INTERACTION AND MEANING MAKING IN TEACHER LITERATURE CIRCLES

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates interactions among three in-service teachers, in a teacher literature circle [TLC], as they tried to make sense of a new literature text, which they had to teach to their students. The new text was introduced by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia in 2011 and the teachers needed to make sense of it first. It is within this context that the researcher studied the ways in which teachers made meaning of the new text through their interactions in the teacher literature circles. This study addresses the following questions: How do teacher interact ion a TLC during discussions of a new literature text and how do teachers make meaning of the new text? The participants comprised three experienced teachers, who had taught the English language syllabus since the introduction of the literature component. The study addresses the interaction between the three in-service teachers as they discussed the new literature text in teacher literature circles. The teachers discussed the new literature text, "Catch Us If You Can" by Catherine Macphail. Data collection comprised transcripts of teacher literature circle discussions, group and individual interviews, written participant reflection forms and researcher field notes. The data were analyzed, described and interpreted, to show the processes and complexities involved in trying to make sense of the new literature text through the interactions of the teacher during the TLC. Findings showed that in-service teachers in TLCs played multiple roles – that of facilitator, leader, active listener etc. The review of literature shows that these roles were also played out by the teachers in classroom with their students. Apart from these roles, the talk was exploratory in nature where the teachers supported one another in their

collaborative efforts to understand the new text. During the teacher interactions, various themes arose helped the teachers to negotiate meanings of the text. This make sense of the text. The research offers insights into the complexities of teacher interactions and the multi-tiered nature of the meaning making processes of teachers as they make sense of a new literature text in a teacher literature circles.

Interaksi Guru dan Pemahaman serta Penghayatan Makna dalam Perbincangan Guru "Teacher Literature Circles"

Abstrak

Kajian ini menyelidik interaksi antara tiga guru dalam perkhidmatan yang terlibat dengan *teacher literature circles (TLC),* semasa perubahan dalam teks sastera yang di perkenalkan oleh Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia pada tahun 2010/2011. Dalam konteks tersebut penyelidik mengkaji cara guru mencuba memahami (*make meaning*) teks tersebut mealui interaksi dalam *teacher literature circles* sebelum mereka mengajarnya kepada pelajar. Kajian ini menjawab soalan kajian berikut: Apakah peranan yang dimainkan oleh guru dalam perkhidmatan apabila mereka membincangkan teks sastera baru dalam *teacher literature circles*? dan bagaimanakah guru-guru mencuba membina makna (*make meaning*) teks baru yang dibincang dalam *teacher literature circles*? Partisipan merupakan tiga guru berpengalaman yang telah mengajar silibus Bahasa Inggeris sejak komponen sastera diperkenalkan. Guru-guru ini membincangkan teks sastera baru iaitu "Catch Us If You Can" oleh Catherine Macphail. Data terkumpul merangkumi transkrip perbincangan guru-guru dalam *teacher literature circles*, temu bual kumpulan dan individu, borang bertulis refleksi partisipan dan nota kajian lapangan penyelidik. Data dihuraikan, dianalisis dan diberi interpretasi supaya menunjukkan proses dan kompleksiti yang diharungi semasa guru-guru cuba memahami secara mendalam teks sastera baru melalui interaksi mereka semasa penglibatan dalam TLC. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan guru dalam perkhidmatan yang memasuki *teacher literature circles* memainkan pelbagai peranan dan proses yang berlangsung degan lancer. Peranan dan

perubahan dalam peranan mencerminkan kompleksiti yang terlibat dalam membolehkan guru-guru membina makna bagi teks baru, secara individu dan kumpulan semasa mereka membina pemahaman. Kajian ini memberi penerangan terperinci berkenaan dengan kompleksiti pembinaan pemahaman teks secara berlapis oleh guru- guru.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, a new cycle of literature texts were introduced into the Malaysian English Language Syllabus (Secondary Schools) by the Ministry of Education, thus situating the current study at a point of change. This situation of text change is only one of several types of change which teachers face during moments in their teaching lives. Other examples of change include the introduction of new and revised examination formats, a change in syllabi, the addition of new subjects into the curriculum, new requirements for teacher promotions and other types of change due to new and changing policies from the Ministry of Education.

This means that teachers need to co-construct knowledge, interpret subject matter, invent teaching strategies and generate knowledge, curriculum and instruction especially so, in order to cope with and adapt to change. This process involves teacher learning over time which is socially mediated (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Of great importance, is the *what, how* and *under what conditions* teachers learn to respond to the needs of a changing society.

In the context of this study, the change is in the introduction of new texts introduced by the Ministry of Education. The question arising is how teachers responded to a change -- a change in texts, made by a higher authority. This is where the researcher proposes teacher literature circles as a mode to help teachers to cope with the text change. Forming teacher literature circles is expected to facilitate teacher learning which will help teachers to make meaning of the new texts which they will have to teach to their students.

When teachers enter the profession after training, they are only incidentally supported in their learning (Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshuizen, 2006; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001). Thus, to facilitate continuous learning, teachers must take the initiative to look for opportunities and other modes to facilitate learning, especially so when they (the teachers) encounter changes. Wilhelm (2009) states that teachers must inquire into "the issues we teach, into how we teach, and by having the courage to continually make the changes that our reflective and reflexive stances suggest to us" (p. 12)

Although the Ministry of Education in Malaysia has taken steps to prepare notes and teaching suggestions which have been disseminated to schools, as well as conduct courses for teachers, most teachers transmit these materials directly to students without considering other interpretations of the texts. Teacher literature circles are one strategy or mode for teachers to make meaning of new texts and to facilitate genuine and shared interpretations of new texts among themselves. This discussion and sharing period is expected to help teachers to prepare themselves to teach the new text to their students.

Teacher literature circles are small groups of teachers who meet regularly to discuss a particular work of literature, inquire into and reflect on ideas presented in the texts. The teachers would make interpretations, construct and co-construct meaning, while shaping and reshaping interpretations over an extended period of time. Daniels (1994) refers to literature circles as "small, temporary groups who have chosen to read the same work of literature." (p.18). Book clubs refer to the same concept and are usually used among adult groups. It is during literature circles that teachers have opportunities to

participate in discussions with other teachers and as a result, deepen, broaden and explore themselves as literacy teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Related studies on literature circles have focused on two major strands: *student literature circles;* and *adult literature circles.*

The first strand of research focussed on student literature circles. Research on student literature circles looked at how students discussed texts collaboratively among themselves (Almasi, O'Flahavan, & Arya, 2001; Anderson, Chinn, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998; Fecho, 2001; Lehman & Scharer, 1996; Nystrand, 1997; O'Flahavan, Arya, 200l; Pace & Townsend, 1999; Rex & McEachen, 1999). Although the focus of this strand of research was on student meaning making, teachers did play a facilitative role in framing student discussions as "outsiders" to the literature circle. Thus, the focus was on the students' meaning making, not the teachers'. An important gap that has not been addressed is the way the teachers make meaning out of the interactions in the literature circles.

A second strand of research on literature circles involved adults. However, these adult groups comprised adults from various occupations. For example, from what is reported in Marshall, Smagorinsky and Smith (1995), the adult literature circle comprised only two in-service teachers while the rest of the participants were non-teachers. Even in the study by George (2001), where 'educators' were the participants, some were teachers, while others comprised a librarian, a school counsellor, principal

and so forth. The question arising from this is, would a teacher group discussion (as in a teacher literature circle), be any different from a mixed adult group discussion?

Hence, the interaction among in-service teachers is less researched as the focus was on student literature circles and mixed adult groups. Furthermore, the context in which meaning making occurs, of in-service teachers in literature circles, has not been addressed, adding to the gap. The focus of this study is on the ways the teachers make meaning of a new text, out of the interactions in TLCs. The new text discussed had also to be taught to students later, placing this study on a different dimension.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are two-fold: to investigate the interactions of the in-service teachers when discussing a new literature text and to examine the ways in which teachers make meaning of the new literature text.

Research Questions

This study attempts to investigate the following questions aimed to be answered in this research on in-service teacher literature circles.

1. How do teachers interact in a TLC, during the discussions of a new literature text?
2. How do teachers make meaning of the new literature text during the TLC?

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework guiding this study includes Reader Response Theory and Socio-Constructivist Theory. These theories provided a foundation for my conceptualization of the meaning making process of experienced teachers as they participated in teacher literature circle discussions of the new literature text, "Catch Us If You Can" (by Catherine Macphail), which they had to teach their students. The theories also offered an understanding of the discussions in teacher literature circles as an important context and medium through which teachers bring their individual transactions and responses to their readings, to a social context. Through social interaction, they engage in negotiations leading to a shaping and reshaping of initial responses. New meanings and "envisionments" (Langer, 1991, p. 230) are constructed and co-constructed.

It is within this framework that discussions on the new literature text, "Catch Us If You Can" by a group of experienced teachers is represented as a creative and socially mediated construction of the meaning making process.

Reader Response Theory and Socio-Constructivist Theory

According to reader response theory, reading is a reflective and creative process where meaning is self-constructed. Fish (1980) informed that readers do not reside in the same context, and reading contexts of an individual change over time. Langer (1991) developed the term envisionment to describe momentary interpretations which are subject to change, as ideas unfold and new ones emerge and develop.

Socio-constructive theory extends the social element present in reader response to the larger social context of the group interaction, which moves the study to a socially situated one. Vygotsky (1978) advanced a view of learning that stressed social influences on the ways people think. The view sees thinking as being shaped by the social and cultural environment in which an individual develops, language being the primary mediator of learning in the environment. Similarly, Wertsch (1991) remarked that "human mental functioning is socially situated" (p. 86).

Similar to reader response theory, socio-constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1962) conceptualizes 'meaning' as a "dynamic, fluid complex whole", as words change meaning and transition from one sense to another, depending on the context. In this way, Vygotsky's conceptualization of meanings parallel and build on Reader Response Theory where changing contexts result in changing meanings within the individual. The reader is not a passive recipient of meaning that an author has rendered in a text but rather an active maker of meaning. Readers' contexts are not fixed; their past experiences, beliefs, expectations and assumptions differ. Langer (1991) referred to these changing momentary meanings in the term she used, 'envisionments'.

Reader response theory has contributed greatly to understanding variation in response, acknowledging the reader as an active maker of meaning. Socio-constructive theory adds the wider social context of interaction among the group which facilitates negotiations within the wider meaning making process of the teachers. The following discussion relates to the key elements of the two theories.

The three key elements in the study are the individuals, the text and the teacher literature circle as a social context. Reader response theory generally focuses on transactions between readers, texts and their social context. The theory generally claims that meanings of texts are derived from transactions between readers and the texts that they read within a specific context. The current context of the study involves readers who are teachers, who need to read and teach the newly introduced novel "Catch Us If You Can" in their classroom. On the other hand, socio constructivism is a theory of learning or meaning making where individuals construct new understandings based on interactions between what they know and believe, and ideas and knowledge with which they come into contact (Resnick, 1989), such as from a text or from others.

The two theories complement each other in unravelling the phenomenon of interactions in the Teacher Literature Circle. While both theories (reader response and socio constructive theories) foreground individuals' responses towards texts as socially grounded, the latter focuses on the individuals as readers transacting meaning with the text while the former focuses on the social interactions that give rise to meaning making. The following discussion shows how the key elements of the study, namely: individual, text and social context relate to the study.

The individual reader and text

Readers, according to Rosenblatt (1938) possess "intellectual, emotional and experiential equipment" (p. 26) and "knowledge" (p. 27) of the social, economic and intellectual history of the age in which literary works were written. Readers draw on this 'knowledge' to understand specific novels they are reading at any one time.

Further, the individual reader uses his or her experiences or what Rosenblatt conceptualizes as "multiple inner alternatives" (2004) in the process of meaning making. The individual experience comprises certain "organismic states, or certain ranges of feeling" (p. 24) which are stirred in the reader's innate "linguistic-experiential reservoir". From these activated reservoirs, selective attention is shaped by multiple physical, personal, social, and cultural factors of the context. The reader then picks out elements to organize and synthesize, a process which Rosenblatt (2004) posits as the emergence of "meaning". The meaning making process is said to occur in a "to and fro spiralling, non linear, continuously reciprocal influence" between the reader and the text (1938, p. 11). In short, the individual's multiple inner alternatives resonate to the words in the new text. Hence the individual teachers, who read the new text in this study, draw on their personal multiple inner alternatives in their 'linguistic-experiential reservoirs, in shaping their experience with the new literature text. The reader thus adopts a 'selective attitude', bringing certain aspects into the centre of attention and pushing others into the fringes. This brings the phenomena of 'stance'.

According to Rosenblatt(1978), any reading involves the reader taking on a stance, either consciously or unconsciously. The stance adopted is a result of the transaction with the text, which 'stirs up elements of the linguistic-experiential reservoir' of the reader. The stance adopted could be a predominantly aesthetic stance or a predominantly efferent stance. An efferent stance would focus on information, directions, conclusions to be retained, used or acted on after the reading event. An aesthetic stance would focus on what is being lived through during the reading event. This includes the sensations, images, feelings, and ideas that are the residue of past psychological events

involving those words and referents. Although many readings may fall near the extremes, many others, and perhaps most, may fall nearer the centre of the continuum, where both stances are more evenly involved.

In comparison, socio-constructivists like Vygotsky (1962) conceptualize "meaning" (p. 46) as one of the zones of sense that is stable and precise. Arguably, a word changes its sense according to the context in which it appears. Hence the "stable" meaning then transitions into a different "stable" meaning within the individual according to the new context. Therefore the meaning making process is a "dynamic, fluid, complex whole". When an individual gains a "sense of a word", the word arouses psychological events in the individual's consciousness especially during group interactions. In this sense Vygotsky's conceptualization of meaning parallels Rosenblatt's inner alternatives found in the linguistic-experiential reservoirs, as both theorists draw on the reader's social and psychological domains in interpreting meaning. In this study, the meaning making mainly manifests in two planes: Firstly, as the individuals read the text and bring their own meanings to the text, and secondly, as the individuals interact socially in the TLCs and share their meanings with the TLC participants.

The individual reader, text and other readers (social context)

The uniqueness of the transaction between reader and text are rooted in 'social origins and social effects' (Rosenblatt, 1968, p. 27). As social beings, individuals also share common experiences such as birth, growth, death, joy and love which form a "common core of experience" (p. 28); this common core allows individuals to communicate on a common footing before they can bring their unique expressions to the

discussion. As individuals belong to social systems, they are said to share social patterns (p. 28). Social patterns in this study are reflected in the teachers' interactions and the social roles they play. The Teacher Literature Circle (TLC) is a social platform which further allowed the teachers the opportunity to communicate their unique transactions with one another. Rosenblatt (1978) adds:

> Learning what others have made of a text can greatly increase such insight into one's own relationship with it. A reader who has been moved or disturbed by a text often manifests an urge to talk about it, to clarify and crystallize his sense of the work. He likes to hear others' views. Through such interchange he can discover how people bringing different temperaments, different literary and life experiences, to the text have engaged in very different transactions with it (p. 146).

In this study, the teachers in the TLC had the opportunity to hear each others' "views", "temperaments", "literary and life experiences", thus enhancing their own insights of the text, through their interactions which included their discourse as well.

As the TLC in this study concerns teachers having to deal with a new text, socio-constructivist theory sheds light in understanding social interactions mediated by the text. The theory acknowledges the social nature of formal knowledge development within an expert community, and of knowledge creation that can take place within a social grouping (Richardson, 2003), namely the TLC group in this study. The participants in this group could be viewed as an expert community due to their extensive teaching experience but who need to gain new formal knowledge of the new text. Furthermore, the theory construes individual contributions as being negotiated in a group. The interactions

among the teachers could be construed as a dialogical and rational *process* that results in a shared and warranted set of understandings. Unlike Rosenblatt's Transactional theory that focuses more on readers' transactions with texts, socio- constructivism focuses more on the interactions as a complex social process. Some characteristics of the social process relevant to the context of the present study include:

1. Facilitation of group dialogue that explores an element of the domain with the purpose of leading to the creation and shared understanding of a topic;
2. Planned and often unplanned introduction of formal domain knowledge into the conversations through direct instruction referenced to text;

In sum the theories inform the present study of the interactions in the TLCs as a social phenomenon that could be visualised as follows:

Context

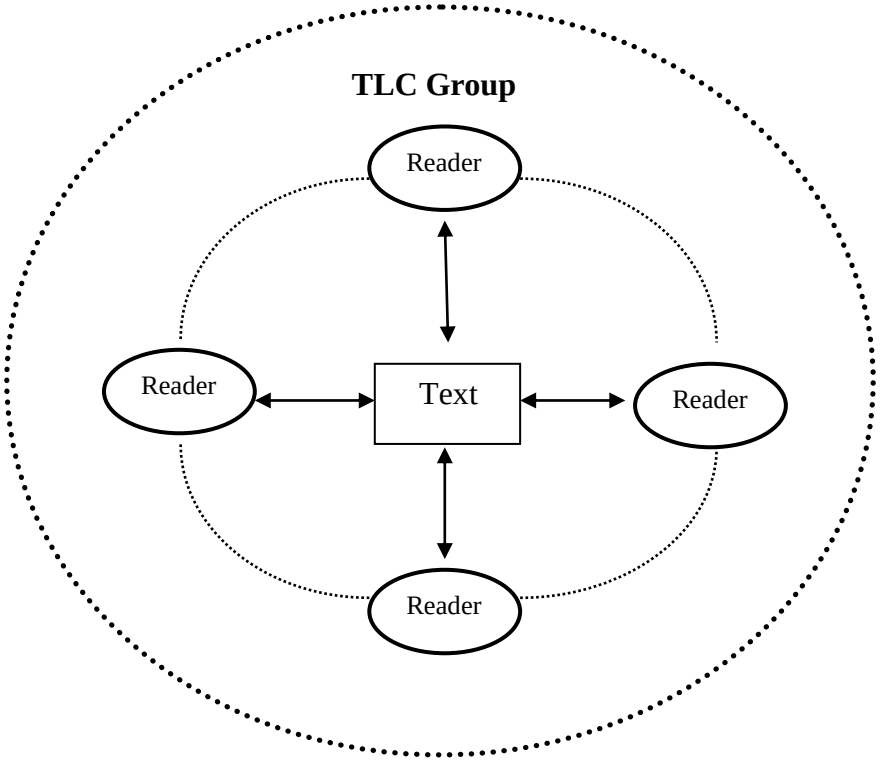

Figure 1.1. Theoretical framework of the study.

In Figure 1.1, the outer boundary of the circle represents the TLC group interaction while the inner circle represents the individual readers as they read and transact with the new text. Reader response theory helps explain this transaction between the reader, the text and the context at the time of the reading. The outer circle represents the individuals who interact as a group in the TLC where socio-constructive theory helps to explain the shared meanings constructed as a group. These theories are not separate but complement each other as the individual weaves the self and the social.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate in-service teacher interaction in literature circles at a point of text change made by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. The study proposes to study in-service teacher interaction in order to find out how teachers in literature circles can engage in the meaning making process through their interactions as they interpret the new literature texts which they have to teach to students in classrooms.

This study thus also looks at how literature circles can facilitate in-service teacher meaning -making (which is socially mediated).

Contribution of the Study

A contribution of the study is made in terms of using and adapting TLCs, as a strategy that can be used during change. Such strategies would also empower and equip teachers better to face changes and challenges. This study shows the importance of and the rich possibilities of teacher meaning making processes in socially mediated environments, at different points in time during the teaching years of in-service teachers--not limited to times of text change but at any point of time that teachers feel the need to discuss issues arising out of teaching and learning situations.

Contribution to research is significant in that TLCs may be an informal learning mode made available to in-service teachers in addition to the more formal learning modes such as attending courses and workshops. This research is also significant, considering the sparse research on purely in-service teacher literature circles compared to work on students in literature circles (mentioned earlier).

The unique interaction of teachers who discuss texts to be taught to learners is a contribution in terms of teacher interaction in preparation for teacher learning as well as for teaching learners. The teachers brought their TLC discussions and meanings to the classrooms where the students added to the meanings of the teachers, and thus explored meaning at a different level, which enriched the TLC. This was what made this TLC a unique contribution. While meanings were explored among teachers (and students), interpretations were shaped and reshaped continuously.

Findings of the study will contribute to the body of research on specific interaction contexts of in-service teachers, considering the scarcity of studies which have examined such contexts of the learning process of communities of practice as well (Little & Horn, 2007). Apart from this, the current study also gives teachers the opportunities to experience literature circles for themselves (Courtland, French, Owston, & Stead, 1998), enabling teachers to understand how literature circles pave the way for meaning making in socially mediated environments and within the context of text change. Teacher literature circles will also help teachers to understand how this strategy works; hence, the teachers will be in a better position to implement literature circles more effectively for students and for themselves (the teachers). Literature circles could be seen as an avenue to exchange multiple interpretations while shaping and reshaping new ones.

Definition of Terms

Literature circles: Literature circles are defined by Daniels (1994) as “small, temporary groups who have chosen to read and discuss the same work of literature”. (p. 74)

In-service teachers: A term borrowed from Borg (2006) referring to teachers who have completed their initial training and work in classrooms. The in-service teachers in the current study are experienced and have a minimum of 15 years of teaching experience.

Roles: The term roles as used in this study refer to the roles that were reported in the review of literature. Some of these roles included being: facilitators, leaders, silent observer, participant etc.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on studies involving teachers, students and adults working collaboratively in socially situated contexts. These studies draw on the importance of social interaction in meaning making. This study is about in service teachers and thus much of the review looks at in-service teachers and opportunities for teacher professional development. Studies on interaction and talk are also included but most of the studies focus on classroom interaction involving students. Past successful research with teachers in collaboration are reviewed to show how teacher literature circles (TLCs) could be viewed as a mode for collaborative work among teachers, with the possibilities of leading to teacher professional development. A historical development of literature circles is also presented followed by a review of studies on teacher roles in student literature circles. Some studies on adult reading groups (literature circles) are also cited to show how adults, other than teachers, responded in literature circles.

The present study draws on these studies to look at what teachers have done in various teacher learning projects, student literature circles and how teachers make meaning in socially mediated ways through teacher literature circles, as they make sense of the new literature text introduced by the Ministry of Education. The review in this chapter presents a gateway leading towards meaning making among teachers through

social and collaborative contexts, with a suggestion of TLCs as an informal mode for meaning making among in-service teachers.

In service Teachers

In service teachers is a term borrowed from Borg (2006) to mean teachers who have completed their training and are no longer considered "novice" teachers. Teachers in their initial teaching years are referred to as "novice" teachers (Berliner, 2001). In-service teachers may be at points in their careers from six years till the time they retire from the profession. Berliner argued that not until their fifth year of experience do they become "proficient" enough to let their knowledge and intuition guide their teaching. This study does not include novice teachers and the teachers in this study have more than six years, that is, from sixteen to twenty four years of teaching experience.

Most in service teachers are usually only incidentally supported in their learning (Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshuizen, 2006; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001. Carico (2001, p. 518) describes some of the emotions experienced by in-service teachers to include, apprehension at starting something new, being uncertain, living with dilemmas "again even after we've been teaching for years".

For many years, researchers have written about the isolation of teachers and the harm that it brings to their continued learning and development (Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982). Little's (1982, 1986) seminal work showed that teachers who worked together not only built commitment among themselves but also built further learning. Learning together also included "struggling" together and helped teachers to learn by way of mastering new practices.

Teacher Professional Development

Educational reform anywhere is aimed at setting higher and higher goals for student learning. Changes in classroom practices demanded by the reform visions ultimately rely on teachers (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Spillane, 1999). The US 'No Child Left Behind Act' 2001 requires a "high quality" professional development but does not address questions as to what constitutes high quality professional development or how professional development should be made available to teachers. Sykes (1996) characterized the inadequacy of conventional professional development as "the most serious unsolved problem for policy and practice in American education today" (p. 465). Perhaps this is true for most countries. How can high quality professional development be achieved then?

No matter what, it is undeniable that a great deal of learning on the part of the teachers is essential to make these visions successful. A report titled 'Teaching at Risk: A Call to Action" was released by the Teaching Commission (2004) which reminds us that teaching is "our nation's most valuable profession" (p. 12). Unless teachers get guidance and support to boost their learning, the task of stretching to higher quality professional development in order to bring about teacher change and achieve higher and higher goals for student learning, will be an uphill one (Bell & Cohen, 1999; Putnam & Borko, 1997; Wilson & Bene, 1999).

Billions of dollars are spent on in-service seminars and other forms of professional development programs which are fragmented, intellectually superficial and do not take into account what is known about how teachers learn (Bell & Cohen, 1999;

Putnam & Borko, 1997). Despite the importance of professional development and teacher learning to teachers, efforts toward this end are inadequate and research has shown disappointing results with teacher professional learning activities often being characterized as ineffective (Hanushek, 2005; Sykes, 1996).

Borko (2004), Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) and Timperley and Alton-Lee (2008) have all argued that in previous research, the problem stems in part from researchers employing simplistic conceptualizations of teacher professional learning that fail to consider how learning is embedded in the professional lives and working conditions of teachers. According to Opfer and Pedder (2011), analysis of extant literature suggests that the majority of writings on teacher professional learning focus on specific activities, processes or programs in isolation from the complex teaching and learning environments in which teachers live. Perhaps this explains Carico's (2001, p. 518) description which includes the "fears and uncertainties after many years of teaching and encompassing one massive inviolable psychological role known as teacher that resists change".

Lieberman (2010) cites the NWP (National Writing Project) as a good example of colleagueship after studying two sites in 2000, confirming that teachers working together was a powerful way to learn about their own and others' practices. During the NWP, teachers learnt to share their best strategies, learn from others, become writers themselves, and be open to learning as a lifelong process. Teachers left with not only a pile of tried and tested practices but a major discovery- that teachers themselves became students of their own practice. While professional development has changed in some places, generally, the power of teachers to analyze their own practice as a critical

centrepiece of high quality professional development, has not been recognized (Darling-Hammond, Chung-Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

Other work which has brought teachers together to study their own practices and gone public (via the internet and in other words, documented as well) include Hutchinson's (2003) video clips which included artifacts for some of the literacy practices shared, as well as materials she had authored to support her departmental and district colleagues in their professional development and part of her work as a teacher consultant for the NWP.

Meyers (2006) a second grade teacher, captured language arts instruction, images of student work and reflections of her practice. Meyer's themes included a description of the rituals and routines she established at the beginning of the year to support her students' literacy learning, a description of her workshop approach, and a discussion of the role of "touchstone texts" in her instruction. This site, together with others, developed at the same time, were fitted into similar frames created for representing teachers' practice: a sidebar for the Web site with features common to all the teachers' practices (a statement about their teaching contexts, connections to state and local standards, a rationale for the content being taught etc.). At the same time, a horizontal navigation bar was designed around a particular practitioner's themes for reflecting on his or her practice. The same frame informed collaboration with Philip Levien (2005) to document an entire semester-long project working with his students to rehearse and perform a Shakespearean comedy.

In 2006, Lieberman partnered with the Noyce Foundation to document four teachers' professional learning practices, whereby each practitioner shared not only a content theme of personal narrative writing but also a structural continuity in his or her writing workshop pedagogy; the researchers created a navigational matrix connecting each teacher's practice to all the others. Therefore a teacher exploring one site might continue to make comparisons and further explorations with other sites through this connection.

Ultimately, Lieberman (2010, p. 82) states that this partnership with the Noyce Foundation which resulted in developing the "Inside Writing Workshop', was the culmination of desires "we each held as teachers ourselves: to see others teach, to examine artifacts of learning, to hear accomplished practitioners reflect on their work, and especially to uncover the subtleties of particularly effective practices". An essential representation of teaching is akin to sitting down with the teacher and looking at the artifacts 'side by side', as Erickson (2006) reminded ethnographers and classroom documentarians to do.

Various documentations have been made online and among them are "The Quest Project for Signature Pedagogies in Teacher Education" (2009) where three teacher educators used Hutchinson's MRT (Multimedia representations). This project enabled the researchers to understand the complexity of teaching could be mined online not only for the teacher's purposes but also for teacher educators who were using the teacher sites for their purposes as well.

Pam Grossman and Christa Crompton (2006) created a web site in which they describe a multipart assignment for their secondary English methods course at Stanford University. The researchers got their students to investigate particular questions about Hutchinson's site and later try out one or more of the strategies identified in Hutchinson's practice in their own field placements. Finally, the students reflected on what it took for them to adapt the strategies to their particular contexts. Grossman and Crompton shared evidence of their students' insights. The impact on these students of digging under the surface of practices, was considerable.

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1997) began integrating Hutchinson's work into a course for preservice teachers and illustrates how teachers can subvert the traditional 'ping-pong' style of classroom discussion from teacher direction to how Hutchinson gets the students up out of their seats and into small group conversations with each other about issues of race and racism. Using interrogation the way Hutchinson does, Ladson-Billing's students could think about how to facilitate class conversations on controversial topics. Some of the topics included poverty, homelessness, immigration, political change and civic engagement. Additionally, Hutchinson's and Ladson-Billings mutual use of each other's work reinforces a significant outcome: that of subverting the traditional power dynamic between university-based research, expertise and school-based wisdom of practice. Instead of a top-down university-school relationship, Ladson-Billings and Hutchinson became colleagues in conversation about issues of mutual concern and aspects of wisdom of practice which are captured, analyzed and documented.

All these projects show the importance of collaboration, the social learning that takes place among teachers and going public in terms of online efforts, and in so doing,

documenting these practices as a source of learning for many to view. When teachers go public with their work, they open themselves up to learning, not only from their own practice, but also from research and others who help expand their knowledge. Documenting teacher practices allows teachers to articulate what they know (and what they may need to know) and teaches the rest about the complexities, layered nature of teaching and ways for others to emulate or adapt strategies for their own working situation and contextualized situations and practices. All these ultimately add to the body of knowledge in teaching and help to build a codified knowledge base for the highly professionalized job of teachers.

When professional development opportunities start with other people's ideas first, they deny what teachers know. Perhaps this is what Robins (2007) meant when she spoke of knowledge about teaching being produced by 'outsiders' (JMTE, 2007, p. 53). Too often, knowledge about teaching is produced by outsiders – researchers who look in on classrooms rather than live in classrooms (Robins et al., 2007). This only perpetuates the idea that teachers are consumers rather than producers of knowledge. In fact, classrooms should be laboratories of learning in which teachers transform ideas they have comprehended. Starting with teachers' practice invites teachers into the conversation and opens them up to critique, learning and expanding their repertoire.

Perhaps teacher literature circles may show up teacher knowledge through teacher narratives and build upon existing case studies. Records of classroom practice are powerful tools for facilitating teacher learning and change (Borko, 2004). Borko uses the metaphor 'multifocal vision' to consider situative perspectives on knowing and learning. The 'near-vision prescription' (p. 8) focuses on the individual teacher and includes how

the individual teacher constructs new knowledge and instructional practices. In a way, this resembles reader response theory where the individual is constructing meaning through his or her transaction between the text, environment and himself or herself. The individual builds and draws from his or her 'experiential reservoir' (Roseblatt, 1938). Borko then refers to the: 'distance-vision prescription' which focuses on the professional development community and includes patterns of participation in professional development activities. The ability to use multiple frameworks simultaneously is a key strength of situative research perspectives. The researcher also sees Borko's metaphor of 'multifocal vision' to consider the teachers in their dual roles as readers and teachers.

In a study by Franke and Kazemi (2004), the researchers worked with the faculty at an elementary school for two years, facilitating and studying several teacher workshops in developing children's mathematical thinking. Over time, the teachers came to see themselves as a community of learners with a shared goal of improving the learning and teaching of mathematics. They became better at elaborating the details of students' mathematical reasoning and understanding their problem-solving strategies, and they began to develop instructional trajectories for helping students advance their mathematical thinking.

A similar study by Borko (2004) called the STAAR (Supporting the Transition from Arithmetic to Algebraic Reasoning) was a professional development program for middle school mathematics teachers. One of the central goals was to create a professional learning community while increasing teachers' understanding of key algebra concepts. Of special interest was the fact that instructors helped to establish trust and create an environment in which teachers would feel safe to explore unknown terrain

(mathematical) and share their solution strategies Pedagogical strategies received greater emphasis in the above mentioned workshops.

Borko's study revealed connections between teachers' experiences in the workshops and changes in their mathematical understanding and instructional practices. The teachers demonstrated greater knowledge of algebra concepts and skills on assessment. Interviews and journal reflections showed that several teachers commented that peer collaboration and mathematical conversations played a crucial role in their evolving understanding of algebra concepts.

Furthermore, the teachers indicated that they planned to foster similar collaborations and conversations among students in their own classrooms. Videotaped lessons during the school year following the summer workshop documented numerous attempts by teachers to incorporate group work and sharing of mathematical explanations and justifications into their instruction (Borko, Frykholm et al., in press; Clark & Borko, 2004). This is the documentation of teacher learning and sharing that is needed to be built up to larger scales.

Teacher Literature Circles: Historical Development of Literature Circles

Literature circles were first implemented in 1982 by Karen Smith, an elementary school teacher in Phoenix. She had been given a box of novels by a fellow teacher which she took and kept until her fifth grade students expressed an interest in reading them. The students organized themselves loosely into groups, and started to discuss the novels. Karen was surprised at the degree of their engagement with the books and the complexity of their discussions, without any instruction or help from their teacher (Daniels, 1994).

From this point, literature circles evolved into what they are today: reading, study and discussion groups. Literature circles as an instructional strategy differ from traditional English instruction where students often look to the teacher for the answers and the meaning of the text. In literature circles, discussion, student response, free choice and collaboration, work together towards 'providing a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection' (Schlick Noe, 2004) are highlighted.

Research on Literature Circles have been conducted primarily by Katherine L. Schlick Noe (1995, 1999, 2001, 2003), Bonnie Campbell Hill (1995, 2001, 2003), Nancy J. Johnson (1995, 1999, 2001), and Harvey Daniels (1994, 2002, 2004). Other researchers have also carried out research work on literature circles, including Kathy Short (1990), Suzi Keegan and Karen Shrake (1991), and Katherine Samway (1991). Most of these studies are classroom-based. This approach to reading and learning looks to some of the best practices and work through collaboration.

Previous research on L2 education has investigated L2 reading comprehension but not the social context in which the reading was done. Most L2 research has focused on the end or final products of reading and not the process in context, apart from the fact of focusing on L2 students, not teachers.

In this study, the goal of the TLC was not a quest or search for an already agreed upon interpretation, but rather the meaning making process of arriving at socially constituted understandings, as teachers, *not students*, brought and negotiated their own responses to the group discussion. A close examination of literary discussion may

provide a portrait of L2 experienced teachers' construction of meaning as they work with ideas and try to make sense of the new literary text.

Literature circles may promote an understanding of L2 meaning making processes and the pedagogical value of literary discussion among teachers, who may then value and explore teacher literature circles (TLC's) more effectively among themselves and also, literature circles among their students.

Teacher Roles in Student Literature Circles

Studies have been done on student literature circles and how literature circles help students develop a better perspective of literature texts. Some of these studies have also included the roles teachers have played in student literature circles but not the kind of 'roles' which this study has explored and identified. The current study looked at the emergent roles from the teachers during TLCs, which were mainly the reader and teacher roles. The 'roles' referred to in most of the studies on student literature circles, included teacher roles such as facilitator, teacher-guided and as participant.

Researchers who subscribed to the teacher in a leader role during student literature circles justify it by the need for students to be guided towards better understanding of text, the salient themes and issues arising (Andre, 1979; Durkin, 1990; Menke & Pressley, 1994). Others argue that usually the typical interaction pattern resulting from this would be teacher initiation, student response and teacher evaluation (commonly referred to as IRF-initiation, response and feedback by Wells, 1999); IRE-initiation, response, evaluation (Mehan, 1979); Question & Answer patterns (Freebody, Ludwig, & Gunn, 1995). This could place students in passive and less responsible roles

(Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979). The IRE pattern invariably leaves students with little opportunity for response. Gutierrez, Rhymes, and Larson (1995) view this as teacher power which "attempts to stifle dialogue and interaction and the potential for taking up a critical stance" (p. 446). This underscored the need for more interactive communication patterns. Studies have also found that students are not regularly accustomed to participating in academic discourse (Corden, 2001; Nystrand, 1996).

Socio-constructivism places that knowledge is actively constructed and the focus is on individual learning that results from social interaction. As a result, many teachers initiated more student-led literature circles in classrooms. Almasi (1995), Eeds and Wells (1989) suggested that where teachers played the role of facilitator, that is, less teacher centred and more student-led, students engaged in more problem-solving talk and in-depth understanding of literature. Student-led discussions which allowed students to engage in discussions that were relevant to them, provided for a deeper and more meaningful response to the text (Almasi, 1995). This is in contrast with the IRE pattern which was characteristic of teacher-led literature circles.

The transition from teacher-led formats to student-led literature circles has not always been an easy transition and involved significant shifts in the roles of both teacher and student. The new role of teacher as facilitator involves the teacher supporting students in both the what and the how of the literature circle discussion (Jewell, Pratt, & O'Flahavan, 1989; Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn, & Crawford, 1999). It is also not that easy for teachers to make the shift from leader, using the recitation IRE pattern to a more democratic role of facilitator, which is more complex. Still, as Wilhelm maintains, teachers must make a change. Likewise, not all students can make the shift from

dependence on the teacher to independence of authority while maintaining organization of others' views. Teachers who change will be in a position to help their students to make the shift.

In a study by Maloch (2002), student-led discussions were not easily accomplished, due to problems of not listening to each other, dependence on the teacher, silence and other problems. Because of social and cultural factors within and beyond the classroom, students found it difficult to accept the invitation to voice out personal responses and lead as they were not used to this (Alverman et al., 1996; Lewis, 1997; Marshall et al., 1995). Added to this was the notion that, in the past, the teacher represented authority, referred to as 'interpretive authority' (Chinn et al., 2001). This was a barrier for the students. Maloch's study shows how teachers can help students through the notion of shared knowledge. In her study, the teacher helped the students by defining the teacher and student roles, giving introductory explanations and repeating these where students did not understand, reminding students to take ownership of their discussion as they were "in charge", suggesting conversational strategies (e.g., follow-up questions, acknowledging another's comment by restating or thanking etc.), using names to invite participation and referring to the book for topics to share. In other words, the stage was being set for facilitative social interaction.

The social environment of the classroom is good at throwing up constraints which challenge individual perceptions. People often have different views of a situation. If these views seem incompatible, there is a need for reconciliation which can lead to the social mediation of individual knowledge. Through discussion or argument, the participants negotiate new positions which lead to shared meanings developing. Such negotiation is

not bargaining but a genuine offering of individual perspectives and meanings for consideration by others. As a result, common or 'taken- as-shared' (Voigt,1991) meanings develop in a classroom. In the context of Maloch's study, the students and teacher had built up a shared or common knowledge of strategies and when to use them (Mercer, 1995). There were still pauses, conflicts and lack of connectors but the literature circles were beginning to take on characteristics of exploratory talk (Mercer, 1995). Exploratory talk is a term used by Mercer and followed up with Barnes and Todd (1986), which refers to talk that encourages meaning making together, in contrast to disputational and off task talk.

What makes Maloch's study a contribution is the fact that few researchers addressed the process at the point of teacher-student interactions during the actual discussions. Maloch et al. (2004) did a subsequent study where the teacher (Karla) suggests that instruction and explicit modelling may be required in the transition between teacher-led and student-led discussions. This role may seem more directive in nature but it serves the purpose of teaching new kinds of roles to students. Furthermore, in order for students to engage in more collaborative work independent of the teacher, Maloch et al. states that support for students' understanding of the process of learning is important. Thus, the meta-facilitator role allowed Karla to do that. The meta-cognitive nature of Karla's interventions and students' appropriation of conversational strategies indicates that in this transition period, a focus on process (explicitly talking about and building understanding of one's own discussion process and strategies) may be a useful way to move students toward new roles in literature circles and to facilitate their own

discussions. Once students achieve this, the teacher's emphasis on the meta-cognitive aspects of the discussion, the directive and instructional roles lessen.

Cox (1997) did not view teacher-led groups as necessarily teacher-centered. Groups could be teacher-led but student centred- a key distinction made by Cox. This is seen in a study by Almasi and Gambrell (1994) where students in peer-led groups created rules for the discussion but the rules were reviewed by the teacher who provided scaffolding when needed. This was an instance of teacher-led discussion in a sense but was student-centered. In contrast, teacher-centred conditions meant that discussions were controlled to hand-raising, turn-taking, and Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) patterns (Cazden, 1988).

In another study, student discourse and teacher roles of two very different instructional frames for story telling were compared, in literature circles (Chin, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001). The two frames were the recitation and collaborative reasoning frames. (Recitation was basically the traditional IRE pattern while collaborative reasoning gave students greater control over interpretation, turn-taking and topic control.) Chin et al. (2001) also report that collaborative reasoning discussions enhanced student engagement. Teacher's stance was analytical, gave most interpretive authority and sub topic control to students and turn taking was open and controlled by the students. In contrast, the recitation frame put the teacher in control, taking on a mainly efferent stance and holding complete interpretive authority and topic control. Chin's study is relevant to the present study in terms of the usefulness of collaborative reasoning which can also be a frame for teacher literature circles.

In a study by Townsend and Pace (2005), two teachers' treatment of student inquiries showed that classroom talk can create moments of possibility or moments of closure for students in their thinking. The first teacher asked a question while seeking a specific answer and did not reflect genuine inquiry (Albritton, 1992). The teacher presented himself as a giver of information and insight, and in turn, his students probably expected him to be the fount of knowledge. Presently, many teachers depend on notes from higher authorities where prescribed texts are concerned and provide these to students as if it were the only answer, giving the impression and creating an environment of teacher as giver of knowledge. The second teacher in Townsend and Pace's study, did not dismiss any questions posed by the students and a number of students were inquiring, expressing uncertainty and used language not only in response to the teacher's questions but also to comment, elaborate and wonder. Discourse markers that signal tentativeness ("I'm not sure," "maybe", "I don't know") alert participants that many views are possible. Furthermore, such markers encourage continued investigation, supporting students in their emerging, developing roles as knowledge and culture makers and not recipients of knowledge. Townsend and Pace's study supports the socio-constructivist theory in that the second teacher made an effort to listen to and understand the students and to collectively share meanings, while co-constructing knowledge, unlike the first teacher.

A study by Culican (2007) introduced an alternative pattern of discourse between teacher and students which attempts to change the basic pattern of traditional teacher-student interaction in order to scaffold students to read and write high level, age appropriate texts that are curriculum-linked. The discourse pattern was called Reading to

Learn and hereafter referred to as R2L. This comprised a scaffolding interaction cycle which proposed a way of structuring texts, which claim to democratise literacy practice. The traditional IRE (initiation, response and evaluation) pattern was replaced with three moves: prepare, identify and elaborate. Before the study took off the ground, teachers were trained and emphasis was on teacher knowledge about texts and language across the curriculum learning areas and cultivating teacher awareness of patterns of pedagogic discourse. Teachers attended workshops, received written and audiovisual materials, including sample lesson plans and demonstration lessons. However, previous research (e.g., Milburn & Culican, 2003) indicates that changing habituated patterns of classroom talk is difficult, even where teachers accept the rationale underpinning R2L. This is what Wilhelm (2009) makes reference to, when he states "the salience of the traditional" by Zeichner. It is no easy task to change teachers' beliefs and practices.

Yet another study by Blum et al. (2010) shows how the teacher scaffolds in the form of "prompts". The prompts included teachers asking students to share their experiences with the class, draw pictures, encourage more elaboration, ask students to talk about their favourite parts of the story and so forth. The teachers commented that when they used the prompts frequently, the children began to talk more about books, and that the discussion helped the children understand what they were reading. As students exchanged ideas, they produced more original responses and reflections. This is basically the social interaction part of socio constructivism which produced individual construction of knowledge through original responses and reflections within the group. The researcher emphasizes that it was not the prompts but the exchange of ideas through the social interaction process that produced original responses and reflections.

A study by Scott J. Shelton Strong (2011) shows the growing importance of literature circles being used successfully in ELT and ESL contexts, with much of the activity stemming from interest in Asian University EFL classes (Chiang, 2007; Mark,2007). Once again Strong's focus is on student literature circles and the teacher roles in scaffolding the student groups in playing roles from facilitators to quiet but attentive observer. Thus, like other past research, this study was on student literature circles, not teacher literature circles. Findings of this study over a period of 24 weeks revealed, through observation and feedback, that fluency in both reading and speaking had improved substantially. The researcher of the study believes that improvements were attributed to the challenge of reading for a specific purpose.

Carico (2001) discovered rich avenues of meaning to explore from students' responses and their discussions after reflections. She discovered a range of responses from the girls from meaningful, analytical, careful to occasions of unproductive and on occasions, destructive responses by insensitive comments. The teacher realized that she had privileged the language of eloquence and so when Hope, a student who was not too fluent spoke, mixing up details and speaking in more halting patterns, the teacher discovered that she did not always attend to Hope's words. This made others feel 'smarter' than Hope. This is what sometimes happens in classrooms and teachers are unaware of its occurrence. What was learnt by the researcher was the need to respect all talk-eloquent or otherwise--and to keep channels of communication open, break unproductive cycles in groups, learn cultural differences, appreciate and deal with differences. The article ends with Barne's (1976, 1992) notion of 'exploratory talk' and

the subsequent work of Cazden (1988) which point to the benefits of talk as part of a valuable process in making meaning.

In a study by Scharer and Lehman (1992), two experienced teachers expressed concern during interviews and group discussions with their colleagues about how to foster both literary appreciation and literacy achievement through book discussions. One teacher seemed unable to adjust her instructional stance in ways that would foster a more student-centered discussion while the other teacher appeared to value students' interpretive and critical thinking and was also able to orchestrate classroom conditions to foster such talk during book discussions. Such differences showed that teachers may claim to value creative, interpretive responses but concentrate mainly on literal responses. The study is relevant to the present study in that, if teachers do not practise the kind of classroom discourse and create conditions that foster talk, students will remain passive learners, limited to literal responses. All that has been said of valuing students' interpretive and critical thinking will remain just statements in the visions and objectives of curriculum, unless teachers put to practice what they think to be right, even if it is a break away from traditional patterns. Making that first change and coping with change and the different consequences of that change, will make a difference.

In another study (Almasi, O'Flahavan, & Poonam, 2001), a comparative analysis of student and teacher development in more and less proficient literature circles was made but of interest for the current study were the roles of the teachers. Teacher talk was determined to be yet a source of ineffective scaffolding, when it promoted increased metatalk which caused students to rely on the teacher to solve interaction problems. While peer-led discussions were worthwhile, it was difficult to implement and more

important was the need for the teacher role to be facilitative of group discussion and not hinder student ownership and independence of the teacher. This shows that teachers too may be unaware of what they are doing in classroom literature circles due to "the salience of the traditional" (Zeichner, quoted by Wilhelm, 2009) and the reluctance to shift power to the students.

Rowe (1998), in an effort to study her own teacher talk in the classroom, became more aware of her own tendency of teacher talk to reshape innovative practices so that they fell within the boundaries of familiar classroom activities. Rowe realized that her reactions to the children's responses were discouraging at times. It was obvious that her usual patterns of book talk privileged her agenda over the alternate ones introduced by the children. Some patterns of talk were so deeply ingrained that it was difficult to make the changes intended. This realization posed her a set of professional questions for which she continues to seek better answers: 'How can I learn to talk differently with students? What other changes in the classroom environment are necessary to support changes in teacher talk and that of my students?' What she realized was that connecting "kid-watching" with teacher-watching helped to reveal hidden limits on curricular change. Awareness of the features of classroom talk has the potential for helping teachers avoid the trap of unintentionally subverting plans for change by encasing new curriculum and beliefs in old patterns of talk.

Short et al. (1999) conducted a study on the roles teachers played in the classroom with their students. The roles of the teachers included that of: facilitator, participant, mediator and active listener. These roles were not rigid and teachers moved in and out of them throughout the literature circles in response to student interactions. Initially, the

facilitator role was overwhelming, with all good intentions, and the participant role was lacking, as teachers did not share their personal responses. Later, teachers took on more mediator roles to help students connect their discussions about the books to their own life experiences and values. These roles were carried out by asking questions or making comments that invited students to explore their own personal and socio-cultural issues. This study and the previous one (Rowe, 1998) provided opportunities for teachers to carefully examine and reflect on their own practice, and change their patterns of talk to match the intent of the curriculum and beliefs.

A study by Fenton Smith and Christopher Stillwell (2011) explored one concrete way of supporting teacher engagement with professional literature in a fashion that is collaborative, local and accessible: a reading discussion group undertaken by EFL teaching staff for EFL teaching staff. In reading discussion groups, discussions on the relative merits of six discussion formats took place. What is interesting is the group management practices that were identified for the most effective participation. Discussions in Fenton-Smith's study were completely unstructured and dealt with the gaps between theory and practice.

The findings of the study included practices that could be crucial for the success of reading discussion groups and relevant to the present study. Four main points that came across included: firstly, the distribution of responsibility among group members in terms of selection of material.

Secondly, another practice suggested by the participants was the need to provide structure and to allow a core group of 'leaders' to emerge. The researchers of the study

felt that the continued existence of a group would depend on a handful of individuals willing to take an active role in scheduling sessions and leading discussions.

Thirdly, the need to respect the clock, or time for the sessions was important. Of interest were the responses given by the participants who did not turn up- lack of time among other reasons.

Finally, few respondents felt that discussion leaders needed to call on quiet attendees or curtail those who spoke a lot. The report on Fenton-Smith ‘s study ended on a promising note on how *discussions among teachers can make connections between theory, research and practice* and the fact that “ it only takes two to talk!” (p. 259).

Some Local Studies

The following Malaysian studies have focused on activities in the literature classroom (Mukundun, 2002, Mardziah, 2002, Ganakumaran, 2003). Mukundun worked with student teachers as they developed teaching materials for selected literature texts. Two interesting aspects of this study are firstly, Mukundun referred to reader response theory, stating that ‘meaning is not contained in the text but derived from the interaction between the text and the experience (or prior knowledge) of the readers. Mukundun also stated that the reader response style helped the students to understand the text better, as they drew from their own past experiences. Secondly, Mukundun, the researcher states that his role was that of ‘facilitator’ (p.41), thus confirming other international studies where such a role was found to be one of several roles that the teachers played during their interactions with students.

In Mardziah's (2002) study, she looked at an undergraduate group of students and their ability to use linguistic poetic devices in creating advertisements. Her findings showed that despite the ESL learners possessing intermediate levels of English proficiency, they were able to make commendable initial efforts (with grammatical errors) at using linguistic poetic devices in creating texts for advertisements.

Ganakumara's (2003) study was on language based activities which he posits, if used, would help students and teachers to fulfill the objectives and expectations of the Malaysian English Language and Literature Syllabi. Of interest to the present study, Ganakumaran highlights criticism based on reader response and cultural perspectives.

Benefits of Student Discussions

Studies on the use of student discussion in the classroom support and are grounded in theories of social constructivism. Participation in group discussions involve social interaction which results in students being able to generalize and transfer their knowledge of classroom learning to building a strong foundation for communicating ideas orally (Reznitskaya, Anderson & Kuo, 2007; Weber, Maher, Powell & Lee, 2008). Such social interaction during discussion enable students to sharpen their ability to test their ideas, synthesize the ideas of others and build deeper understanding of what they are learning (Corden, 2001; Nystrand, 1996; Reznitskaya, Anderson & Kuo, 2007; Weber, Maher, Powell & Lee, 2008).

Large and small group discussion also afford students opportunities to exercise self-regulation, self determination, and a desire to persevere with tasks (Corden, 2001; Matsumara, Slater & Crosson, 2008). Additionally, discussion has been found to increase

student motivation, collaborative skills and the ability to problem solve (Dyson, 2004; Matsumara et al., 2008; Nystrand, 1996). Increasing students' opportunities to talk with one another and discuss their ideas increases students' abilities to support their thinking, develop reasoning skills, and to argue their opinions persuasively and respectfully (Reznitskaya et al., 2007). Furthermore, the feeling of community and collaboration in classrooms increases through offering more chances for students to talk together (Barab, Dodge, Thomas, Jackson & Tuzun, 2007; Hale & City, 2002; Weber, Maher, Powell, & Lee, 2008).

The purpose of this section is to draw on research to show the value of discussion among students. At the same time, the researcher notes the lack of such research among teachers. If discussions bring benefits to students, then, discussion via teacher literature circles should also bring similar benefits to teachers too.

Teacher Talk in Non-Literature Circles

Findings from research on teacher development carried out in New Zealand (Bell, 1993) highlighted the importance of various issues and one of them was the importance of teachers talking to each other. Littles (1982, cited in Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) also found improvement when teachers engaged in frequent, continuous and increasingly concrete talk about teaching practice.

In a study by Shriner (2001), one of the processes that surfaced as important contributors to teachers' informal learning was having discussions with teaching colleagues. Teacher discussions suggested that several factors such as feedback, motivation and perceptions of support are inherent in the process of informal learning.

A study by Walsh (2006) revealed that when teachers reflected and evaluated their own classroom discourse (language classroom), they became more aware of what they said and began to evaluate these as favorable or not favorable. In Walsh's study, teachers self-reported (after viewing recordings of their own classrooms) that they echoed learners' answers, had a lot of extended teacher turns and interrupted students. These self-reported reflections were evaluated by the teachers themselves against the SETT instrument and they could see for themselves how much of their discourse was not suitable while they were also able to justify other discourses. The intention of the reflection on practice can develop and this will help to develop interactional awareness among teachers. As can be seen, the SETT instrument was designed to handle teacher-fronted interaction. With teacher awareness of their own discourse, and what it does, teachers will be more careful and reflect before discourse while trying to use the discourse that will elicit desired learning outcomes in students.

Clifton (2006) studied the ways in which teachers "facilitated" students' discussions (language classroom) and his study showed up the following list of facilitative moves, which are not exhaustive. These included: allowing students to self-select topics, giving them greater share and responsibility for initiating instruction where they perceived the need for it, encouraging students to expand output (by referential questions, back-channelling and co-authoring turns), allowing learners to initiate instruction and for teachers to self-select situations in which to provide feedback in support of the learner's turn by back-channelling, correction or reformulating deviant utterances. This study is relevant to the present study in that teachers may use such facilitative moves among themselves in order to facilitate learning together.

Cohen (2010) found that teachers used certain discourse strategies in their talk to negotiate their professional identities. Findings showed that teachers made and recognized identity bids to accomplish the professional identity of teacher as learner, using the genres of reflective talk: storytelling and analytical talk.

Adult Literature Circles

Reischl's (1999) study was on pre-service teaching interns and their cooperating teachers, discussing autobiographies in a book club (literature circle). Autobiography discussions took place on excerpts of autobiographies about language, literacy and cultural experiences of immigrant refugees and their teachers. As participants narrated experiences from their own lives and listened to those of others, they appeared to grow in their understandings of how language, culture and literacy experiences helped to shape identities and school experiences of both students and teachers. In addition, these conversations created opportunities for teachers to examine their own relationships as teachers at different points in their careers and to challenge traditions of hierarchy. The talk that ensued was exploratory, inquisitive, uncertain, awkward, personal and surprising. The study offers insights into the use of autobiographical literature as a pedagogical tool in teacher education and the role of conversation between beginning and experienced teachers in promoting reflection on teaching in multicultural and multilingual settings.

A determinant in the successes of the above projects was time. According to Lieberman (2010), many teachers do not commonly have substantial time built into their school day to reflect on their practice. As a result, the researchers (e.g. Lieberman) built

paid release time into the project budgets and regularly gathered teacher collaborators together to reflect on the videos, student work samples and other artifacts of their documented practices. This helped the teachers greatly.

Marshall et al. (1999) did a study on adult book clubs (literature circles) and made comparisons between adults, teachers and students. In terms of discourse functions, adults had less directive, question and restating (statements from others) forms compared to teachers. Teachers felt authorized to question students. Adults looked at book clubs as an opportunity to meet but stayed on track, giving their meetings a social nature, unlike teachers or students, where there was nothing social about their meetings. Adult responses were not evaluated as student responses were and students tried to give the teachers the answers they wanted. While adults were more interested in exploring differences, teachers wanted students to have similar understandings and attempts to build a consensus were present. While adults used their own lives as a source of knowledge, teachers did not but, surprisingly, students did try. Adult turns were much longer than student turns because student turns were governed by the IRE pattern (initiation, response, evaluation). Adult turns were cooperative in nature, that is, they worked together to develop ideas but teachers used students' words to co-opt them to advance their own interpretations. Adults hardly summarized the story, teachers did much of this. Adults often saw characters as admirable but this was lacking in both teachers and students.

What was also interesting in Marshall's study was that the two teachers who were participants in the adult group expressed their excitement about how much they got from the book they discussed with the rest of the group. The teachers found the diverse

opinions as complementary to the novel while they felt that other teachers would find this contradictory. The teachers in Marshall's study commented that they should cede authority to students, talk and respond freely, use personal experiences not only about the book but the world and make connections between their lives and that of the literary characters. They also said that the classroom discourse should be just as the book clubs (adult literature circles).

George (2001) did a study comprising a mixed group of adults (librarian, school counsellor and principal) where teachers also participated. The purposes of his study were: to introduce book clubs (literature circles) as an instructional approach which he felt was underutilized, to introduce adolescent literature to teachers as an approach to staff development with the intention that both--book clubs and adolescent literature would be introduced to, and used by teachers in their classrooms. The study reports that the stance taken by all the participants was a reader stance.

George (2004) carried out another study where students participated in adult book clubs comprising teachers, members of the surrounding community and parents. Texts were from works of adolescent literature. Responses were shared and data showed that book clubs were a positive experience at many different levels indicating that when members of the school community regularly engaged in book clubs, the culture of the school was affected positively. George concludes that students were more interested to read, became more adept at responding to and discussing works of literature with other members of the reading community which included adults. This study is reported in this literature review to show the positive effects of book clubs / literature circles and gives greater evidence for using TLCs as an instructional strategy for teacher learning.

A study by Reilly (2008) showed how four full time teachers, working together in a book club, as part of a graduate course, utilized their learning to ensure their students' academic success. The assignment was to self select a professional text which focused on teaching and learning with specific information required to be recorded (title, bibliographic information, method for selecting text, meeting schedules, a reflection report etc.). The text chosen was an Intervention Manual which presented intervention strategies to be used when addressing learning and behaviour concerns. Out of the 12 students in the graduate program, 8 reported learning largely remaining within the locus of each individual, as evidenced by the students reporting views that seemed to originate and remain with each individual. In contrast, the learning reported by the four teachers transcended the individual level and operated at the group level with ideas that appeared to be more blended. The study showed the conditions that might have given rise to such unity among the four teachers. These conditions (Davis & Simmt,2003), included an appreciation for their internal diversity, holding common expectations about the relationships between interventions and students' reading achievement, moving from a group assignment to an emergent structure that was reorganized by the group at points of need, having a flexible structure which allowed for unexpected learning to take place and group members' ideas that were blended and juxtaposed through discussion, resulting at times in novel ideas that did not belong to any one individual.

With this extensive review, it is hoped that the current study will add to theoretical and practical aspects of what we know of in-service teacher interaction, learning possibilities and opportunities for such teachers, as professional teacher development. Socially mediated ways of knowing involve working collaboratively and

one way is via literature circles. This extends teacher meaning making, to try to make sense of new literature texts in environments that support diverse interpretations, while verbalizing and documenting tacit or personal practical knowledge of teachers, so that others can learn from one another. When teachers understand diverse aspects of a literature text, they will be better equipped to teach in classrooms as well as handle student discussions or student literature circles better, having experienced it themselves. The literature circle serves as a medium in the current study for investigating in-service teacher interactions.

Learning as Socially Constructed

Active participation in the social practice is now the primary condition for learning to take place (Hughes et al., 2007). Diverse knowledge of the individuals help in the process of constructing and co-constructing knowledge through the collective meanings of the group in which the individuals participate. In literature circles, this means the group contributes knowledge and finally when the group disperses, each individual has constructed and/or co-constructed meaning from the combined contribution of group members. This individual meaning or knowledge would not have been possible if not for the combined group contribution and reflection during the literature circle discussion. This concurs with Olson (2000), who said that knowledge communities support shifts in personal and collective perspectives, which would be impossible to achieve solely through the individual reflection.

According to Putnam and Borko (2000), the existing cultures and discourse communities in many schools do not value or support a critical and reflective

examination of teaching practice. Group work can be a viable means of promoting positive change and accomplishing tasks (Hulse-Killacky, Kraus, & Shumaker, 1999; Jaacobs, Harvill, & Masson, 1994), which means that the social context in which the group discussion occurs must be conducive.

Further, the conceptualization of group work as a means for professional development is supported by Gladding's (1995) view that "individuals have gathered together to create, achieve, and resolve matters not possible otherwise" (p. 3). Initiated and facilitated by teachers, group work may be a key to meaningful, effective, sustained professional development and a necessary component of adult learning (Wenzlaff & Wieseman, 2004).

Teachers need to take their own initiatives and be proactive within their social practices in order to make teacher learning a reality, even if it has been years after completing teacher education courses. This is what is meant by lifelong and "continuous" teacher professional development – that it does not stop at any particular point but continues in the later years of teachers' careers. According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), teacher learning is part of teacher professional development which is a process of learning to adapt and invent strategies, cope with agendas, interpret and construct curriculum while building classroom and school cultures within conditions that are "ultimately uncertain". This means that teachers must "focus like a laser" on what really matters in content being taught and ensure that learners know how and what they are learning matters, or else they will be disengaged and will not learn (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). Before they can do that, in-service teachers must themselves know and learn the content, be aware of what matters and find it meaningful first, before they can teach in

meaningful ways. In the present study, the teachers seemed to realize the need to understand the text more than the need to 'focus like a laser in content areas'.

Furthermore, in the context of literature, according to Blake (2002) "simply reading literature by ourselves is not enough." To the ancient Greeks, experiencing literature was a social activity. A social activity refers to responding orally, in writing and to discuss these responses with others. It is believed that, in this way, one learns about oneself, one's feelings, and thoughts about others. These aspects comprise the social, cultural knowledge and the social skills that worthwhile literature can give (Blake, 2002). This study focuses on teacher literature circles as a social activity to enhance learning.

Teacher Learning

The idea of learning as the active construction of knowledge (Shuell, 1986) pertains to active engagement in a task that will enable the construction of unique connections between new information and already existing knowledge. In line with a social-constructivist perspective on learning as an active process (Shuell, 1990), learning is studied as it occurs through the engagement in teacher literature circles as meaning is negotiated, constructed, co-constructed and re-constructed during the discussions of in-service teachers.

Learning can be defined as occurring when one changes or elaborates what is already known (Campbourne, 1990). The learning process has also been defined as 'making connections, identifying patterns, organizing previously unrelated bits of knowledge, behaviour and activities into new (for the learner) patterned wholes'

(Cambourne, 1990, p.12). The philosophy underpinning Cambourne's (1990) definition is that the learner is actively involved in the learning process.

Learning in the workplace is integrated in the work process and occurs through work activities (Eraut, 2004; Strake, 2004) which are informal in nature. However, in other contexts and countries, two types of studies have been done on teachers' informal learning (Dunn & Shriner, 1999; Kwakman, 2003; Lohman & Woolf, 2001; Paredes-Scribner, 1999; Smaller, 2005; Van Eekelen, Boshuizen, & Vermunt, 2003). The first type of studies provided inventories of work activities which teachers had reported to have learnt from. These activities have been classified as action level and include collaborating, reading and experimenting with teaching methods (e.g., Lohman & Woolf, 2001). Teachers focused on describing a situation and then evaluated whether their behaviour or their teaching method was adequate or not. The focus was on what worked and what did not work in the classroom.

The second type of studies focused on the mental activities involved in learning (e.g., Mansvelder- Longayroux, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007). This involved learning aimed at understanding the processes underlying teaching. Questions asked would go to greater depths than just what worked or did not to why it worked or why it did not work. This ultimately included critical processing, analyzing and diagnosing, which are all mental activities.

Mansvelder-Longayroux et al. (2007) discriminated between meaning-oriented and action-oriented learning in her study of student teachers' reflections as they reported in their portfolios. Basically the student teachers who were action oriented mostly

described a situation and then evaluated whether their behavior or their teaching method was adequate or not. The aim of their learning was the improvement of their own performance as teachers. These teachers were mostly concerned with what worked and what did not work in the classroom.

Other students (student-teachers) reported meaning-oriented learning: learning aimed at understanding the processes underlying teaching. They asked themselves questions such as: Why did it work or not work? Why did this instructional method work so well / not at all? In other words, when writing their portfolios (action level), they were engaged in critical processing, analyzing and diagnosing (mental level).

Meaning Making

Meanings are the most fundamental aspect of human social setting, thus the importance of meanings and how people make meanings in their lives. Meanings are also referred to by social analysts as culture, norms, understandings, social reality and definitions of the situation, typifications, ideology, beliefs, worldview, perspective or stereotypes (Lofland & Lofland, 1996). All the terms used in Lofland's (1996) definition share a common focus with humanly constructed ideas that are consciously singled out as important aspects of reality.

According to Frankl (1963), the role of meaning is of paramount importance in human life. Life experience generates and enriches meanings, while meanings provide explanation and guidance for the experience (Chen, 2001). A person draws meanings from or gives meanings to events and experiences. That is, experiencing starts to make sense as the person performs his or her psychological functioning of translating it into

how he or she thinks or feels. It is individuals' subjectivity, or phenomenological world, that forms the very core of meaning originations and evolvement. People choose meaning through their interactive experiencing with various internal and external contexts (Chen, 2001).

It can be said that meaning and meaning making have many implications for learning. One key implication emerges through the notion of perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1981, 1991, 1994) in which "learning is defined as the social process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to action" (Mezirow, 1994, pp. 222-223). This is seen in the study when research question two is addressed, where one of the emergent themes was taking perspectives, where the construing, appropriating new or revised interpretations is seen in one of the participants of the present study (Anne). This concurs with Mezirow's definition of learning as a social process. Where 'shared' meanings were not attained, the participants accepted other points or considered other options without making them (the other possibilities) their own. What makes meaning significant is the suggestion that learning is a mechanism for finding or, some propose, making meaning in life (Merriam & Heuer, 1996). Learning can inform or challenge existing conceptions of meaning and, in the process, provide an opportunity for acquiring new meaning or confirming currently held views.

Teacher Learning Outcomes

According to Shuell (1986), learning outcomes are the changes in cognition and/or behaviour, resulting from engagement in learning activities. Studies on teacher

cognition have distinguished between several types of knowledge and beliefs, according to their nature, content or both (Munby, Russel, & Martin, 2001), as their learning outcomes.

Studies show that teachers' beliefs do not easily change (Van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Yerrick, Parke, & Nugent, 1997). Yerrick et al. (1997) describe how teachers assimilate new notions into their existing belief systems and use new language to describe their teaching without changing the underlying beliefs. This is an echo of Rowe's (1998) study where she realized that awareness of the features of classroom talk had the potential for helping teachers to avoid the trap of unintentionally subverting plans for change by encasing new curriculum and beliefs in old patterns of talk (p. 41).

Past Studies on Interaction and Talk

Human learning is contextual and social in nature, having received great emphasis in research on learning and instruction (Anderson, et al., 1997; Greeno, 1997). Attention has been given to practices, processes and conditions leading to the social construction of knowledge in different learning situations (Fisher, 1993; Lemke, 1980; Palincsar, 1986; Tuyay, Jennings, & Dixon, 1995). However, in all these studies, the interactions have been on classroom interactions among students. This is reported briefly in this section of the literature review in order to review studies done on interactions and possibly to draw comparisons with interactions among teachers later on.

The focus of analysis of interactions in classrooms extended from external factors influencing learning processes and achievements to the student's participation in and

evolving interpretation of the learning activity (Grossen, 1994; Perret-Clermont, Perret, & Bell, 1991).

Studies on primary-aged learners' interactions working in peer groups on various tasks in Finland, Greece and the United Kingdom (Fourlas & Wray, 1990; Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002) investigated the nature of students' social activity, particularly their verbal interaction. Initially, the functions of students' verbal interaction as a basis for investigation of students' roles as communicators and learners in teacher-centred and peer-group centred classrooms (Fourlas & Wray, 1990) was the focus but was later modified.

After modification, the framework was applied by Kumpulainen (1994, 1996) in studies that investigated students' social interaction during the process of collaborative writing with a word processor. The functional analysis had fine-grained categories that gave a structured overview of the nature and quality of students' verbal interaction in the collaborative writing learning context. However, this analysis was found to be inadequate as a means of unravelling the complexities of socially shared learning processes.

Firstly, there was a need to develop a descriptive system of analysis which was holistic and multidimensional in nature. Secondly, the moment-by-moment nature of interaction in order to highlight the situated processes of meaning-making and knowledge construction within peer groups needed attention. Finally, it seemed important to take the individual and the group as units of analysis in order to investigate the types and forms of participation within peer groups.

As a result of this, the dynamics of peer group interaction were approached from three analytic dimensions: functional analysis, cognitive processing and social processing. Functional analysis focussed on the character and purpose of student utterances in peer group interaction and characterized the communicative strategies used by the participants in social interaction. Cognitive processing examined the ways in which students approached and processed learning tasks in their social interaction, highlighting students' working strategies and situated positions towards learning, knowledge and themselves as problem solvers. Social processing focused on the nature of the social relationships that were developed during students' social activity which included the types and forms of student participation in social interaction.

A large group of studies focusing on peer interaction from the educational perspective, and is often referred to as process-product studies of peer interaction (e.g., Joiner, Messer, Light, & Littleton, 1995; King, 1989; Light et al., 1994; Teasley, 1995; Trudge, 1992; Webb, Troper, & Fall, 1995). In these studies, peer interaction was analyzed with coding schemes which categorise interaction into pre defined categories. Variables such as student achievement and performance are statistically linked to the frequency of categories as identified in the data. In these studies, the actual interaction process or meaning making in interaction was not the prime interest, but the focus was on some specific feature of the interaction and the relationship to student learning or achievement. The focus of the current study is on the interaction of the teachers and the meaning making that results from the interaction. The Flanders Interaction Analysis (Flanders, 1970) has been used extensively in classroom observation studies (Newman, 2004; Wragg, 1999).

Other research traditions have produced quite different approaches to the analysis of peer group talk and learning. Barnes and Todd (1977, 1995), for example, developed an analytic system for studying peer group talk which was "grounded" in data, as opposed to being derived from a pre-existing network of categories. Barnes and Todd focussed on the actual processes of interaction and the ways students developed and constructed knowledge without direct teacher presence. They considered types of talk and their impact upon the construction of meaning during group interactions. The analysis involved both the social and cognitive functions of conversation. Speech acts were looked at on two levels. Level one consisted of discourse moves (such as initiating, eliciting, extending and responding) and logical processes (such as proposing a cause, advancing evidence, negating, suggesting a method, evaluating). Level two comprised social skills, cognitive strategies and reflexivity. Barnes and Todd identified 'exploratory' speech characteristics such as hesitation and changes of direction, tentativeness in voice intonation, assertions and questions made as hypotheses rather than direct assertions, invitations to modify or surmise, and self-monitoring and reflexivity. Further analysis provided descriptive examples of categories for collaborative moves and a proposal for conditions for collaborative work amongst groups in classrooms, based on empirical evidence. The work of Barnes and Todd made important contributions in the analysis of peer talk as ideas from discourse and conversational analysis were integrated with research on learning and instruction. Several studies have used the Barnes and Todd frameworks to enquire into classroom interaction (e.g., Edwards, 2005).

Other methods of analysis of peer group interaction have also been used, either with distinct categories or with more interpretative 'modes'. One of the important

analytic approaches which will be given a mention in this review is that developed by Fisher (1993), Mercer (1994, 1996, 2000), as well as Mercer and Littleton (2007). What is interesting in this approach is that it tries to investigate how children use talk to think together, thus using a group as a unit of analysis, not individual children. Three distinct modes of talk were identified which characterized different ways of thinking together: disputational, cumulative and exploratory. Exploratory talk was found to be the most effective mode of speaking in fostering critical thinking and cognitive development (Mercer, 1996). One of the limitations of this analytical framework was that it did not take into account individual students' participation in the social mode of thinking.

What past research has shown on interaction studies is that interaction is a complex process and though much research has gone on in the past 30 years with a substantial growth in approaches to and study of classroom interaction, more work is required to really understand what is going on inside the 'black box' (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002, p .42). More research on interaction is needed in other than classroom and student contexts.

Teacher Knowledge

Grossman (1995) mentions a teacher typology of knowledge to include six domains: (a) knowledge of content, (b) knowledge of learners and learning, (c) knowledge of general pedagogy, (d) knowledge of curriculum, (e) knowledge of context, and (f) knowledge of self.

Knowledge of content according to Grossman includes both subject matter knowledge and more explicitly pedagogical knowledge of the subject matter, termed

'pedagogical content knowledge' (PCK). Other typologies (Shulman, 1987) classify PCK as a separate heading by itself but elaborates that PCK is a blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics are organized and represented, adapted and presented to diverse learners. In fact, all the domains of knowledge are naturally integrated to the creation of new knowledge. An example of this is when lesson structure knowledge which is characterized as general pedagogical knowledge intersects with pedagogical content knowledge in determining particular content to be taught and how it is to be presented specifically.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (1987) and Elbaz (1991), teachers' knowledge is inherently personal and organized in terms of stories or narratives. They believe that teachers understand knowledge through their own stories of teaching which preserve the teachers' voice and perspective. These researchers argue that personal practical knowledge is tacit, found in routines of teachers' day to day work and embedded within a particular local context. When teachers talk about challenges they face, missing pieces of pedagogy, students who puzzle them, their own uncertainties and the myriad questions that lurk behind every instructional decision, they are voicing out what they know or do not know because, as Ann Berthoff argues, 'we don't really know what we are thinking until we have said it' (in Pine, 1992, p. 662).

Teacher narratives, refer to stories, both lived, told and heard, which people author or re-author. These narratives are powerful ways in which individuals use to express their personal, practical knowledge of the experiences to themselves and to others. Such narratives are a method of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences (Carter, 1993; Casey, 1993; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995;

Knowles, Cole & Presswood, 1994). The stories that teachers and preservice teachers tell, illuminate their personal thought and actions while making sense of their relationships with others and their stance in the world (Bruner, 1987). I would like to add that such narratives help teachers to make sense of new texts as they make connections between the text, their own experiences and that of their students. As Mishler (1986) puts it, 'legitimate tellings' allow the teachers to narrate the rawness of their experiences, negotiate meaning for such experiences and authorize one's own and other's narrative interpretations of situations. Such interactions are informal and easy, as opposed to bureaucratic and hierarchical relations that declare who knows, what should be known and what constitutes 'good teaching' and 'good schools' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). Such bureaucratic and hierarchical type of professional development offer landscapes which are mandatory, prescribed and demanding specific action within a particular time frame.

Knowledge communities such as those in TLCs, pose as places where teachers not only validate and consolidate their experiences as individuals and as members of a professional community (Huber & Whelan, 1995), but also places where tensions are revealed and where insights are offered that enable situations to be revisited, reassessed and restoried (Craig, 1995c). Such situations result in reflective turns (Schon, 1991), which lead to more informed practical actions. This is seen in the present study, where the teachers in the TLC, through their dual roles as readers and teachers reveal problems and in turn are offered insights, which enable revisiting, reassessing, changing of perspectives and re-storying of the experience or event. Such interactions support shifts in personal and collective perspectives which would be impossible to achieve solely

through individual reflection (Olson, 2000). This is seen in chapter four as research two is addressed.

Narratives of personal practical knowledge offer a way to make sense of individual teachers' practice and when shared with others can be a learning point through reflections on similar issues that arise from one another's own practice. Perhaps teacher literature circles could afford opportunities for teacher narratives to be shared amongst one another, as people who live *in* classrooms rather than *outside* classrooms. This study showed how students' narratives became nested within teachers' narratives as they discussed their students' stories among themselves. The narratives, originally from their students, now nested as theirs (the teachers'), afforded a way to make sense of the text from other perspectives, that of their younger learners. This was a part of the teacher meaning making process, through their students' meanings, which are not often considered or valued. This study shows the powerful role students' narratives play in teachers' lives in helping teachers to shape their meaning making processes as well as those of their students.

There is a good deal of transient experiential learning among teachers, characterized by the 'aha' of a moment that is never consolidated and made part of a new understanding or a reconstituted repertoire (Brodkey, 1986). Specific strategies for documentation, analysis and discussion are needed to preserve this. Teacher literature circles may be a way for teacher narratives and learning, for the 'aha's' to be noted, documented and shared for further discussion before it becomes 'new comprehension' to be discovered by the self and to be shared with other teachers in documented form as well as in real terms.

Having acknowledged the social nature of learning, many teacher education settings value talk but a research agenda that allows teachers to examine their own talk, in a collaborative teacher literature circle as they try to make sense and meaning of the new literary texts, could be an opportunity and source for their own learning in preparation for the real concert of teaching in classrooms, and, if documented, becomes a guide for other teachers to learn and benefit from as well.

Case knowledge is yet another form of narrative knowledge which is a composition of experiences with a number of cases of particular pedagogical situations (Shulman, 1991). This knowledge is situational and contextual and organized into networks of concepts and cases. More general concepts are embedded within specific instances from actual practice. Practitioners use their experiences in classrooms to construct a contextual understanding of classroom situations that allows them to recognize familiar features of new situations. This process of reasoning from case knowledge then, is likely to be analogical in nature.

Advocates of case-based methods in teacher education stress the usefulness of cases in learning to teach. Cases can inform practice by offering precedents for handling particular pedagogical situations. Using multiple cases of a similar phenomenon helps to illustrate more accurately the complexity of practice.

Wisdom of practice (Shulman, 1987) is yet another knowledge base for teacher learning and least codified. Wisdom of practice refers to the maxims that guide the practices of able teachers. Working with practitioners to develop codified representations

of the practical pedagogical wisdom of able teachers is helpful in enhancing learning of other teachers.

Shulman has concluded from past research with teachers at all levels of experience that practitioners know a great deal which they have never articulated. TLCs would be a good place where the negotiations articulated would be a way in which meaning making takes place and is worth collecting, collating and interpreting the knowledge that results from the interactions. A major portion of the research agenda for the next decade will be to collect, collate and interpret the practical knowledge of teachers for the purpose of establishing a case literature and codifying its principles, precedents and preambles (Shulman, 1986b).

Some of the best teaching creations are lost to peers – past, present and future because teaching is conducted without an audience of peers and is devoid of a documented history, system of notation and memory. Unlike fields such as architecture (with tangible and concrete creations), medicine (with records and case studies), good teaching has no reference point for other teachers to look at and study. Thus, the need to begin.

Teacher Change

Wilhelm (2009) talks about the importance of teachers developing a critical stance. This is described as '"conscious engagement", the willingness and capacity to 'try on alternate ways of thinking and being and practicing, the consciously taken responsibility for inquiry and a wide-awake reflectivity and reflexivity'.

Most teachers have a tendency not to change (Zeichner, cited by Wilhelm, 2009) and this has been referred to as "the salience of the traditional" by Zeichner himself. He goes on to say that teachers do what was done to them as students even when it "violates their own beliefs and theories, and fails to make use of their practical teaching repertoire". Carico (2001) echoes similar sentiments as she quotes Marshall et al. (1995) in the term 'psychological events' embedded in the word teacher to mean many things including our memories of how we were taught and our sometimes conflicting beliefs about and personal experiences with literature study as students and as teachers. Carico adds that accountability and responsibility, especially in relation to events such as standardized testing, together with apprehension of starting something new and the fears and uncertainties after many years of teaching encompass one massive inviolable psychological role known as 'teacher' that resists change.

According to Wilhelm (2009), teachers must inquire into the issues they teach, into how they teach and have the courage to continually make the changes that reflective and reflexive stances suggest. He adds that "only in this way can we turn both our mistakes and successes, our half- baked lessons and our home runs, and all our other attempts into the kinds of experiences and educative events that lead to deeper understanding and more insightful practice in the future".

Wilhelm (2009) goes on to say that if teachers are to improve the engagement and learning of students, "we must improve our pedagogy and the contexts of instruction". This simply means that the most important factor that affects and improves student learning is quality teaching. How can teachers carry out quality teaching when they are uncertain even of the subject matter (new texts)? In-service teacher literature circles, as a

strategy for instruction and learning, provide opportunities for teachers to discuss issues pertaining to pedagogy as well as the content of the texts. The present study focuses on texts which teachers will teach to their learners. It is very probable that teachers will bring into their discussions aspects of teaching and pedagogy after they have understood the text. Until the teachers have understood the text for themselves, it is then more likely that they would try to look for ways to teach the new text to their students. This sequence of actions, would tie in with Grossman's typology of knowledge mentioned in an earlier section on teacher knowledge. Teacher literature circles are bound to help teachers to develop their pedagogical content knowledge as well. This is an example of taking on a critical stance by in-service teachers in trying 'alternate ways of thinking and being and practicing', while taking responsibility for inquiry instead of being dependent on notes and critique books of what others have said or believe about the text they are teaching. Teacher inquiry refers to adopting a proactive working for change and a welcoming attitude to change, thus activating the problem-solving mind in favor of the status quo mind.

A review on past successful group learning projects

Projects such as Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI; Schifter, Bastable, & Russell, 1999abc) and Video Cases for Mathematics Professional Development (VCMPD); Seago, Mumme, & Branca, 2004) are examples of programs which consist primarily of curricular materials designed for use in professional development seminars for teachers. The major goals of these programs are to help teachers to deepen their understanding of mathematics content, students' mathematical thinking, and instructional strategies; and develop norms and practices for learning about teaching.

Case studies conducted during development and pilot testing of the programs indicated that teachers who underwent the professional development seminars developed new norms for professional discourse, and a deeper understanding of the mathematics content they studied as well as the development of children's mathematical ideas (Cohen, 2004; Seago, 2004).

The National Writing Project (NWP), initiated in 1973 had a mission to improve the teaching of writing and learning in the nation's schools (USA). This project focuses on situating teachers' learning in their own writing and classroom practices rather than developing extensive curricular materials. The NWP now includes 175 writing project sites and over 12,000 spend time demonstrating their classroom practices, study theory and research about writing instruction while immersing themselves in writing. During the following year, the teacher leaders give workshops for their colleagues, also hosted on the university campus. In 2002-2003, NWP leaders offered 6,482 programs for nearly 100,000 educators. The project also has an interactive online network in which teachers, writing project site directors and staff can share tools, resources and strategies.

Teachers reported that the NWP helped them to develop a valuable professional network, change their philosophies about teaching writing, and increase both the time spent on writing instruction and the use of exemplary teaching practices.

The NWP, DMI (Developing Mathematical Ideas) and VCMPD (Video Cases for Mathematics Professional Development) have made impressive progress toward providing high-quality professional development for large numbers of teachers. However, none of these programs have produced a well specified professional

development program with evidence that it can be enacted with integrity at multiple sites. The nature of integrity differs across programs.

Integrity refers to how materials are designed to maximize the likelihood that teachers and facilitators, in a range of contexts, will use them in the ways intended by the original team. LeFevre's (2004) research indicates that communication is the key. To maintain integrity, a program must effectively communicate the intended goals and uses of resources to perspective facilitators and provide support materials that will enable them to use the resources in the intended ways. LeFevre also noted the importance of extensive pilot testing, so that program designers can envisage the challenges and pitfalls that potential users might face and take these issues into account when revising both the professional development curriculum and support materials for facilitators.

For the DMI and VCMPD, the focus was on the intended use of curricular materials while that of the NWP was on the conception of writing instruction. For curriculum-based professional development such as DMI and VCMPD, successful implementation requires a dynamic, interactive relationship between the written and enacted curriculum, one that takes into account unique features of participants and contexts as well as the program materials and resources (LeFevre, 2004; Remillard & Geist, 2002). For the NWP, the emphasis is on content and activities of the summer institutes and workshops, which must maintain integrity with the Project's conception of the writing process and writing instruction.

The Study of Instructional Improvement (SII) is another project conducted by a research team led by Cohen, Ball, and Rowan (2003). The main purposes of the research

were to gain a deeper understanding of the school improvement process; to investigate the conditions under which school improvement efforts improve instructional capacity, classroom teaching and student learning; and to examine how state and local policies assist or detract from school improvement initiatives.

Such studies have the potential to provide information of great value to the educational community but are only appropriate when well-defined interventions with demonstrated effectiveness already exist. Furthermore the complexity of research designs for a large scale longitudinal field study of multiple professional development programs will undoubtedly require data collection and analysis tools that do not yet exist. Teacher literature circles (TLCs), if used as professional development for teachers, with clear goals, will help teachers to deepen their understanding of literature content, improve instructional strategies for students and develop norms and practices for learning about teaching.

The next chapter will detail the methodology for the study, including the research design, selection of participants and explanation of the data collection and data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The overarching goal of this inquiry was to provide a rich description of the interactions of in-service teachers and how they made meaning of the new literature text, which would be taught to students later. Thus, the phenomena looked at was in-service teacher interaction and meaning making among the teachers. The two research questions addressed in the study aimed at addressing these issues:

1. How do the teachers interact in the TLC during the discussions of the new literature text?
2. How do in-service teachers make meaning of new texts in TLCs?

Context of the Study

The context of this study is at a time when a new cycle of literature texts had been introduced by the Ministry of Education, into the English Language Syllabus. A sense of a need to know and understand the texts better, by teachers in order to be able to be able to teach their students in classrooms, form the backdrop of this study.

The Research Design

This study used a case study approach within a qualitative interpretive research design. The researcher chose a qualitative approach as it is characterized by the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher being the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Using this design allowed the researcher to develop a description of the phenomenon of interaction and the meaning making process of the teachers during the teacher literature circle discussions. A qualitative case study allows for in-depth understanding of the meaning people have constructed about their world and experiences. It helps us to understand how people make sense of their experiences. In the present study, qualitative research paved the way for the researcher to understand the interaction of the experienced teachers in TLCs and look at the ways in which the teachers made sense of the new literature text. This study attempted to understand the nature of the setting- what it means for teachers to be in a particular setting—coping with change in literature texts, while trying to make sense of the text first, before having to teach the text to their students later.

Case Study

As Stake (1995) notes, 'Case study is .... an object to be studied' (p.14). The case study researcher can draw upon a variety of tools to study that object. Leading case study theorists post the principle of 'boundedness' as a central principle. Merriam (1988) suggests that a case is a 'bounded system' (p.9) or a defined individual or entity (like a student, programme, school or institution) that the researcher wishes to explore.

The Case

In this study, the case is the TLC – the object of my study which provides a context for in service teachers to discuss a new literature text which they have to teach to their students. The phenomena being looked at is the 'interactions' between the in service teacher-participants within the TLC. It is the TLC that provides a context for the teacher interactions to take place.

Unit of Analysis

It is the unit of analysis which characterises a case study. For a case study to be categorised as such, one particular programme or group, or one particular learner selected on the basis of typicality, uniqueness, success and so forth, would be the unit of analysis. In this study, the unit of analysis is the interactions among a group of teachers, but not any randomly chosen teachers, but a group of experienced in-service teachers. These teachers have with them, vast years of teaching experience and having taught the literature component since it was introduced into the English Language Syllabus, makes this group a unique one. The context is also important, as it is at a time of change, when a set of new texts were introduced to the schools, by the Ministry of Education. This is also discussed under the heading of 'Boundaries of the Case'.

Uniqueness of the Case

The uniqueness of the case is the fact that all the teacher-participants are experienced in-service teachers, discussing a new literature text which they had to teach to their students, for the first time. The new literature text was also to be tested in the

formal SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) examinations, or the end of year five in secondary schools in Malaysia. The teachers had taught the Literature Component since the introduction of this section into the English Language Syllabus. Most studies studied pre-service teachers and novice teachers but the present study focused on in service experienced teachers, in a teacher literature circle, in a context of text -change, having to teach the new text to their students for the first time. Hence, the uniqueness of the Case.

Boundaries of the Case

The case was bounded by the following: experienced in-service teachers teaching in the same school, the context of a new literature text which was introduced by the Ministry of Education, the discussion of the new text, which had to be taught for the first time and tested for the first time, in a national examination. Added this was the fact that the TLCs took place in different venues, comprising the homes of the teachers, and was not confined to the school context. Perhaps the 'home' venues of the teachers provided the teachers a more relaxed and easy going atmosphere (context) compared to having the sessions in the formal school atmosphere (context).

Even as the boundaries were set by the researcher at the beginning, as the teachers went into classrooms and began to teach their students, they brought into the TLC discussions, their classroom experiences, thus extending the initial boundaries of the case. To sum up, a case can be seen as a bounded system comprising an individual, institution or entity and the site and context in which social action takes place, the boundaries of which are determined by the scope of the researcher's interest.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative researcher can never capture an objective 'truth' or 'reality' but there are a number of strategies that can be used to increase the 'credibility' of the findings, or as Wolcott (2005, p.160) writes, increase "the correspondence between research and the real world." Perhaps the most well known strategy for this would be triangulation which is discussed later in this section. Denzin proposes four types of triangulation: the use of multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators or multiple theories to confirm emerging findings.

Multiple methods of data collection, for example means what one gets from in interview (transcript) can be checked against what is observed or what is read in documents relevant to the phenomenon of interest. In this study, the TLC discussion transcripts were checked during member checks, interview transcripts and some informal jottings of the researcher.

Several strategies were adopted to ensure trustworthiness of this study. Firstly, an important element for the researcher was 'being there'. The researcher was present with the participants during all the TLC sessions and was constantly in touch with them even after the TLC sessions. The researcher would contact the participants via email and telephone communication. The purpose of these continued communication channels were to triangulate the data interpretation and to have more than a 'snapshot view of the phenomenon' (pp. 269, Rallis and Rossman, 2009). The researcher felt that the longer time spent in contact with the teachers through various media, would help her to get a

better picture of the context. This contact between the researcher and the participants went on for a period of two years.

By triangulation, multiple sources of data were possible at multiple points in time including a variety of data allocation methods used to build a clear picture of the aspects being investigated. This was made possible through the multiple sources and methods of data collection from the transcripts of the TLC discussions, to interviews with the participants- individually and as a group by looking at some of the informal researcher jottings.

Where appropriate, site triangulation may be achieved by the participation of informants within several organisations so as to reduce the effect on the study of particular local factors peculiar to one institution. Where similar results emerge at different sites, findings may have greater credibility in the eyes of the reader. The TLC sessions were held in the different homes of the participants, though they were from the same school. This was a form of triangulation to compare the kind of interactions and meaning making in the various sites. Since similar results were seen, the findings had greater credibility.

Member checks

Another strategy for ensuring internal validity is member checks, which was also called respondent validation. Member checks, according to Guba and Lincoln are considered the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study's credibility. Checks relating to the accuracy of the data may take place 'on the spot' in the course, and at the end, of the data collection dialogues. The idea here is to solicit

feedback on emerging findings from some of the people interviewed. Informants (participants) may also be asked to read any transcripts of dialogues in which they have participated. Participants would be able to fine tune the researcher's notes, to better capture the researcher's perspectives. In the study, the question is whether the informants consider that their words match what they actually intended, since, a tape recorder was used, the articulations themselves should at least have been accurately captured, as in this study, during the audio recordings of the TLC discussions.

Apart from this, participant validation or 'member checks' were also carried out when the researcher verified and confirmed her interpretations with the participants through other methods: interviews (individual and group), email and telephone communication. The participants elaborated, corrected or extended the researcher's understanding. There was contact with the teachers through a period of time to help the researcher to get a better view of the phenomena of 'interactions' amongst themselves within the context of the study.

Confirmability

The concept of confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. Steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher.

It is here that triangulation and member checks can be said to promote confirmability, and in this context, to reduce the effect of researcher bias. Reflective

commentaries are a useful tool and in this study, the researcher field notes, served as one such reflective commentary.

Ethics

Patton (2002,p.552) in fact identifies the credibility of the researcher along with rigorous methods and 'a fundamental appreciation' of qualitative inquiry as three essential components to ensure for the credibility of qualitative research. The credibility of the researcher, he says, "is dependant on training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self' (p, 552). Credibility also involves 'intellectual rigor, professional integrity, and methodological competence' (p.570). These qualities are essential because as in all research, we have to trust that the study was carried out with integrity and that it involves the ethical stance of the researcher.

What stands out is Lincoln's (1995) alignment of ethical considerations with the researcher's relationship with the research participants. She suggests seven 'standards' for validity, such as the extent to which the research allows all voices to be heard, the extent of reciprocity in the research relationship, and so on.

In the present study, the researcher shifts to a participant role during the seven TLC sessions. It is important that during these sessions, the researcher, who is a participant, does not steer the discussion to what she thinks the discussions should be directed at or apply coercion, directly or indirectly on the participants, to agree with her views. This is the dilemma that the researcher-participant faces. Thus, the importance of the some notes which serve as reflective and reflexive notes to the self, reminding her not to influence, judge or coerce any of the participants at any time. Thus, the informal jottings made by

the researcher also served this purpose, apart from noting questions to be asked where uncertain during the analysis of the TLC transcripts, which were the main source of data for the study.

Ethics in practice are daily dilemmas that confront the researcher. Ethical dilemmas are not solvable but dealt with through moral reasoning. The focus of ethical issues are privacy and confidentiality, deception and consent, trust and betrayal. The researcher also followed a check list on ethical practice taken from Rallis and Rossman (2009). Some of the items in the list which the researcher ensured include: ensuring the respect, privacy and confidentiality of the participants, allowing participants the authority to negotiate how their identities would be represented in the data and getting institutional approval from my research.

Selection of Participants for the Study

Selection of this particular group of three experienced teachers was purposeful. As mentioned earlier, the overaching goal of this inquiry was to provide a rich description of the interactions of in-service teachers. As such, the three experienced teachers fitted this description and purpose.

The three teachers had more than six years of teaching experience (Berliner, 2001), fulfilling the criteria of being experienced in service teachers, allowing the researcher to study their interactions and the opportunities they (the teachers) had to make meaning of the new literature text in a TLC. The oral information given by the teachers to the researcher showed that the teachers were experienced, having taught the English Language Syllabus since the introduction of the Literature Component into the

syllabus. This fact would add to the experiences of the teachers, not simply in terms of years of teaching experience (19-25 years of teaching experience) but also in terms of their experience in teaching literature texts. The study focuses on the interactions and meaning making of a literature text among experienced teachers.

The participants were also keen to participate and give their time and cooperation to the study. Their willingness to participate in the study was yet another factor, which helped to provide rich data for the current study. Pseudonyms for the three participants (Saty, Di and Anne), were used in the detailed profile descriptions of the three teachers found in Appendix C. The researcher (Angie) was the fourth participant during the TLC sessions.

To paraphrase Merriam (1998), most sampling tends to be purposeful in order to satisfy the researcher's objectives as was this sample group.

Role of the Researcher

During the seven TLC sessions, the researcher was also a participant, and remained as 'Angie' (short for Angeline) in the TLC discussion transcripts. Thus there were four participants during the TLC sessions: Saty, Di, Anne and Angie. However, prior to and after each of the TLC sessions, Angie was no longer a participant, but a researcher. This also meant that Angie (I), had to constantly remind herself and be aware of her role as a researcher. She had to look out for any bias that could have arisen inadvertently, especially when she was a participant of the TLC sessions. These aspects are covered under the section on Ethics (p.73). Even as Angie shifted during and after the TLC sessions, from participant to researcher, respectively, she kept reminding herself

that she was a researcher first and in no way should she steer, influence or put pressure on the participants' discussion during the TLC sessions. She watched out for this during the listening back of the recordings of the sessions, re-reading the written transcripts.

Sources of Data

The sources of data included the questionnaire for demographic background information of the participants, the transcripts of the seven TLC discussions, the transcripts of the individual and group interviews and some informal jottings that the researcher made during the study. However, the main source of data were the audio recordings and the transcripts of the seven TLC audio discussions. The sources of data are depicted in the table below, followed by a brief description of these data sources.

Table 3.1

Data Sources and Schedules

Session	Group Interview	Individual Interview	Researcher notes	**Data source/s**
Before Session 1		√		Questionnaire/ transcripts of individual interview. Informal researcher-notes
Session 1			√	Transcripts Informal researcher-notes of TLC
Session 2			√	Transcripts of TLC Informal researcher-notes
Session 3			√	Transcripts of TLC Informal researcher-notes
Session 4			√	Transcripts Informal researcher-notes of TLC
Session 5			√	Transcripts of TLC Informal researcher-notes
Session 6			√	Transcripts of TLC Informal researcher-notes
Session 7	√			Transcripts of TLC + Group Interview, Informal researcher-notes
One week later		√	√	Transcripts of individual Interview
10.5 months later		√ Final interview	√	Transcript of final interview

Questionnaire

The researcher had met with the teachers a week before the TLC sessions began and asked them orally about their background. The questionnaire served to confirm the oral information given by the three teacher participants of their demographic background information. The participant information (e.g., qualifications, years of teaching experience and level of classes taught etc.) was important as this could inform teacher learning at points in their careers, not often looked at after the completion of their formal learning at colleges or universities. This was to ensure that the sample was 'purposeful', that is, the teachers were experienced and were teaching the English Language Syllabus to the upper secondary school students. A sample questionnaire is found in Appendix A.

Transcripts of the TLC discussion

As mentioned earlier, the transcripts of the TLC discussions were the main source of data where there were seven sessions in total and each session took an average of two hours. The details of this schedule are found in table 3.2.

Table 3.2 *Schedule of TLC discussions*

Week	Time Taken	Venue
1	3 hours	Home of participant
2	2 ½ hours	Home of participant
3	1 ½ hours	Cafe in town
4	1 ½ hours	Home of participant
5	2 hours	Home of participant
6	1 hour	Home of participant
7	2 hours	Home of participant

During every session of the literature circle, a slim and unobtrusive recorder was placed on the table and the audio recordings were transcribed. Excerpts of transcripts of the TLC discussion sessions are found in Appendix F and G. Audio recordings of moments of talk are important as the transcript is an accurate document. It contains the actual words spoken and can be verified during member checks and allows for repeated listening to the recording. Cazden (2001) says of the importance of having a transcript is that "You can take notes afterwards and that's helpful, but it's not as honest and powerful and real- as having a ... transcript ..." (p. 6).

These TLC discussion transcripts helped the researcher to analyze the interactions between the participants. Once the TLC session was over, the researcher was no longer a participant but a researcher, analyzing the interactions while making member checks from time to time, to check on researcher's interpretations of participants' interactions.

Individual interviews

Interviews were another source of data for the study. The interview questions were semi-structured which allowed the participants opportunities to speak on wider areas rather than be limited to specifics. Interviews were carried out by the researcher with the teachers individually and as a group. The rationale for carrying out the individual interviews is that some teachers may prefer the privacy it affords compared to group interviews.

According to Weiss (1994), qualitative interviews should be utilized when the research aims are to develop detailed descriptions, integrate multiple perspectives, describe a process, develop holistic descriptions and learn how events are interpreted. Semi- structured interviews are directed by a set of general questions, rather than specific questions. The general nature of the questions touched on areas of change, accessibility to learning opportunities, experiences and knowledge in teacher literature circles and collaborative. Such semi-structured interview protocols gave the researcher greater flexibility in encouraging interviewees to talk.

According to Borg (2006), one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews includes the possibilities of the researcher developing a relationship and rapport with the participants, which is fundamental to the quality of inquiry (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Furthermore the interview can proceed as a conversation rather than a formalized exchange in which the interviewer imposes his or her authority on the interviewee. Data from these open-ended questions have the potential to generate more elaborate and

qualitatively richer findings than data from closed questions (Anderson & Burns, 1989). The semi-structured interview protocol guide is found in Appendix B.

The first individual interview was carried out individually before the TLC sessions began. The goal of the individual interviews was to provide the researcher with more information about the individual participants' interactions with the text and try to understand ways in which they made meaning of the new text under the circumstance of change. The interview data was also a way to triangulate the TLC transcript data and the interpretation of the data. The purpose was also to enable the researcher to get the general feelings of the teachers as individuals, and what was fore-grounded in their individual lives at that particular moment in time. It also helped to foster a relationship between the researcher and the participants on an individual basis.

The second individual interview was carried out a week after the final TLC discussion, eight weeks later. The purpose of this interview was to see if there were any changes to the participants' responses to the questions posed during the first interview, before the first TLC session. If there were changes, the researcher wanted to know the significance of these changes in relation to the teacher interactions and meaning making processes during the seven TLC discussion sessions.

The final individual interview was carried out five months after the TLC was over. Throughout the five months, there were intermittent exchanges through text messaging and emails between the researcher and the teachers.

It was during these times that the researcher (Angie) was a researcher and not a participant of the TLC discussion sessions. I had to remind myself that the purpose of the

interview was to get as much information about their thoughts and feelings towards various issues: text change, learning opportunities, TLCs, working collaboratively etc.

Group Interviews

The group interview was carried out after the last TLC session in week seven. Group interviews were conducted to triangulate the individual interviews and to get a feel of the group dynamics.

In this interview, the teachers were able to share their reflections of what took place during the TLC sessions as a group. The information from the group interviews were compared to the information from the individual interviews, thus triangulating the individual interview data. The data from this interview added a rich description and understanding of the teachers, as two of the participants had gone into the classrooms and begun to teach their students. The participants who had gone into the classrooms brought their students' meanings to the TLC discussions during the TLC sessions, and also to the group interview.

Researcher informal notes

These comprised jottings by the researcher (Angie) to document notes on points of interest after the TLC discussions, as well as questions the researcher posed to herself as a point of reflection, considering that she was a participant during the TLC discussion sessions.

The notes made by the researcher after the TLC discussions were driven by the research questions. Research question one dealt with interactions and research question

two, on the meaning making processes of the teacher participants. The notes revolved around these two aspects as well as points of reflection.

These points of reflection were directed at reminding the researcher that she should not influence the TLC discussion or exercise any kind of pressure on the teacher participants to think in ways that may seem to be the researcher's stance. These researcher notes were a good reference and reflection point for the researcher to constantly remind herself that she should not influence or steer the TLC discussion to what she may think favourable for her research purposes. Thus, the researcher field notes were a good reflection record as well.

Procedures, Organization and Sequence of Data Collection

The teachers met over a period of seven sessions to discuss the novel titled 'Catch Us If You Can' by Catherine MacPhail. The first six sessions covered five chapters each, (of the thirty- three chapters of the novel), leaving the final session with three chapters. Details of the sequencing of data collection are found in Table 3.1

Schedule of Procedures During TLC Sessions

The first individual interview was carried out before the literature circle began. The second individual interview was conducted a week after the final TLC session (in week 8). The first group interview was conducted immediately after the last TLC session, in week seven. The data also gave a better picture of the in-service teacher interaction, as well as triangulating the TLC data. This interview had the richness of having incorporated the teachers' experiences in their classrooms with their students. The

interview sequence was carried out for the purpose of learning how participants "make sense of what happened and how this perspective informs their actions" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 59).

Organization of TLC Procedures

After the teachers had agreed to participate in the TLC, they filled up a questionnaire before the TLC sessions began. This was done to gather as much background information of the teachers as possible. This was filled up by the teachers in the school library where there was a room for school librarians to hold meetings. It was during this time that the first individual interview was carried out after the teachers gave their consent.

The next event was the teachers discussed the times and venue for the TLC discussions. It was decided by the teacher-participants that the TLC discussions would take place in their homes over tea and one of the participants suggested five chapters per session. The literature text, 'Catch Us If You Can' has 33 chapters so that meant seven TLC sessions, leaving the last session with three chapters. The days and times were fixed for a Wednesday evening as the teachers had extra curriculum meetings and preferred to meet after the meetings. Out of the seven sessions, six were held in the homes of the teachers and the researcher, while one was held in a cafe. All these venues were discussed and agreed upon by the teachers. Perhaps the teachers' homes provided a more relaxed and informal context away from the school. This is mentioned on page 70, under the heading of 'Boundaries of the Case.'

No instructions were given to the participants. The researcher informed the participants that she was doing a study on how experienced teachers discussed a new literature text as a group (Teacher Literature Circle). The researcher did not give more information or instructions for fear that the teachers would be anxious and concerned. She (the researcher) wanted the study to be as naturalistic as possible. This could be seen as a limitation and will be mentioned in chapter five. The researcher mentioned that reading the text first would make the TLC discussions more meaningful. When the researcher asked about any reference materials that the teachers may have had, they replied that they had just received the books and some had already read the entire book. Only one of the teachers said that she was going to finish reading the book. They explained that notes were on the way to schools by way of CDs and there were workbooks in the bookstores but the teachers had not gone to buy or read them at the time. They did mention that they would go round the shops to check. This also meant that during the TLC discussion sessions, the teachers based their interpretations of the text on their own readings and personal experiences.

The Text

The choice of the text, "Catch Us If You Can" was made by the participants' school, out of a selection of a few other texts. Schools were given the choice to select the novels of their preference, among the choices given.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently during the research. Data analysis was an ongoing process. As suggested by Maxwell (1996), analysis began with

the very first initial interview with the participants and continued till the following year, when the final interview with the participants was completed. This was the point when all the data was collected.

The next sub-sections will detail the analysis of the transcripts mainly that of the main data source, that is, the TLC sessions, according to the research questions.

Analysis of TLC Discussion Transcripts

Throughout the duration of the study, data from the TLC discussions and interviews (individual and group) were collected and analyzed in an effort to describe in detail the teacher interaction and the meaning making process among the teachers, of the new literature text. The practical goal of data analysis is to find answers to the research questions. These answers are also called categories or themes or findings. For research question one, the main data source was the TLC transcripts from sessions one to seven, though interview data and researcher's field notes were also drawn upon.

TLC Transcript Unit Analysis: Research Question One

The process of data analysis begins by identifying segments in the data that are responsive to the research questions. Research question one targeted the interactions of the teachers in the TLCs. According to Lincoln and Guba, (1985), A unit of analysis must meet two criteria; First, it should revel information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information; Second, the unit should be "the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself- that is, it must be

interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context which the inquiry is carried out"

The task is to compare one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regularities in the data. The process is one of breaking data down into bits of information and then assigning "these bits to categories or classes which bring these bits together again. Some categories may be sub-divided, and others subsumed under more abstract categories." (Dey, 1993, p.44).

In this study, research question one was on 'interactions'. The literature review on teacher interactions looked at various 'roles' played out by teachers with their students from the traditional IRE patterns (Initiation, Response & Evaluation) to other roles such as facilitator, active listener, participant etc. It is from this resource of the literature review (chapter two) that the researcher draws from to analyze the transcript data. The researcher also drew from Reader Response Theory and Socio Constructive Theory to analyze the data. Aspects looked at in RRT were that of reflection and creativity of the readers (participants) while aspects of Socio-Constructive Theory were the ways in in which the social interaction built on RRT, facilitating negotiations within a wider meaning making process of the readers (participants). The following excerpt exemplifies how the data was analyzed.

The context of the excerpt is Rory's grandfather (Granda) is old, absent minded and throws Rory's homework into the garbage, thinking the homework to be garbage. Rory makes excuses for Granda, to protect Granda from being viewed of incapable of looking after Rory, a young boy. The idea unit is thus identified and labelled

as ‘Rory protects Granda’. Then, both the theories are drawn upon to explain the interactions that take place. Roles are assigned to the data, which follow the review of literature.

Excerpt A: Idea Unit: Rory protects Granda

Anne : They all know(X2)...what happens to his homework.

Angie : Yes...(laughing)

Di : But you see ah...Rory ah(x2)...never put his Granda down...he doesn’t tell the teacher that it’s Granda who has...mistakenly thrown ... the... homework ... what

Angie : Down...ya...

Problem...(Conversation in between not clear)

I would have been the first to quickly tell my teacher that...that.. Granda (x2) threw my book... and all but you see he did not..

Anne : A normal child would have done that...

Saty : Yes...

Di : ...remember...eh.. he was even supposed to stay back during lunch as punishment ?

Angie : He hides all that because he feels that in the end they will put him in the home because I think that was how they deal with such cases...Ya (in between conversation-not clear)

(Session 1, Lines 355-400)

Angie, the researcher-participant gives a personal reader response, reflecting on her own situation and how she thinks she would have reacted, given Rory's position. Anne and Saty acknowledge Angie's response in the social interaction of the TLC. Anne further suggests that Rory is no 'normal' kid and Saty acknowledges this idea in a single word - 'Yes'. Not only were Anne and Saty seen to be in supporting roles, to Angie, they were also participants and facilitators, by way of building on Angie's personal response to the idea of Rory protecting his grandfather, as something rare for a kid. Di, another participant, adds to Rory's sense of loyalty and responsibility towards his grandfather when she draws on textual evidence where Rory had to fight his punishment of staying back during lunch, in order to rush home and get lunch for his grandfather. Di, in her role as participant builds on Angie, Anne and Saty's idea of Rory protecting and taking care of his grandfather. Angie then captures the essence of the situation, " He hides all that because he feels that in the end they will put him in the home...." The idea is if the 'authorities' find 'Granda' unfit to live and care for a young boy, then a 'Home' for the aged is the answer. This is what both Rory and Granda did not want. They wanted to be together and Rory took on more than a 'normal' child would have, to protect his grandfather and prevent him from being sent to a 'Home'.

In this excerpt, RRT helped to explain the individual reflective responses, which were later built upon by the social interaction. Social constructive Theory helped to explain the social interactions of the participants when they expanded on the meaning making process of trying to understand Rory's actions, feelings for his grandfather and the overall situation of avoiding being separated. The teachers played the roles of supporting one another, as participants and facilitators, as suggested in the literature

review. However, in the literature review, such roles were played out in classrooms by the teachers, with their students. In this study, similar roles were played out between themselves, within their own interactions. This showed that the teachers did not change their roles between the classroom and when with each other outside the classroom.

Hence, Reader Response Theory, Socio Constructive Theory and the Literature Review helped in the analysis of the TLC transcripts.

TLC Transcript Analysis: Research Questions Two

For research question two, in order to understand how teachers made meaning of the new text, emergent themes were analyzed from the TLC data. The themes that emerged from the data included the following: drawing on prior beliefs, listening to narratives, taking different perspectives, recognizing dissonance and re-contextualizing of real life experiences. These themes are fleshed out from the data and exemplified in chapter four. An example is shown in the following excerpt where the participants drew on their personal beliefs of the importance of Education.

Excerpt B: Theme of drawing on personal beliefs

Di : But you know, maybe you can label me old fashion la, but I really wish the boy went to school.

Angie : You know why, because *we are coming from there, we feel education is so important,* you know.... that's why...

Saty : And all this time, he (Rory) *is not gone to school, you know*… Rory…

Anige : How much of school he has missed out....

From the extract, it can be said that Di valued education and Angie spells this out. Saty responds in terms of time and how much is lacking without education over the period of time. This is echoed in Angie's remark to mean that much time out of school had taken place which was of concern, judging from the tone of the voice. The main theme in this extract is drawing on prior beliefs and this was one way in which the teachers made meaning of the particular context – by bringing their prior beliefs into the context, and in the present context, the participants' brought their prior beliefs to the context of Rory, that education was of utmost importance.

The basic analytic procedure was to ask questions about the data and to make comparisons for similarities and differences with regard to what was stated, implied and later, verified by the researcher and participants, as member checks were made with reference to accuracy in interpretation of the meaning making process.

Table 3.3

Main Data Sources for the First Research Question

Research Question	Data Source	Data Analysis
How do the teachers interact in the TLC during the discussion of the new literature text?	Transcripts of verbal discourse during teacher literature circle sessions. Transcripts of the semi-structured Interviews Researcher's informal jottings	Teacher interaction based on literature review on 'roles'. Verification of responses

Table 3.4

Main Data Sources for the Second Research Question

Research Question	Data Source	Data Analysis
How do teachers make meaning of new texts?	Transcripts of interaction during teacher literature circle sessions-TLCs Transcripts of the Final Interviews –	Coding transcripts according to meaning making themes. Verification of responses according to meaning making themes.

Conclusion

In summary, chapter three deals with methodology issues and tools used in trying to find answers to the two research questions dealing with teacher interactions among the teachers and how teachers make meaning of the new literature text.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter analyzes and interprets the research findings of this study according to the two research questions posed in Chapter One (see p. 5). Hence, this chapter is divided into two main sections to address the research questions. The first section deals with the emergent roles and functions the in-service teachers played when discussing the new literature text in the Teacher Literature Circles (TLCs) while the second section deals with the meaning making process. This is diagrammatized in Figure 4.1:

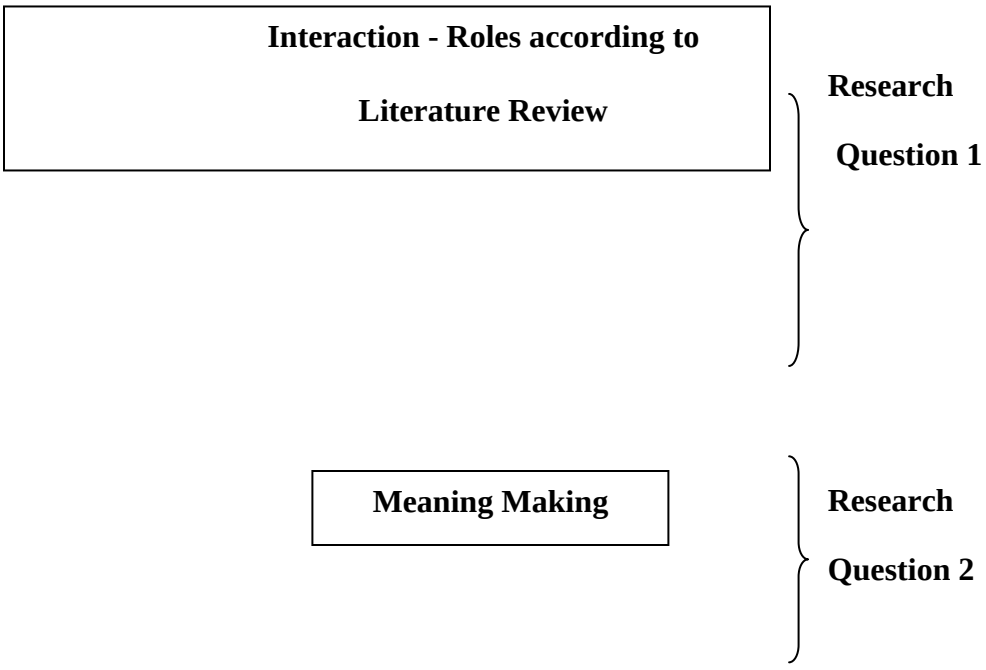

Figure 4.1 Research Questions 1 and 2 Diagrammatized.

Research Question One:

How do the teachers interact in the TLC during the discussions of the new literature text ?

The key concept in research question one is the "interaction" among the teachers during the TLC discussions. This section discusses what happens during the teacher interactions in the TLC discussions.

Excerpt 1: *Rory and Granda*

Di : Ok, we are going to talk about chapters 1 to 5 of the novel *Catch Us if You Can.*

Angie : I really like it. [the text]

Anne : Especially the character "Rory" ah, the kid, the Granda [Rory's grandfather].

Angie : Oh ya... ya, what a fine relationship you know. I didn't have such a relationship with my grandfather you know. He was so strict and always scolding.

Anne : Exactly...[in agreement with Angie, of her own grandfather too].

Di : My grandfather was something like that [the grandfather in the text- loving, close relationship with grandchildren, jovial, fun, absent-minded etc.]

...

Anne : Ya... That's right. Actually you look at this boy ah such a young age and how responsible he is.

Angie : He took on the responsibility far beyond his age ah. Let's say...

Anne : Exactly, taking care of the grandfather, medication, making sure he gave the medication, the food, and the same time going to school.

Ehm... ehm [in between conversation] and get into trouble because of grandfather.....[Grandfather would absent-mindedly throw away Rory's books instead of the garbage]

Angie : Grandfather!

Di : Laughing [over the situation of Rory's homework and the numerous excuses Rory must make to the teacher for the missing homework]

Angie : Can't imagine that la...

Anne : Exactly and he does it [Rory makes sacrifices to protect his grandfather- not telling the truth to the teacher about what really happens to his homework] without actually realizing it, you know.

...

Angie : I would like to think that....I mean I can't dream of my children doing it even for me. I can't imagine eh...eh... my grandchildren doing it for...me... the grandparents... how...

(Session 1, lines 1-30 of the TLC Transcripts)

Di, the participant, begins the first session of the TLC and can be said to have taken on a leader role as well as an instructional stance to get the TLC discussion started. One possible reason for this stance could be the fact that Di was the first participant to have begun teaching the new text to her students and was more confident. Angie's immediate response is a general personal reader response to the entire text- liking it as a whole.

Anne builds into Angie's general but personal response and moves the interaction to a specific context – that of the character Rory and later, Granda [Rory's grandfather]. Angie in turn builds on Anne's views on Rory by adding on and extending the description of Rory and Granda to the relationship that Rory shared with his grandfather [Granda]. It could be said that Angie was taking on a more aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt,

1978) as she lived through the relationship between Rory and his grandfather. What Angie further does, is to draw from her own reflections of her past experiences of her life with her own grandfather. By doing so, she juxtaposes the contrast between her own relationship with her grandfather and that of Rory's. Angie brings her personal context to the text as she transacts with the text. In this instance, the stance taken by Angie is the aesthetic stance as she lives through the reading event (of Rory and Granda) by recalling and reliving her own past experiences with her grandfather, over 30 years ago. The text world of Rory and Granda 'stirred' up elements in Angie's 'linguistic-experiential reservoir'. In the social interactions, Anne adds on to a similar past personal context as Angie's. These two people [Angie, the researcher- participant and Anne, the teacher-participant] draw from their reader responses as they bring their personal responses into their interactions within the TLC. In fact, they were building understanding through the strategy of drawing on their reflections of their past experiences during their interactions. They were bringing the aesthetic aspects of attention into the reading event.

Drawing on past experiences (by Angie and Anne, of their grandfathers) was also a reflective stance as a result of the text 'signals' in terms of the relationship between Rory and his own grandfather. This is what Rosenblatt meant when she said, that the text is a set of verbal 'symbols', which become the 'stimulus' and how it 'stirs up within each reader (Rosenblatt, 1978, p 41). In this context, both Angie and Anne were 'stirred' to their memories of a 'strict' grandfather while Di, the other teacher-participant was 'stirred' to a different experience that she shared with a loving grandfather. Even in Angie's and Anne's similar experiences, if probed further, would bring about different

dimensions within the ‘strict’ grandfather as each person’s experience is unique and cannot be the same altogether.

Anne continues the interactions to focus on the character Rory, even after the mention of grandfathers. In a way, Anne is directing the interaction back to the character Rory. Again, Angie responds to Anne’s evaluation of the character Rory and builds on the character from evidence found in the text. Angie’s interaction can be seen as facilitating Anne’s discussion of Rory, as well as being a participant of the discussion. Anne continues with more details from the text until she mentions Rory’s grandfather. The context is Rory’s grandfather is old and absent-minded, and in this condition, he throws away Rory’s books instead of the garbage. Rory has to make countless excuses about his ‘lost’ homework to the teacher at school. The teacher-participants are amused and Angie utters ‘Grandfather!’. That single interaction draws laughter from Di, thinking of the scene as comical while Angie elaborates that it is unimaginable- the grandfather throwing away the boy’s books mistakenly for garbage. The interaction is seen to be easy going and relaxed where there is laughter while the participants build on the character of Rory and partly Granda too. Angie’s restating or echo of the word ‘Grandfather’ after Anne’s description of the things Rory does for his grandfather, triggered responses from others (Anne). Even as Di and Saty did not comment, they laughed. Their laughter (Angie and Anne included) signalled interaction that was easy and personal, where participants were ready to share, as can be seen in Angie’s forthcoming response as to her own children and hypothetical grandchildren. This part of the interaction could be said to be in both-an efferent and aesthetic stance where, information from the text is selected and interpretation of the characters is taking place:

Anne : ...look at this boy ah such a young age and how responsible he is.

Angie : He (Rory) took on the responsibility far beyond his age

The two participants are going beyond the text and living through the life of a young boy having to handle what most young children would not, or could not handle.

The teacher-participants can be seen to play the roles of 'participant' (as they share their views and personal experiences) as well as play the role of 'facilitator', as they build and encourage each other's ideas and opinions. The stances taken were of the aesthetic and efferent but it was sometimes difficult to separate the stances and that is why Rosenblatt referred to the stances as separate but along a continuum, where readings could be both – along the middle or separate, on either extreme of the continuum.

Later in the interactions, Angie looks to the future in her personal response – of the great possibility that her children or even grandchildren (in the future, as she has no grandchildren presently) might not do for her what Rory does for his grandfather (all the sacrifices and caring for the grandfather in loving ways). Once again, Angie is creating a possible vision and sharing that vision of what she thinks is likely to happen in her future personal life. This is a reader response as she creates such visions through her personal transactions with the text and her particular context of being a mother with children and the possibilities of being a grandparent herself, with the unlikely possibility of having grandchildren such as Rory.

In the above excerpt, the participants display a collegial relationship, easy going conversation and the willingness to draw from and share their past personal experiences. The participants could be said to be reflective as well as participatory in their interactions (Short et al, 1999). The participants also co-authored the text by bringing in their own lived experiences of relationships with grandfathers, to the text relationship between Rory and his grandfather, thus drawing from their personal experiences which were part of their ‘’linguistic-experiential reservoirs’. In order to share their personal experiences, the teacher-participants must have trust between one another and together, work towards a shared meaning. This seemed present in the TLC discussions. Also to be noted is the fact that Saty, one of the teacher-participant, was a silent but attentive listener to the interactions. She often nodded and seemed engaged throughout (from the researcher’s field notes).

The talk within the interactions were exploratory in nature, that is, the participants built on each other’s responses, were supportive and encouraging of each other. It is in times of exploratory talk that shared meanings are developed. Exploratory talk is a term used by Mercer and followed up by Barnes and Todd (1986), referring to talk that encourages meaning making together, in contrast to disputational and off task talk (please see chapter 2, pp). Laughter was also a part of this exploratory talk, creating spaces for ease and spontaneous personal response from the participants.

The next excerpt shows the “interaction” among the teachers during the TLC discussions, as they first began to focus on their students.

Excerpt 2: *'…made the boys really happy…'*

Di : Everything should be perfect so he [Rory's grandfather, Granda] never missed any of the parents' nights, he always made sure he attended and ah .. *the one more thing that I thought was parts were really witty and made the boys really happy when we went through these chapters..*

...

Di : *They [Di's students] pay, they pay so much of attention and they laughed at every single thing that the Granda did... you know... and some of them... I told them that we do this chapter in class and some of them actually went back home and finished the book...* you know... so this is one of the...

...

Saty : Which class was this ?

Di : Five Austin

Angie : Would it be a good class... is 5 Austin a good class?

(Talking at the same time-not clear)

Would you say the same thing with a weak class? Would they also be motivated? Because...

Saty : I'm teaching the fourth class, I'm still having trouble getting the boys to read.

...

Saty : Eh... (in between), no because in the fourth class I have a group of students who can hardly say or write a sentence,...a correct sentence.

Angie : Ya, it's their fluency problem, that...

Di : That shows... that my boys...they are very interested in the story-if you read it to them...since they have difficulties.

Angie : Ya, ya...they can't manage reading it you know, but hopefully when you read to them...and er...explain...they are all listening

Saty : I'm doing part by part.

Di : Ya... 3 chapters... yes.

(Session 1 lines 60-91)

What is seen initially is Di, one of the teacher-participants, referring to the text as she interprets Granda's (Rory's grandfather) actions. Granda's actions are seen in his regular attendance at the boy's school event (parents' night). Di interprets this action, as a great sense of responsibility that Granda [the grandfather] had over the boy. Di was building on the textual information to make her interpretation of Granda's character. This was after the earlier interactions where the participants had shared their interpretations of Rory.

Within the same interaction between text and own interpretation, Di moves the interaction to her students in the classroom. She describes her students' responses as being 'happy' to the 'witty' parts and how her students paid attention

and ‘laughed at every single thing that Granda did’. Her entire interaction from that point on, was focussed on her students’ responses to the text, more specifically, their responses to ‘Granda’ [Rory’s grandfather]. Di could be said to be responding along the aesthetic stance as she ‘lived through’ her students’ responses to Granda. This part of the interaction showed a shift from the earlier roles discovered in excerpt one [facilitator, silent observer, participatory etc]. The researcher has called this role the ‘teacher’ role, as the spot light of the interaction is on the students. Di was, in this context, drawing from her teacher knowledge reservoir which was part of her teacher repertoire, ‘stirred’ by the text situation of Rory and his grandfather. That ‘stirring’ led her to bring into the interaction her students’ responses to the particular part of the novel. Teachers’ repertoires are a component of their linguistic-experiential reservoir. Teachers have an added dimension being ‘teachers’ as they have with them their added teacher ‘repertoires which other readers do not have and thus, cannot draw from.

From then on, the interactions from the other participants are also influenced by Di’s leading, towards the focus on the students to other classroom issues. Thus, the researcher has identified the main role in excerpt two as the ‘teacher’ role. However, even within the ‘teacher’ role, the teacher-participants can be seen to play other roles and engage in exploratory talk, as found in the review of literature. This is seen where Saty, a participant of the TLC [who was a silent but an attentive observer in excerpt 1] voices her challenges that she faces with her students in the ‘fourth’ class. Saty, was voicing out her personal response, not to the text, but of her experience with and discoveries of her own students, in the

'fourth class'. The researcher sees this interaction as the result of belonging to a teacher community and more important, having trust that Saty has established with her colleagues and members of the TLC community.

What Saty does is to share a part of her teacher- challenges in the context of the new novel, despite Di's success story of her very engaged and 'interested' students. Saty's questions to Di are an avenue for her to look for ways to help her students who 'can hardly say or write a sentence...a correct sentence.' Di, in turn shares what she does with her students – read to them. Di's interaction was facilitative in nature while Angie, by restating Di's suggestion of reading to the students, can also be said to be back channelling and facilitating ways for Saty to work with her students. This part of the interaction can also be seen as talk that attempts 'problem solving' of a situation, except that the situation is not text based but context based, that of the teachers' context with their students. This type of talk (problem solving) was identified by Almasi (1995) and other researchers, mentioned in the review of literature (pp.) The overall talk within this interaction, like the previous excerpt was exploratory in nature, where the participants were building on one another's ideas and trying to make sense of what was happening in the text and their own lives as teachers.

Saty engaged in follow-up questions to Di on the (proficiency) level of her (Di's) students in order to understand Di's context better. Angie seems to understand Saty's thoughts and elaborates on Saty's question, in trying to confirm if Di's students in the 'Austin' class were of a higher proficiency and if so, how would students with a lesser proficiency be as motivated as Di's students. Angie

was also playing a facilitative and participatory role. While the researcher finds the overall interaction to be a 'teacher' role, where the participants, being teachers, draw from their 'teacher repertoire (student responses, pedagogy and classroom issues), other roles (facilitator, participant) and talk (problem solving, follow-up questions and comments, exploratory) identified in the literature review is also subsumed within this larger role.

Overall, this part of the interaction of the TLC was something that other adults in TLCs would not have experienced. It is because of the composition of the TLC, being solely teachers that such interactions surfaced, together with the other interactions on the text. It was interesting to see the teacher-participants weave in and out of these roles during their interactions, especially when they moved to interactions involving their students and classroom experiences. In this particular excerpt, Di made associations to her students as she spoke of 'Granda', as her students' responses made an impact on her and she wanted to share that with her colleagues [the other participants of the TLC). It can be said that students are an important part of teachers' lives and perhaps this causes the teachers to move to and fro from the text to their classroom experiences (teacher repertoire), sharing these with one another, while discussing the text for their own understanding.

Excerpt 3 shows the interactions among the teachers during the TLC discussions, as they facilitated the reflections of one of the participants, on the complexities of human emotions and how these complexities were appropriated to the text character and the situation, in trying to understand their own lives and that of the text, in an attempt to find problem solving strategies.

Excerpt 3: *Granda must not go to that place* [Home for the aged]

Anne : No..., what I mean is the boys could be impatient with the parents and the grandparent as well... but...but I also think..em.. There are lot of other factors also, you know, that make one impatient...

Angie : Ya, ya, impatient, ya...

...

Saty : But you know (some pause). You see ... you see in my case ah (silent a while).

Angie : Yes, (you may)...

Saty : ...so many other things... you are tired....

Angie : Ya.

Saty : Mentally, you're really drained, you know and then

Angie : Yes, yes, yes, yes...

Saty : you have to like switch on, switch off, sometimes it's switch on, switch off thing is so difficult, sometimes you want to go a corner and be depressed. And it's so annoying... Because you want to get the thing, things out, you know.

Angie : Ya...of course

Saty : and for this boy (Rory) ah, I (X2) never saw any depression.. only fact that he was afraid and lost....when he knew that the grandfather went to that home….

Saty : That was the stress for that boy, you know.

Angie : Yes...that was very strong in the boy's mind, you know... he was determined that Granda must not go to that place...

Di : Aahh.. because he would die slowly

(Session 1, lines 196-234)

Saty first begins by making a connection to Anne's comment on boys in general who could be impatient with their parents. Saty extends Anne's comments, to lead to the eventual fact that Rory, never showed his feelings (impatience, fear or any emotions) outwardly at the thought of his grandfather being sent to a home for the aged, thus being separated from each other, after living together since he was a baby.

In excerpt 3, Saty takes on a 'leader' role in terms of directing the focus of the discussion towards her own mental state (line) and later, makes connections to Rory's mental state of being fearful (stressed) but trying not to show his feelings of losing his grandfather (line). Before getting to the text character and situation of Granda being sent to a home, Saty shares some personal thoughts. Saty's talk is uncertain, personal, reflective, surprising and exploratory of her thoughts and feelings. She picks up from the context which Anne introduced - that boys in general could be impatient with parents and grandparents, but this could be attributed to " ... lot of other *factors* also, you know, that make one impatient..." (Line 198). Saty takes on the cue of other *'factors'* [from Anne] that could cause this impatience, 14 lines away in the transcript (Lines 214 onwards). Saty takes on the stand of the adult parent and focuses on factors that make the parents impatient, not the child - "you are *tired*", "you're *really drained"*, "you have to like *switch on, switch off*, sometimes it's *switch on, switch off*

thing is *so difficult*, sometimes you want to go [to] *a corner and be depressed*. And it's *so annoying*. ..Because you *want to get the thing, things out*, you know...".

This part of Saty's interactions are a powerful expression of the personal and reflective aspect of Saty which may even be surprising to herself and others initially. Saty is going deep into the personal situation that she and perhaps many others experience. Saty is sharing a 'lived' experience, and is thus taking on an aesthetic stance.The fact of being 'tired' and 'mentally drained' are very real physical and emotional states of the body and mind. Saty goes into greater detail of the situation as she explores the need to sometimes not think about problems and to do so only when needed. She refers to this experience as 'switch on and switch off', which she says is very 'difficult'. She also shares the experience of the need to be alone and to be able to get things out and not leave matters unresolved. This part of Saty's interaction certainly captures the complexities of human experiences that transcends age, as Rory, a young boy too, is going through a difficult period in his life and trying to understand and cope with the situation. What we see is Saty trying to look at her / others' experiences and relate these back to the text, in trying to make sense of the text, and perhaps, herself. Saty has created an attempt to understand what is happening and this can be seen as an attempt at problem solving. In the process, her interactions and talk, as well as those of the others, are seen to be reflective, creative, participatory, facilitative and exploratory. Her stance taken is mostly in the aesthetic as she connects the text to real life – her own life.

The 'you' as used by Saty,(line) is a point of reference to herself but she generalizes it to adults as a whole. The reasons that she does this could be due to the fact that Saty believes her feelings to represent most working adults or possibly the fact that

the use of the pronoun ‘you’ gives her a sense of security – that she is not talking of herself but of others. In this interaction, Saty’s talk can be said to be personal, uncertain, reflective and exploratory as she looks into her own life’s experiences and tries to make connections to Rory’s feelings at a time when he is going to face a separation from the only relative he knows and loves – Granda.

When Saty transfers these adult circumstances and emotions to the child Rory, she says that the situation of Granda being sent to a home was a ‘stress for that boy [Rory], you know’. Despite all the ‘stress’ and trauma of being separated from the only family that Rory had, the participants [Angie] agree that Rory was strong, mature and tried not to show his emotions – “... he was determined that Granda must not go to that place [the Home for the aged]...”, as Di put it clearly, “...because he [Granda] would die slowly...”. Di’s interpretation in that sentence is in the aesthetic stance. She talks of ‘die slowly’ not in terms of physical death but death of the spirit, the lack of a will to live separated from the loved grandson, Rory.

In the above interaction, Angie and Di facilitated Saty’s flow of ideas. In the earlier part of the interactions, Angie was clearly facilitative of Saty’s personal interactions as she uttered affirmative words like “ ya, yes, of course ”, after every personal response from Saty. Angie was also being supportive of Saty while encouraging and urging her on to express herself and enable the others to co-author meanings in their interactions.

In this excerpt, the participants are seen to work together in supportive roles of each other, in their interactions. Some personal experiences are also explored and show

up the complexities of human feelings, attempts at understanding these complexities and appropriating these understandings and complexities to the text.

Concluding Remarks

In the three excerpts above, it can be seen that the dominant talk in the teacher interactions was exploratory in nature. Exploratory talk facilitated a collegial relationship and enabled shared meanings to be developed during the teacher interactions. The participants were also reflective while they played various roles. Some of the roles seen in the excerpts included leader, participant, active listener, facilitator, co-author and teacher role. All the roles, except for the teacher role were cited in the review of literature where teachers played these roles with their students. The excerpts showed that these roles are also played by teachers themselves during their interactions with one another, as a community. Though the teacher role, as seen in excerpt two, was not found in the review of literature, roles such as facilitator and participant were subsumed within this larger role. The participants worked together in supporting roles as they built on each other's ideas.

The teachers also explored the complexities of human feelings and emotio0ns by juxtaposing the text alongside their own personal lives. Personal experiences were shared during the teacher interactions, showing trust and a spirit of comraderie among the teachers. The participants encouraged each other in their explorations and tried to make meaning of these explorations together. The participants elaborated on ideas, asked questions of each other to clarify points, nodded, laughed, listened and quoted from the text during their interactions. The interactions were informal, easy and spontaneous.

The stances taken by the participants were as Rosenblatt(1978) posited, along a continuum, between the efferent and the aesthetic. The efferent stance was when facts of the text were stated as building on text information. The aesthetic stance took over when interpretation began with a 'lived experience'. This was usually seen when the participants shared their personal experiences and thoughts, as triggered by the text. This was also seen when the participants made interpretations of the text.

What was noticed in excerpt two was a teacher role, where the focus of the interaction moved from the text to the students in the participants' classes. This showed that students played an important part of the teachers' lives. The talk was exploratory with 'problem-solving elements where the participants shared their classroom problems, and in the same vein, strategies to overcome the classroom problems. While the focus of the interaction was the students, within this teacher role, other roles mentioned in the literature review were also seen. The teachers played facilitative and participatory roles as well. Talk comprised problem solving strategies, follow-up questions and comments.

What comes across in excerpt two is that teacher interactions are unique as they wave in and out of various roles during their interactions. Of particular interest is the part where students feature significantly in the lives of teachers. Perhaps this causes the teachers to move to and from, from the text to their personal experiences, which also include their classroom experiences which would not be present in other communities. This part of the interactions, where students and classroom concerns emerge, make the teacher interactions particularly unique in comparison to other non-teacher discussion groups. Having said that, the excerpts also show that the teachers played roles as found in the review of literature. While the review of literature shows roles such as facilitator,

participant, active listener etc being played by teachers with their students, this study shows that these roles are also played by teachers during their own interactions.

Research Question Two:

How do Teachers Make Meaning of the New Text?

This section discusses the findings of the second research question which is how teachers make meaning of the new text. The key concept addressed in the question is "meaning making" by the teacher-participants during the TLC discussions. Meaning making is considered as "making sense" (Merriam, p. 286) but in Rosenblatt's (2004) transactional theory adopted in this study, meaning making is said to manifest within an individual, in groups, and between individuals and the text-author. Each individual brings their individualized history to the transaction (i.e., "transaction" in the theory) which Rosenblatt calls the "linguistic-experiential reservoir"; when individuals meet in groups, individuals tap into this reservoir where the transactional mode of thinking occurs. In other words, meaning making is both personal and social.

For Vygotsky (1962) whose view of the social adds to Rosenblatt's transactional theory, meaning making is said to occur when an individual gains a "sense of a word"; a word arouses psychological events in the individual's consciousness. This process is viewed as "dynamic, fluid, complex whole" and has several "zones of unequal stability". Meaning hence is one of the zones of sense, the most stable and precise zone. A word acquires its sense from the context in which it appears; in different contexts, it changes its sense (p. 46). In this study, the meaning emerging within individuals stir from the words scripted in the text but is transacted individually

and to other individuals and other contexts differently. Hence the social dimension and the multi interpretations.

Findings reported in the first research question revealed that the participants engaged in the TLC discussions in various roles which worked together as a 'dynamic, fluid, complex, whole'. Meaning making is seen in terms of understanding the new literature text and then considering ways of teaching it to the students. Due to the dynamic nature of the meaning making process, it not only lingers within the nexus of individual reader and teacher-TLC group- text relationship but is extended to students and their classroom context as well. It is further expounded that students add their own perspectives to that of their teachers', though this is outside the immediate concern of the study. In this recursive process, meaning is constantly shaped and reshaped at both personal and communal levels. Hence the following section deals with the themes that emerged from the data which constitute aspects of meaning making among the participants. The themes include: *listening to narratives, taking different perspectives*, recognizing dissonance and *re-contextualizing of real life experiences.*

Listening to Narratives

The participants' meaning making was evident in their listening to the personal narratives of their students, and the retelling of these narratives to the other participants in the TLC. The narrative presented below exemplifies how listening to others' narratives can become nested as one's own, thus influencing the meaning making processes. The excerpt is based on the text theme of strained relationships which occurred during session 1:

Excerpt 4: Strained relationships

Anne : You see in this story the father and son do not speak to each other. For years they don't even know where they are. So I ask them "Anyone of you here who has not spoken to any of your family members for a long period of time?" and you know Shamala [a teacher in Anne's school] told me that in her class one boy raised his hand.. Shamala said last year he has not spoken to his sister for more than one year, and then they started to discuss this, you know, relationships are important and all that.

Angie : There are people that I don't like as well. In my family, you know, but the thing is I have come to the point that I'm not going to keep it in my heart and hold a grudge because it's going to hold me back in my life. But I'm not going to go out of my way to find the person and talk to the person either, you know.

Saty : Avoid

Angie : I don't know whether that's the best thing or not.

Saty : Certain times it is.

Di : Sometimes I think the hurt can be so great but I need time.

Saty : Get it out of the system

Di : So I think if you kill someone's spirit sometimes it is very hard to say sorry.

Angie : It's very hard ... very hard to forgive.

Di : It's difficult to forgive.

Saty : Ya …very true with Granda the way of his reaction towards the son.

The discussion centered on the strained relationship between Granda and his son in the text. Anne shared a narrative she had heard from her colleague Shamala at school. It was about Shamala's student who responded to her questionings on relationships after discussing the text in class. Anne's retelling of Shamala's narrative in the TLC is a "nested" narrative because it is embedded within the original narrative. Nested narratives are ways in which participants "make sense of their own experiences" (Meyers, 2006, pp. 4-7). The nested narrative prompted Angie, Saty and Di to further add on to Shamala's main narration. Hence, Shamala's sharing of her experience with Anne was the first level of narration whereas Anne's retelling of the narrative in the TLC could be considered as another level of narration, or a nested narrative within an existing nested narrative. Hence the meaning making in this instance could be traced to Shamala's classroom context, transferred to and through Anne, to the TLC group.

The threading through these interpersonal domains is mediated through listening and sharing in different contexts. The participants could be said to have drawn from their teacher narratives which originated from their students. It was through narratives that the participants made connections between the text, real life events and their classroom concerns (i.e., their students). Thus the narratives contributed to the meaning making among the participants.

The nesting of narratives within other narratives contributes to the re-contextualization of the interactions in the TLC. In Vygotsky's words, "A word acquires its sense from the context in which it appears; in different contexts, it changes its sense" (1962, p. 46). Rosenblatt (1938, p. 11) depicts this phenomenon as the individual's "multiple inner alternative resonating to the scripts of the text". The meaning making of the "word" from the text began from Shamala (a colleague of the TLC participants), who articulated her student's personal narrative to Anne (one of the participants of the TLC.) Shamala narrated that one of her students had not spoken to his sister for a year. On listening to Shamala's nested narrative, as the original narrative belonged to her student, the meaning making became relevant to Anne. When Anne narrated the story of the boy's [student's] estranged relationship with his sister, to the members of the TLC, the meaning making took on different trajectories among the participants as they discussed the theme of 'forgiveness' which crops up later in the next excerpt. In sum, meaning making, stemming from the same text, was transacted through nested narratives of students and teachers, mediated through listening and sharing. What was going on among the teachers were the critical processing, analyzing and diagnosing of the narratives in order to make sense of the text. The teachers could be said to be involved in meaning – situated mental activities as suggested by Mansvelder-Longayroux, & Verloop,(2007). Indeed it is a complex system operating at multiple levels of appropriation, interpretation and nestings reflective of Vygotsky's (1962) "dynamic system of meaning" that transcended physical context and involved mental processing.

Another instance during the TLC discussion (Session 7) also reflected the theme of listening to nested narratives. The story was shared by Saty, one of the participants of

the TLC, during an interview with the researcher. Saty shared a narrative of *her* student's strained relationship with his mother; he had not spoken to his mother for two years. Saty's nested narration emerged in the interview because she drew parallelisms between Anne's narration and her own experience with her student:

> ..we were talking about this, whether we can forgive people who have wronged us and one incident which till today I am unable to forget is a boy who came out with this story about he and his mother not having spoken to each other for almost two years. So I related to it.. talking about how Granda has not spoken to his son for many years. And then I asked the students you know, in the class, do you think this is normal, do you think that something should be done about it? And the other boys advised him you know, you shouldn't be doing what Granda is doing. They connected it to the text and we asked him if he feels what he is doing is not right and he himself said that he would try to reconcile the matter with his mum.

Clearly Saty's student's narrative had impacted her as she said "...till today I am unable to forget." In the classroom, she compared her student's strained relationship with his mother for two years and the situation in the text, where Granda experiences a strained relationship with his son for a far longer period of time. Like Anne and Shamala, Saty's concern was to help her students understand the text. Saty's role went beyond the text when she guided them, specifically the student with problems, on strained relationships and reconciliation (themes found in the text). Hence Saty was successful in bridging the text and her students' lives at the end of the lesson when the student said that "he would try to reconcile the matter with his mum". Saty, on hearing

her student's narrative, consciously *related it* to the text situation. This was a way for both, Saty and her students, to make meaning of the text by mediating their life experiences with that of the text.

Taking different perspectives

Meaning making was evident as the participants interpreted the different characters and situations in the text as shown in the following excerpt where Di, Angie and Saty shared their adverse views on Granda's son, Jeff Mackintosh during session 1:

Excerpt 5: Hatred

Di : Ok. He [Granda] was actually, you know, you can see the disappointment in the grandfather regarding his son. His son just decided and he couldn't handle it and left.

Angie:: Left.

Di : Eh, for that I think also because the Granda actually felt very bad that his son has done this. That he felt that he took it up on himself that now he is going to look after the grandson ... Saty: Ya that is what he realized. Both father and mother, they spoilt the son, you see.

Di : Anything he wanted he got and when he got tired of it, he threw it aside.

Anne : Just threw it. Toys when he was a boy and people when he grew up people. *Must point out to the students when they are young must be loyal and stay loyal when older too.*

The participants harboured negative views of the son by looking at two aspects. First, the participants looked at Granda's disappointment with his son and having to take on the responsibility of looking after his grandson. Secondly, the participants looked at the son's circumstances and his actions as he was spoilt and discarded his responsibility. They formed their judgements about Granda and his son Jeff Mackintosh, after reading the text and later discussing in the TLC how Jeff was "spoilt" by his parents when he was small. Making connections between characters and their situations allowed the participants' meaning making to emerge at their personal levels and later, at the TLC level. For instance, Di opined that they could actually "see the disappointment in the grandfather regarding his son. His son just decided and he couldn't handle it and left". In response, she rationalized that Granda "took it up on himself that now he is going to look after the grandson". Her views were two-fold: that Granda was going to look after his grandson due to his son's irresponsibility and that he (Granda) was also responsible for spoiling his own son, which resulted in the son's lack of a sense of responsibility. What seemed to be going on here was the engagement of mental activities among the teachers, namely Di, as she 'processed' the text information, analyzed and diagnosed the situation. Di's views were supported by Saty and Anne.

Anne's articulation that Jeff "Just threw it.. Toys when he was a boy and people when he grew up people" (italicized in the excerpt) mirrored her meaning making of the character and situation in the past and present. Her meaning making was further

extended beyond the text into real life when she expressed the need to drive home the moral values to her students that she "must point out to the students when they are young must be loyal and stay loyal when older too".

However in week seven, the participants shifted in their perspectives of Jeff: from adverse views to being more sympathetic, as displayed in the following excerpt. Anne questioned Jeff's decision of not responding to the media appeals to help to look for Granda and Rory:

Excerpt 6: Judgemental

Anne	:	Why didn't the son (Jeff Mackintosh) talk at the first place, to tell them (Rory, his son and Granda, his father) to come back.
Angie	:	He would have also worried, you know, he knows how the father has a terrible temper, Granda.
Saty	:	But you know, whatever it is, he [Jeff] still comes.
Di	:	Little fear, hesitation.
Angie	:	And also guilt, maybe his own guilt also.
Di	:	Knowing that putting his father through so much of headache.
Angie	:	And his son, both.

Angie, Saty and Di offered possible reasons for the son's hesitance in showing up. The justification was Jeff's fear of Granda's temper on the one hand and on the other hand, Jeff's own fear, hesitation and guilt within. Recognizing Granda's flaw of having a bad temper and the son's personal emotions allowed the participants to change their views of the father and son. Hence this could be interpreted as a change in the meaning making within the individual participants as well as in the TLC group as they seem to have reached a consensus among themselves, after a series of mental processes involving processing, analyzing and making new diagnoses.

It is evident that the participants changed perspectives during the TLC interactions. This can be attributed to their mental activities of re-processing, re-analyzing and re-diagnosing their earlier interpretations. Initially they were judgemental towards Granda's son, however, this perspective changed to sympathy after their sharing sessions. Hence the participants' inner meaning making manifests within one's own linguistic-experiential reservoir and becomes both, social and personal. This phenomenon was further validated through the interview data gathered from Anne who strongly articulated her views of the young Jeff discarding his toys when he was young and later as he grew up, people. What follows is an excerpt of the interview data where Anne traces her change in perspectives.

Excerpt 7: Anne's journey

> The character of the son itself, the very beginning I started to hate him. When I started to read that story, even though I did not know the son because of the deed that he did, I had the anger in me already embedded. I

had that negative thing towards him. But later somehow, he has his own family now, he has his children, deep in him he knows what Granda has gone through and that is why he came all the way to see... to meet and to fetch his father and his son back.

Anne's response reflected her meaning making process that began at a point of time in the past and had continued until the present. The time markers found in the excerpt were "beginning" and "later" respectively. Anne's initial meaning making of the text began during the initial period when she felt "hate" and "anger" for the son. In contrast, Anne's perspectives began to change from being negative to being sympathetic after the TLC discussion, where Anne and the other TLC participants reanalyzed and re-diagnosed the situation causing her continued sympathy for Jeff, during her interactions with her students in the subsequent classroom sessions.

It could be construed that Anne changed her initial perspectives as a result of adapting to the views of the other TLC participants, thus creating newer meanings to prior ones, continuously shaping and reshaping her views. It was in these circumstances that Anne began to shift perspectives from her initial harsh judgement of the son to a more sympathetic and empathetic perspective. Anne continued her reflections during the interview,

Excerpt 8: Sympathetic

> If he was like the arrogant person he was those days, he wouldn't even bother to come but he made it a point to come.. *despite everything.. and he wants his family back and that shows people can change.*

This was a clear shift from Anne's initial perspective, where she considered the son's ability to change from being irresponsible to one who showed a sense of regret, care and wanting to make amends with the family. Additionally, she not only made meaning of the son's change in character, but also extended this meaning beyond the text as she said, "people can change". This contrasted with her earlier perspective where she said Jeff had abandoned people in his adult life and used toys in his childhood (session one). The changes in perspectives from session one in the past to session seven, and then the interview with Anne, after week 7, reflected the changing perspectives which were the result of the mental activities of re-processing, re-analyzing and re-diagnosing the situation and perspectives of Jeff.

In fact, her subsequent lessons in her classroom after her TLC sessions expanded her understanding of her existing beliefs and perspectives. Discussing the same theme on Jeff being irresponsible, Anne related her students' comments as thus:

> Actually the boys are the ones who opened my mind to that. They said look at this, teacher, if the son was not bothered he wouldn't even be there.

It appeared that Anne's students, whom she refers to as "the boys", had also influenced her perspectives, i.e. meaning making, besides the TLC discussions she was involved in. She claimed that they had "opened my [her] mind" to Jeff's efforts in reconciliation with Granda and Rory.

During the interview, Anne also mentioned other reasons that her students gave in support of Granda's son: ''Some said maybe the son was too young when he got

married and he was not ready for marriage", which confirmed their [students'] positive stance towards Jeff. Hence, it could be inferred that not only the TLC participants helped to shape and reshape Anne's perspectives and interpretations, but it was also her students who helped to redefine her meaning making that manifested as her new perspectives. In sum, Anne's journey of taking on new perspectives could be diagrammatized as in Figure 4.4 to further understand the theoretical underpinnings of such moves:

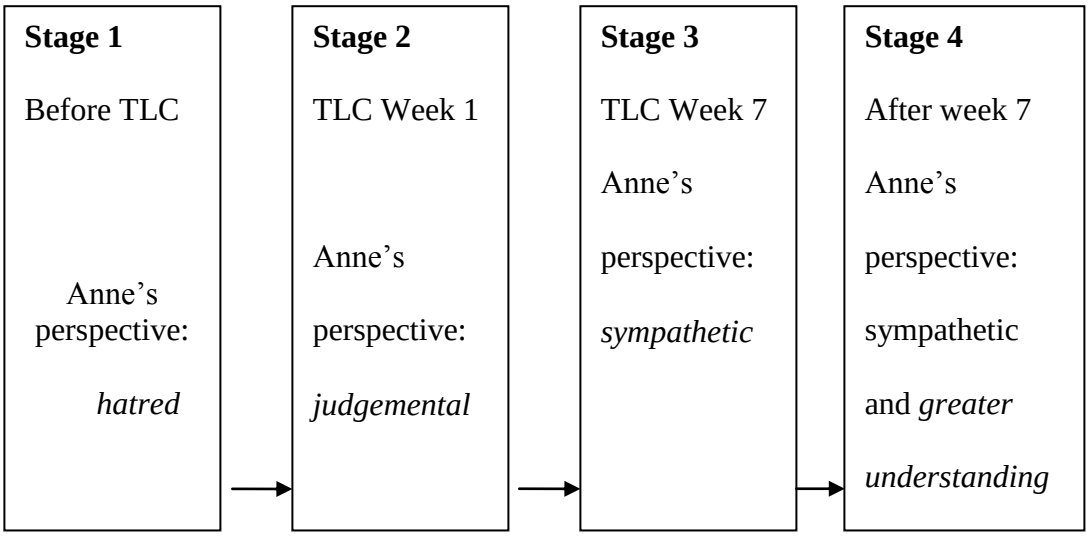

Figure 4.2. Anne's journey of taking on different perspectives.

The journey in which Anne takes on different perspectives reflect Rosenblatt's (2004) conception of "multiple inner alternatives" in the process of meaning making where individuals are bound to project different perspectives. She explains it thus:

We bring our funded experience to bear. Multiple inner alternatives resonate to the signs. Not only the triadic linkages with the signs but also certain organismic states, or certain ranges of feeling, are stirred up in the linguistic–experiential reservoir. From these activated areas, selective attention-conditioned, as we have seen, by multiple physical, personal, social, and cultural factors entering into the situation-picks out

elements that will be organized and synthesized into what constitutes "meaning". (Rosenblatt, 2004)

It could be construed from Rosenblatt's explanation of the human experience as being organic within a "linguistic-experiential reservoir" waiting to be stirred to manifest later through social contacts, mirrors Anne's experience of tapping into her own inner reservoir. As she engaged in discussions with other individuals, their feedback seemed to have stirred alternative meanings from her initial hatred towards Jeff's character to sympathy and understanding towards him. More importantly, what emerged from this episode are elements of *construction* and *reconstructions* of Anne's perception of Jeff, from hatred at the beginning of the TLC sessions to being judgmental, sympathy and greater understanding. In other words, the construction and reconstruction mirrors the concept of revising one's own interpretations (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.146) of a text as a result of exchange through social interaction with other readers in the TLC.

Recognizing Dissonance

The data also revealed the element of recognizing dissonance as part of the meaning making process. Dissonance refers to a contradiction or conflict which needs to be solved, if not acknowledged. Dissonance occurs when beliefs or assumptions are contradicted by new information. The concept was introduced by the psychologist Leon Festinger (1919-1989) in the late 1950s and also Piaget (1959). Later researchers showed that when confronted with challenging new information, most people seek to preserve their current understanding of the world by rejecting, explaining away, or avoiding the

new information or by convincing themselves that no conflict really exists. However, cognitive dissonance is nonetheless considered an explanation for attitude change and this is reflected in Di, as she changes her attitude towards Granda.

Initially Di's perspectives (shared with her first group of students) of Granda were that he was funny and humorous. However Di's subsequent group of students felt otherwise. They felt that Granda's actions were dangerous. This perspective was reinforced by some of Di's student's narratives of their real life experiences where grandparents' absent-mindedness were seen to be dangerous. Di recognized the dissonance between her initial perspective of Granda and her subsequent perspective, after listening to her students' views. Having recognized and acknowledged this dissonance, Di's meaning making process took a change resulting in her more serious stance of recognizing the dangers posed by Granda's absent-mindedness. Unlike some responses as suggested by Festinger, where most people seek to preserve their current understanding of the world by rejecting, explaining away, or avoiding the new information or by convincing themselves that no conflict really exists, Di was able to look more objectively at the different perspectives and recognize the dissonance, acknowledge it and accept it.

Di's meaning making process is deconstructed in Figure 4.6 as Di's meanings, are reflected in her TLC sharing which seemed to have converged after her classroom discussions with both groups of students. At the point represented by the double-headed arrow, her converged meaning making could be construed as being reiterated with the students' narrative and later emerges as a consolidated newer meaning. These newer meanings were the result of mental activities which included processing, analyzing and

diagnosing the situation. Hence the merging and re-emerging of meanings is layered; this implies that Rosenblatt's linguistic-experiential reservoir is not only organic but is deep and layered, as seen in Di's meaning making process.

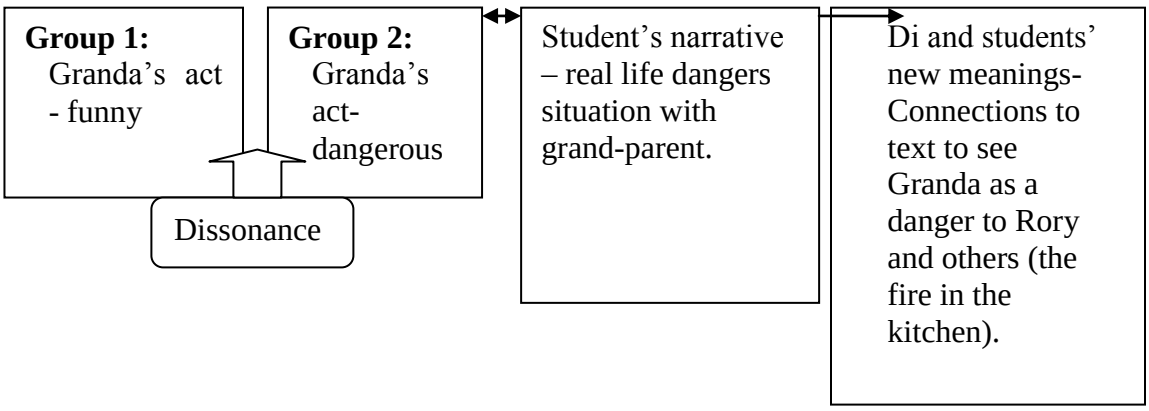

Figure 4.3. Di's meaning making process.

Although recognizing dissonance is rooted in psychological studies particularly Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, in this study it refers to the changes in meaning making and subsequent perspectives due to the diverse interpretations from others. The extracts displayed in the following discussion show how Di's meaning making evolves as she becomes engaged with two different groups of students; in the first instance, Di and her earlier batch of students seem to find Granda funny in their response to the text while in the second, Di's subsequent batch of students seemed to have been affected differently by the text. It is here that Di recognizes and experiences a dissonance from her earlier perspective of Granda

In the extract obtained from Week 1 Session 1, Di shares her first batch of students' responses to Granda's behaviour. The students found him hilarious and there was much laughter in class.

Excerpt 9: They laughed…

> They paid so much of attention and they *laughed at every single thing* that the Granda did, you know, and some of them, I told them that we do this chapter in class and some of them actually went back home and finished the book… Even when we were in the class reading it, we *cannot stop laughing* because the boys really found that *so funny* you know.

The italicized words and phrases *"laughed at every single thing", "cannot stop laughing"* and *"so funny"* in the transcript above shows the students' responses to Granda's behaviour. Anne thought that her students found the book too engaging to stop reading it. This situation contrasts with another group of students that Di taught two years later and reported by Di at the interview which was held two years later.

But they did tell me also, teacher we just want to point out too that these are all very real mistakes that Granda did which had serious consequences. They said this is not a joke for him to put a sack (of) potatoes or throw his homework down a rubbish chute. Or keep a sack of potatoes in the wardrobe, you know? It's very dangerous. It's very bad for Granda because we already know that something is not right mentally with him ..and already he is getting very forgetful. And a forgetful person who is taking care of a child.

In the above extract, Di reports that her students talked about Granda making "very real mistakes" which included putting a sack of potatoes in the wardrobe and throwing Rory's homework down the rubbish chute. In contrast to the earlier group of students, Granda was not seen by the second group of students as being amusing or humorous but instead as a potential danger to his young grandson and to others as well. Hence the students in the second groups seem to have recognized dissonance as Granda was no longer amusing, but posed potential danger to his grandson. It could be construed that the earlier group of students were at the first level of meaning making but Di's subsequent batch of students extended the meaning to a deeper level.

Although the researcher was able to capture the different groups' perspectives through Di's lenses, one that seemed to agree with Granda's mistakes as being humorous and the other that recognised the potential danger that Granda posed as a dissonance, what was more crucial was Di's own *converging perspectives*. Di agrees with both groups of students. She laughed with the first group but also gave serious attention to the second group that Granda's actions were dangerous. The TLC discussion also seemed to have helped Di to recognize the dissonance and to see the situation in the text differently. In this sense, the theme of recognizing dissonance and converging perspectives was one of the ways in which Di and her students made meaning of the text.

What made this relevant to the TLC was when Di brought parts of her students' views to the staffroom, where she shared these dissonant thoughts with members of the TLC, under a more loosely held social context over day to day school routines. Thus, the students' thoughts were explored by the TLC members, through Di's sharing

'outside' the TLC but within a larger shared school context. However, the trigger of these shared 'outside' moments were a spill off from the TLC discussions and it is unknown if these other 'outside' the TLC discussions would have taken place as enthusiastically if not for the TLC. The TLC members seemed to be able to see and accept Di's converging perspectives but did not say if they too agreed with the new perspectives. What seemed clear was that the other participants shared their ideas, accepted differences but did not always agree with each other.

While discussing the topic of Granda and his humorous-dangerous actions, Di also shared one of her student's narratives where the boy's own grandparent was forgetful. In the interview, Di said:

> ..one boy actually talked about this kind of issue that happened but not a fire [as in the text] but about a grandparent (of a friend) forgetting and had left the child at home. The student said that luckily the boy's father came back in time, you know? The pain and the anxiety and all that the family felt at that moment, those are all real feelings. It's not a joke, you know? So everyone might find it funny that the homework has gone down the chute and then all the excuses that Rory makes (to the teacher) but in the end it's all.. it's a serious thing. You know what I mean?

The excerpt above evidences the merging of themes between recognizing dissonance and listening to narratives, which strengthened the point made on the dissonance. The interview data showed that the student's nested narrative (it was not the student's narrative but that of a friend which became nested in the student's narrative)

added to the strength of the groups' argument. The student saw parallelisms between Granda's act of endangering his own life and that of Rory's and the parallel situation of the student's friend's grandfather's behaviour. The data showed an instance of how Di's students made connections between real life narratives and the text situation. The sharing of the student's life narrative helped Di and the rest of the class to make an overall interpretation and meaning of Granda and Rory's life – that Granda was not funny, but needed help before something bad happened to him and his grandson.

Di made meaning of the text through various ways and these ways were not isolated solitary incidences. While recognizing the dissonance between her first and the subsequent groups' perspectives of Granda, Di's meaning making experience seemed have been enriched by the real life narratives shared by her students.

In recognizing dissonance and sharing Di's student's narrative, meaning making took place outside of the TLC but what made these two events significant was Di's sharing these student experiences with her colleagues under different social contexts within the spaces of the school context. If not for the TLC, Di may not have thought of sharing her students' responses as aggressively as she did. Di's idea was to add to the TLC's meaning by showing the other participants, other dimensions of interpretation. It was at this level that the other participants too, recognized dissonance and continued their reflection and meaning making, which took different directions. In other words, it could be concluded that the TLC had a life even after the TLC sessions had ended in week seven. The TLC was actually functioning but on a different dimension, still social but the degree of informality and casual conversations between the participants was even greater when the teachers met along the school corridors, in the staff room or at the school

canteen (cafeteria), sharing their reflections and those of their students' as well, which enriched their interpretations.

Re-contextualizing

One of the ways in which the participants made meaning of the text was through re-contextualizing real life events with the text. For example, in week four the participants talked about a particular text- social class of people who travelled from one place to another in a caravan, doing odd jobs to earn a living. They did not have any permanent abode. Society did not look positively at this group of people, symbolized through the character Granda, who makes judgemental and prejudiced statements about the travellers. He refers to one of the travelling families in derogatory terms "The Tinkers" as opposed to his more politically correct grandson, as in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 10: Granda is rude

Saty : Rory keeps *correcting* Granda. Travellers, travellers and Granda is getting annoyed with Rory for referring to them as travellers rather than 'Tinkers'.

Angie : You see Rory is a very matured boy, you know. Granda is making a lot of judgements, you know. You see here the maturity of the boy and lack of maturity in the older person.

In the selected TLC transcript, the participants were seen to be discussing Granda's prejudice towards the caravan family by referring to them derogatively as the " Tinkers", which Rory did not appreciate. The use of the derogatory term reflected

Granda's deep prejudice for the travellers and Rory's attempt to correct his grandfather, revealing Rory's maturity at a young age. The exchange between the participants on this social issue reflects their meaning making of the text and their lived experience of values. This interpretation is further validated with the following excerpt obtained during an interview with Saty and the researcher.

> Then the other thing is about.. I think what I brought into the class was how people look down on others. We discussed it at the TLC. We talked about the Tinkers. Some of the boys, they give examples of people we tend to look down on like, some give me examples. Some give me examples of immigrants, there was an Indonesian boy in my class, and they started teasing him and about how they viewed them with suspicion. The students related this to the Tinkers in the story. The students also spoke about Bangladeshi and other immigrants [in Malaysia].
>
> Angie : Wow, ok.

In the conversation above, Saty reported that her students recognized the social issue involving "Tinkers" in the text as being similar to what was happening in their lives as there were many immigrants in the Malaysian context. Saty related the case of an Indonesian boy in her classroom and how the students "started teasing him" and "they viewed them (foreigners / Indonesians) with suspicion". The students also "spoke about Bangladeshi and other immigrants" who were not looked at positively in Malaysia. Hence it could be inferred that Saty's meaning making process was further enhanced by her students' responses in terms of *re-contextualizing* the idea of prejudice as found in the

text (original context) with that of the immigrant groups found in the students' real life contexts (re-contextualised).

However, the theme of re-contextualizing is not static but was seen to overlap with the theme of taking perspectives. This is evident in the later part of the TLC. Similarly, in the later part of the text, Granda changes his perspective of the "Tinkers" and warms up to them. The "Tinkers" give food and shelter to Granda with open arms. The following excerpt shows Saty, Angie and Di's taking on a more positive stance of immigrants. This occurred in week 7 session 7 after discovering Granda's pleasant experience with the "Tinkers":

Excerpt 11: Some of us are really nice…

Saty : We regret eh having slammed doors on travellers...[reads from the text]

Angie : Yes and making those judgements, how we judge so quickly. Ya, that's a great one.

Di : And Tyrone [a Tinker] said they are not all bad, some of us are really nice, not all of us are bad.

Perspectives seemed to have changed in the exchanges above as Saty picks out "we regret eh having slammed doors" from the text for the TLC discussion. Although it is thematically considered a re-contextualization of the Tinker-immigrant issue, it could also be interpreted as taking different perspectives. The overlapping of these domains suggests meaning making to be a complex and dynamic process. The following visual representation (Figure 4.5) is an attempt to make sense of Saty's meaning making

process based on the text where Granda initially harbours prejudice against the Tinkers, Saty's own classroom discussion with her students as a result of the TLC where re-contextualization was identified and later, her encounter with Granda's positive disposition towards the Tinkers:

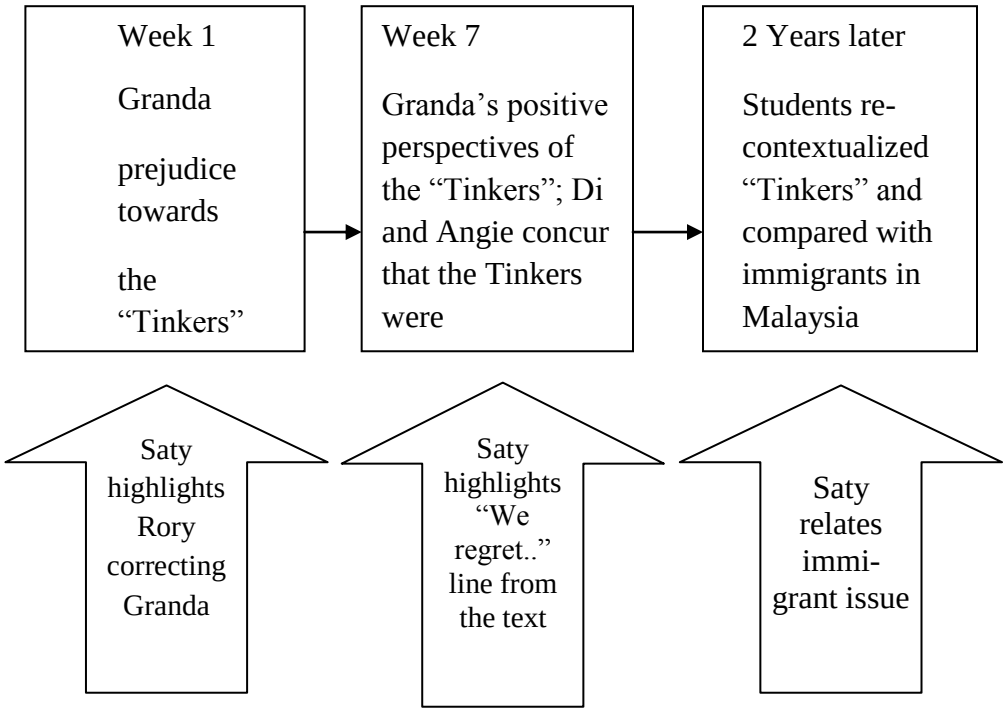

Figure 4.4 Saty's meaning making process.

The visual representations of Saty's meaning making process depicted above show the process initiated with the text and TLC where Granda used the derogatory "Tinker"; at this point, Saty was observed as highlighting Rory's attempt in correcting his grandfather. After this point, Saty meets the TLC group in week seven where the group discuss Granda's positive relationships with the Tinkers; here, Saty articulates the line "We regret eh having slammed doors on travellers". In the interview, two years later,

Saty shares her students' narrative of an Indonesian classmate of theirs and relates this to the local phenomenon of the immigrant influx into Malaysia.

Apart from re-contextualising the Tinker-immigrant issue from the text to real-life, what emerged was a *co-construction* of meaning between Saty and her students in the classroom which was later related to the researcher. Hence, it can be said that the co-construction of meaning was a result of the emergent theme of re-contextualizing the prejudice issue.

The visualizing above reflect the parallelisms between the gradual process of meaning making among the individuals who had encountered the text in one way or another, and the changing storyline and character development. They were able to draw out instances of the text and re-contextualize the instances by analysing and applying the theme of immigrants in their own lives and reconnecting that meaning back to the text. What was happening was the mental activities that involved learning- critical processing, analyzing and diagnosing were going on in the minds of the teachers. This was in line with the studies on mental activities (Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007).

This weaving in and out of the text-real life context-text, reflects the explicit connections that are made to the different dimensions of knowledge. Although Cazden (2006) originally refers to this phenomenon in relation to old-new curriculum, in the context of the present study, this conceptualizing aids in understanding the creation of meaning making as going back and forth along a continuum and through dimensions of

knowledge in different contexts, but threaded and pulled together by the text and a shared meaning.

Overview of Research Question Two

Overview of Research Question Two

In concluding research question two, four themes emerged during the TLC interactions which presented ways in making meaning for the teachers. The themes in research question two also weaved and overlapped between each other.

One example was when the theme of recognizing dissonance overlapped with the theme of listening to narratives. What the theme of listening to narratives did was to reinforce the theme on the recognition of dissonance. While Di recognized the dissonance among her students' vision of Granda (from being funny to dangerous), her meaning making process was simultaneously influenced by listening to her students' narratives, which served to strengthen her new stance of looking at Granda: as a source of danger to himself, the boy (Rory) and others. Di shared these ideas with the TLC group. Di's students' narratives were of real life situations where grandparents had been absent-minded and had forgotten that their grandchildren were at home alone. Likewise, the situation applied to the text, the realization dawned that the kitchen fire was due to Granda's absent-mindedness and a dangerous situation, reinforced by the earlier dissonance which arose, of Granda being seen initially as 'funny' to a later interpretation of being a source of danger to others. Thus, the overlap between the themes of recognizing dissonance and listening to narratives. These ideas were shared by Di during the TLC.

What these themes and overlaps in themes did was to build on meaning making of the new text in a coherent way, for the teachers, as well as their students.

Summary of Research Findings

The teacher-participant interactions showed up the many roles that the teachers played as explained in research question one. Where the teachers supported and encouraged each others' responses, they were seen to play facilitative, participatory and collaborative roles. Sometimes the teachers' interactions focused on the text and while the teachers mined the text for textual information, they played facilitative roles as they built on one another's textual information.

Where the teachers shared their personal responses, they were seen to be in a reflective stance and playing mediating roles, mediating meaning from their own lives to that of the text. Where the teachers focused on their students and classroom concerns, the teachers could be said to be in a teacher role, yet comprising facilitative, inquiry and collaborative roles, within this larger teacher role. It was only the 'teacher' role which was set apart from the roles found in the review of literature. Yet, the sub roles and types of talk within this teacher role, were found in the review of literature (facilitator, silent listener, collaborative reasoning, using problem solving strategies, backchanelling etc.). The teacher role also shows the prominent positions held by teachers of their students and classroom concerns.

The themes in research question two showed in detail, how the meanings were negotiated by the teachers during their interactions. The themes also merged with other themes leading to the construction, co-construction and re-construction of meanings. The

themes showed the mental activities involved in the teachers' interactions as they negotiated meanings. What was going on during the teacher interaction was the mental critical processing, analyzing and diagnosing, as posited by Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007. What the teachers were doing was to negotiated meanings through various themes: Listening to narratives, taking different perspectives, recognizing dissonance and reconstextualizing. All these themes involved mental activities as the teachers listened, reflected, rationalized and negotiated stands for interpretations, revisited previously held interpretations by looking at fresh angles not considered before and rethinking interpretations. This was a series of mental activities that were played out resulting in fresh critical processing, analyzing and diagnosing processes.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a summary of key findings and conclusions of the study.

Summary and Conclusions

Findings of the study showed that teacher literature circles functioned as a mode for informal learning opportunities for the in-service teachers who participated in the study. Through the teacher literature circles, the teachers were able to gather, read, discuss and make meaning of the new literature text, which they had to understand first, before teaching it to their students.

The context was unique in that the literature text was new and had to be taught to students in schools. What made the context more unique was also the fact that the discussions in the TLC were taken into the classrooms and further explored with the students. The input from the classrooms enriched the TLC discussions, and the meaning making processes of the teacher-participants which was captured in the TLC and interview transcripts. Research question one dealt with the interactions of teachers and roles played out by the teachers were highlighted. Mention is also made of the talk that went on. Research question two looked at how teachers made meaning of the new text via emerging themes through the interactions in the TLCs. It was in this context that the present study is situated and is diagrammatized in Figure 5.1.

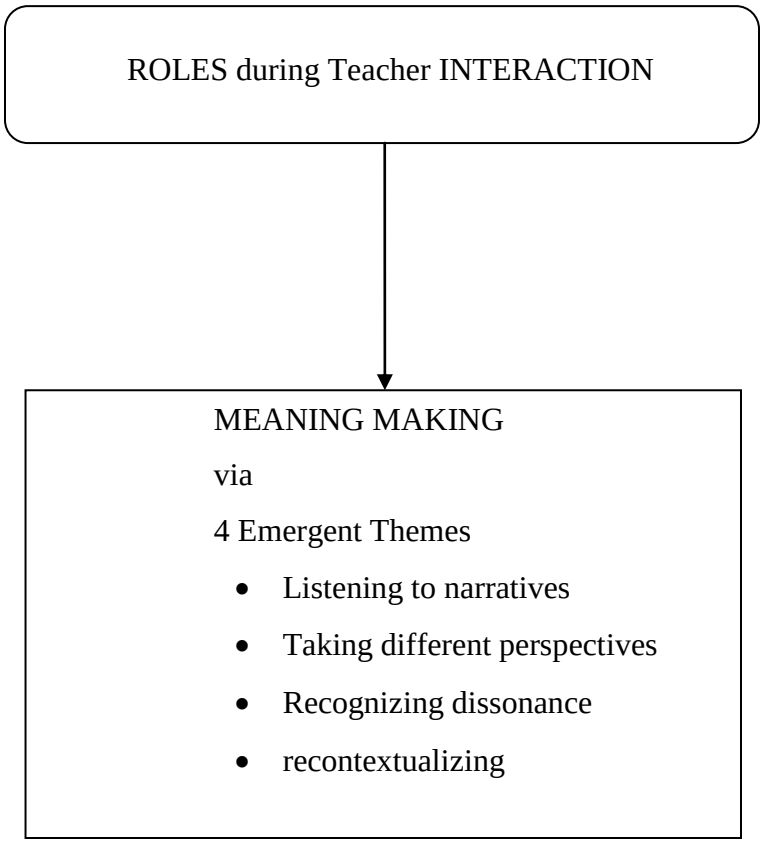

Figure 5.1 Summary of the Research Questions

Research Question One

Research question one investigated the interactions of the teachers during TLCs. The review of literature revealed various roles played out by the teachers during their interactions with students. These roles included being facilitator, participant, mediator, guide, leader, attentive listener and more. Some talk was identified as following the IRE (Initiation, Response, Evaluation) pattern, where teachers held authority and control over students responses. In this way, all possibilities for further talk with the students ended. Other than the IRE pattern of talk, exploratory talk was also reported and this talk referred to talk that encouraged and supported more talk.

Firstly, the roles mentioned in the review of literature were also found in the interactions of the teachers amongst themselves. This showed that the teachers also played similar roles with their students. The teachers facilitated, participated and mediated meaning of the text. They also used strategies such as backchanelling and problem solving to nurture and negotiated their interactions. However, the IRE patterns of talk found with students were not present in the teacher interactions of the TLC. This also showed that the teachers were moving away from such restrictive patterns of talk and perhaps the teachers valued exploratory talk in their interactions in order to make meaning together collaboratively. A role which was not seen in the review of literature was the 'teacher' role where teachers talked about their students and their classroom concerns. Within this teacher role, others were subsumed within: facilitator, participant, mediator etc. Also within this role was talk that was exploratory in nature where the teachers tried to support each other. This larger role, the teacher role, showed that to the teachers, their students and classroom issues formed an important landscape in their repertoire of experiences which were not restricted to their personal lives but extended to their classroom lives as well. Perhaps this added dimension of their classroom lives set the teacher interactions apart from other non-teacher communities.

Shifts in roles facilitated the teachers connections between the dimensions that were familiar to them. Cazden (2006) talked about teachers 'weaving' between different knowledge dimensions which helped them to make connections between different learning dimensions. Likewise, the roles and shifts in roles helped the teachers to make connections between their experiences- both, of their personal and classroom experiences, the new text and their students. These connections helped the teachers to

make meaning of their own lives as well. Thus, a description, understanding and interpretation of the teacher interactions in this study.

Research Question Two

Research question two investigated how teachers make meaning of the new text. In order to address this question, emergent themes were looked at: listening to narratives; taking different perspectives; recognizing dissonance and re-contextualizing of real life experiences. While these themes were seen to overlap, they also helped the teachers to build on each other's meaning making of the new text in a cohesive way for themselves and their students. These themes were the result of the mental activities involved in the teachers' meaning making processes as they negotiated meanings by their mental critical processing, analyzing and diagnosing, as posited by Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007.

The Interactions in the TLCs

Another conclusion drawn from the study, was that the teacher literature circle [TLC] served as a vehicle, taking teachers through a journey of reader response and social interactions. The participants initially responded to the text and the environment as individuals, bringing their own meanings (common and unique), to the social interaction in the Teacher Literature Circle (TLC). Social interaction provided the teacher-participants with exposure to multiple interpretations, ultimately leading to the exchanging, shaping and reshaping of their meaning making of the text, and of life. The TLC gave teachers the social space and informal structure to bring and share their common and unique experiences and concerns with each other as a community of

experienced teachers, faced with a particular context. The TLC thus served as a vehicle to fulfill a social purpose for the teachers to meet in a social context.

What was interesting was that during the TLC, the teachers took their meanings into the classrooms where their students extended the teachers' meanings. It was here – in the classrooms, that the teachers made new meanings from the interactions with, and contributions of their students. The students brought their meanings and perspectives which were sometimes very different from those of the teacher participants, in the class discussions. It is at this level of interaction that the teachers' meanings were further shaped and reshaped, going through change and adaptation to their initial interpretations. This would not have been possible if not for the TLC in the first place. The teachers then brought their students' meanings back to the TLC and reanalyzed and rediagnosed their interpretations.

If another round of the TLC was conducted among the teacher-participants, the teachers' new meanings from the classrooms would have been further discussed at the TLC leading to richer meanings. What made the TLC in the current study unique was that the TLC moved between different levels and layers of the complexity involved in meaning making. On one level, was the interaction among teacher participants, and the meanings they made from the multiple perspectives they brought, while expanding thoughts and considering other interpretations from that of their own colleagues.

On another level, was the interaction between the teacher participants and their their students. On this level, the teachers made meanings from the multiple perspectives that the students' brought, expanding the emergent themes to include their students'

perspectives. The students took on the vantage points of the younger character in the text, closest to their age (Granda's son), while the teacher-participants took on the vantage point of the older character – Granda. The students opened up limitless possibilities in terms of the possible contexts of Granda's son in the text, which the teacher-participants had not explored, prior to the classroom interactions. Thus, the teacher-participants (and their students) negotiated different levels and layers of new understandings and explorations, through the social interactions in the TLCs, which the teachers brought to their students in classrooms and took back to the TLCs. The TLC could be said to be a vehicle for teacher learning as well as a vehicle to bring in their students' voices as they negotiated meanings beyond their own voices.

Implications of the Research

Implications are seen in terms of the contribution this study makes to theory, the review of literature, organizing principles of TLCs, the impact of TLCs on teachers as a mode for teacher professional development and the wider implications for the Ministry of Education.

Implications for Theory: Reader Response Theory

As for the theoretical implications, in Reader Response Theory, Rosenblatt talks about the "experiential reservoir" (p.2), which readers keep referring to every time they encounter new signals in a text. This "experiential reservoir" refers to a reader's past experiences and knowledge base which are familiar to the reader, which would help the reader to make sense of the new signals or new information found in new texts.

However, nothing is said about roles – the multiple roles among teachers, during teacher interaction in Teacher Literature Circles. In fact, Rosenblatt relates much of reader response to teachers and how teachers need to encourage reader response among students, in order to get them (students) to express and bring their own unique feelings and responses to the text. Rosenblatt does not mention anything about teachers' interactions amongst themselves and the roles that teachers play during interactions with each other and most important of all, how the teachers draw from these roles to give them direction of thought which enhances and extends their experiential reservoirs through a complex weaving of multiple roles. This study introduced another dimension of teacher interactions in TLCs, via the multiple roles that the teachers played amongst themselves, thus extending Reader Response Theory to include roles

Hence, this study is a contribution to Reader Response Theory in terms of the recognition, identification and awareness of the multiple roles that emerged during teacher interaction in Teacher Literature Circles. The roles (facilitator, active listener, participant etc) show the unique positions held by teachers, as they slip in and out from one role to another at different times.

Secondly, is the question of what these roles (facilitator, participant, active listener etc) do during teacher interaction in TLCs. The multiple roles were seen to build on and off each other by drawing on different experiences and knowledge areas of teachers. It is this – the drawing from different vantage points, that ultimately enrich teacher interaction by filling and extending teachers' "experiential reservoirs." Rosenblatt talked about the experiential reservoirs of readers but this study helps to explain the composition of the experiential reservoirs of teachers during TLC discussions. Such

reservoirs would serve teachers well during times of drought, in terms of difficulties faced as readers and teachers, as well as during times of abundance, when experiences from the many roles, can be drawn upon for further enrichment, or to be shared with other teachers, thus filling and extending other teachers' 'experiential reservoirs'.

Socio-constructive Theory

Contributions are also seen in terms of socio constructive theory, which explains how social interaction results in learning through the exchange of multiple interpretations. During social interaction, connections are made between prior knowledge and new knowledge. Cazden (2004) talked about weavings which connect something familiar with new curriculum content. All theories of school learning stress the importance of making such connections. This study makes a contribution to socio-constructive theory in that, during social interaction of teachers in TLCs, multiple roles emerged and were found to be weaving between each other. What the weaving between the two roles did was to make connections, not only between something familiar to something new but also to make connections between familiar dimensions, of the teachers, that is, according to their 'selection of attention' to areas of their experiences through the many roles they played. This weaving between the two roles helped the teachers to connect not only the familiar but also the unfamiliar dimensions of experiences that they experienced and shared. What these connections did through the weaving was to make connections, adapt, evolve and reinforce what the teachers already know and build on their worlds as readers and teachers. Some ways in which these connections took place included drawing on past experiences in and out of the classroom

through teacher narratives, as well as student narratives, retold by the teachers during the interview months after the TLC sessions were over, thus reinforcing theory.

Teachers also made connections between the text and their own experiences and the text through the eyes of the their students. They also looked at the text in terms of ways of presenting the text to their students. These are also contributions to socio constructive theory where teachers make different connections which serve to help them to be better teachers. The teachers were connecting learning from self to community (of teachers) to the classroom. Such connections among teachers were not previously captured in socio-constructive theory. This study thus adds to socio-constructive theory.

Implications in terms of adding to the Literature Review on Teachers in TLCs

Much research has gone into student literature circles but less on teacher literature circles (TLC's). While it is acknowledged that teachers play a monumental role in facilitating opportunities for students to become "critical thinkers, proactive citizens and creative contributors to the world" (Borko, 2004 p. 3) this cannot be wholly addressed when teachers themselves are not afforded the same opportunities to grow, learn and participate in learning activities. Much is known from the review of literature on how students work collaboratively and some of the things that teachers do (scaffold, facilitate etc.) which help, or restrain (typical IRE responses, i.e., initiate, respond and evaluate etc.) student responses during literature circles. But how do teachers work and make meaning of literature texts themselves? Less is known about teachers per se, who play such an important part in education.

Findings of this study add to and shed new light in terms of the literature review on teachers and how they play similar roles, amongst themselves, as they did with their students. TLCs would also give teachers the opportunities to acquire important skills in teamwork, leadership, problem solving, collaboration, brainstorming, communication and creativity. The concept of TLCs, shifts the focus of traditional literacy from individual expression to community involvement. Much learning has been found to take place when in collaboration and at community levels, as seen in the literature review found in chapter two. This study adds to work like that of Lieberman (2010), Grossman and many others involved in collaborating work with and among teachers (refer to chapter 2).

Through TLCs, the teachers had gained a deeper understanding of the new text from a personal level, and as a community. But how exactly this took place is clear from this study. Teachers brought their personal meanings to the TLC, negotiated their multiple interpretations and drew from the experiences of the group. The teachers moved through different roles at different points in time. Teachers also drew meaning from various themes that emerged from the TLC data of this study. Such a process enriched the meaning making processes of the teachers, as individuals and as a community of teachers. The teachers worked as a community, in trying to make meaning of the new literature text. TLCs could also serve as a source of teacher professional development opportunities. Lieberman (2010) cites the NWP (National Writing Project, please refer to chapter 2, p. 23) as a confirmation that teachers working together was and is, a powerful way to learn about their own and others' practices.

Implications for organizing principles of TLCs

It was the first time that the teacher-participants had actually participated in a TLC. One of the implications of this study is to have more TLCs on a regular basis and to ensure specific goals to be outlined at the outset of the TLC. Just as in student literature circles, where Harvey Daniels identified and suggested the assigning of various roles (time keeper, summarizer etc.) for students, at least one person in a TLC should be assigned the role of aligning the TLC discussions to the goals of the TLC. This would ensure that the TLC discussions remained focused, with more to be gained from the outcomes. In the present study, no explicit instructions were given to the participants. Had specific instructions been given, the results of the study may have been more focused. Another round of the TLC sessions with specific instructions would be another angle to look at.

Another important element, in organizing TLCs, is trust. Trust must be established and built easily among teacher groups, just as in student literature circles, where teachers will feel comfortable with each other. In Borko's (2004) study, instructors structured activities to establish trust and to create an environment in which teachers would feel safe to explore unknown terrain and share their solution strategies (refer to chapter two, p. 29). Just as teachers need to value every student's response, so too must teachers value and respect every response from the teacher group members. It is here that the teachers themselves realize the many possibilities in terms of interpretation, that there is "no one correct answer" (quote taken from an impromptu interview with Saty, one of the participants of the study). Generally, in theory, teachers know that there is no one correct answer, but in practice, they are themselves, almost always guided by and

continue to guide their students toward a particular interpretation. The particular interpretation is usually the type of "answers one would find in workbooks, the internet and notes received from the MOE" (as stated by one of the participants of the study who wishes to remain anonymous). One of the participants, Anne, said that "even without the exams, we prefer our students to think the way er.. we want them to.. but now it is different. We see for ourselves… there are countless possibilities. It is now different ....difficult to accept a standard answer like before."

One of the implications of TLCs is the realization of the many possibilities in terms of interpretation. The teachers experienced for themselves that there was 'no one correct answer' (taken from an impromptu interview with Saty, one of the participants). Implications are that teachers need to practise what was theorized in terms of valuing peer and student responses.

Implications for the Ministry of Education

Further implications stretch to curriculum. The curriculum needs to keep options open without emphasizing or suggesting one correct answer. When options are kept open in the curriculum, the Ministry of Education should follow suit, in terms of examinations, especially in accepting answers which are logical and show thought, which could include answers other than the set answers prepared. Examinations should not have a pre-set list of correct answers which have to be adhered to strictly by teachers and students, but leave and open up spaces for teachers' and students' explorations. What needs to be emphasized is a curriculum change with the

encouragement of, and value accorded to the multiple possibilities, from different perspectives, and the freedom to keep options from teachers and students, open.

Once the curriculum mindset is changed, then teachers can feel confident about their own change, from deeply ingrained ways of thinking, talking and conducting literature circles among students, to new ways of exploring multiple possibilities, which may not provide answers but in fact, more questions instead. It is noteworthy of mention in Rowe (1998), that awareness of classroom talk (of the teachers) had the potential to help teachers avoid the trap of unintentionally subverting plans for change by encasing new curriculum and beliefs in old patterns of talk. This is something that teachers need to constantly ask themselves truthfully- as to whether they have made changes to their beliefs and practices in the classroom.

Awareness and valuing the multiple responses among teachers should be extended to the classrooms, whereby teachers need to break away from teacher supremacy, to valuing student responses. Zeichner, in Wilhelm (2009), talked about "the salience of the traditional" among teachers. What was being referred to was teacher-directed discussion with predetermined answers (Corder, 2001; Nystrand, 1996). Teachers need to break away from this, and only when the Ministry of Education supports teachers, by way of policies that empower teachers and students to think out of the box, will teachers be more willing to value peer and student multiple interpretations that are unique, and makes sense in different ways to different people.

Implications for Teachers

Teachers in the current study valued each others' ideas and considered the multiple interpretations. Likewise, teachers need to bring the value for other interpretations to the classrooms and value what students think, and encourage interactive discussion via student literature circles. Just as the teachers in TLCs experienced the meaning making process, through negotiations with the ideas of their (teacher's) peers, the teachers need to bring these experiences and explorations to the classrooms where students too can experience, explore and value other interpretations, other than their own, during the meaning making process. In fact, the current study showed that the students were empowered and brought new meanings to the text, which caused the teachers themselves to change their own initial perspectives and opinions of the text. This was a very good example of teachers valuing student interpretation and where the students, in fact, had influenced the teachers, which was not the norm.

The teachers, in carrying out student literature circles, after having experienced teacher literature circles for themselves, would be able to provide more support to students and encourage greater learning among students, empowering them to think outside the box, rather than to be subservient to the teacher's views and authority. Teachers also learn that students may bring different and richer experience to the text, which may be of greater value than their own, as seen in the current study. The students showed up their perspectives of the younger characters in the text, which the teachers had not been able to do. This brought out another dimension to the teachers' meaning making process which helped them to see perspectives from a younger vantage point, that is, their students' vantage point. This was an enriching experience for the teachers.

Acknowledgement and acceptance of student's views is a huge step for both – the teachers and the students. The willingness to learn, realize, negotiate and acknowledge the fact that learning is a lifelong process, is a prerequisite for all teachers, who want to continue their learning process, in terms of professional teacher development. TLCs are an opportunity to be seized, to understand a new text before going into classrooms to teach it. This pre-teaching stage was negotiated and re-negotiated with teachers making meaning of the text as a community. Then, the potential of the TLC, after the teachers had gone into classrooms, where the teachers could bring their students' meanings into another series of TLC discussions, would have extended and enriched the teachers' initial meanings. This is a possibility which should be explored further by teachers. TLCs need not be restricted to only times when new texts are introduced, but be made an ongoing activity for old texts as well as texts selected by the teachers, out of their own interest and general learning enhancement at a social level. Every TLC discussion is bound to bring new ideas and add to existing ones, creating opportunities and dimensions for teacher professional development.

Implications for TLCs as a mode for teacher professional development

By designing and implementing a participatory learning environment via TLCs, new teaching practices will help create informal spaces for teachers to engage in meaningful professional development. Teachers will also recognize that TLCs help to bring real world situations and considerations into discussions, which guide authentic learning and help them to find ways of bringing the text to students in ways that are relevant to the students' interests and realities. When the teachers talked about the text relationships between Granda and his son, and also with his grandson, the teachers also

asked the students about their lives with their parents and grandparents, broadening the text to the students' lives. This was authentic and engaging for both the teachers and students. As seen in chapter four, this gave the students and teachers opportunities to express their emotions and thoughts through the many narratives that became nested within one another-- from students to teachers. TLCs would introduce the culture of creativity, via the multiple responses from the teachers and students. TLCs are a good starting point in terms of community designed for sharing expertise and eventually leading to teachers and students pooling knowledge and co-sharing in the tasks of teaching and learning. This was particularly relevant in the present study, where the teachers learnt from their students, even two years after the TLC was conducted.

The TLC could be seen as a springboard to further learning with the students' participation, thus enriching the TLC and the teachers' meaning making processes. Thus, the TLC formed a context, situated within a larger learning eco-system. The many routes towards meaning making and participation within a community, through TLCs is one such route. TLCs fulfill the goal of giving teachers the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and dispositions for becoming full participants in the world, which is a long- term endeavor, towards teacher professional development.

Another implication for implementing TLCs as a mode for professional development is the necessity for time to be slotted into teachers' time tables, to make room for TLCs among teacher groups. Time is a major constraint for teachers, with the many duties that they have to manage. Unless time is built into teachers' work schedules, TLCs will not be well received or be effective. This is yet another implication that stretches to the Ministry of Education, to make these time spaces for TLCs, which

provide opportunities for in-service professional development of teachers. Past research work involving teachers (Lieberman, 2010), also involved working time in for the teachers, otherwise, it would take too much of a toll on teachers who are already heavily loaded with work revolving teaching and curriculum requirements.

Further Directions for Research

Time

As mentioned earlier, one of the limitations of this study was the duration of the TLC – seven weeks. Perhaps for TLCs to be more effective, a certain length of time is necessary. TLCs should function over prolonged periods where the teachers will have opportunities to reflect and develop knowledge domains more fully. In a short time, the main focus of the participants was to understand the text first, before they could even think of teaching it to their students. Having a full and better understanding of the text, it would seem more natural to move towards the teachers' purpose of how to teach the text to their students. This did not happen as the time duration of the TLC was over a period of seven weeks. One of the reasons for this time period was the time constraints the teachers faced. The teachers had many other duties within the curriculum which demanded much from them. The TLC meetings ate into the teachers' private time and prolonging the span of the TLC would have become a heavier burden on the teachers. Thus, as Lieberman (2010) suggests, slotting in time for the teachers to participate in activities such as TLCs, would enable them to explore and develop themselves.

Student Input

Research on TLCs should also continue even after the teachers have gone into classrooms to teach. In this way, the second round of the TLCs would bring the students' responses into the TLC, thus widening the teachers' horizons, by their students' input by sharing student input among themselves and exploring other possibilities from their younger learners, thus learning from their students. Student input which is brought back into the TLCs as student feedback could enrich the teachers' overall meanings, as seen in this study, but not fully explored as the TLCs began before going into the classes and by the time the TLC was over, the classes were still going on at full steam. Thus, bringing in batches of student input through the continuing of TLC sessions through the years would enrich the interactions and meanings of the teachers.

Classroom Achievement

It would be interesting to look at classroom achievement of students, where teachers have participated actively in TLCs. If this study claims that teacher learning takes place during TLC sessions, then research should also look at whether the learning experiences of teachers translate into student achievement. This would be a gauge as to how effective the TLCs were and how these in turn impacted student achievement.

Background of Teachers

Considering the fact that not all the teachers in this study had a literature background, future research could consider two groups of teachers – one with a literature background and the other without. Added to a longer duration of the TLC, it would be

interesting to explore such a study, and see if it would throw light on whether aspects of teachers' past training and qualifications would influence the direction and quality of the TLC discussions.

Future research could also explore the possibilities of having both groups of teachers – those with a literature background and those without, in the same TLC to see how the two groups build on each other's strengths, scaffold and support each other. in understanding the text and improving teaching pedagogy in the classrooms.

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