vis-à-vis* classroom management. The link to personalities that learners may have seen on TV, here referencing the former President Zuma, suggested a projective element to motivate learners.

Taking a stand could also have indicated teachers' initiative. Initiative, one of the concepts associated with agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) involves a choice between alternatives and decisions teachers made to influence their environments (Etelapelto et al., 2013). In a session on cooperative learning, teachers discussed the different ways cooperative learning could be used in their classrooms. This discussion came after the teachers had watched a video of the strategy in a classroom in another country.

Excerpt 3

T5: Now if the school doesn't have worksheets for each and every child we can still improvise and put one worksheet there.

[…]

T1: We need to improvise, come up with new stuff, at the same time use our own hands and everything, our creativity …Learners respect each, every member's contribution to the group.

[….]

T7: Ja, I wish we had time for that. You know sometimes, because there's so much to do, this co-operative learning's sometimes going to be difficult. You are rushing, … you want this to happen, … groups in Grades 1, 2, … but with the Grade 4 … it feels like very difficult because the way in science I pinned them together … you don't put them together in isiZulu.

T8: Yes

T7: … co-operative it's not easy like you want, … this must be done, tomorrow the marks must be in, you're busy doing the co-operative learning here this side, it's not that easy as in the books.

T1: Ja, it's not that easy but I think it goes back to, don't you think Ma'am it goes back to a subject that you are teaching? For instance Life Skills.

T7: Mmm

T9: Ja, that's true. It may depend on the subject and the topic, themes and also the number of the class also contributes, because maybe with a small group in class you can achieve this, you see. (PLC 02/02/C, Pos. 326-381)

The video that preceded this discussion showed that all learners each had a worksheet. The debate in this excerpt concerned opposing the messages presented in the video. Teachers at City Primary School indicated that worksheets may not be available for all learners in their school therefore teachers would need to improvise to ensure the success of the strategy. Another aspect of debate is that one strategy may not be effective for all grades. While improvisation may have been possible for Grades 1 – 3, a teacher who possibly taught Grade 4's with several different subjects may have found that cooperative learning would have been difficult as there were many demands at that level. Taking initiative could also mean using the strategy for some subjects. This discussion is within a practical-evaluative timeframe which involves the structural and material factors that teachers needs to consider before enacting the strategy. The structural factors included the time demands of the curriculum and the 'marks' needed. The material factors included the worksheets needed to ensure the strategy works. While some teachers would decide to improvise, others would make a different decision, indicating a practical-evaluative element.

To improve their professional competence, including gaining knowledge on inclusive pedagogy, teachers willingly shared what they learned in the PLC and in other professional learning workshops.

Excerpt 4

T1 …before we move I just want to tell you something that I asked last week when we were in the workshop, né?

T3: Mmm

T1: I asked …I've got this situation in the class, I've got this child, né, I'll give instructions do this in class like in writing. That child will not do a thing. Just stay and do like this, né?' [she said] informally '[give other tasks like] "sort colours for me, sort them out.' It's wonderful. That child sorts out like nobody's business. (PLC 01/01/B, Pos. 127-133)

The success of using a strategy, as seen in a learners' success, appeared to build teachers' confidence. Teacher 1 in the excerpt above interjected a discussion and shared what he/she had learned in a workshop. This sharing not only showed an active development of knowledge but also the seeking of professional development opportunities. In Chapter 6, I noted that teachers' confidence was evident when they shared what had 'worked' for them in their pedagogical decision making. Sharing what worked as an agentic action reflected modeling the development of knowledge, which is an aspect of professional competence. This may also indicate the teacher's interest in lifelong learning because of the teachers sharing what she/he had learned and enacted. Confidence is a facet of teacher autonomy that promotes individual and collective decision-making power (Li & Ruppar, 2021).

7.3.3 Autonomy and Reflexivity: Collective decision making

Teachers' willingness to learn together and accept discursive dissonance promotes their autonomy and reflexivity (Li & Ruppar, 2021). The agentic actions related reflexivity show teachers discussing their classroom practices and considering the judgments they make about their learners' behaviour and ability. Discussing the educational system and how it could be failing the learners represents teachers' autonomy and reflexivity. Teachers critiqued the ways in which the learners

value was mainly considered from the standpoint of the learners' academic achievement. The following two excerpts show how reflexivity serves different purposes.

Excerpt 1

T1 … if we are doing that we are, we are killing their confidence

T2 Yes, yes. Sometimes a learner is good in sports

T1 So it is important to give them time

T3 A chance

[PLC 03/04/C Pos:

Excerpt 2

T5 … I've got a learner there who, who always for intervention by the psychologist. She's not good in writing, not good in reading, but when I'm doing the other activities … She's good …

T1 … these are the, the problematic results of bell curve thinking. We make judgment about what some learner can and cannot do.

Some teachers: Ja

T2 We, we limit learning

T7 Like now that one, maybe we are, we are limiting her learning by saying she can't.

T5 … what I'm trying to say is that you can't judge that person … There's no person that you can judge him or her as bad …

T4 And no, no child is born blank.

[PLC 03/04/C Pos:

These discussions from different group show how the teachers reflected and were challenged about their practices when assisting learners. The reflection provided opportunity for different perspective on learners' abilities. In the first excerpt the teachers gave advice for improving academic achievement where a teacher was mainly considering the non-academic performance of a learner. In the second Excerpt a teacher identified how the intervention with a psychologist helped him/her understand how a deterministic perspective may have limited a learner's potential. Teachers giving each other feedback enabled the colleagues to reflect on and monitor their actions. This practical-evaluative engagement with the structural aspects of education also allowed for the projective element of agency that gives teachers visions about themselves and visions for their learners.

7.3.4 It works for me

Teacher autonomy and professional competence were the main aspects of agency that I observed in teacher talk in the PLCs. The common refrain, 'It worked for me', captured teachers' professional competence and individual and collective efficacy and decision-making for inclusion. In the following examples, I have italicised the phrase.

Excerpt 1

T3: All right, all right, if it works for you it's fine.

T2: It's *working for me*.

(PLC 03/03/A - Bell Curve, Pos. 188-254)

Excerpt 2

T1: because each and every one of them they want them to be shine. Okay, for me it *went well* because of remember we do have the learner that cannot write … And when we put that learner with one that can write better …. she automatically copy whatever that the stronger one is doing … So for me it *worked well.*

T10: Ja, and for me *it worked well*, but the problem is written. […]

(PLC 02/04/B, Pos. 17-37)

Some engagement included justifications for when some strategies worked, such as in the teaching certain subjects and in different grade levels. Teachers spoke about using the strategies discussed in the PLCs in their classrooms and indicated that the strategies had helped learners. The responses suggested that teachers were eager to try out the strategies and they also realised that they needed to be creative about how to enact the strategies. When teachers discussed specific practices, e.g. whole body listening and think-pair-share, that they reported they had enacted them and how they had enacted the strategies. In PLC sessions that fostered deep discussion and divergent views, teachers expressed their misgivings about enacting strategies. The sessions on bell-curve thinking challenged existing narratives about learning which gave teachers opportunities to reflect on their own practices. While some teachers did not initially agree that bell-curve thinking was an injustice meted out on some learners, in general the teachers were open to considering how such thinking limited learners' potential. This gave way to teachers reflecting on their practices. Teachers shared what they believed they could do. However, they also contended with the difficulties that might

arise if they enacted inclusive pedagogy, such as class size, time to complete a topic and material resources. 'It worked for me', also encapsulated teachers' purposiveness, especially in their response to different problematic situations (Biesta & Tedder, 2007).

Teacher professional agency does not mean that teachers accept what others say they must do. Speaking about what can be successful or not in their classroom could have affirmed a teacher's self-perception as a competent teacher. This possibility was fostered by teachers' eagerness to learn from one another. Additionally, teacher agency as a present-time decision-making process, which is built on past experiences and considers future impacts created options to take initiatives and take action in the present. Teachers' decision making showed how they considered options according to their temporal elements. The choices were also determined against personal and group agreement and disagreement.

7.4 Teacher professional identity and agency: A Productive Dissonance

The disconnect between what teachers said about enacting inclusion and how they considered that they were not inclusive educators is a Productive dissonance. A grade 5 teacher who had been at City Primary School for a long time and who had participated in various professional learning programmes after the school became a full-service school captured the productive dissonance between what he/she considered to be an inclusive teacher and how s/he taught.

Grade 5 Teacher

Teacher: We didn't start here as a full-service school.

…

I was just trained as a teacher. (Interview 5/Grade 3/ Pos. 31)

…

They said it's eh, full-service school that will cater all the children with different disabilities. That's what will be doing. And they told us that anything that we did not understand here, in our school we will work together with the … one of the clinic schools, somewhere in [name of place]

…

Yes we were trained but I think we still need more of these training.

…

Interviewer: Has the PLC made any changes for yourself, personally?

Teacher: It, it did. It did a lot. And it helped a lot. And I'm very grateful for that because remember we were, we were framed. Years back. I don't know whether it's 20 years or what being in college …

those workshops they were helping and you are helping. But me, individually what I would like to see from maybe you the PLC and the other workshops that were attending, is to see a practical lesson being demonstrated, in the class. So that we can see how to really, really... you know, group these learners, how to teach those ones. Because most of the times, really, we leave these slow learners behind. I wish I can see you, teaching them practically.

…

Let's say we're talking about transport, neh. Then you give the gifted ones their own work. Do this. I want to see how will you separate this average one and the slow one. Your time, remember were working on time as well, because when we look at the time we get frustrated that you know what, those slow ones they're not going to finish.

…

sometimes I have to be left behind with few learners who are slow. And which is also not right. I just ask them nicely 'Do you use transport? Do you walk? I had to take them to the gate to see that they're safe. Is because they don't have ample or enough time to work with. If I can see you doing that, I'll be very happy.

(Interview/Grade5/ Pos. 23 - 57)

The Grade 5 teacher had attended all the PLC meetings. His/her interview captured the complexities of engaging with inclusion. His/her intentions were frustrated by structural matters. In the interview the teacher said that s/he would want to teach the 'slow learners' but there was no time during the regular school day to pay more attend to those learners. This was because covering the curriculum and conducting assessments had rigid time deadlines. S/he could only support the learners after regular class time. The teacher noted that teaching the learners after regular school hours created another challenge regarding the learners' safety. When the teacher would ask the learners if they had means to travel home, she/he was noting that the learners socioeconomic or family circumstances. And while s/he made efforts to teach the learners s/he did not consider that s/he was trained to teach all learners. When s/he said "I want to see how will you separate this average one and the slow one" s/he implied that it would be impossible for this teacher to teach all

learners. Therefore s/he wanted a different form of 'training' that would include demonstrations about how it would be possible to teach an inclusive classroom.

In chapter 6, I argued that teachers talk in PLCs and in the interviews show that teachers categorised themselves as non-inclusive teachers. Here I argue that teachers also talked about themselves as achieving success in enacting inclusion and made efforts to ensure that learners, including those experiencing barriers, were learning. This is productive dissonance.

Productive dissonance refers to my findings about the tension between teacher talk about their professional identity and their professional agency. Even though teachers do not consider their identity as being inclusive educators, they talked about their agentic action as being inclusive teaching. These tensions are evident in both the talk in the PLCs and in the individual interviews. Teachers may be displaying the dissonance between their identity and agency because of their perception that an inclusive teacher required a special form of teacher education and knowledge. This relates to aspects of agency. The tension may also be an aspect of identity. Imagination may involve the possibility of teachers be detached from the present that they lose touch with their sense of efficacy. The teachers' experience of their world could mean they interpret their skills as incompetence (Wenger, 1998).

This dissonance in teachers' talk between how they spoke about their professional identity and how they spoke about what they achieved appears to show some entrenched perceptions about what it means to be inclusive. While teachers' talk exhibited the profile of an Inclusive Teacher described by Oswald and Engelbrecht (2018) and discussed in Chapter 2, the teachers did not consider themselves to be Inclusive Educators. This not only showed the expansive nature of identity and agency, but also that the complex interactions of identity and agency can make seeming contradictions to actually be non-contradictory.

Teachers' conceptualisation of inclusion as mainly about identification of barriers to learning could be the reason for seeing their role with learners who experience barriers to learning with pity as shown in Chapter 6 and in this Chapter. Focusing on learners' profiles as the main way into enacting inclusive pedagogy could disempower or limit teachers from seeing themselves as

Inclusive Educators. An expanded definition of inclusion could help teachers make pedagogical choices with the knowledge that every learner is fundamentally unique and difference need not separate "some" from "most" (Florian, 2014).

Scholars have noted that teachers' agency has meant that teachers could adapt to contextual challenges, including a fluid and contextually relevant conceptualisation of inclusivity (Engelbrecht, 2020). With such an adaptation, teachers could imagine their futures or the futures of their learners. However, in the study, it appeared that the teachers' imagination may have been influenced by their relatively recent interaction with learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools in South Africa (Savolainen, et al., 2012) and their definition of inclusion as being about identifying barriers to learning (Fourie & Hooijer, 2015). The teachers at City Primary School, which had not always been a full-service school, may not have taught learners with disabilities or learners requiring moderate support. The possibly recent interaction with learners with disabilities in mainstream schools may be responsible for teachers' perception of their professional identity. Teachers profiling learners may also represent the "entrenched" attitudes towards learners with learning difficulties and disabilities in South Africa (Walton, 2016a, p. 105). This is corroborated by the teacher's talk in Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 above, in which teachers note that their school had learners with disabilities.

The medical and charity perspectives to learning support seemed to be rooted in teachers' beliefs and assumptions. Teachers' beliefs and assumptions have been a long-standing concern that has needed to be addressed in professional learning (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). The charity model casts a learner with a disability as feeble and unfortunate and needing help because the learner could never be independent. A teacher adopting the medical model would see a learner with a disability as the learner's individual problem that must be treated by experts. Additionally, even where teachers have had special education training, they still appear to struggle with inclusion (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2017; Woodcock & Hardy, 2017a).

Productive dissonances have been observed previously in teachers talk at inclusive schools (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2017; Florian & Spratt, 2013). Teachers have discussed with their school's management about the practices they would like to choose to enact. The teachers explain

how their practices are inclusive even though the practices are different from the school's definition of inclusion (Florian & Spratt, 2013). For other teachers the dissonance is in "agentive maneuverings" (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2017, p. 179) in which teachers make choices by considering their practical-evaluative dimension in relation to other professional roles expected of them within a school. The exercise of agency was determined by context and a teacher chose different enactments based on context rather than only on their identity as inclusive teachers (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2017). If teachers and researchers would leverage dissonance, teachers may develop creative and inclusive practices that are applicable to their particular classroom situations.

Teacher professional learning for inclusion is complex, with multiple teacher, school and policy factors to consider. While teaching in many South African schools is a challenge, when teachers state that they will always struggle, (Walton, et. al, 2014) they are being agentic: making a choice about how to respond to the challenges in their classrooms. Even when teachers consider themselves victims of the circumstances in a school, they exercise their agency and make choices about how they will teach. This raises the question about different kinds of agency and how teachers make decisions about learning opportunities such as PLCs (Brodie, 2019). When teacher agency for inclusion is defined as a 'capacity' (Themane & Thobejane, 2019; Lyons et al., 2016), recommendations for professional learning may focus on building capacity so that a desired goal can be achieved, and the teachers' present choices may not be considered an important factor in creating professional learning programmes.

The task for professional learning could be about bridging the gap between being a non-inclusive teacher — the current identity — to being an inclusive teacher — the designated identity. The theory of identity as narrative (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) advances that both stories — not being an inclusive teacher and being a teacher who uses inclusive practices — indicate identity and learning. This apparent disconnection enabled the teachers to meaningfully engage in learning in the PLC because they were willing to learn as a result of not thinking of themselves as Inclusive Educators. Sfard and Prusak's (2005) definition of identity as story affords storytellers their agency to re-author their identity. The dissonance between identity and agency identified in this study may also reflect other narratives about teachers' skills and abilities. Therefore, in addition to teachers in the

PLCs being significant narrators for one another, the PLC also opened the space for other significant narrators, such as teacher educators, and society more broadly, to deliberately challenge existing negative stories and to reflect on their own intentional or unintentional authoring of teacher identities. Graven (2021) argued that reflection should lead to the re-authoring of stories, which could be negative or contradictory to teachers' practice and experience. An agentic perspective to professional learning would consider that teachers can make deliberate decisions to support their re-authoring conflicting or negative stories often imposed upon them from various sources, including professional educators and societal narrators such as the media.

Productive dissonance contrasts a binary perspective of inclusion where teachers may be regarded as either inclusive or not inclusive (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017b). Acknowledging teachers' different forms of talk enabled me to move beyond a binary perspective about their identity and agency. Teachers at City Primary School could be 'trapped between two conflicting identities' (Graven, 2012, p. 18). They are in a full-service school and are therefore expected to be inclusive teachers, and yet they do not consider themselves inclusive teachers because they have not had training in special education. This gap could also motivate teachers to learn. Learning could move teachers' identities from actual/current identities to designated identities because:

> [a] perceived persistent gap between actual and designated identities … is likely to generate a sense of unhappiness … As implied by the common wisdom that 'success begets success and failure begets failure' stories of victories and losses have a particular tendency toward self-perpetuation. (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 18)

Grounding professional learning programmes on teachers' existing knowledge and experience could be a beneficial starting point for further learning (Graven, 2012). Coupling Wenger's concepts of imagination, alignment and engagement with Sfard and Prusak's (2005) identity as narrative, creates an image of teachers as the subject of their identity construction. Teachers construct their identity by authoring their imagination, their alignment and their engagement. In "learning as becoming" (Wenger, 1998), teachers and others author their 'designated identities' in their stories (Sfard & Prusak, 2005).

Productive dissonance is a meaningful finding that could provide insight for professional learning for inclusive pedagogy in South Africa. When professional learning is offered as being about

special education and identifying learners' barriers (Fourie & Hooijer, 2015) the learning could limit teachers' perception of their practices as being inclusive from the wider definition of inclusion. But even when professional learning offered from the wider definition of inclusion, as in the PLC Initiative of this research, teachers still interpret inclusion from a special education perspective. The difference between what teachers define as learning for inclusion and their apparent inclusive pedagogical practices could provide insights into how to develop professional teacher education for inclusive pedagogy. The perspective that inclusion is about identifying barriers to learning and since teachers did not receive lessons on special education in their initial teacher education and in professional learning may be the reason that they do not identify themselves as inclusive educators. The discussions of inclusive pedagogy in the PLCs suggest that although teachers did not understand some of the strategies that they used in the classroom as being inclusive, they still exercised their agency and discussed their pedagogical decisions about how they had found ways to teach all learners. Teachers were purposeful when they showed concern for some learners because they are seeking ways to teach all learners.

Professional learning should enable teachers to resolve "discursive dissonance" (Li & Ruppar, 2021, p. 51). If teachers and teacher educators accepted that the tension and discomfort that could be produced when responding to learners' differences, without always needing to find a comprehensive and satisfactory resolution, they could seek creative and pedagogical options. Discursive dissonance may arise when there is a conflict between teachers' pedagogical traditions and the official or academic approaches to learning and teaching. Dissonance arises when individuals or groups are the subjects of different or even contradictory discourses (Riley, 2009). Teachers' autonomy is tested when new institutional discourses run counter to traditional discourses and practices. Discursive dissonance could also happen when an individual teacher is expected to master two opposing discourses. Discursive dissonance may occur when teachers attempt to reconcile different approaches to pedagogy.

7.5 Conclusion

The teachers in this study made choices based on what they said had 'worked' for them and in relation to their classroom conditions and constraints. The dissonance between identity and agency talk generated a 'productive dissonance' that could be a basis to transform professional learning

for inclusive pedagogy. Dissonance, when discordant perspectives are presented at the same time, could be misunderstood if the perspectives are not considered in terms of their relationship to the wider purpose.

Learning is not linear. Teachers expressed the challenges as a ‘mixed masala’ (PLC:#1) and ‘a mess’ (PLC #5). As PLCs are ongoing, embedded in practice and collaborative they gave teachers the opportunity to discuss how they would exercise their agency. The PLC gave teachers the space to express their challenges and successes and purposefully discuss their own learning for the benefit of their learners. In the following Chapter, I discuss the nature of PLCs and how teachers at City Primary School created a community in the PLCs.

Chapter Eight – The nature of PLCs

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the nature of PLCs which focused on inclusive pedagogy in City Primary School, a full-service school. Discussing the characteristics of the PLCs builds on the evidence I presented in Chapter 6 and 7. Previously I have shown how teachers' discussions about inclusive pedagogy indicated that the teachers contended with what it meant to teach in their full-service school. In Chapter 6 teacher talk indicated that teachers had broad, adaptive and contextual interpretations of inclusion and how their talk differed from how inclusion was defined by the IPAA. Chapter 7 concluded that there was a dissonance between teacher talk related to their professional identity and talk related to their professional agency. The dissonance revealed that while teachers talked about practicing inclusive pedagogy, they conversely stated that they were not inclusive teachers. I identified this as a productive dissonance.

In this chapter, I argue that even though there was a dissonant position between teachers talk about their professional identity and professional agency discussed in Chapter 7, a coherent community had emerged. When a community of practice facilitates the negotiation of meaning among its members that community can be considered a coherent community (Wenger, 1998). Wenger's three dimensions of community, namely: Mutual Engagement (the engagement in collectively negotiable actions); Shared repertoire (routines, activities, artifacts and stories developed); and Joint enterprise (the negotiated response to address a common situation) guided the analysis of the PLC discussions at City Primary School. I argue that the divergent responses in relation to inclusive pedagogy reflected a coherent community as the teachers had developed an "indigenous enterprise" (Wenger, 1998, p. 79). The indigenous enterprise was a contextually meaningful way for teachers at City Primary School to engage with inclusive pedagogy. While the indigenous enterprise had features that were undoubtedly inclusive, it also had aspects that could be contentious for inclusion, and aspects that could be considered exclusionary and marginalising because of their deficit construction. Despite these features, the coherent community provided insights into how PLCs for inclusive pedagogy could be enacted from cultivating and building relationships among teachers and develop knowledge on inclusive education.

This chapter discusses teachers' participation in PLCs in relation to Wenger's (1998) three dimensions of community to answer the following question:

What is the nature of PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?

Before I present the data in relation to the three dimensions of community, I will describe the analysis process I undertook. I will discuss the coherent community before the conclusion.

8.2 Analysing participation in PLCs

PLCs have been defined as a form of Community of Practice (CoP) (Brodie & Borko, 2016). The relationship between PLCs as CoPs is discussed in Chapter Three, as well as the rationale for framing the PLCs in this study within Wenger's (1998) CoP. PLCs are successful when they are a supportive and engaging CoP for ongoing teacher learning. Teacher talk in the PLCs was coded to find features of community, using Wenger's three dimensions of community. I assigned codes to identify mutual engagement, shared repertoire and joint enterprise, the three dimensions of a CoP. Each dimension is expounded with categories of interaction and each category was recognised with specific characteristics. The characteristics of each dimension were also codes assigned to the data. In Table 8:1, I present Wenger's (1998) dimensions and categories of interaction for each dimension in columns one and two, respectively. The characteristics in column three were selected from Wenger's table on dimensions of community and his narrative on the dimensions (Wenger, 1998, p. 74). Column three combines Wenger's (1998) characteristics of interaction for each dimension with examples of codes.

The first dimension, mutual engagement is presented in the second row of Table 8.1 and comprises three categories of interaction: an enabling engagement, diversity and partiality and mutual relationships. These categories of interaction entail what makes engagement in practice possible and productive. The mutual engagement comprised teachers' engagement in collectively negotiable actions and involved the teachers enabling engagement and accepting diversity and partiality. Various physical arrangements were made that enabled engagement. The PLC meetings were scheduled in advance, giving teachers ample notice and that helped ensure their participation. I coded teachers' qualifications and teaching experience as an aspect of diversity and partiality because the teachers highlighted how their professional profiles had influence on their

participation in the PLCs. The flow of teacher talk, with connection and disagreement, teachers offering to help to each other and making statements that encouraged their colleagues provided evidence to code mutual relationships. Teachers participation in the PLC and a teacher's talk stating she/he could support a colleague in the PLC and beyond was part of their salient collaboration which fostered their mutual relationships.

The second dimension, shared repertoire, is presented in row three. Shared repertoire shows the peculiarities of the community. The two categories of this dimension are history of mutual engagement and inherently ambiguous. The characteristics of shared repertoire involve local lore and community specific jargon. Teachers dramatised their classroom experiences and shared inside jokes with knowing laughter. Translanguaging and code switching that were inherently ambiguous and reflected a history of mutual engagement. The teachers' share repertoire were resources which boosted teacher's participation and engagement.

Table 8:1 Dimensions of Community and Example of Codes

Dimension	**Category of Interaction**	**Characteristics of Interaction and Examples of Codes**
Mutual Engagement "Engagement in collectively negotiable actions"	Enabling engagement:	Scheduling, Physical arrangements: room, furniture
	Diversity & Partiality:	Teacher Qualifications Teaching Experience
	Mutual Relationships:	- Connection and Disagreement - Accepting to work together in the group and beyond - Salient Collaboration - Offer encouragement and assistance,
Shared repertoire Developed routines, activities, artifacts and stories	History of Mutual engagement:	Recall: Sharing use of previous PLC strategy - Creating and agreeing on definitions - Sharing personal stories and their pedagogical repertoire - Pattern of interaction - Recurring elements - Jargon and shortcuts to communication - Dramatisation
	Inherently ambiguous :	- Shifting across languages through Translanguaging & Code-Switching - Local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter
Joint enterprise Negotiated response to address their common situation	Negotiated Enterprise:	- Inventiveness - Initiative
	Indigenous Enterprise:	- Difference Talk
	Regime of Mutual Accountability:	- "Against the grain" decisions - Choosing discussion

(Adapted from Wenger, 1998)

The third dimension, joint enterprise, is shown in row four. By addressing their common situation teachers developed a joint enterprise. Joint enterprise was explained by three categories: negotiated enterprise, indigenous enterprise, and regime of mutual accountability. These three categories of interaction add to the distinctiveness of the PLCs. The teachers had negotiated meaning in the PLC discussion and so developed an indigenous enterprise. The teachers' inventiveness, particularly through Difference Talk, created their indigenous enterprise. A regime of mutual accountability was characterised by discussions that appeared to go 'against the grain' and reflected in animated talk and debates.

It was unnatural to dismantle PLC episodes into the seemingly distinct dimensions of community because the discursive construction of the community meant that the dimensions are interwoven in one episode, and sometimes appeared line-after-line in connected utterances and contributions. The dimensions were therefore not mutually exclusive as they often overlapped and run together and showed the construction of the community.

The findings and discussion of the dimensions of community are discussed in the following sections in the order presented in Table 8.1, namely mutual engagement, shared repertoire, and joint enterprise.

8.3 Mutual Engagement – Valued the collective and shared practice

By collectively engaging in ways that negotiated meaning for their classroom practice, teachers showed that they valued the contributions, competencies and knowledge of their colleagues. Mutual engagement meant a commitment to the PLC, through building and maintaining relationships, that were evidenced in teachers being present at the PLC, participating in the PLC, including sharing personal narratives related to their teaching practice. However, mutual engagement did not imply that all discussions were always harmonious. By participating together in the PLCs, teachers appeared to value their colleagues' professional contributions, the mutual encouragement and the collective assistance.

Various actions ensured the community was maintained and created the enabling engagement. In City Primary, the PLCs sessions were scheduled at the start of the academic year as a professional

development activity and the school's management expected all teachers to attend the sessions. I note the limitation of this requirement in Chapter Nine. As teachers entered the staff room where the PLC sessions were held, they signed an attendance register at the start of each session. There was ample space and furniture for all teachers to sit at any of the several tables that accommodated 5 to 9 teachers. Every teacher had their own copy of the discussion guidelines.

Table 8.2 – Diversity of Teaching Qualifications and Experience

Interview No.	Grade	Qualifications	Years of service	Years at City Primary School
1	Grade 5	Preferred not to disclose	24 years	2 years
2	Grade 2	Masters in Inclusive Ed (In progress)	23 years	3 years
3	Grade 3	Teacher certificate + BA	23 years	3 years
4	Grade 2	Diploma in Education	18 years.	8 months
5	Grade R	N4 and N5 at FET Collage	Part-time 18 years Full-time 11	3
6	Grade 3	Preferred not to disclose	15 years	9 years
7	Grade 4	Preferred not to disclose	12 years	1 years
8	Grade 3	Short courses on inclusive education at 2 different universities	13 years	8 years
9	Grade 4	2 year ACE (22 years ago)	9 years	7
10	Learner Support Educator	Bachelor of Ed. Inclusive Education + Honours: Special Needs	7 years	3 months
11	Grade 1	B. Social Sciences Psychology and Criminology + PGCE	4 years	3 years
12	Grade 3	B.Sc. Human Management + PGCE - foundation	5 years	2 years
13	School Psychologist	BA + Honours in Psychology	3 years	9 months
14	Grade 4	Preferred not to disclose	Approx. 1 year in primary school Previously taught in Further Education and Training (FET) level	Less than 1 year – initially a substitute teacher

Diversity and partiality included agreement and disagreement in community discussions. I noted that productive engagement in the PLC was the teachers' experiences of both the diversity and homogeneity of members in the community. The diversity in the PLC membership included varied teaching experiences and different professional qualifications. This created "complementary contributions" and "overlapping forms of competence" (Wenger, 1998, p. 76). I note that teachers' qualifications and varied teaching experiences are not evidence in themselves of diversity of engagement or participation in the PLC. The evidence of the diversity was noted in teachers talk. Table 8:2 is presented here rather than in Chapter 5 to show the diversity of participants.

In Table 8.2 teachers' qualification and years of experience are arranged according to longest years of teaching of the 14 educators who participated in the interviews. Teachers had varied qualifications from a master's degree (in-progress) and bachelor's degrees to certificates in education. Some teachers who preferred not to disclose their qualifications stated they had many years of experience in teaching including knowledge of "barriers to learning". For example, in Interview 14, the teacher expressed the value of the PLCs as s/he was new to the profession. S/he stated that s/he had only learned that there were different types of primary schools when s/he joined City Primary School and s/he had learned about different teaching strategies during the PLC sessions. There was no way to directly link the varied qualifications and years of teaching shown in Table 8:2 to contributions in PLC contributions. However, teachers who were interviewed expressed that their level of knowledge of inclusion sometimes determined how they participated in the PLCs.

When a teacher openly expressed differing views from his/her colleagues in the PLCs I noted the exchange as a meaningful contribution because s/he offered resources to her/his colleagues with which to engage in discussion. The varied experiences and competencies of practice were a resource for discussion, connection, and learning. The common refrain, "It works for me" discussed in Chapter Seven, is also an example of partiality and diversity as some teachers would agree or disagree with the classroom practice that was shared. An excerpt from Chapter Seven, Section 7.4.2 illustrates the diversity of views and contentious perspectives about inclusion.

Excerpt 1:

T5: Like even you are giving them courage but you are giving them the wrong message

T5: That's wrong - you are giving them the wrong message.

T3: False hope

T3: All right, all right, if it works for you it's fine.

T2: It's working for me.

(PLC 03/03/A - Bell Curve, Pos. 188-254)

The teacher in the above excerpt stood his/her ground about the teaching strategy enacted in class because he/she perceived that it benefited the learners. Teachers' partiality and diversity were resources that did not entail homogeneity and made "engagement possible and productive" (Wenger, 1998, p. 75). Wenger reminds us that mutual relations are a complex mixture of pain and pleasure, failure and competition, trust, and suspicion. When this complexity is not afforded in the learning process, the learning experience may be less successful. The seeming conflict in the excerpt showed a negotiation of meaning that allowed both teachers to participate in the community and found their "unique place and gain a unique identity" (Wenger, 1998, p. 76).

Mutual relationships create connection among members but do not necessarily mean constant peace and harmony. Disagreements, "tensions and even rebellion" may reveal a greater commitment than passive conformity (Wenger, 1998, p. 77). In the following excerpt, one teacher's seeming hostility does not prevent the meeting from proceeding.

Excerpt 1

T1: Good afternoon ladies, how are you?

T2: Participant 1 (P1): Sharp

T1: But we are tired, can we finish this quickly?

T3: Make it snappy.

T1: All right. Today we are going to talk about listening

T2: Mmm

T1: *né?*

T2: Mmm

T1: Then we are going to

T3: Don't *né* us (Translation: Don't "isn't it" us)

T1: *Ai suka wena* [chuckles] (Translation: get out of here)
(PLC 01/02/A - Whole Body Listening, Pos. 2-13)

The local language expressions "*né*", loosely meaning "isn't it", and "*Ai suka wena*", expressing dismissal, indicated tension among the teachers and that they may have come from different backgrounds. T3 appeared to be impatient, "make it snappy" and irritated "don't *né* us". T1 used "*né"* as an expression for continuing her/his introductory statement about the topic of discussion. T1's "*Ai suka wena*" dismissed T3's impatience and irritability. While this exchange may have signified disagreement it may also have indicated mutual relationship.

Activities showing mutual engagement contributed to the coherent community and the indigenous enterprise by how teachers valued the collective and shared experiences in PLCs. The formal organisation of PLC sessions ensured that there was quick setup of the session that allowed conversations to proceed efficiently. Advanced scheduling, sufficient discussion guidelines for every teacher and meeting room preparations, with teachers sitting in groups around a table, meant the PLC sessions could foster mutual relationships, regardless of if there was harmony or conflict during a session. The diversity and partiality among the teachers offered connection and may also contributed to disagreement, an important part of learning and community.

8.4 Shared Repertoire

A community develops, produces or adopts a set of shared routines, a shared repertoire of activities, tools and artifacts, words and gestures, symbols, stories, actions or concepts in the course of its existence as resources for "ways of doing things" (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). The shared repertoire supports community participation and reifies teachers' participation. The shared repertoire also comprises resources for negotiating meaning and reflecting a history of mutual engagement. The resources include discourse by which members create meaningful statements about their world and by which they express their forms of memberships and their identity as members. The shared repertoire is a both the reference point for the community and the value statement for negotiating new meanings in a dynamic way.

The history of mutual engagement in the PLCs at City Primary School was reflected by recurring elements of interaction. The PLC guidelines created a general meeting format consisting of four parts:

- Preliminaries: greetings and meeting purpose, occasionally followed by personal comments or complaints, for example about tiredness;
- Previous Session Recall: questions about how teachers enacted previous session practices;
- Current Session Discussion: sharing responses, challenging each other, laughter, stories, and translanguaging
- End: Closing could include general agreement or an abrupt termination of recording.

The recall questions in the PLC discussion guidelines offered teachers opportunities to discuss the previous meetings' deliberations and the practices that the teachers may have enacted since the previous session. This facilitated a recording of the history for the PLCs and for developing routines and stories. Responses to questions about PLC showed how the teachers valued the PLCs, creating conditions for collaboration. From the first session when teachers discussed the meaning of each word in PLC abbreviation, they identified that working in small groups, that is the PLC groups, was better than workshops because the groups were personal.

Excerpt 1:

T1: Ja, in small groups I think it's better because then it becomes personal. But when we are in a big group I can relax and not participate. But when we are in a small group we are able to participate, each one of us will be able to maybe say our views about whatever topic that we might have or whatever problems that we are encountering in the classrooms.

….

T2: Yes, I agree. We can, we can go back maybe being encouraged even though we know that we are sitting with some challenges wherever we are working. But meeting like this in small groups I believe it can help us to improve our daily work, to improve in our profession as well and also know how to tackle some of the issues that we have encountered within the day with our learners.

(PLC 01/01/A: PLC and Effective Listening, Pos.27-29)

This teacher implied that other forms of professional learning may not have afforded teachers the opportunities to express and share their actual working conditions and challenges. When a teacher noted the value of PLCs in comparison to workshops, he/she indicated a preference for community engagement in the PLCs to attending for mere compliance and fulfillment of the school's management decision that all teachers attend the PLC sessions.

While the guidelines provided a general structure to each session, the form of contributions involved a mix of epistemic activities (Ohlsson, 1995; cited in Zenios, 2011) that combined with other elements of interaction:

- Chorus-like responses with teachers echoing or repeating in agreement.
- Short, staccato-like responses punctuated the meetings. Sometimes the responses indicated agreement with content; other times the responses are a conversation between two teachers, in which one teacher would complete the sentences for the other. The short sentences and phrases appeared to signify an attentiveness to discussions.
- Long-single voice contributions: a "knowledgeable" teacher expressing her/his views or a teacher giving a "mini-lecture" on the topic of discussion.
- Multiple voices: After the facilitator read out the questions in the discussion guidelines to open discussion, and teachers would speak one at a time, there were instances when discussions became animated with many teachers talking at once – as if several discussions were occurring simultaneously.
- 'Dramatisations' of learners' talk: rather than explaining how learners talk, teachers often dramatised the way a learner would speak.
- Translanguaging and side-talk: including clarifications or translations from English and parallel discussions.

There was no evidence gathered that any among this list of participatory resources was reified. Participation and reification are influencing mechanisms in a community. Participation involves member directly interacting in the community while reification would have involved teachers creating lesson plans from the artefacts shared in the community. Sharing stories was also a feature of the teachers' shared repertoire. The stories included how strategies had worked, and stories about learners. Among the shared repertoire was the pedagogical repertoire based on the history of engagement and 'lessons' learned. One interview question I asked was "Which topics do you remember from the PLCs?" Responses were varied and included "inclusive pedagogy and the bell curve" and "whole body listening". "Whole Body Listening was a topic in PLC session two of year one. In Session one of year three the topic on Sentence Starters required teachers to complete the sentence:

"Children learn best in my classroom when …."

Teachers completed the sentence with:

"when they're listening with their whole body" (PLC 03/01/B_ Pos. 28)

Teachers recalling a previous PLC topic was an indication of participation in the PLCs but not evidence of reification. "Whole Body Listening" also became part of shared repertoire, as evidence of teachers' history of mutual engagement and community's inherent ambiguity. While the strategy "whole body listening" was discussed as a way teachers could help learners pay attention in class, the teachers also mentioned it in jest to other teachers during PLC meetings to call the group to order. "Whole body listening" became a part of PLCs' inside joke and shared story.

A characteristic of the shared repertoire is that it remains inherently ambiguous. Ambiguity creates a dynamism that facilitates the negotiation of meaning. Because the ambiguity is not pre-determined and remains inherently dynamic, it can become a Community's signature characteristic. Ambiguity creates resources for the community and enhances creativity which also become part of the community's practice. However, too much ambiguity may not be beneficial for group cohesion. Therefore, ambiguity would need to have an element of structure or guidance so that discussions are kept rooted in the practices of the group and "to maintain cohesion" (Wenger, 1998, p. 38).

The PLC facilitators were meant to ensure that the community did not loose of its intended focus. The dynamism and unpredictable ways teachers participated in the PLCs was reflected in teachers translanguaging and code-switching. Translanguaging and code-switching are defined and discussed in Chapter Five. This gave the PLCs an inherent ambiguity and provided resources for negotiating and generating new meanings. Ambiguity, as a characteristic of shared repertoire, refers to uncertainty and multiple meanings that gave teachers scope to develop or deepen their personal engagement in the community and collective engagement as a community. Translanguaging and code-switching involved using multiple languages that could have facilitated co-construction of meaning and community building. The code-switching was often accompanied by stories and laughter. Hurst and Mona (2017) use Canagarajah's (2011) definition of translanguaging as "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the

diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 132). This applied to the teachers at City Primary School as they used various languages, including township slang in the PLCs.

In the following excerpt I have indicate the translanguaging phrases with [TR] followed by the translation in English is underlined and in *italics.* The translanguaging phrases were not from the same other language but a variety of languages spoken when teachers were not speaking English. Between the first line of the excerpt to the last line I have omitted many other lines. To facilitate the flow of information that I wish to highlight, I have not indicated the omitted sections. The excerpt is taken from PLC 03/01 in which teachers discuss sentence starters by completing sentences about their school and inclusive teachers.

Excerpt 2

T2: how is our school are different from other kinds of schools.

T1: can we write about disability? [TR] *I, though* when mentioning barriers, I was talking about learners … [TR] *those other ones, that we know* they're struggling. [TR] *Right?*

T1: let's say [TR] *I'm visually* what-what; do we give them something to help them see clearly on the chalkboard?

T3: [TR] *I want to write*

T2: [TR] *You want a pen?*

[Background whispers TR]: *We're tired*.

T1: [humoured; TR] "*You're making a noise*

T5: Okay let's move to the second [question].

T2: An inclusive teacher is different from the teachers because [TR] *you see this is going to bore/bother me."*

T5: [TR] *isn't it that* there's inclusive education *for certain people?*

T1: yes. These inclusive teachers they're different from us, [TR] *some of us*.

T2: They are specially trained.

T1: to also identify these learners.

T1: [TR] *what do I want say*… and also be able to handle their different [learners]

T2: There is a school at Petersburg, neh? It's a private school for learners with disabilities. So those teachers who are working there, most of them are not trained; and they're affected – they're traumatised."

T1: [TR] *I would end up quitting that job.*

T2: [continuing] they're traumatised. [TR] *they'd see some kids who would come in* there's no leg – a short leg."

T1: [another] lady got a child [TR] *who was…* yho! *That child;* we didn't even think the child would live. But today, that child – [TR] *he's one of those kids who passed matric but with a down-graded level, you see.*

T1: [TR] *what do they call him again?* A what-what special learner. Even the school that he goes to is a special school. The results they're not the same [TR] *like those of the others.* But he passed with flying colours.

(PLC 03/01/A, Pos. 6-96)

Teachers shared stories that showed their attitudes towards people with disabilities. While this deficit talk about teaching learners "who struggle" may be problematic within an inclusive orientation, it however created some common ground for discussion among teachers and contributed to their shared repertoire. There were context clues within the talk in English that when pieced-together could help a reader understand the teachers' conversation. This is an example of local lore that may not been fully understood by an "outsider". For example, when a teacher says "I'm visually what-what" he/she could be alluding to the VAK - Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (Tactile) 'learning style' of a learner or to a learner's eyesight. VAK 'learning styles' are discredited as a learning theory but are still in the government guidelines for inclusive teaching (DOE, 2010b). It appears that in this instance the teacher was referring to a learner's eyesight because she/he followed that statement with a question about how a learner could be assisted to see the chalkboard clearly. The teachers stated that teachers who had not been specially trained to teach learners with disabilities were traumatised by their experiences with learners with disabilities. This was a topic that "bores or bothers" one teacher; while another teacher stated s/he would resign from a position that required that s/he teaches learners with disabilities. Parenting a child with a disability was yho! – unbelievable, and/or regrettable.

While the code-switching may have created the necessary conditions for generating new knowledge, the ambiguity could possibly have generated discomfort for a new teacher not yet familiar with the community. The ambiguity could have diverted attention from professional learning for a newcomer to the community. Additionally, using language unfamiliar to all members

of the PLC was exclusionary or could have been "secret" talk, to be heard only by the teachers and not "outsiders", such as the University Team involved in the project.

South African classrooms are multilingual environments. As noted in Chapter 6: Section 6.4.1, teachers in the PLCs acknowledged this among their learners, and noted some of the challenges that the teachers and learners faced when English was not well understood. By taking this reality into consideration, professional learning could also respond with "translanguaging pedagogies" (Hurst & Mona, 2017). Translanguaging pedagogies include strategies that encourage teachers to cross between all known languages and to develop "concept glossaries" which define terms in African languages through translingual discussions (Hurst & Mona, 2017, p. 132). Hurst and Mona (2017) imply that professional learning programmes could acknowledge teachers' translanguaging as an important part of learning and this could validate the teachers' identities and encourage participation in community. De Fina (2007) contributed to the theory of CoP, in particular to shared repertoire, by identifying how code-switching defined identities and maintained a community. Teachers' use of their own languages in the PLCs could have encouraged their participation and may have afforded them learning opportunities. Translanguaging and code-switching as a part of the teachers' shared repertoire could also result in developing the joint enterprise.

8.5 Joint Enterprise

The joint enterprise sustains the community and is a result of a collective process of negotiation. The teachers' negotiated responses about inclusive pedagogy and their professional identity and agency were specific to their school circumstances and therefore created an indigenous enterprise. An indigenous enterprise belongs to members of the community and is developed in spite of forces or influences beyond the members' control. The collective and negotiated process that creates an indigenous enterprise is one that builds mutual accountability among its members. The collective negotiation meant that the community found ways to do things together even if there may have been individual responses that were dissimilar to other members' ideas.

Difference Talk, discussed in Chapter Six, is one aspect of the indigenous enterprise. Through this talk teachers transcended their institutional conditions and developed ways that they could teach in the full-service school, even though they did not consider themselves to be inclusive teachers

(Chapter Seven). This inventiveness reflected the resourcefulness of the community, where teachers determined for themselves what they wanted and what they did not want. The inventiveness created spaces for the members to express varied experiences such as amusement, boredom, and fatigue, as they discussed their views on a topic of discussion. Even though the PLCs were arranged through an institutional mandate, the practice that evolved was the PLC's own response to that mandate. The indigenous enterprise did not preclude being influenced, manipulated, or intimidated. Even with external forces – whether benevolent or malevolent – the community mediated the production of its own practice through the joint enterprise.

Mutual accountability is what the community deems to be important or not important (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) does not use mutual accountability in the conventional idea of bureaucratic accountability – such as being answerable to a superior – but professional accountability to colleagues (Brodie & Shalem, 2011). Mutual accountability is what the community chooses to pay attention to; when actions and artifacts are good enough, and when they need improvement or refinement. Mutual accountability is observed in the decisions to reify rules, policies, goals and standards. These aspects are shared and allow participants to negotiate the appropriateness of what can be done in their classrooms.

In two different sessions teachers watched videos showing examples of inclusive teaching: one in a South African school and another in an American school. In both instances teachers critiqued the videos and noted that the schools were different to their own school and therefore the teaching examples shown were not applicable to City Primary School. Accountability as an aspect of joint enterprise intersected with teacher professional agency as teachers took a stand about the appropriateness of other local and foreign examples of inclusion. This was also an example that the PLCs had developed their indigenous enterprise because they did not take up 'lessons' without question. The debates in the PLCs at City Primary School were evidence that they may not have been easily influenced, manipulated, or intimidated.

Coordinating their differences was part of the process that teachers did to understand their enterprise and its effects on their classroom practice. Uniformity was not the desired response for negotiation for the community to be collectively productive. However, conflicting interpretations

on different ideas do not determine the Community's preservation or continuation. Engaging in the community, a commitment to the enterprise, mutual negotiation and sharing, maintains the community and creates mutual accountability for a coherent community.

8.6 The Coherent Community

My arguments around the dimensions of community indicate the PLCs were coherent communities, as the teachers created an indigenous enterprise (Wenger, 1998). The teachers' participation in the PLCs brought together the multi-dimensions of PLCs and had created a coherent community. Wenger et al., (2011) note that the challenge and value of a community is in its collective intention to identify as a community, and to be committed over time to collectively negotiate learning. The convergent and divergent flows of participation, as in the agreement and disagreement in PLC discussions, that were allowed and available for teachers, facilitated rigorous participation. The teachers' participation was amplified when there were tensions and moments of ease. I describe the amplified nature of participation with a sound metaphor – resonance. The tension and ease of teachers' discussions created a resonance, a reinforcement in discussion and an amplified nature of participation. The two elements of talk discussed in Chapter Six were also evidence of teachers' open and free discussion which amplified their participation. The value of community amplified the different dimensions of the professional learning community. The PLCs amplified the divergent views and this helped teachers to consider options for their classroom practices.

Learning in a CoP occurs through the participation of members in a community and is not dependent on the effectiveness of an expert who influences learning as a reproduction of the expert's performance. To be "workshopped" has been a request from teachers (Walton, 2016a) including some teachers at City Primary School. Even though PLC group facilitators played an important role in enabling teachers to interact, she/he was not an instructor who knew more than the other teachers. The facilitator's role is explained in Chapter 4. My findings indicate that the PLCs had aspects of success that resemble the conceptual convergence between PLCs and inclusive education (Walton, 2016b). These may have fostered a positive attitude towards enacting inclusive pedagogy, developing collaborative relationships and fostering learning for inclusion.

8.7 Conclusion

Wenger's (1998) three dimensions of community, namely: Mutual Engagement (the engagement in collectively negotiable actions); Shared repertoire (routines, activities, artifacts and stories developed); and Joint enterprise (the negotiated response to address a common situation) were evident in the PLCs at City Primary School. The analysis showed that the PLCs had developed a coherent community, that enabled teachers to discuss their understanding of inclusive pedagogy and develop contextual meanings for enacting inclusive pedagogy. The ease of discussion and debate, amplified teachers' discussions and provided teachers with community resources that remained throughout the PLC project. Future research and professional learning programme, which could benefit from these findings, are discussed in the following final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter Nine– Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The thesis of this study was that it is important to understand teachers' professional identity and agency because they are key components of professional learning, and especially professional learning of inclusive pedagogy. Teachers' experience with novel ideas, such as inclusive pedagogy was in South Africa, in PLCs, was the basis to focus research on teacher professional identity and agency. Understanding teacher professional identity and agency would be crucial for designing teachers' professional learning programmes for inclusive teaching. Teachers need to re-negotiate their professional identity and agency when they participate in professional learning of new practices. PLCs that focus on inclusive pedagogy may provide opportunities for teachers to re-negotiate their professional identity and engage their agency for inclusive teaching.

To my knowledge, there have not been any studies in South Africa that have investigated teachers' professional identity and agency in PLCs that focus on inclusive pedagogy. This study investigated teacher talk in PLCs in one South African full-service school. In this chapter I consolidate the findings I presented in the three preceding chapters, that answered my three research questions. I present the contributions to, and recommendations for professional learning. The findings point to areas for future research and could reframe professional learning that may enable teachers to make long-term choices, including changing their teaching practices for the benefit of their learners.

9.2 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The linkages of inclusive pedagogy teacher professional identity and agency and PLCs have been explored to answer three research questions. The following findings were documented:

9.2.2 Question One: Teachers talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy

- How do teachers talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?

Two elements of teacher talk emerged from the analysis: Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk. The two elements were in Counterpoint – presenting opposing ideas and also running alongside each other, in that Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk can each be identified separately but in relation

the other. The two elements provided insights into teachers' ideas about inclusive pedagogy, about the teachers' perceptions about being an Inclusive Educator and how inclusive pedagogy relates to their context. The IPAA framework guided my analysis. The findings confirmed that the IPAA is a useful tool for analysis of inclusive pedagogy and provides scope for the framework to be adapted. The adaptation could respond to the nuances and the dilemma of difference, particularly in relation to context.

Inclusive pedagogy, as defined by Florian and Spratt (2013) in the IPAA, is a teaching and learning approach that focusses on "ALL" learners and avoids the separation of teaching for 'some' and 'most' learners. In responding to individual differences teachers guided by the three principles of IPAA would avoid marginalising any learner who would require additional support. Principle One states that difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning. I coded this principle in relation to learners as Learner Profiles and analysed teacher talk that discussed learners under this principle. The second principle, which I coded as 'Teacher capability', asserts that 'teachers must believe (can be convinced) they are qualified/capable of teaching all children'. This was a particularly useful framing of teachers' current knowledge, skills and attitudes as being a valuable springboard for inclusive teaching. Principle Three of the IPAA encourages the continual professional learning and collaboration among teachers and other professional so as to develop creative new ways of working together.

I explained the relationship between inclusive and difference as a counterpoint – a presentation of two interwoven elements, each of which could be identified relatively independent of the other. The Counterpoint provided insights into teachers' ideas about inclusive pedagogy, about practicing inclusion and how inclusive pedagogy related to their context. Even though not all talk fitted the expectations of inclusion according to the IPAA, the IPAA enabled me to recognise the nuanced concept of difference that gave me insights into how the IPAA can be used to interrogate teachers' practice without judgement when considered in context. Being able to delineate the talk elements means that I offer a nuanced perspective on difference. This finding shows the affordances of the IPAA, but also offers avenues for adapting the IPAA for professional learning of inclusive pedagogy in South Africa.

9.2.3 Question Two: Teacher talk and teachers' professional identity and agency

- What does teacher talk in PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy reveal about teacher professional identity and agency?

The findings show that even though teachers talked about enacting inclusive pedagogy they did not consider themselves inclusive educators. Teacher talk that takes place in the PLCs that is focused on inclusive pedagogy reveals a productive dissonant relationship between teacher professional identity and agency. The productive part of the relationship is that the teachers accepted to teach their inclusive classrooms and spoke about how they were able to do so. The dissonant part is of the relationship is that the teachers consider themselves inclusive teachers.

Teacher professional identity and agency are discursively and socially constructed and are critical for learning new practices, especially learning in practice and about practice. The dissonance in teacher talk between their professional identity and professional agency negates the binary conceptualisation that teachers are either inclusive or not inclusive.

9.2.1 Question Three: The nature of PLCs

- What is the nature of PLCs that discuss inclusive pedagogy?

The PLCs facilitated the negotiation of meaning among the teachers and teachers created a coherent community emerged. The convergent and divergent flows of participation, as in the agreement and disagreement in PLC discussions, were available for teachers and facilitated rigorous participation. Wenger's (1998) three dimensions of community, namely: Mutual Engagement (the engagement in collectively negotiable actions); Shared repertoire (routines, activities, artifacts and stories developed); and Joint enterprise (the negotiated response to address a common situation) guided the analysis of the PLC discussions at City Primary School. I concluded that the divergent responses on inclusive pedagogy reflected a coherent community as the teachers had developed an "indigenous enterprise" (Wenger, 1998, p. 79). The indigenous enterprise was a contextually meaningful way for teachers at City Primary School to engage with inclusive pedagogy.

Agreeing with Opfer and Pedder (2011) that teacher professional development is a complex undertaking that requires frequent and varied activities, I also noted that collaboration is an important multifaceted activity that can be a double-edged sword when teachers conform to norms rather than critique and challenge norms. Collaboration does not necessarily mean that teachers were always in agreement. Disagreement can forge collaboration especially if teachers feel they are "safe" to express divergent views. The collaboration and disagreement among teachers may suggest learning.

9.3 Limitations

The following research design and execution constraints may have influenced results of this study:

i. *Public institution*:

The school in this study is a public full-service school and is subject to demands from the provincial and national departments of education. For instance, PLCs scheduled for term four of the first year were cancelled because the local education department instructed the school to prepare for the then Annual National Assessment (ANA) tests. The PLC meetings study were held once a term and therefore the long breaks between each meeting may have negatively impacted the teachers' learning and the cancellation in the first year created an even longer break. PLCs need to meet regularly so that learning is realised (Stoll et al., 2006).

In mitigation of these limitations, every teacher had a file and copies of handouts covering the topic of each meeting are given to each teacher. At the beginning of each PLC meeting, facilitators recapped the discussions of the previous meeting. The handouts and the meeting recaps helped teachers' recall previous meeting deliberations.

ii. Methodological limitations:

The following data collection limitations constrained generalising the findings of this study.

- The NRF-funded project from which I developed this study not only provided me with funding for my PhD, it also gave me a unique opportunity to learn and work with more experienced colleagues. Because the project was not my conceptualisation, my study had to

fit into and be built from the original design. However, this limitation was not restrictive as the project leader, who was also my supervisor, provided close review and approved adjustments that gave my study an "innovative and more complex approach to researching teachers" (Schuelka & Carrington, 2022, p. 18).

- No interviews were conducted before the start of the PLCs. Conducting interviews prior to teachers' engagement in PLCs, followed by interviews during and after the three years of PLCs would have given a comparative picture related to the teachers' knowledge of inclusive pedagogy. This constraint was addressed through in-depth analysis of each PLC meeting in order to uncover nuanced or subtle shifts.

- This study was framed within professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. However, the findings cannot be interpreted as evidence of learning. No classroom observations were conducted to validate findings in PLCs and interviews. This limitation was mitigated by the conceptualisation of identity and agency as discursively shaped through social interaction. The conceptualisation of identity as narratives means that teachers' stories are not considered as "windows" but are seen as identity and are "taken seriously and that [they] shape one's actions" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 21).

- Although all teachers gave consent to be part of the WSOE Project including participating in the PLCs, there may have been some teachers who were not willing to contribute to discussions. While this supposition was not confirmed, it is possible that teachers may have silently resisted participating in the PLCs because the school's administration had not offered them a choice to participate or not to participate. Additionally, PLC meetings were held in the afternoon, after the learners' school time, but within the teachers' contracted hours. While the meetings were not held during teachers' personal time, they certainly took time from teachers' other tasks such as marking and preparation.

Research has shown that teachers are opposed to attending compulsory professional learning that happens after their school day (Lessing & De Witt, 2007) so time to participate in PLCs is a key challenge for teachers (Brodie, 2019). This may affect their contributions in the PLC. Even though

teachers could manage the time challenges and still attend the PLCs, time and teacher workloads are important professional considerations when designing PLC programmes (Brodie, 2021). Nonetheless, the teachers in the study indicated their liking for the PLC as a desirable model of professional learning.

- One of the limitations of the study was the inability to identify the different speakers in the PLCs. Therefore, the extracts presented delineate the different speakers using 'T' for teacher, and a numeral that indicates the teacher who made the contribution. The extracts indicated the PLC session and the lines in transcript. These signifiers were specific to a group.

- To maximise anonymity, there were only audio recordings of all PLC sessions; no video was recorded. There are times when the teachers appeared to give non-verbal cues. Recognisable gestures and routines, seating arrangements as part of community deliberations. Video footage could have provided clearer interpretations of community discussions.

iii Researcher identity:

The factors to consider when choosing a topic for research include personal interest. While my interest in teacher professional learning for inclusion fitted my current professional leanings, the research focus on teacher identity and agency also touched me personally. Early in the research I recognised that my personal identity presented limitations. Even though I state that my involvement as a substitute teacher at City Primary School gave me an insider perspective, as a foreign national, I was also an outsider. To mitigate this limitation, I received support from two university students who were familiar with the nuances in expressions that teachers used in the PLC discussions (see Chapter 5, Section 5.7.2, sub-section*:* Translanguaging and Translations*).* This "insider-outsider" qualitative researcher identity dove-tailed with my personal and transitioning identity as a researcher and as a wife, a *mũtumia* of Gĩkũyũ ethnicity. A *mũtumia*, literally means "the silent one" or "the one who does not speak."

As a *mũtumia*, "the silent one" or "the one who does not speak," who was conducting inclusive educational research in the wake of the "fees must fall" protests, I had to confront the conflict in

my identities. Inclusive education is political endeavour (Walton, 2016; Slee, 2011) and an activist movement (Walton, 2016). Walton (2016) discussing the power of voice states that an inclusive education researcher who is "politically committed" needs to be reflexive so as to disrupt the "privileged fixed position from which the researcher interrogates and writes the researched" (Walton, 2016, p. 148; citing Lather, 2001, p. 484). Additionally, Castelló et al., (2021) urge researchers to contest how different researcher identities provide different perspectives and "blind-spots" (p. 585). I therefore interrogated my now my hitherto identity as a silent one. I noted that my personal identity and my professional/researcher identity were in conflict and needed "ideology critique" (Brookfield, 2011). I wrote an essay that I presented to my supervisors analysing how the conflict required resolution. In writing the essay, I uncovered how *mũtumia* was a patriarchal construction that had been imposed on me from my upbringing and was a reproduction of inequality. I found that my commitment to addressing educational inequality far outpaced my keeping the patriarchy by remaining silent. I was able to shake-off the trepidation that I had felt in raising my voice against educational exclusion. And while I continued the study with a confident voice, I was conscious of my identities all through the data collection and analysis stages and therefore had regular discussions with my supervisors.

9.4 Significance and Contribution of this study

My concern for the marginalisation and exclusion of learners was a major motivator for me to conduct this study. Building from my research with young schooling mothers (Kimani, 2014), I hoped to contribute to efforts that ensure all learners are accorded their rights to education in the country. Understanding teachers' talk in PLCs that discussed inclusive pedagogy would contribute significant to knowledge for inclusive education in general and specifically for professional learning in a South African full-service school.

This study was developed from a larger professional development and research project, discussed in Chapter Four. Some of the lessons from the project have been published (Kimani, 2021; Walton, 2016; Walton et. al., 2019). My study supports and adds to the knowledge of the overall project and offers conceptual and methodological contributions to knowledge in South Africa and in the wider international body of knowledge on inclusion, as discussed below.

9.4.1 PLCs and professional learning for inclusive pedagogy

Professional learning communities (PLC) have been an under-researched aspect of teacher development for inclusive education. This study fills a gap in professional learning for inclusive education by providing conceptual understanding for teacher professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. The collaborative learning process would present inclusive pedagogy as attainable by all teachers, including those who had had a mainstream initial teacher education (Florian & Walton, 2018). Findings of such an investigation could be used to re-design professional learning that would support teachers to practice inclusive pedagogy. PLCs can engage teachers' professional learning that may espouse a shift teacher professional identity and agency for inclusion.

9.4.2 Inclusive Pedagogy

My study contributes to knowledge about the use of the IPAA. This study found that teachers talk in PLCs illuminated the affordances of the IPAA, the variances in teacher talk, the nuances of difference which could inform professional learning of inclusive pedagogy.

9.4.3 Teacher identity and agency

This study contributes a conceptual understanding of the interplay between teachers' professional identity and the sociocultural contexts of PLCs, and how teacher talk can mediate teacher learning for inclusive education. There was scant evidence that research in South Africa had been focused on understanding teacher professional identity and agency for inclusive pedagogy in a collaborative learning programme. And since inclusive pedagogy was a relatively new practice in the country (Florian & Walton, 2018), understanding teachers' professional identity and professional agency for inclusive pedagogy required attention in research on professional learning. This could be a means to progress professional learning that would enable teachers to make choices about their practice and would expectantly change their classroom practice for the benefit of all learners.

9.4.4 Reframing the profile of The Inclusive Teacher in South Africa

Lessons from this study suggest a reframing of "teachers' resistance" and "teachers' unpreparedness" to practice inclusive pedagogy and implement inclusive education, in general.

There is a need to re-examine the 'well-worn complaint' (Walton, 2015) that teachers require more skills and are resistant to change in the literature on inclusive education (Stofile et al., 2018; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007; Swart et al., 2002). The reports of teachers being resistant to change or having negative attitudes also points to the various factors influencing 'resistance', including school-level factors and broader cultural and societal factors (Donohue & Bornman, 2015). The framing and definitions of inclusive education determine the conclusions that are drawn about teachers' responses to inclusion. Studies that recommend that teachers need more professional learning mainly in relation to "barriers to learning" may be limiting teachers' current skills as being inadequate to teach all learners.

Even though teachers do not self-identify as Inclusive Educators they display characteristics associated with inclusive teachers (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018); characteristics discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two. A profile of an inclusive teacher in South Africa was published from a "sufficiently generic" European ideal (Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2018, p. 183). Standards for inclusive teaching for beginner teachers have also been published (Sayed et al., 2020) and critiqued (Walton & Rusznyak, 2019). The findings of this study contribute to the national discourse from a professional learning perspective that could address the misleading desire for a precise response to the challenges and the uncertainty of practicing inclusive pedagogy. The finding that there was a productive dissonance between what teachers said about their professional identity and agency could also invite possibilities for defining the South African inclusive teacher profile. Ultimately, such a discussion would also open the question about who has the power to name and describe what it means to be an inclusive teacher.

9.5 Recommendations for professional learning for inclusive pedagogy

My study contributes to literature on professional learning for inclusive pedagogy. Even though the study has shown the value of shifting the focus of professional learning programmes from acquiring knowledge to targeting professional identity and agency, more research is needed. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made so as to advance the inclusion agenda, particularly in South Africa.

9.5.1 The form of professional learning for inclusive education

I recommend that professional learning for inclusive pedagogy needs to shift the learning focus from acquiring knowledge and skills in workshops to focusing on teacher identity and agency in professional learning communities. Even though many organisations, including civil-society, universities, and government departments, have responded to the constant recommendation for professional learning for inclusive pedagogy, this need is still not adequately addressed (Materechera, 2020). Chapter Two discussed studies on inclusive education that had concluded that teachers were 'untrained,' 'insufficiently trained' or required 'more training'. Teachers did not perceive themselves as inclusive practitioners in the PLCs but their talk in PLCs reflected that they enacted selected inclusive pedagogical practices provides a challenge as to the form and content of professional learning that would possibly shift teachers' identity to conform with their agency. Teacher identity and agency require an integrated approach in both sociocultural and critical perspectives to provide an empowering discursive environment that qualifies inclusion from special education from a social justice standpoint. Such a focus could be possible in and through PLCs.

Professional learning communities for inclusive pedagogy have shown a shift in teachers' attitudes and practice in Scotland (Brennan & King, 2019). Because discussion in the PLCs are teacher-driven, PLCs recognise teachers' professionalism and value their insights. In South Africa PLCs have been recommended for inclusion (Walton, et al 2014; DoE, 2009), and have been shown to be successful in other subject areas (Brodie & Borko, 2016; Chauraya, 2016; Marimandi, 2022). Other research has found that teachers found ways to teach inclusively after collaborating with colleagues and drawing from the collective fund of teaching strategies offered in PLCs (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012; Swart & Oswald, 2008).

9.5.2 Research on the effectiveness of the PLCs for inclusive pedagogy

Follow-up research in City Primary School is recommended to determine the effectiveness of the PLCs for inclusive pedagogy in changing teachers' approach to teaching inclusive classrooms. A coherent community, created as a PLC, could enable teachers to deepen their understanding and could help them develop new meanings about inclusive pedagogy. The ease of discussion and debate that provide information to help teachers enact inclusive practices in their classrooms are

important contributors to a sense of community. Although there is scant evidence in the data that teachers sought each other's help outside planning meetings, teachers did appreciate the opportunity to learn from their colleagues during the PLC meetings. A school-wide promotion of co-teaching and mentoring could also promote collaboration beyond the PLC sessions. The success of learning in a PLC could include teachers' critique of PLC guidelines and hand-outs. That teachers' discussions in the PLCs veered from the prepared guidelines by deviating into other discussions could be an essential pointer of teachers taking charge of their own learning.

9.5.3 Theoretical grounding in PLCs

While empathetic understanding of teachers' classroom realities is paramount, teachers also require up-skilling and knowledge regarding how they can interpret their responses to the realities in ways that are inclusive (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, Tlale, 2015). Inclusion within the IPAA framework offers teachers and teacher-educators the conceptual understanding that focusses on all learners and requires a shift in mindset (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2012). A blanket expectation that teachers will be inclusive and their responses will fit the principles of the IPAA, even with "the help of an external partner" (Carrington & Duke, 2014, p. 197), in this study, the WSOE team, appears to be an unrealistic expectation. However, the collaboration with the "critical friend" is valuable as it brings connects conceptual knowledge to classroom and realities. Themane and Thobejane (2019) found that there is a "dearth of strong theoretical grounding" and that professional learning for inclusion needs to be grounded on "sound theoretical underpinning" (Themane and Thobejane, 2019, p. 379). I too conclude that theoretical grounding in professional learning is necessary that would complement PLC discussions. The cooperative enterprise that includes the teachers' input with input from the 'critical friend" could wholly foster inclusion knowledge and practice. The theoretical grounding in PLCs could stem the perception that teachers at City Primary School had about PLCs. There seemed to be a perception that the PLC was not 'training' or 'development' to become an inclusive teacher.

Since dissonance is a recurring theme in inclusive education, research PLCs could be an opportunity to discuss the varying discourses and find suitable context-specific approaches. The theoretical grounding would include dilemma of difference and a nuanced interpretation of difference. Such grounding could avoid the binary notions about inclusive education and inclusive

pedagogy and the deficit interpretations about teachers' practices. By recognising dilemma and dissonance, professional learning efforts may better support teachers' professional growth.

9.5.4 Teachers' involvement in developing professional learning curriculum

PLCs need to be embedded in the school practice and, therefore, the school needs to reorganise the school day to allow teachers to meet regularly for their own learning. Seeing teachers as learners and producers of knowledge, rather than receivers of knowledge, would change the narrative that teachers need more 'training.' Professional learning for inclusion has been offered on weekends (Fourie & Hooijer, 2015) and teachers indicated that they do want professional learning programmes to be offered at the end of the school day more than a decade ago (Lessing & De Witt, 2007). This request needs to be taken seriously. Additionally, teachers' need to be involved in developing professional learning programmes. The findings of the two elements of talk, Inclusive Talk and Difference Talk, the productive dissonance in teacher professional agency and identity and the development of a Coherent Community indicate the value of teachers' knowledge. Teachers have knowledge, skills and experience and they are best placed to give meaningful feedback on curriculum and teaching practices, including in the context of professional learning (Graven, 2012). Professional learning that values teachers' voices and experiences makes the connection between teachers, learners, new knowledge and skills.

9.6 Conclusion

I have used musical and sound metaphors to describe my findings. The counterpoint of inclusive and Difference Talk in Chapter Six; the productive dissonance in Chapter Seven; and the resonance in Chapter Eight, project relationships. Just as musical notes and lines resonate in relation to other notes and lines, so did teachers' talk respond to inclusive pedagogy in relation various professional, school and wider educational circumstances. How the teachers responded determined the content, the focus and the form of their talk.

To enact inclusive pedagogy can be an onerous and sometimes vague undertaking. The term 'inclusive education' is often used to denote many practices. However, if inclusion can be understood as a school-wide collaborative approach teachers may not perceive inclusion as an impossible and individual teacher responsibility.

As I conclude this study and reflect on the lessons that I have learned, I end with a cadence that gives a sense of full *and* partial resolution. While the talk in the PLCs was productive with the findings discussed above, and therefore provided a full resolution to the study, there are also partial resolutions to the study. In Chapter four, I discussed my positionality, noting that this study had also challenged my own identities as an inclusive educator and inclusive researcher. Those identities will always be in flux, partially resolved, because inclusive education is an "activist movement" comprising "strong currents …of many different local struggles" (Walton, 2016, p. 157). My identities as an inclusive educator and inclusive researcher need to be alert and to constantly develop new inclusive approaches because of the ubiquity and evolving forms of educational exclusion means that. My experience has shown me that inclusive education will continually have an imperfect cadence.

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Appendices

Appendices A: Research

Appendix A1: The Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) framework

Adapted from Florian and Walton, 2018; Florian (2014); Rouse and Florian (2009)

Principles	**Thinking Disruptions And Key Challenges**	**Associated Concepts/Actions And Evidence**
Principle 1: Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning.	Thinking Disruptions Thinking differently about learner difference Key Challenges 'Bell-curve thinking' and notions of fixed ability still underpin the structure of schooling	Associated Concepts/Actions • Replacing deterministic views of ability with those that view learning potential as open ended • Acceptance that differences are part of the human condition. • Rejecting idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others. Believing that all children can make progress. Evidence 1. Teaching practices which include all children (everybody) 2. Diverse grouping configurations/rejecting ability grouping as main configuration 3. Using language that values every learner
Principle 2. Teachers must believe (can be convinced) they are qualified/capable of teaching all children.	Thinking Disruptions Difficulties in learning are professional challenges for teachers Key Challenges The identification of difficulties in learning and the associated focus on what the learner cannot do often puts a ceiling on learning and achievement	Associated Concepts/Actions - Commitment to the support of all learners - Belief in own capacity to promote learning for all children - Demonstrating how the difficulties learners experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within learners. Evidence 1. Focusing on **what** is to be taught (and **how**) rather than who is to learn it 2. Focus on what is to be taught and how rather than who 3. Interest in the welfare of the 'whole child' not only acquisition of knowledge and skills
Principle 3. The profession must continually develop creative new ways of working with others.	Thinking Disruptions Teachers can learn how to collaborate and teach inclusively Key Challenges Changing thinking about inclusion (from 'most' and 'some' to everybody)	Associated Concepts/Actions • Willingness to work (creatively) with and through others • Modelling (creative new) ways of working Evidence - Seeking and trying out new ways of working to support the learning of all children; - Working with and through other adults in ways that respect the dignity of learners as full members of the community of the classroom; - Discussion with other teachers focusing on learning of all children

Appendix A2: PLC Guideline: Session 1: PLCs and Listening

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

1. About Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The purpose of PLCs is enhancing learning for learners and improving teachers' practice.

'Professional' means:

- A specialised and technical knowledge base
- A service ethic to meet learner needs
- Developing collective identity through professional commitment

'Learning' means:

- Working together towards a common understanding of concepts and practices
- Making a difference for learners
- "A professional community that is centred on student learning makes a significant difference to measureable student achievement"

'Community' means

- A cohesive group
- Building collective knowledge
- An ethic of interpersonal caring



2. The difference between PLCs and other teacher development activities

	Other activities	PLCs
Focus	Individual skill	Collective knowledge
Outcome	Teacher improvement	Learner improvement
Purpose	Address lack of skills	Build professional knowledge for learner improvement
Teacher input	Minimal – teachers as passive recipients of training	Essential – teachers contribute to generating knowledge
Accountability	Limited – relies on individual	Shared

It is important to understand the importance of developing professional knowledge. Too often, professional development, which is sometimes called 'in-service training' for teachers is associated with underperformance. PLCs attempts to change this by focusing on the professionalism of teachers. We expect our doctors, for example, to keep on learning so that we can get the best and most up to date treatment. So teachers should be continually learning, not just so they get skills (like computer skills) but for the benefit of their 'clients' - the learners.

Also, PLCs are deliberately situated at the school, and are expected to engage with developing inclusive practice in this context.

PLC meeting 1: 5 March 2014: Directions for facilitators

1. Settle in groups and welcome
2. Discuss the research component. I requested that PLC groups be voice recorded. Some people agreed, and others didn't. Everyone can change her mind either way, and I would be grateful for as many recorded PLCs as possible. Please remind teachers that these recordings are for research purposes only, and no-one will be able to be identified, and the recordings will not heard by anyone in management at any level. It is particularly important to ensure that the permission forms correctly reflect those who agree to be recorded.Turn on the recorder if yours is a recorded group!

   (10 – 15mins)
3. Explain what PLCs are and how they are different from other teacher development activities. Emphasise active contribution and learning together. Discuss the focus on improving learning for our learners, and that ongoing learning is important to all professionals (like doctors and lawyers) and is not a reflection of underperformance. Some questions you might like to use for discussion:
   - What are the advantages of getting together in small groups for learning?
   - Why is it important that the focus is on improving learning for learners?

   Encourage participation and discussion (15 – 20 mins)
4. A focus on developing listening skills in learners
   a) Ask teachers why they think listening is so important for learning
   b) See if teachers can identify the various components of listening for learning. Discuss any that they identify.
   c) Give out the teacher hand-out and clarify the various components described here. Try to answer any questions, noting any we need to discuss at the next facilitator meeting.
   d) Encourage teachers to come prepared to the next PLC meeting next term with ways in which they promote listening in their classes, or strategies they use to develop listening skills.

   (20 – 30 mins)
5. Thank teachers for their participation and wish them a safe journey home. Turn off the recorder.

Appendix A3: Semi-structure Individual Teacher Interview Guide

A. Biographical Information

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. How long have you taught in a full-service school?
3. Describe your teaching experience in a full-service school

B. Teacher's experience of learning in a PLC

1. Describe the professional learning that you have received in relation to inclusive education.
2. In what ways have the discussions in the PLC changed how you teach?

C. Teacher's understanding of inclusive pedagogy

1. How would you describe the differences among the learners in your classroom?
2. When there have been challenges in learning what are some of the ways you have solved them?
3. How has working with other teachers in the PLC influenced how you teach?

D. Teacher's identity

1. How did you describe yourself before attending the PLC?
2. How do you describe yourself now, after attending the PLC?

E. Teacher agency

What have you done differently in your classroom since attending the PLC?

Appendix A4: Profile of inclusive Teachers (EASNIE, 2012)

Values	Areas of Competence	Attitudes and Beliefs	Essential knowledge and understanding	crucial skills and abilities
1. **Valuing Learner Diversity** – learner difference is considered as a resource and an asset to education.	**1.1** Conceptions of inclusive education;	... education is based upon a belief in equality, human rights and democracy for all learners; ... inclusive education is about societal reform and is non-negotiable; ... inclusive education and quality in education cannot be viewed as separate issues; ... access to mainstream education alone is not enough; participation means that all learners are engaged in learning activities that are meaningful for them.	... the theoretical and practical concepts and principles underpinning inclusive education within global and local contexts; ... the wider system of cultures and policies of educational institutions at all levels that impacts on inclusive education. The possible strengths and weaknesses of the educational system that they work in have to be acknowledged and understood by teachers; ... inclusive education is an approach for all learners, not just those who are perceived to have different needs and may be at risk of exclusion from educational opportunities; ... the language of inclusion and diversity and the implications of using different terminology to describe, label and categorise learners; ... inclusive education as the presence (access to education) participation (quality of the learning experience) and achievement	... critically examining one's own beliefs and attitudes and the impact these have on actions; ... engaging in ethical practice at all times and respecting confidentiality; ... the ability to deconstruct educational history to understand current situations and contexts; ...coping strategies that prepare teachers to challenge non-inclusive attitudes and to work in segregated situations; ... being empathetic to the diverse needs of learners; ... modelling respect in social relationships and using appropriate language with all learners and stakeholders in education.

			(learning processes and outcomes) of all learners.	
	1.2 The teacher's view of learner difference	... it is 'normal to be different'; ... learner diversity is to be respected, valued and understood as a resource that enhances learning opportunities and adds value to schools, local communities and society; ... all learner's voices should be heard and valued; ... the teacher is a key influence on a learners' self-esteem and, as a consequence, their learning potential; ... categorisation and labelling of learners can have a negative impact upon learning opportunities.	... learners can be used as a resource to facilitate learning about diversity for themselves and their peers; ... learners learn in different ways and these can be used to support their own learning and that of their peers; ... essential information about learner diversity (arising from support needs, culture, language, socio-economic background etc.); ... the school is a community and social environment that affects learners' self-esteem and learning potential; ... the school and classroom population is constantly changing; diversity cannot be seen as a static concept.	... learning how to learn from differences; ... identifying the most appropriate ways of responding to diversity in all situations; ... addressing diversity in curriculum implementation; ... using diversity in learning approaches and styles as a resource for teaching; ... contributing to building schools as learning communities that respect, encourage and celebrate all learners' achievements.

Values|Areas of Competence		**Attitudes and Beliefs**	**Essential knowledge and understanding**	**crucial skills and abilities**
2.Supporting All Learners teachers have high expectations for all learners' achieve-ments.	**2.1** Promoting the academic, practical, social and emotional learning of all learners	-learning is primarily a social activity; -academic, practical, social and emotional learning are equally important for all learners; -teachers' expectations are a key determinant of learner success and therefore high expectations for all learners are critical; -all learners should be active decision-makers in their learning &	... understanding the value of collaborative working with parents and families; ... typical and atypical child development patterns and pathways, particularly in relation to social and communication skill development; ... different models of learning and approaches to learning learners may take.	... being an effective verbal and non-verbal communicator who can respond to the varied communication needs of learners, parents and other professionals; ... supporting the development of learners' communication skills and possibilities; ... assessing and then developing 'learning to learn skills' in learners; ... developing independent and autonomous learners; ... facilitating co-operative learning approaches; ... implementing positive behaviour management approaches that support learner's social development and interactions; ... facilitating learning situations where learners can 'take risks' and even fail in a safe environment;

		any assessment processes they are involved in; -parents and families are an essential resource for a learner's learning; -developing autonomy and self determination in all learners is essential; -the learning capacity and potential of each learner has to be discovered and stimulated.		... using assessment for learning approaches that take account of social and emotional as well as academic learning.
	2.2 Effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes.	... effective teachers are teachers of all learners; ... teachers take responsibility for facilitating the learning of all learners in a class; ... learners' abilities are not fixed; all learners have the capacity to learn and develop; ... learning is a process and the goal for all learners is the development of 'learning to learn' skills, not just content/subject knowledge; ... the learning process is essentially the same for all learners – there are very few 'special techniques'; ... on some occasions, particular learning difficulties require responses based upon adaptations to the curriculum and teaching approaches.	-theoretical knowledge on the way learners learn and models of teaching that support the learning process; -positive behaviour and classroom management approaches; -managing the physical and social environment of the classroom to support learning; ... ways of identifying and then addressing different barriers to learning and the implications of these for teaching approaches; -the development of basic skills – in particular key competences – along with associated teaching and assessment approaches; -assessment for learning methods focussed upon identifying the strengths of a learner; -differentiation of curriculum content, learning process and learning materials to include learners and meet diverse needs; -personalised learning approaches for all learners that support learners to develop autonomy in their learning;	-employing classroom leadership skills that involve systematic approaches to positive classroom management; -working with individual learners as well as heterogeneous groups; -using the curriculum as a tool for inclusion that supports access to learning; -addressing diversity issues in curriculum development processes; -differentiating methods, content and outcomes for learning; -working with learners and their families to personalise learning and target setting; -facilitating co-operative learning where learners help each other in different ways – including peer tutoring – within flexible learner groupings; -using a range of teaching methods and approaches in systematic ways; -employing ICT and adaptive technology to support flexible approaches to learning; -using approaches to teaching that are evidence based to achieve learning goals, alternative routes for learning, flexible instruction and the use of clear feedback to learners; -using formative and summative assessment that supports learning and does not label or lead to negative consequences for learners; -engaging in collaborative problem solving with learners; -drawing on a range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills to facilitate learning.

			-the development, implementation and effective review of Individual Education Plans (IEP) or similar individualised learning programmes when appropriate.	

Values	*Areas of Competence*	*Attitudes and Beliefs*	*Essential knowledge and understanding*	*crucial skills and abilities*
3.Working With Others – collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers.	**3.1** Working with parents and families;	... awareness of the added value of working collaboratively with parents and families; ... respect for the cultural and social backgrounds and perspectives of parents and families; ... viewing effective communication and collaboration with parents and families as a teacher's responsibility.	... inclusive teaching as based on a collaborative working approach; ... the importance of positive inter-personal skills; ... the impact of inter-personal relationships on the achievement of learning goals.	... effectively engaging parents and families in supporting their child's learning; ... communicating effectively with parents and family members of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds.
	3.2 Working with a range of other educational professionals.	... inclusive education requires all teachers to work in teams; ... collaboration, partnerships and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers and should be welcomed; ... collaborative teamwork supports professional learning with and from other professionals.	... the value and benefits of collaborative work with other teachers and educational professionals; ... support systems and structures available for further help, input and advice; ... multi-agency working models where teachers in inclusive classrooms co-operate with other experts and staff from a range of different disciplines; ... collaborative teaching approaches where teachers take a team approach involving learners themselves, parents, peers, other school	... implementing classroom leadership and management skills that facilitate effective multi- agency working; ... co-teaching and working in flexible teaching teams; ... working as part of a school community and drawing on the support of school internal and external resources; ... building a class community that is part of a wider school community; ... contributing to whole school evaluation, review and development processes; ... collaboratively problem solving with other professionals; ... contributing to wider school partnerships with other schools, community organisations and other educational organisations; ... drawing on a range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills to facilitate working co-operatively with other professionals.

			teachers and support staff, as well as multi-disciplinary team members as appropriate; ... the language/terminology and basic working concepts and perspectives of other professionals involved in education; ... the power relationships that exist between different stakeholders that have to be acknowledged and effectively dealt with.	

Values	**Areas of Competence**	**Attitudes and Beliefs**	**Essential knowledge and understanding**	**crucial skills and abilities**
4.Personal Professional Development – teaching is a learning activity and teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning.	**4.1** Teachers as reflective practitioners;	... teaching is a problem solving activity that requires on-going and systematic planning, evaluation, reflection and then modified action; ... reflective practice facilitates teachers to work effectively with parents as well as in teams with other teachers and professionals working within and outside of the school; ... the importance of evidence-based practice to guide a teacher's work; ... valuing the importance of developing a personal pedagogy to guide a teacher's work.	... personal meta-cognitive, learning to learn skills; ... what makes a reflective practitioner and how personal reflection on and in action can be developed; ... methods and strategies for evaluating one's own work and performance; ... action research methods and the relevance for teachers' work; ... the development of personal strategies for problem solving.	... systematically evaluating one's own performance; ... effectively involving others in reflecting upon teaching and learning; ... contributing to the development of the school as a learning community.
	4.2 Initial teacher education as a foundation	... teachers have a responsibility for their own continuous professional development; .	... the educational law and the legal context they work within and their responsibilities and duties towards learners, their	... flexibility in teaching strategies that promote innovation and personal learning;

	for ongoing professional learning and development.	.. initial teacher education is the first step in teachers' professional lifelong learning; ... teaching is a learning activity; being open to learning new skills and actively asking for information and advice is a good thing, not a weakness; ... a teacher cannot be an expert in all questions related to inclusive education. Basic knowledge for those beginning in inclusive education is crucial, but continuous learning is essential; ... change and development is constant in inclusive education and teachers need the skills to manage and respond to changing needs and demands throughout their careers.	families, colleagues and the teaching profession within that legal context; ... possibilities, opportunities and routes for further, in-service teacher education, in order to develop knowledge and skills to enhance their inclusive practice.	... employing time management strategies that will accommodate possibilities for pursuing in-service development opportunities; ... being open to and proactive in using colleagues and other professionals as sources of learning and inspiration; ... contributing to the whole school community learning and development processes.

Appendix B: Ethics

Appendix B1: Wits Ethics clearance

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

Student Number:
Protocol Number:
2013ECE111S

Date: 30 October 2013

Dear Elizabeth Walton

Application for Ethics Clearance:

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Teacher development for inclusive education through Professional Learning Communities.

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely

MMabeta

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

011 717 3416

Appendix B2: Letter to Principal Requesting permission to conduct research

June 2016

Dear [Principal]

Request to conduct research interviews at XXX School

My name is Wacango Kimani and I am a PhD student at the Wits School of Education. I am a member of Wits School of Education team, led by Prof. Elizabeth Walton who is collaborating with XXX Primary School to develop the teacher inclusive practices. There are two components of the inclusive practices project: professional learning for the teachers, and a research component. The overall research intends to find out what knowledge about inclusive pedagogical practices can be developed as teachers in a full-service school engage with university researchers in professional learning communities (PLCs). Within this overall research project, I am also conducting research for my degree. My research seeks to find out if, and how, teachers' identity and their agency (their actions in class related to inclusive pedagogy) have changed since being involved in PLC meetings. The title of my research is:

Professional learning for inclusive pedagogy:

The shaping of teacher professional identity and agency through interactions in Professional Learning Communities

I would like to ask you for your permission to carry out this research at XXX School. My research will entail audio recording PLC meetings of teachers and facilitators; conducting individual interviews with two willing teachers per grade; and facilitating two group discussions comprising a group of a minimum of four to a maximum of six teachers in each group.

Teachers will be invited to participate in the **Three (3)** possible ways:

The first way is to allow their contribution to their professional learning community to be audio-recorded for my research project. Audio recording will ensure an accurate record of the PLC meetings which can then be transcribed. This will require no additional time from them, just that the PLC discussion is recorded for my purposes. Teachers will be assured that this is voluntary, and that there will be no negative consequences should they not want to be recorded. Those who agree to allow their contribution to be recorded for my research will be assured that they can withdraw from a recorded PLC at any time with no negative consequences. I assure you and the participants that the name of the school or names of members of recorded PLC groups will not be made public in all published and written data resulting from the study. If necessary, a pseudonym (false name) will be used.

The Second way is to participate in One individual interview. This will require 30 minutes of their time on a week day after classes that will be convenient for those willing to participate. The interview will be held in Term Three of 2016 within the school premises. The interview will be audio-recorded, in the same way that the PLC discussions are recorded. Every teacher who agrees to allow their contribution to be recorded will be assured that she/he can withdraw from an interview at any time with no negative consequences. If a teacher decides that she/he is not willing to allow her/his contribution to be recorded, she/he can change her/his mind at any time and stop being part of the recorded individual interview. There are no negative consequences to a teacher if she/he decides not to have her/his contribution recorded, or if she/he wants to stop being interviewed. I will assure every teacher who accepts my invitation that if she/he decides to participate in the interview I will not ask for any names to be recorded. The interview will be completely anonymous. This means that every participating teacher's identity will never be made public. If necessary, a pseudonym (false name) will be linked to what a teacher says. I assure you that the name of the school will not be made public in all published and written data resulting from the study. If necessary, a pseudonym (false name) will be used. All information about the school and participating teachers will be kept confidential.

The Third way teachers could participate in my study would be to participate in One 45 minute group discussion with me. The group discussion will be on a week day in the third term of 2016 and will be at a time after school that is convenient to them within the school premises. I will ask questions about their learning and experience in the PLC. With participants' permission, the interviews would be audio-recorded so that I have an accurate record of what the teachers would say. I will assure them that this would be entirely voluntary and that there would be no negative consequences if they choose not to be interviewed. Those who agree to be interviewed will be assured that they can withdraw from the interview at any time, and that they do not have to answer any questions they do not want to. There would be no negative consequences if a teacher would choose not to answer any question. I assure you that if teachers do decide to participate by being interviewed of participating in the group discussion, they will be completely anonymous, and the school's name will not be made public in all published and written data resulting from the study. If necessary, a pseudonym (false name) will be used.

Teachers in your school would thus be free to choose:

- not to participate in my research at all, OR
- have their PLC conversation audio-recorded for my research.

Teachers will be invited to participate in interviews with me and will be free to choose:

- not to participate in my research interviews at all, OR
- only to participate in one audio-recorded individual interview, OR
- only to participate in one audio-recorded group discussion, OR
- to participate in one audio recorded individual interview and one audio-recorded group discussion.

I will emphasise that participation in my research is **entirely voluntary**. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and teachers will not be paid for this study. There are no direct benefits to those who participate, but I expect that the research findings will be used to improve the professional development programme at XXX Primary School, and ultimately to inform professional development for teachers in all full service and inclusive schools.

All research data (electronic and material) will be kept securely in locked offices and would be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project. The results of the research will be used for academic purposes (including books, journals and conference proceedings) and a summary of findings will be made to available to participants, the school and the GDE.

If you are willing to give permission for teachers in your school to be part of my research project, I would ask that you complete and sign the attached consent form and return it to me. If you have any queries regarding any aspect of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Prof. Elizabeth Walton.

Regards,

Wacango Kimani

PhD student, Wits School of Education

Wacango Kimani wacango@gmail.com 079 250 1051 (all hours)	Elizabeth.Walton@wits.ac.za 011 717 3768 (office) 083 239 0318 (all hours)

Appendix B3: Teachers' Information sheet and invitation to participate in research

June 2016

Dear Teacher

Invitation to participate in research at XXX Primary School

My name is Wacango Kimani and I am a PhD student at the Wits School of Education. I am a member of Wits School of Education team, led by Prof. Elizabeth Walton, which is collaborating with XXX Primary School to develop the teacher inclusive practices. There are two components of the inclusive practices project: professional learning for teachers and a research component. Therefore, while you are engaged in professional learning for inclusive education, there is information being gathered for research. This is being done with the support and permission of the school principal and the GDE.

The overall research intends to find out what knowledge about inclusive pedagogical practices can be developed as teachers in a full-service school engage with university researchers in professional learning communities (PLCs). Within this overall research project, I am also conducting research for my degree. My research seeks to find out if, and how, teachers' identity and their agency (their actions in class related to inclusive pedagogy) have changed since being involved in PLC meetings. The title of my research is:
Professional learning for inclusive pedagogy:
The shaping of teacher professional identity and agency through interactions in Professional Learning Communities

As a teacher at XXX Primary School has participated in PLCs for professional development, you are in an ideal position to help learn if PLCs are an ideal learning format for inclusive education. I would therefore like to invite you to participate in this research project. Your participation entails allowing your contribution to your professional learning community to be audio-recorded for research purposes. This does not require additional time from you, just that your PLC discussion is recorded. If you decide that you are willing to allow your contribution to be recorded for my research project, you can change your mind at any time and stop being part of a recorded PLC. There are no negative consequences to you if you decide not to have your contribution recorded, or if you want to stop being part of a recorded PLC. I assure you that if you do decide to participate by having your contribution to the PLC recorded, you will be completely anonymous. This means that the names of members of recorded PLC groups will never be made public. If

necessary, a pseudonym (false name) will be linked to what you say. All information about participating teachers would be kept confidential.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. This means that it is entirely up to you whether you want to participate in the research. There will be no negative consequences in to you in any way should you not participate. There are no direct benefits to you if you do decide to participate, but I expect that my research findings will be used to improve the professional development programme at XXX Primary 1 School, and ultimately to inform professional development for teachers in all full service and inclusive schools.

All research data (electronic and material) will be kept securely in locked offices and would be destroyed five years after completing the project. The results of the research will be used for academic purposes (including books, journals and conference proceedings) and a summary of findings will be made to available to you, the school and the GDE.

If you are willing to participate in my research project, I would ask that you to complete and sign the attached consent form and to return it to me. If you accept to participate and fill in the consent form, I will give you a copy of your filled-in form to keep for your records. If you have any queries regarding any aspect of our research, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor Prof. Elizabeth Walton.

Regards
Wacango Kimani
PhD student,
Wits School of Education

Wacango Kimani wacango@gmail.com 079 250 1051 (all hours)	Elizabeth.Walton@wits.ac.za 011 717 3768 (office) 083 239 0318 (all hours)

Appendix B4 Informed Consent Form for Teachers:

Please fill in and return this consent form by indicating willingness to participate in a research titled: **Professional learning for inclusive pedagogy: The shaping of teacher professional identity and agency through interactions in Professional Learning Communities;** By Wacango Kimani (PhD student, Wits School of Education)

I _____ (participant's full name)

I indicate my willingness to participate in the research project by allowing my contribution to my PLC to be audio recorded for research purposes **Yes/ No***

If you answered yes to having your contribution to your PLC audio recorded for research purposes, please indicate your understanding of the following:

- I understand that I may withdraw my participation in an audio recorded PLC at any time without any negative consequences: **Yes/ No***
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that there are no negative consequences for choosing not to participate in this research: **Yes/ No***
- I understand that my responses will be used as research data for academic purposes, and may be published in conference papers, journal articles or books: **Yes/ No***
- I understand that my responses will be used anonymously at all times and I will not be identified in any research publications: **Yes/No***
- I understand that the data will be kept securely in a locked office and will be destroyed five years after completion of the research: **Yes/ No***

Signature: _____ Date: _____

***Please circle your choice of answer**

Appendix B5: Invitation to participate in research interviews

June 2016

Dear Teacher

Invitation to participate in research interviews at XXX Primary School

Invitation to participate in research at XXX Primary School

My name is Wacango Kimani and I am a PhD student at the Wits School of Education. I am a member of Wits School of Education team, led by Prof. Elizabeth Walton, which is collaborating with XXX Primary School to develop the teacher inclusive practices. There are two components of the inclusive practices project: professional learning for teachers and a research component. Therefore, while you are engaged in professional learning for inclusive education, there is information being gathered for research. This is being done with the support and permission of the school principal and the GDE.

The overall research intends to find out what knowledge about inclusive pedagogical practices can be developed as teachers in a full-service school engage with university researchers in professional learning communities (PLCs). Within this overall research project, I am also conducting research for my degree. My research seeks to find out if, and how, teachers' identity and their agency (their actions in class related to inclusive pedagogy) have changed since being involved in PLC meetings. The title of my research is:

Professional learning for inclusive pedagogy:
The shaping of teacher professional identity and agency through interactions in Professional Learning Communities

As a teacher at XXX Primary School who has participated in the PLC meetings, you are in an ideal position to help me find out teachers' experiences of learning to use inclusive pedagogy in a PLC. I am conducting the second phase of my research project which involves individual interviews and group discussions with teachers who have participated PLC meetings. I would like to invite you to participate in the second phase of my research project. If you agree to participate, there are **two** possible ways in which you could participate:

The first is one (1) individual interview. If you accept the invitation to be interviewed you would be asked to offer 30 minutes of your time on a week day after classes in Term Three of 2016. The interview will be

held at a time and place that would be convenient for you. I would request that the interview be audio-recorded for research purposes. If you accept to be interviewed but you decide that you are not willing to allow your contribution to be recorded, you can change your mind at any time and stop being part of the recorded individual interview. There are no negative consequences to you if you decide not to have your contribution recorded, or if you want to stop being interviewed. I assure you that if you do decide to participate in the interview I will not ask for your name to be recorded. You will be completely anonymous. This means that your identity will never be made public. If necessary, a pseudonym (false name) will be linked to what you would say. All information about the school will also be kept confidential.

The second is a group discussion. I am inviting you to participate in one 45 minute group discussion on a week day at a time after school that is convenient to you in Term Three of 2016. If you accept the invitation to be part of the group discussion, the time and place of the discussion would be convenient to the participants. I am inviting other teachers who teach different grades at your school to participate in the group discussion. I would ask you questions about your PLC and what you are learning from it. Although the questions would ask about your personal reflections and experiences regarding the PLC, I will undertake not to ask questions that would violate your privacy. With your permission, the group discussion would be audio-recorded so I can have an accurate record of what teachers say.

If you decide that you are not willing to be interviewed with other teachers, you can stop the interview at any time and you would not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. There are no negative consequences to you if you do not want to be interviewed, or if you want to stop being interviewed. I assure you that if you do decide to participate by being interviewed and audio-recorded, you will be completely anonymous. This means that your name and the names of all teachers who would be interviewed will never be made public. If necessary, pseudonyms (false names) will be linked to what you and other teachers say. All information about teachers participating in the research will be kept confidential.

You may choose to:

- **NOT** participate in the second phase of my research
- **participate** in only **One** individual interview, Or
- **participate** in **One** individual interview and **One** group discussion
- **participate** in only **One** group discussion

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. This means that it is entirely up to you whether you want to participate in the research. There will be no negative consequences to you in any way should you not participate. There are no direct benefits to you if you do decide to participate, but we expect that my research findings will be used to improve the professional development programme at XXX Primary School, and ultimately to inform professional development for teachers in full service and inclusive schools.

All research data (the audio recording and material) will be kept securely in locked offices and would be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project. The results of the research will be used for academic purposes (including books, journals and conference proceedings) and a summary of findings will be made to available to you, the school and the GDE.

If you are willing to participate in my research project, I would ask that you to complete and sign the attached consent form and to return it to me. If you accept to participate and fill in the consent form, I will give you a copy of your filled-in form to keep for your records. If you have any queries regarding any aspect of our research, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor Prof. Elizabeth Walton.

Regards
Wacango Kimani
PhD student,
Wits School of Education

Wacango Kimani wacango@gmail.com 079 250 1051 (all hours)	Elizabeth.Walton@wits.ac.za 011 717 3768 (office) 083 239 0318 (all hours)

Appendix C

PLC Sessions and Topics

Session 1: Effective Listening

Teachers first discussed the meaning of each word of the PLC. They identified that working in small groups, that is the PLC groups, was better than workshops because the groups were personal. The teachers noted that the workshops do not encourage participation. The second and main discussion of this session was about what listening entails, including the physical and social conditions that enable learners to listen.

Session 2: Whole Body Listening

This session presented listening as important for the development of inclusive education. Instead of focusing on the learners as the problem, teachers need to develop listening skills for all learners. The selected focus is "whole-body listening" which is an approach teachers can use to promote active listening in their classrooms. An article by a speech therapist and a picture on whole-body listening are given to the facilitator, and teachers get only the picture.

Session 3: Building Vocabulary for comprehension

Going with the theme for the year, listening, this session is practical and helps teachers develop a lesson plan under the heading "Visit to the Zoo." Questions were asked about the previous meeting's topic: The Whole Body listening strategy. The second part of the meeting teachers discussed how to teach a topic on transport.

Session 4: Inclusive teaching and learning

At the beginning of the session teachers watched a four-minute video featuring a full-service school in the Eastern Cape. To help teacher identify features of inclusion in the video is watched three times with the Wits team pausing the video at key sections to highlight inclusive teaching and learning components. The teachers' guideline required them to pick a topic that they would be teaching in the coming week and discuss how they would use one of the teaching strategies shown in the video for their selected topic.

Session 5: Cooperative Learning 1

Teachers watch a video and discuss the advantages of children learning together in groups, and the problem of grouping children according to ability. This formed the introduction to cooperative learning in which teachers identified the difference from just putting children in groups to work.

Session 6: Cooperative Learning 2: Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share was introduced as a form of cooperative learning that allows learners greater participation on class. The one-to-one personal interaction was meant to motivate learners who may be afraid to participate in whole class discussion. A worksheet was given to teachers which they could give learners or dictate to learners how to use the strategy. The teacher in the video had learners sitting on a carpet. The use of the carpet was discussed in the PLC as a strategy for introducing new concepts.

Session 7: Cooperative Learning 3: Write-Think-Pair-Share/Pair-coaching

The third meeting to discuss cooperative learning included two strategies: Write-Think-Pair-Share; and Pair-Coaching. The meeting began with teachers watching the video from the previous session followed by shares about using Think-Pair-Share. To operationalise the strategy the teachers discussed story-writing and identify problems with a particular text-book that uses "English names that they the learners don't know."

Session 8: Sentence Starters

Sentence starters were discussed as a strategy that scaffolds learners. The teachers' discussion guideline began with examples of sentence starters related to PLC full-services schools and inclusive teachers.

Session 9: Meaningful Engagement

The purpose of this topic is to improve learner engagement and motivation. A graphic in the teachers' hand-out shows the relationship between learners, teachers, and content and advice for improving learner engagement and motivation.

Session 10: Bell-Curve Thinking & Inclusive Pedagogy 1

This was a technical session that introduced the IPAA. In this discussion teachers identify how learners are labelled as “excellent ones”, “poor ones”, “the weak link”, “poor performers”, and the use of misleading terms such as “genius” for the “slow learners”.

Session 11: Bell-Curve Thinking & Inclusive Pedagogy 2

Bell-curve thinking was illustrated using role-plays. Teachers were divided into 3 ability groups to work on geometric shapes. One group coloured different shapes and were told that because they cannot perform difficult work all they need to do is colour the shapes in the hand-out. A second group was given loose pictures of shapes and a hand-out with different shapes. The group were told to stick pictures into their corresponding shape in the hand-out. The third group was gives Jelly tots sweets and tooth picks and were asked to make as many shapes by joining the jelly tots with the tooth picks. Teachers then reflected about being in different groups.