MODERN LANGUAGES TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: IN SEARCH OF IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing evidence base suggesting that the effectiveness of individual teachers is one of the most significant factors in predicting valued pupil outcomes. This has led to much debate about how in-service teachers might continue to develop and improve their practice.

This study takes a single subject area (Modern Foreign Languages - MFL) as the context in which to explore teachers' Professional Learning (PL) needs, experiences and motivations from July 2016 to July 2018. During Year 1, data tracking the PL priorities, experiences, well-being and self-efficacy of 57 MFL teachers clustered in 14 state school languages departments were collected via four iterations of an online questionnaire. Year 8 Students of French in 13 of the 14 schools (n=1370) completed a student perception questionnaire to gauge their classroom experiences. Questionnaire data were followed up with in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Heads of Department in six of the schools. Two languages departments were subsequently identified as productive contexts for teacher PL and in-depth case-studies of these departments were conducted in Year 2.

Languages teachers expressed strong interest in accessing PL and they particularly identified the need to develop their preparedness to teach towards new examinations at GCSE and A Level. They also highlighted a need to develop students' speaking skills and motivation. Over the course of the study, analysis shows very low levels of engagement in PL that shares characteristics with the effective PL practices identified by Cordingley et al. (2015). Very few teachers reported extended engagement in PL activities over the course of multiple sessions. Teachers' access to PL experiences was shaped by a sharp focus on instrumental organisational aims related to the introduction of new examination specifications and curricula. Although no significant associations were found between teachers' engagement in PL and pupils' outcomes at GCSE, a strong correlation was noted between the size of the language department and pupils' value-added outcomes in language GCSEs. The possible underlying reasons for this pattern are discussed.

Some Heads of Department perceived the changing curriculum as an opportunity for development and innovation, whereas others conceptualised the changes as a threat to established ways of working and to colleagues' wellbeing. Working conditions and the nature of relationships between colleagues within institutions shaped the conditions for PL, with accompanying impacts on individual teachers' sense of self-efficacy, engagement and intention to remain in the profession. The findings of this study have implications for policy makers, school leaders and Heads of Department wishing to build better conditions for teacher learning.

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LIST OF KEY ABBREVIATIONS

(The most frequently used abbreviations are highlighted in bold)

A Level	**General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level**
CPD	**Continuing Professional Development** (see also: PL)
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EBacc	**English Baccalaureate**
ECT	**Early Career Teacher** (used to describe teachers in the first three years of their career)
FDIP	Faculty Development and Improvement Plan
FLA	**Foreign Languages Assistant**
GCSE	**General Certificate of Secondary Education**
ISLA	Instructed Second Language Acquisition (see also: SLA)
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
HoD	**Head of Department**
KS3	**Key Stage Three** (describes pupils aged 11-14)
KS4	**Key Stage Four** (describes pupils aged 14-16 working towards GCSE examinations)
KS5	**Key Stage Five** (describes pupils aged 16-18 working towards A Level examinations)
L1	**First Language** (in this study, this refers to English, the majority language of schooling)
L2	**Second Language** (see also: TL)
MFL	**Modern Foreign Languages**
NQT	Newly-Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	**Office for Standards in Education**
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PL	**Professional Learning** (see also: CPD)
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SDIP	School Development and Improvement Plan
SLA	Second Language Acquisition (see also: ISLA)
SLT	**Senior Leadership Team**
TA	**Teaching Assistant**
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TL	**Target Language** (see also: L2)

1 INTRODUCTION

Mere time on the job does not ensure teacher effectiveness; rather it is personal engagement in professional development that builds teaching expertise. (Husman et al., 2014, p. 189)

1.1 The Envisaged Contribution to Knowledge

Since the 1967 Plowden Report, education policy in England has included an explicit expectation that teachers will continue to develop and improve their practice throughout their careers, with five statutory, non-contact days a year set aside from 1988 onwards for the purpose of formalised In-Service Teacher Education (INSET) in state-maintained schools. In recent years there has been intensifying international interest in how time devoted to teachers' professional learning (PL) can best be used as a mechanism by which to improve both the quality of teachers and their commitment to the profession.

This study investigates teachers' perceptions of their PL needs and the nature of the PL that they report having accessed. I explore the impact of PL on teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their engagement in the profession, alongside the possible secondary impact that teachers' engagement in PL might have on their pupils' experiences and outcomes. Research into teachers' continuing development of teaching expertise has been highlighted as an under-explored area with '*implications for both teacher quality and teacher retention*' (Duggan, 2007, p.5; Jensen et al., 2016). In terms of retention, teachers' motivation to engage in PL can be seen as a manifestation of a wider positive engagement in the teaching profession (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and, via a mutually reinforcing process, engagement in high-quality PL can build teachers' sense of competency and relatedness, further bolstering their professional engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Increasing our understanding of factors affecting teachers' engagement in PL and the processes by which their PL needs and priorities can best be met is therefore critical at a time when less than 50% of teachers remain employed in the UK maintained sector five years after qualification[1] (Allen et al., 2016).

With regards to teacher quality, international education policy attention has recently been directed at PL as a lever for improving pupil outcomes (Schleicher, 2016). Although it is challenging to collect evidence of the impact of teachers' PL on pupil outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012), there is a developing body of literature that identifies characteristics of PL that are associated with improved pupil learning

[1] Five-year retention rates vary across Initial Teacher Training routes, ranging from 37–44% for Teach First to 59–62% for the (now discontinued) Graduate Teacher Programme

(Cordingley et al., 2015; Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020). My study will contribute to the evidence in this field by evaluating teachers' lived experiences of PL in relation to a framework of known characteristics of 'effective PL' (Cordingley, 2015) and by looking for possible associations between teachers' engagement in PL and their students' experiences and outcomes. One of the key contributions of the study is its use of multiple data sources, drawing together both teachers' and pupils' perspectives alongside attainment data to explore hypothesised associations between teachers who report engaging in 'effective' PL and pupils' academic outcomes and experiences of learning.

Following Duggan's (2007) call for cross-sectional studies of teachers across experience levels, this study investigates the attitudes and PL experiences of whole departments of languages teachers, from student teachers and newly qualified teachers (NQTS) to Heads of Department (HoDs). A focus on teachers across different career stages is sorely needed: most existing research into teacher development has focussed on the development of new entrants to the profession. It has often been claimed that teachers tend to improve over their first three years and then plateau (see for example Rivkin et al., 2005). However, more recent research has challenged this assumption, finding that schools characterised as supportive professional environments helped teachers to continue to make significant improvements after three years, while '*teachers in the least supportive schools actually declined in their effectiveness*' (Coe et al., 2014, p. 5). These apparent significant differences in teacher learning across different contexts warrant further investigation.

The study makes a significant contribution to the field of teacher education by offering an in-depth, subject-specific analysis of the interrelation of personal and contextual factors that can impact teacher learning and effectiveness.

1.2 Languages Teachers: the case for a subject-specific lens

Each subject discipline taught within secondary schools presents unique challenges. If we accept that one of the aims of teaching in discrete subjects at secondary school is to induct pupils into particular subject disciplines (Pring, 2015), it follows that the knowledge required to do this successfully must vary (S. Borg, 2003; Thompson, 2015). In the case of languages, the choices a teacher must make regarding the language of classroom discourse exemplify one of the subject-specific pedagogic challenges inherent in teaching a second or foreign language (L2). For example, in a French lesson, it is possible to introduce pupils to the vocabulary and structures of the French language using French itself as the medium of instruction, whilst in other disciplines the subject content (e.g. the concept of 'evidence' in history) and the medium (e.g. in England, English) are usually clearly distinct. Teachers of an L2 are faced with

decisions regarding when and how to communicate with their pupils in the target language and/or their pupils' first language (L1). A decision to use the L2 requires considerable skill in manipulating the language forms to maximise opportunities for pupils to practise their TL listening skills, whilst ensuring pupils' comprehension and the efficient use of lesson time (Macaro, 2005). Freeman (2002a, p. 6) makes the point that some widely accepted constructs in the domain of teacher education, such as Shulman's (1986) concept of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), can become '*messy and possibly unworkable*' when applied to languages teaching.

Languages teachers themselves are a distinct population within the school workforce. Modern foreign languages (MFL) departments typically contain a higher percentage of 'foreign nationals', who may enter teaching in the UK context with a different range of motivations and goals and who may themselves have been educated within a very different system (Block, 2002). The language and style of communication between colleagues in a languages department is therefore likely to be more varied than that of other departments and teachers' prior experiences and current learning needs may also be more diverse.

Further support for a subject-specific approach when investigating teachers' PL comes from the research identifying features of PL that are associated with improvements in pupils' academic outcomes; PL has been found to be most effective when it is directly focussed on enriching teachers' subject-specific content and PCK (Shulman, 1986; 1987), or when it contextualises generic pedagogic strategies for individual subject areas (Cordingley et al., 2018).

1.3 The aims of MFL teaching and learning in state secondary schools in England

Since the early 1980s, the dominant model of L2 teaching and learning in Europe has been Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Pachler et al., 2009). The CLT approach to L2 study was influenced by researchers in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) who developed theories around the importance of L2 input, output, interaction and spoken corrective feedback in the development of communicative competence (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1981; Lyster, 1998; Swain, 1995). A skills-led approach prioritising competent *use* of the L2, as opposed to a grammar-translation approach emphasising *knowledge about* the L2, became enshrined as the goal of L2 learning in England with the introduction of the National Curriculum (NC) in 1988 (Meiring & Norman, 2002). This overarching goal has significant implications for the ways in which L2 teachers make use of language (both L1 and L2) in their classrooms. Recent policy and research documents in England frequently advise that, although judicious use of the L1 can have pedagogical value, teachers and pupils should aim to establish the L2 as

the main means of communication in the classroom (Burge et al., 2013; Department for Education, 2013; Macaro, 2001; Ofsted, 2011; Teaching Schools Council, 2016). However, L2 teaching in England's secondary schools has been described as following a 'weak' model of CLT, where the purpose of learning an L2 is widely understood to be communicative but the L2 is still predominantly taught as a 'school subject' with explicit teaching of grammar (usually in the L1) often taking a prominent role (East, 2015). Many researchers have argued that the communicative goals of L2 teaching in England have been frustrated in practice by years of high-stakes assessment that has encouraged the prioritisation of rote-learning and memorisation above the development of communication skills (East, 2015; Macaro, Graham, & Woore, 2016). This may be one of the underlying causes of persistently disappointing pupil outcomes for L2 education in England compared to our international neighbours (European Commission, 2012). Pupils' perceptions of limited progress in their speaking may also undermine their motivation for language study (Bower, 2017, 2019). The current National Curriculum (2013) and the recently established National Centre for Excellence in Language Pedagogy (NCELP, 2019) both endorse a balanced approach to developing knowledge about language (with a focus on developing an understanding of grammar, phonics and vocabulary) alongside the development of communicative competence in language use.

The aims of language teaching as understood by the general public, teachers and learners have an impact on pupils' motivations to learn a language and there is evidence that in England, pupil motivation is at a low ebb (Lanvers et al., 2019; Tinsley, 2019). In response to this trend, there has been a popular discourse in England emphasising language learning as a practical means to access future employment opportunities. This discourse has largely eclipsed a focus on the '*educational, social, linguistic and cultural enrichment that can be derived from learning languages*' (Scarino, 2014, p. 299). As Coffey (2018, p. 475) points out, '*this type of instrumentalism posits a set of motives that are easy for students who do not envisage a future needing this transactional capital to refute*'. There are therefore current calls for those designing language curricula and examinations in England to reconsider whether achieving a working level of fluency in communication in an L2 should be the only or even the main aim of language tuition. The most recent (2013) National Curriculum for languages at Key Stage Three (KS3[2]) highlights the importance of intercultural understanding and the potential of languages to develop an openness to the international community. This is in line with a recent call to: a) address pupils' potential

[2] Compulsory education in England is divided into four Key Stages (KS): KS1 and KS2 relate to Primary education; KS3 encompasses the first three years of secondary education (ages 10/11 – 13/14) and KS4 encompasses the following two years of education leading up to the national GCSE examination

misconceptions that English is the only world language; b) help students to recognise the cognitive benefits of multilingualism; and c) to raise awareness of '*the ubiquity of multilingualism, globally and in the UK*' (Lanvers et al., 2019, p. 89). At the time of writing, although the latest versions of national standardised examinations of language learning in England (GCSE[3] and A Levels[4]) do require the study of some cultural content (films and literature), an in-depth exploration of culture is not present or prioritised in the assessment structure. Other authors have suggested that contrastive analysis and language awareness approaches might stimulate pupils' interest in languages and better equip them to learn additional languages in later life (Hudson & Trousdale, 2019).

1.4 Support for L2 teaching and learning in England

An L2 teacher and researcher recently described the language teaching landscape in England as one of '*work overload, stress, low self-efficacy and demotivation [in which teachers'] 'professional efficacy and health are undermined by a plethora of prescriptive pedagogic obligations which do not chime with research nor with common sense'* (Conti, 2016, para.2).

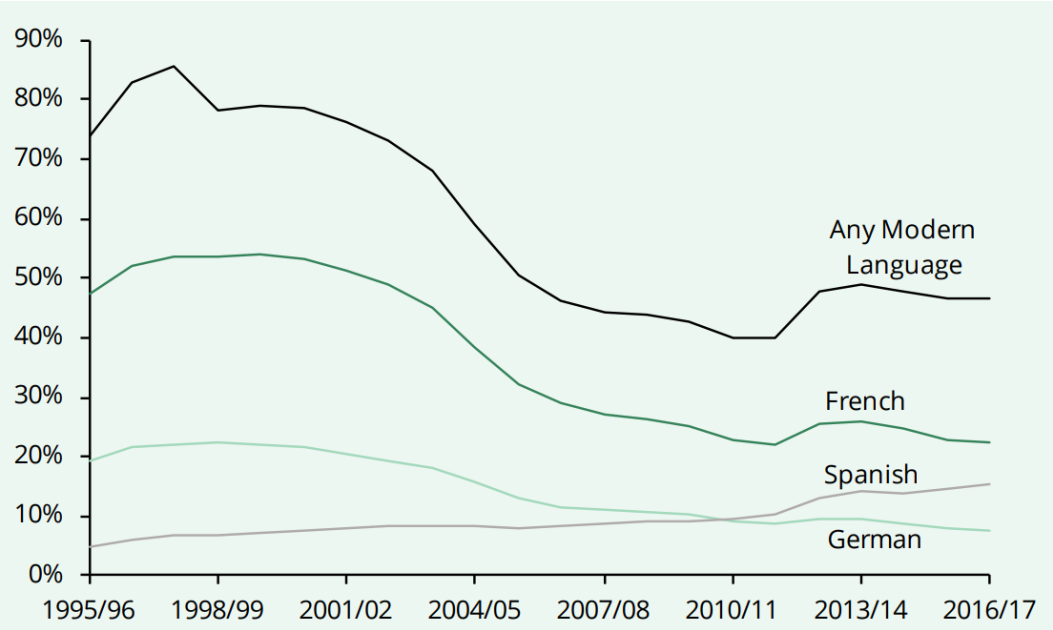
The status of L2 learning within the English secondary curriculum has been seen by many teachers to be under threat over the last decade: Despite the inclusion of a language in the English Baccalaureate performance measure (applied to school performance tables from 2010 onwards), a quarter of schools reported a reduction in lesson time in languages in the 2016 *Language Trends* survey (Tinsley & Board, 2016) and this uncertainty over the status of MFL in the curriculum has distinctly shaped the experiences and professional identities of L2 teachers over this time (for a full overview see Hagger-Vaughan, 2016). The Teaching Schools Council (2016) has recently recommended that, ideally, schools should be offering at least three hours' of L2 teaching per week. However, in the majority of English secondary state schools, the learning of a language is allocated less time than recommended and there are frequent reports of one hour per week or less allocated to KS3 classes (Tinsley & Board, 2016, 2017; Tinsley & Doležal, 2018).

In recent years, policy ambitions have been outlined for the study of at least one foreign language to become a compulsory element of the English and Welsh curriculum in state-maintained community schools for all pupils aged 4 to 16 (Department for Education, 2015). This could be interpreted as an affirmation of the perceived importance and utility of language learning in the UK and is hoped to mark a turning point in a story of patchy and under-resourced provision. In what has been described as a

[3] General Certificate of Secondary Education; a national examination taken at age 16.
[4] Advanced Level; a subject-based qualification generally undertaken at age 18.

'*remarkable piece of educational vandalism*' (O'Neill, 2013, p. 9), the study of an L2 has not been mandatory post-14 since 2004. The impact of this change has been pronounced: a 2012 report found that against a backdrop of falling numbers taking languages to GCSE (see Figure 1.1), languages currently have the lowest progression rates of all subjects from GCSE to A Level (Department for Education, 2012; Newton et al., 2017). Between September 2000 and September 2013, 43 UK universities also stopped offering languages degrees (Boffey, 2013). The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual, 2014) confirmed teachers' suspicions that A Level examinations were unfairly assessed and acknowledged teachers' concerns that perceptions of the difficulty of the subject and erratic grading were putting off potential A Level students from taking an L2. The recent 'decoupling' of AS and A2 examinations has led to a narrowing of the curriculum to just three A Levels per pupil in many schools (Tinsley & Doležal, 2018). This has resulted in the loss of pupils from A Level language courses, particularly those pupils whose future career aspirations require three A Levels in science and mathematics but who might have previously supplemented their studies at AS level with a language. In schools where class sizes for advanced L2 learning have become financially unviable, the subsequent reduced opportunities for teachers to teach an L2 at post-16 level may have a significant impact on teachers' sense of professional self-efficacy and engagement. Additionally, isolationist politics and the United Kingdom's uncertain future relationship with the European Union following a referendum vote in June 2016 have served to fuel an ill-informed public discourse in England that languages other than English are neither important or valuable (Coleman, 2009; Lanvers et al., 2019; Tinsley & Doležal, 2018). L2 teachers thus find themselves needing to address these negative societal perceptions with pupils, parents and, on occasion, their colleagues and school leaders. It is therefore with the aim of contributing to the security of the future of language learning in the UK that the link between L2 teachers' PL and pupil experiences of language learning in terms of engagement, attainment and uptake at KS4 and KS5 will be explored within this study.

Figure 1.1: Entries in modern language GCSEs in England (% of GCSE cohort)



Source: GCSE Results in England (subject tables), DfE

1.5 The nature and impact of recent MFL curriculum and examination changes

A revised National Curriculum (NC) came into force for state-funded secondary schools in September 2014 (Department for Education, 2013), and a centrally imposed system of assessing pupil attainment in the first three years of secondary school was withdrawn, leaving schools with the freedom to devise their own assessment systems. This change was swiftly followed by significant structural changes to the GCSE and A level languages examinations in 2016. The current NC Programme of Study (PoS) places an emphasis on L2 learning as a vehicle to develop intercultural understanding (something which Hennebry (2014) found that L2 teachers in England felt unprepared to develop). New elements of study specified in the PoS include the development of translation skills and reading of 'great literature', which Dobson (2018, p. 75) points out will be challenging for many L2 teachers, '*since most now have little experience of teaching translation and literature below the sixth form (ages 16–18)*'. The PoS for MFL is far shorter than earlier versions and there is no longer any extensive, non-statutory supplementary guidance of the type that has accompanied previous iterations of the PoS for MFL. Consequently, L2 teachers are now perhaps afforded greater freedom in their interpretation and implementation of the PoS, but they no longer have access to this source of guidance and support. Recent research has shown that the lack of time and support for L2 teachers to re-evaluate their pedagogy in light of sweeping curriculum changes has caused teachers to experience a '*dissonance between their ideal professional self and the reality of*

their professional lives' (Hennebry, 2014, p. 302). I believe that there is therefore a current need for teacher innovation, development and training in response to this new educational landscape, setting the scene for a timely study into L2 teachers' continued learning. To assist in building a picture of teachers' engagement in PL, this study was designed to track L2 teachers' responses to ongoing curriculum change and identify successful approaches to developing and sharing professional expertise.

1.6 Summaries of upcoming chapters

Chapter 2 – Background and review of the literature

This chapter begins with a summary of debates surrounding the nature of teaching as a professional occupation and the knowledge base that underpins effective teaching. I present the positions that I have taken in relation to these debates and the working definitions of key concepts used throughout the thesis. The current policy context and supply and demand of PL opportunities in England is outlined, firstly in general terms and then with specific reference to L2 teachers. The chapter then reviews the literature, beginning with what is known about the processes of teacher PL in general and in the field of language teacher education. A range of contextual and individual factors that are known to affect teachers' access to and engagement with PL opportunities is identified and discussed.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter begins with an explanation of the research questions that drive this study and the hypotheses that the study is designed to address. I outline the focus of the project and the research methods devised to address each research question. Decisions taken about sampling, study design, instrument development, piloting, and data analysis approaches are explained in turn. The chapter also reviews the ethical considerations that informed the research design and that were navigated during the data collection.

Chapter 4 – Findings and Discussion I: Teachers' professional learning needs and priorities

This chapter relates to Research Question 1: What are the professional learning needs and priorities of L2 teachers?

The chapter reports on respondents' perceived strengths and development needs in relation to their classroom practice. It begins with a look at L2 teachers' current sense of self-efficacy for classroom teaching (and the stability of this self-assessment over time). I explore the extent to which teachers feel

that their current classroom practices align with research-informed understandings about how languages are learned (with reference to the eight principles identified by Macaro et al. (2016)). Teachers' self-identified priorities for further development are then investigated, along with their reasons for these choices. Patterns in relation to teachers' career-stage and school context are discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of current development needs and priorities across the sample.

Chapter 5 – Findings and Discussion II: Teachers' recent professional learning experiences

This chapter relates to the following Research Questions:

RQ2: What are the main characteristics of L2 teachers' recent PL activities?

RQ3: To what extent are the characteristics of effective PL practices (as defined by Cordingley et al., 2015) present in L2 teachers' descriptions of their valued PL activities?

RQ4: What factors facilitate or constrain L2 teachers' engagement in PL activities?

The chapter begins with a look at the participants' own conceptions of PL and the extent to which these might be considered expansive or restrictive interpretations of learning. Teachers' conceptions are linked to various positions in the debate about the nature of teacher professionalism (discussed in Chapter 2). Next, the chapter turns to the nature and quality of the PL experiences that teachers have identified as their most valuable experiences, with a focus on the extent to which these activities share characteristics with the type of PL activities identified by recent research (Cordingley et al., 2015) as likely to be 'effective'. Finally, the chapter engages in a discussion of the individual and contextual factors that are identified as supporting or inhibiting participants' engagement in various kinds of PL. The data is investigated at individual and departmental level to see how much variance might be explained by contextual and/or individual factors.

Chapter 6 – Findings and Discussion III: Teachers' situated experiences of professional learning in two schools

This chapter reports on an in-depth investigation of Research Questions 1-4.

The two case-study MFL departments are presented (selected as 'best cases' in terms of the teacher PL opportunities that they offer) and I describe the nature and organisation of teachers' learning within each setting. The findings from observations of team meetings and semi-structured interviews are combined to develop a narrative of the teacher learning embedded in each MFL department. I highlight the processes by which learning opportunities are organised, with a particular focus on how interactions in teachers' meetings addressed their relatedness, autonomy and competence needs (Deci & Ryan,

2008). I conclude the chapter with a summary of the key factors facilitating effective PL opportunities for teachers within these purposively sampled settings.

Chapter 7 – Findings and Discussion IV: Teachers' professional learning and the domain of consequence

This chapter relates to Research Question 5: What perceived effect, if any, does L2 teachers' engagement in PL that they regard as 'valuable' have on

a) teachers' beliefs?

b) teachers' classroom practices?

c) pupil experiences and outcomes?

d) teachers' intentions to remain in the profession?

The chapter begins with a detailed analysis of the qualitative data provided by teachers describing PL opportunities they themselves identify as having had an impact on factors a – c as listed above. Data is drawn from both the questionnaires and the case-study interviews. Various categorisations of PL described by teachers are then correlated with pupil experiences (collected via the CSPS_MFL questionnaire) and outcomes at GCSE. Finally, patterns in the data related to teachers' intentions to remain in the profession are explored. The discussion centres on the demonstrable perceived impact of teachers' PL within the data set and possible explanatory factors for these effects.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

The key findings from Chapters 5-8 are summarised and I offer responses to the research questions posed, discussing where the data collected for this study supports or challenges the ideas in the published literature. The most promising examples of L2 teacher learning, perceived to be valuable by teachers are used as a basis from which to suggest possible implications of these findings for policy makers, school leadership teams, heads of languages departments and teacher educators. The implications of the study encompass both radical thinking about desirable structural changes to the organisation and nature of teachers' professional work, and also suggested actions that would be relatively straightforward to implement within the constraints of the educational system as it currently operates in England.

2 BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following review will draw on literature from the areas of teacher education, workplace learning, motivation and second language acquisition research. Although the literature is drawn from around the world, the focus of the review is on teacher learning in the UK context for instructed language learning in publicly funded secondary schools. Within the review I examine the following questions:

- What knowledge and skills do languages teachers need?
- What constitutes effective professional learning for teachers?
- What are languages teachers' current professional learning needs and experiences?
- What factors are known to affect teachers' access to and engagement in effective professional learning?

2.1 Defining excellence in teachers' professional values, knowledge and skills

Many attempts have been made to define the attitudes, knowledge and skills that teachers require in order to be effective professionals. In England, beginning teachers' competencies are currently assessed against the Teachers' Standards (Department for Education, 2011), which define the minimum level of practice expected for the award of qualified teacher status. These standards include eight domains, covering planning, teaching, subject knowledge, knowledge of child development, psychology and classroom management. The standards (2011, p.10) outline an expectation that teachers be self-critical and that they '*keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date*'. They also highlight the moral dimension of teaching and the expectation that teachers uphold a set of values defined within the document such as honesty, tolerance, integrity and the rule of law.

In the public realm, conceptualisations of the knowledge required for teaching range in complexity from a view of teaching as a discrete set of technical skills to be learned and enacted to an expansive view of teacher professional knowledge as multi-faceted and ever evolving. A recent education secretary in England gave the following definition of teaching in a speech: *teaching is a craft and it is best learnt as an apprentice'* (Gove, 2010). Gove's (2010) characterisation of teaching has been roundly rejected by many teachers and researchers. Canning (2019), an academic specialising in teaching quality, highlights the complexity of teaching and the multiplicity of aims of, and contexts for education. In light of this complexity, he asserts that it is a fallacy that there is such a thing as 'teaching excellence' that can be

itemised and worked towards (Canning, 2019). Most authors (e.g., Ben-Peretz, 2011; Shulman, 1986; Winch et al., 2013) fall somewhere in-between: they see value in the attempt to describe and categorise 'excellence' in teachers' skills and knowledge for specific purposes and contexts, whilst acknowledging the incompleteness of any attempt to capture the complex set of interrelated competencies required for successful teaching. For example, Winch, Orchard and Oancea (2013) conceptualise teacher professional knowledge as a combination of situated understanding, technical knowledge, and theoretical knowledge. Each of these different forms of knowledge is seen as complementary and indispensable.

In an influential article from 1986, Shulman theorises that the knowledge base for teaching is vast and complex. He identifies seven main categories of teacher knowledge (detailed in Table 2.1) and highlights both the intellectual nature of teaching (reminding us that the doctorate, the highest degree awarded by our higher education institutions, translates directly as 'teacher') and also the moral, normative dimension to teaching, requiring decision-making based around a set of core professional values and ideals about the purposes of education.

Table 2.1: Forms of knowledge needed for teaching according to Shulman (1986)

1	Content knowledge
2	General pedagogic knowledge
3	Curricular knowledge
4	Pedagogical content knowledge
5	Knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values
6	Knowledge of learners and their characteristics
7	Knowledge of contexts

A key category of knowledge outlined in Table 2.1 is *pedagogical content knowledge* (PCK)) or, in the European tradition, *didactical transposition* (Chevallard, 1986). Shulman (1986, p. 9) explains that PCK includes knowledge of '*the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others'*. Amongst other things, teachers need an assortment of effective examples and explanations at hand to elucidate their subject and to tackle pupils' misconceptions. They also need an understanding of how knowledge progression occurs in their subject and what pupils are likely to find difficult. The concept of PCK has been influential in the literature around teacher learning and it has also been developed: the term pedagogical content *knowing* (PCKg) is a theoretical extension of PCK that captures a teacher's continually developing, integrated understanding of pedagogy, subject matter content, pupil characteristics, and the context of learning (Cochran et al., 1993).

An alternative organisation of teachers' knowledge and skills into four domains was put forward by Rowland, Turner and Thwaites (2014). Each teachers' knowledge and beliefs form a *foundation* (1) that

must then be *transformed* (2) by the teacher (a process drawing on a teacher's PCK (Shulman, 1986) and *connected* (3) with pupils' prior understandings. The fourth dimension of *contingency* (4) emphasises the unfolding of teaching in 'real-time' and the teacher's need for knowledge and skill in reacting to the pupils in front of them, modifying their transformation and connection processes on the fly. This contingency dimension (Rowland et al. 2014) can be linked to what Doyle describes as '*the multidimensionality, simultaneity and unpredictability of the classroom environment*' (1977, p. 53). Skills that teachers need in order to adapt to the complexities in the classroom were identified by Doyle (1977) as the ability to: a) classify classroom events, relating them to previous experiences; b) discriminate among and prioritise events with respect to immediate and longer-term goals; c) multitask by addressing two or more events at once; d) monitor and control the duration of events; and e) interpret events and make rapid judgements. The enactment of these skills has been described in the literature as a process of clinical reasoning, defined by Kriewaldt and Turnridge (2013, p. 106) as '*the analytical and intuitive cognitive processes that professionals use to arrive at a best judged ethical response in a specific practice-based context*.' Clinical reasoning as a process through which competing concerns in the classroom are resolved as part of a teachers' ethical decision making has been highlighted by several authors in their descriptions of teachers' professional roles and expertise (Burn et al., 2010; Hagger et al., 2011; A. Kennedy, 2005; Stronach et al., 2002).

New knowledge is constantly generated in the fields of educational psychology, child development and second language acquisition, as are recommendations for practice. For this reason, teachers need to continue building their knowledge and understanding to support the processes of clinical reasoning. An additional skill required for the maintenance of excellence in teaching is therefore research literacy (BERA and RSA, 2014). Through the processes of engaging with and in research, teachers should develop the tools to examine the impact of their classroom practices and become more critical and reflective about their behaviours in the classroom (Atay, 2008; Sachs, 2016).

Following authors such as Winch (2004) and Coe et al. (2014), the current study rejects both a reductionist view of teaching and a view of teaching as so complex that attempts to define and study teachers' skills and knowledge are seen as pointless (e.g. Canning, 2019). I take the position that effective pedagogy is '*more than just a set of classroom techniques*' (Coe et al., 2014, p. 20) and it involves the teacher's engagement in complex and ethically charged 'online' decision making, drawing on expert pedagogical and content knowledge and evaluating the appropriateness of a range of possible methods at any given point in time.

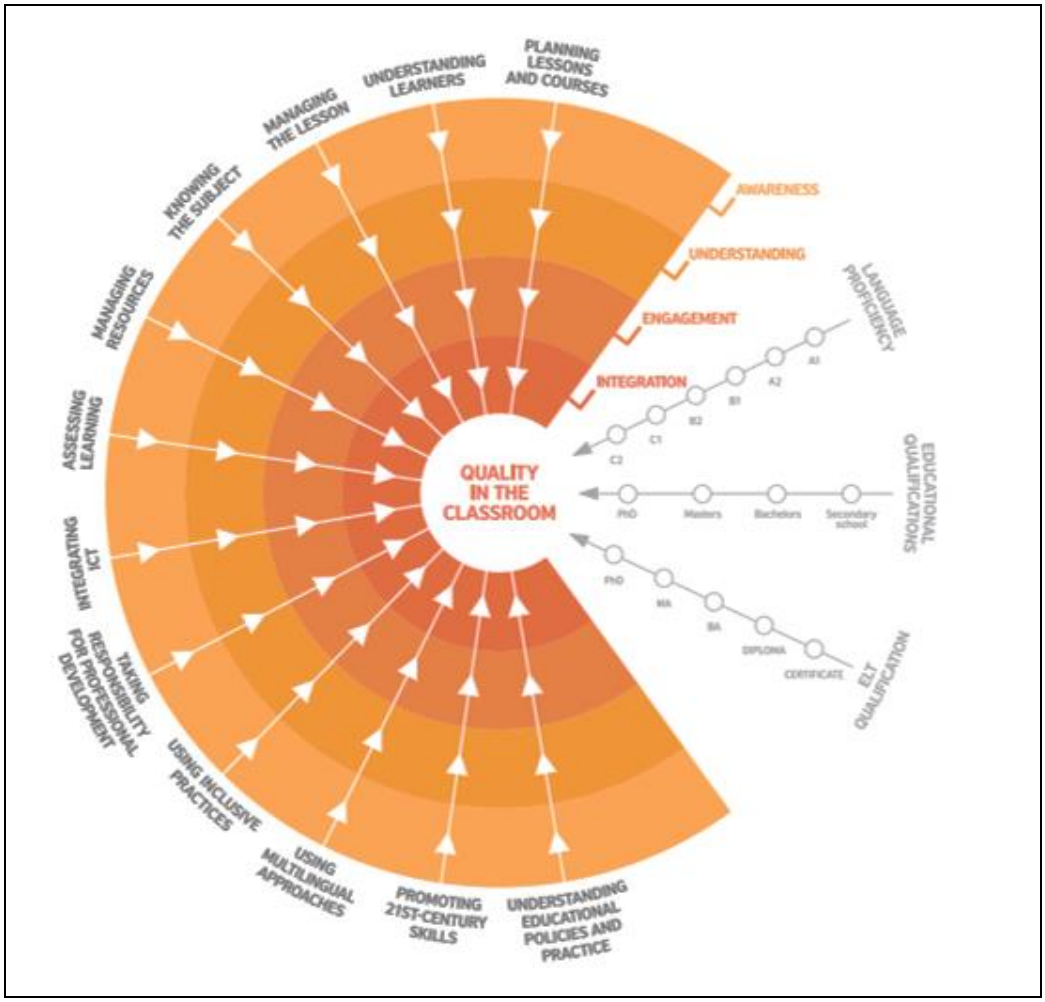
MFL-Specific conceptualisations of the skills and knowledge that teachers need

Conceptualisations of the specific skills and knowledge that L2 teachers need vary depending on the perceived aims of language education endorsed by the author. Since the late 1980s there has been an increasing focus on communicative competency as the main aim of language education across Europe rather than a focus on the development of declarative knowledge of grammar and linguistic structures (Molway et al., 2020). In the last decade, increased globalisation has contributed to a growing recognition of the need for intercultural understanding to be a focus of language education programmes (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). The Programme of Study for the National Curriculum in England at Key Stage 3 (2013) declares in its opening sentence that '*learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures*'. However, culture does not feature prominently in national assessments of L2 study and in practice rarely features in L2 lessons in English schools (Hennebry, 2014). An emphasis on culture is also apparent in a recent Council of Europe report (Byram et al., 2002, p. 5):

> *[L2 teaching should] give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviours; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience*.

Many authors have drawn on research into second language acquisition to catalogue the knowledge and skills that L2 teachers require in order to be effective (British Council, 2015; Ellis, 2005; Freeman, 2002b; Lightbown, 2003; Macaro et al., 2016; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Smith & Conti, 2016). One of the most recent and comprehensive attempts to map these skills was completed by the British Council (2015, p. 5), which sets out twelve core competencies for high-quality teaching of English as a foreign language (see Figure 2.1). Drawing on the outputs from those authors listed at the start of this paragraph, I noted a high degree of convergence, with PCK(g) in the following areas considered universally important: grammar; phonology; speaking; listening; writing; reading; communication strategies. Given the increasing acknowledgement of the importance of intercultural understanding, it is difficult to explain why this aspect of teachers' knowledge and skills is neglected by all except Smith and Conti (2016) and the British Council (2015, p.10), which includes PCK(g) of '*sociolinguistic skills*' as a subcomponent of 'knowing the subject'. Translation and contrastive analysis with other languages are highlighted by the British Council (2015) and Smith and Conti (2016). Additionally, Macaro et al. (2016) emphasise the need for PCK(g) in the use of metacognitive approaches to learning, which have been demonstrated to be key to L2 development (Rose, Briggs, Boggs, Sergio, & Ivanova-Slavianskaia, 2018).

Figure 2.1: British Council Continuing Professional Development Framework (2015, p.5)



Categorisations of language teachers' content knowledge (such as the one displayed in Figure 2.1) routinely distinguish between teachers' knowledge *about* language (declarative knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and syntax) and their knowledge *of* language (communicative proficiency). Teachers' relative confidence and competence in these domains may inform their language teaching methodologies and their decision-making processes in the classroom. However, when enacting classroom teaching, these two interrelated knowledge domains become very difficult to isolate for study. For example, the process of rendering target language (TL) input comprehensible to learners requires teachers to draw simultaneously on their communicative proficiency and also their PCK(g) of linguistic forms likely to be comprehensible to their pupils. Andrews (2003) explores the multiple and simultaneous pedagogic purposes of teachers' TL use, explaining that pupils listen to their teachers' TL (a) to comprehend instructions regarding the details of their learning task; (b) to understand teachers' representations and explanations of language as an object of study; and (c) to engage with the input,

developing their second language listening decoding skills and noticing new vocabulary. In this way, '*teaching and what is taught are inseparable'* (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 413).

The PCK and content knowledge that teachers of languages require has been the subject of some debate (Freeman, 2002), leading Agudo (2014, p. 1) to claim that '*there is no consensus in the field of SLTE as to what the essential knowledge base of SLTE is, either in terms of disciplinary knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge.*' Issues of grammar teaching or of first language (L1) and TL use within the L2 classroom are examples of key aspects of L2 teaching about which there is not yet a '*consensual body of knowledge*' (McIntyre, 1995, p. 371) to inform teacher education. In part as a response to the ongoing debates in SLA research and also in acknowledgement of the need for teachers to make choices about which implications from SLA literature are of relevance to learners in their own classroom contexts, Ellis (2010, p. 192) notes that languages teachers need to continually '*examine their own teaching practice as in a reflective model of education*.'

The wider debate about teachers' professionalism

> *From the standpoint of professional positioning, teacher education involves political choices. Decisions about what teachers should know, how they should learn it, and how their knowledge and competence should be assessed both stem from and create social recognition and value for their work.* (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 403)

The debate surrounding teachers' skills and knowledge base sits within a wider web of conflicting discourses about the nature of teacher professionalism (Densmore et al., 2007; Evans, 2002; L. Hargreaves et al., 2006; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Sachs, 2016).

School teaching was officially recognised as a *profession* in the UK in 2001 when it was classified at professional level 1.2 (alongside doctors and lawyers) for the census by the Office for National Statistics. However, this officially conferred status may mask a less favourable perception of teaching's status amongst the general public. Kennedy (2016, p. 2) points out that the work of a teacher can be variously characterised as that of a manager, actor, social worker, lecturer, mediator, role model, salesman and so forth. The complex nature of teachers' roles renders their professional selves 'split, plural and conflictual' (Stronach et al., 2002) and creates ambiguity in attempts to describe and define teachers' work.

In an attempt to improve the conceptual clarity surrounding multifaceted and conflicting understandings of teacher professionalism, Hoyle (2001, p. 146) makes a distinction between professionalisation as 'the pursuit of status' and professionalism as 'the enhancement of the quality of service', noting that

although they are linked, the two do not always go hand in hand and that gains made in one can sometimes be to the detriment of the other. Further defining these two dimensions, Hoyle (2001) links professionalisation to concepts of occupational prestige and status, whilst professionalism is linked to occupational esteem. Occupational prestige relates to the public perception of the position of teaching within the hierarchy of professions and Hoyle argues that the very nature of teaching restricts the enhancement of prestige since groups of children take the role of clients and teaching is thus strongly associated with behaviour management. Occupational status is defined as the extent to which other professionals (such as politicians, doctors etc.) would accept teaching as belonging to the same professional group. Finally, occupational esteem is defined as the extent to which teachers are perceived as bringing dedication, competence and care to their daily tasks. Hoyle (2001, p. 150) notes that 'of the three dimensions of 'status' it is esteem which is the most amenable to improvement through the efforts of teachers themselves through increasing professionalism'. Hoyle's (2001) concept of professionalism, invoking dedication and competence, can be linked to Evetts' (2011) understanding of 'occupational' professionalism which she links with notions of care, partnership, discretion and trust.

Evetts (2011) writes about the wider perception of teacher professionalism as being affected by the language of public policy in education – over which teachers themselves have very little control. She argues that the trend in recent years has been towards increased accountability and surveillance within the teaching profession in an attempt to '*measure and demonstrate professionalism*' (Evetts, 2011, p. 412) and to improve standards of teaching and learning in all UK schools (see also L. Hargreaves et al., 2006; Schleicher, 2011). L. Hargreaves et al. (2006, p. 8) have argued that accountability measures, performance-related pay and policies such as national strategies and standards can be understood as both 'professionalising, through giving specific skills, and de-professionalising, or taking away pedagogical autonomy'. However, movement towards externally imposed standards is most widely understood in the literature as undermining teachers' professionalism: Sachs (2016, p. 416) argues that an overload of accountability measures in schools '*erodes trust and develops risk-adverse dispositions towards practice*'. Similarly, Densmore et al. (2007, p. 81) emphasise the importance of teachers' having the freedom to exercise their '*skills, judgement and creative potential*'. They state that '*when priorities, regulations and standards are established at a distance that does not allow for local modification, professional development suffers*' (Densmore et al., 2007, p. 81). From the perspective of initial teacher education, Ellis and McNicholl (2015, p. 8) consider that '*the trajectory of reforms in recent years […has] attempted to reconceive teachers and teaching and establish new regimes of governance and authority on entirely different terms to former understandings of professionalism*'. As Hoyle (2001, p. 148) noted a decade previously, such reforms operate on an assumption that '*enhanced teacher 'status' will flow from*

a professionalism which adopts managerialism, technological innovation, competition, and rigorous accountability' but there is, as yet, little evidence to support this assumption and there is much debate surrounding whether this new professionalism may stand at odds with the moral purposes of teaching (Evetts, 2011; Moore & Clarke, 2016). The high value placed on what Evetts (2009) has called 'organisational' professionalism rather than 'occupational' professionalism may mean that '*the motives that drive professional actions are not (always) reflected higher up the system*' (Edwards, 2010, p. 127). For example, both Blackmore (2004) and Evetts (2011, p. 415) describe the unintended consequences of the introduction of targets in teaching, which have brought with them '*a focus on target achievement to the detriment or neglect of other less measurable tasks and responsibilities*'. Another unintended consequence has been identified as teachers' reluctance to seek help when they are struggling due to '*a heightened concern to be 'seen to be good'*' (Blackmore, 2004, p. 454; Boylan, Adams, et al., 2018). As Ball (2000, p. 2) puts it, the '*tactics of transparency produce a resistance of opacity*'.

2.2 The definitions of teacher professionalism and professional learning in use in the current study

Sachs (2016) draws together several of the conceptualisations of teacher professionalism discussed above. She develops an argument in favour of an enhanced occupational professionalism for teachers, which positions them as agentic, autonomous knowledge workers. Her conceptualisation of a teachers' professional role includes notions of research literacy (Winch et al., 2013) and knowledge production leading to both functional and attitudinal development in the pursuit of a broadly democratic social agenda. Where teachers are inclined and enabled to adopt this occupational professionalism, Sachs (2015, p.421) suggests that they are likely to engage in active, collaborative and enquiry-focussed forms of PL with the aim of continually reviewing and transforming their practices and their learners' outcomes. This understanding of occupational professionalism and the processes underpinning it is adopted throughout the current study as a desirable aim.

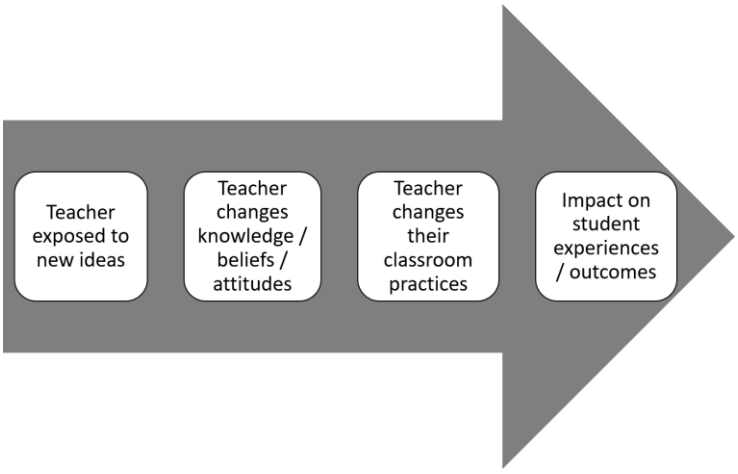
The position I have taken in the debate surrounding teacher professionalism described above has clear implications for any subsequent interpretation of PL (as explored by O'Brien & Jones, 2014). In principle, any activity can lead to a change in one's understanding, beliefs or practices. This means that '*every activity can be a learning activity, even when a teacher did not have the intention to learn from that activity*' (Bakkenes et al., 2010, p. 536). For the purposes of this study, Professional Learning will be defined as any activity that teachers themselves consider (at times retrospectively) as relevant to the development of their professional expertise. However, throughout the study I acknowledge and problematise the ways in which prevalent discourses of performativity in England 'influence the

construction of professional development activity, teachers' engagement in such activity and its outcomes' (Boylan, Coldwell, Maxwell, & Jordan, 2018, p. 129). When evaluating PL described by my participants I understand high-quality PL as contributing to the development of teachers' professional expertise as envisaged by Winch et al. (2013) and to the enhancement of occupational professionalism as envisaged by Evetts (2011) and Sachs (2016).

2.3 Models of teachers' professional learning

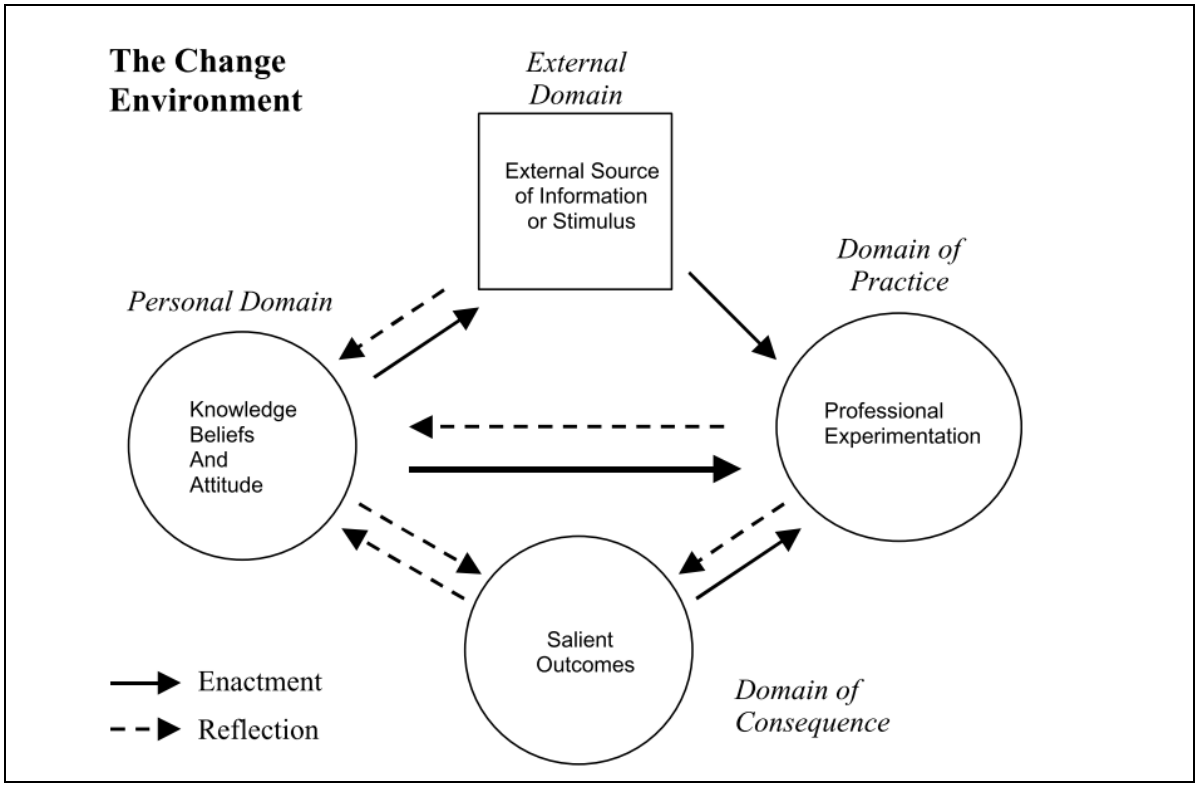
Early theoretical models envisaged teacher learning as a linear process beginning with a teacher's exposure to new ideas and concluding with impacts on pupil outcomes and/or experiences (see Figure 2.2). Guskey (2002) questioned the ordering of this change sequence and suggested that the impetus for genuine change in teachers' attitudes and practices is more likely to be a response to observable changes in pupil outcomes. Pupil outcomes were therefore theorised as prompting and *preceding* changes in teacher's beliefs and attitudes: '*demonstrable results in terms of student learning outcomes are the key to the endurance of any change in instructional practice*.' (Guskey, 2002, pp. 383–384).

Figure 2.2: Early linear model of teacher change



Noting that linear models struggle to account for the complexity of teachers' learning identified in their work, Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) proposed a multidirectional model of teacher growth (see Figure 2.3), which theorised change as a process mediated by teachers' reflection and enactment (*enactment* describes teachers' actions driven variously by external stimuli; personal knowledge and beliefs; and/or evidence of impacts). This model allows for teacher change initiated, potentially simultaneously, in any of four dimensions, which make it more flexible in capturing the complex processes involved in teacher learning than the models described above.

Figure 2.3: Clarke and Hollingsworth's model of professional growth (2002: p.951)



Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) acknowledge that teacher learning is affected by the context in which it occurs (represented within the model as the 'change environment'). This idea was further developed by Desimone (2009), who suggests a range of environmental factors that need to be considered including pupil characteristics, curriculum, policy and school leadership. The importance of the change environment to any attempt to theorise teacher learning is highlighted and expanded upon by Opfer and Pedder (2011), who describe the process of teacher learning as the product of interactions between three nested systems which are seen as interdependent and reciprocally influential, namely the teacher, the school, and the learning activity. The school system is described as involving '*the contexts of the school that support teaching and learning, the collective orientations and beliefs about learning, the collective practices or norms of practice that exist in the school, and the collective capacity to realize shared learning goals'* (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 384). Whilst Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) model offers an excellent tool with which to map cognitive aspects of teachers' learning, it is useful to bear in mind the political and socio-cultural variables highlighted by Desimone (2009) and Opfer and Pedder (2011), since it is clear that no learning occurs in a vacuum and the change environment both influences and is influenced by each teacher learner.

Pupil outcomes feature in most of the models of teacher learning either as the logical endpoint of a linear, causal learning pathway or as both a possible outcome and initiator of teacher change. However, there is a debate about whether pupil outcomes should be included in theorisations of teacher learning and some authors choose to leave them out (i.e. Opfer and Pedder, 2011; Evans, 2014). Evans (2014, p. 188) asserts the 'impossibility' of identifying causal impact of PL on pupil outcomes and argues that although pupils may be secondary beneficiaries of teachers' professional development, they should not be integral to the conceptualisation of the processes of teacher learning or development. Whilst acknowledging this argument, I take the position that, as demonstrated by Guskey (2002) and Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) changes in pupil outcomes have the potential to spark teacher change as well as to arise indirectly from changes in teachers' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices. For this reason, I believe it is helpful to include pupil outcomes in our theorisations.

Other potential shortcomings of the models of teacher learning explored above are offered by Boylan, Coldwell, Maxwell and Jordan (2018): Firstly, they point out that the macro education policy context is a neglected aspect of all existing models of the processes of change at work in teachers' PL and that more ought to be done to analyse the ways in which national policies and discourses around education shape school systems and therefore the environments in which teachers engage. A second criticism levelled at some of the models explored above is their failure to explicitly account for the role of a teacher's agency to shape their action within their social context. Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002, p. 953) work is an exception in this regard as they emphasise that the teacher is at the heart of their model and that what constitutes a 'salient outcome' is subjective: '*change in the domain of consequence is firmly tied to the teacher's existing value system and to the inferences the teacher draws from the practices of the classroom*'. Finally, the role of teacher's interaction with tools and materialities such as texts, technologies, places, artefacts etc. could be more fully explored in the models and Boylan et al. (2018) suggest that cultural historical activity theory could offer insights for researchers seeking to expand the current models to address the influence of teachers' socio-material learning landscapes.

In summary, there are a range models of teachers' PL that offer useful perspectives to researchers. In this study I make use of Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) model, which has been used in multiple empirical studies and judged to capture the cognitive processes of teacher change in a way that makes them accessible for analysis (Boylan et al. 2018). However, I also draw on the work of other authors to help me take the sociocultural and socio-material aspects of teacher learning into consideration by exploring the reciprocal influence of the '*change environment*' on the change processes described by Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) model.

2.4 Effective professional learning for teachers

Day et al. (2006) point out that teachers are continually learning in schools but that not all learning is necessarily good. 'Effective' PL is commonly defined in the literature as those learning experiences that have a positive impact ultimately on valued pupil outcomes (see Timperley, 2008) although clearly, PL experiences could lead to benefits in many other domains, '*whether this is couched in terms of better teaching and learning, [or] student and staff welfare and well-being*' (Bubb & Earley, 2013, p. 237). Indeed, Coldwell (2017) notes that PL can enhance teachers' confidence and self-efficacy, thereby increasing the likelihood that they remain in their school and/or in the profession.

To return, for now, to the often-used definition of 'effective PL' as having an impact on pupils' attainment, there is broad consensus amongst teachers, researchers and policy makers that teachers' PL can be a means to eventual improvements in valued pupil outcomes (Goodall et al., 2005; A. Kennedy, 2013; M. Kennedy, 2016; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007; Sutton Trust, 2015). However, capturing rigorous evidence of the processes by which teachers' PL may lead to secondary effects on pupil outcomes has proven a challenging task. Speer (2005, p. 371) criticises research designs that fail to develop an adequate shared understanding between teachers and researchers of the language used to describe practices, meaning that '*resulting data may not accurately represent teachers' beliefs or practices*'. Carefully designed studies combining a range of data collection methods such as video observation, teacher interviews with stimulated recall and the careful collection of a range of data about pupils' responses to teaching are advocated to address this issue. One additional problem with evaluating the impact of changes to teachers' practice as a result of PL is that an outcome measure aligned to the intervention (such as a test of pupils' strategic reading behaviour following a professional development programme focussed on developing reading strategies) is very likely to produce a higher effect size than an unaligned outcome measure (such as a GCSE languages examination). This makes it challenging to compare the impact of different approaches that have been evaluated in different ways (Cheung & Slavin, 2016).

Much research into the impact of PL relies heavily on teacher's own perceptions of impact, which may be affected by confirmation bias. The difficulty in illuminating '*the 'black box' between acts of teaching and associated student outcomes*' (Timperley et al., 2007, p. xxiii), is further exacerbated by the difficulty teachers experience in articulating their decision making processes in the classroom. Korthagen (2016, p. 2) suggests that '*much of a teacher's behaviour is unconsciously guided*' and may be driven by unacknowledged cognitive, motivational, affective and social contextual factors (see also Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). Opfer and Pedder (2011, p. 386) explain that even when positive change does take

place as a result of PL, a change in one area does not necessarily lead to a change in another, '*that is, teachers may change their beliefs but not their practices, may change their practices but not their beliefs, and ultimately may change their practice but not the learning outcomes of their students*'. In light of this, Evans (2008, p. 33) proposes that in order to have any impact on pupils, teachers' PL must involve '*both attitudinal and functional development, since either without the other is unsatisfactory*'. Examining teachers' responses to top-down mathematics reform in the US, Shirrell et al. (2018) found that social context was key to teachers' attitudinal development: whilst formalised PL courses led to short-term changes in teachers' practices, the existence of within-school systems to support teachers' teaching- and learning-focussed interactions with their colleagues was a better predictor of reform-related changes in both teachers' beliefs and their practices. Borg (2003, p. 1) highlights the need for further research into the relationship between what L2 teachers 'do' in their classroom and what they '*think, know, and believe*', drawing these three mental processes together under the term 'teacher cognition'.

In spite of the difficulties discussed above, a growing number of studies have sought to make links between PL interventions and pupil outcomes. Guskey and Yoon (2009) conducted a review of studies that seek to validate the link between PL and improvements in pupil learning. In their analysis of the 9 studies that were deemed to meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards of credible evidence (WWC & IES, 2013), they found that PL associated with improvements in pupil learning '*focused principally on ideas gained through the involvement of outside experts*' (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 496). External input may be particularly stimulating in learning terms because it can assist people to think outside of the professional discourse in which they are immersed, bringing new perspectives to familiar problems of practice (Ball, 2013). Where face to face contact with outside experts is not practicable, one obvious source of external expertise for teachers is research evidence in the fields of educational psychology, child development, and the teaching of each subject specialism. A recent enquiry into teacher research engagement in England advocates that teachers engage both *with* and *in* research:

> *Every teacher is entitled to work in a research-rich environment that supports the development of their research literacy, and offers access to facilities and resources (both on-site and online) that support sustained engagement with and in research*. (BERA and RSA, 2014, p. 7)

PL that assists teachers in the development of self-regulatory skills of inquiry alongside clear theoretical frameworks is seen as key to self-sustaining improvements in teaching since this provides a basis for teachers to investigate the impact of their instructional strategies and make '*principled changes to practice in response to student needs*' (Timperley, 2008, p. 24). The role of external expertise, including research evidence, has subsequently been foregrounded by a robust umbrella review of several systematic research reviews about effective PL activities (Cordingley et al., 2015). A large degree of

convergence across the study findings was noted and, amongst other things, the review underlined the importance of access to external expertise; sustained engagement with new ideas; and formative assessment of teachers' PL with a focus on pupil outcomes. Drawing on the work of the umbrella review, Cordingley (2015: 240-1) described eight teacher actions thought to characterise effective PL:

1) Making use of specialist expertise, including expertise in the form of research evidence; using evidence and expertise to support planning in particular
2) Giving and receiving structured peer support using collaboration, especially reciprocal risk taking and professional dialogue, as core learning strategies
3) Undertaking sustained, enquiry-oriented learning over (usually) two terms or more supported by use of tools and protocols to discipline learning and secure coherence and progression
4) Learning to learn from looking through exploration of evidence about pupil outcomes and from observing teaching and learning exchanges especially those involving experiments with new approaches
5) Using aspirations for specific pupils and evidence about their learning as a driver for development
6) Focusing on why things do and don't work in different contexts to develop an underpinning rationale or practical theory alongside practice
7) Seeking out leadership support—time/encouragement/modelling—including specialist coaching and engaging in enquiry-oriented approaches to development
8) Actively seeking out specialist and peer support and taking responsibility for creating and taking opportunities for professional learning within day to day school life

Following the data collection for this study a meta-analysis was published that examined 53 randomised controlled trials of PL interventions that were deemed to meet a definition of 'high-quality' PL, including a substantial number of studies conducted in England (Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020). This meta-analysis found an average effect size of professional development on student learning of 0.09. In terms of content and focus, PL has been found to be most effective (in terms of impact on pupil outcomes) when it is directly focussed on enriching teachers' subject-specific content and pedagogic content knowledge (the term coined by Shulman in 1986), or when it contextualises generic pedagogic strategies for individual subject areas (a finding that supports the conclusions of Cordingley et al., 2018). The TALIS survey in 2013 also found that 91% of teachers who participated in PL related to subject-matter content reported positive impacts on their teaching (Schleicher, 2016).

2.5 Secondary schools in England as a context for teacher learning

For many professions in England, continuing membership of the professional body is dependent on undertaking a number of hours of professional development. However, this is not the case with teaching. Since the 1967 Plowden Report, education policy in England has included an explicit expectation that teachers will continue to develop and improve their practice throughout their careers, with 5 statutory, non-contact days a year set aside from 1988 onwards for the purpose of formalised In-Service Teacher Education (INSET) in state-maintained schools. However, the value of these INSET days has been frequently called into question by teachers and researchers investigating the impact of this time (Bubb & Earley, 2013; NFER, 2008). There is great variability in the way that schools make use of these five days, with often-reported tensions between meeting school needs or the needs of individual departments or colleagues. When whole-school presentations are given that teachers find it hard to connect to their own development goals, cynicism can easily set in, as illustrated in the characterisation of an INSET day below:

> *The first presentation is about to begin. Teachers sprint to fill the seats towards the back of the room. Post-It notes are being circulated, while graphs, charts and motivational quotes flash up on the projector screen. Phones on silent are partially hidden underneath worksheets, while Inset-day bingo players are eagerly listening out for the latest edu-jargon.* (Mullin, 2020, p. 1)

Whilst some schools have moved to disaggregate INSET days and spread the time across more, shorter twilight sessions, many schools retain a model of INSET days spread out across the academic year. At least two of these days are frequently used as administrative preparation days after the Summer and Christmas holidays to help teachers get ready for pupils returning to the classroom (Bubb & Earley, 2013; Hustler et al., 2003). Whilst this preparation time is undoubtedly useful to teachers, the disconnected nature of any PL-focussed work accomplished within and across these sporadic days does not lend itself to the long-term consolidation of new practices. At this point it is important to acknowledge that, of course, INSET days are not the only opportunities for teacher learning. Internal and external continuing professional development (CPD) courses, formalised programmes of practitioner research, peer coaching and observations, and all manner of informal activity may offer rich sources of PL. However, given the statutory nature of INSET days and the financial and time investment in them, their effectiveness as learning opportunities warrants close attention.

Recent research into formalised PL in England (in the form of courses and INSET days) identified three recent key concerns: (1) the poor quality of much PL provision reduces its impact (that is, participants are less likely to transform their practice as a result); (2) participation in PL is insufficiently incentivised; and (3) many schools offer poor environments for teacher learning (Hood, 2016). Regarding the quality of PL

provision, a snapshot review of 75 CPD providers in England in 2010-11 found that PL was rarely based on effective needs analysis and tailored to individual teachers (CUREE, 2011). There was also only limited evidence of programmes supporting teachers to consider the impact of their PL on their learners. The review concludes that only a fraction of the CPD it reviewed was designed in a way that had potential to 'transform' teachers' practice although this was still achieved by schools that were able to build '*a professional learning environment in school that provides the support that needs to be wrapped around short episodes of specialist external contributions*' (CUREE, 2011, p. 6). This final point chimes with the Hood's (2016) concern about the environment that schools in England offer for teachers' learning.

When compared with their peers in other developed countries, teachers in England report relatively low amounts of time spent participating in PL activities (England ranked 30th out of 36 jurisdictions included in the 2013 TALIS data set for time spent on the categories of PL included). They also report relatively low impact of those activities on their classroom practice (Sellen, 2016). Cordingley et al. (2015) suggest that the high workloads faced by teachers in England create conditions in which they struggle to find the time for PL. Time and funding pressures may also have led to the prevalence of a whole-school delivery model for PL within schools in England, with school leaders employing economies of scale and prioritising whole-school improvement agendas.

The 2018 TALIS survey asked teachers about the PL activity they felt had the greatest impact on them in the preceding year. Given what is known about the characteristics of effective PL (Cordingley et al., 2015) the responses of teachers in England continue to reveal some limitations to their existing PL activities. For example, only 41% of lower-secondary teachers agreed that their most impactful PL activity had taken place over an extended period of time and only 51% agreed that their PL had included follow-up activity to help them embed new ideas into their practice.

Teacher Tapp surveys offer an additional source of data about teachers' opinions in England. These surveys reach over 3000 self-selecting teachers in England, who respond to questions and are sent articles summarising research into teaching in return for their participation. In a recent survey, secondary school teachers questioned the extent to which the PL they accessed through school was informed by evidence: 70% believed that half or less of their professional development was 'evidence-based' (Teacher Tapp, 2018). The same survey asked teachers to imagine a hypothetical scenario where INSET days were abolished and there were no longer any funds for PL. 31% of secondary school teachers believed that this scenario would not have any impact on their teaching (20% believed they would

improve their teaching anyway and 11% claimed that there would have been no change to their teaching in any case) (Teacher Tapp, 2018).

In recent years the government in England has responded to reports that have been critical of the status quo for teachers' learning in England's state schools and called for '*an increase in effective CPD in the UK, and for building awareness of effective practice*' (Cordingley, 2018, p.6). The recommendations of research into teachers' PL outlined by Cordingley et. al (2015) have been used explicitly to inform the design of a Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (STPD) (2016). The STPD has not (yet) been made statutory but it represents an effort to raise awareness about what constitutes effective PL and to improve teachers' access to sustained and effective PL programmes. The framework suggests that PL should:

1. be prioritised by school leadership.
2. have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
3. be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
4. include collaboration and expert challenge.
5. be sustained over time.

Following the data collection for this study, the government announced it is also planning to roll out an Early Career Framework (ECF) designed to provide more time for PL and mentoring support for the first two years of new teachers' careers (Department for Education, 2019a). Whilst a focus on supporting new entrants to the profession is welcome, the framework in its current state does not foreground a focus on subject-specific PL, which is of concern given what is known about the importance and impact of teacher learning contextualised within subjects (Cordingley et al., 2018; Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020; Schleicher, 2016). The ECF is due to launch in September 2020 in certain areas of England and the success of its delivery will be closely monitored by those interested in questions of teachers' PL, wellbeing and retention.

2.6 Languages teachers' current professional learning experiences and needs in England

A 2018 survey reported that 38% of MFL teachers reported that they were unconvinced that '*time and resource allocated to professional development are used in ways that enhance teachers' instructional capability''* (Teacher Tapp, 2018). This joins a growing number of recent reports pinpointing issues with L2 teachers' access to and participation in effective PL activities. The Association for Language Learning highlighted professional development opportunities as '*a crucial factor'* in teachers' commitment to stay

in the classroom (Jones & Gordon, 2020, p. 13) but acknowledged that most L2 teachers were not accessing effective PL. The most recent Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) report for languages noted that whole-school development was often seen to take precedence and *'teachers had few opportunities to update themselves in subject work*' (2011, p. 40). Board and Tinsley (2015, p. 8) corroborate this finding, noting that the PL experience most frequently reported by L2 teachers in recent years is attendance at one-off, internally organised training sessions and that many L2 teachers have found it difficult to access PL '*due to heavy workloads and schools' budgetary constraints*.' It seems that many L2 teachers are not currently accessing sustained learning opportunities and the potential contribution of outside expertise may currently be under-exploited. These findings are concerning and merit further investigation.

Regarding the need for development and innovation in L2 teachers' practices, Ofqual (2014) have acknowledged that there has been a negative wash-back effect of high-stakes examination preparation on L2 teachers' classroom practice. In particular, the widespread practice of promoting rote-learning for GCSE speaking and writing examinations in order to help pupils gain the highest possible marks has been identified as squeezing out time for more motivating and communicative L2 classroom activities (East, 2015; Macaro et al., 2016). This may be one of the underlying causes of persistently disappointing pupil outcomes for L2 education in England compared to our international neighbours (European Commission, 2012).

A report into the take-up of languages by Ipsos Mori declared the following:

> *Generally it is recognised that teachers are not teaching languages the way they would like to and do not feel that they have the scope to innovate. A culture has developed where few are willing to risk missing the highest grades in return for learning something interesting but not relevant to the exam.* (Ipsos Mori, 2014, p. 42)

The findings of Ipsos Mori (2014) regarding the need for changes in the way that languages are taught in England are corroborated by a review of modern languages pedagogy published at the beginning of the data collection for this study (Teaching Schools Council, 2016).

One frequently mentioned resource for teachers in England who wish to develop their pedagogy is to engage with available evidence in their field. In line with Cordingley's (2015) and Timperley's (2008) general recommendations that teachers should engage with principles of practice to inform their work, Ur (2013, p. 474) also argues that L2 teachers should be encouraged to develop '*situated methodologies*' drawing on research-informed principles that are '*likely to be conducive to good language learning and can be used in a wide range of teaching situations*'. This has been termed '*principled eclecticism*' and

relies on teachers' own agency in interpreting what might be effective in their individual contexts (Smith & Conti, 2016, p. 172). In order to facilitate this process, several attempts have been made to synthesise the findings of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research in order to construct a set of pedagogical principles that teachers of languages can use to inform their teaching (Ellis, 2005; Lightbown, 2003; Macaro et al., 2016; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Smith & Conti, 2016). Projects have also been carried out in order to encourage L2 teachers to engage with research-informed principles with the aim of developing in-service teachers' practice (Erlam, 2008; Lyster, 2019; Macaro et al., 2016) and to make summaries of SLA research freely available online[5]. However, the available evidence suggests that many languages teachers do not engage with SLA research-informed literature in any form following the completion of their training year (see S. Borg, 2010) and Borg and Burns (2008) found very few L2 teachers in their study referred to theory or methodological principles when prompted to explain their teaching practices.

Macaro (2003) reported on the results of a survey of 80 heads of languages departments in secondary schools in the UK. The participants were asked about what they would like to know from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. The four areas of research that teachers identified most frequently as priorities were the process of vocabulary acquisition; how the rules of the language are best learnt; pupil motivation; and how to conceptualise learners' progression with language learning. The fact that these areas of priority relate to underlying mental processes in skill acquisition may point to the contribution that research can make to teachers' understanding of less observable aspects of language learning. Macaro (2003) found that whilst 84% of the respondents thought that SLA research could be useful, only 3% felt that it was readily accessible, citing lack of time, lack of expertise in finding relevant research and lack of appropriateness of the available research for classroom practice. This confirms Mitchell's (2011, p. 16) finding that for languages, '*links between policy, research and practice remain systemically weak*'. This is in spite of the fact that the research literature potentially available to assist L2 teachers in developing their practice is '*much more extensive than that available to teachers of many other school subjects*' (Macaro et al., 2016, p. 129). This research repertoire includes rich and varied work that has been conducted in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), including a large and growing number of classroom-based intervention studies (see Spada, 2005). Although much of this body of work investigates the processes of teaching and learning English as an additional language, the implications for effective pedagogy drawn from this would often have relevance for teachers of an L2 in

[5] One recent project funded by the ESRC and the British Academy is known as OASIS and can be accessed at https://oasis-database.org

the UK context. This makes the apparent lack of engagement of most in-service L2 teachers with SLA research-informed literature a pressing concern.

The literature reviewed above outlines a situation in which many L2 teachers are not accessing effective PL with the potential to transform their practice. This is despite an increasing acknowledgement that changes in language teaching practices in England may be necessary to improve language learning outcomes for pupils. It is therefore of paramount importance to understand whether, how and why opportunities to learn and develop professionally are available to and taken up by teachers of an L2. In particular, the factors that have functioned as barriers to L2 teachers' engagement in the eight behaviours known to characterise effective PL (Cordingley, 2015) need to be fully understood before they can be effectively mitigated by L2 teachers and school leadership teams.

2.7 Individual factors known to affect teachers' access to and engagement in professional learning

In this section I draw on psychosocial and socio-psychological theories of motivation that are more usually applied to students' learning than to the professional learning of teachers. However, as professional learners, teachers are subject to the same motivational forces that are known to influence their learners' persistence and success in pursuing learning goals. it is therefore valuable to consider the extent to which well-studied constructs of motivation may offer insights into teachers' development trajectories.

Motivation and professional engagement

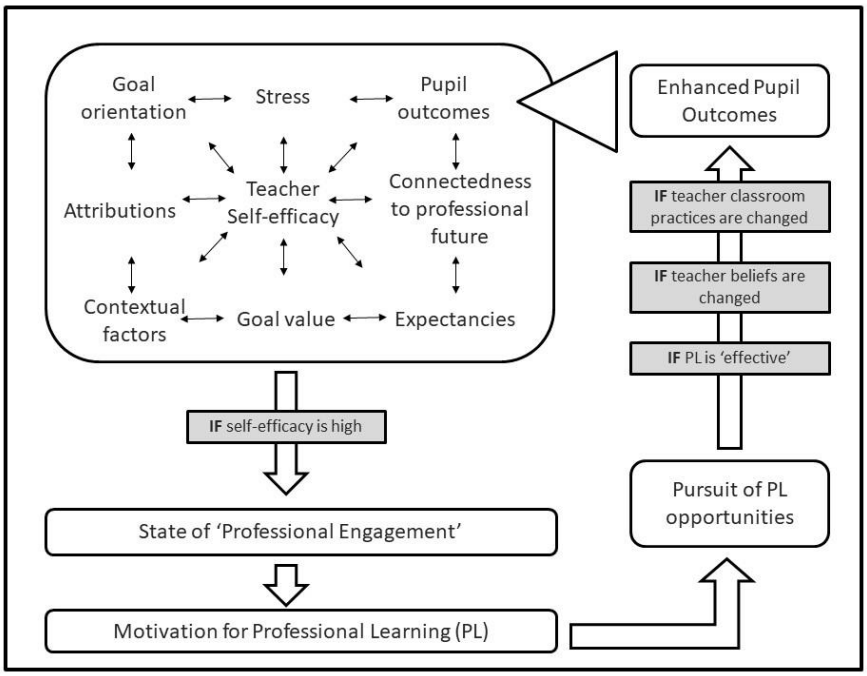
In her review of PL and its impact on teaching, Kennedy (2016, p. 4) rejects hundreds of studies that fail to control for teachers' motivation on the basis that motivation to learn is '*the most important form of comparability when a study is about learning*'. Motivation (as a construct within the wider context of teacher learning) has both cognitive and socio-cultural elements that are interdependent (Ushioda, 2017). This study uses Williams and Burden's (1997, p. 120) definition of motivation as '*a state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals)*'. In the following review several different aspects of motivational theory will be discussed, all of which are relevant for the focus of the prospective study.

Within the literature on teachers' development, many writers have focussed on describing the situations considered to have been the vehicles for teacher learning such as workshops, action research projects,

the presence of student teachers etc. These situations may provide the catalyst to transform a teacher from a 'restricted' to an 'extended' professional (Evans, 2002). However, a prerequisite for meaningful engagement in these various PL situations is identified in the literature as a state of 'professional engagement'. Schaufeli and colleagues have defined engagement as '*a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption*' (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74).

Duggan's (2007) model of teachers' professional engagement positions it as an outcome of a set of reciprocally influencing factors including a teacher's level of stress, their sense of 'connectedness' to their professional future, their goal orientation and their sense of efficacy in teaching their subject in the classroom. In their model of teacher motivation, Neves de Jesus and Lens (2005) show engagement in the profession as a function of a slightly different set of factors: they identify teacher expectancies, attributions, goal value and intrinsic motivation as key components. Together, these two models serve as the starting point for an exploration of some of the key factors identified as impacting teachers' motivation and engagement in learning. I have combined these factors into my own model in Figure 2.4, which illustrates the key, positively reinforcing cycle of relationships suggested in the literature between teachers' sense of self-efficacy, their professional engagement, their motivation for learning, their pursuit of PL opportunities and the potential for enhanced pupil outcomes as a result of positive transformations of teacher beliefs, attitudes and classroom practices.

Figure 2.4: Model of teachers' professional engagement and learning derived from Duggan (2007) and Neves de Jesus and Lens (2005)



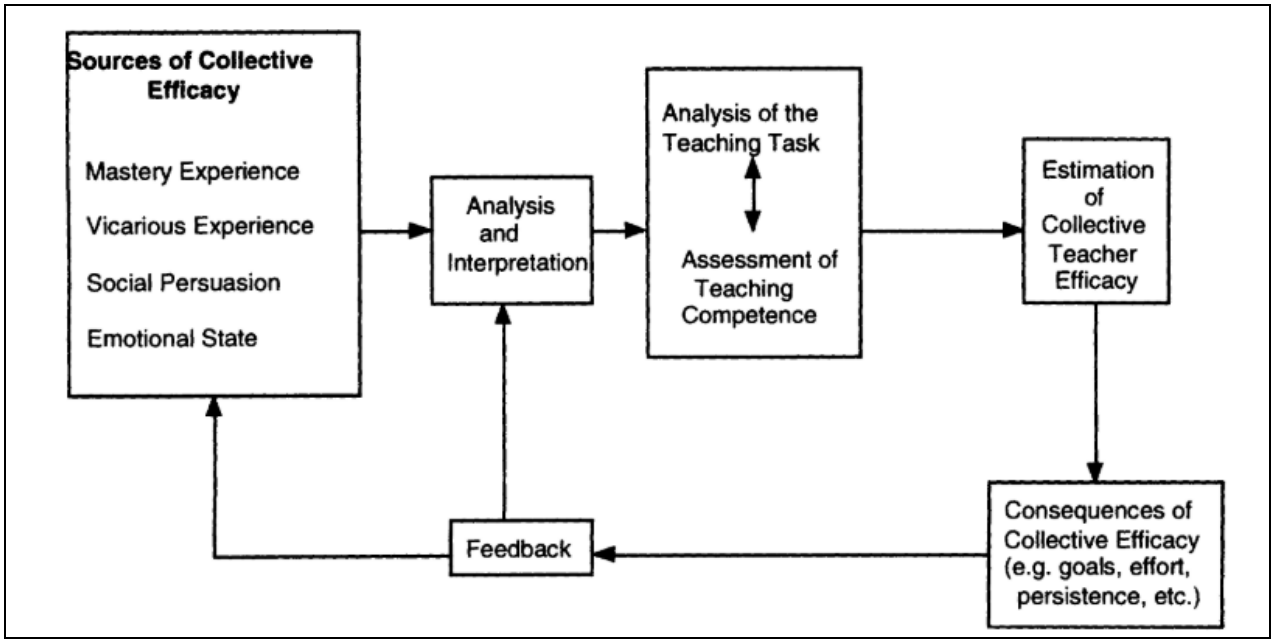
Self-efficacy

The term 'self-efficacy', with respect to learning, forms a key part of Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which describes the effect of self-beliefs on human agency. Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief in his or her power to influence situations. An individual's belief in their capacity to undertake a given task is understood to be a determinant both of a person's actual capacity to complete the task and of the behavioural choices that a person might make with regards to that task. In school, teachers' own interpretation of the success of their lessons will either confirm or challenge their current self-efficacy beliefs. Over time, this can result in either a positive or a destructive spiral in relation to self-beliefs, teaching and learning behaviours, and teaching efficacy.

Teachers' sense of self-efficacy was found to be the most significant predictor of professional engagement in Duggan's (2007) model of teacher motivation. Connections have also been found between teacher self-efficacy and pupil attainment (Ross, 1992; Zee & Koomen, 2016), teacher willingness to innovate (Guskey, 1988), and increased commitment to the teaching profession (Coladarci, 1992). The effects of teacher efficacy measured at the level of teacher teams have also been studied (Goddard, 2001) and evidence suggests that a faculty's collective self-efficacy (CSE) may be a better predictor of pupil attainment than the pupils' socioeconomic backgrounds (Goddard et al., 2000).

Bandura (1997) presented four sources from which we draw efficacy beliefs: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (i.e. emotional arousal). These sources of an individual's efficacy beliefs are incorporated into Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk Hoy's (2000) model of a faculty's CSE as can be seen in Figure 2.5. Duggan (2007) proposes that vicarious learning (i.e. through observation of a colleague) is something that may be more difficult for a teacher to access once they are beyond their initial training years. Both vicarious learning and verbal persuasion are dependent upon interactions with others and so the existence of a collegial atmosphere is important in the development of collective efficacy (Childs et al., 2013). This contextual factor is examined in greater detail later in this review.

Figure 2.5: A model of collective teacher efficacy (reproduced from Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk Hoy (2000, p. 486))



Reflecting on the potential impact that high teacher self-efficacy can have on pupils' attainment, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001, p. 803) suggest that PL activities should take the form of a series of '*powerful mastery experiences with an eye toward helping teachers garner evidence of improved learning on the part of their students in order to reap the efficacy pay-off that would result*.' However, Wheatley (2002, p. 17) challenges the assumption that teachers' self-efficacy doubts are '*inherently problematic*'. He makes a distinction between 'global' and 'specific' self-efficacy, arguing that although a high global sense of efficacy has been seen to be advantageous, teachers' doubts about specific areas of their practice can lead to reflection and motivate them to learn. Hiver (2013, p.219) also argues that a sense of dissatisfaction can serve as a driver of teacher learning '*as long as it is accompanied by feelings of power to enact a change*'. Opfer and Pedder (2011, p. 388) concur with these views but warn that too much '*dissonance between personal expectations and sense of efficacy*' can lead teachers to perceive new ideas as a threat and close themselves off to learning.

Goal orientations and attributions

Locke and Latham's (2006) Goal Setting Theory suggests that self-generated learning goals can make a significant contribution to the initiation and maintenance of motivation. They explain that goals which are primarily 'learning-oriented' (in terms of a desire to master a particular skill) as opposed to 'performance-oriented' (in terms of achieving a particular result) have been found to lead to better sustained task-perseverance and enhanced overall performance (Latham & Locke, 2006). Weiner's

Attribution Theory (1979) explores the ways in which different goal orientations may shape the explanatory reasons that an individual constructs for themselves in order to explain their degree of success or failure in completing tasks. In high-stakes tasks, individuals with a strong performance orientation may be more likely to attribute failure to factors outside of their control in order to save face. Attributions to explain performance can be categorised as adaptive or maladaptive based on whether they support or undermine an individual's sense of self-efficacy. Teachers who perceive their failure to teach a successful lesson as due to stable causes or causes beyond their locus of control (e.g. the nature of the pupils or a fixed, low estimation of their teaching ability) may be less likely to maintain their self-efficacy for future teaching tasks than teachers who attribute such failure to unstable, controllable causes (e.g. the use of an ineffective teaching strategy or the amount of effort put into planning) (see Wang et al., 2015). In research related to pupil motivation, adaptive attributions are linked to a mastery orientation toward learning, whereas negative attributions may contribute to an avoidant orientation in the form of learned helplessness (Dweck & Goetz, 1978; Molway & Mutton, 2019; Seligman, 1975). Mastery-oriented pupils have been proven to out-perform their peers in terms of their academic progress over time (Blackwell et al., 2007). Based on the demonstrable benefits to pupils of this orientation, it seems sensible to seek to promote a mastery-orientation in teachers about the development of their teaching skills.

Although many studies have explored the attributions that teachers make regarding their pupils' outcomes on standardised tests, the attributions that teachers generate whilst evaluating their teaching successes and failures in the classroom is a less well-explored area. Duggan (2007, p.12) asserts that teachers' adaptive attributions for their teaching success are '*foundational to their willingness to engage in further professional growth*' and yet there are many negative contextual factors in the teaching profession (such as accountability systems calculated on pupil results and parental pressure) that '*pull teachers away from a mastery orientation and toward a performance orientation to learning how to teach*' (Duggan, 2007, p.14). This warning regarding contextual pressures is echoed by Graham, Santos and Francis-Brophy (2014, p.54), who highlight '*the importance of acknowledging the force of [performativity] concerns in teacher development work*'. In her large-scale US study of teacher learning, Duggan (2007, p.65) found that '*19% of the variance in mastery scores could be explained by school membership*' and she concludes that a school community has the power to either nurture or impede the development of a mastery orientation for learning to teach.

An important development in theories of goal-setting and self-determination is a construct known as Future Time Perspective (FTP) and this has been defined as '*the degree to which and the way in which*

the chronological future is integrated into the present life-space of an individual through motivational goal-setting processes' (Husman & Lens, 1999, p. 114). Duggan (2007, p.59) argues that teachers' ability to envisage teaching goals in their future is essential to their engagement in PL and that '*teachers with longer teaching career goals report less stress*' (although the direction of causality between these two factors is not known). The term 'connectedness' (Husman & Shell, 2008) is used to describe the making of links between the present and the future. This process of link-making occurs when an individual believes they have the power to influence their future: teachers who voluntarily seek out opportunities for PL are exerting some control over future events and thereby demonstrating 'connectedness' by '*making links between, say, attendance at an after school workshop and improvement in their future instruction*' (Duggan, 2007, p. 20). Early career teachers identified as having a 'performance-avoid' goal orientation in Duggan's (2007) study were significantly more likely to report stress and had a more compressed future time perspective. This highlights the urgent need for studies into school environments that either facilitate or impede teachers' development of FTP (Husman et al., 2014, p. 189).

2.8 Environmental factors known to affect teachers' access to and engagement in professional learning

School environments are located within and shaped by international, national and local education policy landscapes. They affect and are affected by their local geography, politics, policies, and resources, and also their pupil and staff characteristics, capacities, attitudes, motivations and norms. School environments form the contexts within which teacher learning occurs, and they shape teachers' learning both in terms of what is (considered) feasible and what is valued. Since secondary schools in England are usually organised around subject departments, it is important to note the ways in which colleagues within each department '*share subject loyalty and expertise as well as "micro political" interests, [which means that] they form units which can be crucial agents of change within schools*.' (Brown et al., 2000, p. 242).

There is a significant body of research that looks at aspects of school and department 'cultures' and how culture affects the experiences of individuals within institutions (Brown et al., 2000; Childs et al., 2013; Day & Gu, 2007; Hargreaves, 1992, 1994). Hargreaves (1994) describes the way that communities of teachers develop habits of mind (i.e. values, beliefs) and behaviour as they learn to cope with the constraints and affordances of their contexts over time. He explains that culture '*carries the community's historically generated and collectively shared solutions to its new and inexperienced membership. It forms a framework for occupational learning*' (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 165). The following sections examine

aspects of school and departmental culture that the existing literature suggests are influential for teachers' learning.

The balance between autonomy and collaboration

Self-Determination Theory highlights three basic needs that can help to sustain human motivation: firstly, a sense of autonomy; secondly, a sense of competence; and thirdly, a sense of relatedness to others (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Ryan and Deci (2000b, p. 68) argue that fulfilment of these needs is '*essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being*'. School environments that encourage teacher competence, autonomy and collegial support have been identified by Lam et al. (2010) as fostering teacher motivation towards innovative teaching (see also Gagné & Deci, 2005 and OECD, 2005). This section will discuss the importance of a sense of autonomy and relatedness (the need for a sense of competence has been discussed above in relation to the term 'self-efficacy').

Their perceived degree of autonomy is known to influence pupils' decisions to participate in adaptive learning behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Similarly, the degree to which teachers perceive themselves to be in control of their professional development has been identified as an important predictor of self-efficacy (Roth et al., 2007) and of the impact of teacher learning on pupil outcomes (Walter & Briggs, 2012). The positive motivational impact of a sense of autonomy and ownership has been termed the 'endowment effect' and extensively studied in the field of human psychology (Hattie, 2012). Husman et al. (2014, p. 189) discuss the current '*accountability environment*' of teaching and argue that pressures to perform can lead to risk-averse practices and an accompanying '*perceived lack of autonomy among teachers*', which in turn '*may detract from intrinsic motivation for engaging in professional learning*'. This warning has been borne out in the results of recent NFER research (2020, p.14) that has found teachers in England report low levels of control over their PL goals and that teacher's control over the direction of their PL was strongly associated with job satisfaction and an intention to remain in the profession.

Although a sense of control and autonomy is important in building teachers' motivation and self-efficacy, this must be clearly distinguished from teacher isolation. Collegial support is connected to the concept of 'relatedness' (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), which describes an individual's need to feel a part of a team. The importance of collaborative learning opportunities in satisfying teachers' relatedness needs and avoiding isolation has been highlighted by multiple studies (Burn et al., 2010; Cordingley et al., 2015; Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014). One challenge when investigating collegiality and collaborative practices is the need for a clear, shared understanding of what counts as collaboration. Little (1990) describes a continuum of

working practices ranging from independence (simple aggregates of individuals working in proximity to each other) to interdependence (individuals working together towards clearly aligned goals). Collaboration is seen as distinct from cooperation, in which colleagues divide the work and later combine each of their efforts into the final outcome (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Collaborations are highly valued by teachers (Kelchtermans, 2006) but may be relatively rare in practice:

> *Collaborations may arise naturally out of the problems and circumstances that teachers experience in common, but often they appear contrived, inauthentic, grafted on, perched precariously (and often temporarily) on the margins of real work*. (Little, 1990, p. 510)

Hagger et al. (2011, p. 17) suggest that promoting collaborative development within departments can create '*stronger professional learning environments for all teachers, not just those new to the profession*'. Kardos and colleagues (2001) explored school PL cultures as seen through the eyes of 50 teachers in the first two years of their career in Massachusetts . They describe an integrated learning culture where veteran teachers guide and support new teachers whilst also inviting them to contribute their views and ideas. The development of '*organizational structures such as mentoring arrangements and curriculum-planning sessions*' (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 283) that all teachers are involved in were identified as key to the maintenance of integrated learning cultures. The collaborative learning cultures of different departments have also been explored by Childs et al. (2013), who highlighted the influence of the Head of Department and the importance of a shared space such as a team room. The study also suggests that the status of the subject within the school may influence departmental learning cultures and considering the chronic instability regarding the status of languages in England, it is regrettable that a languages department was not included in the research.

Many research studies have sought to pinpoint the characteristics of effective teacher collaboration on the assumption that groups of teachers working together in what are often described as 'Communities of Practice' (CoPs) or 'Professional Learning Communities' (PLCs), can facilitate each other's development. Bolam et al. (2005, p. 1) assert that '*effective' PLCs will demonstrate 'shared values and vision; collective responsibility for pupils' learning; collaboration focused on learning; individual and collective professional learning; reflective professional enquiry; openness, networks and partnerships; inclusive membership; mutual trust, respect and support*.' This characterisation of an effective learning community may, on first reading, appear unproblematic. However, the desirability of close-knit PLCs with shared beliefs and values has been called into question by others who are concerned that such communities are closed loops, vulnerable to the unchallenged propagation of pre-existing ideas (see for example Johnson, 2003; Timperley, 2008). Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) also raise concerns about Balkanised departments in secondary schools where teachers interact only with the colleagues with whom they work most closely.

The potential for teacher collaboration to be a double-edged sword can be related to the Goldilocks Principle in that too much collaboration can stifle innovation, too much isolation can inhibit teachers' development, but just enough collaboration leads to teachers receiving '*the stimulation and support from colleagues necessary for change*' (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 385).

Workload and stress

As Stoeber and Rennert (2008, p. 37) emphasise, '*being a teacher is stressful*'. NFER's recent report on England's teacher labour market found that a fifth of teachers '*feel tense about their job most or all of the time, compared to 13 per cent of similar professionals*' (Worth & Van den Brande, 2019, p. 5). Given that occupational wellbeing has been found to be the most important factor in overall wellbeing (Rath & Harter, 2010), work related stress can have serious consequences for teachers' professional work and also for their health.

It is well documented that teachers' maladaptive responses to workplace stresses can impede their continued professional development and learning (Collie et al., 2012; Friedman, 2000; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Rappaport (1991) has demonstrated that induced stress can temporarily contract a person's perspective of the future. It is thus hypothesised that stressed teachers may be less connected to their professional futures, making it more difficult for them to perceive the instrumentality of any current PL (Duggan, 2007). There is some evidence that suggests overall teacher stress levels reach their peak between November and February in the school year (Duggan, 2007; Moir & Stobbe, 1995). This may have implications for the timing of PL interventions, which may be most appropriate at the beginning and end of the academic year.

Work-related stresses and pressures may '*gradually erode professionals' belief in their ability to organize and implement the actions required to produce a given set of attainments*' (Friedman, 2000, p. 597) and this perceived gap between their expected and observed sense of professional self-efficacy leads to a lack of engagement in their professional work and development. The measurement of excess stress suffered by teachers is often conducted with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al., 1996), which identifies stress-induced exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy as key elements of burnout. It has been suggested that overall if job demands exceed resources (i.e. job control, innovative climate, leadership support, social support, information sharing) then burnout is likely to follow (Demerouti et al., 2001). Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2006) explored the Job Demands-Resources model with a large sample of Finnish primary and secondary teachers and found that it was able to explain 49% of the variance in burnout and 46% of the variance in teachers' organisational commitment. Friedman (1991,

2000) has identified four characteristics of a school culture that play a role in exacerbating teacher burnout: 1) an emphasis on measurement of performance by school leadership; 2) a lack of trust in the skills of teachers; 3) a school culture perceived as controlling; and 4) an inadequate physical environment. In relation to these risk factors, recent research supports the hypothesis that 'audit culture' is causing burnout in schools in England (R. Allen, 2018).

A poll by the National Education Union (NEU, 2019) found 18% of teachers expected to leave the profession in less than two years, citing workload (62%) and the accountability regime (40%) as the main reasons for their decision. A sense that workload is excessive has long been linked to performativity concerns, with teachers highlighting that additional workload is often created in an attempt to control and standardise practices. For example, onerous whole-school marking policies have been identified as both unsupported by available research and also detrimental to teachers' health (Elliott et al., 2016). Additional workload is also frequently required of educational professionals tasked with implementing various intervention strategies aimed at raising pupil attainment in key performance indicators such as Progress 8[6]. The Teachers' Union, NASUWT, now advocate for the implementation of interventions that not only consider the likely impact on learning but also the workload burden that it creates for teachers and school leaders (NASUWT, 2018).

As Sellen (2016, p. 50) explains, '*the current long-hours culture among teachers in England is restricting access to continuing professional development*'. An additional source of over-work and stress in teachers' lives is indirectly created by the undervaluing of teachers' pay over the last decade (Jerrim & Sims, 2019; Schultz, 2000). In order to supplement their income, a recent survey found that a quarter (24%) of secondary school teachers had taken on private tuition outside school in the previous two years (NFER Teacher Voice Survey, 2019), thus joining the gig economy alongside their full-time work in school. The likelihood of such overworked and underpaid teachers having the time and resources to engage meaningfully in PL to develop their practice is low.

School leadership for professional learning

School leaders have a significant influence on their organisation's culture for learning. Their influence stems from 1) the organisational learning environment that they promote; 2) their own attitudes and actions as a learner; 3) the decisions they take regarding the availability, finance and design of PL; and 4)

[6] Progress 8 is a secondary school accountability measure based on pupils' progress between Key Stage Two (scores in English and Mathematics) and GCSE (scores across eight subjects) (for more information see Department for Education, 2019b).

the way in which they evaluate and reward teachers' PL efforts and outcomes (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000).

Head teachers and HoDs can support their colleagues' self-efficacy and their sense of relatedness by creating organisational cultures of high expectations and high trust (O'Neill, 2013). In an era of high-stakes accountability for schools based on pupils' GCSE attainment, there is a temptation for Head teachers to filter this accountability pressure down to the level of individual teachers and to introduce surveillance measures to control and evaluate teachers' performance (Ball, 2000). However, there is accumulating evidence that such accountability systems can create additional stress and lead to an erosion of trust between the senior leadership team (SLT) and teaching colleagues, who may feel a need to conceal any perceived weaknesses rather than seek support (Friedman, 2000; Mockler, 2005; Zeichner, 2010).

Attitudes to learning from errors are shaped by the organisational culture and 'error climate' (Putz et al., 2013). In order to explore possible improvements in their practices, teachers need to feel enabled to try out new ideas in their classroom and so leaders need to create a sense of 'psychological safety' to enable their staff to take risks. In order to create optimal conditions for teacher learning, school leaders should aim to minimise the perverse impacts of intrusive accountability systems and to demonstrate trust in their staff, actively encouraging '*creativity, innovation and a degree of risk-taking*.' (The Sutton Trust, 2015, p. 3). The creation of a positive learning environment for teachers does not entail an outright rejection of accountability but rather the development of what has been described as '*intelligent professional responsibility*' amongst teachers, who hold each other to high standards in their work with young people (a key idea here is that *responsibility* is chosen whereas *accountability* is imposed) (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018, p.165). Governments creating accountability policies '*should work from a position of respect for local values and commitments*' (Cochran-Smith et al., 2017, p. 583) and ensure that performance measures are sensitive to the structural inequalities in the school system so that a systematic reproduction of disadvantage is avoided.

In the current accountability context in England, SLT can avoid '*the accountability tail wagging the educational dog*' (O'Neill, 2013, p. 9) by resisting practices that make teachers feel unnecessarily judged or undermined. School leaders may not always recognise that progression in language learning does not follow the same pattern as progression in mathematics and English and that the Progress 8 indicator of pupils outcomes in languages is therefore deeply flawed (relying as it does on mathematics and English scores from Key Stage 2) (Hutchings, 2015). Additionally, problematic discrepancies in the expectations

of pupil performance at GCSE in languages compared to other subjects have been recognised (Ofqual, 2014).

Finally, school leaders who are well-informed about the research into the features of effective PL for teachers are, quite obviously, better-positioned to develop conditions for such learning within their school communities (Leithwood, 2016). It may be that school leaders themselves need PL opportunities to help them to understand the evidence about what effective PL looks like and how to foster well-integrated and self-sustaining PL communities in their institutions!

Contexts of relative, self-perpetuating privilege or disadvantage

Context is often under-theorised in discussions of teacher learning (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017) but, as the discussion in the sections above demonstrates, contextual factors affecting teachers' working conditions can have far-reaching implications for teachers' professional lives, including their PL. Drawing on Bourdieu (1986), Boylan et al. (2018) highlight the influencing role played by a school's relative systemic position of privilege or disadvantage on the thoughts and activities of colleagues within each institution: they assert that economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital held by schools and departments can all influence the ways in which and the extent to which teachers engage in activities to develop their practice.

The various types of 'capital' identified by Boylan et al. (2018) are closely interrelated, with changes in one form of capital exerting influence on the others. From a symbolic capital perspective, the most influential designations held by schools in England are headline measures of their pupils' attainment at GCSE (such as Progress 8) and their Ofsted grading[7], both of which are made publicly available to parents/carers who may use them to make choices about which school is best for their child (Hutchings, 2015). In England's current quasi-market of secondary schooling, accreditation with the highest Ofsted grade enables schools to accrue increased economic capital as a result of their symbolic prestige. For example, only 'outstanding' schools are eligible to apply to become designated Teaching Schools, which are given a remit to organise school-led initial teacher training and opportunities to bid to take the lead on PL initiatives (Coldron et al., 2014). These activities provide the conditions for the development and strengthening of learning networks amongst the school's staff and colleagues in associated institutions, thus building social capital. 'Outstanding' schools are also able to take advantage of local markets for

[7] In England, schools are inspected at regular intervals by Office for Standards in Education (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted) and they are subsequently classified as either: outstanding; good; requires improvement; or inadequate.

school-improvement services, which are often purchased by schools designated 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' (Greany & Higham, 2018). Additionally, between 2012 and 2019, 'outstanding' schools also enjoyed an exemption from routine Ofsted inspections, freeing them from the bureaucracy, stress and performance anxiety that routine inspection brings. This means that staff in 'outstanding' schools may have greater capacity to engage in innovation and experimentation in their classrooms, creating opportunities for PL, whilst their colleagues in contexts of high surveillance by Ofsted may instead experience significant performativity pressures and reduced autonomy. Further, due to the (mal-)functioning of the education marketplace, Greany and Higham (2018) found that affluent parents made choices that resulted in 'outstanding' schools becoming '*relatively less deprived during the period 2010–15, while the reverse was true for schools judged as Requires Improvement or Inadequate*' (2018, p. 67). It is well-understood that levels of socio-economic status are inversely related to attainment (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018b) and so yet again, the symbolic designation of 'outstanding' may indirectly lead to increasing levels of advantage for the high-performing school, and increasing disadvantage for its lower-performing neighbours.

Within a school languages department, the extent to which capacity exists to take pupils out on school trips abroad represents one element of inequality in economic and cultural capital across contexts with implications for PL: trips offer L2 teachers an opportunity to practise their language skills with native speakers (Valmori & De Costa, 2016). However, British Council reports have noted a sharp national decrease in the organisation of trips abroad over the last 5 years, with funding, workload, safeguarding concerns and red tape amongst the possible explanatory factors (Tinsley, 2019). The schools most affected by this decline are schools in the state sector with a less affluent intake of pupils. Another example is that of the '*symbolic prestige associated with the teaching of advanced level work*' (Coldron et al., 2014, p. 395). Schools with a high-performing sixth form find it easier to recruit highly qualified teachers and those teachers benefit in turn from opportunities to teach their subject at a high level, further consolidating their cultural and linguistic knowledge. Additionally, associations with institutions of high prestige, such as school partnerships with universities (i.e. to deliver ITE or as research sites) can open up opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas and supporting teachers' sense of competence and relatedness in their profession (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

2.9 Conclusion

This review has touched on a wide range of concepts that must be understood and accounted for in any study of teacher learning. I began the review with the following four questions in mind:

1. What knowledge and skills do languages teachers need?
2. What constitutes effective professional learning for teachers?
3. What are languages teachers' current professional learning needs and experiences?
4. What factors are known to affect teachers' access to and engagement in effective professional learning?

In my exploration of the above questions I found evidence in the literature of quite different understandings of the nature of teaching, the nature of teacher professionalism, and the purposes of languages education. These underpinning understandings shape the knowledge and skills that L2 teachers might be considered to require in order to be effective. In this study I follow authors such as Winch et al. (2013) and Coe et al. (2014) in adopting the position that effective pedagogy involves the teacher's engagement in complex and ethically charged 'online' professional decision making, drawing on expertly integrated technical, practical and theoretical knowledge and evaluating the appropriateness of a range of possible methods at any given point in time.

The participants in this study teach in a context that defines the purposes of L2 study in terms of developing both intercultural understanding and communicative competence. However, culture does not feature prominently in national assessments of L2 study, which tend to focus on grammatical accuracy and communicative competence in listening, reading, writing and speaking. Languages teachers in England currently face a range of challenges in their work. Rapid changes to the assessment structure and content of high-stakes examinations have created a need for teachers to develop knowledge and understanding of new assessment regimes. Teachers also find themselves facing a language learning crisis in England, with uptake for GCSE and A Level language qualifications at a low ebb and well-documented issues of pupil disengagement with the process of language learning, exacerbated in some cases by populist anti-European sentiment and isolationist politics. There is an urgent need for L2 teachers to be supported in the development and implementation of engaging and motivating language curricula in their schools that enable pupils to reach higher levels of mastery in the language.

Effective PL for teachers is often understood as learning that leads to improved pupil outcomes in terms of academic attainment. I accept that the aim of much PL activity is to ultimately improve pupil outcomes, and these should therefore logically and intuitively be considered in evaluations of PL. However, I also agree with Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) that whatever is valued in education should count as a salient outcome of teachers' PL and a narrow focus on pupil attainment in standardised tests is unjustified. The difficult task of establishing causal links between teachers' engagement in PL, changes

in their cognitions and their practices, and impact on salient outcomes is frequently discussed in the literature and I sought to explore this issue in more detail within my own study. International research seeking to isolate the hallmarks of PL that is effective in impacting pupil outcomes highlights the importance of access to external expertise; sustained engagement with new ideas; and formative assessment of teachers' PL with a focus on pupil outcomes. PL may also be most effective when it is focussed on subject-specific development. This study's focus on the PL of L2 teachers addresses a gap in the literature (most existing research into subject-specific PL is focussed on Mathematics, English and Science), enabling close consideration of the aspects of subject-specific development that are most valued by teachers on the ground.

Finally, I turned to the question about the factors that make a difference in teachers' engagement in PL. At an individual level, issues of motivation are frequently identified in the literature as having a significant impact on teachers' pursuit of and sustained engagement in PL activities. Each teachers' sense of self-efficacy for teaching, goal orientations and commitment to their profession will have reciprocally influencing effects on that teacher's motivation to pursue activities to enhance their practice. However, it is also clear from the literature that teacher learning cannot be studied as an isolated construct at the level of each individual teacher: teachers work in department teams within school communities that each have norms of working and interacting. The '*enveloping change environment*' (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002, p.950) that a teacher finds themselves within will influence what is possible and probable in terms of their learning. Different communities have different levels of access to tools, expertise and resources such as time and funding. They also have different social values, norms and habits of mind, different levels of collective self-efficacy, different development goals and different attitudes to PL. Local, national and international education policies and discourses shape conditions for teacher learning as they are interpreted and re-interpreted at school, departmental and individual level. Understanding the processes that are involved in effective teacher learning necessitates an understanding of these interpretations and enactments of policy as well as the complex, reciprocal influences of the values and motivations espoused by individual teachers, departments, schools, and communities.

The review of the literature has highlighted the need for a study that looks in detail at the learning experiences and priorities of L2 teachers at all stages of their careers. Methodological issues highlighted in previous research that has sought to explore the processes of teacher learning have informed the design of this study, which sought to consider a very broad range of variables that the review highlighted

as having important influences on teacher learning. The methods adopted in this study are described in detail in the following chapter.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an overview of the theoretical framing of the study and an explanation of the research questions pursued. I then briefly outline the overall research design with the aim of providing the reader with a clear sense of the study's structure. This is followed by sections describing in detail the decisions that shaped my approach to sample selection, timescale and research instruments, along with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the approach taken. Ethical considerations pertaining to the methods employed are discussed at the end of each of sections 3.4 – 3.7.

3.1 Observational Design and Theoretical Framing

The initial literature review has indicated that further subject-specific research into the nature and impact of teachers' PL experiences is needed. The lack of current knowledge and understanding about L2 teachers' in-service learning led me to design an exploratory, observational study to build up a richer understanding of the learning needs of L2 teachers in England and the multiple factors that impact teachers' access to and engagement in effective PL.

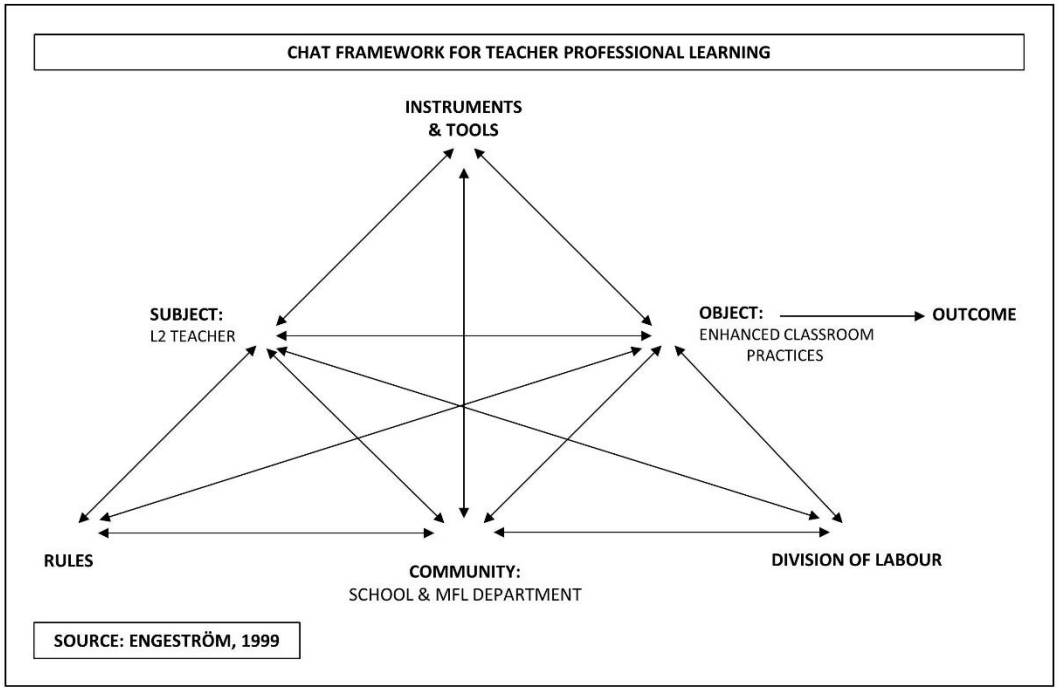
The study is conducted within a critical realist tradition, which acknowledges that both the social and physical worlds are experienced, measured and interpreted imperfectly and subjectively by human agents. The knowledge generated from this research is therefore understood as contributing to an ongoing process in which an understanding of the mechanisms of teachers' PL will be continually reconstructed and refined.

Throughout this research, various theories of teacher learning (explored in the previous chapter) are used to inform an understanding of factors underlying teachers' access to and engagement in effective PL. The phenomena captured within these theories are considered at both an individual and a collective level. This is because rather than looking at each teacher in isolation, the study aims to understand the interaction between individuals and their contexts, recognising the fact that a sense of history, place and community has an impact on the activities that individuals engage in at any moment. In this respect, the study design is informed, although not driven by, cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 1999), a philosophical position which derives from the work of Vygotsky (1978) and shares his understanding of learning as a social activity. Wardekker (2010, p.241) advises education researchers to use the ideas of CHAT as '*more a way of thinking than a coherent whole, a paradigm rather than a theory*'. In this spirit, Freeman (2002a, p. 12) describes CHAT-informed research into teacher learning as research that takes into account '*how schools as socio-cultural environments mediate and transform*

what and how teachers learn' and recognises human activity as both a product and creator of 'historically sedimented cultural practices' within organisations (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015, p. 5).

From a CHAT perspective, this study investigates an activity system in which the subjects are L2 teachers, nested within school and departmental communities, and the object of the activity is the enhancement of teaching practices via PL. Engeström (1999) positions the object of the activity as being under constant re-imagining as a product of the reciprocal influences of the subject, the mediating artefacts (tools), the rules, the community and the division of labour (see Figure 3.1). A shared understanding of this object is obscured by what Leont'ev (2009) refers to as 'object motive': Individual teachers will have diverse underlying motivations for their engagement in the activity of PL that may often be unacknowledged and sometimes contradictory. For this reason, the current study aims to draw out teachers' own conceptualisations of the purpose of their PL and the factors affecting it.

Figure 3.1: CHAT framework for teacher professional learning



Drawing on intervention research that has made use of successive iterations of CHAT models, Ellis and McNicholl (2015, p. 12) explain that as teachers engage in an activity system, there will be many contradictions to be '*overcome and broken away from in order for new forms of the activity to emerge and for human agency to lead human development*'. These contradictions arise as the rules, tools and communities in different institutional settings exert their influence on human activity. The CHAT framework has been found to be particularly useful in intervention studies, as these studies include the

introduction of a disruption or innovation to the established activity system (Edwards, 2007; McNicholl, 2013). The current study spans several different contexts and is observational in design, which I believe makes a comprehensive adoption of the CHAT framework unsuitable. However, the relevance of the interdependent and reciprocal influences of the CHAT constructs to developing an understanding of teacher learning is acknowledged and throughout the study I attempt to do justice to this complexity.

Engeström's (1999) model (as conveyed in Figure 3.1) has been criticised for its failure to afford insight into the cognitive and affective processes related to an individual's learning (Ellis et al., 2010). For this reason, I also draw on Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) model of teacher growth (discussed in section 2.3) to provide a structure within which to explore processes of change in individual teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs.

The importance of developing a situated understanding when studying teacher learning has informed my research questions and has shaped my data collection methods. I began my study with the collection of quantitative data, after which I prioritised the collection of rich, qualitative data in order to build a picture of the many individual and contextual factors that influence the learning process. This approach has allowed me to explore common themes and consider the typicality of my richly contextualised case studies as well as being able to identify some of the processes by which teachers believe their learning has resulted in changes to pupil experiences and outcomes.

3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Given that a specific focus on the PL of L2 teachers England is an under-explored area of research, I decided that the study should begin with an investigation of L2 teachers' own views on their current learning needs and priorities (see 3.3 for information about the L2 teacher participants). I wanted to understand teachers' working contexts and the ways in which these contexts may have shaped the nature and quality of L2 teachers' PL experiences. I considered it important to gather teachers' assessments of the value and impact of their PL, but I also felt that teachers' own impressions should be triangulated with other measures of impact, including pupils' experiences of L2 learning. I selected Cordingley et al.'s (2015) collation of the characteristics of effective PL from robust reviews of evidence around the world as a key framework to assist with evaluating the quality of the PL reported by my participants. The research questions are detailed below.

Research Questions

1: What are the PL needs and priorities of L2 teachers?

2: What are the main characteristics of L2 teachers' recent PL activities?

3: To what extent are the characteristics of effective PL practices (as defined by Cordingley et al., 2015) present in L2 teachers' descriptions of their valued PL activities?

4: What factors facilitate or constrain L2 teachers' engagement in PL activities?

5: What perceived effect, if any, does L2 teachers' engagement in PL that they regard as 'valuable' have on

a) teachers' beliefs?

b) teachers' classroom practices?

c) pupil experiences and outcomes?

d) teachers' intentions to remain in the profession?

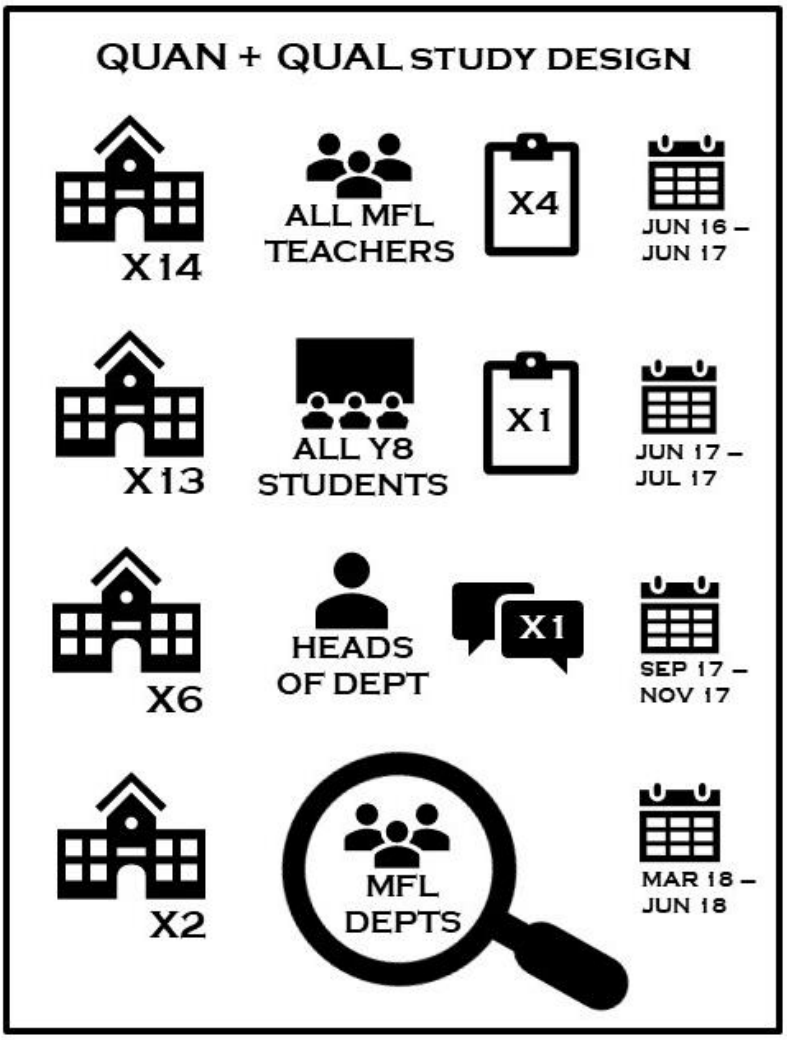
Hypotheses

The above research questions were formulated in response to the literature and they enable an exploration of the following four key hypotheses:

- that a majority of L2 teachers would be positively motivated to develop their practice but that there would be a range of constraining factors including time, assessment pressures and access issues related to school finances (based on the findings of Board and Tinsley (2016)).
- that the PL activities rated highly by L2 teachers would be likely to exemplify some of the characteristics that Cordingley et al. (2015) identify as desirable (such as subject-specificity; access to external expertise; learning sustained over time etc.).
- that a perceived, positive transformation of teachers' beliefs, classroom practices and subsequently pupil experiences and outcomes would be most likely to occur when teachers reported engaging in 'effective' PL (as characterised by Cordingley et al., 2015).
- that teachers who accessed effective PL would be more likely to report higher self-efficacy for L2 teaching and a long-term commitment to the teaching profession (Duggan, 2007).

3.3 Overview of Study Design

Figure 3.2: Overview of the study



This investigation of teacher learning was designed with a focus on '*explanatory causality and the reciprocal influences*' of the teacher, the PL activity and the school context (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 1). I chose a two-phase, explanatory sequential design as described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 215) to reflect the socio-cultural lens adopted throughout this study: teachers are not viewed in isolation but their learning is instead understood to be reciprocally affected by their socially- and historically-influenced institutional contexts (for an overview of the study see Figure 3.2). I decided to begin by collecting quantitative questionnaire data, enabling the efficient gathering of a large amount of data from a diverse range of L2 teachers. I complemented this with rich, qualitative interview and observation data that is appropriate for the investigation of a complex and multi-layered social phenomenon such as teacher learning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The first phase of the study was conducted over a full

calendar year in order to go some way towards addressing the current lack of longitudinal studies on teacher learning (Opfer, 2014). The second phase of the study involved detailed case-studies, which are advocated by Yin (2014) as a method that offers explanatory insight into social phenomena.

In the first year, a purposive sample of L2 teachers working in state school languages departments in England was identified (see section 3.3). The teachers completed four waves of online surveys (in July, November, March and June) generating both qualitative and quantitative data (section 3.4). This was followed up in the second year by interviews with Heads of Department (HoDs) (section 3.6) and by two in-depth case studies of MFL departments (section 3.7).

The study was also designed to address the frequently missing link between teacher education research and pupil outcomes (Sleeter, 2014). A key innovation in the study is the design and employment of a pupil perception questionnaire to enable triangulation with teachers' self-report data (section 3.5). Table 3.1 details the data collected and used to answer each of the research questions.

Table 3.1: Data collection instruments mapped against research questions

RESEARCH QUESTION	Teacher Questionnaires 1-4 (JUL 2016-JUN 2017)	HoD Interviews (OCT-DEC 2017)	Year 8 Pupil Perception Survey (JUN 2017)	Case study observations (MAR-JUN 2018)	Case study interviews (MAR-JUN 2018)	GCSE languages examination results (AUG 2017)
1: What are the professional learning needs and priorities of L2 teachers?	✓	✓				
2: What are the main characteristics of L2 teachers' recent PL activities?	✓	✓				
3: To what extent are the characteristics of effective PL practices (as defined by Cordingley et al., 2015) present in L2 teachers' descriptions of their valued PL activities?	✓	✓				
4: What factors facilitate or constrain L2 teachers' engagement in PL activities?	✓	✓		✓	✓	
5: What perceived effect, if any, does L2 teachers' engagement in PL that they regard as 'valuable' have on						
a) teachers' beliefs?	✓	✓		✓	✓	
b) teachers' classroom practices?	✓	✓		✓	✓	
c) pupil experiences and outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
d) teachers' intentions to remain in the profession?	✓	✓		✓	✓	

3.4 Participants

Educational Phase

I decided to focus on secondary school L2 teachers only. Due to recent policy changes requiring all primary schools to deliver a language other than English from 2014 onwards (Department for Education, 2013), many primary L2 practitioners are delivering language lessons with limited subject knowledge and without the support of a subject department (see Tinsley & Board, 2016). It can therefore be assumed that the PL needs and priorities of primary teachers may differ greatly from those of their colleagues teaching at secondary level. Limiting the sample to those teaching in secondary settings thus reduced the number of additional variables within a study that was already complex and sought to delve into context-related factors affecting teacher learning.

School Type

In order to be included in the study sample, schools were required to be a) state-funded and b) secondary schools. The sample included several academies (publicly funded independent state schools with the freedom to determine staff pay and conditions, and their own curriculum). Academies were included because this type of school governance structure has become the dominant model in England, accounting for 72% of all secondary schools (Department for Education & National Audit Office, 2018). Private schools were omitted from the sample because L2 teachers in these settings are subject to different contextual pressures and they are exempt from some of the external policy pressures which apply in the state sector. For example, private schools are not subject to inspections by Ofsted and the newly published standard for PL referred to in this study (Department for Education, 2016) does not apply to these schools.

Access

For pragmatic reasons I chose to focus on the schools linked to one Higher Education Institution via an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnership. The University of Oxford, Department of Education maintains a partnership with 47 local secondary schools and as a tutor on the ITE programme I have easy access to these settings. It was also important that departments committed to the study for a full year and the schools' proximity to and links with the university facilitated this commitment.

Final Sample and Limitations

Of the 47 schools approached, 14 agreed to participate in the study. This is a positive take-up given the nature of the demands that I made on participants over the course of the study. However, the possibility of a non-response bias in my data must be acknowledged as some of the schools that chose not to participate in the study may have done so due to factors such as the level of teacher stress, which is known to have an impact on constructs key to my study such as teacher motivation and PL. It is noteworthy that all 14 schools in the final sample are rated by Ofsted as 'outstanding' or 'good', meaning that I did not collect data about the PL of teachers in settings rated by Ofsted as in need of improvement. Whilst this is a limitation of the study, there are some advantages to this self-selection in schools: I was able to investigate a range of PL practices, which have not been linked exclusively to whole-organisation Ofsted concerns. Also, since the study focuses on schools that are performing well, some of the contextual barriers to participation in PL that were identified might be assumed to exist in an intensified form in schools that are already under pressure due to performance concerns raised by Ofsted.

One significant limitation arising from the sampling approach that I took is the fact that limiting the study to these local schools restricts the extent to which the sample can be seen to be representative of the full range of schools in England. This risk is mitigated to an extent by the fact that the final 14 schools in the sample vary greatly across a range of measures, encapsulating some of the wider diversity to be found across the UK at the time of the study (see Table 3.2). Three of the study schools were located in villages, eight in market towns and three were inner-city schools.

Table 3.2: Demographic data for the schools in the sample

	Study Sample Ranges (2016)	**National Average for all state-funded secondary schools in England (2016)**
Total number of pupils	588 – 2086	990
Relative performance at GCSE (% achieved EBacc measure)	14% - 43%	22.9%
% of pupils classified as PPG (being in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant)	8.7% - 33.3%	29.4%
% of pupils classified as SEND (having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)	0.5% - 3.8%	1.8%
% of pupils classified as EAL (speaking English as an Additional Language)	1% - 32.1%	15%

For full details of the sample schools and how they compare to National Averages in these measures, see Appendix A: Characteristics of the 14 schools in the sample.

3.5 Data Collection Year 1: Teacher Questionnaires

I intended to collect data regarding L2 teachers' PL needs, experiences and motives from whole school departments of L2 teachers, from those who were newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to Heads of Department (HoDs). In order to achieve this, the first phase of the study began with a cross-sectional online questionnaire for all L2 teacher participants (see Appendix B: Teacher Questionnaire 1) and an additional online questionnaire for the Head of each MFL department to complete (see Appendix C: Head of Department Questionnaire 1). Whilst acknowledging the limitations of the questionnaire method in relation to its lack of interactive flexibility, I chose this approach as an efficient method to collect a wide range of empirical data with limited resources (Gillham, 2000). This first phase of data collection was intended to inform the design of a second, more in-depth qualitative phase of data collection and so at this stage I prioritised methods that could offer a rapid overview of the key issues. Questionnaires are a data collection method of which all have experience (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010) and this means that little explanation is needed to enable teachers to participate. An online questionnaire format made it possible to collect data within the same timeframe from multiple school sites. It also enabled the rapid collection of both quantitative data, that could be used to inform statistical analyses, and qualitative data, that could help to explain the patterns emerging.

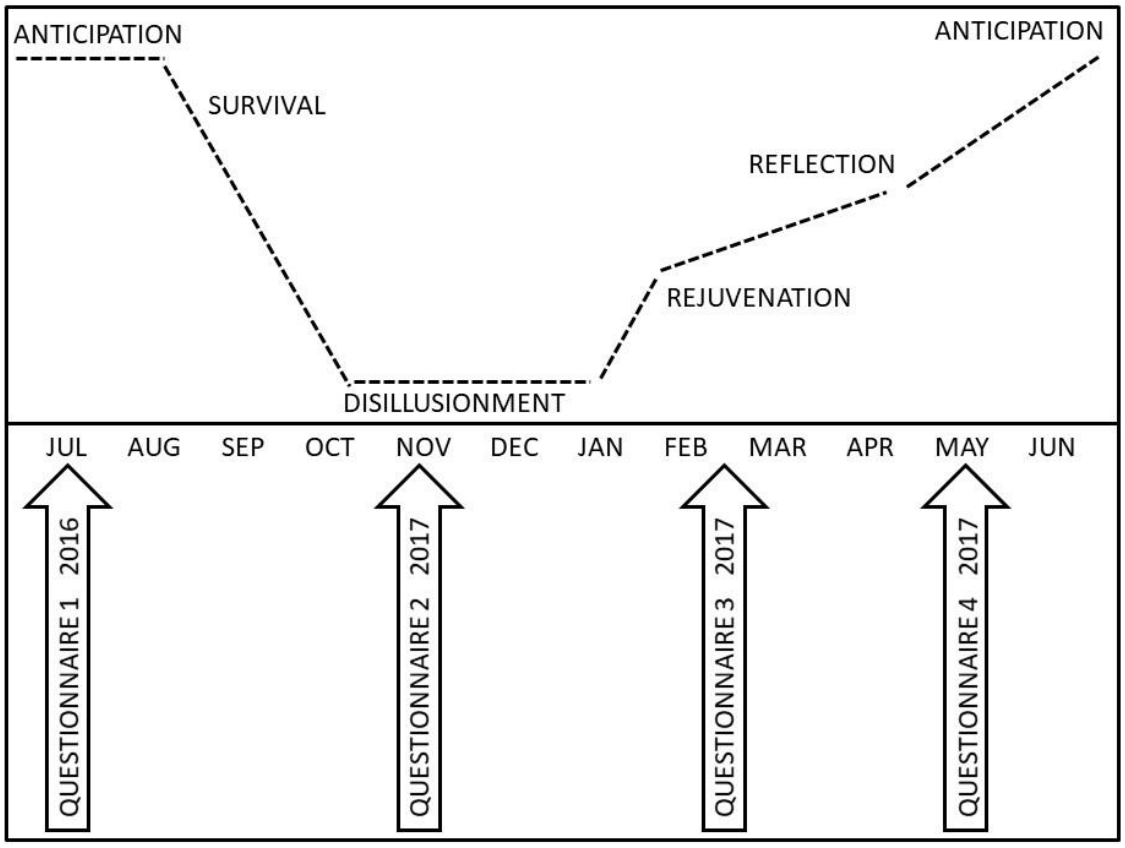
Piloting

To test the questionnaire design, I piloted it with four L2 teachers in a state grammar school in London. This was a convenience sample of L2 teachers, one of whom is a personal acquaintance. The four teachers were all members of the same department, with roles ranging from Head of Languages to NQT. The questionnaire was subsequently deemed fit for purpose in terms of being appropriate for cross-sections of language teacher communities in schools. Following these teachers' feedback some minor revisions were made to ensure clarity in the wording of the questions. Duggan (2007) underlines the importance of a streamlined questionnaire for busy teachers and this was also raised during the piloting of the teacher questionnaire. To address this point, I changed some of the free-text questions and constructed more quick-response formats wherever possible (for example, I made extensive use of Likert scales). However, some of the more time-consuming open-response questions were retained when I felt that the richness and exploratory nature of the data collection would otherwise be compromised.

Administration

In July 2016 links to initial electronic questionnaires were emailed to all 80 L2 teachers in the 14 participating languages departments. Shorter follow-up online questionnaires were then distributed in November 2016, March 2017 and June 2017 (see Figure 3.3). These time points were chosen because they are thought to represent key points in the fluctuations of teachers' stress and motivation levels during a typical academic year: '*teachers take a dip in motivation in November, and motivation does recover in February, although not to the original August levels*' (Duggan, 2007, p.67). It is, however, acknowledged that studies into the patterns of pressures over the academic year have generalised teachers' experiences and that the stress and motivation levels of teachers with specific responsibilities may not always fit this model. For example, a Head of Sixth Form may be under great pressure during the Autumn term (Terms 1 and 2 of a 6-term year) when assisting pupils with their applications to UK universities. L2 teachers may also experience greater stress than other teachers during the oral examination window, which falls earlier in the year than the majority of GCSE and A Level examinations in other subjects. This may impact upon the February 'rejuvenation' period identified by Moir (1999).

Figure 3.3: Timescale for the teacher questionnaires (adapted from Moir, 1999)



For tracking purposes, questionnaire links were personalised, and reminder emails were sent to encourage completion. However, teachers were reassured that all data would later be anonymised. The fact that I am known to several of these departments through my role as a Curriculum Tutor within the ITE partnership no doubt encouraged completion of the questionnaires (but is also fraught with ethical implications to be taken into consideration – see Ethical Considerations below). I asked the 14 Heads of Department to complete a short additional questionnaire in July 2016 and March 2017 that included questions about the make-up of the department and the leadership style adopted.

Participant Details

Out of a possible 80 respondents across 14 different schools, between 45 and 54 MFL teachers participated in each wave of the teacher questionnaire (see Table 3.3), with a total of 65 separate individuals participating in the study. As a proportion of the possible respondents, 72% of the female and 50% of the male teachers participated in the questionnaire at Time 1. Their experience of teaching MFL ranged from 1 year to 15 or more years (see Table 3.4 for an overview of the proportions of teachers at each career stage) and the combined average years of experience within each languages department ranged from 4.6 to 12.5 (see Table 3.5). The schools in the sample offered one or more of the following three European languages: French, German and Spanish. The teachers' level of expertise in these languages is detailed in Table 3.6.

Table 3.3: Demographic information for teacher questionnaires

	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS AND GENDER ACROSS THE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES													
	L2 teachers in each department (June 2016)		Questionnaire 1		L2 teachers in each department (Sep 2016)		Questionnaire 2		Questionnaire 3		Questionnaire 4		L2 teachers who completed all 4 questionnaires	
	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂
Aspen	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Birch	11	0	11	0	11	0	8	0	8	0	8	0	6	0
Cedar	4	1	3	1	4	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1
Douglas-Fir	9	1	5	0	9	1	5	0	5	0	4	0	2	0
Elm*	6	0	3	0	5	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	2	0
Fig	6	1	4	1	6	1	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0
Ginkgo	6	2	5	2	6	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2
Hawthorn*	3	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	3	0	3	0	2	0
Ivy	5	0	3	0	5	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
Juniper*	4	3	1	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Katsura*	3	0	2	0	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	0
Laurel	4	1	4	0	4	1	4	0	3	0	4	0	3	0
Mahogany	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Nutmeg*	3	2	3	0	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	3	0
All schools (Total)	67	12	48	6	69	11	43	5	38	7	42	73	29	3
	80		54		81		48		45		49		32	

* Highlighted schools underwent a change in MFL staff between June and September 2016

Table 3.4: Years of experience of L2 teaching at Time 1

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF L2 TEACHING AT TIME 1		
Experience	**Number of respondents**	**Percentage of respondents***
EARLY CAREER (1-5 Yrs experience)	**12**	**22%**
MID CAREER (6-10 Yrs experience)	**13**	**24%**
EXPERIENCED (11+ Yrs experience)	**29**	**54%**

*percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

Table 3.5: Teaching experience within each languages department at Time 1

MEAN COMBINED YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE WITHIN EACH LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT AT TIME 1	
Aspen	**9**
Birch	**9.5**
Cedar	**13**
Douglas-Fir	**11.6**
Elm	**9.7**
Fig	**11.6**
Ginkgo	**8.1**
Hawthorn	**7**
Ivy	**11.3**
Juniper	**15**
Katsura	**12.5**
Laurel	**12**
Mahogany	**12**
Nutmeg	**4.6**
All respondents	**10.2**

Table 3.6: Participants' levels of competence in each language taught

	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE IN EACH LANGUAGE			
	Native Speaker	**Confident to teach to A Level**	**Confident to teach to GCSE**	**Confident to teach to Key Stage Three**
French	14	38	7	6
German	1	23	11	11
Spanish	2	11	2	17
Totals	17	72	20	34

The Contents of the Teacher Questionnaires

In the first questionnaire, teachers were asked for demographic and administrative information relating to the year groups and languages that they were teaching; their gender; current employment status; level of education; other professional roles and responsibilities; the length of time they had been teaching languages in their current school and in their career to date. In each of the questionnaires, teachers were also asked to rate their confidence that they would continue teaching languages in a UK state school in the next two years. The inclusion of this question sought to link intention to remain in the profession with factors affecting teacher learning and I was able to compare this data with actual teacher retention figures.

Owen (2015) makes a strong argument for the inclusion and consideration of teacher perceptions of pupil impact when evaluating PL activities. Each questionnaire therefore asked teachers to describe their recent PL experiences and to consider the impact of their PL across the domains of their own knowledge/skills, their classroom practice, their pupils, and any wider impact on colleagues/pupils within the school.

A section of each questionnaire focussed on the participants' perceptions of their individual motivation and self-efficacy as a teacher of L2. The complexity of the constructs under investigation represented a major challenge to be tackled in the research design. For example, in seeking to investigate the ways in which communities of languages teachers might shape their members' motivations towards professional learning, individual measures of self-efficacy and motivation towards PL were accompanied by collective (i.e. departmental) measures of these constructs. When changing the unit of analysis in this way, an associated risk of amplification of error must be acknowledged.

Throughout the questionnaires, teachers were asked firstly for their personal thoughts with an open-ended question and these sections were later followed by an opportunity for teachers to engage with closed item responses drawn from the literature. This allowed for each questionnaire to collect both unprompted qualitative data and categorised, quantitative data for comparison with previous research. Where possible, established measures were included to maximise the validity and reliability of the instruments used and to increase the comparability of the results (after initial piloting to ensure suitability for use in the context of UK languages departments):

- Perceived self-efficacy for teaching was assessed via the short-form Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) as used by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). Minor amendments were made to the scale to fit the UK context and to make some questions specific to L2 teaching rather than teaching in general. Three factors on the TSES have been shown to account for 75% of the variance in teaching self-efficacy: instruction, management, and engagement. The internal reliability for the short-form scale has been demonstrated at .94. (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001)
- Perceived collective teacher efficacy for teaching languages was gauged via an adapted version of the Collective Efficacy Scale (Goddard et al., 2000)
- Perceived levels of stress were measured via a much-reduced version of Fimian's Teacher Stress Inventory (1984)
- Teachers' connectedness to their professional futures was gauged using a reduced version of the Future Time Perspective Scale employed by Husman and Shell (2008).

Identifying L2 teachers' subject-specific development needs and priorities

Following Ur's (2013, p. 474) suggestion that L2 teachers should develop 'situated methodologies' drawing on research-informed principles, a set of principles drawn from the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature was included in the questionnaire. Teachers were asked to consider the eight principles (Macaro et al., 2016) in order to ascertain to what extent they felt their current practice aligned with SLA research principles and also whether they regarded any of these principles as priorities for the development of their practice. It is important to acknowledge that, ideally, teacher's own perceptions would have been combined with structured observations of their classroom practice in order to strengthen the reliability and validity of the data collected since, as Williams, Mercer and Ryan (2015, p. 45) note, '*our sense of self may not necessarily be an accurate reflection of our actual abilities or performance*'. However, I did not have the resources to observe so many teachers across multiple sites and so I have relied on teachers' self-reports.

Table 3.7 details the eight principles for effective teaching and learning of an L2 that were included in this questionnaire. These principles were developed by Macaro et al. (2016) and I chose them because they have been recently and extensively researched and developed with 241 L2 teachers during the Professional Development Consortium in Modern Foreign Languages (PDCinMFL) project. Other sets of research-informed principles were considered, including those compiled by Ellis (2005), Nation and Macalister (2010) and Smith and Conti (2016). However, Macaro et al. (2016) include metacognitive approaches to learning that are omitted in Ellis (2005) and that have been demonstrated to be key to L2 development (Rose et al., 2018). Another advantage of Macaro et al.'s (2016) principles is that teachers are free to enact them in any way they see fit, whereas the principles presented by Smith and Conti (2016) are accompanied by specific methodological suggestions, which could be interpreted as prescriptive. It is regrettable that Macaro et al. (2016) do not include the development of intercultural understanding within their principles. However, overall, I believe Macaro et al.'s (2016) principles are clearly communicated whilst affording L2 teachers some freedom in their adaptation of each principle for their own context.

Table 3.7: Eight Research-informed principles for languages teaching from Macaro et al., 2016

LANGUAGE TEACHING PRINCIPLE (source: Macaro et al., 2016)
1 ORAL INTERACTION: Target language input is essential for learning, but it can be made more effective if learners are encouraged to check the understanding of it by asking questions of what the teacher is saying or asking the teacher to repeat.
2 ORAL INTERACTION: Learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things that they are not sure are correct
3 ORAL INTERACTION: Less spontaneous oral interaction should nevertheless be of high quality. By high quality we mean including substantial student turns; adequate wait time; cognitive challenge [e.g. by requiring a verb phrase or subordinate clause]; appropriate teacher feedback; nominating students rather than waiting for volunteers.
4 ORAL INTERACTION: Students should be explicitly taught strategies to use when faced with communication difficulties. These should be used alongside techniques for developing their oral fluency, such as repetition of tasks and chunking of pre-learnt words into whole phrases.
5 READING AND LISTENING: Learners need to be taught how to access a greater range of more challenging spoken and written texts, through explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and in the relationship between the written and spoken forms.
6 STRATEGIC APPROACHES: Learners need to develop their self- confidence and see the link between the strategies they use and how successful they are on a task.
7 WRITING: Writing should be developed as a skill in its own right, not just as a consolidation of other language skills. For this to happen students should frequently write using the language and strategies they already know rather than resources provided by the teacher (e.g. textbooks, writing frames, dictionaries, etc.)
8 SKILLS FOCUS: The principal focus of pedagogy should be on developing language skills and therefore the teaching of linguistic knowledge (knowledge of grammar and vocabulary) should act in the service of skill development not as an end in itself.

Additional items included within the Head of Department questionnaire

In addition to the items included in the teacher questionnaire (discussed above), Heads of Department (HoDs) were asked to report on the administration of the L2 teaching in their school, including the amount of timetabled lesson time for each language and the options process for pupils who are choosing their GCSE subjects. This information gives some insight into the relative status and success of the languages department within the school. HoDs were given space to comment on their answers and prompted to identify possible facilitators and/or barriers to increased curriculum time and opportunities for pupils to opt for language study at GCSE and beyond.

The HoD version of the questionnaire also included questions that were drawn from a list of recommended self-assessment criteria for HoDs (reported in OfSTED, 2002). This report found that in

departments with consistently good teaching some common features included not only excellent leadership, systematic evaluation of teaching and collaborative professional development practices but also access to resources and '*the stimulating quality of the environment*' (OfSTED, 2002, p. 70).

Several questions focused on HoDs' conceptualisation of their team as a community of learners. Bolam's (2005, p. 30) definition of a professional learning community was given and HoDs were asked to make an assessment of their languages department's current position in relation to the definition.

Ethical Considerations for the collection of data from teachers via questionnaires

There were benefits to the schools and teachers who participated in this study. It promoted awareness, discussion and debate surrounding possible routes towards meaningful PL for L2 teachers. All schools will also receive a copy of the final research report in which they will find a discussion of the effectiveness of strategies and practices in relation to continued PL for L2 teachers.

In spite of these benefits, there were a considerable number of ethical considerations to tackle in the design of the study and at all times during data collection the British Educational Research Association guidelines for ethical conduct of research in education were followed (BERA, 2011). The following paragraphs detail the risks that I identified and countered where possible.

Each teacher questionnaire took an average of 20 minutes to complete. This represents a significant burden on and intrusion into teacher participants' free time. The questionnaires were carefully piloted to ensure that any unnecessary questions were removed and that the remaining questions were presented in the most accessible format possible. Electronic questionnaires were used to allow teachers to complete the questions at a time that best suited each individual.

The online teacher questionnaires were unique to each teacher for tracking purposes, which raises concerns about participants' right to privacy and to the protection of their personal data. In order to reduce associated risks, participants were assured that their data would be saved in an anonymised spreadsheet before being subjected to analysis. The key to the identities of participants was then stored on the University of Oxford Department of Education servers in a password-protected area.

The inclusion of the eight principles for effective teaching and learning of MFL (Macaro et al., 2016) in the questionnaire brings with it the potential for participants to infer that these principles are unquestioningly accepted by the study as a 'gold standard'. Participants may have subsequently experienced a sense of frustration or inadequacy when asked to consider their own teaching practices in the context of these principles and may have felt that they were being judged by the researchers. There

is also a risk that some participants may have sought to portray themselves in a favourable light at the expense of answering all questions truthfully. In order to address these concerns, the wording of questionnaire items related to the principles acknowledged that they are open to different interpretations and critique. Participants were also given space to indicate disagreement with the principles, should they so desire.

I was known to L2 colleagues in the participating schools through my work as a Curriculum Tutor on the MFL PGCE programme. There was therefore a risk that teachers might feel compelled to agree to participate in this project in order to maintain a positive relationship with the University Department of Education. In order to counter this risk, information letters made clear that participation was voluntary and that declining to participate would not incur any negative consequences or affect the university – school relationship in any way. I also reinforced this message verbally. Plenty of time (at least two weeks) was allowed for all prospective participants to make their decision.

An associated perceived risk that L2 departments' practices would be scrutinised and found lacking was minimised by emphasising the fact that all identifiable data would be anonymized before it was seen by any university colleagues or written into a report. This was made clear to participants in the information letters.

3.6 Data Collection Year 1: Pupil Questionnaires

Rationale for the Pupil Perception Questionnaire

As a part of this project I aimed to explore the missing link identified in the research literature between teachers' PL and their pupils' experiences and outcomes (e.g. Sleeter, 2014). It is difficult to identify what makes 'great teaching' and clumsy attempts to do so can cause more harm than good (Steinberg & Garrett, 2016). Nonetheless, in recent years researchers have arrived at a degree of international consensus about what some of the indicators of high-quality teaching might be, leading to the development of 'quality teaching' frameworks and measures to guide teacher education and evaluation (Bowe & Gore, 2017; OECD, 2017; Raudenbush & Marshall, 2014; Schleicher, 2011, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). High-quality teaching is commonly defined as teaching practices that are associated with improved pupil outcomes, encompassing both pupil attainment and also harder-to-measure outcomes such as pupil enjoyment and wellbeing (Kennedy, 2016). In seeking to evaluate the impact of PL practices, researchers have noted that it is prudent to avoid the assumption that positive pupil outcomes can only be measured in terms of academic attainment. Coe et al. (2014, p. 11) argue that '*whatever is valued in education should count*'. Kennedy (2015, p. 2) also warns against a reliance '*solely on quantitative, pupil attainment-based studies as the 'gold-standard*'', pointing to the fact that such studies are '*highly dependent on the availability of good outcome* measures' (Coe et al., 2014, p. 4) and give *'insufficient regard […] to the inherent complexity in the system and the social and cultural differences that exist more widely*' (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015, p. 16). The obvious outcome measures to use in the UK secondary setting would include uptake (pupil numbers) and a value-added model based on GCSE or A Level results. However, for MFL the validity of the GCSE as a standard of assessment has been heavily criticised. It has been seen to effect a negative washback against the objectives of a pedagogically sound MFL curriculum that seeks to develop communication skills (see critique in Macaro et al., 2016). Also, GCSE and A Level uptake are known to be influenced by differences in individual school policy (variations in the number of school hours and years of mandatory study; school concern with the English Baccalaureate performance measure etc.) and wider political issues.

In much of the Western world, high-stakes accountability systems evaluate teaching quality via a combination of pupils' test scores and structured observations of teachers' classroom practice. I considered including structured classroom observations in my study but ruled this out for pragmatic reasons related to my limited research time and resources. Also, the large-scale Measures of Effective

Teaching (MET) project found that even when observers are carefully trained in the use of a research-informed observation protocol, the ratings provided by a single observer are often highly volatile and unreliable (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012). Given the problematic nature of the existing national quantitative measures of pupil performance, I looked for additional methods of exploring the impact of teachers' PL on pupils in a way that could provide valid and reliable measures to enable cross-context comparisons. Following Ferguson (2012, p. 25), I decided to include pupil questionnaires in the study as these would be quick and easy to administer and there is evidence that they can '*play an important role in suggesting directions for professional development and also in evaluating teacher effectiveness*'. Coe et al. (2014, p. 4) have also suggested that asking pupils to rate their progress and enjoyment in a subject can be '*a cheap and easy source of good feedback about teaching behaviours from a range of observers who can draw on experience of many lessons*'. They add that some of the measures developed and used in schools have also been found to have high validity (ibid.). In the USA, a large-scale study of pupils in both primary and secondary schools found that pupils' own ratings of the effectiveness of their lessons were significantly more accurate in predicting pupil attainment on standardised tests than the ratings given by teachers or principals (Wilkerson et al., 2000). Beyond their use for accountability purposes, there has also been much research interest in the potential for well-designed feedback and evaluation systems, including SPS, to support teacher's PL. (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013; Schleicher, 2011).

In June 2017, all Year 8 pupils (13-14 year olds) studying French in participating schools were asked to complete a short, hard-copy questionnaire to gather their perceptions of their progress and enjoyment relating to MFL lessons. Year 8 was chosen because every school in the study had classes learning French in this year group and pupils in Year 8 are not yet in preparation for high-stakes examinations (whereas some schools in the study begin their GCSE courses with Year 9 pupils).

The results of the pupil questionnaire subsequently enabled the triangulation of self-report data from both teachers and pupils with quantitative, pupil attainment-based measures, resulting in a more nuanced picture of the overall impact that motivated teacher-learners might have on pupil outcomes.

Pupil Questionnaire – Instrument Development and Validation

The pupil questionnaire adapted for use in this study was the Colorado Student Perception Questionnaire (CSPS), which was developed as a part of the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, n.d.). This questionnaire has undergone extensive and rigorous testing in the USA, where responses from one set of classrooms were used to predict value-added gains

in other classrooms taught by the same teacher, thus controlling for the possible effects of individual pupil prejudices and other confounding factors (Colorado Education Initiative, 2013).

The CSPS is a 34-item instrument (with a 4-point Likert response scale from Never to Always) that asks pupils about how frequently they experience particular teaching behaviours in the classroom. The instrument has been found to measure four underlying dimensions of expert teaching (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: The Colorado Student Perception Survey dimensions and example items

Underlying Dimension of Expert Teaching	Example CSPS Items
Student Learning How teachers use content and pedagogical knowledge to help students learn, understand, and improve.	• My teacher makes learning enjoyable • If I don't understand something, my teacher explains it a different way
Student-Centred Environment How teachers create an environment that responds to individual students' backgrounds, strengths, and interests.	• My teacher respects my opinions and suggestions • Students feel comfortable sharing their ideas in this class
Classroom Community How teachers cultivate a classroom learning community where student differences are valued.	• I feel like an important part of this classroom community • My teacher would notice if something was bothering me
Classroom Management How teachers foster a respectful and predictable learning environment.	• Students in this class treat the teacher with respect • The students behave the way my teacher wants them to

The case for a domain-specific version of the CSPS

Rather than taking the CSPS as it stands and implementing it within my study, I decided to create a version of the survey that would be specific to L2 classroom teaching. This is because each subject discipline taught within secondary schools presents unique challenges (Thompson, 2015) and generic approaches to the evaluation of teaching are therefore insufficient. For example, the CSPS cannot, in its current form, capture useful information about the target language use of teachers and pupils in the MFL classroom. Given the central importance of this aspect of acquiring a language (Ellis, 2010), this is a serious flaw. In refining the CSPS to create an MFL version, I hoped that the resulting domain-specific student perception instrument would gather more nuanced and actionable data for L2 teachers.

Refinement of the CSPS to create the CSPS_MFL

The eight research-informed principles about languages teaching that were investigated within the teacher questionnaires (see www.pdcinmfl.com and Macaro, Graham & Woore, 2016) were

operationalised as 24 sub-statements and randomly spaced within the existing CSPS, with the aim of minimising order effects (Siminski, 2008). Table 3.9 contains examples of two items created in order to operationalise the first of the eight principles. The final survey is attached at Appendix D: CSPS_MFL Instrument.

Table 3.9: Exemplar items from the refined CSPS

PRINCIPLE 1 - ORAL INTERACTION	ITEMS WITHIN THE CSPS_MFL INSTRUMENT
Target language input is essential for learning, but it can be made more effective if learners are encouraged to check the understanding of it by asking questions of what the teacher is saying or asking the teacher to repeat.	• My French teacher expects us to understand instructions in French. • I feel like I can stop my French teacher and ask a question if I don't understand something

Exploring the performance of the CSPS_MFL

A small pilot of the CSPS_MFL instrument was conducted with one class of 23 Year 8 pupils of French in a state grammar school in London (the same school as was used for the piloting of the teacher questionnaires). These pupils matched the target sample in terms of language learned and year group. However, a limitation of this pilot group is that grammar school pupils may not be representative of my target sample in terms of their level of attainment and therefore perhaps their capacity to understand and interpret the language and meaning of the questions. The pilot pupils completed the questionnaire and were invited to add comments about the process. Their responses were used to eliminate unclear wording and/or redundancy in the questionnaire. For example, some pupils were unsure about how to interpret the term 'strategies' in item 11 "In this class we learn strategies to help us when we are having a conversation in French". In response to this, a gloss was added to the item: "(In this class we learn strategies to help us when we are having a conversation in French. (For example, asking someone in French to repeat their question or to explain what something means)"

When internal reliability was tested with the full sample (n=1370), Cronbach's Alpha for the full set of additional MFL-specific items was exceptionally high at .91. Although the scale as a whole performs well, the clusters of items for each individual principle have internal reliabilities of less than .7, which means that separate analysis of the items underlying each principle is not statistically defensible.

The wording of the principles themselves includes some overlap (i.e. 'feedback' is highlighted in both principle 3 and 6; strategic approaches are mentioned in several of the principles). For this reason, it was deemed likely that a few underlying constructs would be found. Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify for each item the factor with which it is most strongly associated.

A principal axis factor analysis was conducted on the 24 items with oblique rotation (direct oblimin). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure confirmed the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .93 ('marvellous' according to Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999) and the factor loadings can be seen in Appendix J. Three factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 44.2% of the variance. Based on items with a loading of .25 and above (Stevens (2002) recommends factor loadings of .16 can be considered statistically meaningful for this sample size), the items that cluster on the same factor suggest three underlying constructs that may measure aspects of an effective MFL classroom, strengthening the case for a domain-specific instrument:

1 – items related to a supportive L2-classroom community

2 – items related to high frequency and quality L2 interaction

3 – items related to a strategic approach to challenging language tasks

Participant details

In June 2017, I invited HoDs to distribute pen-and-paper questionnaires to their Year 8 pupils of French. 1370 Year 8 pupils of French completed the CSPS_MFL questionnaire. These participants were members of 59 intact classes, taught by 41 different teachers within 13 of the 14 schools.

Table 3.10: Demographic data for CSPS_MFL participants

	Female	Male	Undisclosed	Total
Aspen	49	47	3	99
Birch	81	92	8	181
Cedar	35	30	6	71
Douglas-Fir	72	64	9	145
Elm	34	30	4	68
Fig	50	45	6	101
Ginkgo	62	38	17	117
Hawthorn	55	42	2	99
Ivy	62	57	6	125
Juniper	50	57	3	110
Katsura	25	23	5	53
Laurel	14	19	1	34
Nutmeg	83	79	5	167
Total	**672**	**623**	**75**	**1370**

Ethical considerations for the collection of data from pupils via questionnaires

Asking pupils to give feedback on their enjoyment and progress is within the scope of schools' 'normal' practice (McIntyre et al., 2005) and the research took place in the classroom under the supervision of classroom teachers. Pupils and parents were informed about the study andy given the opportunity to opt out. It was made clear to them that their participation was entirely voluntary, that they were free to withdraw themselves and their data at any time, and that doing so would incur no kind of penalty and have no effect on the assessment of their progress in school.

The primary ethical concern in the administration of the pupil questionnaires was the need to avoid taking up too much curriculum time and thus detracting from the time available for learning. For this reason, the questionnaire was designed to take no more than 20 minutes to complete (a realistic time allocation according to the pilot study). Despite this, two teachers commented that the questionnaire administration had taken longer than they felt was appropriate. It may be that the grammar school cohort who piloted the survey was not representative of my actual pupil sample, leading to an inaccurate estimate of the timing of the questionnaire.

In order to avoid the possibility that pupils might feel anxious about their teachers' interpretations of their responses and / or may fear being evaluated themselves, teachers were asked to introduce the questionnaire using a clear script to make it clear to pupils that the questionnaire was anonymous and that the results would not be analysed by their teacher.

It must also be acknowledged that teachers themselves may have felt anxious about the pupils' responses as this represents yet another form of teacher evaluation within an education system that includes increasing levels of high-stakes teacher assessment and accountability (see Evetts, 2011). Teachers were reassured that the findings of the pupil questionnaires relating to individual teachers would not be accessible to anyone except the main researcher and no individual would be identifiable in the final report.

3.7 Data collection Year 2: HoD follow-up interviews

Interview Rationale and Administration

Data collected in Year 2 (September 2017 to June 2018) was intended to add depth and contextual understanding to the emerging findings.

Although semi-structured interviews are time-consuming for both interviewee and interviewer, I chose to include a limited number of interviews within the study in order to address some of the limitations of the questionnaire data collected thus far. In particular, my respondents had been unable to seek clarification of the questionnaire items presented to them and to offer any extended explanation and contextualisation of their responses. Interviews thus enabled a fuller investigation of what Maxwell (2010, p. 477) terms a process approach, involving the asking '*of "how" and "why" questions, rather than simply "whether" and "to what extent"*'. McNamara (1999) also argues specifically for the value of interviews in getting the story behind a participant's beliefs and practices, and he advocates qualitative interview as a useful follow-up tool to questionnaires.

Following analysis of the questionnaire data from the first year of the study, all Heads of Department were invited to participate in a follow-up interview. Six HoDs were happy to participate and these interviews were conducted at a time and place of the HoDs' choosing between Oct-Dec 2017. The interviews were audio recorded (with participants' informed consent) and transcribed for analysis. The interviews were designed to explore in greater depth items of interest from the HoDs' responses to the four waves of teacher questionnaires. For example, each HoD was asked to comment further on the departmental development priorities and their own individual learning priorities that they had identified in June 2017. Finally, the follow-up interviews presented an opportunity to gauge HoDs' responses to their pupils' CSPS_MFL results, which were reported to HoDs in aggregated form in September. Some HoDs were able to offer possible explanations for the results and their differing interpretations gave me a greater awareness of contextual factors to consider within my own analysis. For a full outline of questions asked, see Appendix E: Head of Department Follow-up Interview Questions.

3.8 Data Collection Year 2: Case-studies

Case Studies Rationale and Administration

We should seek to understand 'how schools as socio-cultural environments mediate and transform what and how teachers learn.' (Freeman, 2002a, p. 12)

The inclusion of a second data collection phase involving case-studies addresses several calls for studies of teachers' PL to be context-sensitive (Freeman, 2002a; Webster-Wright, 2014). Freeman argues that teachers' practices should be seen as '*situated in personal and institutional histories and seen as interactive […] in the settings in which they unfold*' (2002a, p. 12). Case studies also create the conditions for the '*critical evaluation of emerging constructs against ongoing observations*' (Suddaby, 2006, p. 636) and, since a case-study researcher gets closer to those under study than a quantitative researcher her preconceived ideas or naïve understandings are more likely to be challenged and '*corrected by the study objects 'talking back*'' (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 236).

Following an initial analysis of the questionnaire and follow-up interview data, I identified two language departments as cases for further study. Between March and June 2018, I undertook a detailed case-study of the perceptions and development of languages teachers within each context, involving documentary analysis; observations of department meetings; and further interviews with each teacher. The decisions taken in this stage of the research and their justifications are explored below.

Sample

The case-study schools were selected based on analysis of the data collected during Phase 1 of the study. My original intention had been to identify MFL departments that had contrasting profiles on the following measures:

a) Measures of the quantity and quality of the PL experiences reported by teachers
b) overall levels of individual and collective teaching self-efficacy
c) measures of the 'status' and success of the MFL department within the school

However, as I began to analyse the questionnaire and interview data two language departments clearly stood out from the others. These two schools appeared to be particularly fertile contexts for teachers' PL, scoring highly on the three measures listed above. In addition, factors that appeared to constrain teacher learning in other contexts (in particular a managerial discourse and narrow focus on GCSE

examination strategies) were less prevalent in the data related to these two settings. I decided that purposive sampling of these two schools might provide useful insights into contextual factors that can promote teacher learning. This approach is advocated by Seawright and Gerring (2008) and also follows Flyvbjerg's assertion that '*atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information [than typical or average ones] because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied*' (2006, p. 229).

Participant details

The two schools chosen for closer study were Douglas-Fir School and Ginkgo School. The make-up of the two MFL departments can be seen in Table 3.11 and some contextual information for the two schools is given below:

Table 3.11: Demographic Data for Case-study MFL Departments

	STAFF WITHIN EACH MFL DEPARTMENT (MARCH 2018)					
	L2 teachers		Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs)		Student Teachers	
						
Douglas-Fir	9	1	2	1	2	0
Ginkgo	5	2	1	0	1	0

Douglas-Fir School

At the time of the study, Douglas-Fir school was rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted. It is a large, school situated in a market town with approximately 2000 pupils on roll. French, Spanish and German were offered at both GCSE and A Level. The MFL department was comprised of ten teachers, six of whom worked part-time. The department included one ECT with two years of experience (NQT 'plus one') and three FLAs. The department was also supporting two student teachers completing their ITE course in partnership with a local university. The HoD had been in post for more than ten years.

Ginkgo School

At the time of the study, Ginkgo school was rated 'good' by Ofsted. It is a medium-sized, inner-city school with approximately 1000 pupils on roll. French and Spanish were offered at both GCSE and A Level. The MFL department was comprised of seven teachers, three of whom worked part-time. The department included one NQT and one teacher who held a dual role as the school's Deputy Head

Teacher and who taught very few L2 lessons. The department was also supporting one student teacher completing her ITE course in partnership with a local university. An FLA to support the teaching of French was shared with another local school and employed by Ginkgo school for just five hours per week. The HoD had been in post for less than one year but had been employed as an L2 teacher within the school for five years prior to taking up the HoD role.

Case-study Methods

Alongside publicly available demographic data, I collected relevant documentary, interview and observation data to inform my case-studies. This enabled me to collect all of the forms of data that are advocated by Brown, Rutherford and Boyle (2000) as key sources for a case-study in a school setting (see Table 3.12 for an overview).

Table 3.12: Sources of data for case-studies

Case-study data collection methods
Document analysis ▪ Each school's Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP) ▪ Each MFL department's Development and Improvement Plan (MFLDIP) ▪ MFL department meeting agendas and minutes
Semi-structured interviews ▪ A Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member at each school with a responsibility for staff development ▪ All members of each MFL department
Observations ▪ MFL department meetings ▪ Interaction within the main social space utilised by MFL teachers (i.e. the MFL team room or staff room)

Document Analysis

In order to rapidly and unobtrusively gain a fuller understanding of the two school contexts, I drew on existing written materials that could provide me with a flavour of the current policies and priorities for whole-school development and for the development of languages teaching and learning within the school. One advantage to these documents as research data is that, since they existed independently of my research agenda, they can be considered non-reactive, that is, they should not have been biased by the research process itself (Yin, 2014).

Development and Improvement Plans for the whole school and the MFL department

The school development and improvement plan (SDIP) and the MFL equivalent (MFLDIP) gave me background information on the key development areas identified by colleagues within each school. Accessing both documents enabled a comparison of the MFLDIP with the SDIP to see to what extent whole-school concerns were evident in department's own development plans and to what extent these whole-school concerns were given a subject-specific focus. In conjunction with teacher interviews this helped to reveal the extent to which HoDs felt they had professional agency in shaping their own development plans.

When using documentary data that were not developed for research purposes it is important to consider the history of each document in terms of author, purpose and audience, and how this history may have shaped its message and meaning (Merriam, 1988). I was mindful that the two Development and Improvement Plan documents in particular played multiple roles in setting out ambitions for improvement and serving as a road-map for teachers throughout the year whilst also acting as an artefact against which teachers could later be held to account, both internally (by SLT) and externally (by Ofsted), for their progress towards their stated goals.

MFL department meeting agendas, working papers and minutes

In addition to the SDIP and the MFLDIP, I collected MFL department meeting agendas, working papers and minutes (where these were available). These provided insight into the topics that were given priority in MFL department meeting time and the extent to which meetings offered attendees opportunities for PL. For meetings in which I was present, the artefacts of the meeting acted as material that could be triangulated with my own perceptions of the activity observed, and each source was used to critically interrogate the other.

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed to obtain a range of perspectives on MFL teachers' PL experiences. I chose this method because the structure facilitated comparison of the data collected across contexts, but the interviews were also flexible enough for participants to shape the direction of the conversation and for me to follow up on unanticipated responses to my questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Each interview was designed to be no longer than 30 minutes. In reality, they lasted between 14 and 47 minutes, depending on the time each teacher had available and the extent to which each participant developed their responses. Interviews were conducted at a time and place of each teacher's choosing,

most commonly in the teacher's own school classroom during their lunch break, free lesson or after school. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and anonymised for analysis. This approach meant I was free to focus on interviewee's responses rather than dividing my attention between conducting the interview and making notes.

Interviews with a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member at each school with a responsibility for staff development

I chose to interview an SLT member at each school who held a responsibility for staff development because this enabled an investigation of what this key leader considered to be effective PL (see Appendix G: Interview Schedule for case-study SLT members). I asked how the SLT member diagnosed, prioritised and addressed perceived staff learning needs. I was able to identify the SLT member's priorities for the development of teaching staff over the subsequent academic year; the nature of the whole-school approach to PL and what practical constraints were in place in each school (i.e. what system was in place for applying for cover in order to attend external PL; how staff were encouraged to track their learning; how the performance management system was set up etc.). The interviews lasted for 22 minutes (Douglas-Fir) and 42 minutes (Ginkgo).

Interviews with each member of the MFL department

MFL teachers, student teachers and foreign language assistants (FLAs) were all invited to interview (see Appendix F: Interview Schedule for case-study school teachers). I chose to include all these MFL department members rather than just those employed by the school as L2 teachers because I wanted to gain a sense of the entire department as a learning community. There is also evidence that both student teachers (Childs et al., 2013) and FLAs (Tinsley & Board, 2017) can act as catalysts for PL conversations within institutions. MFL department member interviews enabled the collection of richer data about complex phenomena investigated during Year 1 such as the range of factors contributing to teachers' motivation to learn and I was able to follow up on anomalous or interesting data collected during the questionnaires. Interviews focussed on teachers' thoughts and experiences in relation to the specific learning goals that featured on the MFLDIP, allowing for a consideration of the extent to which different members of each teaching team shared a common understanding of these concepts.

Observations in the field

I chose to include observations in this study because they are an accessible tool for case study researchers who want to get close to their participants' lived experiences (Merriam, 1988). As with interviews, observations are time-consuming, but Yin (2014) argues that all case study researchers

should collect direct observation data because it is such a straightforward and obvious way to collect contextualised information about events occurring in real time. I did not audio record my observations as, over the course of my time in each school, this would have resulted in overwhelming amounts of data involving multiple speakers, much of which may have been irrelevant to my research focus.

Observations of department meetings were included to provide an insight into the ways in which each MFL department's development time was used and to what extent PL featured on the agenda. Following Childs, Burn and McNicholl (2013), I also spent time in teachers' social spaces, which gave me some degree of access to the informal conversations about teaching and learning that occur incidentally through teachers' interactions with each other over the working day. This allowed me to make some inferences about the languages sub-community within the school and the degree to which the established patterns of discourse and behaviour in the community might facilitate or constrain teachers' PL.

It is clearly impossible for a field researcher to be completely unbiased and detached from the activity that they are observing as each person constructs their own subjective understanding of experience (Yin, 2014). Also, however imperceptibly, my presence was sure to have altered in some way the thoughts and behaviours of those being observed. However, as Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) argue, the effect of the observer's presence can also be a source of relevant data and that a skilled observer should '*become sensitive to, and perceptive about, how she is seen and treated by others*' (2011, p. 4). The limitations of observation in terms of the researcher's selective attention and the possible impact of the observer's presence, can also be mitigated by a process of careful triangulation with other methods.

Observations in L2 teachers' main social spaces

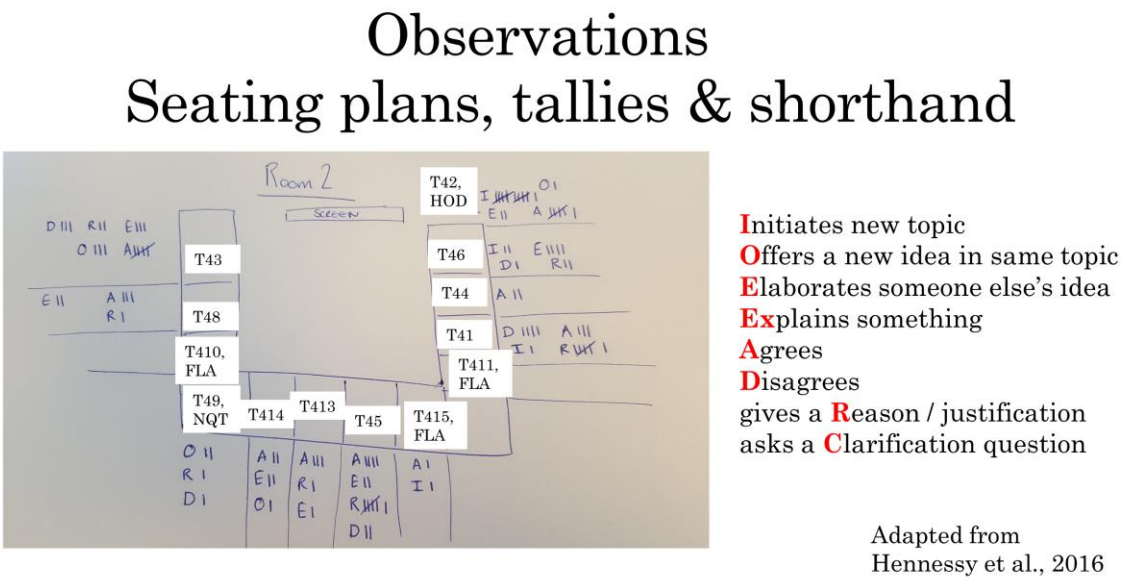
On the first day of my school visits I recorded static details about the physical attributes of the teachers' social spaces (light levels, desk-space, IT facilities, kitchen equipment etc.). Each day that I was in school I also recorded variable details such as the number of staff using the space at break, lunch and during lessons. When in the field, I established a role as a note taker straight away in the hope that teachers around me would become accustomed to this practice and it would quickly become a more natural and less unsettling aspect of my intrusion into their setting. This overt note-taking also helped to ensure that there was a degree of transparency and honesty in my relationships with my research participants, albeit potentially at the cost of some data as participants may have self-censored in my presence, aware that what they said might be recorded (Emerson et al., 2011).

During my time in teachers' social spaces I paid close attention when L2 teachers were overheard discussing teaching and learning. In these instances, I made notes about who initiated the conversation, who participated, what was discussed, and any ideas or strategies put forwards. My unstructured observations were firstly recorded as 'jottings' that, wherever possible, were made concurrently with the ongoing activity around me. This facilitated the transcribing of direct quotes from participants and snippets of the detail of relevant interactions that were later used to jog my memory as I turned my jottings into fuller notes. In my notes I avoided the use of evaluative language and the temptation to speculate about individuals' motivations (as recommended by Emerson et al. (2011)). In this way I tried hard to avoid early attempts at analysis, which might have led to subsequent confirmation bias and blindness to possible alternative interpretations.

Observations of MFL Departmental Meetings

Departmental meetings provided a structured context within which to observe the organisation and processes of teacher learning. I created a standardised observation format with both space for jottings and also pre-determined codes to enable me to take notes quickly and to collect data in a format that would facilitate a comparison of meetings within and across the two school contexts over time (see Appendix H: Observation Framework for case-study department meetings). For each meeting I made notes on who was present and where they were seated; topics of discussion and rough amounts of time devoted to each item on the agenda. Whenever I observed an activity which could be related to descriptions of effective PL (Cordingley, 2015), I made a note of this. As suggested by Hennessy et al. (2016), I also kept a record of the number of contributions made by each person present and the nature of their contributions; action points agreed etc. This interaction data facilitates an analysis of the distribution of power and representation of different teacher voices within department meeting time (see Figure 3.4 for an example of some of these observation notes). I looked for markers of Hargreaves' (1994, p. 3) various characterisations of teachers' learning cultures, mindful of the differences between collaborative cultures and '*contrived collegiality*'.

Figure 3.4: Observation notes example



Time spent in each case-study setting

I visited each case-study school multiple times between March and June 2018 (I made a total of 7 visits to Douglas-Fir and 8 visits to Ginkgo). Table 3.13 provides a breakdown of the activities conducted during my visits and the approximate length of time spent on these activities in each school.

Table 3.13: Time spent in each case-study setting

	Douglas-Fir School		Ginkgo School	
	Incidences	Estimated total duration (hours)	Incidences	Estimated total duration (hours)
After-school MFL department meetings attended	2	2	3	3
Before school MFL department briefings attended	N/A	0	3	0.75
Additional L2-specific INSET time attended	1	5	N/A	0
Days spent in the L2 teachers' social spaces	4	28	4	28
Interviews	10	5	7	3.5
Total case-study time in the field	N/A	40	N/A	35.25

Ethical considerations for the collection of data from teachers via case-study observations and interviews

In recruiting schools for the case-study element of my study, I explained to each HoD that the questionnaire data indicated their MFL department was a positive and interesting context in terms of the development opportunities being taken up by staff. I followed Yin's (2014) recommendation of honesty in explaining the reason for my interest in the two schools but I acknowledge that this may have created a sense of pressure to live up to my expectations, which may in turn have affected participants' behaviour during the study.

My presence in school for extended periods of time was a burden on the time of my teacher participants. I minimised this burden by ensuring that I was as flexible as possible in the timing of semi-structured interviews: I sought to work around what was practicable for the teacher participants. In order to offer some return for teachers' investment of time I offered some 1:1 support to pupils sitting their GCSEs but this was not taken up in either setting.

There are issues surrounding my own subjectivity as I went about the process of interpreting the activity that I observed around me, particularly as I brought with me some degree of 'insider' knowledge of the two schools gained via my role as a Curriculum Tutor on the MFL PGCE course at the university. I tried at all times to ask for further clarification if I suspected that I might have misunderstood something and I sought information about observed activities from as many different perspectives as possible, following up aspects of my observations with participants in individual interviews.

There were student teachers present in both case-study school MFL departments and these students knew me in my capacity as a Tutor on the MFL PGCE course at the university. In both schools I also needed to visit in my role as assessor of these students, leading to some blurring of the lines between my role as researcher/observer and as the student teachers' assessor. This had the potential to make both student teachers and mentors uncomfortable with my increased presence in the school, which may also have changed their behaviour and affected the validity of my data. One option to address this issue would have been to avoid selecting departments with student teachers. However, given the fact that the presence of trainee teachers is known to be a possible catalyst for PL in departments (Field & Philpott, 2000; Hargreaves, 1992; McIntyre & Hagger, 1992) this did not seem a suitable solution. Instead, I minimised the risks identified above by writing and adhering to a protocol to govern my interactions with student teachers during my case-study visits (see Appendix L: Risk Assessment / Protocol for engaging with PGCE mentors and student teachers in case-study schools).

Many of the L2 teachers in the case-study schools had completed the questionnaires from Year 1 of the study and therefore may have developed their own ideas about what it was that I was looking for. This may have fuelled anxieties related to a sense of being evaluated and it may have led to teachers feeling a need to 'perform' in an atypical way whilst in my presence. To mitigate this potential participant anxiety I was as open and transparent as possible about my data collection. I reinforced my non-judgemental stance and the potential for the recorded experiences of teacher participants to inform future understandings of L2 teachers' PL.

3.9 Data Analysis Approaches

The multiple methods employed in this study resulted in a rich and diverse collection of data. When I came to devise an approach for the analysis, I was careful to select methods that were appropriate for each category of data in its own terms. Then, at the later stages of analysis I was able to combine the strengths of variance approaches (involving statistical analyses to establish regularities in the quantitative data) and process approaches (involving description of possible '*causal mechanisms and processes that were involved in particular events and situations*' (Maxwell, 2010, p.477) to look at the emerging patterns in my data from a range of different angles.

Teacher Questionnaires

The data generated from the teacher questionnaires were both quantitative and qualitative. The teachers responded to statements measured mainly on interval scales. From this initial quantitative questionnaire data, descriptive statistics were calculated in SPSS and patterns identified. Hypotheses drawn from the literature review were tested: where data met assumptions of linearity, normality and homoscedasticity, ANOVA analyses and t-tests were carried out and p-values calculated. This work included within-subject time-series analysis of data from the four waves of teacher questionnaires. To examine relationships between the variables, Pearson product-moment (r) correlation, Spearman rank correlation (rho) and eta were used. Where established measures were used, analytical procedures from recent research were replicated in order to increase the comparability of results. Whilst I looked at the teacher questionnaire data for patterns at both individual and school level, the number of teachers in the sample was too limited to conduct a multi-level analysis (for some schools only two or three L2 teachers participated in the study).

Following Hargreaves et al. (2006, p. 10), teachers' free-text responses were coded thematically to '*look for commonality in peoples' constructions of complex ideas such as status and professionalism*'. However, I returned frequently to the data in their original form and tried to avoid falling into the trap of aggregating data without heeding the possibility that this '*may create unnecessary ambiguity and error in conceptualizing teacher learning by masking variation and assuming uniformity that does not exist in reality*' (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 395).

The qualitative data were imported into the NVivo 11 software package and both anomalous narratives and patterns of significance in participants' free-text responses were identified and subsequently

triangulated with the quantitative data. As advocated by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) I adopted a pragmatic, hybrid approach to thematic analysis that integrated both data-driven (inductive) codes and theory-driven (deductive) codes (see Appendix I: NVivo Codebook).

Pupil Questionnaires

The pupil questionnaires gathered quantitative data, which was imported into SPSS for analysis. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were run to explore the performance of the questionnaire items and the underlying constructs investigated. Next, patterns in the variance of the pupil data were investigated using multiple regression analyses and I looked at the extent of between-teacher and between-school variation in pupil scores. Finally, correlations between responses to items in both pupil and teacher questionnaires were explored.

Head of Department Follow-up Interviews

The six HoD interviews were transcribed and imported into the NVivo 11 software package for analysis. The transcripts were coded using the codes derived from the free-text teacher questionnaire data as a starting point, and this code-book was expanded upon as new, inductive codes were devised when interview data did not fit into the themes that had already been identified in the questionnaire data.

Case-study data

During the case-study phase of the study I used NVivo 11 to collect together observation notes from in the field; transcripts of interviews with participants; and tools (such as web links) and documents from each context that were used by teachers to plan, manage or assist them in their PL alongside notes regarding the way that these were being used. Attention was given in my notes to the '*social organisation of the practical activities in which the teachers are engaged*' (McNicholl & Blake, 2013, p. 290) and the way in which the cooperative, collaborative, conflictual and/or hierarchical nature of relationships with colleagues and institutions shape teachers' learning. In the analysis of this data I followed up on questions and anomalies that arose during Phase 1 of the study and looked for further explanatory data where patterns were identified. For each school I sought to identify the reciprocal influences of the individual teachers; the systems in place for PL; the rules and norms of the MFL team and whole-school community; and the allocation of roles. I looked for contradictions and tensions in the data as well as patterns of convergence.

I have followed the good-practice guidelines established by Tong, Sainsbury and Craig (2007) and Twining, Heller, Nussbaum and Tsai (2017) when presenting the qualitative data in this thesis. These authors highlight the importance of sufficiency and transparency, advocating detailed description of data. When reporting participants' comments, I have also tried to follow Lincoln and Guba's (1985) principles of trustworthiness. I acknowledge that understandings reached via interviews are interactionally co-constructed by the interviewer and interviewee. Where appropriate, I have therefore included both interviewer and participant turns in my in-text quotations to enable the reader to access the interactional contexts that form the basis for claims made in the analysis (Mann, 2011).

3.10 Concluding Comments

This chapter has laid out in detail the focus of this investigation into L2 teachers' PL needs, priorities and experiences. I have outlined the decision-making process leading to a sample of L2 teachers and learners based at 14 state-funded secondary schools and I have explained the approaches taken to gathering relevant data for analysis (namely teacher and pupil questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document gathering). I have also discussed the limitations of the approaches taken and the steps taken to mitigate ethical concerns. In combination, the methods described above provided me with rich and complementary data to inform fresh insights into the factors affecting the PL of L2 teachers in England.

The upcoming chapters report and discuss the results of the study. To facilitate the reader in navigating the results I have divided the report into four separate findings chapters along the following lines: Chapter 4 begins with a look at the PL needs and priorities of the L2 teachers in the study, providing some context to the subsequent findings chapters. Chapter 5 then draws on the questionnaire and HoD interview data to report on the nature of the PL experiences reported by teachers during the study and the factors facilitating and constraining their engagement in PL. In Chapter 6, I examine the issues discussed in Chapter 5 in greater depth with reference to the case-study schools. This chapter also introduces an analysis of the leadership structures and interaction patterns in the two schools, highlighting the ways in which these shape teachers' learning. Finally, in Chapter 7 I explore the data related to the impact of teachers' PL on their beliefs, their practices and their pupils' outcomes and experiences.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION I: TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

This chapter reports on findings related to Research Question 1: What are the professional learning needs and priorities of L2 teachers?

I begin by exploring respondents' current sense of self-efficacy for classroom teaching and the stability of this self-assessment over time. I then turn to the extent to which L2 teachers feel their current classroom practices align with research-informed understandings about how languages are learned (with reference to the eight principles identified by Macaro et al. (2016)). Next, L2 teachers' self-identified priorities for further development are reported along with their reasons for these choices. Patterns in relation to teachers' career-stage and school context are discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion and summary of current development needs and priorities across the sample.

4.1 Teachers' sense of self-efficacy for classroom teaching

The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) was used to measure participants' levels of self-efficacy for their classroom teaching (Questionnaire 1, item 31). The 12-item scale was grouped into three factors based on previous research and these factors were labelled 'efficacy in student engagement' (items 2,3,4,11); 'efficacy in instructional strategies (items 5,9,10,12) and 'efficacy in classroom management' (items 1,6,7,8). The alpha coefficients for the full TSES scale and each subscale were found to be at least .7, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Reliabilities for the TSES and subscales (Time 1)

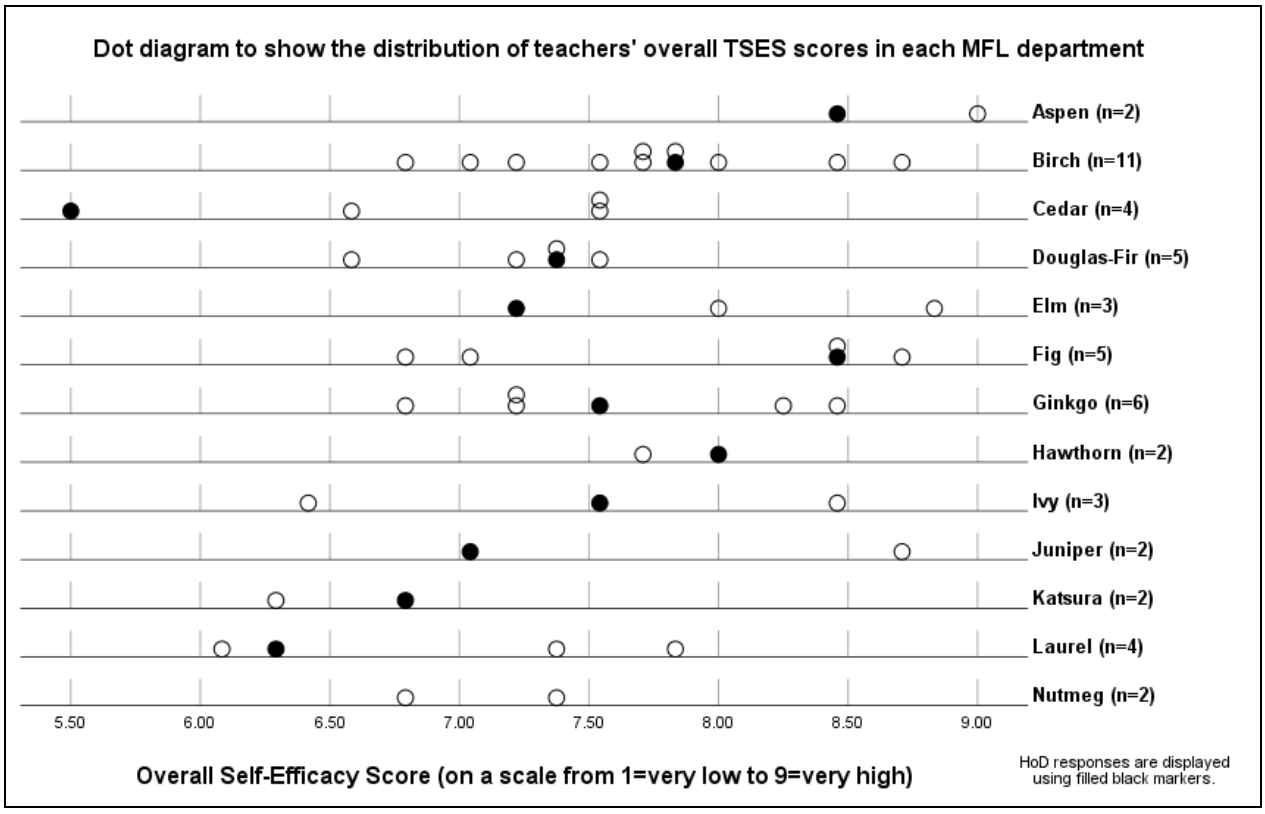
	Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001)			**Current Study (Time 1)**			
	Mean	*SD*	*alpha*	Mean	SD	range	alpha
TSES	*7.1*	*.98*	*.90*	7.5	.79	5.5-9	.88
Engagement	*7.2*	*1.2*	*.81*	7.0	1.01	3.75-9	.70
Instruction	*7.3*	*1.2*	*.86*	7.6	.92	5-9	.74
Management	*6.7*	*1.2*	*.86*	7.9	.86	5.75-9	.86

As can be seen in Table 4.1, the teachers in this data set report slightly higher overall self-efficacy for classroom teaching than those in Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2001) research and it could therefore be concluded that the teachers in this sample began the study with high levels of confidence in their classroom expertise. However, it is important to note the wide range of scores, especially for self-efficacy

in promoting pupil engagement. Self-efficacy scores for the teachers in this study follow a different pattern to those in Tschannen -Moran and Hoy's (2001) work: the highest mean score is recorded for classroom management and the lowest for self-efficacy in pupil engagement.

As Figure 4.1 shows, overall TSES scores were clustered around the 6.5 – 8 range across the departments. However, teachers at Cedar and Katsura schools were relatively less confident in their overall teaching self-efficacy than their two peers at Aspen school, who reported very high TSES scores. TC2, the HoD of Cedar school, is an outlier in that their overall TSES score is very low compared to the rest of the cohort both in their own department and across other schools.

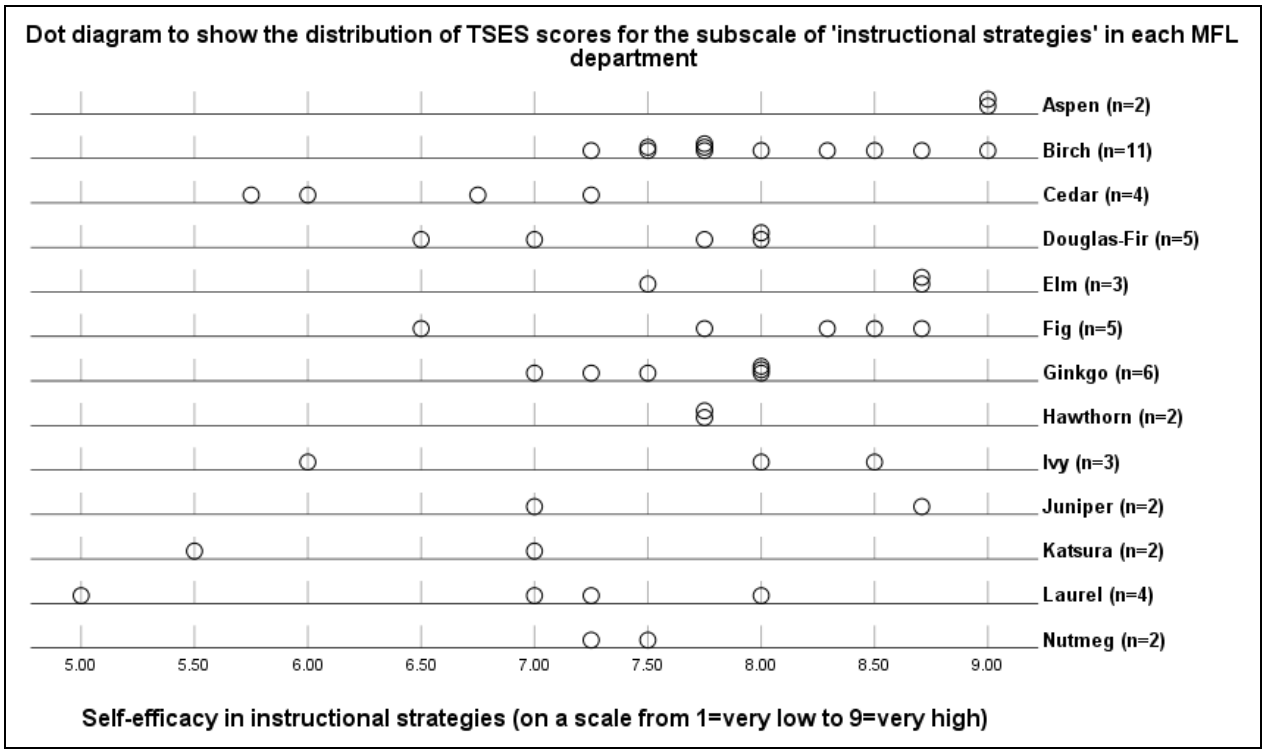
Figure 4.1: The distribution of TSES scores in each MFL department (at Time 1)



To determine whether statistical differences existed between MFL departments' TSES scores I ran a Kruskal-Wallis H test. At Time 1 the distributions of TSES scores were not statistically significantly different between MFL departments for teachers' overall self-efficacy or their self-efficacy in the student engagement or behaviour subscales. However, distributions of scores differed significantly between schools the 'on the 'self-efficacy in instructional strategies' subscale ($\chi 2(12)=22.2$, $p=.035$). The small number of respondents in some departments precluded the use of multiple post-hoc tests but a visual

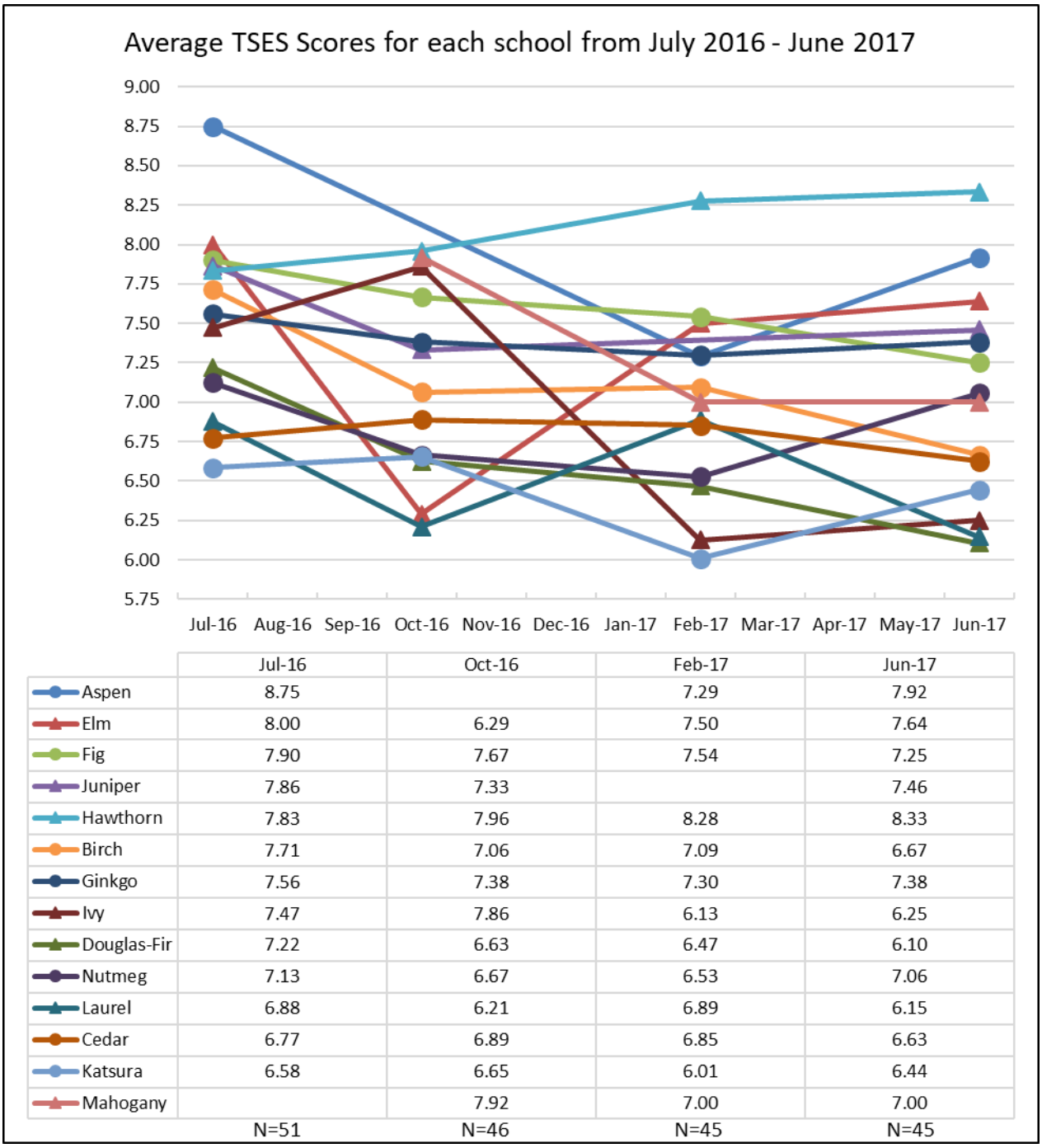
inspection of the data in Figure 4.2 shows that individual colleagues at Cedar, Ivy, Katsura and Laurel school reported self-efficacy scores for their instructional strategies of 6 or lower (TC2, TC4, TI1, TK2 and TL1). As can be seen in Figure 4.2, the variation in reported self-efficacy scores from individuals *within* school languages departments was, in most cases, greater than the variation in mean scores *between* departments.

Figure 4.2: The distribution of TSES scores for self-efficacy in instructional strategies in each MFL department (at Time 1)



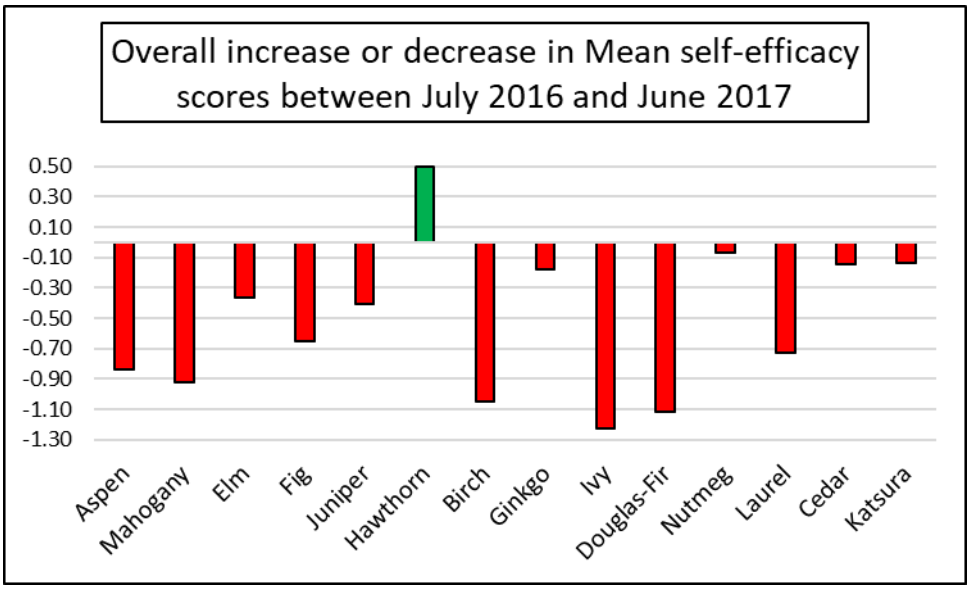
When TSES scores for all respondents at each Time Point are examined (see Figure 4.3), there is an overall pattern of sharp decline in scores followed by slow recovery. This may reflect the annual rhythm to overall motivation and wellbeing identified by Duggan (2007) and Moir (1999) wherein levels dip sharply between September and December before recovering in the Spring, and reaching an annual peak towards the end of the Summer holiday. Figure 4.3 also shows the variation in mean scores for each languages department, which reveals an overall decline in teachers' self-reported confidence in their classroom teaching across the course of the study in all schools except for Hawthorn (this can be seen distinctly in Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.3: Mean TSES scores for each languages department (times 1-4)



	Jul-16	Oct-16	Feb-17	Jun-17
Aspen	8.75		7.29	7.92
Elm	8.00	6.29	7.50	7.64
Fig	7.90	7.67	7.54	7.25
Juniper	7.86	7.33		7.46
Hawthorn	7.83	7.96	8.28	8.33
Birch	7.71	7.06	7.09	6.67
Ginkgo	7.56	7.38	7.30	7.38
Ivy	7.47	7.86	6.13	6.25
Douglas-Fir	7.22	6.63	6.47	6.10
Nutmeg	7.13	6.67	6.53	7.06
Laurel	6.88	6.21	6.89	6.15
Cedar	6.77	6.89	6.85	6.63
Katsura	6.58	6.65	6.01	6.44
Mahogany		7.92	7.00	7.00
	N=51	N=46	N=45	N=45

Figure 4.4: Residual self-efficacy scores by department (Time 1 - Time 4)



Teachers were asked to respond to the TSES items at four time points between July 2016 and June 2017. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare TSES scores at Time 1 (July 2016), Time 2 (Oct 2016), Time 3 (Feb 2017) and Time 4 (June 2017) for the 31 teachers who completed the TSES at every time point. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4.2. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot and the data were normally distributed at each time point, as assessed by Shaprio-Wilk's test ($p>.05$). Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had not been violated ($X^2(5)=2.9$, $p=.71$). Using the guidelines suggested by Cohen (1988), a small but significant effect for time was found for the drop in scores between Time 1 and Times 2,3 and 4 (Wilks' Lambda = .60, $F(3,28) = 6.15$, $p=0.002$, multivariate partial ETA squared = .40). This confirms that the pattern of decline across the year that is visible in Figure 4.3 is significant.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for TSES scores (Respondents who completed Time 1, Time 2, Time 3 and Time 4)

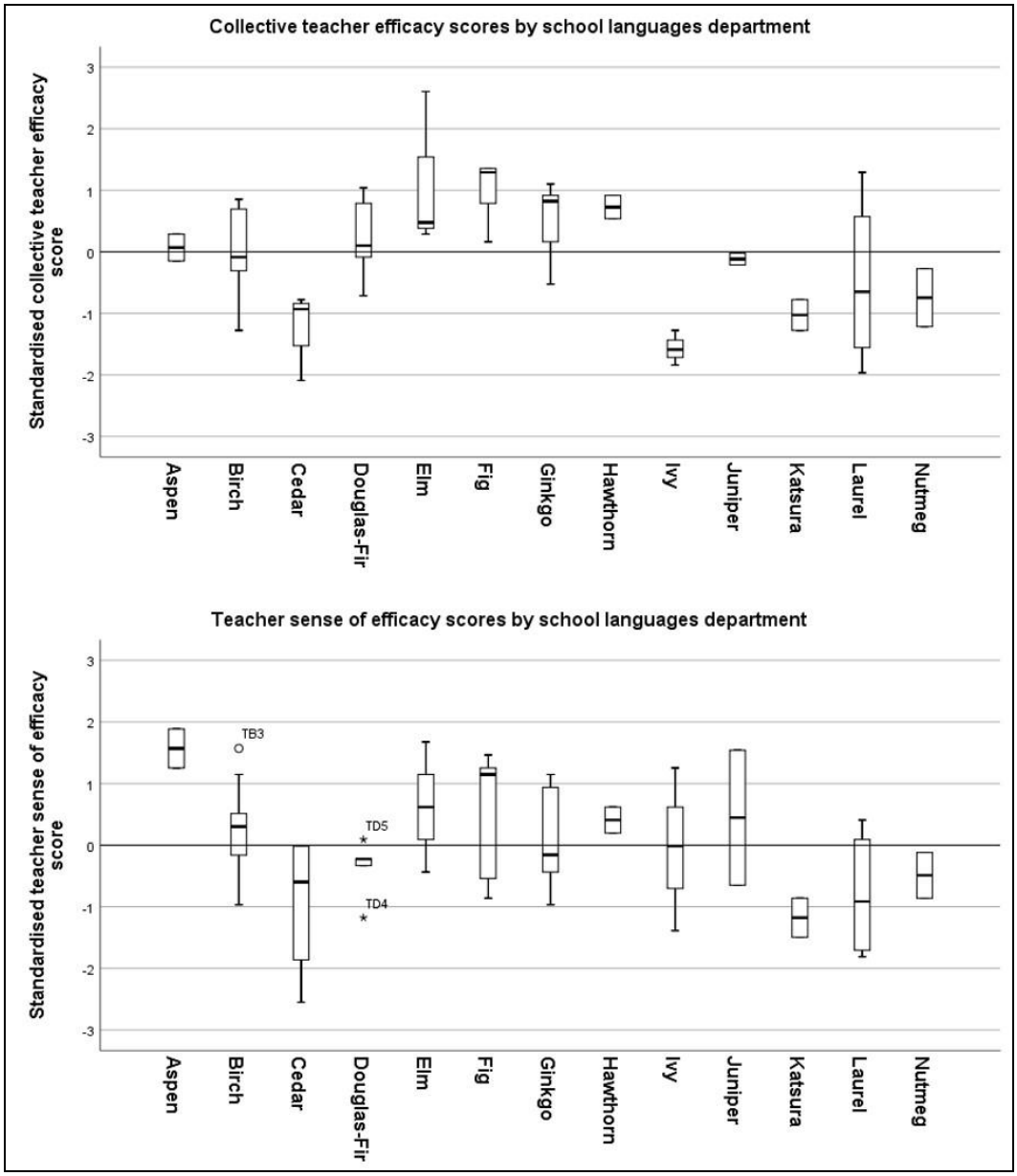
	N	Mean	SD
Time 1 (Jul 2016)	31	7.39	.71
Time 2 (Oct 2016)	31	6.87	.93
Time 3 (Feb 2017)	31	6.93	1.03
Time 4 (Jun 2017)	31	6.81	1.07

Collective teacher efficacy

Teachers in a school MFL department work in close proximity and share similar goals and responsibilities, which makes them likely to exert strong reciprocal influences on one another. For this reason, the construct of collective teacher efficacy (CTE) was explored. CTE measures the perceptions of a group of teachers about whether their collective efforts will positively impact pupils' learning. I used an adaptation of the CTE scale produced by Goddard et al. (2000). The original scale measures a group orientation at school level (exemplified by an item such as '*teachers in this school can reach a difficult student*') but I adapted the scale for this study to measure a group orientation at departmental level (e.g. '*teachers in this department can reach a difficult student*').

In the first questionnaire (Time 1, Q35), teachers were asked to report both their own sense of self efficacy for teaching languages and their estimation of their MFL department's collective efficacy. CTE scores for each school are summarised in Figure 4.5. As expected, teachers' individual TSES scores correlated positively with their departments' average CTE scores (rho = .38, p= 0.005).

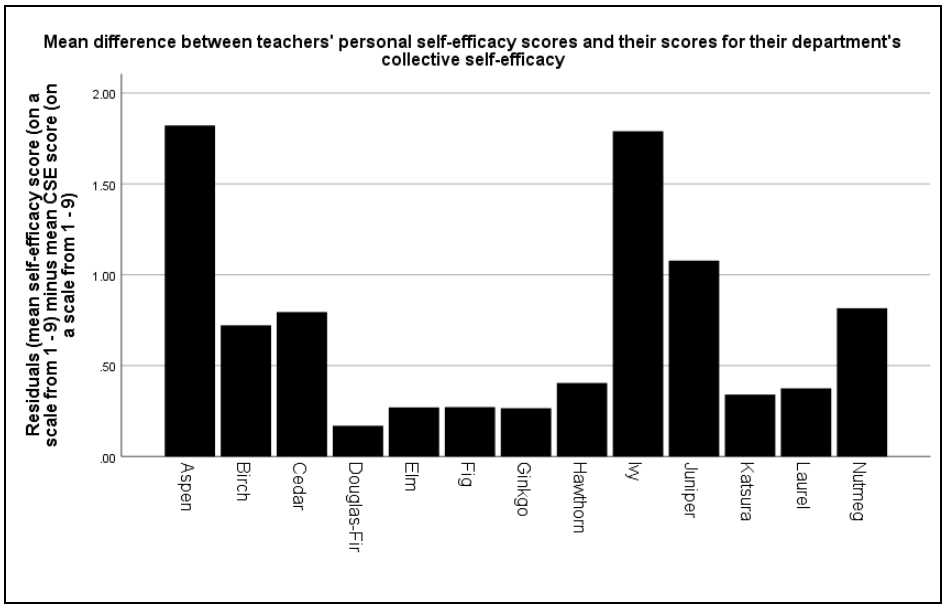
Figure 4.5: Collective teacher efficacy and individual teacher self-efficacy scores by school languages department



*reference line displays the mean CTE and TSES scores across the sample.

When the mean scores for TSES and CSE are examined in each school, there is an overall pattern of teachers estimating their department's CSE for teaching slightly higher than their individual TSES as can be seen in Figure 4.6. Given that the average self-efficacy scores of these teachers were already relatively strong, this suggests that teachers' in this sample generally have high levels of confidence in the collective ability of their department team to meet the demands of the teaching task within each setting.

Figure 4.6: Mean difference between SE and CSE scores in each school



4.2 Teachers' reported engagement with research-informed principles in their teaching practices

The TSES and CTE data give us an idea about respondents' overall confidence in their classroom practice but these data are unable to tell us anything in detail about the specific instructional strategies that languages teachers are aware of and may employ in their classrooms with varying degrees of confidence. In order to gather more specific data about current reported practices, teachers were asked to respond to a set of research-informed principles thought to underpin effective teaching and learning of an L2 (see Table 3.7 for the full list taken from Macaro et al. (2016)). For each principle, teachers were asked to indicate whether they agreed with the following statements (Questionnaire 1, item 27):

1. This is a principle that I believe has some value
2. This is a principle that I have experimented with in my own practice
3. This is a principle that I regularly enact in my own practice

Across the sample, there was broad agreement from teachers that each of the eight principles was of value (agreement ranged from 88% to 100%) as can be seen in Table 4.3. Widespread agreement with the value of each principle did not however equate to reports of widespread enactment of these principles in teachers' classrooms. The average reported enactment of the four principles relating to oral interaction ranged from 54.9% (learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things that they are not sure are correct) to 74.5 % (Students should be explicitly taught strategies to use when faced with communication difficulties). It seems that a majority of teachers feel they are already teaching some of the coping skills that support spontaneous conversation, but many do not feel that they are successfully integrating spontaneous conversation into their lessons.

Principle 2 (learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things that they are not sure are correct) and 7 (writing should be developed as a skill in its own right, not just as a consolidation of other language skills) were the least regularly enacted across the sample and these may therefore represent areas in need of development work. These two principles both relate to the development of productive L2 skills, which have been identified as consistently under-developed in English secondary schools when compared with receptive skills (Mitchell, 2003; Ofsted, 2011).

There are no statistically significant associations between teachers' reported enactment of the principles and either their school membership or the number of years of teaching experience that they report. This suggests that other factors at an individual level account for the variance in teachers' responses.

Table 4.3: L2 teachers' reported engagement with research-informed principles about L2 teaching

	% Agreement with each statement (N=51)				
Language Teaching Principle	**1.**This is a principle that I believe has some value	**2.**This is a principle that I have experimented with in my own practice	**3.**This is a principle that I regularly enact in my own practice	**Mean weighted engagement score** (from 1-3)	**Std. Deviation**
Principle 1 Oral Interaction	96.1	74.5	58.8	2.1	0.89
Principle 2 Oral Interaction	100	96.1	54.9	2.5	0.58
Principle 3 Oral Interaction	92.2	78.4	60.8	2.1	0.96
Principle 4 Oral Interaction	96.1	82.4	74.5	2.0	0.75
Principle 5 Reading & Listening	100	82.4	62.7	2.2	0.72
Principle 6 Strategic Approaches	98	88.2	58.8	2.5	0.76
Principle 7 Writing	98	86.3	54.9	2.3	0.76
Principle 8 Skills Focus	88.2	70.6	56.9	2.0	1.06

4.3 Teachers' self-identified learning needs and priorities

This section analyses teachers' free-text responses to the question 'what aspect of your classroom teaching, if any, would you most like to develop?' (Time 1, item 25). Responses were coded and categorised to enable a comparative analysis of themes across schools. At the beginning of the study teachers identified a broad range of development priorities covering aspects of all four main language skills as well as more general pedagogic issues such as developing strategies for inclusion and integrating technology into the classroom (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Aspects of their professional practice that respondents would like to develop

	WHAT ASPECTS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE WOULD RESPONDENTS MOST VALUE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP AT TIME 1? *Teachers' free-text responses (n=52) have been coded and only those categories mentioned by two or more teachers have been included in this table. Please note that some teachers mentioned multiple categories in their responses.*													
	Improving speaking skills	Differentiation / personalisation	Developing assessment practices	Teaching A Level	Developing learners' independence	Increasing student engagement/ motivation	Developing knowledge of new exams and specifications	Developing use of technology for teaching	Improving writing skills	Improving listening skills	Teaching literature	Curriculum planning	Achieving a balance between accuracy and fluency	Developing teacher's own language skills
Aspen				1	1									
Birch	3	1	4		2	1	1	1	2			2		
Cedar				1							1			
Douglas-Fir	3			2				1	1	1	1			
Elm		1				1	1							
Fig	2	2	1											
Ginkgo	1	1		1									2	
Hawthorn			1											
Ivy	1					1		1						
Juniper		1												1
Katsura					1			1						
Laurel		1					1							1
Mahogany	1						1			1				
Nutmeg	1					1								
Total number of mentions	**12**	**7**	**6**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**

Teachers' responses ranged from the very general, for example '*Teaching 6th form*' (TA2, Aspen School) to the more specific and actionable: '*Encouraging students to engage in spontaneous conversation in the TL*' (TD2, Douglas-Fir School). The development of pupils' speaking skills was identified as a key priority for L2 teachers' future professional development by more than a fifth of the respondents (12/52), spread across seven of the schools. Nine of the teachers specified the development of spontaneity in speaking as a key development need, which may reflect a greater emphasis on spontaneity in the National Curriculum and GCSE examination criteria (Edexcel, 2016; Ofqual, 2016).

Seven of the 52 respondents highlighted meeting the diverse needs of learners in the L2 classroom as a development priority. It has been found previously that L2 teachers, especially those trained at a time when disapplication of students with special educational needs and disabilities from language learning was common, may lack the '*necessary training, knowledge and resources in terms of materials and specialist support staff*' (Vilar Beltrán, Abbott, & Jones, 2013, p. xii) to create effective, inclusive classrooms. The data for this study was also collected at a time when many schools in England have begun to implement more mixed-attainment teaching across the curriculum on the basis of a lack of evidence for significant positive impacts of setting or streaming for high-attaining pupils and evidence suggesting harmful effects for those pupils who are labelled as lower-attaining (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018a; Hart, Dixon, Drummond, & Mcintyre, 2004).

Four teachers highlighted a need to increase their understanding of new technologies. This finding is unsurprising in an age that has seen an explosion of digital tools becoming available for computer assisted language learning (CALL) (Macaro et al., 2012). Lamb (2017, p. 322) asserts that developments in digital technology have been '*the most prolific source of innovation in L2 teaching methodology in contemporary times*' and that the successful integration of new technologies into and beyond the classroom may have significant positive impacts on students' engagement and motivation (an aspect that four respondents also identified as a priority for the future development of their practice).

Given that teachers completed this questionnaire in July 2016, just two months before the first teaching of newly reformed GCSEs and A Levels in September 2016, it is surprising that only four responses specify the need to become better acquainted with the new specifications and examinations. The influence of these changes may however be detected in mentions of A Level teaching (x5) and also literature teaching (x2) and speaking skills (x12), both of which are emphasised in the revised specifications (Dobson, 2018).

When asked how their chosen development focus might be of value to their pupils (Questionnaire 1, item 26), 10 of the 45 responses envisaged improvements to examination results, 10 focussed on the enhancement of language skills and 11 highlighted improvements to motivation or enjoyment (see Table 4.5). A concern with pupil motivation and enjoyment seems logical given that teachers' self-efficacy scores were lowest in relation to pupil engagement (see Table 4.1). It is also frequently reported in the literature that in England there is a downward trend in pupil motivation for L2 learning during the first three years of secondary school (Ofsted, 2015; Williams et al., 2002) and the most recent large-scale British Council report (Tinsley, 2019) found that 45% of the L2 teacher respondents in state schools felt that the Brexit vote had resulted in major challenges to language learning in their school, including negative pupil and parent attitudes. Teachers' linking of speaking skill development with global improvement in L2 skills is also supported by the literature: a recent European Commission report (European Commission, 2012) found a strong positive association between the frequency of pupils' L2 use (as reported by their teachers) and pupils' scores on a range of language tests.

Table 4.5: Teachers' perceptions of the value of their identified development area for pupils

	WHY WOULD THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONDENTS' CHOSEN ASPECTS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE BE OF VALUE TO THEIR PUPILS? *Teachers' free-text responses (n=45) have been coded and categorised*								
	Improved exam results	Improved language skills	Increased engagement / motivation	Increased enjoyment	Improved sense of progression	Improved access to learning materials	Increased confidence	Increased uptake	Increased resilience
Aspen		1	1						
Birch	1	2		1	2	1	1	1	
Cedar	1	1				1			
Douglas-Fir	2	1		1		1			
Elm	2			1					
Fig	2	1	1					1	
Ginkgo			1	1					1
Hawthorn		1		1					
Ivy			2				1		
Juniper		1			1				
Katsura			1			1			
Laurel	2				1				
Mahogany		1							
Nutmeg		1					1		
Total number of mentions	**10**	**10**	**6**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

Following teachers' free-text responses, they were presented with a set of research-informed principles for the teaching of an L2 (Macaro et al., 2016) and asked which principle, if any, they would most like to further explore in their teaching (Time 1, Q29). The results are summarised in Table 4.6. They align closely with those reported above in that over 70% of teachers chose a principle related to oral interaction (Principles 1-4) and the majority (53% or 27/51) identified Principle 2 ('learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things they are not sure are correct') as the principle that they would most value the opportunity to develop in their teaching. A range of reasons were given for the prioritising of the four principles related to oral interaction, but the most frequently offered reasons were:

1. a belief that a focus on spontaneous speaking could increase pupils' confidence (8/38)
2. a belief that a focus on spontaneous speaking could improve exam results (6/38)
3. a belief that speaking is the most important language skill (5/38)

In relation to pupil confidence, one teacher explained that a focus on spontaneous speaking '*empowers students and gives them the confidence and the tools to communicate well'* (TB2, Birch School). Another noted that in order to develop their confidence pupils '*need to have the experience of succeeding in 'getting the message across'* (TF1, Fig School). Comments about changing examination requirements were characterised by terms such as 'require(s)' (x4) and 'essential/must' (x4). One teacher observed:

> *Most pupils up to at least KS4 have a real 'block' about spontaneous speaking (thanks partly to controlled assessment culture of recent years) […] the new spec GCSEs are going to require much more spontaneity in speaking.* (TF1, Fig School)

Some remarks highlighted the difficulties that teachers have experienced in developing pupils' speaking. These comments are well-represented by the following:

> *This is an area of language learning which I strongly value but unfortunately also find very difficult to succeed in. I find students generally very scared of talking in the target language and of taking risks.* (TB5, Birch School)

Taken together, these questionnaire responses indicate a significant concern with the development of pupils' spoken language, and it seems that many of the L2 teachers in my dataset would value targeted support with this aspect of their practice. This development priority appears to be driven both by changing assessment structures and a strongly articulated belief, in line with current policy and research (Macaro et al., 2016), that communicative competence is the most valuable of the language skills and the key to developing pupils' confidence and self-efficacy (see Table 4.5 and Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Language teaching principles chosen by teachers as priorities for development and the reasons given

			Reasons given for teachers' choice of principle *(Teachers' free-text responses were coded and categorised. From 37 responses, a total of 50 reasons were coded)*								
		Number of teachers who chose this principle as a development priority	to increase pupils ' confidence / self-efficacy	to improve exam results	this is the most useful / important skill	to foster independence / reduce reliance on support	this will be useful for pupils' future lives	this is the most difficult skill to teach	to increase pupils' willingness to take risks	to devote more time to this skill	to increase pupils' engagement / enjoyment / motivation
Language Teaching Principles (*Source: Macaro et al., 2016; the principles are also detailed in full in Table 3.7*)	Principle 1 Oral Interaction	**4**		2							
	Principle 2 Oral Interaction	**27**	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	1	2
	Principle 3 Oral Interaction	**3**	3		1	2		2	1		
	Principle 4 Oral Interaction	**2**	1				1			1	
	Principle 5 Reading & Listening	**4**		1							
	Principle 6 Feedback	**3**	2								
	Principle 7 Writing	**6**	1	3		1					1
	Principle 8 Skills Focus	**2**	1		1				1		
	Totals	**51**	12	10	6	5	4	4	4	2	3

4.4 MFL departments' subject development and improvement plans

Twelve of the fourteen HoDs reported their MFL Development and Improvement Plans (MFLDIPs) in free-text responses and indicated which plans were linked with wider whole-school priorities (Head of Department Questionnaire 1, item 26 and 27). These data are detailed in Table 4.7. Given the prevalence of the target to improve pupils' speaking skills in the data collected at individual teacher level, it is striking that only three of the twelve HoDs made explicit mention of speaking within their MFLDIPs. In fact, when reading the HoDs' development priorities it is only discernible that these priorities relate to L2 departments in five of the thirteen responses (Douglas-Fir, Elm, Ivy, Katsura and Laurel).

Within HoDs' development plans the pressing need to prepare for new GCSE qualifications at KS4 took centre stage (10/12 responses) and more specific targets that may have formed a part of this strategy tended to be subsumed within the global exam-related focus. At a departmental level it is evident that development priorities were explicitly driven in several contexts by uptake/attainment targets and performance-management aims. This is particularly clear at Fig school, where the HoD added optional free-text comments that the team were under '*pressure to prepare for Ofsted*' (TF3, Fig School). Birch, Douglas-Fir, Elm and Nutmeg HoDs highlighted development priorities specific to KS3 with two of these targets relating to the need to devise new assessments at this level in the wake of the removal of National Curriculum levels. Elm HoD planned to align the KS3 curriculum with the KS4 assessment requirements of the new GCSE.

The enhancement of teachers' and/or pupils' learning was present only by inference in most HoDs' stated development priorities (the only explicit mention of teacher learning comes in the form of a plan for the '*development of staff second language skills*' (TK1, Katsura School)).

Table 4.7: Head of department Subject Development and Improvement Plans

School	**Development Plans** (*free text responses are reproduced here following teachers' exact wording. An asterix indicates that the development plan is linked to a whole school priority)*
Aspen	Getting ready for the new exams*; Raising attainment at GCSE (German)*; Developing use of 6th form representatives to support younger years
Birch	Planning for changes at KS4 and KS5; Marking and feedback*; Assessment at KS3
Cedar	Hit GCSE Target*; Hit A-level Target*; Increase recruitment at GCSE and A-level*; Prepare for new curriculum and qualifications*
Douglas-Fir	Key Stage 3 levels and new assessments*; Key Stage 3 literary texts; New GCSE course and AS levels*; Group Talk[8]
Elm	Research new GCSE and A Level requirements; Teach Spanish to Year 7 for the first time; Adapt KS3 SoW to reflect KS4 changes; Use of whole school behaviour monitoring system*
Fig	FFTd Targets[9] at GCSE and ALPS 3[10] at KS5; Quality of Teaching (challenge, differentiation, FAR marking[11])*; Leadership - quality of monitoring to identify areas for improvement; Decide on new Exam Specs for GCSE and A Level
Hawthorn	Closing the gap*; Results in line with Progress 8 predictions[12]*; New staff; New GCSEs
Ivy	Increase spontaneity in speaking; Consistency in marking at KS4; Revising schemes of work; Encouraging and celebrating student's achievement
Juniper	Reduce the gap with PPG[13] students*
Katsura	Interventions to raise standards*; Preparation for new exam specs*; Development of staff second language skills; Development of SoW
Laurel	Marking for OFSTED; New GCSE and A Level; Target language use; Authentic materials
Nutmeg	Challenging Learning at KS3*; PPG attainment at KS4*

Follow-up interviews with HoDs in Sept/Oct 2017, a year after the collection of their MFLDIP targets displayed in Table 4.7, presented an opportunity to gather more detailed data about the PL priorities of TD4, TF5, TG3, TI3, TK4 and TN1 and the extent to which these had changed over the course of the previous year. I found that the priorities of all six HoDs I interviewed were still dominated by discussions

[8] This is a well-known methodology for encouraging peer-to-peer interaction in the L2
[9] The Fischer Family Trust is a non-profit organisation that provides and processes school performance data, target setting and benchmarking information (see https://fft.org.uk)
[10] Alps is a company that offer data analysis tools for schools, generating minimum expected grades for use in target setting and offering performance reports against national benchmarks (see https://alps.education/)
[11] Feedback and Response
[12] A secondary school accountability measure based on GCSE attainment (for more information see Department for Education, 2018)
[13] The Pupil Premium Grant is additional funding allocated to publicly funded schools for each pupil registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the preceding six years (for more information see https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings)

of new specifications at KS4 and KS5. It seemed that a year of teaching the new GCSE and A Level specifications had not made these development targets any less salient and anxieties around the first examinations of the new specifications were increasing rather than decreasing. Ivy HoD confirmed that her target to develop pupils' spontaneity in their speaking went hand in hand with a focus on teachers' conducting and marking of speaking examinations at KS4. She explained that this remained such a high-priority due to the high-stakes nature of the GCSE assessments:

> *I think as language teachers we have a big responsibility when we conduct the exams because if you're not doing it right you can completely mess it up for the student. It's not the same as other subjects where, OK, you prepare them for an exam that they're sitting in the hall ... we are actually conducting it so if we get the timings wrong or don't ask the right questions… I don't think people realise but it's really very stressful... it's very stressful because do it wrong and that's it. You don't get a second chance.* (TI3 interview, Ivy School)

Fig HoD also elaborated on the KS4 targets she had identified for her team. She expressed a sense of powerlessness in her interview that centred on a lack of understanding about how to lead her team's development of effective teaching strategies to maximise examination success:

> *The main thing now is just year 11 exam results. [I worry about] just how the hell are we going to get these results? and the worry about [...] what tier to put the students in for, what the hell the grade boundaries are going to look like, what is required for a 9?* (TF5 interview, Fig School)

Ginkgo HoD was planning for a strong focus on developing pupils' speaking skills but she was notably less concerned about this aspect of her team's work than some of the other HoDs. She explained that she felt a move '*straight from the old GCSE to this [new specification] is a massive jump whereas for the last few years [previous HoD] moved us on to the iGCSE which actually isn't that dissimilar to the new GCSE'* (TG3 interview, Ginkgo School). The space freed up by the new specification being a less pressing concern was given to developing dialogic feedback practices that TG3 hoped would encourage pupils to ask questions that would move their learning on such as *'I'm not sure I've done this correctly' or 'I've tried to do this using a dictionary is this right?*' (TG3 interview, Ginkgo School).

4.5 Concluding comments

The teachers in this study reported generally high levels of self-efficacy for their teaching practice but there was a significant overall pattern of declining self-efficacy scores across the year. For the 31 teachers who completed all four questionnaires, there was no sign of the expected gradual recovery of self-efficacy scores by the end of the 2016/17 academic year (the annual rhythm I had predicted based on patterns of stress and engagement identified by Moir (1999)).

Teachers' lowest average self-efficacy scores were reported for test items related to 'student engagement'. Increasing student enjoyment or engagement was frequently cited as a reason for teachers' chosen development priorities and several teachers expected the development of learners' L2 speaking skills to result in higher pupil engagement. There is support in the literature for this connection: Crichton (2009) suggests that if teachers can encourage their learners to make meaningful and spontaneous use of language, the sense of progress that this instils can build pupils' confidence and boost motivation to learn.

There are striking similarities between the findings of Macaro and Erler's (1998) study of 53 MFL HoDs in South-East England and the data from teachers in this study twenty years later: The majority of teachers in both studies reported that they would value support in developing their pupils' spoken use of the L2. In the current study, teachers highlighted spontaneity and fluency as the key speaking skills in need of development. Over the course of the different questionnaire items explored above, this priority was highlighted by teachers at all schools and at all stages of their career. The saliency of pupils' spoken language as a priority in the data could be an indication of the importance attached to pupils' interaction and self-expression in the L2 as the ultimate object of communicative language teaching (Loewen & Sato, 2018; Pachler et al., 2009) or it could be a response to the emphasis on spontaneity in high-stakes L2 assessments (Edexcel, 2016). It could also indicate that the development of pupil talk is a universally challenging aspect of L2 teaching and learning. Previous research has been found this to be the case, particularly in instructed L2 learning settings with limited curriculum time during which pupils can be exposed to and make use of the language, such as is the case in England (Crichton, 2009).

One of the teachers' comments in relation to this development need was that '*more time with the assistants would be helpful*' (TD3, Douglas-Fir School). It is of note that Douglas-Fir school is one of only three schools in the sample that currently employ Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs), who offer an opportunity for teachers and pupils alike to benefit from regular contact with a native speaker of the L2.

A recent Language Trends survey (Tinsley & Board, 2017) also reported that just 33% of state schools are currently investing in FLAs and so for many L2 teachers, FLAs are an inaccessible resource for addressing the need to offer pupils more opportunities to develop their speaking skills.

Other frequently mentioned development priorities included meeting the needs of diverse learners; developing the skill of writing; and preparing pupils for new examination formats. In explaining the reasons for their choices, teachers stress the need for pupils to obtain good examination results, but they also highlight the importance of building pupils' sense of confidence and enabling them to become more independent in their studies. Teachers' prioritisation of 'assessment' in relation to the introduction of new GCSE and A Level examinations mirrors the findings of Macaro and Erler (1998), who investigated teachers' self-reported PL needs and experiences in the wake of large-scale structural changes to the National Curriculum and who also found teachers prioritised the development of their understanding of how to assess L2 skill development in relation to the curriculum.

Whilst teachers identified a very wide range of development priorities and these were frequently related to specific aspects of L2 teaching and learning, the HoDs' development priorities for their departments were less diverse. Departmental development priorities were predominantly expressed in terms of desired outcomes and, taken together, they reflected a strong focus on meeting a range of school-specific and national accountability measures. Of the two roles that MFLDIP documents fulfil (firstly to set out plans for development and secondly to act as an artefact against which to hold teachers to account for their development), there seemed to be a clear leaning towards the latter function in the way in which HoDs formulated their priorities. Development priorities were rarely expressed in terms of either pupils' or teachers' learning, which is of concern given that research suggests development plans are more likely to be effective when they are clearly linked to specific teacher and pupil needs (Cordingley, 2015; Cordingley et al., 2018; Jensen et al., 2016).

Chapter 5 builds on the work of this chapter by investigating the nature of teachers' recent PL experiences and the factors constraining and facilitating teachers' development in relation to their PL needs and priorities.

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION II: TEACHERS' RECENT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

This chapter explores the data related to the following Research Questions:

RQ2: What are the main characteristics of L2 teachers' recent PL activities?

RQ3: To what extent are the characteristics of effective PL practices (as defined by Cordingley et al., 2015) present in L2 teachers' descriptions of their valued PL activities?

RQ4: What factors facilitate or constrain L2 teachers' engagement in PL activities?

The chapter begins with a look at the participants' own conceptions of PL at the beginning of the period of data collection and the extent to which these might be characterised as expansive or restrictive interpretations of learning. Teachers' conceptions are linked to various positions in the debate about the nature of teacher professionalism (explored in Chapter 2). Next, I turn to the nature and quality of the PL that teachers have identified as their most valuable experiences, with a focus on the extent to which these activities share characteristics with the type of PL activities identified by recent research (Cordingley et al., 2015) as likely to be 'effective'. Finally, the chapter engages in a discussion of the individual and contextual factors that are identified as supporting or inhibiting participants' engagement in various kinds of PL. The data is explored at individual and departmental level to identify patterns that might be explained by contextual and/or individual factors.

5.1 Participants' conceptions of professional learning

There was considerable variation among the 54 teachers' responses to the question 'what does the phrase 'professional learning' mean to you?' The length of teachers' definitions ranged from 3 – 76 words, with a mean length of 20 words.

PL was frequently characterised as a continuous process (35 responses) for which teachers should take an active responsibility (25 out of the 35 responses). It seems that these teachers saw PL as an integral part of their professional role, a stance that has been found to be characteristic of highly professionalised education systems around the world (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Most teachers expressed the aim of their PL as the enhancement of their classroom practice (39 responses made this aim explicit). However, relatively few teachers linked their definition of PL explicitly to the aim of improving pupils' learning outcomes or experiences (seven responses, of which two were the HoDs at Aspen and Elm Schools).

Eight of the responses from teachers offered definitions of PL that highlighted the complexity and multi-faceted nature of teacher learning. These expansive descriptions align with research into the different

aspects of teachers' knowledge and skills (Winch, 2004; Winch et al., 2013), emphasising both *thinking* and *doing* (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). This was best captured by the following quotations:

- *[Professional learning is] a continual process of improvement; one that is non-linear, messy and that is continually re-negotiated. Professional learning at the school I am in is quite vaguely defined as it is associated and blended with lots of other terms. Professional learning for me means something which helps me to evolve and change as a practitioner in many ways: behaviours, ways of thinking, approaches to interactions, systems etc.* (TB7, Birch School)

- *Professional Learning to me involves taking and seeking opportunities for continuing development and continually reflecting and adapting your teaching to meet the need of each student in the classroom. This also involves seeking feedback and advice from other members of staff.* (TN2, Nutmeg School)

- *Evaluating and adapting my teaching methods whilst observing the impact of my teaching on every student I teach. It is a continuous stream of study and thinking based on my experience of a class, and how to improve my teaching taking in account many aspects of it.* (TB1, Birch School)

In contrast to the above, six teachers defined PL in ways that Leonard and Roberts (2016, p. 157) have termed '*constrained and bureaucratic*'. In the examples given below, teachers identify PL with instrumental learning that offers a recipe to be 'implemented' by teachers in their classrooms. This technicist view of teaching aligns with a more limited understanding of teacher professionalism (Winch et al., 2013).

[Professional learning is…]

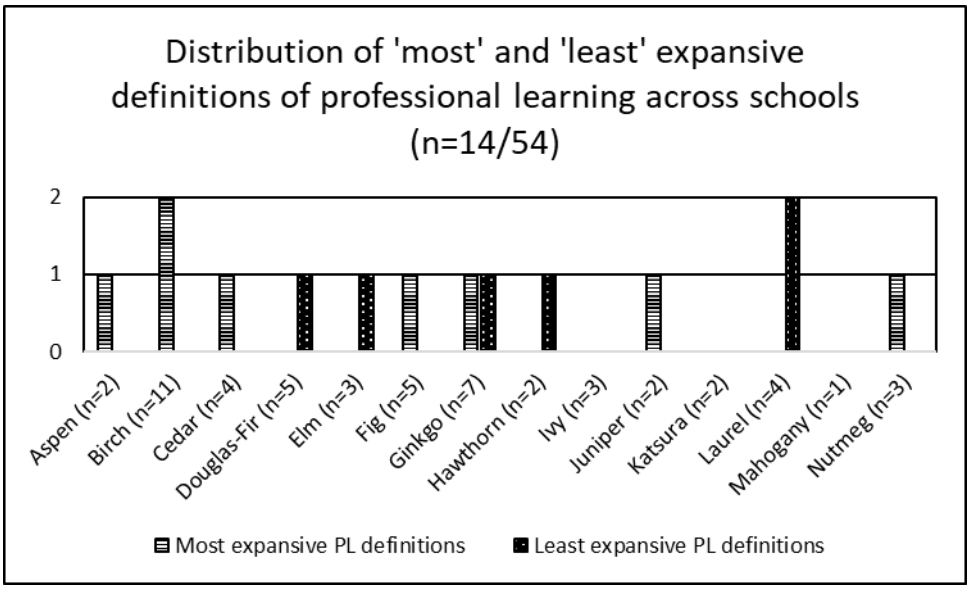
- *the understanding of curriculum development and the implementing of new teaching and learning strategies into lessons* (TD2, Douglas-Fir School)

- *acquiring practical skills for use in the classroom.* (TH2, Hawthorn School)

- *tips to aid teaching* (TL4, Laurel School)

The spread of these 'most' and 'least' expansive definitions of PL across different schools can be seen in Figure 5.1. Contrary to what one might expect, I did not find any clusters of similar responses that might indicate a closely shared departmental vision of PL. However, it is noteworthy that there is only one school (Ginkgo) in which both a 'most' and a 'least' expansive definition of PL occurred. The variation in teachers' definitions may reflect an overall haziness to the term PL and the lack of shared understandings of the term both within and across contexts.

Figure 5.1: Distribution of 'most' and 'least' expansive definitions of professional learning across schools



Brown et al. (2000) suggest that the Head of Department's conceptions of professionalism and teacher learning can exert a powerful influence on the rest of the teaching team. For this reason, I took a closer look at the definitions of PL given by HoDs (detailed in Table 5.1). Some HoDs' responses convey a sense of PL as a collaborative or collective endeavour: Juniper HoD uses the metaphor of a shared journey; the HoDs of Fig and Ivy school highlight their responsibility to support the learning of others in their team. Two HoDs (at Aspen and Elm school) link PL to enhanced pupil outcomes, making an instrumental rationale for PL explicit. There is some difference in the language HoDs used to conceptualise teacher's PL variously as an obligation and integral part of a teacher's professional role (Aspen, Elm) or as an opportunity (Birch, Ivy).

Responses from HoDs vary greatly in style and substance as do those from the wider sample of teachers. Overall, and in contrast to Brown et al.'s findings (2000), I found that individual teachers' conceptions of PL do not appear to be shaped by the HoD's own conception of the term.

Table 5.1: Head of Department conceptions of professional learning

School	Head of Department's response to the question 'What does the phrase 'professional learning' mean to you?
Aspen	To ensure that I remain equipped with the language skills and teaching skills to deliver high quality, engaging lessons, ensuring the best outcomes for our students.
Birch	The opportunity to develop teaching skills or to learn new skills relevant to my profession. The chance to learn about new developments in MFL pedagogy.
Cedar	Developing my practice, learning whilst working, identifying areas to improve.
Douglas-Fir	Professional learning is the understanding of curriculum development and the implementing of new teaching and learning strategies into lessons.
Elm	Developing understanding of current teaching methods and outcomes and learning about new ones through CPD [continuing professional development] in order to achieve the best results possible for students.
Fig	In general - improving my teaching and learning, continuing to improve as a teacher by sharing good practice, helping to develop others' teaching and learning. As a languages teacher- keeping up to date.
Ginkgo	Attending and participating in workshops, lectures or meetings looking at ways in which to further one's own teaching of languages but also the wider aspects of teaching.
Hawthorn	Develop/ learn new techniques and strategies as a Teacher and/or as a Head of Department.
Ivy	The possibility of learning how to improve my own practise [sic] and support others in my department as HoD.
Juniper	It's about a journey that we all follow and share to achieve our professional goals.
Katsura	Keeping up to date with specialist subject knowledge - language, culture. Also, developments in pedagogy and best practice plus technology. Changes to exam specifications.
Laurel	Tips to aid teaching.
Mahogany	Development of the individual in a school-based context.

5.2 Recent self-reported professional learning experiences

Content of PL experiences perceived as valuable

Teachers were asked to recall their most valuable learning experiences at Times 1, 3 and 4. At Time 1 (Q16), teachers were prompted to think back to the 2015-16 academic year and to describe up to three of their most valuable learning experiences. At Time 3 (Q4) and Time 4, (Q4) teachers reported their one most valuable PL experience from Sept 2016 onwards (if the same PL experience was reported at both Time 3 and Time 4 then the descriptions of that experience are included only once in the data reported and discussed below). A total of 240 descriptions of teachers' most valued PL were collected across the study.

In order to ascertain the topics that were the focus of participants' most valued PL experiences, 209 free-text responses[14] were grouped thematically using the PL categories from a recent large-scale OECD study (Schleicher, 2016). These results are displayed in Table 5.2. Sixty-three per cent of all responses fall into the two OECD categories relating to subject-specific knowledge and pedagogical competencies, demonstrating that teachers in this study valued learning focussed on the specifics of languages teaching above all other categories of PL. This finding is unsurprising given that a majority of teachers identified languages-specific development needs at Time 1, as discussed in Chapter 4. 'Student evaluation and assessment practices' was the next most frequently cited category of PL, accounting for 21% of all responses. Each response in this category specified a focus on either the changes to the 2014 National Curriculum for MFL or the changes to GSCE and/or A Level language assessments, with a typical response being '*online exam board training in how to conduct the GCSE speaking exam*' (TE1, Elm School). Teachers clearly valued opportunities to focus on these revised programme and assessment criteria, reflecting their desire to prepare pupils effectively for the new demands of high-stakes examinations. However, it is unfortunate that this focus has almost certainly been at the expense of teachers' access to a richer variety of PL content: of the ten remaining OECD PL categories, not a single one accounted for more than 3% of responses.

The responses of these MFL teachers reflect a nationwide pattern among lower-secondary school teachers across all subject areas. Data from the TALIS studies shows the proportion of teachers in

[14] 31 responses could not be categorised because they did not specify the content of the PL activity, for example '*sharing ideas with colleagues*' (Time 1, TA1, Aspen School).

England who reported a moderate or high need for additional training in pupil assessment practices increased from 22% to 29% between 2013 and 2018 and numbers of teachers reporting a need for increased knowledge and understanding of their subject field increased from 12% to 18%.

Table 5.2: Frequency (%) of teacher descriptions of their most valuable PL experiences between July 2016 and June 2017 by school

	OECD Categories of PL Content (source = Schleicher, 2016)														
	Knowledge and understanding of subject field	Pedagogical competencies in teaching subject field	Student evaluation and assessment practices	Knowledge of the curriculum	Student behaviour and classroom management	Approaches to individual learning	Teaching cross-curricular skills (e.g. problem solving)	Teaching students with special needs	Student career guidance and counselling	Developing cross-occupational competencies for future work or future studies	School management and administration	Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	ICT skills for teaching	New technologies in the workplace	N (number of responses)
Aspen	83.3		16.7												6
Birch	43.5	28.3	13	2.2					2.2	4.3	4.3	2.2			46
Cedar	64.7		11.8					5.9	5.9			11.8			17
Douglas-Fir	41.7	16.7	33.3				4.2		4.2						24
Elm	53.8		38.5					7.7							13
Fig	42.9		42.9					7.1			7.1				14
Ginkgo	57.7	11.5	3.8	3.8	3.8		7.7	3.8			3.8	3.8			26
Hawthorn	70	20	10												10
Ivy	50		37.5	12.5											8
Juniper	12.5	25	12.5	12.5			12.5	12.5	12.5						8
Katsura	90.9		9.1												11
Laurel	20	10	40	10	10		10								10
Mahogany			75							25.0					4
Nutmeg	50	25	16.7					8.3							12
All Schools	49.8	13.4	21.1	2.4	1	0	2.4	2.9	1.9	1.4	1.9	1.9	0	0	209

Frequency, duration and freedom of engagement in PL experiences perceived as valuable

At Time 1 (Q17), teachers reported the frequency with which they engaged in their most valuable PL experiences on a scale from 1 (= 'just once') to 5 (= 'very regularly – at least once per fortnight'). Given what is known about repeated exposure to and engagement with ideas resulting in more effective learning (Cordingley et al., 2015), I expected that teachers would be likely to report repeated engagement in the PL activities they considered valuable. However, this trend was not the case: 48% of the 141 responses reported either one-off courses (30%) or very infrequent engagement (less than once per term – 18%). Conversely, 29% indicated that they had regularly (14%) or very regularly (15%) engaged in their most valued PL experiences.

At Time 3 and Time 4, participants were asked some additional questions regarding the timing, frequency and duration of their most valued PL experiences and their responses are summarised in Table 5.3. The pattern of frequency is similar to that observed at Time 1, in that the majority of responses (40%) relate to one-off PL experiences. Additionally, the overall duration of engagement in these valued PL activities is limited: 55% of experiences lasted for a total of four hours or fewer, whilst only 22% of these experiences were engaged in for a combined period longer than the duration of one school day. These figures show that the extended embedding of learning into practice, envisaged as characteristic of high-quality and impactful PL (Jensen et al., 2016) was rarely a feature of the PL that these teachers reported as valuable. This could indicate that for these L2 teachers there were impactful forms of PL that were short in duration. Alternatively, these teachers' access to extended PL may have been limited, meaning that their reports of valued PL experiences may represent the most impactful of the limited range of experiences that were accessed. Based on the constraints to teachers' engagement in PL discussed in section 5.3 below, I believe this second interpretation to be the most likely.

Forty-six per cent of participants at Time 3 and Time 4 reported that they had engaged with their valued PL in their own time, either before or after school hours (39%) or at the weekend (7%). This demonstrates a high level of commitment to PL on the part of the participants. However, if valued PL opportunities are routinely scheduled outside of school hours, this may prevent teachers with other commitments (such as those associated with family life) from accessing them. Thirteen of the 33 respondents who reported engaging in their valued PL before or after school hours also indicated that this PL had been required rather than voluntary. This may be explained by moves in some of the schools to disaggregate whole-school INSET days and require attendance at PL events during shorter twilight sessions instead (Bubb & Earley, 2013).

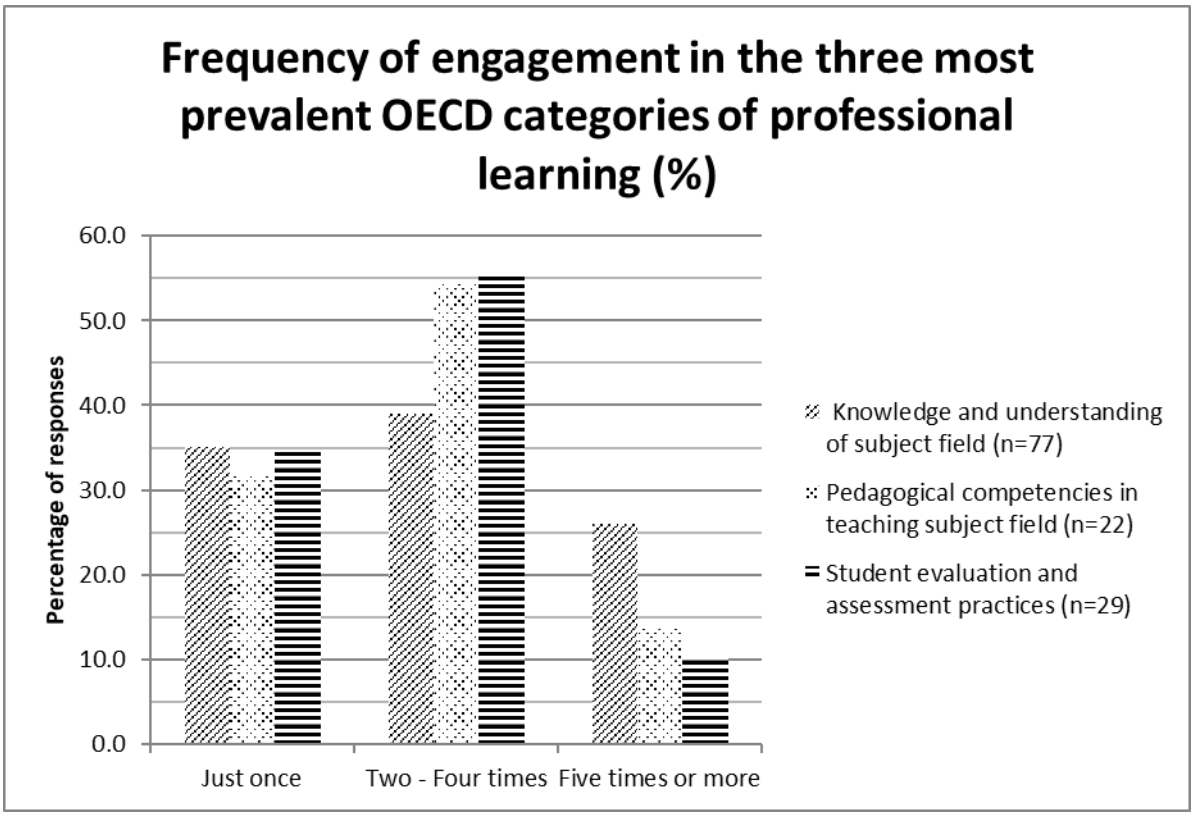
Table 5.3: Descriptions of the time, frequency and duration of participants' most valued PL

1. When did the PL take place? (%)*			
During my lessons	During school hours in my free periods, lunch or break	Before or after school hours on weekdays	At the weekend
35	19	39	7
2. How many times did the PL take place? (%)*			
Just once	2-3 times	4-7 times	8 times or more
40	26	13	21
3. Over how many hours did the PL take place? (%)*			
1 hour or less	Between 1 and 4 hours	Between 4 and 7 hours	More than 7 hours
13	42	22	22

*percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. This data is drawn from participant responses at Time 3 (n=46) and Time 4 (n=39)

Combining data from all four questionnaires, responses about the frequency of engagement in teachers' most valued PL were cross-referenced with the focus of teachers' reported learning. The frequency with which teachers said they engaged in the three most commonly reported OECD categories of PL is displayed in Figure 5.2. Overall, teachers reported the least frequent engagement for PL focussed on student evaluation and assessment practices (mean frequency score = 2.38). Of the three main OECD categories of PL described by teachers, a Kruskal-Wallis H test confirmed that the PL described in the 'student assessment' category (OECD category 3) was the least likely to be engaged in over more than one session ($\chi 2(2) = 11.231$, $p = 0.004$, with a mean rank frequency score of 40.8 for category 1 (subject knowledge), 41.8 for category 2 (pedagogical competencies in subject) and just 20.7 for category 3 (student assessment)). This is likely to be due to the prevalence of examination board training in this PL category: examination board training sessions tend to consist of a single input or a short sequence of webinars.

Figure 5.2: Frequency of engagement in top three OECD categories of professional learning



Moving beyond questions of frequency, each teacher questionnaire also asked teachers to indicate whether their engagement in their most valuable PL activities had been voluntary or required. Out of 233 descriptions of valued PL experiences, 59% were engaged in voluntarily and 41% were prescribed. I looked to see whether there were any differences in the nature and perceived impact of teachers' PL based on this variable. However, voluntary participation did not appear to predict any other aspects of teachers' valued PL such as the duration, the extent to which teachers felt the activity had impacted their thinking or the degree to which the activity was languages-specific in nature. This finding mirrors that of previous research: in her synthesis of research into teacher PL, Timperley (2008, p.16) explains that '*prior commitment does not guarantee greater engagement, and both voluntary and mandatory teacher participation have co-occurred with positive and negative outcomes for students*'.

Extent to which teachers' valued PL shared characteristics with PL practices known to be effective

As part of the final teacher questionnaire (Time 4, Q16), participants were asked to consider the extent to which each of eight teacher actions thought to embody effective PL practices (Cordingley, 2015) had featured as a part of their self-identified most valuable PL. These results are detailed in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Teachers' perceptions of the extent to which 8 teacher actions linked to effective PL featured as part of their most valuable PL activities

	Frequency of Response across all schools (n=42)		
PL Actions (taken from Cordingley, 2015)	This was not a feature of my PL (score=0)	Some elements of this featured in my PL (score=3)	This featured strongly in my PL (score =5)
1. Making use of specialist expertise, including expertise in the form of research evidence; using evidence and expertise to support planning in particular	20	13	9
		22	
2. Giving and receiving structured peer support using collaboration, especially reciprocal risk taking and professional dialogue, as core learning strategies	12	21	9
		30	
3. Undertaking sustained, enquiry-oriented learning over (usually) two terms or more supported by use of tools and protocols to discipline learning and secure coherence and progression	30	11	1
		12	
4. Learning to learn from looking through exploration of evidence about pupil outcomes and from observing teaching and learning exchanges especially those involving experiments with new approaches	19	18	5
		23	
5. Using aspirations for specific pupils and evidence about their learning as a driver for development	19	15	8
		23	
6. Focusing on why things do and don't work in different contexts to develop an underpinning rationale or practical theory alongside practice	13	18	11
		29	
7. Seeking out leadership support - time/encouragement/modelling - including specialist coaching and engaging in enquiry-oriented approaches to development	24	14	4
		18	
8. Actively seeking out specialist and peer support and taking responsibility for creating and taking opportunities for professional learning within day to day school life	10	26	6
		32	
Mean response frequencies across all 8 activities	18.4	17	6.6
		23.6	

Table 5.5: Descriptive Statistics for combined scores of engagement in activities characteristic of effective PL by school*

School	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Laurel	3	25	14.5	8.4	11	40
Fig	2	24	5.7	4	20	28
Hawthorn	3	22.7	2.1	1.2	21	25
Elm	3	21	6.1	3.5	14	25
Katsura	3	20	1.7	1	19	22
Nutmeg	3	18	4.6	2.6	14	23
Birch	6	16.3	9.5	3.9	8	32
Ginkgo	5	12.2	6.5	2.9	5	20
Juniper	2	12	4.2	3	9	15
Cedar	4	11.8	11.2	5.6	0	27
Douglas-Fir	4	9	6	3	6	18
Ivy	2	4.5	6.4	4.5	0	9
All Schools	40	16.1	8.8	1.4	0	40

*Scores range from 0 (no engagement in the 8 activities was reported) to 40 (strong engagement in all 8 activities was reported). Schools with more than one respondent across the effective PL measures are included in rank order. Aspen and Mahogany school each had only one respondent for these items (logging scores of 0 and 30 respectively).

When responses from all 42 respondents are taken together, the mean number of teachers reporting strong engagement across the eight actions associated with effective PL is just 6.6 (approximately 16%). By contrast, nearly three times as many teachers (M = 18.4 (approx. 44%)) indicated zero engagement. These figures could be interpreted as evidence of a need for a continued focus on raising awareness and increasing opportunities and incentives for teachers to engage in actions that are known to be effective in promoting teacher learning.

The undertaking of sustained, enquiry-oriented learning (action 3) was the least frequently reported action, with 30 out of the 42 teachers asserting that this did not feature as a part of their PL. By contrast, the enlisting of peer support and seizing opportunities for learning within everyday school life (actions 2 & 8) were the most frequently reported actions, perhaps because these activities are arguably the most accessible to teachers who find themselves short of time and resources. These findings are similar to those of Bolam et al. (2005) who found that secondary teachers frequently reported working together to take collective responsibility for pupil learning, but that they rarely had time or financial support for activities such as peer-observation or participation in award-bearing courses.

Table 5.5 summarises the overall scores for participation in activities characteristic of effective PL for each school. The large standard deviations recorded for teachers' responses within some schools reveal the high levels of variability in teachers' reported engagement *within* a single setting: at Laurel school one teacher (TL6) recorded a score indicative of strong engagement in all of the effective PL activities (40) whilst another teacher felt that very few elements of effective PL had been a feature of their learning, scoring just 11 (TL1). The teachers at Katsura and Hawthorn school were the most similar in their responses within each setting, recording moderate scores of 19-25.

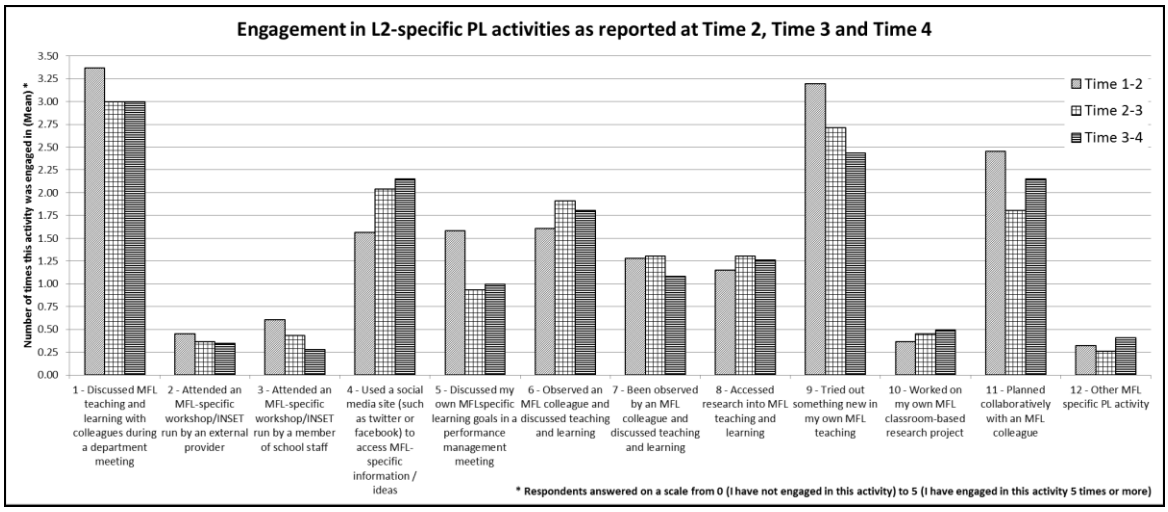
Limitations: There is high potential for variation in teachers' interpretations of and response to the eight actions described by Cordingley (2015). For example, action 2 encompasses both risk-taking and collaboration: where participants indicated that some elements of action 2 featured in their recent PL experiences, it is not possible to distinguish the specific elements to which they were referring. It should also be noted that the high variability evident both within and across schools may be amplified by the small numbers of teachers within some settings (just two respondents per school are included in some cases).

Engagement in languages-specific PL activities

Chapter 4 demonstrated teachers' strong endorsement of language-specific learning opportunities. In particular, a need for focussed work on the development of spontaneous speaking was identified. It is therefore of interest to investigate the extent to which teachers felt they did engage in a range of language-specific development activities over the course of the 2016/17 academic year.

At Times 2, 3 and 4, participants were presented with eleven languages-specific PL activities and asked how often, if at all, they had engaged in each activity since the beginning of the academic year (Time 2) or since their last questionnaire response (Times 3 and 4). These data are visualised in Figure 5.3, which shows that the pattern of overall engagement in each activity is relatively stable across the three time points.

Figure 5.3: Engagement in L2-specific PL activities at Time 2, Time 4 and Time 4



Discussions of the teaching and learning of languages during a department meeting was the most frequently reported activity: teachers engaged in this around 3 times per full school term (12 weeks) on average. Trying something new in one's teaching (activity 9) and planning collaboratively with a colleague (activity 11) were the next most frequently reported activities, although the frequency with which teachers reported experimenting in their classrooms declined substantially across the academic year. Teachers were least likely to report attending languages-specific training (activities 2 and 3) and working on their own classroom-based research project (activity 10). On average these three activities were engaged in less than once per term. Performance management discussions (activity 5) were, predictably, more frequently reported at the beginning of the school year. The pattern of increasing social media usage (activity 4) reflects an international upwards trend in teachers' pursuit of online, '*interest-based, self-directed learning opportunities that are available through their hand-held devices*' (Prestridge, 2019, p. 144).

Ten of the free-text comments left by teachers specified additional types of languages-specific learning that they had engaged in. Three comments related to teachers' mentoring of trainee teachers as PL, with TB11 (Birch School) saying that '*having trainees is a big help to CPD as it makes you observe and question your own practice and exposes you to new ideas*.' The potential PL benefits to taking on the role of mentor are well-documented in the literature (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Hobson et al., 2009; Kardos et al., 2001; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005). A further three comments related to the searching for and adapting of L2 resources online; two highlighted collaborative marking and moderation of mock examinations; one referenced a languages exchange trip; and one mentioned a teaching experience in a primary school.

A moderate correlation was found between teachers' mean scores across the study for frequency of engagement in the L2-specific PL activities described in Figure 5.3 and their overall scores for engagement in PL activities known to be effective (rho=.51, p=.001). This is an unsurprising result since contextualising learning within a subject area is accepted as an indicator of effective PL (Cordingley, 2018). When scores for individual L2-specific activities are investigated, collaborative planning (activity 11, rho=.45, p=.003), engaging in one's own classroom research project (activity 10, rho=.46, p=.002)) and accessing research (activity 8, rho=.46, p=.002) were strongly associated with overall scores for engagement in 'effective' PL.

5.3 Factors that facilitate or impede teachers' engagement in professional learning

This section will begin by reviewing the barriers and facilitators directly identified by teachers in their questionnaire and interview responses as having a perceived impact on their professional learning. This is followed by a discussion of a selection of factors raised directly by teachers or highlighted by the existing literature as likely to influence access to and/or engagement in professional learning.

Self-reported barriers to engagement in professional learning

The key barriers to accessing PL reported by teachers across Times 1 – 4 were: 1) a lack of time, 2) a lack of funding, 3) excessive workload, and 4) insufficient access to cover[15] (see Table 5.6). These four barriers were also identified in all six follow-up interviews with HoDs.

Table 5.6: Teachers' reported barriers to accessing professional learning

		Number of respondents who identified each barrier									
School	**Number of respondents who identified at least 1 barrier across Times 1-4**	**Lack of time**	**Lack of funding**	**Excessive workload**	**Lack of cover**	**Timing of PL outside working hours**	**Lack of opportunities**	**Ill health**	**Lack of energy**	**Disruption to teaching**	**Total number of barriers identified*** *Where participants identified a barrier more than once, it is included only once in this table
Aspen	2		2	1	1						4
Birch	10	9	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	27
Cedar	4	3	1	2		1	1				8
Douglas-Fir	7	6	4	3		2	1				16
Elm	3	1				2					3
Fig	5	4	1	3							8
Ginkgo	4	4		3							7
Hawthorn	2		1				1				2
Ivy	2	1	1	1	1						4
Juniper	2	1	1								2
Katsura	3	2			1						3
Laurel	4	2	3	1	2						8
Mahogany	2		2		1						3
Nutmeg	2	2	2	1	1						6
All schools	52	35	21	18	10	8	6	1	1	1	101

[15] Cover refers to the provision of an additional staff member to take on a teacher's duties during periods when they are absent (common reasons for absence being illness or engagement in other work-related activities)

Time- and finance-related barriers appear to be encountered in almost every context, which aligns with the extensively documented reductions in funding and staffing in schools across England in recent years (Hargreaves et al., 2006; Tinsley & Board, 2017). Where teachers identify insufficient time as a barrier, one plausible underlying cause is the impact of excessive workload and indeed, these two factors were frequently raised in combination (n=16/52). Together these two concerns account for 56% of all barriers identified. Comments from TB7 offer one example of the way in which issues of time, workload and finance can combine to create significant barriers to teachers' pursuit of extended professional development. TB7 wanted to undertake a part-time MSc course designed for and marketed at full-time, practising teachers. However, she felt that it would not be feasible to complete the course as intended and so, in order to create time and reduce her workload to make her participation in the MSc feasible, TB7 felt that she had to opt for part-time employment, sacrificing salary whilst simultaneously taking on the burden of financing half of her course (at a cost I estimate to be around £4000 (*University Tuition Fees: Reddin Survey*, 2019)). Of course, the decisions taken by TB7 would be out of reach for many teachers who could not afford to take such a significant salary cut:

> *The cost of my Masters was at considerable personal expense - my school funded 50% but it was a significant outlay - not really an obstacle but a financial burden. The key thing I feel is that I had to look mostly outside my own school to develop and also reduced my hours in order to create sufficient intellectual space to grow and have the time to think clearly. I feel I have taken a financial hit in order to grow in the way I want to as a professional so that I'm thriving rather than surviving / enduring full-time teaching.* (TB7, Time 1, Q21)

Concerns about lack of cover are likely to be due, in part, to a lack of available funding to pay for cover arrangements (Goodall et al., 2005), which means that these two barriers might be considered as interrelated. Teachers who are (or who believe they would be) denied cover arrangements will find themselves unable to access PL activities that take place during school hours. One teacher (TB5, Birch School) also highlighted a desire to avoid '*disruption to teaching*' and this concern for the continuity of pupils' educational experience is another possible underlying reason for school policies of restricted access to cover.

It is notable that most of the barriers reported in Table 5.6 can be described as external to the participants and encountered as part of the context within which teachers work. A '*lack of energy*' (cited by participant TB3, Birch School) is the only barrier that relates to an individual and this, in itself, might be seen as a product of adverse working conditions. The saliency of barriers that are positioned as external and beyond teachers' locus of control is a concern because existing literature suggests that a perceived lack of control may serve to systematically undermine teachers' agency and motivation to engage in PL (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Miller et al., 1988; Stillman, 2011).

Barriers in relation to the development of specific language teaching principles

An additional question about obstacles to development was asked at Time 1 (Q30). Teachers indicated which (if any) out of the eight languages-specific teaching principles (Macaro et al., 2016) they would like to further develop in their practice and subsequently they were asked whether there was anything that would impede their exploration of their chosen principle. Fifty-one teachers indicated a language teaching principle that they would like to explore in their teaching, and 22 of these teachers then offered a total of 33 envisaged barriers to their exploration of their chosen principle in the classroom.

Although the familiar barriers of time, funding and workload were common responses, both when teachers were asked generally about barriers to engagement in PL (see Table 5.6) and also when they were asked about barriers to specific practices that they might wish to develop in their teaching of languages, there were also some striking differences in response patterns to these two questions (compare Table 5.6 and Table 5.7). These differences may be in part due to an enduring tendency to automatically associate PL with formal engagement in courses (requiring time, funding, cover etc.) rather than with other approaches such as classroom experimentation with teaching methodologies.

When teachers reflected on the language-specific principle that they might like to develop in their own classroom teaching of languages, roughly a third of the potential barriers identified to doing so (barriers 10-15 in Table 5.7) can be categorised as relating to a perceived pupil deficit (in terms of behaviour, competence, confidence or work-ethic). The degree to which teachers feel they have the power to influence the low competency, confidence etc. of their pupils is likely to be key to their level of ongoing motivation to engage in experimentation with research-informed methodologies (Schieb & Karabenick, 2011). For this reason, it is a limitation of my data that I did not ask my participants to indicate the extent to which they felt that they had any power to surmount the barriers that they identified as preventing them from developing teaching practices in alignment with the research-informed principles.

Table 5.7: Teachers' reported barriers to the development of specific language teaching principles

Barriers teachers identified to developing their chosen principle	Language teaching principles teachers would like to develop						
	P.1	P.2	P.3	P.6	P.7	P.8	
	Oral Interaction – input & meaning negotiation	Oral Interaction – spontaneity	Oral Interaction – quality	Strategic approaches	Writing	Skills focus	Totals
1 Lack of time*		5		1		2	8
2 Lack of funding*		1					1
3 Lack of energy*		1					1
4 Excessive workload*		2					2
5 Disruption to GCSE curriculum coverage		2				1	3
6 Lack of high-quality resources		1				1	2
7 Moving classroom between each lesson		1					1
8 Unsupportive colleagues		1					1
9 Lack of teaching time		2				1	3
10 Pupils' low confidence		4	1				5
11 Pupils' poor behaviour		1					1
12 Pupils' low L2 competence		1			1		2
13 Pupil's poor work-ethic					1		1
14 Mixed-ability classes	1						1
15 Need for L1 grammar explanations	1						1
Totals	2	22	1	1	2	5	32

* barriers that were also identified as general barriers to teachers' PL (see Table 5.6)

Self-reported factors enabling engagement in professional learning

To investigate teachers' perspectives about what might help enable them to engage in PL, I asked a question about this directly after inviting them to identify an aspect of their practice that they would like to develop. Responses were coded and categorised for analysis. At Time 1 (Q30) and Time 2 (Q6), teachers were asked '*is there anything that would facilitate your development of this aspect of your teaching?*' This question invited teachers to offer some blue-sky suggestions. Subsequently, at Time 3 (Q17) and Time 4 (Q19), teachers were asked '*is there anything that you anticipate will facilitate your development of this aspect of your teaching?*' This question shifted the focus to elicit teachers' real-world expectations.

Firstly, when teachers were asked to imagine what would facilitate their PL, Figure 5.4 shows the most common suggestions were the provision of additional non-contact time to dedicate to PL (17/77) and access to courses (12/77). Both suggestions would entail some financial investment and structural changes to staffing, timetabling and provision of cover. The same is true of several other suggestions such as smaller class sizes, additional teaching hours with each class and provision of foreign language assistants. The latter two suggestions can also be found in the British Councils' language trends research reports (Tinsley, 2019; Tinsley & Board, 2017; Tinsley & Doležal, 2018). Teachers also highlighted the benefits of a whole team focus on a particular development area within the language faculty (8/77) and the opportunity to observe and discuss with colleagues (8/77). These suggestions could feasibly be implemented in resource-poor settings.

Figure 5.4: 'Blue sky' factors teachers envisage would facilitate the development of their teaching

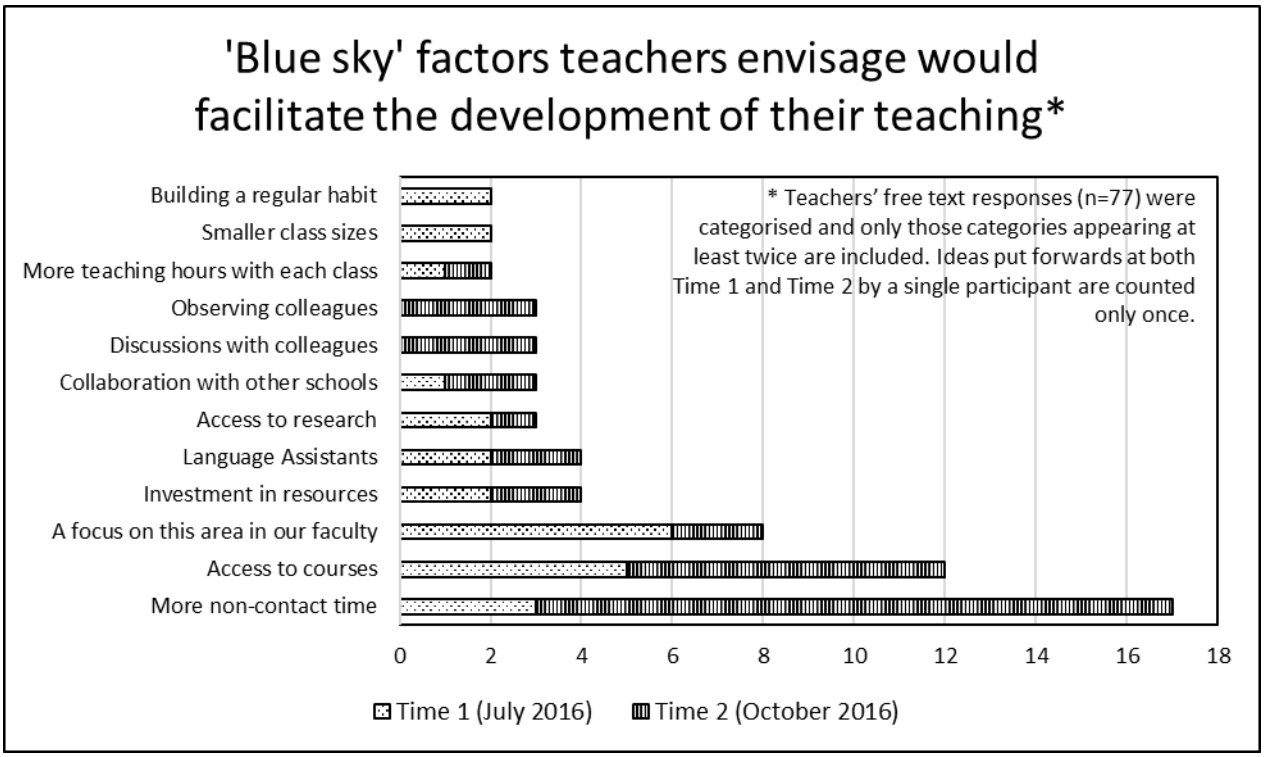
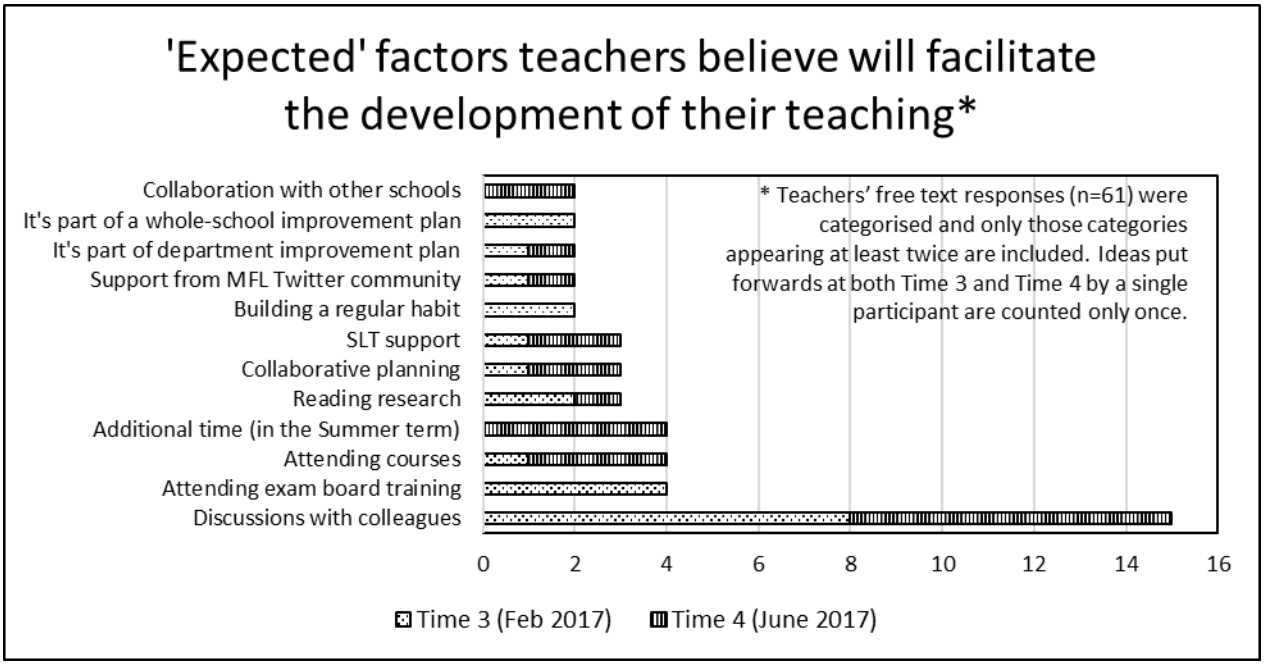


Figure 5.5: 'Expected' factors teachers believe will facilitate the development of their teaching



There are some clear differences between the 'blue sky' and the more concrete 'expected' facilitating factors identified by teachers (see Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5 respectively). 'Discussions with colleagues'

appears in both response sets but was, by some margin, the most frequently mentioned facilitator that teachers expected to have access to during the second half of the 2016/17 academic year (15/61). The prominence of this factor is likely to be due to the ready availability of this source of support in most schools. Beyond their colleagues, teachers expected to find support online (2/61) and from SLT (3/61). Four respondents also mentioned expectations of additional non-contact time in June, presumably anticipating time gained due to GCSE and/or A Level examination classes having completed their examinations. This supports the reasoning that the summer term is a practical time for teachers to intensify their focus on PL (Moir, 1999). However, it is unfortunate that this 'gained time' comes so late in the year, meaning that the benefits from teachers' PL are likely only to be fully realised in the subsequent academic year. There is also a risk of a loss of momentum as a result of the long summer break (a phenomenon that is well-studied in relation to pupils' learning but has not yet been investigated in relation to teachers' learning (Shinwell & Defeyter, 2017)).

Other factors appearing in both 'blue-sky' and 'expected' lists were collaborating with other schools; attending courses; reading research; and a whole-faculty focus. The overlap between facilitating factors in both lists is a positive finding, suggesting that desirable facilitating conditions were likely to be available to some participants in practice. Eight out of 61 respondents expected to attend a course or exam board training between February 2017 and the end of the school year. One participant at each of Ginkgo and Hawthorn schools indicated that their chosen development areas were in alignment with a whole department focus for development, which has the potential to reduce a sense of isolation and contribute to the conditions for sustained discussions with colleagues and 'joint work' (Little, 1990). Two teachers expected to be able to collaborate with other schools, which is of interest because this requires some investment in structures to enable collaboration across sites at a time when teachers are reporting scant availability of resources for such initiatives. Both teachers were based at Fig school which, despite being a rural school, is part of a larger Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), bringing with it the opportunity to meet teachers from other schools within the MAT. Fig school is also one of two schools with a very high level of network use more generally (see *Pool of expertise* section on p164).

The idea that habit-building could be a facilitating factor for teachers wishing to develop their practice is mentioned by more than one participant as both a 'blue sky' and an 'expected' factor. This suggests that the need to embed new ideas in practice over a sustained period of time (Cordingley et al., 2015) is endorsed by these participants and there is a recognition of individual responsibility for enacting this.

The following sections explore in greater detail some of the individual and contextual factors that have been identified by teachers in this study (as discussed above) and/or in the existing literature as likely to act either as an impediment to or catalyst for effective PL.

Individual Factors

I interpret the high levels of variation in teachers' reported experiences of PL *within* school settings as pointing to the mediating influence of individual differences and providing support for the argument that '*personal factors appear to be more significant in predicting professional learning activities than task and work environment factors*' (Kwakman, 2003, p. 166). This section will explore factors that have been identified in existing literature as likely to be of importance alongside factors that appear particularly salient in my data set.

I began looking at individual differences by exploring descriptive statistics, correlations, t-tests/Mann-Whitney U and ANOVA/Kruskal–Wallis tests to identify any patterns in my data. I found no statistically significant associations in the data between a range of demographic variables and the extent to which participants reported having engaged in the eight PL activities that are known to be effective. I explored the following variables: level of experience (number of years in teaching); level of qualification; gender; level of managerial/leadership responsibility; and contractual status (full- or part-time; permanent or fixed-term). The lack of associations was surprising in some cases. For example, I had anticipated that teachers holding a higher degree (Masters or Doctorate) would indicate that they found it easier to access research about the teaching of languages since these degrees include some training in the conduct and use of research (Time 1, Q23), but independent samples t-tests established no significant difference between teachers who had experienced study at a higher level and those who had not.

Four of the interrelated individual variables identified by Duggan (2007) as affecting teachers' professional engagement emerged as significant from the data and are explored below: teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching their subject; their level of interest in learning; their level of stress; and their sense of 'connectedness' to their professional futures.

Sense of self-efficacy

Previous research has found positive associations between teachers' sense of self-efficacy for teaching and their overall work engagement and disposition to learning (Day & Gu, 2007; Duggan, 2007; Jones & Gordon, 2020). For participants in this study there is a significant, positive correlation between teachers' average sense of professional self-efficacy (measured by the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale developed

by Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and their overall reported engagement in PL activities known to be effective (r=.37, p=.017). There is also a pattern of positive association between overall self-efficacy scores and mean scores for frequency of engagement in L2-specific learning activities (r=.38, p=.038). These results suggest that teachers who already evaluated their global language teaching abilities highly were accessing more effective and frequent PL than their counterparts with lower levels of self-efficacy. The underlying causes for this may well be a combination of personal and contextual factors as explored in the sections below. In terms of the direction of causality, TALIS data suggests that engagement in effective, school-embedded PL can lead to higher levels of self-efficacy (Schleicher, 2016). Meanwhile, Hiver (2013) found that teachers reporting high levels of self-efficacy were also more likely to be proactive in identifying 'enhancing' PL opportunities, thereby creating a mutually reinforcing cycle. When examining individual PL activities, I found some support for Hiver's (2013) conclusions: there is a strong correlation between teachers' overall sense of self-efficacy and the frequency with which they report trying out something new in their own language teaching (r=.48, p=.000). It may be that a certain level of confidence in one's teaching abilities empowers teachers to take risks and introduce innovations in their classrooms, which may in turn nurture a sense of professional agency, autonomy and self-efficacy.

Level of interest in professional learning

Kennedy (2016) highlights the fact that each individual's level of interest in a learning experience has a significant impact on their level of engagement and subsequent success. At Time 1 (Q13), teachers indicated their overall level of interest in pursuing PL opportunities to enhance their classroom practice. Table 5.8 shows that the teachers in this study reported a strong interest in pursuing professional learning opportunities: just six of the 52 teachers (spread across four different schools) indicated a neutral stance or moderate lack of interest. Three teachers who gave neutral responses offered explanations for their answers: TC4 (Cedar) had recently returned to work from maternity leave and was still struggling to balance work and home life. TA1 (Aspen) explained that their interest level fluctuated and depended entirely on the nature of the PL on offer and TB7 (Birch) reported: '*my interest has been affected by a lack of differentiated learning opportunities in my school. I have done a lot of self-directed study to develop as a teacher and professional over the last two years*'. The comments of these three teachers do not appear to be in any way hostile to the idea of PL; rather they highlight some of the challenges in making PL opportunities attractive to and effective for diverse individuals, and accessible in terms of time and workload.

Table 5.8: Teachers' level of interest in professional learning opportunities (Time 1)

	Over the 2015-16 academic year, how interested were you in pursuing Professional Learning opportunities to enhance your classroom practice?					Total
	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Neither interested nor disinterested	Quite interested	Very interested	
Aspen			1	1		**2**
Birch		1	1	4	5	**11**
Cedar			2	1	1	**4**
Douglas-Fir				3	2	**5**
Elm				1	2	**3**
Fig			1		4	**5**
Ginkgo				2	4	**6**
Hawthorn				1	1	**2**
Ivy				2	1	**3**
Juniper				1	1	**2**
Katsura					2	**2**
Laurel				2	1	**3**
Mahogany				1		**1**
Nutmeg				2	1	**3**
Total	**0**	**1**	**5**	**21**	**25**	**52**

Although positive associations were found between teachers' level of interest in PL and their engagement in effective PL activities, these trends did not reach a level of statistical significance except in one case: there was a positive association (rho=.49, p=.004) between teacher's reported level of general interest in pursuing PL activities and the extent to which teachers reported '*making use of specialist expertise, including expertise in the form of research evidence; using evidence and expertise to support planning in particular*' (Cordingley, 2015, p.240)). Previous research has noted that it is not always easy for teachers to access evidence (and research evidence in particular) (Leat et al., 2015) and so high levels of intrinsic motivation may help teachers to sustain a proactive pursuit of evidence and expertise to help them develop.

Teachers also reported the factors that they felt had motivated them to participate in PL activities over the 2015-16 academic year (Time 1, Q20). Forty-eight teachers offered a total of 65 motivations, which I then categorised for analysis (see Table 5.9). Almost half of the teachers (23/48) said that they were motivated by wanting to become better teachers, with five of these specifying a vision of future

enhanced student outcomes as a key motivator. A quarter of teachers (12/48) highlighted their own intrinsic motivation and interest in learning, with responses such as '*I love to learn and am keen to improve myself*' (TK1, Katsura School). Four teachers also explained that they are motivated by a desire to avoid becoming bored or stagnating. The obligation to meet job demands (8/48) and to stay up to date with changes in curriculum and examinations (7/48) were frequently raised instrumental motivators. TF5 reminds us that motivations are often many and varied within a single individual: '*enjoyment, desire to improve, interaction with my colleagues, being made to do so by SLT!*'.

Table 5.9: Teachers' motivations for participating in professional learning activities

What motivated you to participate in professional learning activities in 2015-16? * 48 teachers offered responses, which have been categorised into a total of 65 motivations	**Number of mentions**
desire to become a better teacher	23
personal enjoyment / interest / satisfaction	12
desire to meet job description/demands	8
desire to stay up to date with changes	7
fear of becoming bored / stagnating	4
desire to interact with colleagues	4
desire to achieve career goals	2
availability of relevant courses	2
desire to maintain student outcomes	1
availability of low-cost courses	1
easy access to course information / easy booking system	1
Total	65

Qualitative data in the form of free-text comments throughout the questionnaires also shed some light on teachers' individual motivations for PL. Echoing the findings of Day and Gu (2007), four of the 16 mid-career teachers in the dataset mention a change in their focus from mastering the teaching of their subject to wider professional roles such as leading the induction of others into the profession (TG3, TB10, TK2), or taking on pastoral and academic leadership roles with management responsibilities (TB7, TG3). For example, TG3's most valuable PL included heading up '*a school improvement group on inclusive teaching*' and '*delivering NQT+1 sessions*' whilst TG7 valued the work she had done to complete '*leadership training'* and a '*coaching course through the Institute of Leadership and Management in London*'. These findings suggest the importance of tailored programmes of PL that are can engage colleagues with varying motivations and interests. Some PL interests may be crudely predicted based on teachers' career stage but for the most part, it is likely to be helpful to give teachers an element of autonomy to determine the direction of their own learning.

Family commitments

A recurrent theme in teachers' qualitative comments was the competing demands of work and family. Nearly half of teachers' most valued PL took place outside of school hours (see Table 5.3) and this was identified as problematic for teachers with caring responsibilities in their home lives. Across the questionnaires, seven teachers (TB7, TB12, TC4, TC5, TD4, TD5, TG2) highlighted the issue in their free-text comments, a selection of which are reproduced below:

'*I would do more if I didn't have three young children*' (TC5, Cedar School)

'*It is hard to juggle extra things with family life*' (TD5, Douglas-Fir School)

'*It did not prevent me from going, but it would have been great to be able to attend the Languages Live show on a school day rather than sacrificing family time on a Saturday*' (TD4, Douglas-Fir School)

The teachers in this study who mentioned caring responsibilities as a barrier maintained an interest in PL but felt that there were additional barriers created by the fact that PL was frequently framed as something to be completed in teachers' free time and at their own expense. This creates a situation in which an individual's varying levels of external commitments, motivation and resources have a significant impact on the extent to which they access learning opportunities.

Stress

Teachers were asked to indicate the level of school-related stress (if any) that they had experienced during specific time-windows at Time 2, Time 3 and Time 4. Responses were collected on a scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) and the data collected cover five of the six terms making up an academic year from the first week of school in September 2016 to the end of school term 5 in June 2017 (see Figure 5.6 and Table 5.10). Self-generated reporting data for a phenomenon such as stress are subject to much variation based on participants' own interpretations of the term. Nonetheless, this self-report data does provide some idea of teachers' experiences and offers a starting point to understanding the impact of subjective degree of stress on teachers' learning. Average reported levels of stress across the year fell between 'moderate' (=3) and 'high' (=4). The peaks of reported stress during term 2 and term 4 align with troughs in teachers' self-efficacy scores and their sense of 'connectedness' to their professional futures. It seems that the periods leading up to the Christmas and Easter breaks are particularly challenging, perhaps due to accumulated stress without significant time off to recuperate. The second of the peaks visible in Figure 5.6 may also reflect the impact of preparation for language speaking examinations, which typically fall in term 5.

Figure 5.6: School-related stress levels during term time (2016-17 academic year)

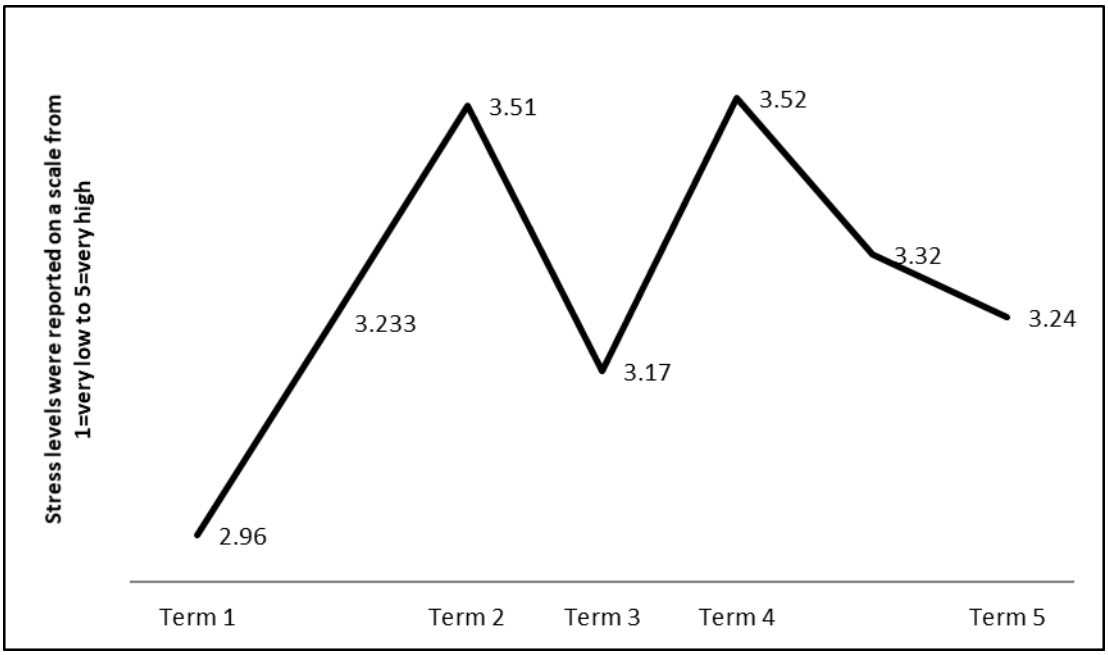
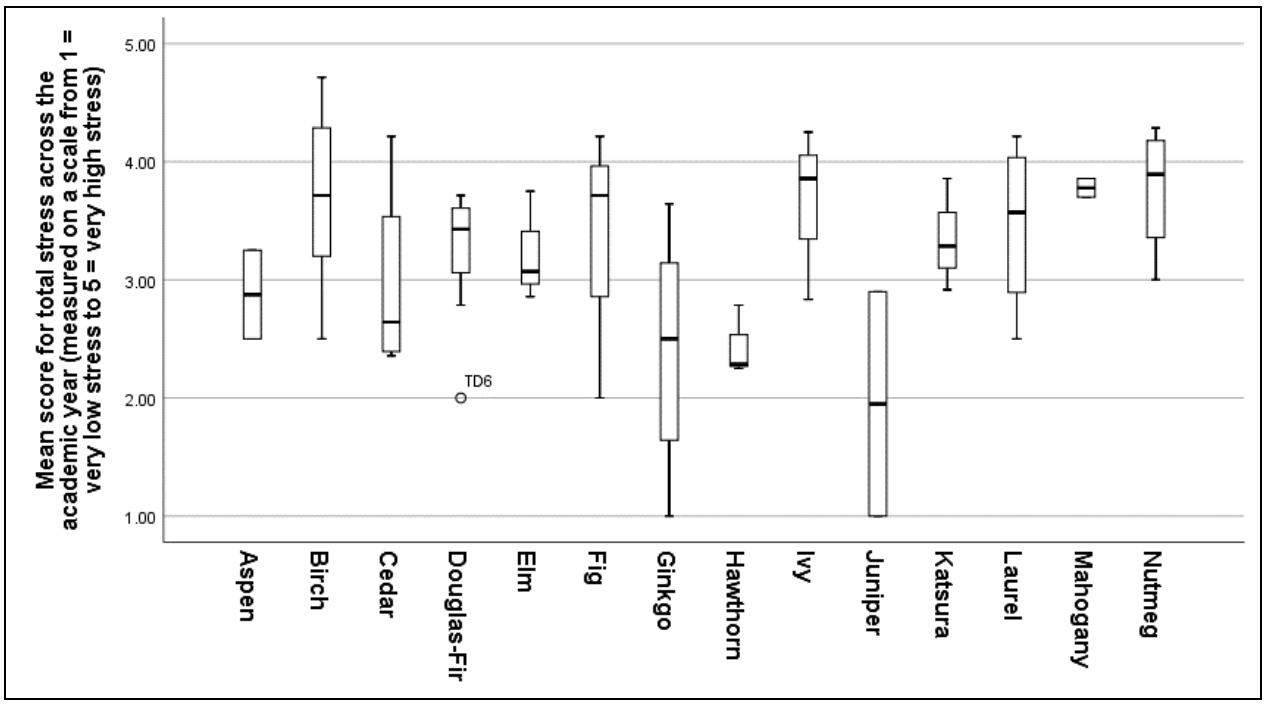


Table 5.10: Teachers' average reported school-related stress levels

	Reported average school-related stress levels during the 2016-17 school year* *stress levels reported on the following scale: 1=very low, 2=low, 3=moderate, 4-high, 5=very high)										
	Term 1	Term 1	Break	Term 2	Break	Term 3	Break	Term 4	Term 4	Break	Term 5
	05.09.16 - 18.09.16	19.09.16 - 23.10.16	24.10.16 - 30.10.16	31.10.16 - 18.12.16	19.12.16 - 02.01.17	03.01.17 - 12.02.17	13.02.17 - 19.02.17	20.02.17 - 26.02.17	27.02.17 - 09.04.17	10.04.17 - 23.04.17	24.04.17 - 28.05.17
Mean	2.96	3.23	2.02	3.51		3.17	1.85	3.52	3.32	1.87	3.24
N	45	45	44	45		46	46	46	44	45	45
Std. Dev.	1.02	0.75	1.36	1.16		0.93	1.07	0.98	1.16	1.1	1.23

When average stress levels are calculated across different schools, there are some clear differences with Juniper and Hawthorn school standing out as environments in which teachers report lower overall levels of stress (Figure 5.7). This suggests an interplay between individual teachers' responses to stress and the working conditions within schools, which may generate more or less stressful environments for teachers.

Figure 5.7: Comparison of overall term-time stress levels across schools



It is well known that an excess of stress can restrict peoples' ability to envisage and plan for the future (Husman et al., 2014) and there is evidence from teachers' open-text comments of this occurring. For example, at Time 1, TF1 says '*many of us are focusing so much on just getting through the next few days that it can be hard to be motivated to step back and see the 'big picture*''. In this way, stressful work environments impeded teachers' professional learning indirectly by affecting their ability to set themselves learning goals for an envisaged future. The quantitative data also revealed that the higher teachers' reported stress levels were, the more likely they were to see planning for their PL as a waste of time (rho=.31, p=.04) and the less likely they were to consider teaching L2 in a school setting to be a long-term career (rho=-.44, p=.004).

Although there were no statistically significant relationships found between teachers' reported stress levels and their degree of engagement in effective PL, the qualitative comments collected for the study frequently linked these two variables. Over the course of the study, the comments made by TF1 (Second in Department at Fig School) help to illuminate and exemplify the ways in which stress induced by excessive workload restricts teachers' ability to learn and flourish:

> *Overwhelmingly, the day-to-day time pressure of workload increases my stress - we really don't have time even to plan and deliver lessons and mark books to the standard we aspire to. Finding the time to fit in any training on top of this is very difficult, and many of us are focusing so much on just getting through the next few days that it can be hard to be motivated to step back and see the 'big picture'.* (TF1 – Time 1, Q30)

At Time 1, TF1's comment demonstrates the way that stress a) undermines teachers' sense of competence whilst b) making it very difficult to engage in PL activities that might build up teachers' sense of self-efficacy in targeted skills and knowledge. There is evidence of an accompanying contraction in teachers' ability to take a step back and make strategic decisions about their careers and it also seems that in TF1's context there is an understanding of PL or 'training' as something that is a luxury extra, bolted '*on top of*' a teachers' normal workload rather than as something that is integral to a teacher's everyday role. In her comments at Time 2 and Time 3 (see below), TF1 makes it clear than an additional stressor that reduced her capacity and motivation to engage in PL came in the form of the anticipation (Time 2) and experience of (Time 3) a visit from Ofsted.

> *In addition to the usual start-of-year stresses (getting to know new classes etc), Curriculum Coordinator duties in first half term required extensive analysis and discussion of exam data from 2016 cohort with SLT […], which was very time-consuming. We have also had to somewhat re-plan our KS3 curriculum in the light of reduced staffing in MFL department this year. We are overdue an Ofsted visit. All this in the context of trying to get to grips with new GCSE and A level courses!* (TF1, Time 2, Q8)

> *The need to keep up with 'everyday' assessment, admin and planning makes it very difficult to make time for this [=PL]. We were booked into an online after school A-level training course in March, but Ofsted had arrived the day before and there was simply not time to complete the training as planned, for example.* (TF1, Time 3, Q3)

Overall it is clear that for TF1 there was a 'perfect storm' of accountability-driven pressure to increase pupil performance in narrowly-defined attainment measures combined with sweeping curriculum change and the threat of a high-stakes performance evaluation in the form of Ofsted. These forces are largely beyond an individual teacher's locus of control and are thus likely to be experienced as oppressive and to add to anxiety levels and stress, thereby reducing teachers' capacity to turn their attention to an agenda of self-improvement in the service of their pupils' education (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Wang et al., 2015).

Future plans

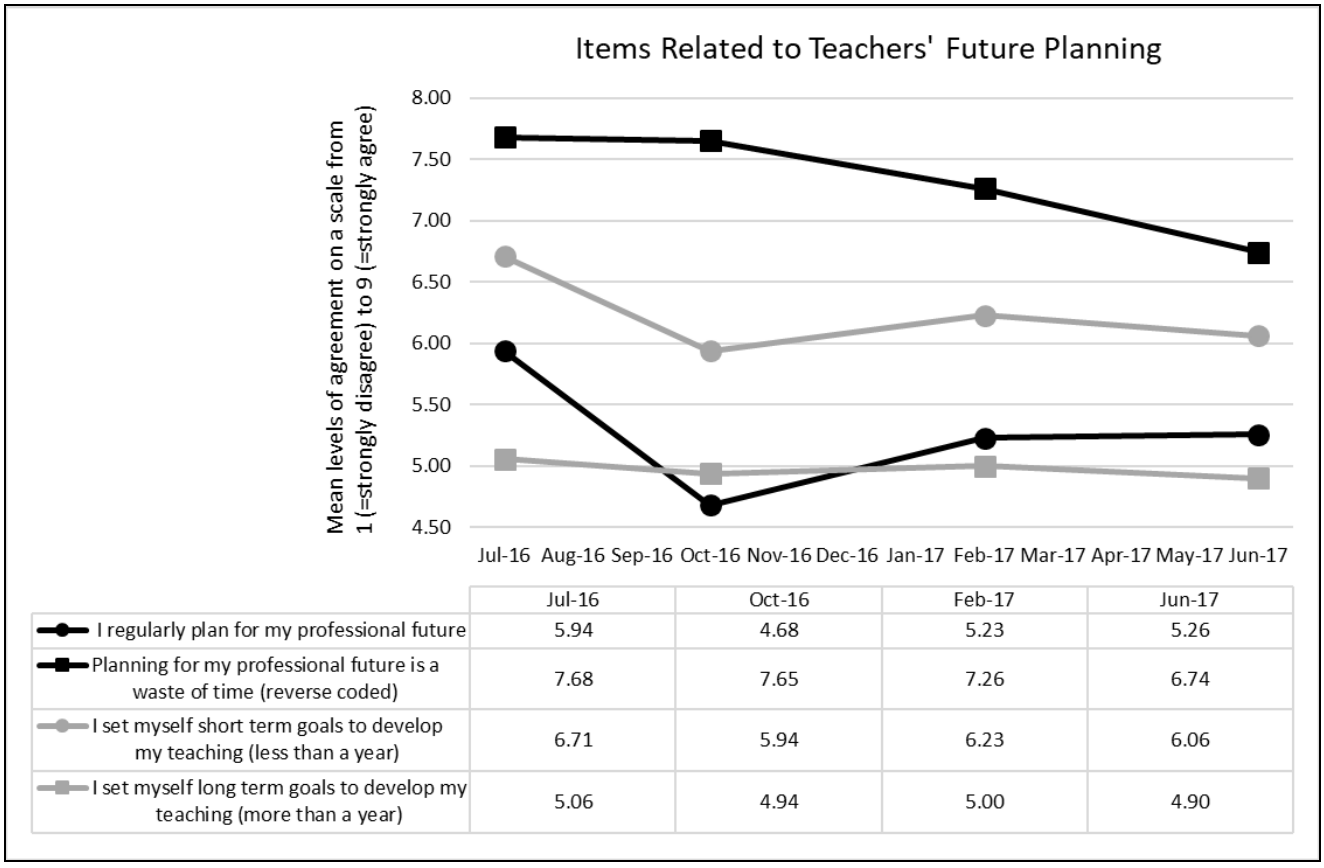
Teachers' (lack of) planning for their immediate and longer-term professional future is known to be a key indicator of overall professional engagement (Duggan, 2007). For this reason, I expected teachers who reported high levels of planning for their professional future to be more likely to pursue and engage in PL opportunities linked to their development goals.

At each of the four time-points, teachers were asked to respond to a set of four statements about their forward-planning (Time 1, Q32; Time 2, Q9; Time 3, Q20; Time 4, Q22), indicating their level of agreement from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (9):

- I regularly plan for my professional future
- Planning for my professional future is a waste of time
- I set myself short term goals to develop my teaching (less than a year)
- I set myself long term goals to develop my teaching (more than a year)

Mean scores for these items are visualised in Figure 5.8. Overall, teachers recorded weak levels of agreement that they engaged in regular planning for their professional futures. They strongly rejected the idea that such planning was 'a waste of time', although the scores for this item did weaken slightly over the course of the study. On average, teachers agreed that they set themselves short-term goals to develop their teaching although long-term goal setting was less prevalent, attracting mean scores of around 5 throughout the study, which indicates a neutral response.

Figure 5.8: Participants' attitudes towards future planning



	Jul-16	Oct-16	Feb-17	Jun-17
I regularly plan for my professional future	5.94	4.68	5.23	5.26
Planning for my professional future is a waste of time (reverse coded)	7.68	7.65	7.26	6.74
I set myself short term goals to develop my teaching (less than a year)	6.71	5.94	6.23	6.06
I set myself long term goals to develop my teaching (more than a year)	5.06	4.94	5.00	4.90

In order to assess whether teachers' planning habits changed significantly over time, one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs were conducted to compare future planning scores for each statement at Time 1 (July 2016), Time 2 (Oct 2016), Time 3 (Feb 2017) and Time 4 (June 2017) for the 31 teachers who completed the future planning questions at every time point. No statistically significant changes in mean scores were found for the statement 'planning for my professional future is a waste of time' or for the

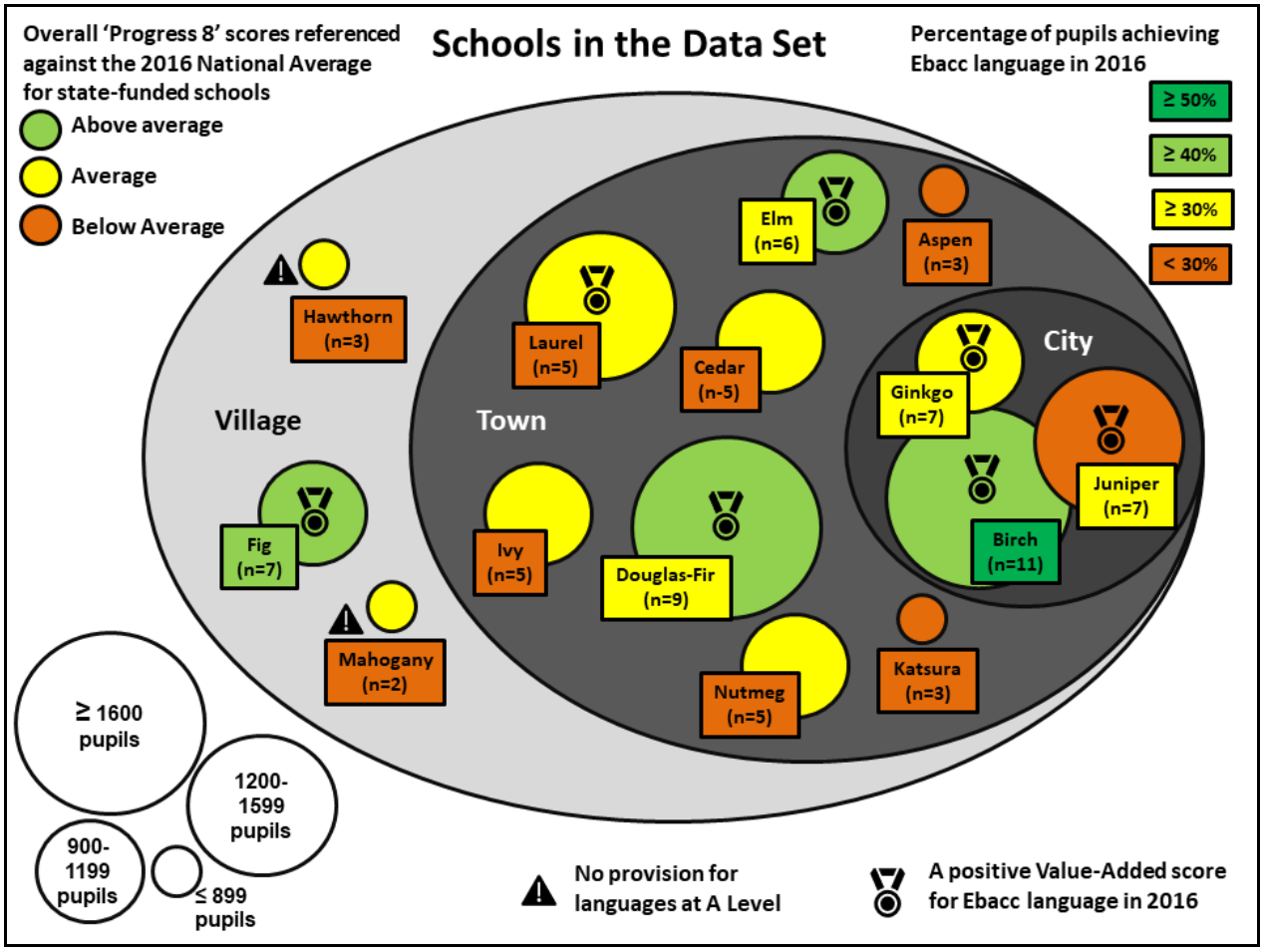
statements related to short- and long-term planning. However, a significant main effect for time on participants' responses was found for the statement 'I regularly plan for my professional future' ($F(3, 90) = 4.37$, $p = .006$, $\eta p2=.13$). (Mauchly's test of sphericity showed that this assumption was met, $\chi2(5) = 6.247$ $p = .28$). Bonferroni post hoc tests showed that participants' agreement that they planned regularly for their professional future dropped significantly between Time 1 ($M = 5.94$; $SD = 1.84$) and Time 2 ($M = 4.68$; $SD = 2.24$; $p=.018$). This dip in scores in October reflects a similar dip observed in participants' overall self-efficacy scores (see Chapter 4) and coincides with the time of year characterised as a period of 'disillusionment' in Moir's (1999) study of teachers' overall levels of engagement, stress and motivation.

When exploring associations between participants' responses to the planning questions and their engagement in PL, I found that levels of agreement with the statement 'I regularly plan for my professional future' were indeed strongly, positively correlated with overall engagement scores in PL activities known to be effective ($rho=.57$, $p=.000$). Agreement with this future planning statement was also associated with higher reported levels of self-efficacy for teaching ($rho=.38$, $p=.010$). There was no statistically significant pattern in the data related to future planning based on participants' career stage or gender.

School, Departmental and Wider Contextual Factors

Existing literature recognises that '*personal agency operates within a broad network of socio-structural influences*' (Bandura, 1997, p. 6) and emphasises the importance of the institutional context in determining teachers' working conditions and the possibilities for their development (Boylan, Adams, et al., 2018; Schleicher, 2012). Figure 5.9 visualises some of the characteristics of each school and languages department in the study, including size, geographical location and relative degree of success in terms of national standardised examinations. Due to the small numbers of teachers in some schools, statistical modelling of data at individual and departmental levels was not appropriate. However, patterns in participant responses based on key characteristics of their school contexts do emerge from both the quantitative and the qualitative data and these are explored below.

Figure 5.9: A visualisation of the size, geography and relative success of schools in standardised assessments



Economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital

Boylan et al. (2018) have explored the ways in which economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital held by schools and departments can influence the ways in which and the extent to which teachers engage in activities to develop their practice. This work provides a useful frame for thinking about the positioning of schools in terms of their relative advantage and how this might be related to teacher learning. Boylan et al. (2018) also suggest a consideration of the 'coupling' or alignment of teachers and departments to school and wider education systems (particularly in terms of adherence to performativity and improvement agendas).

Following Boylan et al. (2018), I anticipated that the 'success' (in terms of key performance indicators of 'status' such as Ofsted gradings) of individual schools and departments would function as social and symbolic capital and support the sense of self-efficacy of the colleagues that work within them. As has already been established in my data, self-efficacy beliefs are, in turn, associated with an increased engagement in PL activities known to be effective.

In order to explore this hypothesis, both global and languages-specific performance data from the end of the academic year during which the main data collection took place (2015-16) was gathered from the freely available national database at www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables for each school. The key measures of schools' overall performance in England at the time of writing are the school's Ofsted grading and the 'Progress 8' measure. The Progress 8 score is a standardised measure of the average progress made by pupils between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in eight qualifications, including English and mathematics. A score above zero means pupils made more progress, on average, than their peers across England who achieved similar results at the end of Key Stage 2 (Department for Education, 2019b). In Table 5.11 schools are presented in descending order of their overall Progress 8 scores. It is immediately apparent from Figure 5.9: A visualisation of the size, geography and relative success of schools in standardised assessments and Table 5.11 that whilst some of the generally high-performing schools also performed highly in languages, the global success of a school in terms of Progress 8 results is not always an accurate predictor of the success of the languages department. For example, out of the 14 schools, Nutmeg school has the fifth highest Progress 8 score but is ranked 13th for its value-added score for the languages area of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)[16]. Conversely, Juniper School's global performance was below average, but it was also the school with the third-highest percentage of pupils achieving the EBacc language area and the school with the third-highest value-added score for languages. This suggests that there are other factors at play within the school context or at the departmental level that may account for these differences. In Juniper School's case, this positive performance in languages may be, in part, a legacy of the school's history as a Specialist Languages College from 2003 – 2010, which involved significant additional investment in languages and raised the profile of languages within the school. Evaluations of the impact of the Specialist Schools Programme have shown lasting effects on pupil attainment linked to the increased funding and the status of the subject amongst teachers, pupils and parents (Pugh et al., 2011).

Teachers in schools with higher Progress 8 scores were not any more likely than their peers to report a strong sense of self-efficacy or increased engagement in PL activities known to be effective. However, teachers in school with higher 'success/prestige' in terms of the percentage of students achieving the Ebacc language component at GCSE (>30%) did report higher self-efficacy scores for their instructional strategies than their peers in less 'successful' MFL departments (U=419, p=0.24).

[16] The English Baccalaureate is a school performance measure calculated from qualifications sat at the end of Key Stage 4 and published in annual school league tables in England. There are five components that make up the English Baccalaureate: English, mathematics, science, a language, and history or geography.

Table 5.11: School performance measures at GCSE in 2016

School	Ofsted grading (1=outstanding; 2=good)	Progress 8 score* (*average for state-funded schools in England =-0.03)	Progress 8 score categorised	Percentage of pupil body that achieved the language component of the Ebacc	Value-added measure for the Ebacc language component	Percentage of pupils entered for more than 1 foreign language
Birch	1	0.49	Above Average	53.7	1.24	7
Fig	2	0.22	Above Average	43.2	0.17	3
Elm	2	0.17	Above Average	36.5	0.68	4
Douglas-Fir	1	0.15	Above Average	35.9	0.07	1
Nutmeg	2	0.14	Average	22.6	-0.65	0
Ginkgo	2	0.13	Average	35.7	0.14	3
Ivy	2	0.13	Average	28	-0.15	2
Laurel	2	0.03	Average	23	0.26	0
Cedar	2	-0.01	Average	25.8	-0.19	3
Hawthorn	2	-0.03	Average	16.8	-0.69	0
Mahogany	2	-0.18	Average	15	-0.21	0
Juniper	2	-0.25	Below Average	37.3	0.36	0
Aspen	2	-0.29	Below Average	19.4	-0.54	3
Katsura	2	-0.3	Below Average	14.3	-0.16	5

Another measure of a secondary school's symbolic prestige and success is the extent to which it is seen to operate a sixth form within which students attain highly in their GCSE and A Level examinations and subsequently pursue higher education at prestigious universities. Highly-qualified teachers value greatly the opportunity to teach their subject at A Level, which attracts them to schools with successful sixth forms (Coldron et al., 2014). Teaching their subject at A Level may subsequently help teachers to maintain a sense of competence in their language skills. At Time 1, ten out of 54 teachers reported that they were not currently teaching at A Level and three of these were based in schools where there was no opportunity to do so: Hawthorn School was an 11-16 school and Mahogany School's relatively new sixth form did not yet offer any languages at A Level. Teachers in these settings were therefore unable to benefit from the development of their subject with pupils at this level.

One proxy for the visibility and symbolic status of each MFL department within the school is the extent to which languages colleagues are engaged in a range of language-related extra-curricular activities (Louis, 1998). These tend to flourish in schools where there is support for the organisation of extra

activities and also where there are staff who are positively motivated within their roles. At Time 1, HoDs were asked whether any members of the L2 team had been involved in each of a list of twelve languages-related activities in the preceding academic year. Of course, departments comprising fewer teachers are likely to offer a narrower range of activities whilst larger departments may have more capacity to offer a broad range of language enrichment. For this reason, Table 5.12 includes the number of staff in each school languages department to aid interpretation. Capacity to engage in extra-curricular work may also be impacted by a range of whole-school factors such as the school norms in relation to workload and accountability, and the relative levels of advantage the school enjoys in terms of its social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital (Boylan, Adams, et al., 2018).

It was pleasing to see that seven of the twelve departments for whom I was able to collect data had been involved in running language exchange trips abroad, as this is an activity that brings L2 teachers an opportunity to practise their language skills with native speakers (Valmori & De Costa, 2016). This is also an activity for which British Council reports have noted a sharp national decrease over the last five years, in part due to safeguarding concerns and red tape (Tinsley, 2019). Juniper School once again stands out from others in that this department is involved in a rich array of extra-curricular language work, which likely supports the better-than-expected attainment of Juniper students in their language examinations. Unfortunately, I did not collect more detailed data about the specific languages to which each school trip was related and, as a proportion of the pupil population, how many students were typically involved in such trips each year. These data would have provided a more accurate sense of the contribution of trips to the culture of the languages department within each setting. For example, the case-study data from Douglas-Fir school revealed that the languages department was involved in organising three language exchange trips abroad each year (one for each of French, German and Spanish), which is not adequately captured by the data collated in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12: Department involvement in a range of extra-curricular language activities

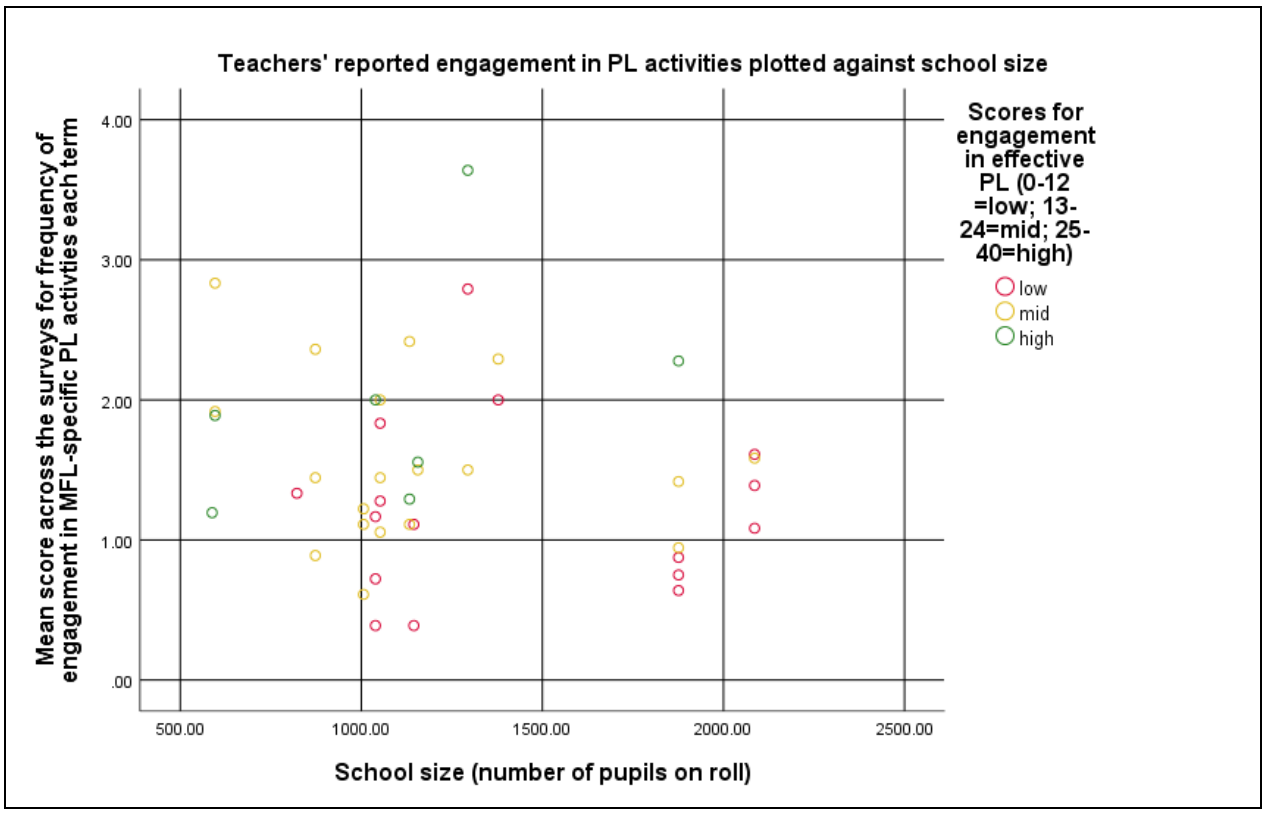
	Head of Department responses to the question 'have any members of your team been involved in these activities over the 2015-16 academic year?'												
School (number of teachers within each languages department)	**a language exchange trip abroad**	**a trip abroad (not an exchange)**	**a day trip in the UK**	**a club or event in school**	**a partnership with an overseas school**	**a partnership with a UK employer**	**a partnership with an overseas employer**	**a partnership with a UK primary school**	**a partnership with a UK secondary school**	**a partnership with a UK university (not including Initial Teacher Education partnerships)**	**an initial teacher education partnership with a UK university (i.e. mentoring for PGCE students)**	**an initial teacher education programme (not connected with a university)**	**Totals**
Aspen (n=3)				Y							Y		2
Birch (n=11)	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9
Cedar (n=5)	Y		Y		Y								3
Douglas-Fir (n=9)	Y			Y		Y					Y		4
Elm (n=6)	Y		Y		Y			Y					4
Fig (n=7)	Y		Y	Y								Y	4
Hawthorn (n=3)			Y	Y									2
Ivy (n=5)		Y		Y				Y					3
Juniper (n=7)	Y			Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y		7
Katsura (n=3)	Y				Y						Y		3
Laurel (n=5)				Y	Y					Y			3
Nutmeg (n=5)			Y	Y							Y		3
Totals	7	2	6	8	6	2	0	3	1	3	6	1	

Department size and location

Previous research has suggested that '*teachers in smaller schools tend to have more positive perceptions of school climate, of their abilities to influence school policies and control their classrooms, of school norms; teachers also perceive greater cooperation and more resource availability*' (Garrett et al., 2004, p. 3). One might therefore expect smaller schools to be more positive overall contexts for teachers' learning. I categorised schools as small, moderate, large or very large based on the size of the student

body, with the 'moderate' category representing schools at around the national average size of 990 (based on 2012 census data). These categories are visualised in Figure 5.9. On its own, school size was not linearly associated with engagement in PL activities known to be effective (Cordingley, 2015) as can be seen at a glance from Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10: Scatterplot showing the relationship between teachers' engagement in PL activities and school size



There is a pattern of teachers in large schools (1200-1599 pupils) reporting significantly more frequent engagement in MFL-specific PL activities across Times 1 – 4 than teachers in small, moderate or very large schools ($F(3, 50) = 6.45$, $p = .001$, $\eta p2=.13$). I also found that teachers in more rural schools tended to record lower levels of participation in languages-specific PL. However, these teachers were statistically more likely to report making use of their local subject associations and networks than teachers based in schools located in towns or cities ($F(2, 48)=4.33$, $p=0.019$). This may be driven by a perceived isolation that may motivate teachers to look for an expanded pool of expertise.

Learning spaces and resources

HoDs gave an assessment of the quality of their main team room space (HoD Time 1, Q20), which is of relevance because this is the space in which teachers may spend non-teaching time and engage in informal discussions about teaching and learning, which can help to create a culture of relaxed

collegiality. Existing research suggests that warm, comfortable and welcoming spaces can encourage staff to spend time together socially and thus support conditions for informal PL (Lisahuntera et al., 2011; McNicholl et al., 2013). As can be seen in Table 5.13, eight of the HoDs in this study report an overall satisfaction with their team spaces but four HoDs (at Birch, Katsura, Laurel and Nutmeg School) were less satisfied. In some cases, the issues could be easy and cheap to remedy. For example, where the seating is not comfortable, or the lighting is insufficient. However, at Birch and Nutmeg school the HoD indicates that the team room is rarely a private space for MFL colleagues. Where schools have limited space, spaces usually reserved for staff are often co-opted for small group intervention work and this may be particularly prevalent in MFL departments where students need break-out spaces for practising and recording spoken language skills. This is problematic because if students are frequently engaging in language practice sessions or interventions etc. in teachers' social spaces, this restricts opportunities for teachers to converse freely and share both problems and ideas.

Table 5.13: Quality of the languages team room

	The MFL team room is a pleasant space	There is adequate space for MFL colleagues to work	There is adequate space for MFL colleagues to use as storage	The seating is comfortable	The heating/cooling systems in the room are sufficient	The lighting/shading in the room is sufficient	There are sufficient computers for MFL colleagues to use	There are adequate facilities for tea/coffee making	At break times the room is reserved solely for the use of MFL colleagues	At lunch times the room is reserved solely for the use of MFL colleagues	During lessons the room is reserved solely for the use of MFL colleagues	Mean
Aspen	4	3	2	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.4
Birch	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2.4
Cedar	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	3.2
Douglas-Fir	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.0
Elm	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.7
Fig	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	4	4	3.2
Ginkgo	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Hawthorn	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.0
Ivy	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.8
Juniper	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3.0
Katsura	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	1	3	3	2	2.1
Laurel	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	4	4	2.5
Mahogany	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Nutmeg	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	4	2	2	2	2.5
Mean	3.2	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.4	3.0	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.1

Support, Challenge and Control: the school culture

> *People who see themselves as knowledge workers are not attracted by schools organized like an assembly line, with teachers working as interchangeable widgets in a bureaucratic command-and-control environment.* (Schleicher, 2012)

Existing literature highlights the key role of school leadership teams in creating the conditions for teachers to continue to increase their effectiveness and commitment over time (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000). A particular challenge for school leaders in a context of increasingly high stakes performativity regimes in the wider education system is the need to find a balance between on the one hand, empowering colleagues to feel a sense of competence and autonomy to pursue their own development agendas; and on the other hand, holding those same colleagues to account for maintaining efficient and coherent work towards the achievement of high standards in key performance indicators (Zeichner, 2010). For this reason, I closely examined the degree of trust and autonomy that teachers perceived they had in their day-to-day work.

At Time 2, 3 and 4, all participants reported the extent to which they agreed that they felt able to make decisions affecting their work in the classroom (Time 2, Q9:11; Time 3, Q20:11; Time 4, Q22:11). Their responses provide some indication of the level of perceived autonomy (and by extension, trust) teachers felt they had. On a scale from 1 (=strongly disagree) to 9 (=strongly agree), the vast majority of teachers expressed agreement that they were able to make decisions about their work in the classroom (At each Time scores ranged from 3 to 9 and mean scores were as follows: Time 2 = 7.3; Time 3 = 7.6; Time 4 = 7.6). TB2, TB11, TB12 (Birch School), TK2 (Katsura school) and TL4 (Laurel School) each expressed disagreement (a score of 4 or below) at least once during the study.

A look at the language used by HoDs in interviews (see Table 5.14) provided some insight into the prevalence of common markers of the discourse of management and control (Boag-Munroe, 2008). These markers occurred less frequently in Douglas-Fir School and Ginkgo School than in the other four settings, suggesting that perhaps these schools were less tightly-coupled to the dominant discourses of neoliberal control and accountability, which I hypothesised would lead to teachers feeling a greater sense of agency to pursue PL agendas that went beyond coping with new curricula and examinations (as suggested by Blackmore, 2004; see also Toom et al., 2015).

Table 5.14: Markers of managerial discourse from Head of Department interviews

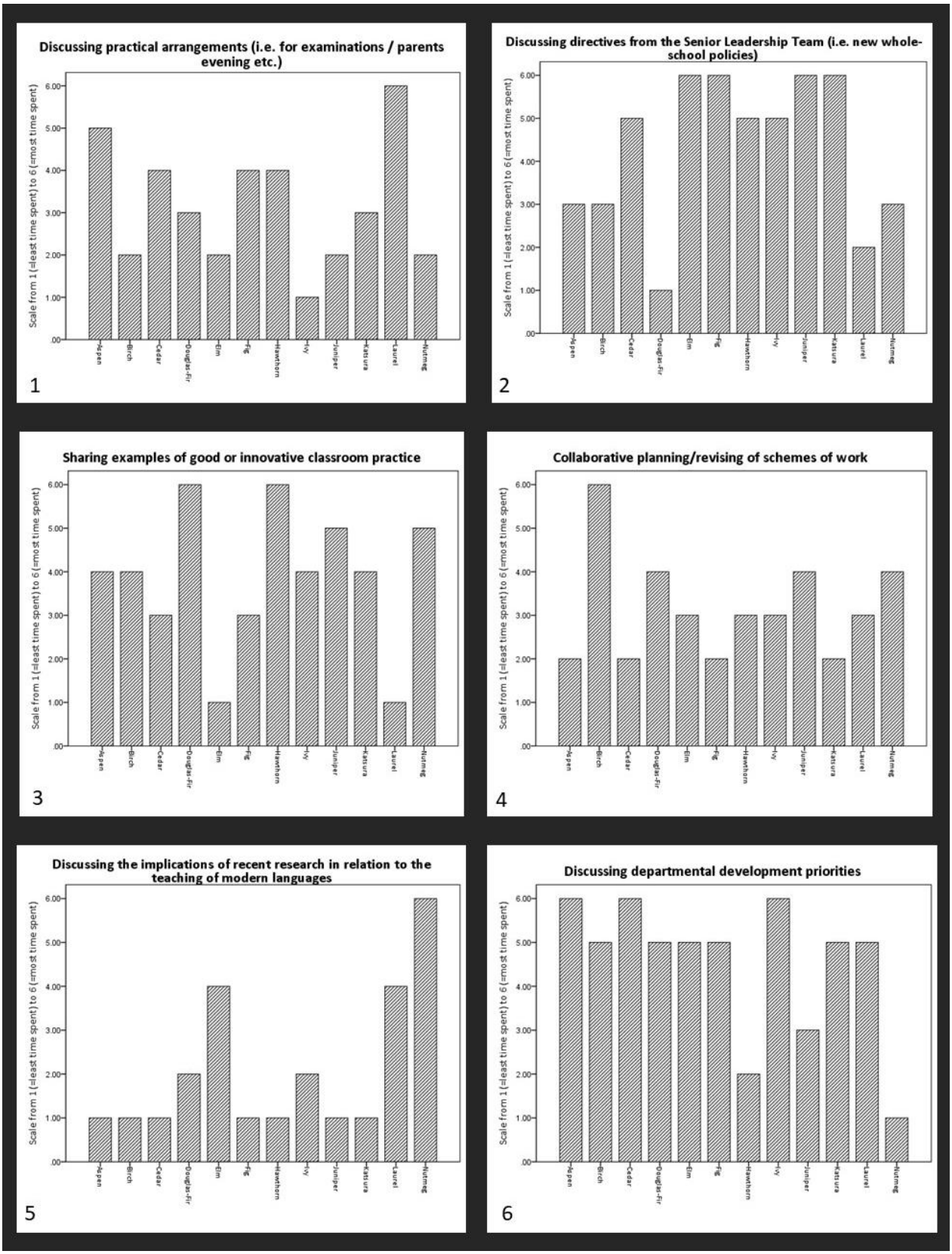
Marker	Douglas-Fir	Fig	Ginkgo	Ivy	Katsura	Nutmeg
Number of words spoken by HoD during interview	6688	6218	6313	7420	9470	5063
Account	2	1	0	0	1	4
Achieve	1	0	0	9	2	1
Assess	13	0	1	9	14	5
Check	0	2	1	0	2	2
Deliver	1	1	5	1	1	0
Delegate	0	1	0	0	1	0
Design	0	0	0	0	3	2
Effective	5	1	0	2	4	2
Efficient	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goals	0	0	0	1	0	0
Manage	3	5	12	6	7	5
Monitor	0	0	0	0	1	0
New	11	20	8	13	25	10
Outcome	0	1	0	0	0	0
Perform	3	2	5	2	3	4
Plan	1	6	4	4	6	10
Target *(excluding the collocation "target language")*	2	14	5	22	17	5
Train	3	16	1	1	1	3
Observe	0	2	0	0	2	10
Total:	45	72	42	70	90	63
Proportion of total talk (%)	0.67	1.16	0.67	0.94	0.95	1.24

At Time 1 (Q30), HoDs reported on the extent to which they agreed that they felt well supported in their work as Head of MFL by their school's senior leadership team. All but three HoDs agreed with this statement (Ivy and Katsura HoDs were neutral and Laurel HoD disagreed). Laurel HoD left a comment to explain that she felt the SLT were placing '*huge pressure on results and [they have] no understanding of the processes of language learning',* a comment that contrasts greatly with Hawthorn school HoD who said that she felt she had '*unconditional support*' from her SLT. The support identified by HoDs who left positive comments included availability of SLT for regular supportive meetings (x3); support with organising trips and exchanges (x2); restructuring of the timetable to benefit languages (x2); supportive but challenging conversations about pupil outcomes in MFL (x1); and financial support for new textbooks (x1), FLAs (x3), and staff cover for trips (x1).

HoDs were also asked about the level of control over the direction and content of their department meetings and the approximate allocation of time within meetings that they dedicated to discussing whole-school policies and directives (HoD Time 1, Q22 and Q24). Katsura school HoD (TK4) felt that they had little control over their department meetings. Other HoDs however, felt that they had quite a bit

(Aspen, Cedar, Elm, Hawthorn, Juniper, Laurel) or a great deal of control (Birch, Douglas-Fir, Fig, Ivy, Nutmeg). When all HoDs' responses are taken together, they felt that they spent the most time in department meetings on discussing departmental development priorities, closely followed by time spent on directives from the senior leadership team. The least amount of time was dedicated to discussions of research in relation to teaching languages. There is however considerable variation between schools as can be seen in Figure 5.11.

Figure 5.11: Time spent on activities in department meetings



Departments that spent less time on administration and whole-school policy compliance (bar charts 1 and 2) were, in theory, able to devote more time to activities with the potential to support teachers' learning (bar charts 3 – 6). Unfortunately, in four schools (Elm, Fig, Juniper and Katsura) the HoD estimates that they spent the *most* time on discussing directives from the senior leadership team. This may point to these contexts being more tightly controlled environments, with strong, hierarchical leadership. Of course, this data is unable to tell us anything about the nature of these directives or the extent to which they may have been developmental or administrative. Bar charts 3-6 represent activities that are directly linked to PL and Douglas-Fir, Birch, and Nutmeg HoDs reported spending the most time on these developmental activities. It is perhaps unsurprising that these three HoDs are all part of the group that also reported having a great deal of control over their meetings.

Sharing examples of good or innovative practice is an easily accessible way to support teachers' learning and, through verbal persuasion, vicarious learning and experiences of mastery (for the teachers who share their expertise) this process can enhance a team's sense of collective efficacy (Goddard et al., 2015). It is therefore encouraging to see substantial time dedicated to this activity in most schools (Figure 5.11, chart 3), but also a matter of concern that the HoDs in Elm and Laurel school report spending the least amount of time on this activity.

Discussions of research that could inform L2 teaching appear to be relatively neglected by HoDs in their meetings, with some notable exceptions (Nutmeg, Laurel and Elm). A general pattern of low levels of engagement with research is unsurprising given the BERA RSA enquiry's finding that many teachers in England do not feel they have the time or expertise to engage meaningfully with and in research that could be of relevance to their practice (BERA and RSA, 2014).

Departmental culture for learning

Since secondary schools in England are usually organised around subject departments, colleagues within them '*share subject loyalty and expertise as well as "micro political" interests, [which means that] they form units which can be crucial agents of change within schools*.' (Brown et al., 2000, p. 242). Following Hargreaves (1994) and Day (1999, p. 78) I looked for the habitual ways in which teachers' '*values, beliefs, prejudices and behaviour'* were articulated and explained within my questionnaires and interviews.

Several questions at Time 1 were designed to gain a sense of teachers' impressions about the departmental culture for learning within each school. Firstly, HoDs were asked to consider the extent to which they felt their department was functioning as an effective professional learning community (PLC) (HoD Time 1, Q5). To assist them in making a judgement they were given the following definition:

> *An effective professional learning community has the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals and other staff in the community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning* (Bolam et al., 2005, p. 2).

Responses from 12 out of the 14 HoDs are shown in Table 5.15. This table includes the number of years that each HoD had been teaching in their current school, as a measure of how well-established each HoD was within each department. It is interesting to note that the departments rated as '*starting the journey*' to becoming a PLC were led variously by a very new HoD (TN1) and relatively well-established HoDs (TC2 and TF5). This underlines that the development of an effective PLC cannot be an assumed outcome of a team working together over time but rather, as Kwakman (2003) has argued, active and intentional stimulation is required to create the conditions within which PLCs can thrive.

Table 5.15: MFL Departments as Professional Learning Communities

	Time 1: What is the Head of Department's overall assessment of the MFL department's current position in relation to the definition of a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?	**Number of years that the HoD reports having taught languages at their current school**
Aspen	mature/established	13
Birch	mature/established	15+
Elm	mature/established	8
Ivy	mature/established	15+
Douglas-Fir	developing	15+
Hawthorn	developing	3
Katsura	developing	15+
Laurel	developing	15+
Cedar	starting the journey	10
Fig	starting the journey	9
Nutmeg	starting the journey	1
Juniper	working to re-establish what we had previously achieved	12

At Time 1 (Q33) teachers were asked to describe their languages team using up to three adjectives. Almost one quarter of the responses characterised the languages team as a supportive unit (see Table 5.16). This was closely followed by descriptions of L2 departments as hardworking, enthusiastic and competent. These characterisations are affirmations of two of the three needs identified by Deci and Ryan's (2005) self-determination theory that enable positive work engagement: competence and relatedness (the third need being 'autonomy').

Just three of the responses, all from Birch School, characterised the languages team as learning or evolving in some way: TB1 described their team as 'constantly developing and adapting' and as having 'common targets'; TB5 wrote that their team were 'keen to try new things'.

Table 5.16: Most frequently chosen adjectives used by participants to describe their team

Adjective	Count (n=148)	Inclusive of similar adjectives / short descriptions
supportive	36	supportive (17), friendly (6), caring (3), co-operative (2), helpful (2), welcoming (2), generous (1), inclusive (1), kind (1), team-spirited (1)
hard-working	31	hardworking (13), committed (8), conscientious (2) dedicated (2), keen (2) determined (1), devoted (1), engaged (1), focussed (1)
enthusiastic	21	enthusiastic (6), fun (5), motivated (3) dynamic (2), positive (2) passionate (1), energetic (1), vibrant (1)
competent	18	competent (4), knowledgeable (3), strong (3), effective (2), efficient (1), excellent (1), excellent linguists (1), high-achieving (1), talented (1), well-qualified (1)

Almost all adjectives were unequivocally positive in tone. However, eleven participants offered descriptions that were negative or ambiguous as can be seen in Table 5.17. Perhaps the strongest of the negative characterisations was 'dysfunctional', used by TC3 at Cedar School (a school characterised by the HoD as 'starting the journey' to becoming a PLC). TG8's characterisation of Ginkgo school MFL department as 'small' is surprising as, with eight teachers, this school's MFL department is larger than 11 of the 13 other schools in the data set. TN3 also characterised their department as small: Nutmeg school MFL team numbered 5 at the time of the study, which was just below the mean (5.6).

Table 5.17: Negative or ambiguous adjectives used to describe MFL department teams

SCHOOL	ADJECTIVES	NEGATIVE OR AMBIGUOUS?
Aspen	disjointed (HoD, TA1)	N
	realistic (TA2)	A
Birch	stressed (TB10)	N
Cedar	dysfunctional (TC3)	N
Fig	opinionated (TF1)	A
	tired! (TF5)	N
Ginkgo	small (TG8)	A
Ivy	busy (TI1)	A
	with mixed motivation (HoD, TI3)	A
Juniper	cautious (TJ3)	A
Nutmeg	small (TN3)	A

In order to assess the extent to which department cultures were felt to foster a sense of 'relatedness' and 'competence' (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) during the 2016-17 academic year, all teachers were asked to respond to the following two statements: 1) My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship and 2) My skills and expertise are valued by my department. Responses were on a scale from 1 (=strongly disagree) to 9 (=strongly agree). Throughout the surveys there was widespread, strong agreement with both statements, indicating a broadly harmonious and respectful environment was perceived within MFL departments across the schools (as can be seen in Table 5.18). No teacher indicated that they disagreed with the statement '*My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship*'. However, between one and four teachers at each time point gave a neutral response.

In relation to the statement '*My skills and expertise are valued by my department*', although responses were strongly positively skewed, two teachers (both at Birch School) consistently indicated strong disagreement. Neutral responses were also reported by teachers at Cedar and Hawthorn schools.

As can be seen in Table 5.19, all neutral and negative responses to these two statements across the surveys can be attributed to just seven teachers across four schools (Birch, Cedar, Hawthorn and Ivy).

Table 5.18: Descriptive statistics for items related to department team culture

	Descriptive statistics for items related to teachers' sense that they are valued and the quality of their working relationships					
	Time 2 (n=45) (Time 2, Q9, items 2 and 15)		Time 3 (n=46) (Time 3, Q20, items 2 and 15)		Time 4 (n=45) (Time 4, Q22, items 2 and 15)	
	My skills and expertise are valued by my department	My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship	My skills and expertise are valued by my department	My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship	My skills and expertise are valued by my department	My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship
Number	45	45	46	46	45	45
Mean	7.33	8.13	7.48	7.98	7.69	8.16
SD	1.624	1.160	1.457	1.325	1.649	1.205
Minimum	2	5	3	5	2	5
Maximum	9	9	9	9	9	9

Table 5.19: Neutral or negative responses to items related to department team culture

	Neutral and/or negative responses to items related to teachers' sense that they are valued and the quality of their working relationships		
	My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship	My skills and expertise are valued by my department	
	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree
Time 2 (n=45) (Q9, items 2 and 15)	Birch (TB11)	Cedar (TC4; TC5) Hawthorn (TH4)	Birch (TB10; TB11)
Time 3 (n=46) (Q20, items 2 and 15)	Birch (TB11) Hawthorn (TH1; TH4) Ivy (TI1)	Cedar (TC4)	Birch (TB10; TB11)
Time 4 (n=45) (Q22, items 2 and 15)	Birch (TB10; TB11) Cedar (TC4)		Birch (TB10; TB11)

One aspect of the departmental culture for learning that was frequently mentioned in the data is the issue of workload quantity and distribution. Teachers' comments about barriers to their PL and HoD interview data indicate that workplace cultures and policies that can lead to additional workload have been more effectively tackled in some schools and departments than others. Three HoDs mentioned an element of their role as being the protection of their colleagues from excessive workload. The HoD at Douglas-Fir school explained she had responded to research evidence questioning the impact of extensive marking by encouraging her team not to correct everything but to take a '*less is more approach*'. However, HoDs' ability to shield colleagues was limited when whole-school initiatives with workload implications were introduced or when HoDs felt less of a sense of agency and autonomy: Nutmeg School HoD spoke about a school-wide programme of regular performance management observations as '*counterproductive*' and as '*adding a lot of stress to peoples' lives*'. They stressed the need for trust in one's colleagues, commenting that '*the vast majority are self-accountable*'.

Departmental responses to curriculum and examination reforms

The data suggests that teachers in every school department in the study have experienced recent changes in standardised examinations as a source of stress related to a heightened sense of high-stakes accountability. This has contributed to a perceived rise in risk-averse dispositions towards classroom practice, as exemplified by the following quotations from interviews with Heads of Department:

> *Now is not the time to take risks* (HoD, Elm School)

We're just relying on each other for reassurance that we're doing everything right (HoD, Douglas-Fir School)

At least with the exam board training you get affirmation that you're not doing a terrible job (HoD, Ivy School)

The above quotations are reminiscent of those identified by Ball (2000, p. 220) as evidence of the perpetual uncertainties created by surveillance cultures: '*Are we doing enough? Are we doing the right thing? How will we measure up?*'. This tendency towards standardised practices that are perceived to be 'safe' has obvious negative implications for teachers' willingness and ability to experiment and test out something different in their classroom. All six HoDs brought up the issue of a need to prepare for new examinations as something that was occupying teachers' minds and dominating the available time and budget for PL. Although Ivy School HoD (TI3) felt that the new GCSE examinations were '*an improvement in that they force you to speak naturally*', her need for '*affirmation that you're not doing a terrible job*' demonstrates the way in which rapid changes in the examination structure can undermine teachers' sense of competence (Lam et al., 2010), which is a key ingredient in developing a sense of professional engagement. These comments align with previous research, which has suggested that the need for conformity to deliver externally imposed educational change agendas can stifle teachers' autonomy and creativity, creating cultures of '*contrived collegiality*' (Hargreaves, 1994; Jeffrey, 2002). Cognisant of the overall trend towards anxious alignment of teaching practices, some HoDs countered this process by actively preserving spaces for innovation: Ginkgo School HoD (TG3) spoke of the implementation of a lesson-study approach to developing new pedagogical understandings (see Schipper et al., 2019 for an overview of this approach) with '*different people feeding in their opinions about 'oh, why would you teach it like that?' or 'what about this?*' and Katsura School HoD (TK1) highlighted their fight to remain a part of a university ITE partnership, which they saw as facilitating discussion and re-evaluation of current practices in light of new research. Unfortunately, in Ivy School (also the school with the lowest average reported engagement in PL activities known to be effective), the HoD (TI3) appeared to perceive new ideas brought into the department by a colleague as a threat, saying that '*it almost makes you feel a bit ... what's the word? [...] as if you're not as good as they are?*'. An embracing of innovation and criticality from both within and beyond the department seems to be a key tool with which HoDs can work to develop safe spaces for their colleagues' learning.

Collective efficacy

Analogous to self-efficacy, collective teacher efficacy (CTE) has been defined as '*the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students*' (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 480). Collective efficacy beliefs have the power to shape the normative

environment of a school and this in turn shapes teachers' levels of effort and persistence in their work. With regards to PL, positive CTE beliefs can support teachers' persistence in their efforts to enhance their teaching, and well-designed PL activities can also provide mastery experiences that enable teachers to build CTE beliefs.

A positive correlation nearing statistical significance was found between MFL department teams' average CTE scores and levels of agreement with the statement '*my own professional learning is currently a high priority for me*' (rho=.3, p=0.051). However, no significant relationships were found between departments' CTE scores and other measures of teachers' PL experiences (including engagement in PL activities known to be effective and frequency of engagement in languages-specific PL activities). It is likely that a department's sense of collective efficacy is just one of a range of factors that interact to contribute to a departmental culture for learning.

Pool of expertise

Engagement with specialist expertise is known as one of the hallmarks of activities that foster effective PL (Cordingley, 2015; Cordingley et al., 2015). There were clear differences between MFL departments in this study regarding the extent to which they avoided becoming closed loops, vulnerable to the unchallenged propagation of pre-existing ideas (see for example Johnson, 2003; Timperley, 2008). One source of specialist expertise might be engagement with and/or in research. However, as has been noted already, very few HoDs reported that their teams routinely engaged with ideas from research that might be of relevance to teachers' practice during department meetings. As discussed by Akkerman and Bakker (2011) another possible source of external expertise was departments' interactions with boundary-crossing associate members of the department such as student teachers, university researchers and FLAs. Departments that invited these affiliated colleagues into their staffroom spaces had access to knowledge, skills, and institutional, social and cultural perspectives that were shaped 'elsewhere'. At the time of the study, most departments (apart from Laurel, Mahogany and Nutmeg schools) were hosting at least one student teacher of languages. The reverse picture was collated for FLAs, who were employed by just the inner-city school departments (Birch, Ginkgo and Juniper) and one very large school department based in a market town (Douglas-Fir). As for university researchers, a member of the Ginkgo school MFL department was an active participant in a research project involving innovations in her classroom practice and school visits by a university-based member of the project team. Where these affiliated colleagues were present, the qualitative data contains strong statements from teachers about the value of the learning experiences they have enabled.

Although teachers in this study did not identify subject association networks as potential facilitators of their PL in their unprompted responses, there is evidence in the existing literature to suggest that these networks can act as part of an 'extended pool of expertise' with the potential to support teachers' professional learning (Board & Tinsley, 2015; Boylan & Demack, 2018; Nishino, 2012).

A further source of expertise I anticipated some departments would access was networks of language teachers in different schools, either accessed online (i.e. via blogs or social media groups) or face to face. At Time 1, participants were questioned about six well-known national and/or local language networks (Time 1, Q22). Overall levels of awareness and use of language network resources and expertise were extremely limited. Of the 54 respondents, just 31 were aware of the main subject association for L2 teachers in England: the Association for Language Learning (ALL). This is in spite of the fact that the local branch of this association is active: for example, during the year of data collection, the local ALL branch had held low-cost language teaching and learning events on Saturdays in both January and June. Thirty-six respondents were aware of the Alliance Française, an international organisation to promote the learning of French, with an active local branch. However, only three teachers reported that they made use of this network. The numbers were similar for the active German network administered by a local university.

Just 20 out of 54 participants reported that they used any of the networks listed. Of these 20, seven teachers (based at Birch (TB2), Fig (TF1, TF2, TF5), Ginkgo (TG3, TG7) and Katsura (TK1) schools) were actively using more than one network. In five out of the fourteen schools there was only one respondent who reported making use of any of these networks and in four schools there were no respondents making use of them (Elm, Laurel, Mahogany and Nutmeg). Thus, a picture emerges of a few well-networked individuals spread thinly across several schools, with a concentration of network use in just two schools: Fig and Ginkgo. These schools are both moderately sized, but their geography differs: Fig is rural, and Ginkgo is an inner-city school. It is intriguing that whilst teachers at both schools are clearly actively engaged in networks with high potential for PL, colleagues at Fig school reported very high levels of engagement in the eight activities characteristic of effective PL (Cordingley, 2015) whereas teachers at Ginkgo reported relatively low levels of engagement in these activities.

Respondents who reported that they found subject associations useful in supporting their PL were in surprisingly short supply: only five of the 20 network users indicated that their chosen network was useful in this regard. Given that each of the subject associations list supporting language teacher

development as part of their raison d'être[17] and that this function has been highlighted as a key source of support in the academic literature (Lamb, 2012), it seems that an urgent task for future research is to unpick the reasons underlying L2 teachers' lack of engagement in and estimation of the value of these networks for their PL.

Table 5.20: Teacher's awareness and use of professional networks at Time 1 (n=54)

	I am aware of this network	**I make use of this network**	**I find this network useful in supporting my PL**	**Schools where respondents reported they made use of each network**
Association for Language Learning	31	7	1	Birch (x2); Fig (x1), Ginkgo (x2), Juniper (x1), Katsura (x1)
Routes into Languages	29	6	0	Fig (x1); Ginkgo (x1); Hawthorn (x1); Ivy (x1); Juniper (x1); Katsura (x1)
Alliance Française (for French)	36	3	1	Cedar (x2); Ginkgo (x1)
Instituto Cervantes (for Spanish)	16	1	0	Ginkgo (x1)
Goethe Institut (for German)	22	5	3	Aspen (x1); Birch (x1); Douglas-Fir (x1); Fig (x1); Ginkgo (x1)
Local German Network[18]	36	5	0	Birch (x1); Fig (x4)
Other - CiLT (Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research)				Katsura (x1)

[17] For example, the ALL website available at https://www.all-languages.org.uk states the following: '*We exist to represent and support language teachers and are committed to their ongoing professional development* '

[18] This network is based at and administrated by a local university. However, it is also national in its reach through online resources.

5.4 Concluding Comments

Analysis of the PL activities teachers have found most valuable demonstrates a surprising level of conformity across the sample, perhaps reflecting the sharp focus on instrumental organisational aims related to the introduction of new examination specifications and curricula. Teachers report that they have valued subject-specific PL opportunities and PL that equips them to tackle the challenges of changing assessment regimes.

I found that teachers' experiences of PL that fell within the 'assessment' category consisted almost exclusively of one-off, online examination board briefings about new GCSE and A Levels. As TF5 put it, '*the training from the exam board has been about admin rather than T&L [=teaching and learning]*' (Time 2, Q5). HoDs confirm that engagement in this kind of PL is driven by the need to cope with and conform to new assessment requirements. It seems that opportunities for in-depth consideration of teaching and learning in relation to changing assessment were not readily available to the teachers in this study.

This study found that, in contrast to Goodall et al.'s findings (2005), teachers' engagement in PL activities known to be effective was not determined to a large extent by the school in which they worked. Across all schools, teachers in this study reported low levels of engagement in PL activities known to be effective. As I have argued elsewhere, *'recent fast-paced curriculum and assessment change with potential to create an impetus for PL has in fact combined with time, financial constraints and accountability pressures to create a working environment that impedes teachers' engagement in effective, sustained forms of PL*' (Molway, 2019, p. 108). However, the variability across school contexts in teachers' experience of excessive workload and stress (well-known barriers to PL) suggests that some department cultures are more resistant to the pressures facing all schools created by new examination systems, increasing accountability agendas and curriculum change. Given the known association between maladaptive responses to stress and teacher attrition, departments that are less successful in tackling workload and stress may face long-term negative consequences.

Where teachers did report higher levels of engagement in effective PL practices, including L2-specific PL, there was accompanying evidence of a positive association with individual teachers' sense of self-efficacy and general professional engagement. This study thus provides additional evidence of the need for and potential benefits of an increase in teachers' access to and engagement in effective PL in England.

6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION III: TEACHERS' SITUATED EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN TWO SCHOOLS

Subject departments in secondary schools '*define who teachers are, what they do, where and with whom they work, and how they and their work are perceived by others*' (Siskin, 1995, p. 89). Huberman (1999, p.45) advises researchers to '*look to the departments as the unit of collaborative planning and execution in a secondary school [since] this is where people have concrete things to tell one another and concrete instructional help to provide one another*'. Data explored in this chapter from the two case study schools offer an in-depth look at the enmeshed contextual influences on teachers' learning in departmental teams. This chapter begins with a reminder of the rationale for choosing to focus on these two schools. This is then followed by a discussion of the processes of learning identified within the MFL teacher teams at Douglas-Fir School and then Ginkgo School. Each case-study begins with an outline of the contexts including the structures of leadership in the school and the ways in which these structures are perceived as generating affordances or constraints for teacher learning. This is followed by a discussion of the teacher learning observed and reported within each setting, drawing on data from department meeting observations and individual interviews. Finally, a close look at the nature of the discourse within department meetings offers insights into the ways in which teachers' work towards their development goals and the extent to which the organisation and enactment of interactions in each department support teachers' relatedness, competence and autonomy needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Douglas-Fir and Ginkgo school departments were rich cases for study because the language department in each comprised a full range of teacher experience levels (from early career teachers (ECTs) to those with 10 or more years of experience). In both contexts, teachers' free-text questionnaire responses and Head of Department interview data were suggestive of positive departmental cultures for teacher learning. This can be seen at a glance in Figure 6.1: teachers at Douglas-Fir highlighted their language faculty as a rich source of learning and teachers at Ginkgo highlighted school-embedded discussions of teaching and learning. The sharp focus on coping with examinations, central to responses at some other schools (Fig school is given as a comparison in Figure 6.1) was not foregrounded to the same extent in the case study schools.

Figure 6.1: Teacher descriptions of their most valuable professional learning experiences at Douglas-Fir, Fig and Ginkgo schools



*Font size increases in line with the word frequency

Table 6.1: Characteristics of Case Study Schools

Douglas-Fir School	Ginkgo School
Very large school (approx. 2000 pupils) with academy status located in a market town.	Average size school (approx. 1000 pupils) with academy status located in a city. Member of a multi academy trust consisting of four primary schools, Ginkgo School and two rural secondary schools.
Ofsted (2011) – 'outstanding'	Ofsted (2013) – 'good'
Above average Progress 8 scores in 2016	Average Progress 8 scores in 2016
French, German and Spanish offered from KS3 to A Level	French and Spanish offered to A Level. German being phased out.
Very little local competition from other schools.	Strong competition from other local schools.
10 teachers, 3 FLAs and 2 student teachers	7 teachers, 1 FLA and 1 student teacher
Experienced HoD (in post for 8 years (internal promotion))	Recently appointed HoD (in post for 1 year (internal promotion))
35.9% pupil body achieved the languages area of the English Baccalaureate in 2016	35.7% pupil body achieved the languages area of the English Baccalaureate in 2016

6.1 Douglas-Fir School Case Study

Douglas-Fir, a very large school located in a market town with approximately 2000 students on roll, was rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted with the most recent inspection report completed in 2011, five years earlier. At the time of data collection, French, Spanish and German were offered at both GCSE and A Level and pupils could opt to study two languages at these levels. The MFL department comprised ten teachers, six of whom worked part-time. The department included one NQT (TD9) and an FLA for each language (TD10, TD11 and TD15). The department was also supporting two student teachers completing their post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE) ITE course in partnership with a local university (TD16

and TD17). The HoD (TD2) had been in post for eight years and had worked at the school as a languages teacher prior to taking on this role when the previous HoD (TD6) stepped down to a part-time role. Alongside the HoD, three teachers held roles as Subject Leads for French (TD3), Spanish (TD14) and German (TD1).

Leadership: support, challenge and control

When asked about the school's approach to staff development, TD12 (the member of the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for teacher development) spoke first about the school culture: '*there is an open dialogue within team rooms […] I think that's immensely powerful and sustaining […] it's cultural. Everybody is a learner'.* I asked TD12 how this culture came about and she asserted that '*it comes from the Head*'. The message from the Headteacher was reportedly:

> *Try your best, reflect, sometimes it will go pear-shaped and that's OK as long as you work out, you know, you reflect on what it is [that went wrong] and adapt your practices. In other words, people have got permission to fail.*

In terms of the school's response to the performativity and accountability climate within education, TD12 recounted her habitual introductory talk to newly qualified teachers joining the school:

> *We are aware that there's a tension here. We are aware that you need to demonstrate competency against the standards, and you may feel you need to cover things up. But don't do it […] it's far better to just say actually that went really badly and this is what I think I need help with.*

This head-on approach to tackling the tension between giving teachers confidence and autonomy, enabling them to experiment and needing to hold teachers to account reflects a high level of self-awareness in the leadership team and, as Stillman (2011) found, honest acknowledgement of accountability tensions by SLT may provide the balanced conditions in which teachers are able to experience tensions as productive rather than incapacitating.

Regarding the formalised PL structures put in place by the school, TD12 explained that once a week after school there was staff development time, which took the form of internal speakers facilitating workshops aimed at ECTs and student teachers. What TD12 called '*core training'* was devolved to HoDs during faculty meetings over the course of the academic year. HoD's '*determine what their priority is within the faculty […] so they have autonomy over that*'. Most departments dedicated a section of these meetings to '*a lightbulb slot, sharing good practice'* and TD12 reported a very high level of trust between SLT and HoDs.

The HoD (TD2) confirmed that she had a high level of control over her work and she felt trusted. As Stillman (2011, p. 151) found in her case-study, the HoD's long-standing career at the school and

reputation for leading '*an effective and dedicated team*' (TD12) made it easier for her to set the parameters of the school-department relationship. Her stable position enabled TD2 to shield colleagues from an excess of accountability pressure within a standards-driven environment. TD2's one criticism of the culture set by the SLT related to the way in which they responded to evidence of poor teaching practice:

> *One area that our senior leadership team are, they're not very good at is actually tackling specific teachers with specific issues. Their way of dealing with it is to tell everybody and hope that the people that they are aiming at will hear. But of course, those people it will just go over their heads and the people in my team here will tie themselves up in knots thinking 'I'm not doing enough', 'I've got to do more'*

TD2 reported strong support for languages from the school's Headteacher, highlighting the fact that '*every year at the Year 9 options evening languages are in a block by themselves and there is very explicit encouragement that they think everybody should do a language'* and also that the school had recently invested in renovating a new building with spacious classrooms and dedicated small speaking rooms for the languages department. These concrete examples of SLT support notwithstanding, TD2 also clearly saw an element of her role as actively informing SLT about and advocating for the needs of the languages team:

> Researcher: *You do still have your foreign language assistants, don't you? So has that been protected as part of your funding?*
>
> HoD, TD2: *it was protected for this year. I had to write a letter last year to the governors explaining why we felt that we needed to keep them. So I was very pleased with the outcome of that.*

The argument put forward by TD2 for retaining FLAs included statements of their value in supporting examination classes and an agreement that the assistants would deliver one lesson of A Level per week, thereby reducing the overall language staffing budget. TD2 explained that she had carefully and strategically crafted her argument to include '*all of the things that I knew the governors would want to hear'.* In this way, TD2 demonstrated that she was '*an effective, politically astute advocate for the department*' (Leithwood, 2016, p. 129).

Professional learning in the MFL department at Douglas-Fir: routines, tools and division of labour

The HoD explained that department meetings at Douglas-Fir were '*supposed to be on a Wednesday or Friday but we have ours on a Monday because Monday is the only day that the whole team is in*'. This practice of deliberate inclusion of both full and part-time members of the team set the tone for the department work that I observed. The MFL team at Douglas-Fir met twelve times during the academic year in their shared team room. The meetings were planned out for the year and all colleagues in the team had a copy of the excel spreadsheet containing the dates and main foci of each meeting, including the topic for the 'focus fortnight' that teachers were encouraged to experiment with in the two weeks following every other meeting and then report back on at the subsequent meeting. The six focus-fortnight topics for the year in which this data was collected were: 1) setting up an excel spreadsheet to track pupils' progress; 2) making use of Google Forms to set homework; 3) using Quizlet and Kahoot to support pupils' learning; 4) Using Kerboodle to set homework; 5) planning starter and plenary tasks; and 6) pupil movement in the classroom (with a focus on lower-attaining pupils).

Between April and July, I observed two after-school department meetings and one full day of L2-specific INSET at Douglas-Fir School. The outline of these meetings can be seen in Table 6.2. One striking feature of these meetings is the fact that a whole day of precious MFL department time was given over in April to strategic planning in relation to high stakes speaking examinations. This shows that colleagues at Douglas-Fir strongly prioritised understanding the examinations, surely driven by the same performativity pressures that were highlighted again and again by teachers in this study (see Chapter 4). However, the Douglas-Fir team were able to tackle their need to understand these examinations during the school day and with access to the examination board's webinar support. This created a sense of collegiality, calm and purpose that may have been out of reach for colleagues in other schools who did not have the luxury of dedicated time for this purpose. The second meeting I observed was more of '*a typical meeting*' (TD5 interview) and this showcased the tools and routines that were used in the department to share resources and expertise, building a sense of relatedness and competence. Sharing of practice in the form of teaching and learning ideas and resources was indeed a structured and formalised part of this department meeting, given status by its inclusion as a significant item on the agenda. The final meeting was dedicated to the review and development of the department's strategic development plan. This meeting showcased the democratic processes at play in the leadership of this teacher team.

Table 6.2: Department meetings at Douglas-Fir

Meeting	Outline of Meeting Content
Meeting 1: MFL INSET Day (April)	**Main focus: speaking examinations at KS4 and KS5** 8.30: 'Bring and share' breakfast 9.00-11.0: watch AQA Webinar about GCSE speaking examinationss (1hr) then split into languages teams to discuss (30 mins). 11.00-11.20: birthday cake for HoD (brought in by colleagues) making of tea & coffee 11.20-12.10: watch AQA webinar about AS speaking examinations (1hr) then split into languages teams to discuss with reference to examiner feedback from last year (30 mins) 12.00 – student teachers arrive and join in 12.30-1.45: lunch at a local pub 2.00-3.30: watch AQA webinar about A2 speaking examinations (1hr) then split into languages teams to discuss (30 mins) (Everyone attends GCSE session. Only relevant staff required to attend others (although all made welcome). If not involved, colleagues use the time for PPA and appraisal meetings (10 minutes each))
Meeting 2: Department meeting (May)	**Main focus: planning for lower-attaining students at KS3** 15.50-16.00: making of tea & coffee 16.00-16.30: volunteers 'show and tell' what does and does not work in their lower-attaining sets in Year 8. 16.30-16.45: small groups discuss three aspects of working with these groups: 1) curriculum content; 2) Homework; 3) design of assessments 16.45-17.00: plenary discussion of expectations for points 1-3 above. Action points agreed and licence given to 'forget the medium-term plan' (HoD) if this is in conflict with a mastery approach.
Meeting 3: Department meeting (July)	**Main focus: review of the FDIP** 16.00-16.10: tea & coffee making, cake and biscuits (baked by HoD) shared 16.10-16.25: HoD gives info about plans for timetabling and setting. 16.25- 16.40: small groups discuss current FDIP and priorities for next year. 16.40-17.00 plenary discussion of FDIP and voting on 'focus fortnights' for next academic year. (HoD keeping notes).

Drawing on observations of department meetings, written artefacts, and teachers' comments during individual interviews, I collected evidence of teachers at Douglas-Fir engaging in almost all of the activities identified in the literature as being associated with effective PL, with the exception of the use of research evidence (see Table 6.3). In determining the strength of the evidence for each aspect highlighted in table 6.3 I made a best-fit judgement based on the frequency with which I observed or heard about each action in teacher interviews. Evidence was considered strong if the action was observed and/or mentioned by at least two sources within the department (e.g. a teacher interview and notes from a department meeting). It is important to acknowledge that I have gathered an incomplete

picture of the activity within the department since I am only able to base my judgements on the data gathered within a short window of time towards the end of the academic year.

Table 6.3: Characteristics of effective professional learning activities at Douglas-Fir

Activities characteristic of effective PL (taken from Cordingley 2015, p.240-241) *Text colour indicates strength of evidence gathered in the case study for each activity (from observations, documentation and interviews) Green = strong evidence (at least two sources); Amber = some evidence; Red = no evidence
1) Making use of specialist expertise, including expertise in the form of research evidence; using evidence and expertise to support planning in particular
2) Giving and receiving structured peer support using collaboration, especially reciprocal risk taking and professional dialogue, as core learning strategies
3) Undertaking sustained, enquiry-oriented learning over (usually) two terms or more supported by use of tools and protocols to discipline learning and secure coherence and progression
4) Learning to learn from looking through exploration of evidence about pupil outcomes and from observing teaching and learning exchanges especially those involving experiments with new approaches
5) Using aspirations for specific pupils and evidence about their learning as a driver for development
6) Focusing on why things do and don't work in different contexts to develop an underpinning rationale or practical theory alongside practice
7) Seeking out leadership support—time/encouragement/modelling—including specialist coaching and engaging in enquiry-oriented approaches to development
8) Actively seeking out specialist and peer support and taking responsibility for creating and taking opportunities for professional learning within day to day school life

The HoD at Douglas-Fir confidently communicated a process of calm and proactive forward-planning for the development of teaching learning in relation to changes to examinations and curricula:

> *I am trying to move us in the direction of being more skills-oriented and less content-obsessed and we have had a big focus on group talk* […] *with the new GCSE exam coming through I would say the current Year 9, so when they were in Year 7 that's when we really started thinking about how things were going to change and we have adapted slowly and steadily since then so we have introduced lots of pictures, you know, describing the picture. And more talking off the top of your head, you know, and building it up alongside lots of group talk activities.*

The incremental embedding of new ideas over an extended period of time was a feature of the HoD's strategic planning. She set herself and her team time-limited targets to focus their work towards specific goals as can be seen in the quotation below:

> *with the literary texts my aim […] was that by the end of this academic year we will have filled in all the gaps at Key Stage Three so that at the end of each year [the pupils] will have done a literary text at every half term.*

These longer-term goals were complemented by a programme of 'Focus-Fortnights' (as mentioned above). Every teacher I interviewed mentioned these Focus Fortnights as a vehicle for their learning. The only criticism of this programme came from TD8, who felt that the discussion could sometimes drag on and become repetitious. She also explained that the expectation to share what she had trialled with her classes left her feeling that she was '*accounting all the time for [her]self*' and she acknowledged that it was a hard balance to get right.

In relation to Focus Fortnights, TD1 explained that '*we've agreed it's going to be a 'focus half-term' next term. So we're going to keep trying because we think until you try an activity out it doesn't become embedded in your practice*.' This move towards a more sustained approach to experimenting with and embedding new teaching strategies is strongly supported by research (Cordingley et al., 2015; Walter & Briggs, 2012). Specific aspirations for pupils were used as a driver for learning in the department meeting focussed on meeting the needs of low-attaining pupils. During this meeting TD2 prompted colleagues to think explicitly about which strategies did not work with their own low-attaining students and why that might be, thereby encouraging reflection on the context-embedded nature of learning.

I observed that colleagues at Douglas-Fir were actively encouraged by TD2 (HoD) to observe each other and, although there was not a programme of organised peer observation, the use of informally organised observations of each other as a tool for development was frequently mentioned in department meetings (Meetings 1 and 2) and interviews (TD1, TD4 and TD6). At interview, TD6 spoke about the value of having jointly observing the HoD (TD2) with TD4. The fact that the HoD sought her colleagues' feedback and was open to practising what she preached in this way may have helped to create the conditions in which a pattern of unstructured informal observation became a self-sustaining norm of teachers' working lives.

Honest talk and risk-taking

Although the word 'risk' does not occur at all in teachers' interviews, a degree of comfort with risk-taking was in evidence in teachers' meetings. There were several instances of feelings of anxiety and vulnerability being shared in department meetings alongside stories of failed classroom activities. For example, in Meeting 1, TD1 asked '*does anyone else feel like this is just an impossible task? How are we supposed to get them to hit the grammar and the fluency unprepared?'.* In relation to her lower-attaining set TD5 said '*I just never feel like they get the best of me'* and '*the four corners game was total chaos'* (Meeting 2). At interview, TD12 said that she felt '*people have got permission to fail*'. Experimentation was encouraged in the form of '*trying out new activities […and] being creative with planning*' (TD1

interview). Despite this micro-climate of non-judgemental experimentation, there was some evidence that recent curriculum change had affected colleagues' willingness to take risks:

> *That's my worry generally at the moment. The fact that we have so much curriculum change that has been imposed upon us […] with the pressures of finishing a syllabus […] people have been so focussed on trying to learn and implement them and deliver them within the timeframe that a lot of teachers, a lot of teaching has become very didactic again. Very controlled.* (TD12 interview)

Pool of expertise

Most learning opportunities identified at Douglas-Fir arose during interactions within the languages department. No mention was made of opportunities for learning with and from colleagues in the wider school and, during my time in the MFL teachers' social spaces, I recorded only two instances of a non-team member entering the department space. In her interview, TD5 gave an interesting assessment of the balance between whole-school and department-specific INSET at Douglas-Fir:

> *I think what we do within faculty is very, very good. What I don't get so much out of is when they try and do whole school INSET […] literacy for example, having a whole school thing on literacy. I never find it quite relevant enough to languages when they're sort of addressing it to you know, everybody, like science, art, languages, maths … really? That's where I don't appreciate their approach. […] if somebody wanted to come in that was overseeing literacy in the school and come in and work with us as a team, they'd be absolutely welcome to, we're very open to ideas. But when you have to sit there and try and mould your situation to some generic whatever it is that they're doing … or you have to chat about what you do in your faculty to Joe Blogs and what he does in his faculty when really we haven't got anything that is in common. I don't see the point of struggling to find a commonality when really, we need to be working on what we do and how can we improve what we do.* (TD5 interview)

During the department's INSET day, AQA webinars were used as source of expertise to facilitate discussions around the planning of GCSE and A Level curriculum. Teachers also made use of each other's specialist expertise (e.g. TD9 drew on his fine art background to create lessons that were then trialled by the team). FLAs and native speaker teachers were consulted for their language expertise (This was noted 6 times during the case-study observations). The use of research evidence was not observed or discussed although the most recently qualified colleague (TD9) mentioned that to inform his planning of reading activities he planned to attend a free, local university conference about research-informed approaches to the teaching of reading in French. In their responses to my question 'where do you normally go to get new ideas for your teaching?', TD1, TD2, TD4, TD5 and TD6 all mentioned a whole department trip to the *Languages Live* show in London (see https://languageshowlive.co.uk), which had offered rich stimuli for the development of teaching and learning in the languages department It seems lasting impact from this

day was due to the way in which ideas were picked up and embedded into teachers' practice using the established mechanism of experimentation and feedback in faculty meetings:

> - *We came back buzzing from that with loads of ideas and those have gradually fed our faculty training in the last year or so.* (TD5 interview)

> - *We went to the Goethe Institute presentation which was all on teaching literature and we just had some fabulous ideas. And we've worked really well at developing them further.* (TD2, HoD interview)

> - *We haven't taught literature before, and it was great to share ideas - we each planned a literature lesson that we then shared* (TD1 interview)

It seems that one of the powerful elements of this PL-focussed visit out of school was that the whole team was involved. This meant that colleagues '*were able to immediately discuss the ideas suggested, and how we could adapt and use them*' (TD1 interview). Unfortunately, colleagues at Douglas-Fir did not expect to be able to access similar experiences in the near future due to budget restrictions and this trip was framed nostalgically as an event from a bygone age:

> *We were talking fondly the other day about going to this venue in Birmingham and meeting colleagues from other schools […] but all of that has absolutely gone. I think that's a shame. You know, actually a chance to get out and […] I do remember you got fired up by those, you know colleagues from other schools that do stuff differently.... and I think that kind of INSET has gone. It almost belongs to a different era now.* (TD6 interview)

Back at the department, a culture of proactive resource sharing and co-construction was in evidence during observations and frequently mentioned in all seven teacher interviews (TD1 x8; TD2 x4; TD4 x9; TD5 x8; TD6 x4; TD8 x4; TD9 x1). This may in part have been a response to the common occurrence of part-time staff sharing classes. It happened both in person (*we do an awful lot of sharing in faculty meetings* – TD5) and remotely (*we have a big bank of resources on the system. So I use that a lot. I have a look at what others have done and then I inspire myself from it* – TD9 interview). TD1 explained the many forms of sharing that were taking place:

> *lots of us share classes because there are quite a few part-time staff. […] it's really sort of everyone's developed systems of, um all the mark books are on Staff Drive. We share mark books . All the resources are on Shared so everybody shares everything and there's constant discussion in the team room with everybody.* (TD1 interview)

Resources were habitually adapted and re-uploaded as teachers contributed their own ideas, adding instructions and teaching strategies in the 'notes' pages of their PowerPoint slides to facilitate colleagues' use of them:

> *You can see these hybrids developing. So, if somebody's planned a lesson and somebody's done it another way, somebody's put those two together and added their own thoughts and then you add your own take on that. So, you can see in one PowerPoint there might be you know, bits that four*

> *different people have put together and, yeah, or adapted for their own purposes. So, it is incredibly collaborative*. (TD4 interview)

The sharing and support noted amongst language colleagues at Douglas-Fir extended to the student teachers that were welcomed into the department. Student teachers were mentioned as sources of inspiration and ideas by five of the teachers interviewed (TD2 (x2), TD1 (x2), TD5 (x1), TD8 (x1), TD9 (x1)):

> *Obviously, our student teachers are brilliant because, yes, you have to invest in them, but they can come up with and come across all sorts of great ideas. And that's a brilliant partnership*. (TD1 interview)

There was some evidence (inspection of shared drive, observation of meetings and interview with TD4) that the sub-team of Spanish teachers were less collaborative and did not share their resources as frequently on the department's shared area. This demonstrates that even within a close-knit department team there may be sub-cultures that deviate from the established norms for ways of working.

In a nutshell

The SLT at Douglas-Fir School devolved a large amount of development time to departments and the MFL department functioned as its own unit with little cross-curricular discussion. The work of the MFL department at Douglas-Fir school bore the hallmarks of a mature and confident PLC (Bolam et al., 2005). The HoD established a democratic agenda for PL, which was prioritised within department meetings. TG2 was active in shielding her colleagues from accountability pressures where possible and she was helped in this by the SLT, who were aware of and honest with teachers about the tensions in the performance-oriented school system. TG2 laid the groundwork for honest talk in meetings by sharing both successful and unsuccessful stories of her own classroom experimentation. Colleagues seemed to take collective responsibility for pupils' learning, sharing ideas and resources both within the structure of the 'Focus Fortnight' programme and informally via peer observation and conversations in social spaces about teaching and learning, which demonstrated high levels of trust and mutual respect. This may have been facilitated by the availability of a comfortable, well-equipped and well-frequented team room and the habitual sharing of classes between pairs of part-time colleagues, leading to well-established systems of co-planning. Access to external expertise in the form of research evidence or CPD courses was very limited (the latter due in large part to budget cuts). However, the department used the expertise and alternative perspectives of FLAs and student teachers to good advantage. These affiliated department members were highly valued and fully integrated into the professional discourse of the PLC through practices of deliberate inclusion.

6.2 Ginkgo School Case Study

Ginkgo, a medium-sized, urban school with approximately 1000 students on roll, was rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2013, three years prior to data collection. French and Spanish were offered at both GCSE and A Level, and pupils could opt for one language at these levels. The MFL department comprised seven teachers, three of whom worked part-time. The department included one Early Career Teacher with two years of experience (TG8) and one FLA (TG1) who was employed for 5 hours a week to support the teaching of Spanish. The department was also hosting one student teacher (TG11) completing a PGCE ITE course in partnership with a local university. The HoD (TG3) had been in post for less than one year but had been employed as an L2 teacher within the school for five years prior to taking up the role when the previous HoD moved school. The HoD was supported by a Deputy HoD (TG2). There were no allocated Subject Leads. One department member (TG4) was also the school's Deputy Head Teacher and taught very few L2 lessons.

Leadership: support, challenge and control

SLT members TG9 and TG10 both described Ginkgo's ambition to be a '*research-engaged school*'.

> *We are very lucky in this school to have a network of research-engaged teachers. And that they, well, we are not seen as outsiders. We're seen as an integral part of the teaching and learning that's going on in the school.* (TG9, Professional Tutor)

TG10, the SLT member with responsibility for improving teaching and learning, was nominated the school's 'Research Lead'. This role involved supporting teachers within the school to engage with and in research to develop their classroom practice. TG10 had access to the local university's library services and was allocated time to complete this work.

The school's model of the process of research-engagement was multi-layered and involved both whole-school directed work and support for individual interests. At a whole-school level, TG10 put together a school Special Interest Group (SIG) focussed on research (this group was constituted of any members of school staff who volunteered based on an interest in research-engagement). This SIG then decided on a whole-school focus for the year, drawing on the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research into effective interventions in education. Enhancing students' metacognitive awareness and self-regulation was the chosen focus during data collection for the case-study. All teaching colleagues attended an INSET where some initial input about the EEF research was disseminated. Then, each department within the school was tasked with developing these ideas further and applying them in their own subject. As TG9 said, '*each department takes ownership of what the school is focussing on'.* After some experimentation and discussion in departments, groups of teachers across different subject areas were

brought back together to share and discuss the changes that had been made to their practice and the challenges in enacting some of the research-based principles in the classroom.

At an individual teacher level, the school encouraged and financially supported teachers to engage in small-scale action research projects in collaboration with the local university. Other staff were part-funded to complete master's degrees in education with a focus on their subject areas. The main structure for the sharing of knowledge generated by individual teachers engaging in enquiry projects was a school research newsletter compiled by TG10 and then scattered in team rooms and the school staffroom. This enabled teachers to feel part of something and facilitated conversations amongst colleagues in teachers' social spaces that built a sense of relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000) within a research-engaged community.

When asked about accountability and how the school vision of teacher learning intersected with performance management structures, TG10 admitted that the performance management process was often a tick box exercise that was not developmental. Work towards embedding metacognitive strategies in lesson was monitored via learning walks[19]. However, TG9 was quick to highlight that the findings from learning walks were never used at an individual level to make judgements about teacher competence. Instead they were used at aggregate level to inform the school's strategic planning and progress towards its goals. This less high-stakes approach to the gathering of data via short observations could be seen in the contents of the school teaching and learning newsletter, which reported the findings of recent learning walks focussed on how students were using the metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring and evaluating their work:

> *The learning walks, superficially maybe, present a better picture of metacognitive practices occurring in lessons compared to students' self-reporting.* (Summer 2018 Teaching and Learning Newsletter)

The triangulation of data sources and open acknowledgement within this report that learning walks provide only superficial evidence suggests a strong desire to gather valid and reliable data, and to use this data to make research-informed decisions to improve practice.

[19] A learning walk is a brief classroom visit. At the time of writing, these were frequently used by senior leadership team members in schools alongside more formal lesson observations to collect data about the quality of various aspects of teaching and learning in the school. Concerns about the negative impact of learning walks and surveillance culture in schools have led to the National Union of Teachers producing a policy to set out some parameters to limit such brief visits leading being used for the purposes of holding teachers to account at an individual level (see https://www.teachers.org.uk/learning-walks-model-policy).

When prompted at interview Ginkgo HoD (TG3) could not think of any examples of active SLT support for the languages department. However, she stressed that the Headteacher was '*very supportive'* and explained that she felt she was listened to when making decisions about the curriculum and timetabling. At the time of the study the languages department were considering offering just one language for the first two years of Key Stage Three instead of two, which the HoD hoped would help students to make more meaningful progress in the limited curriculum time available.

Although Ginkgo HoD saw part of her role as advocating for the needs of the languages department in discussions with the SLT, this was not something that she had yet felt empowered to do. Through her involvement in the ALL network she had encountered other HoDs who had said things like '*well I've told SLT that we need to have a mock for speaking and we need to have it then and this is how it needs to happen and this is how long it will take'.* Ginkgo HoD reported that these conversations had '*been quite useful in terms of realising oh, I can try and be more demanding'.* Recent developments of concern in Ginkgo school were 1) a recent reduction in timetabled time for A Level language classes, 2) combined classes of Year 12 and Year 13 students in order to make A Level classes viable and 3) a communication from the SLT that '*this will be the last year'* that the school would finance FLA time. These developments appeared to have been accepted by the HoD as an inevitable consequence of the tightening school budget and she explained '*we're working with what we've been given and taking on the challenge'*. Her plan to recruit pupils studying languages at A Level to support languages classes lower down the school was a creative response to the loss of FLA support but, as she acknowledged, she did not have any strategies to address the gap left in native speaker support for higher-level language classes.

Professional learning in the MFL department at Ginkgo: routines, tools and division of labour

All meetings of the MFL team were held in the HoD's classroom as the team room could only accommodate three colleagues at a time. In addition to twice-termly after-school department meetings, MFL colleagues at Ginkgo School met fortnightly on Wednesday mornings for short 'subject briefings'. I observed three of these fortnightly briefings and noted that there were no set agendas for these meetings. They were used mainly for administrative matters and as a source of informal troubleshooting and support when colleagues had issues with IT or with specific pupils. I also observed three full department meetings, agendas for which were circulated in advance. As TG5 said in his interview, '*it's always agenda-d beforehand. So, you have a chance to, you know, if you wish to comment on something you can. You've got the time to think about it*'. The content of the department meetings is summarised in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Department meetings at Ginkgo School

Meeting	Outline of Activities
Department Meeting 1 (May)	**Main focus: metacognitive learning strategies** 15.30 – 15.50 administration of GCSE mock speaking assessments and arrangements for learning walks with a focus on metacognitive learning strategies 15.50 – 16.10 'book look' with a focus on Pupil Premium[20] students and how they are responding to teacher LIFT[21] feedback (each teacher brings 3 or 4 books from KS3 classes). 16.10 -16.20 discussion of ideas generated from school metacognition training (the previous week each colleague had been placed in a cross-curricular group to discuss approaches to developing metacognitive strategies with colleagues from other subject areas) 16.20 – 16.25 admin: planning to collect student voice questionnaires in the next few weeks 16.25 – 16.30 AOB debate about the value of rote learning and testing effect for remembering verb paradigms
Department Meeting 2 (June)	**Main focus: assessment at Key Stage 3** 15.30 – 15.55 administration. Discussion of which pupils to nominate for end-of-year school rewards. 15.55 – 16.10 discussion of draft grammar and vocabulary booklets created to support teaching of Year 9 in the next academic year with a focus on preparing the basis for GCSE success. TG3 (HoD) takes notes of suggestions and amendments. 16.10 – 16.20 TG7 presents a series of gap-fill verb tests for Spanish and French supported by a Memrise[22] verb course. Agreement is reached to use these on a fortnightly basis next year. 16.20 – 16.30 HoD summarises student voice feedback about whether they would rather study 1 or 2 languages. Debate about teaching one language in Y7 and Y8 with a second language added ab initio in Y9.

[20] The Pupil Premium Grant is additional funding allocated to publicly funded schools for each pupil registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the preceding six years (for more information see https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings)
[21] The Learner Initiated Feedback Technique is a dialogic approach to feedback promoted by Gianfranco Conti, who offers a description of the technique on his blog: https://gianfrancoconti.com/2015/07/30/l-i-f-t-an-effective-writing-proficiency-and-metacognition-enhancer/
[22] Memrise is a language learning software application available at https://www.memrise.com/

	16.30 -16.35 AOB discussion about whether there are too many assessments at KS3 16.35 – 16.40 AOB discussion of Learning Walks and how to continue to embed LIFT strategies with groups.
Department Meeting 3 (June)	**Main focus: planning for GCSE speaking examinations** 15.15-15.30 Flowers and cake for student teacher (TG11) who finishes her placement this week (TG11 leaves after the cake) 15.30-15.45 Administration discussion of mock results data drop 15.45-16.05 TG2 talks through the administration of the speaking examinations, passing on info from an examination board training session he has attended. 16.05-16.15 Discussion of KS3 assessments timing and content. How to reduce marking load. 16.15-16.30 Discussion of plans for current Y7 (studying 1 language over 6 lessons a fortnight) to pick up a second language in Y9. Suggestions for the Y9 curriculum.

Observations and interviews at Ginkgo School yielded strong evidence of a PL culture that valued and engaged with an inquiry approach to learning. Engagement with external expertise, including research evidence, was also a prevalent feature of the learning experiences at this school. Structures were in place at Ginkgo to develop teaching and learning strategies over a long period of time. The school focus on metacognition with an emphasis on classroom experimentation and adaptation was sustained for a full academic year and the MFL department focus on feedback strategies was in its second year of development. Tools and protocols in the form of low stakes learning walks, structured sharing during INSET and the teaching and learning newsletter were all used to promote coherence and progression. Table 6.5 summarises the extent to which I found evidence of the eight teacher actions that Cordingley (2015) identified as associated with effective learning. As with the Douglas-Fir case study, I made a best-fit judgement about the strength of the evidence for each action based on the frequency with which I observed, read or heard about it in interviews. Evidence was considered strong if the action was observed and/or mentioned by at least two sources within the department (e.g. a teacher interview and notes from a department meeting).

Table 6.5: Characteristics of effective professional learning activities at Ginkgo

Activities characteristic of effective PL (taken from Cordingley, 2015, p.240-241) *Text colour indicates strength of evidence gathered in the case study for each activity (from observations, documentation and interviews) Green = strong evidence (at least 2 sources); Amber = some evidence; Red = no evidence
1) Making use of specialist expertise, including expertise in the form of research evidence; using evidence and expertise to support planning in particular
2) Giving and receiving structured peer support using collaboration, especially reciprocal risk taking and professional dialogue, as core learning strategies
3) Undertaking sustained, enquiry-oriented learning over (usually) two terms or more supported by use of tools and protocols to discipline learning and secure coherence and progression
4) Learning to learn from looking through exploration of evidence about pupil outcomes and from observing teaching and learning exchanges especially those involving experiments with new approaches
5) Using aspirations for specific pupils and evidence about their learning as a driver for development
6) Focusing on why things do and don't work in different contexts to develop an underpinning rationale or practical theory alongside practice
7) Seeking out leadership support—time/encouragement/modelling—including specialist coaching and engaging in enquiry-oriented approaches to development
8) Actively seeking out specialist and peer support and taking responsibility for creating and taking opportunities for professional learning within day to day school life

Much of the INSET time at Ginkgo was devolved to subject departments. In her interview, TG3 (the HoD) said she felt this was a helpful move to increase the subject-specific nature of PL. However, she also expressed low self-efficacy in relation to the task of providing meaningful PL input for her colleagues and some resentment for the imposition of the responsibility for this task:

> *We have to do 6 hours over the year and so they [=SLT] sort of, I'll be honest, lumped it, because that's how I feel, on to curriculum leaders' shoulders to deliver.* (TG3 interview)

TG3's language here implies a transmission model of learning where she, as HoD must 'deliver' new knowledge to her team. Her perception of the need to be a knowledge source seemed to cause TG3 some personal anxiety as she demonstrated acute awareness of the limited opportunities for her to extend and develop her own knowledge and understanding via an expanded pool of expertise:

> *[what I am doing in department meetings] is still in a way CPD but it's not that kind of engaging, talking to people from other schools who, you know … and it is very much it is coming from me but I'm still then not then going out of school to find out anything else unless it's on my own time… […] although I have taken it upon myself to go out to the ALL meetings […] but yeah, I don't get any time during the day to maybe do a webinar myself or something like that and feed back to people […] it feels as though I could do with **knowing** some more, with having some **time**, so that I could then feed back to others.* (TG3 interview – bold text indicates TG3's original emphasis)

Having expressed reservations about leading PL in the department, TG3 did go on to outline a clear plan for the year. She intended that her team would further develop metacognitive approaches to learning (which was a whole school priority). She then planned to persevere with an existing department development focus from the previous year and embed this over the medium to long term: the team were working on written feedback approaches. Finally, she planned to incorporate TG7's request to focus on developing spontaneous talk.

One issue that Ginkgo HoD was encountering in her leadership of these strategic aims was an apparent lack of buy-in from all team members:

> *It is definitely something I learnt last year that just because they say that they are on board with it and they are all really keen in the department meeting doesn't then … so yeah we are going to be doing more sort of book look strategies* (TG3 interview)

TG3's response to a perceived lack of action by colleagues was to build in some accountability mechanisms to encourage the enactment of agreed upon experimentation work in classrooms. This demonstrates the uneasy process of balancing accountability with trust that is frequently highlighted in the literature as having important impacts on teachers' motivation for engaging with change agendas (A. Kennedy, 2014; O'Neill, 2013). TG3 saw the performance management system as an efficient way to set out targets for development and she planned to '*give people something that they want to do, that they can use with their classes and then send out to all of us'.* The impetus to offer colleagues control over their development goals demonstrates the HoD's recognition of the importance of a sense of autonomy for teachers' learning. However, the model of dissemination of ready-to-go materials that is envisaged by TG3 as the result of teachers' development work seems comparable with a shallow approach to PL that focusses on teachers as 'technicians' (Winch et al., 2013), rather than encouraging a deeper engagement with new approaches to understand their aims and the ways in which they may need to be adapted for specific contexts and learners (as advocated by Cordingley et al., 2015).

The impact of school structures of performance management was visible in Meeting 1 in the HoD's warning to her colleagues about impending 'learning walks' and her explanation of the 'success criteria' for these walks. Another instance of the language of performativity within Ginkgo department meetings was the 'book scrutiny' that was an item on the agenda of Meeting 1. This language is associated with a culture of ensuring that teachers are compliant with school systems. However, the unfolding discussion that I witnessed under the name of a 'book scrutiny' was characterised by non-judgemental sharing of what teachers felt was and was not working for individual pupils in their classes. This was achieved by the HoD sharing some examples of her own students' books first and highlighting less successful aspects

of the specific feedback technique that the team had been experimenting with. This had the effect of opening a discussion in which colleagues appeared to feel safe and comfortable to admit difficulties and share strategies to overcome them (for example, in Meeting 1, TG5 explained that her pupils seemed to formulate questions just for the sake of meeting her expectations and TG7 suggested that this could be avoided by modelling the process of writing with students to demonstrate when it is appropriate to note down a question).

Honest talk and risk-taking

Although the book scrutiny was used to create conditions within which colleagues seemed willing to share their vulnerabilities, this was the only such example that I observed during my time at Ginkgo. In Meeting 2, TG4 discussed the work of a specific pupil during the book scrutiny, asking '*how do we move him from a simple sentence to the kind of sophistication they need for the exam?*' but this is one of the only instances of aspirations for specific pupils and/or evidence of pupil learning being used to drive colleagues' PL that I recorded. Similarly, there was only limited evidence of ideas being adapted by teachers for their individual classroom contexts. At interview, TG7 spoke about the wider education policy context that she perceived was working against a nuanced and individual approach to pedagogy: '*I'm worried that in England there is a trend that is trying to make it all more homogenous so that we should all be teaching the same*'

Most contributions that were shared within meetings were examples of practice that was perceived to work well. Within the meetings there was also a dominant pattern of TG3 and TG7 providing ideas to colleagues, who then implemented them in their classrooms. I did not observe any instances of other team members experimenting with new ideas and feeding these into department discussions. Four of the MFL team (TG2, TG5, TG12 and TG7) worked part-time and the team rarely used their team room as it was only large enough to seat two colleagues. These timetabling and space constraints seemed to have led to a tendency for MFL colleagues to work in relative isolation. TG3 expressed frustration that not everyone was present for department meetings or joined in with new initiatives. She was keen to develop the opportunities for the languages team to learn with and from one another as a PLC and she had sought out the support of colleagues in the mathematics department to help her to design a structured, programme of research-informed, enquiry-focussed PL for the languages department to engage with together in the next academic year (based on the successful model of the mathematics department in the school).

Pool of Expertise

The rich learning opportunities identified at Ginkgo involved collaboration with colleagues from other subject areas within the wider school as well as within the MFL department. There was ample evidence of the use of expertise and evidence to inform teachers' planning and to sustain their PL over an extended period (see Table 6.5). This included the school focus on metacognition research, TG3 drawing on ideas and expertise from ALL meetings and TG2 sharing his expertise as an examiner for the AQA examination board. As part of a formalised higher degree programme TG7 was exploring her pupils' listening outcomes and experimenting with new strategies in her classroom. In the first department meeting there was clear evidence of teachers' engagement with research into the potential of metacognitive strategies to enhance learning. This was both explicitly addressed as an item on the meeting agenda and it was also visible in teachers' use of technical language in the department meetings as can be seen in the underlined examples below:

> *They go through the exam paper together. One pupil can be the strategist and the other one writes. It's basically a think-aloud technique* (TG7, Meeting 1)
>
> *We need to avoid cognitive overload* (HoD, TG3, Meeting 2)
>
> *We've been working on interleaving high-frequency vocab through the year* (TG4, Meeting 1)

Although the use of expertise within the school community was evident, colleagues at Ginkgo highlighted dwindling opportunities to access external CPD courses with the exception of continued partial financial support for action research projects coordinated with the local university and formal Masters courses. The key barriers to accessing a wider pool of expertise were '*money and being allowed out of school*' (TG3). The gradual loss of FLA support at Ginkgo also reduced colleagues' opportunities to interact with additional native speakers and consult them on issues of contemporary language and culture. TG3 recognised the potential of being part of an academy chain for knowledge-exchange and at interview she expressed a desire for more formalised structures for observation and peer support from beyond her immediate school surroundings. She wished that *'some top-down people would just sort of go 'here is an INSET, get together, here are your other colleagues from our trust group. There you go*'.

An additional source of new ideas came in the form of TG7's involvement in a university-led research project with a specific focus on KS3 pupils' phonics development via challenging reading texts (see Woore et al., 2018). TG7's crossing of boundaries between school and university provided fertile ground for her to take on a role as a change agent, bringing ideas shaped within both contexts to help interrogate values and practices that were, perhaps uncritically, endorsed within each institution

(Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). The department's hosting of a student teacher provided a similar function: at interview TG5 spoke about working with student teachers as an important source of new ideas: '*I find that I learn so much from [them] you know, they always say thank you and I say well thank you as well because it's a two-way process, you know which, you examine your own practice and everything*'.

In a nutshell

Ginkgo School offered rich opportunities for teachers' PL. Whole-school community engagement with research-informed, inquiry focussed approaches to developing new practices was a striking feature of the learning environment and such learning was recognised, disseminated and celebrated via an internal school newsletter. The MFL department were led by a committed and passionate HoD who was keen to develop the work of the department around a set of L2-specific development goals, which were sustained over a significant period. However, TG3 was, as yet, underconfident in her own leadership of PL and struggling to balance the managerial elements of her role (requiring a focus on compliance and performance review) with the desire to take a democratic and developmental approach to the leadership of a PLC. Colleagues at Ginkgo were able to access a wealth of external expertise due to the inter-organisational networks of TG3 and TG7 and the hosting of both an FLA and a student teacher. The potential impact of deep engagement with new ideas from these sources was, however, constrained by the fragmented nature of the department, which may be in part due to a combination of part-time working; TG2's split role as a member of SLT; the lack of a well-frequented and equipped team room; and the absence of FLAs and student teachers from department meetings.

6.3 Patterns of interaction during department meetings and what they reveal about the functioning of the professional learning community

Douglas-Fir and Ginkgo school languages departments had a great deal in common and I found evidence of rich learning processes in each context. However, I also observed differences in the norms of interaction established in each of the departments that seemed to either facilitate or impede the flourishing of effective PLCs (as envisaged by Bolam et al. (2005)).

During observations of department meetings, I mapped out the meeting room space and tallied the number and nature of contributions made by each person (using a code adapted from Hennessey et al., 2016). The pattern of contributions made in department meetings is visible in Table 6.6 and Table 6.7. Figure 6.3 and Figure 6.2 also show visually the colleagues who were included or excluded in meetings; the total contributions made by each colleague; and the sources of ideas that were contributed within the meetings. Whilst acknowledging that these frequency counts are 'inherently problematic' (Myhill, 2006) as they cannot tell us the *quality* of the individual contributions, it is nevertheless helpful to identify features of the talk in each department. For example, it is immediately apparent that junior members of each department made less frequent contributions to the meetings than their more experienced colleagues and that HoDs accounted for the highest proportions of the overall talk. However, a quick comparison shows that meetings at Douglas-Fir were less dominated by the HoD than those at Ginkgo (the mean percentage of total contributions made by each HoD were 32% and 40% respectfully).

Table 6.6: Contributions to department meetings (n=2) and an MFL INSET day (2x hr long meetings included here) at Douglas-Fir School

	Initiates new topic	**O**ffers an idea or suggestion	**E**laborates on an idea	**Ex**plains something	**A**grees / approve**s**	**D**isagrees / questions something	gives a **R**eason / justification	asks a **C**larification question	**C**onsensus **C**hecks	**In**structs	makes a **J**oke	**S**eeks opinion(s)	Total Contributions	Mean contributions per meeting attended	Mean proportion of overall contributions per meeting (%)
EXT (TD2 - HoD)	23	4	3	9	24	3	8	2	10	14	0	12	112	28	32
EXT (TD1 - SL German)	3	3	3	3	9	6	7	1	1	0	0	2	38	12.7	10.9
EXT (TD6 - ex HoD)	7	4	9	1	9	2	2	0	0	0	2	1	37	9.3	10.6
EXT (TD3 - SL French)	1	7	3	1	11	6	4	0	0	2	0	1	36	12	10.3
EXT (TD5)	4	2	4	3	12	2	7	0	0	0	0	1	35	8.8	10
MCT (TD8)	0	0	8	1	9	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	24	8	6.9
MCT (TD13)	0	1	2	1	7	2	3	3	1	0	0	1	21	5.3	6
EXT (TD4)	0	2	2	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	4.7	4
MCT (TD14 - SL Spanish)	0	1	3	0	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	12	4	3.4
NQT (TD9)	0	3	2	2	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	9	2.3	2.6
FLA (TD15 - German)	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	1.5	1.7
FLA (TD10 - French)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	5	1.3	1.4
ST (TD16)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.5	0.3
FLA (TD11 - Spanish)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ST (TD17)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	39	30	40	24	97	26	34	14	13	17	2	18	350	98.1	100
Proportion of overall contributions to meetings (%)	11	9	11	7	28	7	10	4	5	5	1	5			

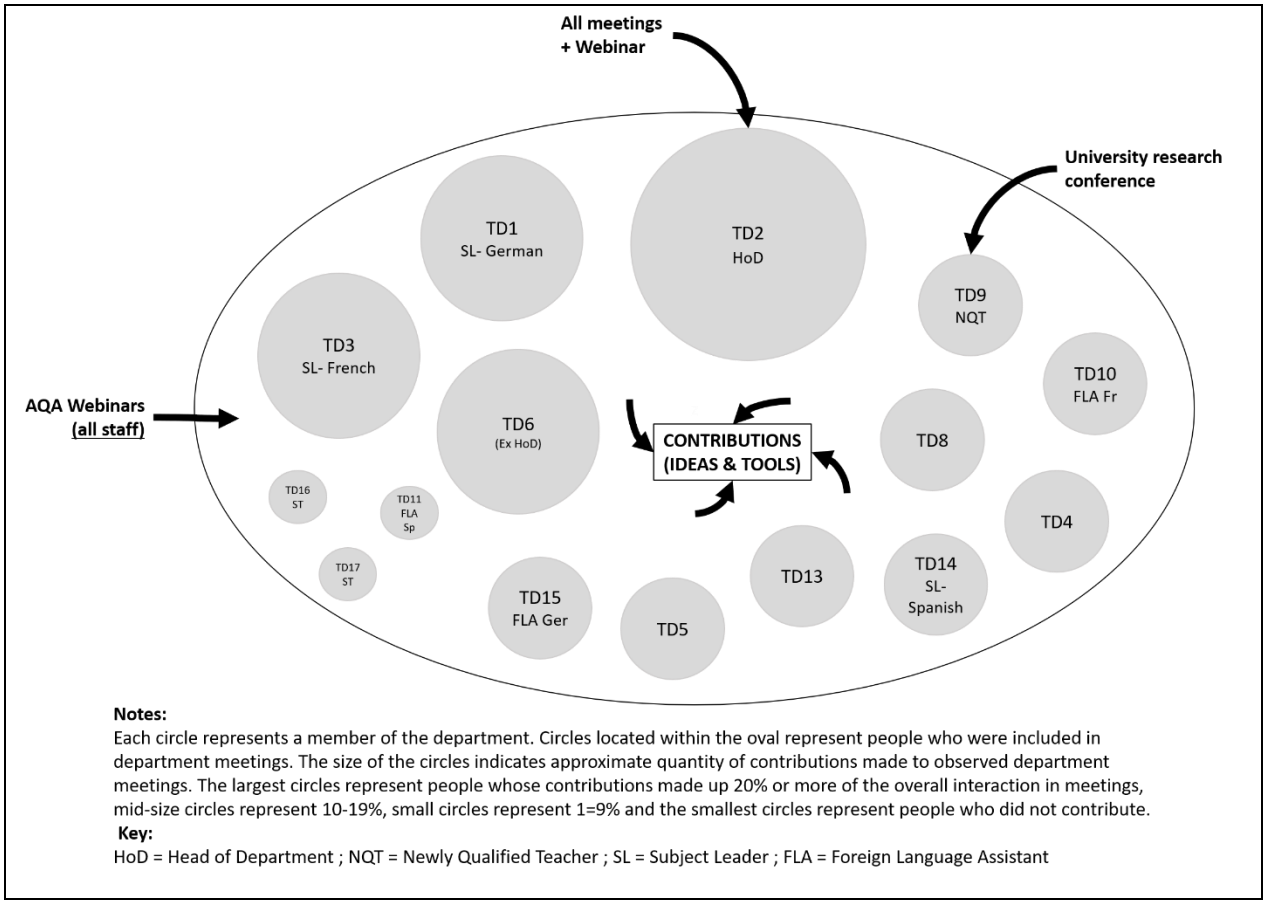
*HoD (=Head of Department); EXT (=Experienced teacher with 10+ years of experience); MCT (=Mid-career teacher with 5-9 years of experience; ECT (=Early-career teacher with 2-4 years of experience) NQT (=Newly-qualified teacher with 1 year of experience)

Table 6.7: Contributions to department meetings (n=3) at Ginkgo School

	Initiates new topic	**O**ffers an idea or suggestion	**E**laborates on an idea	**Ex**plains something	**A**grees / approve**s**	**D**isagrees / questions something	gives a **R**eason / justification	asks a **C**larification question	**C**onsensus **C**hecks	**In**structs	makes a **J**oke	**S**eeks opinion(s)	Total Contributions	Mean contributions per meeting attended	Mean proportion of overall contributions per meeting (%)
EXT (TG3 - HoD)	24	20	8	23	20	8	15	4	8	11	1	17	159	53	39
MCT (TG7)	7	23	15	6	17	5	6	2	0	0	0	1	82	27	20
EXT (TG5)	6	0	4	0	25	6	5	7	0	0	0	1	54	18	13
EXT (TG4 - SLT)	7	8	4	4	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	34	17	13
EXT (TG2 -2nd in dept)	2	5	6	1	26	2	2	4	0	0	2	0	50	16.7	12
ECT (TG8)	1	4	0	0	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	13	4	3
Totals	47	60	37	34	96	24	31	21	8	11	3	20	392	136	100
Proportion of overall contributions to meetings (%)	12	15	9	9	24	6	8	5	2	3	1	5			

*HoD (=Head of Department); EXT (=Experienced teacher with 10+ years of experience); MCT (=Mid-career teacher with 5-9 years of experience; ECT (=Early-career teacher with 2-4 years of experience)

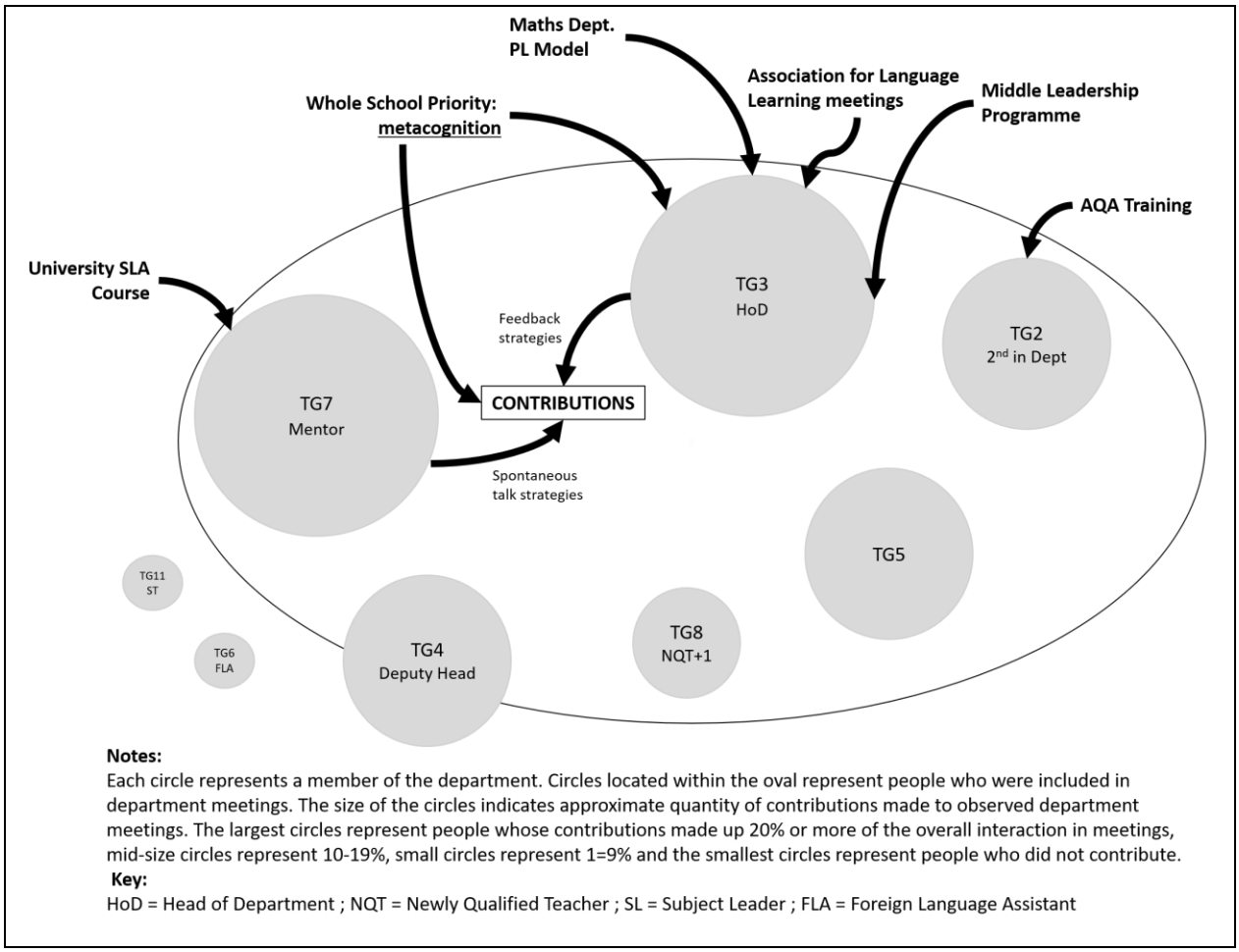
Figure 6.2: Department meetings at Douglas-Fir School



Notes:
Each circle represents a member of the department. Circles located within the oval represent people who were included in department meetings. The size of the circles indicates approximate quantity of contributions made to observed department meetings. The largest circles represent people whose contributions made up 20% or more of the overall interaction in meetings, mid-size circles represent 10-19%, small circles represent 1=9% and the smallest circles represent people who did not contribute.

Key:
HoD = Head of Department ; NQT = Newly Qualified Teacher ; SL = Subject Leader ; FLA = Foreign Language Assistant

Figure 6.3: Department meetings at Ginkgo School



Relatedness: practices of inclusion and exclusion

'*I feel at home here. I feel respected here. I feel liked here'* (TD6 interview, Douglas-Fir School)

At a whole-school level, the teaching community at Douglas-Fir seemed more loosely connected than the community at Ginkgo school. The sprawling campus of Douglas-Fir and the tight-knit nature of the L2 team may in part explain this but the devolving of PL to departments in this setting appeared to have had the unintended effect of removing mechanisms for generating inter-departmental connections. At Ginkgo on the other hand, a policy of devolving PL to departments was paired with the structuring of some whole-school PL with the specific aim of developing links between small, inquiry-focussed groups of colleagues across the school. The whole-school ethos of shared, research-informed inquiry into teaching and learning was well-developed. This seemed to have successfully led to the creation of a school within which teachers were securely connected via professional relationships with peers in very different subject disciplines.

At the level of the MFL department, the picture is reversed: there were clear differences between the way that department meetings at Douglas-Fir and Ginkgo school were organised in terms of who was invited to attend, who was able to attend and who was thus able to participate in the interaction. All colleagues associated with the department routinely attended meetings at Douglas-Fir and were included in decision making. There was a conscious effort made by teachers to '*keep the language assistants in the breach and linked in with all of us as a team*' (TD5 interview). The meetings at Ginkgo were different in that student teachers and language assistants were not present at any of the meetings that I observed and TG2 (HoD) confirmed that TG4, who had a dual role as deputy head of the school, was often present for only part of each department meeting. Both departments contained experienced colleagues who worked part-time. At Douglas-Fir, the department meetings were purposefully arranged on the only day when all colleagues were present in school to attend. Conversely, at Ginkgo the department meetings were held on the school-appointed day, with the consequence that one member of the languages team (TG12) was never in attendance. The observational data collected for the study show that colleagues at Douglas-Fir made more frequent requests for assistance and admitted their difficulties more often than colleagues at Ginkgo. It may be that the practices and expectations of inclusion at Douglas-Fir helped to flatten hierarchies and create a sense of security and relatedness, which in turn facilitated more interdependence and honest communication.

Another notable difference in approach concerned the prevalence of part-time working in both settings: at Douglas-Fir this had given rise to an intensification of collaborative planning of shared classes and remote sharing of resources. At Ginkgo School however, where shared classes were unavoidable (as was the case with TG12 and TG7; and TG7 and TG3) the curriculum was divided, with colleagues planning for their own section largely in isolation.

The building of friendly and supportive professional relationships was facilitated by the routine bringing of food to share at meetings at Douglas-Fir (I observed the HoD (TD2) bring in home-baked goods twice and this was clearly appreciated by the colleagues present) and the making of cups of tea and coffee (a ritual at the beginning of each meeting, completed by TD2 and one or two helpers for the rest of the team each time). TD6 explained that meetings '*always begin informally and there's always a nice atmosphere and a chat and laughter and empathy and so on*'. These teachers' collegial friendships were also maintained via a WhatsApp group, where they shared photographs and updates from school trips and exchanges; notifications of illness and cover needs; and occasional non-work-related news (for example, photographs of a newly arrived granddaughter and the finish line of a marathon race were discussed at meetings I observed).

Choice of language

When investigating the interaction of the two departments a striking feature of teachers' talk was the choices that they made regarding the language used for communication. In both department teams English was the only language shared fluently by all teachers. However, French, Spanish and German were all also possible means of communication between various combinations of colleagues.

The mixing of languages was a frequent occurrence and supported the ways in which colleagues related to each other as professionals at Douglas-Fir, where the presence of FLAs facilitated the establishment of a normalised practice of codeswitching (the practice of alternating between two or more languages within a single utterance or during the course of a conversation). When spending time in teachers' social spaces I observed instances of TD2, TD9 (x2) and TD10 having a go at joining conversations which were taking place in a language that they did not speak fluently. This was received with good humour, encouragement and, in 3 of the 4 instances observed, the conversation was subsequently continued in English. It was clear that teachers had established a culture where people felt a trust and closeness that enabled them to display gaps in their knowledge with confidence. This was also a culture where teachers appeared to be curious about each other's language expertise and frequently took on the role of language learner. This established practice of codeswitching was not observed at Ginkgo school, possibly in part due to the absence of FLAs, who seemed to offer an impetus for language play.

At both schools I observed occasional uses of codeswitching for private, whispered comments during meetings at both schools. Such comments were made in French (observed twice between TG5 and TG2 at Ginkgo) and Spanish (observed once between TD13 and TD14 at Douglas-Fir) and these instances of codeswitching in meetings appeared to be exclusionary (others in the immediate vicinity did not share a high-level of fluency in the language). I was not able to understand the Spanish comment observed at Douglas-Fir but at Ginkgo my notes indicate that the overheard commentary was an expression of frustration at what was perceived to be the '*pointless bureaucracy*' of the learning walks and the '*ridiculous'* feedback technique that was being trialled that '*created an endless cycle of work'*. TG2 and TG5 were the two most longstanding members of staff in the MFL team at Ginkgo School. At times they appeared to be 'playing along' without either fully embracing or openly critiquing the ideas for practice presented by TG3 – a pattern of behaviour labelled by Ball (2003, p. 222) as 'cynical compliance'. During their individual interviews with me TG5 and TG2 both expressed some cynicism about the implementation of new approaches via department meetings, which helps to contextualise their whispered comments:

> *Obviously, everything that goes through the department level does influence you. You know some things that come through, one particular policy to do with marking I'm not particularly comfortable with and I'm trying to make myself comfortable with, you know, it doesn't sit comfortably with me. But that's not to say that I'm not going to try to do it.* (TG5 interview)

TG5 was also sceptical about what he saw as buzzwords that became new orthodoxies in the school. In relation to the school's focus on developing students' metacognitive awareness, he reported: '*frankly, and I have said this to senior leaders, we've had this before with 'skills for learning' […] and so I haven't changed my practice at all'.* For TG2, the administrative and hierarchical aspects of meetings were a source of frustration. She explained that '*for half of it you can just send me an email*' and she saw meetings as places for the HoD (TG3) '*to be able to say what's going on and to do what she has been told to do so she can tick her boxes*'. TG2 had noticed that in meetings '*the onus is all on [TG3] and she talks and she talks, poor girl, and then at the end it's 'oh my, it's already 4:30, 4:45' ... and how much we advance I don't know.*'

Alignment and autonomy: reactions to voices of dissent

Notwithstanding strongly voiced critiques of the ways in which the GCSE and A Level examinations shaped teaching, interviews in both Ginkgo and Douglas-Fir confirmed that colleagues felt they were able to exercise their personal discretion to teach in a way that they felt comfortable with. This suggests that teachers' autonomy needs were generally well-served in these two schools.

Ball (1987, p. 67) highlights that when school head teachers and middle leaders fail to recognise and address issues of power, their '*lack of micropolitical competence*' frequently limits the impact of change initiatives. The HoDs at both Ginkgo and Douglas-Fir explained at interview that they wanted colleagues to feel empowered to make decisions about their own classrooms. They both sought to balance the goals of achieving coherence, quality assurance and alignment of practices across the faculty with the goal of enabling colleagues to exercise autonomy. These ambitions were visible in department meetings, with TG3 frequently asking colleagues questions such as '*are we all happy with that?*' and taking care to explain her decision-making processes: '*I've tried not to be too prescriptive with regards to marking as I recognise that there are lots of helpful strategies'* (TG3, Meeting 1, Ginkgo School). In a similar vein, TD2 explained:

> *I rewrote the faculty marking and feedback policy last summer […] and I said just choose. Are you going to use the marking codes? Are you going to underline and ask them to correct? Are you going to correct the work for them but then identify a couple of sentences that you want them to write out below the work in a correct form? Just choose one thing and get them to do it properly.* (TD2 interview, Douglas-Fir School)

There was some evidence that the Douglas Fir department team had a stronger sense of shared alignment of purpose in their development work than the team at Ginkgo School. The strong alignment at Douglas-Fir appeared to have been achieved by dedicating a department meeting at the end of each academic year to a full discussion of the aspects of teaching and learning that colleagues felt needed development. TD2 (HoD) took notes at this meeting and these were circulated, forming a transparent basis for the agenda for the subsequent year's experimentation and development work. At Ginkgo School, colleagues' focus on feedback was a result of mandated alignment with the whole-school development focus on metacognition. There was some resistance to the imposition of this development goal from TG4, despite significant efforts from SLT to enable staff members to contextualise the metacognition focus within their own subject. Ginkgo HoD (TG3) was planning for the department to adopt an additional development focus based on ideas that TG7 suggested from her involvement in a university led research project. However, the lack of buy-in that TG3 perceived from other department members may have been due to the lack of a structured and democratic system by which suggestions for the department's future work could be debated and agreed by all.

It has been acknowledged in previous studies that cohesive teams can sometimes stifle healthy dissent and instead '*promote conformity with majority norms and practices*' (Johnson 2003, p. 349). An embracing of productive tensions can help to ensure that teams continue to evolve and enhance their effectiveness over time. Voices of dissent were present and well-distributed amongst team members in both departments and in all meetings (I categorised 7% of contributions at Douglas-Fir and 6% at Ginkgo as voicing disagreement). However, in line with the pattern for overall contributions, the junior members of each team challenged the ideas under discussion less frequently than their more established colleagues. At Ginkgo, dissenting utterances were made by all colleagues except the most junior team member present in meetings (TG8, NQT+1). At Douglas-Fir, there were incidences of both early career and experienced teachers voicing disagreement, but no such contributions were made by the FLAs or the student teachers. In his interview TD4 (an NQT and the most junior teacher) spoke about his reticence to interject:

> *in the beginning I wasn't so confident because I, you know you just sort of have this respect for your colleagues who are more experienced. You think well they must know everything I know so they're not going to listen to me… but I feel like that's kind of changed and we're equal within the team*. (TD4 interview, Douglas-Fir School)

In both schools, disagreements and challenges that I observed were received positively as TD6 describes:

> *[In our meetings] anybody's allowed to talk at any time […] I would say we're very lucky because there are no politics within our department so it's not point-scoring or undermining. So everybody*

that talks gets a chance to say what they want to in a really lovely atmosphere and even if they feel unhappy then they know they won't be judged... it'll just be you know, being talked about and if you've got something to share then it'll be received warmly. (TD6 interview, Douglas-Fir School)

Instances of disagreement often prompted colleagues to carefully consider the rationale for decisions taken in their teaching and learning, as the example below from Ginkgo School (meeting 1) demonstrates:

TG3: I know [TG5] gets her students rote learning their verbs and they know them really well. I think it is a good thing and we should all do more of it. How do we feel about it?

TG7: Don't you think this could really overwhelm some students? And can they actually transfer the explicit knowledge to real-life communication? I'm not sure…

TG5: Well yes the trick is to get them using them in full sentences so they have a real context to practice.

TG3: So how about using a translation task instead of a verb test?

Competence: interaction that strengthens or undermines colleagues' feelings of self-efficacy

It is known that '*people are more likely to adopt activities that relevant social groups value when they feel efficacious with respect to those activities'* (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 73). In both Douglas-Fir and Ginkgo school there were several examples of colleagues supporting each other's need to feel competent in the pursuit of PL goals. This was observed particularly through designated opportunities for colleagues to share ideas in meetings. These ideas were then given status and consideration by others. This created a positive feedback loop and also an arena for mutual reassurance. Referencing one such idea-sharing session, TD4 said '*as much as anything it reassured me that […] I'm not wide of the mark in my planning […] because all the ideas coming out were things that, the sort of things that I do anyway'* (TD4 interview, Douglas-Fir School).

Across both schools I observed just one relational dynamic that appeared to undermine rather than build up a teacher's sense of self-efficacy. This occurred twice at Ginkgo school in the interaction between two experienced colleagues (TG3 and TG7) and TG8, a recently qualified teacher. During the course of the first department meeting, TG3 (the HoD) made a direct reference to TG8's struggles with the negative behaviours of a Key Stage Three class and promised to support her during gained time in the Summer term. Although TG3 was offering support, TG8's sense of discomfort during this conversation was visible and I wrote in my field notes that the pubic nature of the discussion could be interpreted as undermining her perceived competence in the eyes of her colleagues. In the second department meeting a suggestion

offered by TG8 (‘*how about including the pronouns in English for the weaker students?*’) was summarily dismissed by TG7 and the dismissal contained an implication that TG8 was an ineffective teacher (‘*surely they know them by Year 9! Mine certainly do*’). During a later interview, TG8 confided that a low sense of self-efficacy in teaching was affecting her contributions in meetings. She described herself as ‘*a still developing teacher even though I’m no longer… so I’m an NQT plus one now*’ and she explained she felt ‘*a bit of a hang-up’* about contributing when ‘*they’ve all got a lot more experience than me’*. During her interview she explained that she had made plans to leave the teaching profession and it seems probable that a lack of effective support to enable her to experience success in developing her teaching skills is a likely contributing factor to this attrition.

6.4 Concluding comments

A close look at Douglas-Fir and Ginkgo MFL departments has yielded some rich data that highlights a range of promising approaches to the building of high-functioning and self-sustaining PLCs. Leaders of both schools had recognised the importance of PL that is contextualised within specific subjects and created space for devolved INSET time in subject departments. There were many similarities in the approach of both HoDs to the leadership of PL in that both had ambitious, clearly articulated goals for their team's development, which went beyond merely coping with the new examination requirements at GCSE and A Level. Both HoDs recognised the importance of incremental embedding of ideas into practice and giving teachers time to experiment in their classrooms (as advocated by Cordingley (2015)). Development work sustained over more than two terms was a key feature of PL at Ginkgo and the team at Douglas-Fir spoke about moving from a 'focus fortnight' to a 'focus half-term' for the next academic year. Both HoDs also recognised the value of strong PL communities within which voices of dissent were valued and encouraged. They felt a keen, personal sense of responsibility for the learning of their colleagues. These similarities notwithstanding, the two contexts had different strengths: colleagues at Ginkgo were immersed in a rich school culture of regular engagement with research evidence, a PL activity that was not well-documented at Douglas-Fir. However, colleagues associated with the MFL team at Douglas-Fir demonstrated stronger relational links and more frequent use of routines and tools to structure their development work. When taken together there was slightly more evidence of colleagues at Douglas-Fir undertaking the eight activities listed in Cordingley's (2015) evidence synthesis. Of particular note is the way in which practices of deliberate inclusion created social glue at Douglas-Fir and this could be easily replicated in other departments. For example, the necessity to collaborate (due to shared classes) can be transformed into an opportunity for joint work and learning (via ensuring times for colleagues to meet, and creating shared systems for planning, resources and mark books).

A focus on the language choices of L2 teachers when they spent time with each other in their teams proved revealing. The rich environment for informal exchange of knowledge and expertise when language teachers feel comfortable to converse in languages in which they have varying levels of competence was a striking feature of the PLC at Douglas Fir. This language play seemed to strengthen the bonds between department members, and it drew both student teachers and FLAs into professional conversations where they could act as language and culture 'experts' for their colleagues. However, at both schools, occasional decisions by teachers to use languages that were not shared by everyone were also observed to create conditions within which conversation became exclusionary and/or subversive.

Finally, as Brown et al. (2000) and Leithwood (2016) have found in their research, these case studies highlighted the key political role that HoDs play in advocating for their subjects at a whole-school level. The less experienced HoD (TG3) lacked confidence in her ability to petition for improved conditions for her subject and her colleagues. She had, albeit uneasily, largely accepted the loss of FLA support and teaching time at A Level as beyond her control. This contrasts sharply with the more experienced and established HoD (TD2), who was able to protect her colleagues from performativity concerns, thereby creating more space for experimentation and risk-taking. She was also able to campaign effectively for time and resources to support her subject's status and her colleagues' development.

7 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION IV: TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND THE DOMAIN OF CONSEQUENCE

This chapter relates to Research Question 5: What perceived effect, if any, does L2 teachers' engagement in PL that they regard as 'valuable' have on

a) teachers' beliefs?
b) teachers' classroom practices?
c) pupil experiences and outcomes?
d) teachers' intentions to remain in the profession?

The chapter begins with an analysis of the qualitative data provided by teachers describing PL opportunities they identify as having had an impact on factors a – c as listed above. Data are drawn from both the surveys and the HoD interviews. Various features of PL described by teachers are then triangulated with pupil experiences (collected via the CSPS_MFL questionnaire) and value-added outcomes at GCSE. Finally, patterns in the data related to teachers' intentions to remain in the profession are explored. The discussion centres on the perceived impact of teachers' PL within the data set and possible explanatory factors for these effects.

It has been an explicit aim of this study to look for evidence of the impact of teachers' PL activities across the domains identified by Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), exploring changes in teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes; their professional practice; and their pupils' experiences and outcomes. Impact in the domain of consequence, and in particular the 'missing link' (Sleeter, 2014, p.147) identified in the research literature between teachers' PL and their pupils' experiences and outcomes, has been the subject of sustained debate in the teacher education literature. Yoon et al. (2007, p. 3) explain that showing the impact of teachers' PL on their pupils '*poses tremendous challenges, despite an intuitive and logical connectio*n'. Representing one end of the spectrum of positions taken in this debate, Evans (2014) counsels against considering impact on pupil outcomes in studies that focus on teacher learning and suggests that researchers focus instead on teachers' experiences and behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual changes, which can have strong positive effects on self-efficacy, work engagement and motivation. At the other end of the spectrum the argument is made that a failure to identify the impact of teachers' PL on pupil outcomes misses the point, especially when improving the outcomes of pupils is an explicit aim of the PL in which teachers engage. Yoon et al. (2007) assert that links between teachers' PL and student attainment and experiences can be made when researchers adopt a strong, internally valid, study design using measures that are age-appropriate, reliable and sensitive to the aims of a

specific programme of PL. The current study, however, is not an evaluation of a single PL intervention but is, instead, an exploration of a range of activity that teachers identified as valuable PL. It was therefore not possible to '*rule out competing explanations*' (Yoon et al., 2007, p. 5) or to make causal inferences. However, the qualitative data in this study provides a rich source of narratives about change mechanisms as perceived by teachers. The data collected about pupil perceptions of language lessons and GCSE examination results also offer an opportunity to explore associations between pupil experiences and outcomes, and teachers' descriptions of their PL and their classroom practices. In exploring this data, I grapple with some of the barriers to establishing links between PL and pupil outcomes, offering insights that can serve as a starting point for the future testing of possible associations via rigorous, experimental research.

7.1 Teachers' valued professional learning experiences and perceived changes in beliefs, practices and student outcomes

Unsurprisingly, responses to questions about the perceived impact of teachers' most valued PL experiences on their thinking and practice were positively skewed. At Time 1, 93% of the 148 descriptions of teachers' valued PL were accompanied by perceptions of moderate or significant changes to their classroom teaching. At Time 3 and Time 4 teachers were asked to report on their perceptions of impact in three domains corresponding to those in Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) model of teacher learning. Across these two time points (n=85 responses), the majority of teachers reported either moderate or significant impacts of their valued PL on their thinking (94%), their practice (94%) and their pupils' outcomes (96%).

Although teachers' perceptions of impact were mostly positive, at Times 1 and 4 it was still possible to discern a statistically significant, positive relationship between the frequency with which teachers engaged in their most valued PL activities and the extent to which they reported that their PL activity had influenced their classroom practice (Time 1 rho=.39, $p<0.005$; Time 4 rho=.39, $p<0.05$). These results are as expected since the existing literature demonstrates that extended engagement in PL is more likely to influence teachers' classroom practice (Cordingley et al., 2015).

Across all the teacher questionnaires (Times 1, 3 and 4), the majority of teacher descriptions of valued PL (195/243) fell into the following three categories: 1) Knowledge and understanding of subject field, 2) Pedagogical competencies in teaching subject field or 3) Student evaluation and assessment. Knowing that the PL described in the 'student assessment' category (category 3) was the most likely to take the form of one-off, short sessions, I hypothesised that the PL in category 3 would be the least likely to be

perceived as impacting pupil experiences and outcomes. The data do indeed show that the lowest perceived impact scores were given for category 3, but a Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that none of the differences in mean scores for teachers' perceptions of the impact of these different categories of PL on their thinking, their classroom practice or their pupils' experiences or outcomes were statistically significant ($\chi2(2) = 0.385$, $p = 0.8$, with a mean rank frequency score of 36.7 for category 1, 38.1 for category 2 and 34.6 for category 3).

At Times 3 and 4, teachers were asked to indicate whether their valued PL had been MFL-specific in nature. Existing literature suggests that teachers attribute high value to PL focussed on subject-specific teaching approaches and that PL contextualised within a subject area is associated with increased effectiveness (Schleicher, 2016; Cordingley et al., 2018). This study's findings support the existing literature: those teachers whose valued PL was MFL-specific reported, on average, more extensive perceived changes in their thinking, their practice, and the positive impact of that practice on pupils (see Table 7.1). The ranked differences relating to teachers' thinking and their practice are statistically significant with a small (r=0.25) and medium (r=0.31) effect size respectively.

Table 7.1: Results of Mann-Whitney U test comparing perceived impact of PL that was or was not designed specifically for languages teachers

	Mean (SD)					
	PL designed specifically for MFL teachers (n=49)*	PL not designed specifically for MFL teachers (n=36)*	U	Z	p	r
Impact on how teachers think about teaching and learning	2.35 (.48)	2.13 (.55)	667.5	-2.29	0.022	-0.25
Impact on what teachers do in their classrooms	2.24 (.48)	2.06 (.25)	642	-2.89	0.004	-0.31
Benefit for pupils from changes to practice inspired by PL	2.24 (.63)	2.03 (.47)	632	-1.73	0.083	-0.19

* teachers reported impact on 3-point scale from1 (no impact/benefit) to 3 (a significant impact/benefit). Data relates to 85 responses (combined from Time 3 and Time 4)

7.2 The processes of change prompted by teachers' valued PL

I examined teachers' free-text descriptions of the usefulness of their PL to identify *how* they felt they had changed as a result of the stimulus of their valued PL experiences (n=118 descriptions, collected across Times 1 (Q18), 3 (Q5) and 4 (Q6)).

In my analysis I have paid particular attention to the verbs that teachers used in their responses since verbs, as grammatical vehicles of action, tell us about the mental and physical activity teachers associated with PL experiences and hence the inferred mechanisms of change (Fairclough, 2003). Table 7.2 lists the verbs that teachers used to describe actions within the contexts of a) their knowledge and beliefs, b) their attitudes, and c) their practices (see Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). Forty-nine percent of the verbs in teachers' responses were used to denote active changes to teachers' planning and/or classroom teaching in the form of professional experimentation, with processes of *using*, *changing*, *developing*, and *trying things out* the most frequently cited examples. A further 45% of the verbs denoted cognitive processes, with the remaining 6% signifying attitudinal developments. The relatively low incidence of verbs of affect should not necessarily be taken as evidence of absence: teachers may have been less consciously aware of changes in their own attitudes (as suggested by Borg, 2003) and/or they may have omitted to mention them in their descriptions of the value and usefulness of their PL.

Teachers' descriptions highlight the perceived impact of their valued PL on their students (the 'domain of consequence' in Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) terminology) much less frequently than the impact on their own thoughts and actions: just fourteen descriptions of the usefulness of teachers' PL made explicit reference to pupils' experiences or outcomes. In the questionnaires I asked teachers to tell me about their *recent* valued PL and so perhaps my participants had not yet had time to identify and reflect on possible changes in the domain of consequence. The fact that pupils' experiences and outcomes can only ever be indirectly affected by changes in teachers' classroom practice and such changes are notoriously difficult to measure and causally attribute (Parr & Timperley, 2010), could also explain the low frequency of this category of comment. Across the 14 responses describing perceived benefits for pupils, a range of affective and cognitive pupil benefits were identified using the following verbs: engage (2), enjoy (2), make progress (1), benefit (1), develop (1), improve (2), speak (1), access (1), understand (1), learn (1), lay (foundations) (1). Most responses (n=11) did not specify whether the perceived benefits had been directly observed or whether they were assumed consequences of changed teacher practices. However, two teachers said they had observed changes in their pupils ('*it has shown impact among [sic] student enjoyment'* (Time 1, TE1)*; 'students seem receptive'* (Time 4, TG3)) and one had used pupil feedback as

the basis of her judgement: '*students have reported that they enjoy [the new activities] and [they] have helped them to understand and learn better*' (Time 1, TE1).

Table 7.2: Frequency and categories of verbs used by teachers to explain the value of their professional learning

Verbs used by teachers explaining *how* (Time 1) and *why* (Time 3 and Time 4) they felt their valued professional learning was useful* *data relates to 118 comments from a total of 54 teachers across Time 1 (n=38), Time 3 (n=44) and Time 4 (n=36)					
Perceived actions related to thinking & feeling (domain of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes)				**Perceived actions related to teaching (domain of practice)**	
Knowledge/Beliefs	**N**	**Attitudes**	**N**	**Planning and Teaching**	**N**
reflect (on) 19 think (about) 13 think critically 1 focus on 1 look into 1 consider 2	**37**	**boost/increase/gain** …confidence 6 …enthusiasm 2	**8**	**use** 25 implement 9	**34**
pick up/get (ideas) 17 select (ideas) 1 have (ideas) 1 share (ideas) 4 access (ideas) 1	**24**	**feel** …safe 1 …more positive 1 …more engaged 1 …more prepared 2 …in the same boat 1 …useful (to others) 1	**7**	**change** 7 adapt 5 improve 4 amend 2 refine 2 reshape 1 impact 5	**26**
understand 7 deepen understanding 2 give insight into 2 clarify 2	**13**	**want** to develop 1	**1**	**try out** 15 experiment 2 trial 2 vary 1	**20**
find out 1 read 2 enhance knowledge 1 inform 2 discover 1 identify 2 observe 1 listen to 1 research 2	**13**			**develop** 13 take steps towards 2 deal (with) 2 work on 1 move forward (with) 1 address 1	**20**
learn 8	**8**			**apply** 4 bring into 2 incorporate 2 feed into 1 translate into 1	**10**
analyse 2 interpret 2 question 1 evaluate 1 challenge (ideas) 1	**7**			**teach** 3 deliver 1 tell 1 show 1 stretch 1 promote 1	**8**
increase awareness 6	**6**			**plan** 6 prepare 1	**7**
re-assess 3 rethink 2	**5**			**give feedback** 1 assess 1	**2**
remind 5	**5**			**avoid** 2	**2**
relate (to others) 1	**1**			**group** (pupils) 1	**1**
TOTAL	**119**	**TOTAL**	**16**	**TOTAL**	**130**

Although teachers did not frequently relate their PL to the domain of consequence in their free-text responses, when they were prompted with a specific, closed question (Time 3, Q14; Time 4, Q15) many reported that they felt their students had benefitted from changes to their practice inspired by their PL: Across the two timepoints, 73 of the 81 responses indicated an impression that students had benefitted

in some way and of these, 21 responses (from 16 different teachers) indicated that pupils had 'benefited greatly'.

I looked in more detail at the responses of the 16 teachers who indicated their pupils had 'benefited greatly' from changes to their practice inspired by their PL, in the hope that these might reveal the mechanisms by which these teachers felt positive impacts for their pupils had been achieved. The 16 teachers' descriptions of their valued PL and their responses to the question 'Why do you think this activity has been particularly valuable?' (Time 3, Q5; Time 4, Q6) are detailed in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Teachers who reported high perceived impact of their PL on pupil experiences or outcomes at Times 3 and 4

ID	What has been the most valuable Professional Learning experience that you have had so far this academic year? (since September 2016)	Why do you think this activity has been particularly valuable?
TB1	Time 3: SCITT [=*school-centred initial teacher training*] training and mentoring Time 4: Being a SCITT mentor	Clarity in mentoring an associate teacher and the learning from observing and co-teaching with her (prompted by SCITT and supported by a clear guide). Learning from others and discovering new aspects in teaching
TB2	Martine Pillette* presentation and materials shared by head of faculty [**Martine Pillette workshops usually include an emphasis on phoneme-grapheme correspondences and authentic texts*]	Really easy to implement practical resources were included
TB5	Planning sessions for my specialist teacher sessions (SCITT)	I have completed reading and research
TD2	Time 3: Sharing expertise and ideas on how to maximise software, such as Textivate*. [**an online subscription service that generates interactive activities based on text inputted by teachers.*] Time 4: Faculty INSET [=*in-service training*] on Textivate and Show My Homework* [**An online subscription service that enables teachers to set and monitor homework on a platform accessible to both pupils and parents*]	Increased opportunities for learning and homework tasks; Time-saving tips An opportunity for us to share ideas and demonstrate our expertise
TD3	how to teach new AL [=*A Level*]	it clarified to a certain extent what we needed to do

TD5	sharing ideas in Faculty meetings	It benefits us all - we share ideas as well as see different teaching styles. We are then encouraged to use these ideas in Focus Fortnights, after which we feed back how things went.
TD6	INSET on the use of Exampro software	It enables me and my students to access specific topics on past papers at a click. I have used this in lessons and for homework
TE6	Time 3: Federation Inset Day with specific input from exam boards regarding the new MFL curriculum and examinations at KS4 and KS5.	Access to up-to-date information and sharing of good practice with other MFL teachers.
	Time 4: Languages Show Live* [**an annual exhibition for language teachers and learners with workshops and demonstrations*]	Huge numbers of new ideas, incorporation of technology in the classroom, preparation for teaching of the new curriculum.
TF1	Collaborative planning with colleague of new specification exam courses, taking charge of one language each	We are both experienced teachers with a similar outlook, and exchanging ideas is very fruitful. We are both reflective and have continued the dialogue as the courses have got underway, and are incorporating the things we are learning this year into plans for next year - it is an organic, ongoing process driven by our desire to do the best for our pupils
TG7	participating in [university-based L2 researcher's] project* [**this project was an intervention to trial new ways of teaching reading in L2 lessons with Key Stage Three.*]	Getting new ideas for how to teach phonics; discussing these with other colleagues.
TH1	Working with colleagues on 'Lighting Fires in year 7'	Really looking into how to engage Year 7 students and keep them interested in language learning so that they become more independent and want to do this outside of the classroom.
TH4	Using films to teach at KS3 and KS4	More interesting, funny and interactive way to promote speaking in the TL
TI3	GCSE Exam board webinar	It has helped me understand the new spec
TJ2	changing focus from Head of Year to classroom teacher.	retiring? and returning part time? Yes. I enjoy it more and spend time with colleagues. I am more engaged.
TK5	Time 3: Mentor meetings (NQT)	personalised time to discuss ideas etc
	Time 4: NQT mentor meetings	personalised, discussing issues as they arose
TL6	Time 3: Kerboodle* training/ MSc workshops [**Kerboodle is an online subscription service offering MFL activities linked to the AQA exam board*]	Kerboodle - It has allowed me to develop the resources in the department. MSc workshops - The sessions have allowed me to reflect on my teaching practice and to research new activities and methods.
	Time 4: MSc sessions at [*local*] University	It allowed me to reflect on my own teaching and gain new ideas.

Two of the 16 teachers (teachers TH4 and TG7) described making changes to specific aspects of their Key Stage Three teaching with subsequent perceived impact for their students. I triangulated these two teachers' responses with data from their Year 8 pupils' questionnaire responses to see whether there were any observable indications of the impact of their PL activities on pupils' experiences of their language lessons.

TH4 described an ongoing process of experimentation with the use of film at Key Stage Three as her most valued PL opportunity. This experimentation arose as a result of some research-informed experimentation work that a student teacher had completed previously under TH4's supervision. TH4 reported that she voluntarily engaged in this project with her own classes over the course of four hours. She used film as a stimulus to develop her pupils' speaking skills and believed that a key mechanism by which this positively impacted her pupils was '*by removing/minimising the self-awareness factor*' (the need to lower students' self-consciousness when developing their speaking is supported by Forbes & Fisher, 2018). One Year 8 class of TH4's pupils (n=26) offered their perceptions of their French classes, and across their questionnaire responses the highest mean scores were recorded for items related to developing speaking in French (item 4 – In this class I feel safe to practise speaking in French; item 39 - My French teacher encourages me to have a go and say things I am not sure are correct; item 40 - My French teacher expects us to speak some French in every lesson). Overall, TH4's pupils' responses to these speaking-related items were the highest scores recorded by any class of pupils in the data set. This suggests that TH4's pupils did indeed experience a focus on the development of their speaking during the time that their teacher reported a strong focus on developing this aspect of her practice.

TG7 identified her voluntary engagement over the course of seven hours in a research project (see Woore et al., 2018) as her most valued PL. She was involved in the strand of the project with a specific focus on KS3 pupils' phonics development via challenging reading texts. As part of my study, 30 of TG7's Year 8 pupils gave their impressions of their French lessons. TG7's pupils did not rate the questionnaire items that most closely link to the phonics and reading research project focus any more highly than other aspects of their classroom experience (item 20 - In this class we learn to recognise patterns in how French sounds are written down; item 47 - Sometimes the teacher gives us things to read that I find challenging; item 48 - When we are reading French that is challenging, the teacher shows us strategies to help us understand). The combined mean score for TG7's students' in response to these items fell close to the average for all pupils in the data set (TG7 pupils mean = 2.57; Overall mean = 2.6). It may be that the positive impact for her pupils that TG7 reported related only to the Year 7 class that was directly

participating in the research project and TG7 may not yet have embedded new practices developed as part of the project within her teaching of other KS3 classes.

An explicit link between engagement in valued PL and perceived impactful changes in practice was also made by the HoD at Douglas-Fir during an interview. When discussing the results of pupils' perceptions of their French lessons, TD2 was pleased to note a high CSPS_MFL score for the item 'my French teacher gives feedback on my work to help me improve', explaining that feedback was '*a really big focus in the school and so it's good to see that there is some recognition there'.* The same teacher highlighted high scores for items related to oral interaction and linked this to efforts by the team to move '*in the direction of being more skills oriented'* alongside a *'big focus on Group Talk'* (Group Talk is a well-known MFL teaching strategy designed to develop student talk in the TL).

7.3 Professional learning experiences that were valued but teachers did not perceive as having an impact on their practice

Most teachers reported that the PL they had identified as finding most valuable had helped them to change their teaching practices. However, at each timepoint (Time 1, 3 and 4), between 4% and 7% of respondents (total n=15) indicated that, although they had valued their PL experience, it had not (yet) had an impact on their practice. Only three of these teachers gave reasons to explain their responses and these are explored further below.

TA1 - At Time 4, TA1 wrote about how much she had enjoyed working with student teachers and she regretted that her decision to retire at the end of the academic year meant that she would not be able to act on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach she had explored with a student teacher. She commented that she was certain the exposure to CLIL via this student teacher would have changed her practice '*if I had been staying in educatio*n'. The unfulfilled promise of this learning experience can also be understood as a positive example of the value of engagement with initial teacher education as a potential source of powerful PL (Hobson et al., 2009) in that the warrant the student teacher in this example was given to experiment with CLIL opened up space for an experienced teacher at the end of her career to observe and engage with an unfamiliar methodology.

TF1 - In relation to her valued PL (exam-board training for the new specification examinations), TF1 comments that '*this training was actually mostly very poor*'. It seems plausible that although the perceived quality of the session was not high, TF1 may still have valued it as a vehicle through which to learn about structural changes to assessment of direct relevance to the assessment tasks for which she had to prepare her pupils.

TB7 – Comments made by TB7 (reproduced below) convey a clear sense of frustration that her valued PL (sharing of ideas with colleagues) had not been *coherent* or *cohesive.* She attributes this to the lack of a systematic approach and twice mentions the need for new ideas to become *embedded* in her practice. The mechanism by which she envisages this might happen includes rigorous review of the '*next steps'* that teachers take following exposure to new ideas. All of this echoes the conclusions of much of the literature into teacher learning, which stresses the importance of follow-up after initial input and sustained engagement with new ideas (Cordingley et al., 2015):

> *On paper we share good practice; but there is not yet a coherent system or the intellectual space and time to embed ideas. Knowledge is shared; but rarely embedded in a cohesive way. There is a best efforts approach rather than a systematic one.* (TB7, Time 1, Q15 free text comment)

> *I was able to share and be given some really interesting resources from my teaching faculty in MFL but the sharing has not had an impact on my teaching as the next steps following knowledge sharing were not rigorously reviewed* (TB7 – Time 1, Q18 free text comment)

TB7 also discusses her experiences of impactful PL that was not focussed on her classroom teaching but instead focussed on leadership training and an introduction to counselling. In a similar vein, her work towards an MSc in Education had '*a significant impact on my training work using findings from my R&D [=research and development] project to change policy and improve models of professional learning for teachers in their second year'.* It seems likely that this teacher's academic study of PL models, together with her school role as a leader of PL, may have made her more aware of and sensitive to the research findings regarding effective PL. This may partly explain her dissatisfaction with the limitations of a sharing culture that three of her colleagues (TB2, TB4 and TB10) cited less critically as facilitating highly effective and impactful PL.

7.4 Pupils' reported experiences of languages lessons

As a part of this project I aimed to explore whether my data could illuminate in any way the 'missing link' (Sleeter, 2014) identified in the research literature between teachers' PL and their pupils' experiences and outcomes. I therefore developed and included a measure of pupils' experiences of French lessons across different school contexts – the CSPS_MFL. This section explores the CSPS_MFL questionnaire results and the usefulness of this measure as a tool for evaluating the quality of MFL teaching and providing the starting point for discussions of professional learning needs and priorities. In section 7.5 I then move on to explore possible associations between MFL departments' professional learning cultures and pupils' experiences and outcomes as measured by the CSPS_MFL and value-added GCSE scores.

The CSPS_MFL results and associations with other measures of MFL teaching

The CSPS_MFL tool produced data that could be triangulated with teacher self-report measures of MFL teaching and school-level attainment data for languages at GCSE. Since each of these measures was intended to capture data related to the quality of MFL teaching I expected to find positive associations and high levels of covariance between them. As anticipated, teachers who self-reported higher levels of alignment of their practice with a set of research-informed language learning principles (pdcinmfl.com – investigated at Time 1, Q27) received higher scores from their students on the items related to these principles in the CSPS_MFL ($r=.48$, $p=.02$).

A positive but non-significant correlation was found between teachers' general sense of self-efficacy for teaching (measured via the TSES at Time 4 (the closest time point to the administration of the CSPS_MFL)) and their students' overall scores on the CSPS_MFL ($r=.39$, $p=.21$). This means that the general confidence of teachers in this sample in their capacity to teach effectively was not consistently related to their pupils' perceptions of a range of positive teaching strategies within their lessons. The fact that this was not a statistically significant correlation may be due to the generic nature of the TSES, which does not collect data specifically related to language teaching. It may also be due to a lack of reliability in teachers' and/or pupils' reporting of their perceptions.

Mean CSPS_MFL scores for each school are positively associated with the percentage of pupils achieving a pass grade in a language GCSE (rho=.34, $p=.008$), which may suggest that positive experiences of languages teaching at Key Stage 3 support strong uptake of and performance in the subject at GCSE level. However, there is only a weak and non-significant correlation between mean CSPS_MFL scores for

each school and value-added GCSE attainment data for languages (rho=.24, p=.07). As the final two columns in Table 7.4 show, Year 8 pupils at Ivy and Cedar school reported very high scores for the quality of their French classroom experiences whilst GCSE value-added scores for languages in these schools were close to 0. Conversely at Ginkgo school pupils' CSPS_MFL scores were surprisingly low given the high value-added scores obtained by this school at GCSE.

Table 7.4: CSPS_MFL results and GCSE attainment data

N.B. The highest scores in each category are highlighted in green and the lowest scores in orange.

School	Progress 8 score* (*average for state-funded schools in England =-0.03)	Progress 8 score categorised	Percentage of pupil body that achieved the language component of the Ebacc	Value-added measure for the Ebacc language component	CSPS_MFL scores (desirable practices rated on a scale from 1 (=never) to 4 (=always))
Birch	0.49	Above Average	53.7	1.24	2.70
Fig	0.22	Above Average	43.2	0.17	2.75
Elm	0.17	Above Average	36.5	0.68	2.98
Douglas-Fir	0.15	Above Average	35.9	0.07	2.55
Nutmeg	0.14	Average	22.6	-0.65	2.70
Ginkgo	0.13	Average	35.7	0.14	2.38
Ivy	0.13	Average	28	-0.15	2.99
Laurel	0.03	Average	23	0.26	no data
Cedar	-0.01	Average	25.8	-0.19	2.90
Hawthorn	-0.03	Average	16.8	-0.69	2.46
Mahogany	-0.18	Average	15	-0.21	no data
Juniper	-0.25	Below Average	37.3	0.36	2.60
Aspen	-0.29	Below Average	19.4	-0.54	2.72
Katsura	-0.30	Below Average	14.3	-0.16	2.07

The MFL-specific items on the CSPS_MFL were found to load onto the following three factors (see Appendix J for the factor loadings):

1 –a supportive L2-classroom community

2 –high frequency and quality target language interaction (relates to Macaro et al. (2016) principles 1, 2 and 3)

3 –a strategic approach to challenging language tasks (relates to Macaro et al. (2016) principles 5 and 6)

Factor 1 combines elements of several of the language teaching principles (Macaro et al., 2016) that focus on teacher actions to create conditions of low anxiety and high support. However, Factors 2 and 3 relate to discrete elements of the principles that teachers were asked to consider in their questionnaires, and I was therefore able to investigate the extent to which teacher and pupil perceptions of these aspects of their French lessons were similar. Statistically significant correlations were found between teacher and student perceptions of the languages classroom in relation to a) high-frequency and quality target language interaction (r=.42, p=.02) and b) a strategic approach to challenging language tasks (r=.35, p=.04).The correlation between teacher and student perceptions of the way in which target language is used is positive, particularly as it has previously been found that MFL teachers' own estimates of the levels of target language use in their classrooms can be inaccurate (Copland & Neokleous, 2011).

The perceived usefulness of the CSPS_MFL as a diagnostic tool for PL

Average results of the CSPS_MFL were communicated to the Head of Department (HoD) for MFL in each school in September 2017. Scores for each school were presented alongside the whole-study averages (see Table 7.5 for an extract of one of the reports and Appendix K for the full set of study averages). Interviews with HoDs took place 1-2 months after the reports were disseminated and I asked the following questions:

- Was there anything that surprised you about your students' results?
- Have you discussed your students' results with anyone else? If so, who and why?
- Have the students' responses helped you to identify any areas for professional learning this year?

Table 7.5: Example CSPS_MFL feedback report for MFL departments

ML Teaching Principles www.pdcinmfl.com	Responded Favorably (Percentage of responses in top two categories)	
	Your MFL Department	The Study Average
Principle 1: Target language input is essential for learning but it can be made more effective if learners are encouraged to check the understanding of it by asking questions of what the teacher is saying or asking the teacher to repeat.		
My French teacher expects us to understand instructions in French.		**66.8%**
I feel like I can stop my French teacher and ask a question if I don't understand something		**49.9%**
Principle 2: Learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things that they are not sure are correct		
In this class I feel safe to practise speaking in French.		**65.7%**
My French teacher encourages me to have a go and say things I am not sure are correct		**68.4%**
My French teacher expects us to speak some French in every lesson		**78.6%**
If I need to say something to the teacher, the teacher encourages me to say it in French		**39.2%**

All six HoDs who were interviewed identified elements of the students' perceptions that they found surprising. The fact that the survey tool did not simply reveal patterns that HoDs were anticipating could be viewed as a positive outcome as the tool provided colleagues with a provocation for reflection and discussion, as highlighted by the comments below:

We discussed this yesterday and it was a great way to start a conversation about some uncomfortable truths regarding the habits we have fallen into as a department. (TN1, HoD, Nutmeg School)

I think one that I was disappointed on was […] teachers giving me feedback to help me improve my work because that is something that we started work on last year and […] I did a project myself as well last year as to how we can do it and how best to do it. So we still have work to do. (TI3, HoD, Ivy School)

[…] interesting reading indeed! We need to work on our students' TL use. (TD2, HoD, Douglas-Fir School)

As the above quotations demonstrate, the CSPS_MFL data that I had collected and collated for HoDs functioned '*as a currency that facilitates the access of outsider researchers into contradictory and uncomfortable places in a school community*' (Howes et al., 2004, p.243).

Four of the six HoDs had already discussed the CSPS_MFL results with their colleagues and were using the lower-scoring items in their faculty report to inform their development planning. This is exemplified by the following comment by TB5, HoD at Birch School (TB5 was not interviewed but sent me an email following receipt of the CSPS_MFL results):

> *This is a wonderful document to help us improve. Overall, I am rather pleased but it does highlight some areas for development and this will go into my FDIP* for 2017-2018. *Faculty Development and Improvement Plan*

Of the two HoDs who had not shared the results of the report with their colleagues, one (TD2) explained that they felt some of the low scores could demoralise their team ('*You know 'my French teacher makes learning enjoyable'. Only 39%. With the average being 55%. Considering how dynamic the team is and how creative, I think if they saw that they would probably be quite upset by that so I didn't really want to show them'*); the other (TN1) highlighted a lack of time at the start of the busy school year as the reason why they had not yet discussed the report with their colleagues. The issue of timing was also raised by TI3, who said '*the problem with September has been that […] it's possibly one of the busiest terms of the year so when I circulated it to my colleagues I had a couple of comments back but we haven't really sat down and said actually what do we think?*'. It seems that receiving the report in September facilitated some departments in planning ahead for their PL but perhaps hindered others due to the slew of conflicting priorities at the beginning of the school year.

Subject-specific items on the report were explicitly highlighted (unprompted) by five of the six HoDs, suggesting that these items were of value and interest to them. The HoD of Elm School (TE2) was not interviewed but in an email said of the report: '*it was really, really, really interesting because it's based on evidence about language learning*'. This aligns with prior research calling for subject-specific and evidence-informed approaches to teacher evaluation and development (Cordingley et al., 2018, 2015).

MFL departments' professional learning cultures and students' perceptions of their language lessons

I hypothesised that pupils' perceptions of their French lessons would vary significantly across different schools and that one predictor of students' perceptions of their language learning experiences would be

the extent to which each school context was supportive of teachers' professional growth. The data presented in this section explores these hypotheses.

Firstly, a I ran a Kruskal-Wallis test to determine if there were differences in pupil perceptions (assessed via the CSPS_MFL scores) between different schools. Distributions of CSPS_MFL scores were similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot (see Figure 7.1). As expected, there are statistically significant differences between the scores for different schools, $\chi 2(11) = 198.1$, $p < .001$. Subsequently, I performed pairwise comparisons using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. This post hoc analysis revealed that CSPS_MFL scores at Katsura (Mdn = 1.98) were statistically significantly lower than scores at all other schools except for Ginkgo (Mdn = 2.34) (with adjusted p-values all at the at the $p < .001$ level). Scores at Ginkgo School (Mdn = 2.34) were also significantly lower than those at all schools except for Douglas-Fir (Mdn = 2.54), Hawthorn (Mdn = 2.38) and Katsura (Mdn = 1.98). At the other end of the scale, scores at Ivy School (Mdn = 3.05) were significantly higher than those at Aspen ($p=.043$), Birch ($p < .001$), Douglas-Fir ($p < .001$), Ginkgo ($p < .001$), Hawthorn ($p < .001$), Juniper ($p < .001$), Katsura ($p < .001$) and Nutmeg ($p < .001$).

Figure 7.1: Boxplot showing the distribution of pupils' perceptions of their French lessons in each school

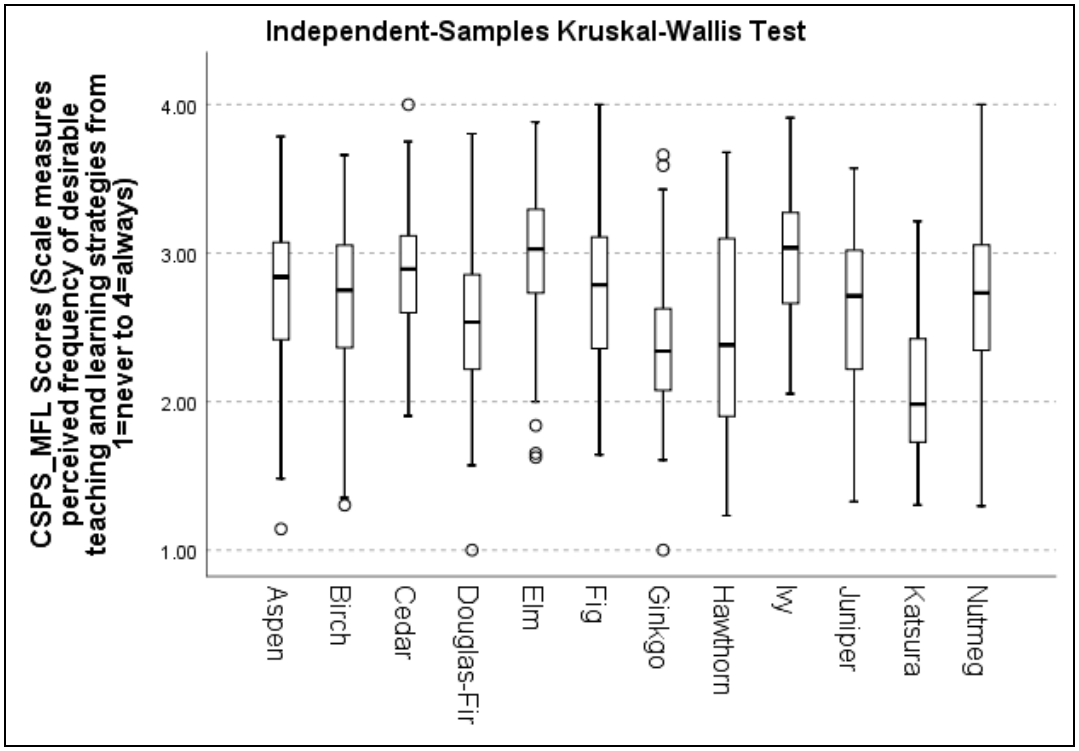


Table 7.6 : CSPS_MFL score Mean ranks and Medians for each school

Ranks and Medians for CSPS_MFL scores			
School	N	Mean Rank	Median
Ivy	125	898.33	3.04
Elm	68	896.28	3.03
Cedar	71	824.98	2.89
Fig	101	730.45	2.79
Aspen	99	719.17	2.84
Birch	181	695.09	2.75
Nutmeg	167	691.13	2.73
Juniper	110	635.97	2.71
Douglas-Fir	145	576.17	2.54
Hawthorn	99	555.74	2.38
Ginkgo	117	446.32	2.34
Katsura	53	271.02	1.98
Total	1336		2.70

Having established statistically significant differences between schools in terms of their pupils' perception of French lessons, I then investigated the hypothesis that higher CSPS_MFL scores would be observed in schools that teachers regarded as positive contexts for teacher learning and workplace engagement. A positive school context was considered to be one in which teachers' autonomy, competence and relatedness needs were met (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Alongside measures of stress, collective efficacy and PL opportunities (all of which have an impact on teachers' competence and relatedness needs), I considered a range of teacher perceptions of their working environment (as detailed in Table 7.7). Responses to item 1 in Table 7.7 were strongly positively skewed in the data set (all participants agreed or strongly agreed). I discarded this item as it was not a good discriminator amongst respondents.

Table 7.7: Teacher perceptions of their working environment

Teacher perceptions of their working environment: Descriptive Statistics (Time 2, Q9) Attitudes measured on a Likert scale from 1 (=strongly disagree) to 9 (=strongly agree)						
Item	**Contribution to school working environment**	**N**	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
1. My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship	supports relatedness	45	5	9	8.13	1.160
2. My skills and expertise are valued by my department	supports competence and relatedness	45	2	9	7.33	1.624
3. I am able to make decisions affecting my work in the classroom	supports autonomy	45	3	9	7.29	1.701
4. I am inspired to meet my goals at school	supports work engagement	45	1	9	6.13	1.779
5. I am satisfied with the investment my school makes in teachers' professional learning	supports competence	45	1	9	5.36	2.238

Next, I created Table 7.8 in order to visualise each school's performance across a range of measures. The traffic-light colour coding system highlights high, average and low scores for each measure. I calculated a simple composite environment score for each school by assigning 3 points for each 'high score', 2 points for each 'average' score and 1 point for each 'low' score. The final two columns of this table contain each school's mean scores for the CSPS_MFL and the Ebacc value-added measure for languages (discussed in detail in section 7.5). It is immediately apparent that the scores in these final two columns appear randomly ordered: for example, there are high scores for pupils' experiences and outcomes recorded at each of high, average and low levels of the composite score for each school's PL culture.

Table 7.8: Measures of a supportive PL culture and student outcomes and experiences

School	Stress across the academic year (on a scale from 1 = very low, to 4 = very high)	Standardised Collective Teacher Efficacy Score	Engagement in effective PL (on a scale from 0 = no engagement, to 30 = high engagement)	Engagement in MFL-specific PL (mean number of MFL-specific PL activities per school term)	I am inspired to meet my goals at school	I am able to make decisions affecting my work in the classroom	I am satisfied with the investment my school makes in teachers' professional learning	My skills and expertise are valued by my department	Overall composite score for a supportive PL Culture (Green =3, Orange =2, Red = 1)	Mean rank scores for each school on the CSPS_MFL	Value added score for the language area of the EBacc in 2016
					(agreement with each statement on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree, to 9 = strongly agree)						
Hawthorn	2.4	0.7	22.7	2.2	8.0	8.3	7.3	8.7	22	5.6	-0.7
Elm	3.2	1.1	21.0	1.6	8.0	8.3	8.3	8.3	22	9.0	0.7
Fig	3.3	1.0	24.0	1.5	6.0	8.5	7.0	9.0	20	7.3	0.2
Mahogany	3.8	no data	30.0	1.6	8.0	7.0	9.0	8.0	19	6.9	-0.2
Ginkgo	2.4	0.5	12.2	1.5	7.0	8.2	4.2	8.2	18	4.5	0.1
Katsura	3.4	-1.0	20.0	1.6	7.3	8.3	6.3	8.0	17	2.7	-0.2
Juniper	2.0	-0.1	12.0	2.1	7.5	7.0	3.5	7.5	17	6.4	0.4
Aspen	2.9	0.1	0.0	1.1	9.0	9.0	3.5	9.0	16	7.2	-0.5
Laurel	3.5	-0.5	25.0	2.3	5.3	7.3	4.3	8.5	16	no data	0.3
Douglas-Fir	3.2	0.2	9.0	1.2	6.5	6.3	5.0	7.0	13	5.8	0.1
Nutmeg	3.8	-0.7	18.0	0.9	5.3	7.3	6.0	7.3	13	6.5	-0.7
Birch	3.6	0.1	16.3	1.1	5.3	7.4	5.0	6.3	12	7.0	1.2
Cedar	3.0	-1.2	11.8	1.1	5.5	7.3	3.0	7.0	12	8.2	-0.2
Ivy	3.6	-1.6	4.5	0.9	5.5	7.0	4.0	7.5	10	9.0	-0.2

As Table 7.8 demonstrates, there is a lack of simple association between factors associated with positive school learning cultures and the measures of pupils' experiences and outcomes that I have explored in this study. Taken together with the fact that I also found no association between measures of pupils experiences (CSPS_MFL) and outcomes (value-added GCSE score), this data points to a much more complex relationship between the many variables at play than I have been able to isolate from the quantitative data collected.

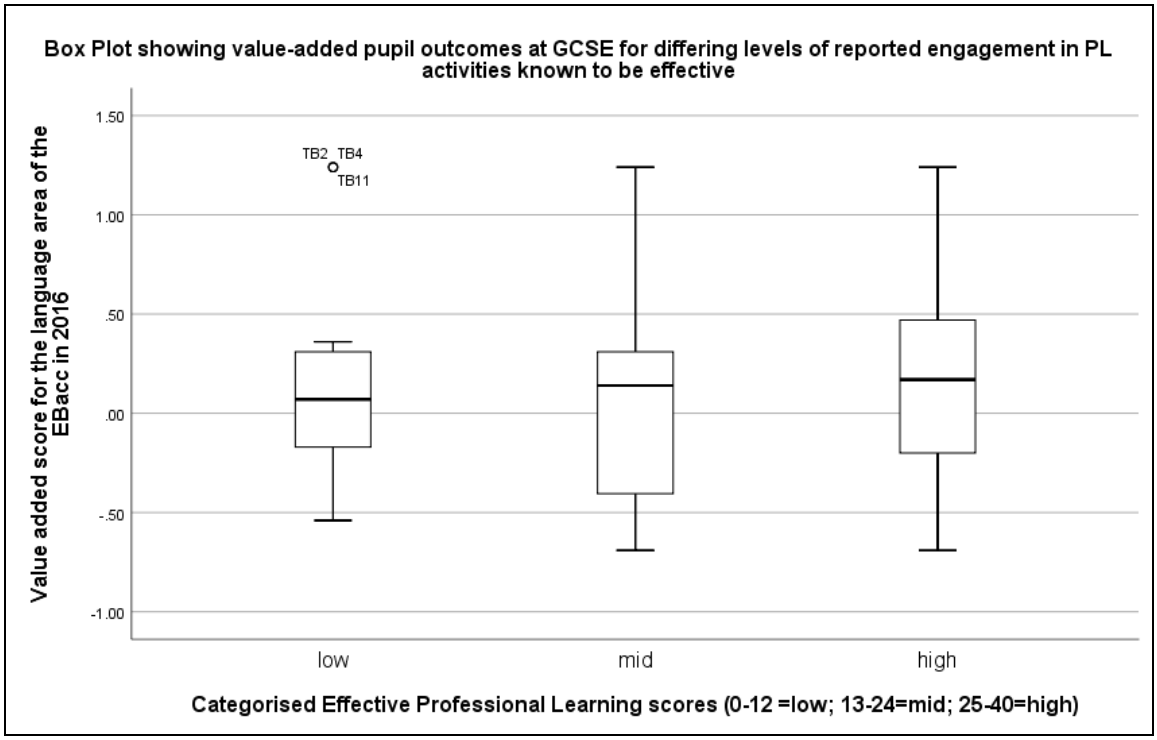
7.5 Teachers' professional learning and pupils' performance in standardised assessments

The existing literature suggests that teacher teams engaging in sustained and collaborative PL activities to develop their practice are associated with increased effectiveness (Cordingley et al., 2015). However, few studies have been able to examine rigorously the assumed causal link between motivated teacher learning and pupil academic performance. This study is observational in design and the small, purposive sample precludes the drawing out of widely generalisable patterns in the data. Nonetheless, as part of the study I collected information on the GCSE performance of pupils taking languages at each school. I examined the data with interest to see whether schools where teacher teams were most active in developing their practice might also be schools where pupils were achieving highly in their language examinations.

When discussing GCSE outcomes in the sections that follow, I focus on the 'value added' GCSE scores for the language area of the EBacc in each school. Value-added scores attempt to control for pupils' prior attainment to identify how successful their secondary schooling has been. In 2016, value-added scores were calculated by making a prediction of each pupil's Key Stage 4 results based on the expected attainment of all pupils with similar Key Stage 2 results in English and Mathematics. The difference between each pupil's actual and estimated performance at Key Stage 4 was calculated and the overall mean score was reported (Department for Education, 2015b) (of course, it is important to bear in mind that this is an imperfect and much-debated measure (see Hutchings, 2015)).

Regarding pupil outcomes, the first thing to report is that, across the 14 schools, there were no clear patterns of association between the extent to which teachers reported engagement in PL known to be effective and value-added pupil performance in GCSE language examinations (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: GCSE outcomes for differing levels of teachers' reported engagement in PL activities known to be effective

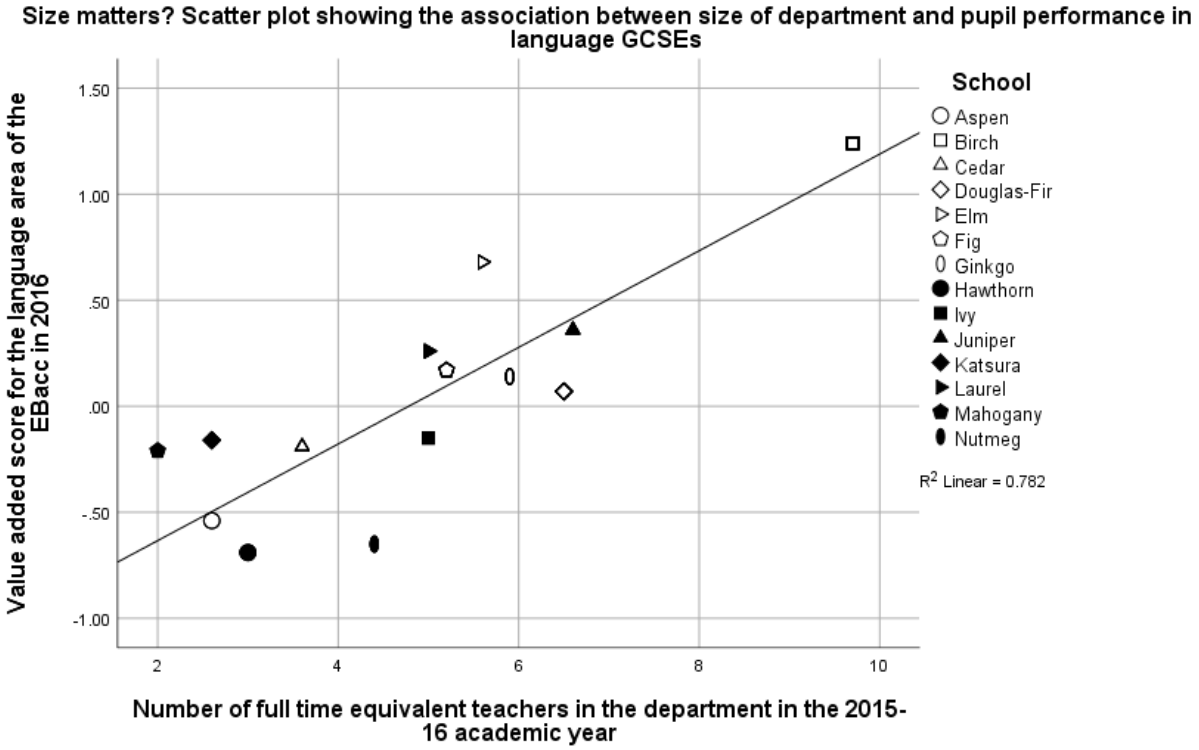


There are, of course, a plethora of confounding and intertwining variables that make it very challenging to isolate associations between a positive environment for teachers' PL and student experiences or outcomes (Evans, 2014). Indeed, my attempt to create a measure of positive school PL cultures did not lead to the uncovering of a positive associations between the factors explored and pupils' GCSE outcomes in language (see Table 7.8: Measures of a supportive PL culture and student outcomes and experiences).

When looking more closely at the characteristics of each school context, I was surprised to find that the size of each school's MFL department was strongly associated with pupil's performance at GCSE (see Figure 7.3). On reflection, I believe that this is likely to be due to a range of factors favouring larger schools in the current education system in England. Firstly, at a time when school budgets are tight and opportunities to access external expertise are constricting (Tinsley & Board, 2017), a wider pool of in-house expertise in the form of language colleagues may create more opportunities for mutually beneficial exchanging of ideas. Economies of scale in larger schools help to justify the continued running of smaller classes at A Level and GCSE, meaning that teachers continue to gain experience of teaching at a high level. With more colleagues to deploy, HoDs may be able to make strategic decisions about timetabling to play to their colleagues' strengths. Larger departments contain more people who can

share the additional workload created by tasks such as the planning of trips and extracurricular language activities, and the coordinating of speaking examinations. Some of these activities (such as language exchanges) create opportunities for increased contact with native speakers, which is beneficial for both staff and students. The capacity to run such trips also raises the profile of languages within the school, creating a virtuous circle of heightened interest in languages for students and increased sense of recognition and competence for language teachers. The status of the language in the school is a key variable: a higher status brings with it increased likelihood of HoDs being able to make a convincing case to SLT for continued access to FLAs; administrative support for the planning of trips and exchanges; and continued general investment in the subject. Sharing additional workload amongst a larger team also frees up time for colleagues to concentrate on other things, such as creating new curricula or developing their classroom practice. Larger schools are more frequently located in urban areas, with greater diversity in the pupil body helping to make the study of languages feel more immediately relevant. I am unaware of any previous research that has identified this significant pattern of association between department size and pupils' language learning experiences and outcomes.

Figure 7.3: Scatter plot showing the association between department size and pupil performance in language GCSE examinations



7.6 Teachers' valued professional learning experiences and their intention to remain in the profession

Data related to teachers' commitment to teaching as a long-term career

In order to explore the possible associations between teachers' PL experiences and retention, data about teachers' intentions to remain in the profession were collected during the 2016-17 school year (at Time 2, Time 3 and Time 4): teachers indicated on a 9-point Likert scale their level of agreement with the following two statements: 1) 'I see teaching in UK state schools as a long-term career choice' and 2) 'I plan to keep teaching in UK state schools for at least the next two years' (see Table 7.9 and Table 7.10).

Table 7.9: Teacher agreement with the statement 'I see teaching in UK state schools as a long-term career choice

	I see teaching in UK state schools as a long-term career choice (%)*					
	Time 2 (n=45)		Time 3 (n=46)		Time 4 (n=44)	
Strongly agree (9)	42	71	28	71	34	70
Agree (6-8)	29		43		36	
Neutral (5)	9		4		7	
Disagree (2-4)	9		15		16	
Strongly disagree (1)	11		9		7	

* Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

Table 7.10: Teacher agreement with the statement 'I plan to keep teaching in UK state schools for at least the next two years

	I plan to keep teaching in UK state schools for at least the next two years (%)*					
	Time 2 (n=44)		Time 3 (n=46)		Time 4 (n=45)	
Strongly agree (9)	45	77	54	74	51	75
Agree (6-8)	32		20		24	
Neutral (5)	7		9		7	
Disagree (2-4)	9		7		9	
Strongly disagree (1)	7		11		9	

* Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

At each time point, around 70% of teachers expressed agreement with the idea that teaching in UK state schools is a long-term career choice, whilst 20-24% disagreed (see Table 7.9). A slightly higher proportion (74-77%) agreed that they planned to continue to teach languages in state schools in the near future (Table 7.10). At each time point 16-18% of teachers indicated that they planned to leave the profession within the next two years and 7-9% gave a neutral response. This data is in line with a recent poll by the National Education Union (NEU, 2019), which found 18% of teachers expected to quit in less than two years, citing workload (62%) and the accountability regime (40%) as the main reasons for their decision.

The lack of significant fluctuation in overall proportions of responses over time at the whole-sample level masks some anomalies that warrant further attention: some teachers displayed swings in their attitudes towards teaching at a UK state school as a long-term career (see Figure 7.4). For example, between Time 2 and Time 4 TA1's score decreased by 8 points from 9 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). A similar pattern is observed for TB1, (-4 points) and TI3 (-6 points). Conversely, large positive swings were observed for TD3 (+5) and TL4 (+4). Four teachers also reported a substantial change in position in relation to their intention to remain in the profession for the following two year as can be seen in Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.4: Residuals for agreement that teaching is a long-term career choice

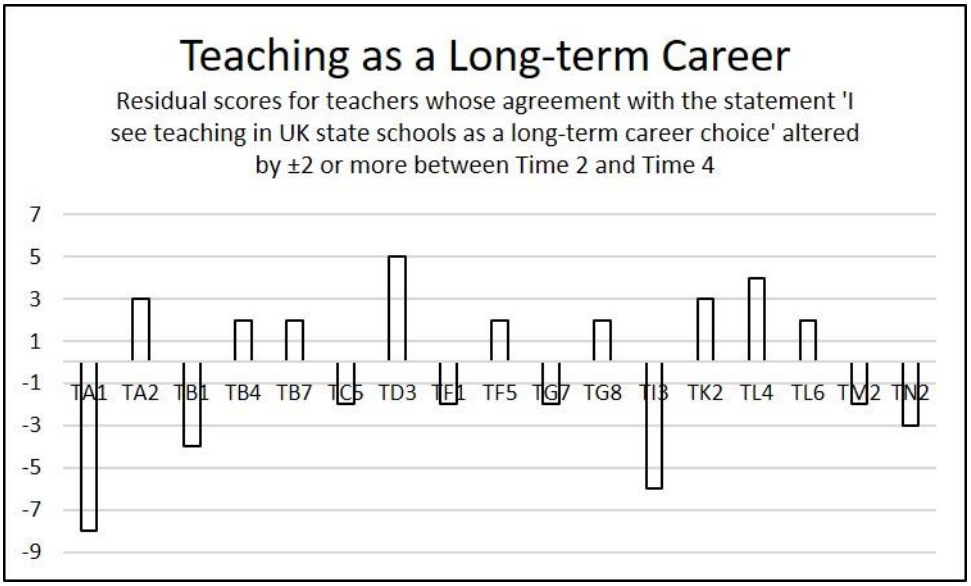
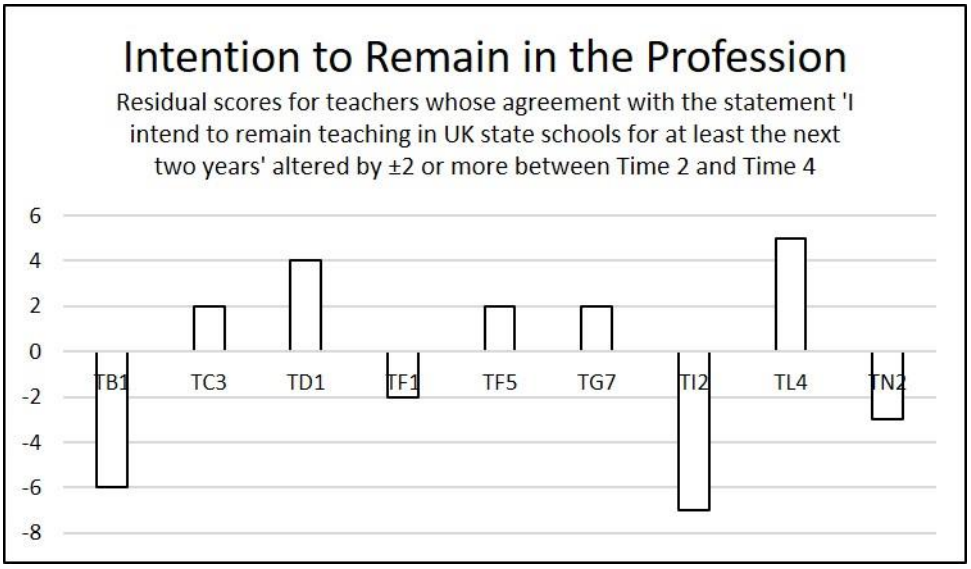


Figure 7.5: Residuals for agreement that teachers intend to remain in the profession



When looking at measures of the school culture, some possible reasons for negative swings in teachers' responses at Aspen, Birch and Ivy schools emerge (the questionnaire items used as measured of school culture are summarised in section 7.4, Table 7.8: Measures of a supportive PL culture and student outcomes and experiences). Teachers at Aspen, Birch and Ivy schools reported high levels of dissatisfaction with the investment that the school made in their PL and respondents at Aspen school gave the lowest overall responses in the data set regarding their levels of engagement in PL activities known to be effective. TA1 was also approaching retirement and her free-text responses show signs of disillusionment with the school's leadership. Teachers at Birch and Ivy school reported the second highest levels of school-related stress across the data set combined with very low levels of agreement that they felt inspired to meet their goals at work. It is likely that these factors combined for individuals in these settings to create a situation where cynicism and burnout were beginning to set in (Pas et al., 2012).

The largest positive overall swing in attitudes was observed for teacher TD3 between Time 3 and Time 4. At Time 3, during the term that all teachers reported as having been most stressful, TD3 commented:

> *researching and planning for new GCSE and AL is extremely time-consuming. I have a particularly challenging year 9 class, and moderately challenging year 8 classes this year. Amending my teaching/planning and resources to try to behaviour manage my Year 9s in particular is causing a great deal of extra work. My French exchange fell through last year, so I have been trying to research and set up a new school trip - very time-consuming. Mentoring/liaising with colleagues is also proving to take more time this year.*

TD3's comment is a reminder of the way in which excessive job demands can overload teachers and reduce their ability to envisage a positive job-related future (as explored by Husman et al., 2014). Her much more positive stance towards teaching as a long-term profession by Time 4 corresponds with a drop in her reported stress levels from 'high' to 'moderate', indicating that for this teacher the acute period of stress was not chronic and had eased by the end of the school year.

Across Times 2 – 4, 14 teachers indicated that they intended to quit the profession within the next two years. Six of these teachers' scores recovered to at least a neutral response by the final survey (TD1, TL4, TG8, TI1, TN1 and TN2), leaving eight teachers whose final response indicated that they were still not planning to stay in teaching for a further two years. These teachers were based in Aspen (TA1), Birch (TB1, TB2, TB10), Fig (TF1), Hawthorn (TH2), Juniper (TJ2) and Laurel (TL6) schools.

Four of these eight teachers had made concrete plans for a change in their employment by the end of the study: TA1 (HoD) had decided to take early retirement at the end of the academic year. TB1 announced she was '*leaving teaching*' at Time 3 but did not report any concrete plans at Time 4. By Time

4 both TB2 and TB10 reported that they had accepted new posts for the next school year in secondary schools in mainland Europe. TJ2 did not leave her school but she decided to give up her role as a Head of Year between Time 2 and Time 3, moving to part-time work.

Associations between teachers' commitment and their school experiences

I hypothesised that, as Duggan (2007) found in her study, teachers who accessed effective PL would be more likely to report high self-efficacy for L2 teaching and a long-term commitment to the teaching profession. This hypothesis is also supported by a recent study of MFL teachers in England, in which more than 60% of respondents agreed that PL opportunities had strengthened their decision to stay in their current school (Jones & Gordon, 2020). However, I found no significant correlations between teachers' levels of agreement with the statement 'I see teaching in UK state schools as a long-term career' and a) their level of engagement in PL activities known to be effective (rho=-.1, p=.54), or b) their overall engagement in MFL-specific PL activities (rho=.23, p=0.09).

Next, I explored associations between teacher's level of agreement that teaching in UK state schools is a long-term career and a range of other statements about their experiences at school (see Table 7.11 for a list of factors and correlation coefficients). As anticipated, feeling under constant pressure at school was negatively associated with agreement that teaching was a long-term career (rho= -.3, p=.05). Alongside poor physical work environments and the emotional toll of challenging pupil behaviour, high workload demands to meet performance expectations are well known to be one of the major causes of psychological strain among teachers (Hakanen et al., 2006).

Table 7.11: Teachers' school experiences and their view of teaching as a long-term career

	Correlations with each teacher's final response to the statement "I see L2 teaching in UK state schools as a long-term career" *(N=44; agreement measured on a scale from 1=strongly disagree to 9=strongly agree)*	
	Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (p value)
1. I am inspired to meet my goals at school	.37*	0.013
2. I am pleased with the career advancement opportunities available to me	.35*	0.021
3. I get excited about going to school	.34*	0.027
4. I set myself short term goals to develop my teaching (less than a year)	.31*	0.039
5. I feel under constant pressure at school	-.30*	0.048
6. I am satisfied with the investment my school makes in teachers' professional learning	.30	0.052
7. I am able to make decisions affecting my work in the classroom	.28	0.062
8. Planning for my professional future is a waste of time (reverse coded)	.26	0.087
9. I am often so involved in my work at school that the day goes by very quickly	.26	0.09
10. The school's performance management system is used to support my professional learning	.24	0.112
11. I am determined to give my best effort at school each day	.23	0.134
12. My MFL colleagues and I have a good working relationship	.17	0.273
13. I set myself long-term goals to develop my teaching (more than a year)	.11	0.468
14. My skills and expertise are valued by my department	.09	0.572
15. My own professional learning is currently a high priority for me	.07	0.681
16. I regularly plan for my professional future	-.10	0.511

Following Roness (2011, p. 633) I expected to find that teachers' commitment to the profession would increase '*in line with their level of overall professional satisfaction'*. I found moderate positive associations between views of teaching as a long-term career and the following factors: 1) feeling inspired to meet one's goals at school; 2) teachers' level of satisfaction with the career advancement opportunities available to them; 3) a feeling of excitement about going to school and 4) the degree to which they set themselves short-term goals to develop their teaching. These factors relate to two key

underlying constructs that the existing literature also identifies as key to teachers' retention: the first is teachers' emotional investment in their professional role. Feelings of excitement and inspiration within the role fall under the '*often less well- articulated motivational and enjoyable potentials*' (Hakanen et al., 2006, p. 510) of teaching and those who are supported to maintain their enthusiasm are known to be less likely to face burnout and more likely to maintain high levels of commitment to their job. The second underlying aspect that appears salient here is teachers' optimism about and planning for their professional futures. Satisfaction with career advancement opportunities suggests an optimistic view of the future and the setting of short-term PL goals is a behaviour that indicates strong, positive work engagement. To set oneself a professional development goal is to exert some positive control over one's future, a behaviour that indicates a degree of commitment to that future (Husman et al., 2014; Miller et al., 1988).

In reviewing the factors in Table 7.11 I focussed particularly on autonomy because recent research into teacher autonomy has suggested that it is a crucial factor in teachers' job satisfaction and retention: Worth and Brande (2020) found that teachers in England reported low levels of autonomy over their PL goals (only 23% felt that they had a lot of influence over this aspect of their working life) and yet this type of autonomy was found to be strongly associated with teachers' intentions to remain in the profession. In my study I did not ask directly about the level of control teachers felt that they had over their PL goals but those who agreed that they autonomously set themselves goals to develop their teaching were significantly more likely to consider teaching as a long-term career. Agreement with the statement '*I am able to make decisions affecting my work in the classroom*' was also positively associated with intentions to remain in teaching but this result did not quite reach the threshold of statistical significance (rho= 0.28, p=0.06). These findings lend some support to the growing evidence of a link *'between the autonomy that teachers are given or that they take for themselves, and opportunities to be creative and pursue their professional development'* (Jones & Gordon, 2020, p. 10).

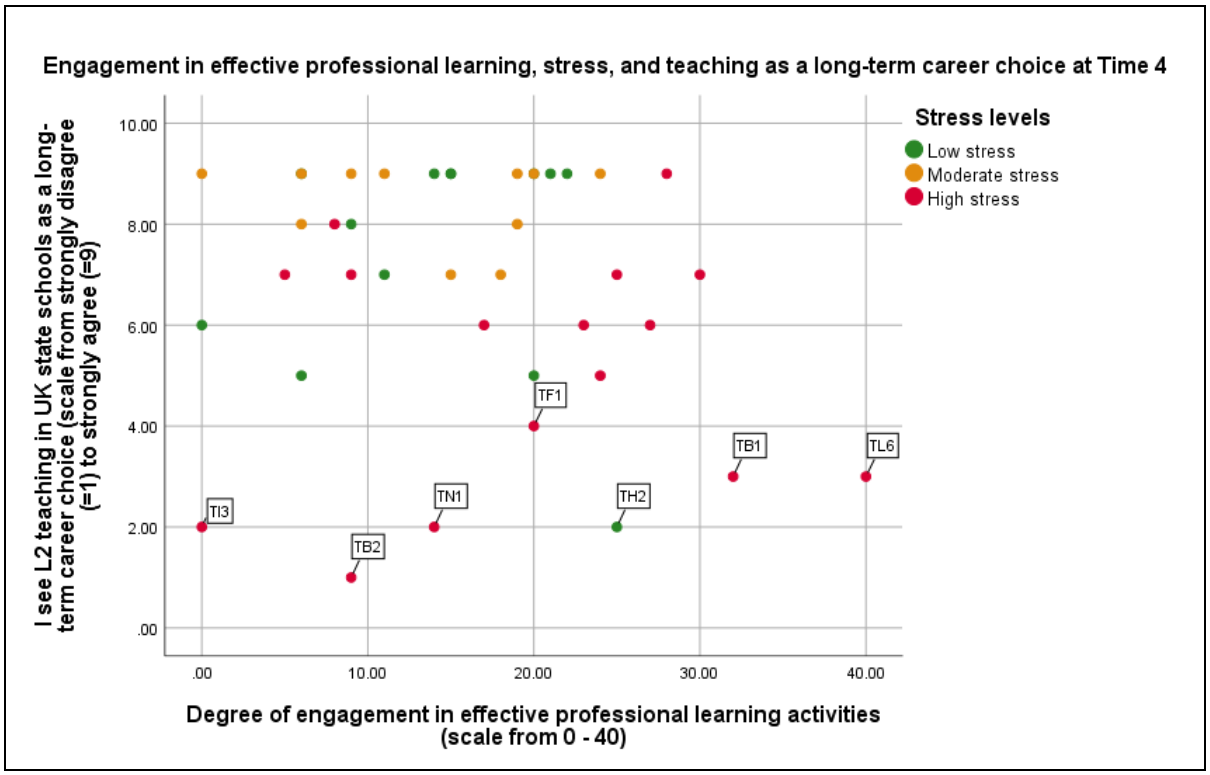
I expected teachers with a high level of self-efficacy, and those who were working in departments with a high level of collective self-efficacy, to be more likely to maintain their commitment to the profession since a sense of competence has been identified as a necessary condition for work engagement and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008). However, there were no significant associations between teachers' efficacy and their commitment in the data collected for this study. This may be due to the generally high levels of self-efficacy for teaching that my participants reported. There is, however, a strong correlation between teachers' agreement that they considered teaching to be a long-term career and their pupils' scores on the CSPS_MFL (rho=.6, p=.003). This indicates that teachers who were perceived by their pupils

to be creating high-quality learning experiences were more likely to indicate a long-term commitment to the profession.

The experiences of teachers who planned to leave

In previous studies, engagement in effective PL activities has been shown to be positively associated with teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their overall level of satisfaction with their job, which is, in turn, associated with a greater sense of teaching as a sustainable career (Duggan, 2007; Schipper et al., 2019). However, as explored in the section above, I found no clear relationship between the extent to which teachers reported engaging in PL activities known to be effective and the extent to which they saw teaching in UK state schools as a long-term career. One factor that has emerged strongly from data explored in earlier chapters is teachers' level of stress and workload and so I investigated stress as a possible mediating factor between engagement in professional learning and commitment to the profession. High levels of stress were reported by many teachers at Time 4 and those teachers' scores for engagement in effective PL varied greatly. It is, however, notable that six of the seven teachers who did not see teaching as a long-term career also reported very high stress levels (these teachers are labelled in Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6: Engagement in professional learning, stress, and view of teaching as a long-term career at Time 4



TH2 is an intriguing case. At Time 3 and Time 4 she indicated a clear intention to leave Hawthorn School after seven years of teaching there. However, she also reported high levels of satisfaction with her MFL department team; high levels of self-efficacy for teaching; above-average engagement in PL activities known to be effective; and low levels of stress. TH2 left very few free-text comments to explain her answers but she did report at Time 2 that her PL priority was to develop her A Level teaching even though she was '*not teaching A Level French this year'*, which may perhaps have been a source of dissatisfaction.

A closer look at the questionnaire responses of the 14 teachers who indicated their intention to leave the profession at some point during the study confirms that workload seems to have been a major stressor for most of these teachers. All 14 teachers highlighted preparations for new examinations in their responses, as exemplified by TL4: *[There is a] new exam syllabus for 3 languages at GCSE and AS at the same time. Changes to KS3 curriculum also at the same time. Grading changes at GCSE*. (Time 3, Q19). TI1, TF1, TL4 and TL6 all employ the word 'pressure' and assert that this pressure arises from senior management (Time 2, Q8) but perceptions of an increased workload as a result of a performativity agenda are most apparent at Birch School: teachers' comments about *new school requirements* (TB1) and *ever more demands* (TB2) in the form of meetings, lesson observations, book scrutiny, administrative tasks etc. accumulate to give an impression of an overwhelming burden of work that is perceived as low-value and a barrier to more meaningful work activities (see Table 7.12). Other teachers at Birch School maintained their commitment to stay in teaching over the coming two years. However, their comments echo the concerns of their three colleagues who declared an intention to leave. For example, at Time 2, TB7 mentioned that her role in school-based initial teacher training (SCITT) meant that she had a more varied and flexible workload than others in her department and she admired the '*resilience of colleagues in the context of high workload and lack of proper regard for teacher wellbeing'.*

Table 7.12: Birch teachers' comments about factors contributing to their stress at Time 2 and Time 3

Teacher	Time 2 - Nov 2016	Time 3 - Feb/March 2017
TB1	*I'm working from 7am till 11 pm without break to fit lesson planning, resource making and especially marking, whilst going to meetings and other staff duties every week. Weekends are similar (7 to 12 hours of work every weekend, mainly due to admin and marking)*	*Over marking, insets and meetings, delaying school work. New school requirements to integrate in lessons, adding to the amount of work. Working from 7.10 till bedtime to ensure everything is done to satisfaction*
TB2	*It feels as if there are ever more demands being made of us, more emails to answer, more information to take in and act on, more strategies and a lack of time to teach the lessons that I really want to teach*	*I am simply way too busy to think about anything beyond the day-to-day. [There's] too much to do, in particular work that I don't feel is a valuable or constructive use of my time*
TB10	*Many meetings / trainees starting to teach more and requiring a lot of support / Y11 speaking exams and retakes / start of a project with students volunteering which I am in charge of / lesson observation / Books scrutiny / Marking end of term 1 assessments for all year groups / increase of behaviour issues*	*Amount of marking, very long term, exams approaching, administrative tasks, parents' evenings, staff and faculty meetings, school trips, speaking exams, planning cover work when having to miss lessons because of school trips and speaking exams*

There were, of course, a multitude of other factors that teachers brought up in their questionnaire responses and that were likely to have contributed to their overall commitment to the profession. Three of the 14 teachers (TB2, TB10 and TL4) reported the three lowest scores across the whole sample for their self-efficacy in relation to student engagement, displaying a vulnerability in relation to their perceived competence to meet the demands of their daily work. TB10 highlighted '*students' behaviour*' as a barrier to developing their practice three times (Time 1, Q30; Time 2, Q6, Q8) whilst TL4 wrote of '*pupil expectations that they need make little effort'* (Time 1, Q30). Two teachers also highlighted '*the severe SEND challenges*' (TB1, Time 2, Q4) in their classes and the issue of '*extreme differentiation in KS4*' (TF1, Time 2, Q4). The choice of strong, emotive adjectives in these characterisations suggests that teachers are perceiving these challenges as beyond their current competencies. Difficulties with student

engagement and behaviour are known to correlate with teacher burnout and attrition (M. G. Borg & Riding, 2016; Hakanen et al., 2006) and so this may have been an influential factor in these cases.

Two different outcomes: one department

Teacher 5 at Fig School is an unusual case in that although she reported very high levels of stress, she also reported a very high level of commitment to the profession and effective professional learning experiences (TF5 is represented by the top right data point in Figure 7.6). TF5 expressed a very strong interest in PL during the surveys and defined PL as:

> *in general- improving my teaching and learning, continuing to improve as a teacher by sharing good practice, helping to develop others' teaching and learning. As a languages teacher- keeping up to date*' (TF5, Fig School, Time 1, Q12)

TF5 believed that both she and her colleagues engaged in frequent PL and her most valuable PL activities included delivering a session on her use of plenaries at a teaching and learning conference for school staff, peer observations and attendance at an MFL specific training session in a local school (Time 1, Q16). These activities demonstrate a number of positive factors about TF1's school context: 1) her skills and expertise were valued by the SLT, who invited her to present an aspect of her practice to colleagues; 2) the school provided tools and protocols to facilitate teacher learning by organising a teaching and learning conference and peer-observations and 3) the MFL department was networked with at least one other school and teachers were able to access a wider pool of expertise by attending a subject-specific PL event off-site. These elements supported TF5's competence and relatedness needs (factors identified by Deci and Ryan (2000) as key to positive work engagement). Although TF5 also reported the stresses of an Ofsted visit, understaffing in the MFL department and the additional burden of organising the French exchange, her motivation for and satisfaction with teaching appeared to be resilient to these external pressures.

TF5's colleague, TF1, was in the same department and had a similar level of experience. However, her comments show that she was much less positive about teaching as a long-term career and she indicated that she did not intend to stay in the profession. TF1 expressed no particular interest in PL (Time 1, Q13) but, like her colleague, did identify the school's teaching and learning conference as her most effective PL experience and explained that the '*conference addressed our whole-school priorities and included substantial departmental time to discuss how to interpret these in MFL '* (Time 1, Q18), thus meeting Cordingley's (2015) suggestion that whole-school PL can be made more effective when teachers are given time in teams to discuss how to embed ideas into specific practices. Whilst TF5 identified a key motivation for PL as being '*enjoyment*', indicating an intrinsic satisfaction, TF1's motivation for PL was

expressed as an instrumental '*need to prepare for new exam courses*' (Time 1, Q20). Both TF1 and TF5 identified meeting the varying needs of pupils in their classrooms as a key area for their future development but they framed this target differently: TF1 spoke about planning for mixed-ability groups at GCSE as being '*VERY time-consuming* [original emphasis]' and '*very dispiriting at times*' but she felt it was of value because it could improve '*school stats*' and have an '*impact on EBacc figures'*. TF5 on the other hand felt a focus on individual student needs '*would help me to challenge and support my students*'. The difference in framing here, with one teacher identifying a results-focussed performativity agenda as driving her work (whilst simultaneously characterising this as energy-sapping) and the other teacher expressing a concern for students' learning as a driver of her work (and characterising this as a positive process of growth), may go some way to explaining the varying driving factors that led one of these teachers to reject the profession and the other to sustain her commitment in challenging circumstances. As Kwakman (2003) has argued, individual motivations and orientations play a significant role in determining teachers' work engagement, and sometimes these factors can be more powerful than environmental factors.

7.7 Concluding comments

This chapter has explored the perceived effects of L2 teachers' engagement in PL that they regard as 'valuable' on their beliefs, their classroom practices, their pupils' experiences and outcomes and their intentions to remain in the profession. The overwhelming majority of teachers in this study reported that their valued PL activities had resulted in changes in their thinking, their practice, and the positive impact of that practice on pupils. Teachers whose valued PL was related to the teaching and learning of languages reported, on average, more extensive perceived changes in all three of these change domains.

Teachers frequently mentioned the impact of their valued PL on their thoughts and actions in their free-text comments but very few teachers explicitly connected their valued PL to personal, emotional changes or to their pupils' experiences and outcomes (the 'domain of consequence' in Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) terminology). It may be that impact on pupils' learning was less prominent in the data as pupils' experiences are only indirectly related to the more immediate changes in teacher's cognitions that may arise through engagement in PL. However, the lack of consideration of the learners in teacher' responses may also be symptomatic of low levels of engagement in PL activities that involved a focus on the collection and use of evidence about pupils' responses to modified teaching practices (as advocated by Cordingley et al. (2015)).

Stories of individual teacher change considered in this chapter highlight the ways in which engagement with initial teacher education can act as a potential source of powerful PL. Innovations introduced into practising teachers' classrooms by student teachers (such as a film project at Hawthorn school or CLIL at Aspen school) can generate enthusiasm and opportunities to discuss teaching and learning for both mentor and mentee. This beneficial aspect of working with student teachers has been highlighted by many previous studies (Allen et al., 2016; Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Hobson et al., 2009; Walter & Briggs, 2012).

The trial of a languages-specific student perception survey (CSPS_MFL) revealed broad alignment between teachers' and pupils' perspectives of the extent to which teachers were engaging with a range of teaching practices (including practices aligned with research-informed principles for language teaching - see Macaro et al., 2016). Pupils' scores on the CSPS_MFL were positively associated with the proportion of pupils attaining a language GCSE in each school but they were not predictive of value-added GCSE scores. HoDs were enthusiastic recipients of the aggregated CSPS_MFL data for their teams and several comments were made about the value of this data for initiating discussions about pupils' experiences

and the teaching and learning of MFL within the department. This aspect of my data highlights the way in which evaluations of teaching can inform teachers' practice when data is gathered in a low-stakes environment and teachers are in control of its use. As Rauch and Coe (2019, p. 12) assert, '*when evaluations of teaching are treated as formative processes, rather than summative processes, there is greater potential for teacher learning'.*

I found no direct association between the extent to which teachers reported engagement in PL known to be effective and value-added pupil performance in GCSE language examinations at each school. A broader composite measure of the quality of each school context for teachers' PL was also not predictive of pupils' CSPS_MFL or GCSE outcomes. These findings are unsurprising given that even when robust and internally valid experimental research designs are adopted, it is still very challenging to isolate associations between teachers' learning and their students' experiences or outcomes (Sleeter, 2014; Yoon et al., 2007).

The strong association (rho=.81, p<.001) between the number of full-time equivalent languages teachers in each school department and the value-added outcomes of pupils in language GCSEs was an unexpected result. It is possible that department size acted as a proxy measure of a range of other important social and economic factors affecting teachers and learners in each context (explored in full in section 7.5). Larger teams provide, at a very basic level, more fertile ground for discussion and collaboration, supporting colleagues' sense of relatedness. It may therefore be more important for teachers in small teams to be active in compensating for their position of relative isolation via networking with colleagues in other schools in multi-academy trusts or by making use of subject associations.

Finally, existing research highlights the exodus of more than 40% of teachers from state schools within the first 5 years after qualification (Sibieta, 2018). Engagement in high-quality PL has previously been shown to build teachers' sense of competency and relatedness, bolstering their professional engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2008), which led me to look for possible associations between teachers' PL experiences and their commitment to the profession. The majority of teachers in this study reported strong levels of agreement with the statement '*I see teaching in UK state schools as a long-term career*'. However, at each time point 16-18% of teachers indicated that they planned to leave the profession within the next two years, a similar proportion to that found by a recent survey of over 8000 primary and secondary teachers in England (National Education Union, 2019). Excessive workload, linked in many cases to new standardised assessments and accountability regimes, was a significant stressor for the 14 teachers in the study who indicated an intention to leave within the next two years. Some of these

teachers reported very low levels of self-efficacy in relation to managing student behaviour, which may also have acted as a contributing factor, with excess workload and a decreasing sense of competency combining to push teachers towards burnout.

Teachers' intentions to remain in the profession and their view of teaching as a long-term career were positively associated with 1) the extent to which they reported feelings of excitement and inspiration at school; 2) their level of satisfaction with the career advancement opportunities available to them and 3) the degree to which they set themselves short-term goals to develop their teaching. Satisfaction with career advancement opportunities suggests an optimistic view of the future and the setting of short-term PL goals is a behaviour that indicates strong, positive work engagement. This optimism may, in turn, help to protect teachers' enthusiasm for and emotional investment in their professional role. Overall, this data supports existing research that highlights '*the importance of feeling valued by senior colleagues, being appreciated, invested in and given new opportunities for professional growth*' (Jones & Gordon, 2020, p. 16).

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study I set out to explore the following research questions:

1: What are the PL needs and priorities of L2 teachers?

2: What are the main characteristics of L2 teachers' recent PL activities?

3: To what extent are the characteristics of effective PL practices (as defined by Cordingley et al., 2015) present in L2 teachers' descriptions of their valued PL activities?

4: What factors facilitate or constrain L2 teachers' engagement in PL activities?

5: What perceived effect, if any, does L2 teachers' engagement in PL that they regard as 'valuable' have on

a) teachers' beliefs?
b) teachers' classroom practices?
c) pupil experiences and outcomes?
d) teachers' intentions to remain in the profession?

In this final chapter, I summarise the key findings from chapters four to seven and explore the implications of these findings for policy makers, school leadership teams, heads of languages departments and teacher educators.

8.1 The most pressing learning needs and priorities of L2 teachers in this study

In response to my first research question, the most pressing learning needs identified by teachers in this study can be summarised as follows: teachers expressed a desire to learn 1) how to develop pupils' productive L2 skills (especially speaking); 2) how to develop and implement a motivating and engaging L2 curriculum; 3) how to devise and adopt pedagogies that meet the needs of diverse learners in the L2 classroom; and 4) what the curricula and assessment structures for national language qualifications at GCSE and A Level require of teachers and learners.

These four frequently identified learning needs are closely interrelated: a curriculum that motivates and engages all pupils is likely to be one that meets individual needs and enables each pupil to experience a sense of success in their language learning. Perceptions of a lack of progress and success in speaking spontaneously have been identified as an important source of demotivation for pupils who are learning a language at school (Bower, 2019). A strong focus on fluency and spontaneity in pupils' speaking performance is a common thread through the revised national assessments for language GCSEs and A

Levels, further heightening teachers' concern to develop effective pedagogies in this area of language learning.

Given the recent and wide-reaching changes to content and assessment of MFL at every stage of learning at secondary school (Tinsley & Doležal, 2018), it is unsurprising that teachers in my study reported a need to get to grips with curriculum design and new, high-stakes assessment systems. These findings mirror those of Macaro and Erler, whose 1998 study investigated teachers' self-reported PL needs and experiences in the wake of large-scale structural changes to the National Curriculum. In relation to curriculum design, one frequently cited aim for the teachers in this study was to design lessons to engage and motivate their pupils. I had anticipated this result as the need to increase pupils' engagement in language learning in England is well-recognised in the literature (Ofsted, 2015; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002) and often attributed to a combination of unappealing curriculum content, poor pedagogical practices, pupils' lack of progress and a baseline of low levels of extrinsic motivation to learn an additional language in a country where the official language is a global lingua franca. This last point may have been exacerbated in some contexts by recent isolationist politics in England: just last year a large-scale British Council report (Tinsley, 2019) found that 45% of the L2 teacher respondents in state schools felt that the Brexit vote had resulted in major challenges to pupils' engagement in language learning in their school, including negative pupil and parent attitudes. I found that the teachers in this study reported generally high levels of self-efficacy for their teaching practice but the lowest average self-efficacy scores were reported for test items related to 'student engagement', which adds weight to the literature suggesting that student engagement is an issue of significant and ongoing concern for practitioners.

In relation to the development of pupils' productive skills, spontaneity and fluency emerged as the aspects of speaking in most urgent need of development. When asked to explain their choices, teachers frequently linked the goal of improving pupils' speaking to goals of improving pupils' motivation and self-esteem (24% of teachers made this connection (n=12)). The saliency of pupils' spoken language as a priority in the data reflects the importance attached to pupils' interaction and self-expression in the L2 as the ultimate object of communicative language teaching (Loewen & Sato, 2018; Pachler et al., 2009) and it is likely to also be a response to the emphasis on spontaneity in high-stakes L2 assessments (see for example Edexcel, 2016). The teaching of speaking skills has been identified as a consistently under-developed aspect of MFL education in English secondary schools when compared with reading and writing (Mitchell, 2003; Ofsted, 2011).

Teachers' desire to devise and adopt pedagogies that meet the needs of diverse learners in the L2 classroom coincides with a nationwide move towards more mixed-attainment teaching on the basis of an accumulation of evidence suggesting harmful effects of setting and streaming for those pupils who are labelled as lower-attaining (see disucssion in Belfi et al., 2012; Boaler et al., 2000; Education Endowment Foundation, 2018a; and Hart et al., 2004). It has been found previously that L2 teachers, especially those trained at a time when disapplication of students with special educational needs and disabilities from language learning was common, may lack the '*necessary training, knowledge and resources in terms of materials and specialist support staff*' (Vilar Beltrán et al., 2013, p. xii) to create effective, inclusive classrooms.

8.2 The nature of the PL accessed by language teachers

This section reviews the key findings relating to research questions two and three, which relate to the nature of the PL that L2 teachers reported accessing and the extent to which their valued PL displayed characteristics of effective PL practices (as described by Cordingley, 2015).

Teachers reported very low average levels of participation in the eight teacher actions that are associated with effective professional learning (Cordingley, 2015). The extended embedding of learning into practice envisaged as characteristic of high-quality and impactful PL (Jensen et al., 2016) was very rarely a feature of the PL that the teachers in this study reported as valuable and it seems that most teachers had limited opportunity to access this type of PL during the study. This may be partly explained by the limited time and money that schools are able to afford teachers for their development in the current economic climate (Sellen, 2016). It may also be due to a lack of understanding from school leaders and staff about what the features of effective PL are and how to create the conditions for teachers to engage in extended learning. Whatever the reason, the study provides evidence of a need for continued focus on raising awareness and increasing opportunities and incentive for teachers to engage in actions that are known to be effective in promoting teacher learning.

The PL activities that teachers most valued in the study related to the following three OECD categories: 1) subject specific knowledge; 2) subject-specific pedagogical competencies; and 3) student evaluation and assessment practices. I found that teachers' experiences of PL that fell within the 'assessment' category consisted almost exclusively of one-off, online examination board briefings about new GCSE and A Levels. Teachers clearly valued opportunities to focus on these revised programme and assessment criteria, reflecting their desire to prepare pupils effectively for the demands of high-stakes examinations. However, these briefing activities did not offer teachers opportunities for in-depth consideration of teaching and learning in relation to changing assessment: as TF5 put it, '*the training from the exam board has been about admin rather than T&L [=teaching and learning]*' (Time 2, Q5).

The high levels of variation I found in teachers' reported experiences of PL *within* school settings points to the mediating influence of individual differences and support's Kwackman's (2003, p.166) research, which suggests that '*personal factors appear to be more significant in predicting professional learning activities than task and work environment factors*'. One significant factor appears to be teachers' sense of self-efficacy. I found that teachers who already evaluated their global language teaching abilities

highly were accessing more effective and frequent PL than their counterparts with lower levels of self-efficacy. These teachers were significantly more likely to report trying out something new in their language teaching. It may be that a certain level of self-efficacy empowers teachers to take risks and introduce innovations in their classrooms, which may in turn nurture a sense of professional agency, autonomy and self-efficacy.

8.3 Towards an understanding of the factors enabling or impeding teachers' access to effective learning

Research question four called for an exploration of the factors that facilitated or constrained teachers' engagement in PL activities. I hypothesised (in section 3.2) that a majority of L2 teachers would be positively motivated to develop their practice but that there would be a range of constraining factors including time, assessment pressures and access issues related to school finances (based on the findings of Board and Tinsley, 2016, 2017). As anticipated, teachers in this study reported a strong interest in pursuing professional learning opportunities. A complex web of factors influencing teachers' learning emerge from the data collected for this study, of which I will review the most prominent here.

The key factors perceived by teachers as limiting their access to and engagement in PL were in line with my predictions and indeed, they have been cited time and again in literature related to teachers' learning. They were: 1) a lack of time, 2) a lack of funding, 3) excessive workload, and 4) insufficient access to cover. Of course, these factors are closely intertwined: the time available for PL is dependent on the intensity of teachers' workloads; teachers' access to cover is dependent on the availability of funding for this purpose. Each of these barriers manifested itself to differing degrees in teachers' responses both within and across different school contexts. The following sections explore the barriers to learning in more detail and the underlying reasons for the varying prevalence of these issues in different schools and for different colleagues within the same school.

Time and workload

The findings from this study echo those of Cordingley et al. (2015), Sellen (2016) and Board and Tinsley (2015), who report that high workloads faced by teachers in England create conditions in which they struggle to find the time for PL. It was clear in this study that workplace cultures and policies that can lead to additional workload have been more effectively tackled in some schools and departments than others. This leads to the conclusion that issues of teachers' workload can be mitigated, to some degree, by the actions of a Head Teacher or Head of Department. The data also shows a very clear association between the reporting of high workloads and high levels of stress. Excessive stress is well-understood to impede one's ability to engage with goals beyond day-to-day coping (Collie et al., 2012; Duggan, 2007; Worth & Van den Brande, 2020).

Teachers' reported levels of stress and workload fluctuated, with an overall pattern of small dips across holiday periods and a gradual increase in term-time stress over the course of the academic year.

Speaking examinations for languages in England at GCSE and A Level are routinely scheduled between March and May, which leads into the main written examinations window from May to June. This means that language teachers experience a more extended period of the school year in which there is an acute focus on pupils' examination performance than their colleagues in some other curriculum areas. Many L2 teachers also experience additional pressure as they assume the hybrid role of teacher and examiner in conducting live performances with their own pupils for these standardised examinations. Whilst their reporting of workload and stress increased, the frequency with which teachers reported experimenting in their classrooms declined substantially across the academic year alongside their overall levels of self-efficacy for teaching. This has implications for the timing of L2 teachers' engagement with new ideas and practices, which may be best scheduled at the beginning of the academic year.

Funding and cover

Teachers in this study reported that their schools were under-resourced, and each institution was, to some extent, feeling the impact of real-terms funding cuts in education over the course of the last decade. The cost implications of PL undertaken during normal teaching hours (incurring indirect costs in the form of cover teacher salaries) or externally-led PL (frequently entailing both direct and indirect costs) led to teachers' reports of being denied opportunities they requested access to or of choosing not to make those requests in the first place.

Three teachers in the study reported benefitting greatly from engaging in part-time Masters-level study in applied linguistics (TG7) or in languages teaching and learning (TB7 and TL6) during the 2015-16 school year. Undertaking a Masters course in a relevant field enables teachers to engage in an extended and research-informed PL experience that bears many of the hallmarks of 'effective' PL (Cordingley, 2015; Woore et al., 2020). However, the costs of this type of study can be prohibitive: the most recent UK survey found that taught MSc courses cost an average of £7,946 (*University Tuition Fees: Reddin Survey*, 2019). In 2016, the government in England introduced postgraduate studies loans of around £10,000 administered by the Student Loans Company (see https://www.gov.uk/masters-loan) to help people cover the cost of additional study, but it is well-documented that people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to avoid debt (de Gayardon et al., 2019) and therefore the cost of this type of extended study is likely to remain a barrier to entry for some.

Some teachers did report engaging in PL activities that met Cordingley's (2015) quality criteria without entailing high costs. These activities often involved engagement with specialist expertise (Cordingley's first criterion) via productive interactions with boundary-crossing affiliated members of the department such as student teachers, university researchers and foreign language assistants. These affiliated

colleagues each cross boundaries between institutional, social and cultural worlds to bring to the department a perspective that has been shaped 'elsewhere'. The Douglas-Fir case study offered an example of a department, which had developed norms of interaction that enabled colleagues to access new knowledge from student teachers and FLAs. Colleagues at Fig School were also benefitting from productive boundary-crossing via the school's membership of a locally administrated multi-academy trust, which facilitated the meeting of language colleagues from other schools. The two case studies also demonstrated that structured programmes of support for teachers' experimentation and risk-taking can be achieved at school or department level without incurring high costs by devoting time to enquiry-oriented work involving discussions of teachers' experimental practice and evidence about their pupils' learning.

Situations of relative advantage or disadvantage

This study found that the size of each language department (in terms of the number of full-time equivalent teachers employed in each setting) was strongly correlated with value-added outcomes for pupils in their language GCSEs. This suggests that there are economies of scale that facilitate high-quality teaching and learning for both teachers and pupils. HoD narratives within the interview data of smaller departments struggling to run language exchanges, making difficult decisions to limit the number of languages offered and facing the loss of A Level classes that were no longer financially viable were alarming and play into a pattern of social inequality as documented by Lanvers (2017) in which larger, urban schools with multicultural intakes or high-performing and high status (in terms of Ofsted grading) schools become the only ones that can sustain the teaching of languages at a high level. Where smaller, often rural, schools are unable to sustain financially viable class sizes at A Level this may lead to the loss of expert colleagues who want to teach their subject at an advanced level and students in such schools may subsequently lose access to a subject that can expand their horizons and open their eyes to new cultures. One example of economies of scale having direct impact on the potential opportunities for teachers' PL is the issue of access to foreign language assistants (FLAs), who offer an opportunity for teachers and pupils alike to benefit from regular contact with a native speaker of the L2. At the time of data collection, FLAs were employed by the three inner-city schools and one very large school based in a market town (Douglas-Fir). The smallest of these four schools, Ginkgo, was not planning to employ an FLA for the subsequent academic year as the Headteacher felt that class sizes at GSCE and A Level were not sufficient to justify the cost. A recent Language Trends survey (Tinsley & Board, 2017) also reported that just 33% of state schools are currently investing in FLAs, rendering them an inaccessible resource for many.

8.4 The impacts of effective L2 teacher learning

My final research question focused on perceptions of the impact of teachers' PL on their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, actions, and ultimately on their pupils. Where teachers reported higher levels of engagement in effective PL practices, there was accompanying evidence of a positive association with individual teachers' sense of self-efficacy, general professional engagement and intention to remain in the profession. These findings echo those of Duggan's (2007) study in the context of the USA and it provides additional evidence of the need for and potential benefits of an increase in teachers' access to and engagement in effective PL in England.

Those teachers whose valued PL was of specific relevance to languages teaching reported, on average, more extensive perceived changes in their thinking, their practice and the positive impact of that practice on pupils. This supports findings in the existing literature (Cordingley et al., 2018; Schleicher, 2016). Teachers' descriptions of the impact of their valued PL tended to focus on the perceived cognitive and behavioural changes that they had made. Changes in teachers' attitudes and emotions (the affective domain) were rarely mentioned and changes in pupils' experiences and outcomes were very rarely discussed. I interpret the lack of consideration of their learners in teachers' responses as highlighting a need for increased engagement in PL with a focus on the collection and use of evidence about pupils' responses to changed teaching practices.

Possible associations between teacher learning and their students' outcomes and experiences proved challenging to identify and examine within the dataset. This is unsurprising given that even when robust and internally valid experimental research designs are adopted, it is still very challenging to isolate associations between teachers' learning and their students' experiences or outcomes (Sleeter, 2014; Yoon et al., 2007). Year 8 students' responses to the CSPS_MFL survey tool were positively associated with uptake and attainment in language GCSEs. However, there was no significant correlation between students' CSPS_MFL responses and each school's value-added GCSE attainment data for languages. I also found no direct association between the extent to which teachers reported engagement in PL known to be effective and the quality of the value-added pupil performance in GCSE language examinations at each school, which suggests that there is a much more complex relationship between the many variables at play in teachers' learning, their practice and their pupils' outcomes than I have been able to isolate from the data collected.

A positive outcome of my exploration of pupils' perspectives was the way in which HoDs embraced this low-stakes, subject-specific evaluation exercise. There was strong evidence that the findings from pupil

questionnaires were considered valuable by HoDs, some of whom used them to initiate and inform discussions about the strengths and development needs of their department.

Finally, I looked at the associations between teachers' learning and their commitment to the teaching profession. At the whole cohort level, there were no significant associations between teachers' engagement in learning activities known to be effective and their reported agreement that they would remain in teaching. However, for the teachers in this study who indicated an intention to leave teaching within the next two years (n=14, approx. 25%), dissatisfaction with the investment that their school made in their professional learning, high levels of school-related stress and for some, low levels of self-efficacy in relation to managing student behaviour, appear in both the quantitative and qualitative data as likely explanatory variables.

8.5 Limitations

Although this study has illuminated the lived PL experiences of L2 teachers in England, the exploratory design of the study has, perhaps necessarily, thrown up many more questions than it has answered.

The data for this study relates to a relatively small sample of teachers (n=57) within one geographical area and the experiences of these teachers may not be typical of all teachers in England. However, given that these data were collected in the South-East of England where numbers of students learning languages are significantly higher than in some Northern regions and the West-Midlands (Malpass, 2014), I would expect that the pressures facing teachers in this study would be experienced with even greater intensity elsewhere in the English education system.

I asked my respondents to tell me about their most valuable PL experiences, but I did not provide them with an option to tell me that they did not consider themselves to have engaged in any PL that was valuable. Also, my data did not distinguish the *degree* to which each teacher valued the PL experiences that they reported. Any continuation or replication of this study should seek to address these questions.

I chose to use Cordingley's (2015) eight teacher actions as the basis of my exploration of teachers' engagement in 'effective' PL because they were based in rigorous research evidence and I hoped that the presentation of these processes as teacher actions would make it easy for teachers to relate directly to the processes described. However, on reflection these statements are problematic in that although they emphasise the importance of specialist expertise, they are nonetheless generated from a range of generic reviews into teacher learning. In future work I would aim to carefully review each of these statements in light of what is known about the processes of effective *L2* teacher learning and to edit them where appropriate to reflect this subject-specific focus. Each of the eight statements also combines multiple processes and a future study should seek to disaggregate these in order to collect more nuanced data about the extent to which teachers feel they have been involved in each one.

The data for this study were collected in the wake of large-scale changes to assessment and curriculum structures in England. This has had a significant impact on the nature of the data collected, which may limit the extent to which the findings of the study have relevance beyond the current context. It would therefore be fruitful to extend the study in order to track the nature and content of teachers' PL over time and examine the ways in which the PL variables might impact teachers' self-efficacy, work engagement and retention over the longer term, capturing teachers' learning during times of policy, curriculum and assessment changes and also during times of relative stability.

Finally, I acknowledge significant limitations in my exploration of possible associations between teachers' engagement in effective PL, pupils' CSPS_MFL data and pupils' outcomes in standardised assessments. The CSPS_MFL data collected in this study relate only to Year 8 students of French and the GCSE data relates to all language outcomes in each school. The methodological challenges of efficiently collecting valid and reliable data to explore the effectiveness of teaching are well-known, as are the issues of making connections between teachers' learning and the possible impact of this learning on their pupils (Sleeter, 2014; Timperley et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2007). Whilst I was unable to isolate any clear associations in these areas, the qualitative data collected in the study does illuminate teachers' perceptions of the mechanisms of change at play and offers some avenues for future study.

8.6 Implications for policy and practice

It is generally accepted that the negative wash-back effect of high-stakes examination preparation on L2 teachers' classroom practice over many years (acknowledged by Ofqual (2014)) has created a need for in-depth and sustained, subject-specific PL to help L2 teachers engage with alternative pedagogies that are informed by research into the processes of effective language learning.

A key finding from this study is the teachers' strong endorsement of opportunities to develop subject-specific knowledge and pedagogical competencies. This is supported by the association in the data between subject-specific PL experiences and teachers' perceptions that PL has led to changes in their practice, bringing benefits for learners. These findings align with those of international studies and deliver an unambiguous message: school and faculty leaders hoping to improve pupil outcomes should bear in mind the accumulating evidence about the features of effective PL. If school leaders are able to access and understand this evidence, they are well-positioned to develop the organisational conditions that can support highly effective PL for themselves and their colleagues. School environments do not automatically support high-quality teacher learning. Rather, work needs to be done to re-structure the working environment in order to foreground and foster learning for teachers. There is evidence from the Ginkgo School case study that when a headteacher embraces the research into effective PL, conditions for research-informed and extended, embedded inquiry learning approaches can be created without incurring significant financial costs.

In a first step towards designing education policy that prioritises teachers' PL, the Department for Education (DfE) in England has published an ambitious Standard for Teachers' Professional Development (STPD) (2016), which draws explicitly and extensively on the recommendations of research into teachers' PL by Cordingley et. al (2015). The STPD has not been made statutory but it represents an effort to raise

awareness about what constitutes effective PL and to improve teachers' access to sustained and effective PL programmes. The framework provided by the STPD is an accessible and research-informed tool to guide school leaders in building better opportunities for their staff to engage in PL activities known to be effective. The findings of this study support the claims in the STPD that PL should:

1. be prioritised by school leadership.
2. have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
3. be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
4. include collaboration and expert challenge.
5. be sustained over time.

For teachers in the early stages of their careers the government is also introducing an Early Career Framework (ECF) to be rolled out in specific areas of the country in 2020-21 (Department for Education, 2019a). This framework is designed to provide more time for PL and mentoring support for the first two years of new teachers' careers. The focus of the STPD and ECF on teachers' learning is welcome. However, the capacity of the system to deliver additional high-quality mentoring has been questioned and the generic nature of the ECF is also of some concern: this was the subject of a recent open letter from subject associations to the DfE, which urges that '*at least 50 per cent of mentoring and development time, especially for a subject specialist secondary teacher, should be dedicated to subject-specific aspects of professional learning.*' (Kinder et al., 2019, para.4). My study underlines the importance of subject-specific development work, which should be a cornerstone of both the ECF and the STPD. The DfE, led by the current Education Secretary Williamson, should also produce guidance around the STPD and ECF to emphasise the importance of enabling individual teachers to exert some control over the content and aims of their PL (a suggestion put forwards by NFER (2020)). Finally, I strongly support raising the status of the STPD by making the guidance within it statutory.

This research has described how, even in challenging national and local policy contexts, individual schools and language teacher teams can create productive micro-climates that facilitate teachers' access to and engagement in effective PL. Reports of excessive workloads coupled with limited time for development work are a leitmotif running through the data collected for this study and I found strong evidence that levels of workload do vary significantly between schools. Beyond questions of PL, excessive workload was a significant stressor for the 14 teachers (24.5% of the cohort) who indicated an intention to leave within the next two years. In view of this I make a strong recommendation that school and department leaders take steps to reduce unnecessary workload (such as that created by excessive marking practices (Elliott et al., 2016)).

Key recommendations for Heads of Department and School Leaders

Heads of department and school leaders wishing to create better conditions for teacher learning within whole-school and language department communities should consider the following recommendations:

1. **Professional learning should be widely recognised as part of a teacher's professional role.**

2. **School leaders should recognise that part of their role is to build a culture that supports the professional learning of their colleagues.** This should involve becoming informed about the hallmarks of effective professional learning; carving out time and funding for it; and expecting, encouraging and rewarding it.

   The headteacher at one of the schools in this study had appointed a Head of Research. This raised the profile of inquiry approaches to professional learning within the school, helping to create a culture of research-informed professional experimentation and risk taking. Dedicated time and space for teachers to contextualise learning within their subjects was a key feature enabling rich learning in this setting. In relation to MFL, it would be helpful for school leaders to recognise the current urgent issues of low student engagement in and uptake of language learning in England. In response to this, headteachers could seek to create the conditions within which L2 teacher teams can engage in an extended review of language curricula and pedagogy, involving access to external sources of expertise (perhaps via the subject association). The value of student teachers and FLAs for the learning of both teachers and pupils could be acknowledged and, wherever possible, prioritised in the school budget. The additional workload that comes with administering speaking examinations and organising language trips and exchanges could be acknowledged and L2 teachers could be supported with time and resources to engage in this work (particularly when the MFL teacher team is small in number), helping to ensure that they have capacity to engage in learning throughout the school year.

3. **Heads of departments should recognise that part of their role is to build a culture that supports the professional learning of their colleagues.** This should involve dedicating time to discuss teaching and learning as a team drawing on: the combined experiences and ideas of the teaching team (with colleagues encouraged to discuss and analyse both successful and unsuccessful strategies); information about pupil experiences and outcomes; and external expertise in the form of research-informed practices and ideas.

   The case study schools offer some possible models for creating a strong professional learning culture in MFL. An MFL HoD can adopt practices of deliberate inclusion in department meetings and HoD modelling of honest, 'risky' talk can help teachers and boundary-crossing affiliates (FLAs and student teachers) to learn from each other in meetings. Experimentation with teaching practices can be established as a routine feature of an L2 team's work when democratically agreed development objectives are used in a structured way over the course of several weeks as the focus point for discussions of teaching and learning. Active engagement with external sources of expertise (i.e. subject networks and associations) can be pursued to ensure that the team does not become a 'closed loop'. HoDs can also advocate strongly for their team, lobbying the SLT for things known to impact the quality of teachers' learning and working environment such as: dedicated time for L2 colleagues to work together; membership of subject networks; engagement in initial L2 teacher education; employment of FLAs; support for trips and visits; and adequate teaching spaces in the department (to

avoid the main MFL team room being co-opted for speaking practice, which can stifle teachers' engagement in informal conversations about teaching and learning during their non-contact time).

4. **School leaders and heads of department should acknowledge and seek to mitigate any negative effects of accountability systems on teachers' engagement in professional learning.** Whilst acknowledging the tensions within the current performativity-focussed education system in England, school leaders should aim to develop conditions of high trust and high standards, expecting teachers to take professional responsibility for the learning of their pupils and ensuring that evaluations of teaching are respectful, valid, reliable, low-stakes and formative.

   An MFL HoD can help school leaders to understand that progression in L2 learning does not follow the same pattern as progression in some other subjects and the target grades against which colleagues are often held accountable are of only limited value. An awareness of the Language Trends surveys (British Council) and the Association for Language Learning publications can support MFL HoDs in making these points. HoDs can also protect their team from excessive workload demands by ensuring that expectations around marking and reporting are not burdensome and that whole school directives with workload and accountability implications are resisted where appropriate and implemented as sensitively as possible at department level.

5. **Heads of department should bear in mind the value of productive tensions within the team and strive to create conditions in which all teachers, no matter their status, are empowered to contribute candidly and critically to conversations about teaching and learning.** Collaboration and sharing of resources should be established as normal ways of working, with all teachers modelling an openness to genuine dialogue about the strengths and drawbacks of current approaches.

   If the HoD deliberately positions themselves as a learner, perhaps through language-play with FLAs or by disclosing a problem of practice that they are grappling with in their own classroom, this may help other colleagues to follow suit. This study demonstrated that even in very collaborative teams, junior colleagues may be hesitant to participate and HoDs could be mindful of this and seek to invite junior colleagues into teaching and learning conversations whenever possible.

6. **Heads of department should aim to achieve a balance between alignment of purpose and teaching aims whilst trusting their colleagues to adapt generally agreed-upon curricula and methods for their own learners.** This will enable teachers to maintain a strong sense of professional autonomy and give them a warrant to experiment within their own classroom.

   Whilst seeking to create a shared agenda for language learning in the department, an MFL HoD can acknowledge that second language acquisition is a complex process and that there are many contested ideas in the research literature about the best way to teach an L2. This creates a warrant for debate and experimentation, particularly around issues such as the teaching of grammar, the use of the target language and the place of intercultural understanding within the L2 curriculum.

A note on time and timetabling

When asked what would facilitate their PL, nearly one third of teachers' responses in this study suggested the provision of additional non-contact time to dedicate to PL (17/77). Therefore, in relation to the recommendations above, protected time for PL purposes should be built into teachers' timetables *within* the school day. This time should be synchronised for members of each department, ***including*** part-time colleagues, to enable co-planning of the curriculum and exploration of new ideas and practices clearly linked to both teacher and pupil needs (the provision of unsynchronised, self-directed time is not sufficient since it would most likely be used for jobs perceived as 'urgent' (such as marking or planning) and teachers would miss out on the richness of a collaborative approach to the 'important though rarely urgent' work of PL). This kind of commitment to creating time for teachers' learning entails significant structural changes to staffing and timetabling, which presents a challenge within a context of tight school budgets. However, the wider literature reports that some schools in England have trialled creative approaches such as having slightly longer working days for four out of the five days a week, enabling a reduction of timetabled teaching hours for one day a week. The freed-up time can then be dedicated to teachers' PL (Spoors, 2018). A more radical proposal (put forward by Bubb & Earley, 2013) would be to extend the current academic year in England to shorten the summer break and provide teachers with more dedicated time for learning across a longer but less intense teaching year, which would have the added benefit of tackling the issue of summer learning loss for both pupils and teachers (Shinwell & Defeyter, 2017).

Ring-fenced funding for teachers' PL with a minimum statutory number of 'department PL' hours built into teachers' timetables may well be the top-down policy change that is required to initiate wide-spread change. However, for school leaders eager to make a start from the bottom up, a first step towards valuing and prioritising high-quality, subject specific PL would be to devolve some of the existing INSET time to departments, providing opportunities for subject teams to work together to contextualise generic PL for their specific situations.

Intelligent accountability in a high-trust profession

Both policy makers and school leaders should work to dismantle accountability systems that have led to unintended adverse effects for teachers and learners. At a policy level there should be recognition that progression in language learning does not follow the same pattern as progression in mathematics and English and that the Progress 8 indicator of pupils' outcomes in languages is therefore deeply flawed

(relying as it does on mathematics and English scores from Key Stage 2) (Hutchings, 2015). The creation of the EBacc measure and inclusion of languages within it may have been a well-meaning attempt to raise the status of language study but it opens up the possibility that students may be persuaded not to take languages if it is feared that they may not achieve highly enough to contribute to the school's performance indicators. This is exacerbated by a widely held perception of more demanding expectations at GCSE and A Level in MFL than in other subjects (Barker, 2016; Ofqual, 2014; Tinsley, 2013), which in turn feeds into reduced uptake of languages at GCSE and A Level and reduced opportunities for languages teachers to teach their subject at a high level and to be part of a vibrant language teaching community within the school. All such unintended consequences of the current systems need to be addressed at policy level.

External expertise – opening up the 'closed loop'

A key recommendation for policy makers is to consider the importance of facilitating teachers' access to external expertise and educational research that is likely to be of relevance to their subject areas. Professional bodies such as the Chartered College of Teachers and relevant subject associations should be recognised as offering an important route for teachers to access up-to-date research and innovation via subject association journals and PL events. My study suggests that a culture of engagement with and in these subject communities can build teachers' sense of relatedness and professionalism, which may be particularly important when an MFL department is made up of just two or three colleagues. Heads of language departments could prioritise access to the Association for Language Learning and the related Language Learning Journal (LLJ). HoDs should also be aware of the Open Accessible Summaries in Language Studies (OASIS) (Marsden et al., 2019) that can be searched via key word and accessed at no cost. Only one teacher in this study was aware of these resources and that teacher was completing an MSc in Applied Linguistics. Using these tools, HoDs can create space in their department meetings for regular group discussions of a chosen classroom-focussed issue of interest to colleagues, thereby building a shared professional and domain specific language with the potential to support teachers' competence and relatedness needs (Noels et al., 2003).

The teachers in my study demonstrated a strong appetite for PL and identified subject-specific aspects of their pedagogy that they wanted to develop. However, they were lacking in meaningful opportunities to undertake the kind of in-depth curriculum development work that might lead to lasting changes. One national initiative that all language teachers should be aware of is the recent creation of the National Centre for Excellence in Language Pedagogy (NCELP, 2019), which was set up with substantial funding

from the Department for Education for two years. Its mission, as described on the associated website, is to '*improve language curriculum design and pedagogy, leading to a higher take up and greater success at GCSE*' by taking forward the recommendations of the Modern Foreign Languages Pedagogy Review (Teaching Schools Council, 2016). The NCELP project has involved a group of academics and teachers working together to design research- and practice-informed schemes of work, assessments and resources. Whilst the resources are freely available to all teachers online (available at https://resources.ncelp.org/), the project currently directly involves 18 teachers at nine lead schools each working with four local hub schools. It is hoped that if the centre continues to be funded and more teachers are able to access the resources and professional education it can provide then this could be a source of innovation and lasting change in the language teaching and learning landscape. However, some have already questioned whether the delivery model of NCELP may yet end up positioning most teachers who come into contact with it in the role of 'executive technician' (Winch et al., 2013), delivering one-size-fits-all, pre-made schemes of work in their classroom. In his critique, Conti (2020) warns of the danger that the approaches endorsed by NCELP, based on a limited range of research, could become a new orthodoxy in language teaching and actually stifle creativity. Perhaps an approach more in line with what is known about effective PL would be to develop NCELP's capacity to work face-to-face with many more teachers, creating opportunities for lead teachers and researchers to explain the principles behind the pedagogies presented and empowering teachers to adapt NCELP resources for their own purposes. This training could involve at least two phases: an initial NCELP course followed by a period of experimentation and evidence gathering in teachers' classrooms, followed by a further opportunity for teachers to return to NCELP to discuss and analyse their experiences and findings, with teachers' feedback informing the ongoing development of the NCELP project.

Stability in education policy

At the time of writing teachers in England were struggling to keep abreast of a programme of fast-paced and significant reform in the National Curriculum, in assessment structures at Key Stage 3 and in qualifications at GCSE and A Level. Teachers in this study were investing significant amounts of time and energy in worrying about the administration of examinations, for example, the number of marks awarded for content or accuracy in students' written work in the 150-word GCSE answer or the correct timings for each section of the GCSE speaking examination. A period of some stability in the coming years would enable teachers to move beyond limited goals of 'coping' towards deeper and richer learning with the potential to transform both classroom practice and pupil outcomes. After all, there are

now unprecedented freedoms for teachers to design their own curricula at Key Stage Three, creating opportunities for radical rethinking of how languages are taught.

8.7 Future research directions

The current study focussed only on secondary school L2 teachers. There is an urgent need for future research to develop an understanding and support the learning needs of L2 teachers in the primary phase, which are likely to differ from those of their colleagues teaching at secondary level. Since 2014, all primary schools have been required to deliver a language other than English as part of their curriculum (Department for Education, 2013), an unintended consequence of which has been that many primary L2 practitioners are delivering language lessons with very limited subject knowledge and without the support of a subject department (see Tinsley & Board, 2016).

The design and trial of a subject-specific student perception survey (CSPS_MFL) enabled some triangulation of teachers' and pupils' perspectives of language lessons, which offers a promising avenue for further research into fair and meaningful evaluations of teaching (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013; Levine, 2003). A future study could look to refine and validate the CSPS_MFL instrument with a view to enabling language teachers to use it formatively to interrogate their practice. Such a study should combine teacher and pupil questionnaires with lesson observations, using pre-existing instruments such as the communicative orientations to language teaching (COLT) protocol developed by Allen, Fröhlich and Spada (1984). Following validation work, the CSPS_MFL could be used as a tool within an intervention study aimed at supporting HoDs to implement the key recommendations from this study (listed in section 8.6) in order to support and sustain the development and flourishing of their team.

8.8 Conclusion

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of teacher education by offering an in-depth, subject-specific analysis of the interrelation of personal and contextual factors that impact teacher learning and professional engagement. Languages teachers in this study were strongly motivated to learn and they identified a range of aspects of their classroom practice that they wanted to develop. However, very little high-quality development work was reported. What many of the teachers lacked was access to time, encouragement, structures and tools to support the type of learning activities that are known to be effective. The CSPS_MFL student questionnaire tool developed in this study offers a promising approach to supporting teacher-led inquiries into the impact of their instructional practices. I have made this tool freely available via the IRIS repository of data collection tools for SLA research (Marsden et al., 2016). Amid a language learning crisis in England, this study provides strong evidence for the importance of subject-specific development at secondary school level: teachers valued learning which was contextualised within their subject and they reported high impacts of this learning on their thinking and practice. Creating working conditions in which this subject development could occur would bring far-reaching benefits for teachers' efficacy, wellbeing and retention.

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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A: Characteristics of the 14 schools in the sample

SCHOOL	SCHOOL TYPE	AGE RANGE	OFSTED RATING IN 2015-16	LOCATION	PUPILS ON ROLL in 2015	MFL TEACHERS	% GCSE 5x A*-C IN 2015	Progress 8 in 2015 (voluntary data opt in)	% PUPILS WHO ACHIEVED THE EBACC in 2015	% PUPILS ENTERED FOR THE LANGUAGE AREA OF THE EBACC IN 2015	% PUPILS WITH A STATEMENT OF SEND	% PUPILS WITH EAL	% PUPILS IN RECEIPT OF PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT
NATIONAL AVERAGE	**State-funded schools**				**990 (2012 census data)**		**53.8**	**47.4**	**22.9**	**49.3**	**1.8**	**15**	**29.4**
Aspen	Community School	11-18	2	Suburban	822	3 (2F, 1M)	54		15	27	1.6	5.7	21.6
Birch	Academy	11 - 18	1	Urban	1876	10 (10F, 0M)	74		43	65	2.3	22.5	19.7
Cedar	Academy	11-18	2	Suburban	1039	5 (4F, 1M)	67	52.5	34	51	3.8	2.6	12.8
Douglas-Fir	Academy	11-18	1	Suburban	2086	8 (8F, 0M)	52		29	53	2.1	2.8	10.5
Elm	Community School	11-18	2	Suburban	1133	6 (6F, 0M)	63		32	54	2.5	14.6	11
Fig	Academy	11-18	2	Rural	1156	7 (6F, 1M)	78		45	64	1.1	2.7	14
Ginkgo	Academy	11-18	2	Urban	1052	6 (5F, 1M)	65	52.8	30	46	1	9.6	13.9
Hawthorn	Community School	11-16	2	Rural	596	3 (3F, 0M)	65		16	37	1.5	1	8.7
Ivy	Academy	11-18	2	Suburban	1145	5 (5F, 0M)	61		18	47	1	7.3	13.6
Juniper	Academy	11-18	2	Urban	1378	7 (6F, 1M)	63		34	60	1.2	32.1	33.3
Katsura	Academy	11-18	2	Suburban	873	3 (3F, 0M)	59.7		25.4	22	0.5	9.2	21.4
Laurel	Academy	11-18	2	Suburban	1294	5 (4F, 1M)	63	49	17	30	0.6	2.5	16
Mahogony	Community School	11-18	2	Rural	588	2 (2F, 0M)	55		14	41	2.6	3.7	17
Nutmeg	Academy	11-18	2	Suburban	1006	4 (3F, 1M)	64	50.4	24	45	1.1	6.2	24.8

10.2 Appendix B: Teacher Questionnaire 1

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

1. Languages Teachers' Professional Learning: in search of impact

* 1. Before you begin the survey, please indicate below that you have read the information letter (sent to you via email) and you agree to participate in this research. Please check all of the boxes below to continue.

- [ ] I have read the study information sheet
- [ ] I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee
- [ ] I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw myself or my data at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or academic penalty.
- [ ] I understand how personal data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project
- [ ] I understand how the findings will be disseminated
- [ ] I understand how to raise concerns or make a complaint.
- [ ] I agree to take part in the study.

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

2. About You

* 2. Please indicate below which languages you speak and assess your level of competence in each one

	1. I am a native speaker of this language	2. I consider myself fluent in this language	3. I am comfortable with teaching this language at Key Stage Five (A Level)	4. I am comfortable with teaching this language at Key Stage Four (GCSE)	5. I am comfortable with teaching this language at Key Stage Three	6. I do not currently have any level of competence in this language
English	○	○	○	○	○	○
French	○	○	○	○	○	○
German	○	○	○	○	○	○
Spanish	○	○	○	○	○	○
Italian	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mandarin	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify the language and your level of competence)

* 3. Which languages do you currently teach? (Please select all options that apply)

	Key Stage Three	Key Stage Four (GCSE)	Key Stage Five (A Level)
French	☐	☐	☐
German	☐	☐	☐
Spanish	☐	☐	☐
Italian	☐	☐	☐
Mandarin	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify the language and the Key Stages taught)

1

4. Which qualifications do you currently hold? (Please select all that apply)

- [ ] Undergraduate Degree
- [ ] Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)
- [ ] Masters Degree
- [ ] Doctoral Degree
- [ ] Other (please specify)

5. What is your current employment status?

- ◯ Full time
- ◯ Part Time (please specify in terms of the percentage of a full time contract)

6. What is your current contract status?

- ◯ Permanent employment
- ◯ Fixed term contract for a period of more than 12 months
- ◯ Fixed term contract for a period of 12 months or less

* 7. Including the current school year and your PGCE training year (if applicable), how many years have you been teaching languages in a school setting?

In total	
In the current school	

8. What roles do you have within the MFL department? (Please select all that apply)

- [ ] Foreign Language Assistant
- [ ] Teaching Assistant
- [ ] Language Teacher
- [ ] Head of Department
- [ ] Deputy Head of Department
- [ ] Head of one Modern Foriegn Language
- [ ] Coordinator of one or more Key Stages
- [ ] Other (please specify) / Please add any additional details

9. What whole-school roles do you have? (Please select all that apply)

- [ ] Form Tutor
- [ ] Head of Year
- [ ] Deputy Head of Year
- [ ] Other (please specify) / Please add any additional details

* 10. Are you continuing to teach MFL at the same school as last year (2015-16) during the current academic year (beginning September 2016)?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ N/A

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

3. About your decision to leave your current school

* 11. What has led to your decision to stop teaching MFL at your 2015-16 school?

- ◯ I am retiring
- ◯ I have a new position teaching MFL elsewhere
- ◯ I am leaving MFL teaching to pursue a different career
- ◯ Other (please give details below)

Please give any additional details that explain your decision to leave your 2015-16 school

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

4. About Your Understanding of Professional Learning

Notice: The primary aim of this questionnaire is to identify your thoughts and priorities in relation to your professional learning. For this reason, throughout the questionnaire you will be asked for your personal thoughts first and this will then be followed by an opportunity for you to engage with the responses that teachers have given in previous research projects.

* 12. Please give a short explanation of what the phrase "Professional Learning" means to you as a teacher.

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

5. About your experiences of identifying and participating in Professional Learning opportunities

For the remainder of this questionnaire, Professional Learning is defined as: any activity, whether formal or informal, that could be understood as facilitating the development of your classroom practice

* 13. Over the 2015-16 academic year, how interested were you in pursuing Professional Learning opportunities to enhance your classroom practice?

Not at all interested	Not very interested	Neither interested nor disinterested	Quite Interested	Very Interested
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

* 14. Over the 2015-16 academic year, how regularly did you engage in activities that support your own Professional Learning?

Very rarely (not more than once per year)	Rarely (less than once per term)	Sometimes (at least once per term)	Regularly (at least once per month)	Very regularly (at least once per fortnight)
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

* 15. Over the 2015-16 academic year, how regularly do you believe most teachers in your MFL department engaged in activities that developed their own or others' Professional Learning?

Very rarely (not more than once per year)	Rarely (less than once per term)	Sometimes (at least once per term)	Regularly (at least once per month)	Very regularly (at least once per fortnight)
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

* 16. Please list the 3 most effective Professional Learning experiences that you have had during the 2015-16 academic year

1

2

3

* 17. How regularly did you participate in each of the Professional Learning experiences that you have mentioned in Question 16?

	Just once	Rarely (less than once per term)	Sometimes (at least once per term)	Regularly (at least once per month)	Very regularly (at least once per fortnight)
1	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
2	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 18. Please answer these questions in relation to thethree Professional Learning experiences that you mentioned in Question 16

	Was your participation in this activity voluntary?	Was this activity specifically designed for MFL teachers?	Has this activity had a positive impact on your teaching?
1			
2			
3			

Please comment on *how* your participation in these activities has impacted your teaching

The next few questions are about the process of finding and engaging in Professional Learning opportunities

* 19. How easy has it been for you to identify suitable Professional Learning opportunities over the 2015-16 academic year?

Very difficult	Quite difficult	Not difficult	Quite easy	Very easy
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

20. What motivated you to participate in Professional Learning opportunities?

* 21. Were there any obstacles to your participation in Professional Learning opportunities?

◯ No

◯ Yes

If yes, please give some details

22. Are you aware of the following professional language teacher networks? (Please select all options that apply)

	I am aware of this network	I make use of / am a member of this network	I find this network useful in supporting my own Professional Learning
Routes Into Languages	☐	☐	☐
Association for Language Learning	☐	☐	☐
Alliance Française	☐	☐	☐
Instituto Cervantes	☐	☐	☐
Oxford German Network	☐	☐	☐
The Goethe Institut	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify and give any additional details)

* 23. How easy is it for you to access recent research about the teaching of modern languages?

1. Very difficult	2.	3.	4.	5. Very easy
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

24. Do you make use of any online resources to access recent research and support your Professional Learning? (Please select as many options as apply)

	I am aware of this resource	I make use of this resource	I find this resource useful in supporting my own Professional Learning
Professional Development Consortium in MFL (www.pdcinmfl.com)	☐	☐	☐
Education Endowment Fund Toolkit (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit)	☐	☐	☐
Teacher Development Trust (http://tdtrust.org/advisor/overview)	☐	☐	☐
MESH guides (http://www.meshguides.org/)	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

6. About your Professional Learning needs and priorities

* 25. What aspect of your professional practice as an MFL teacher would you most value the opportunity to develop?

26. Why would the development of this aspect of your professional practice be of value

to you?	
to your students?	
to your department?	
Would this aspect of professional practice have an impact beyond your department? if yes, how?	

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

7. About your Professional Learning needs and priorities in relation to research-informed principles

Recent research into Second Language Acquisition processes has been synthesised and presented below as a set of 'principles'. These principles might be useful guidelines for professional practice in the teaching of modern foreign languages.

* 27. Please read the statements below. Which, if any, of these principles do you value and which do you feel that you enact in your own teaching? (Please select as many as apply)

	This is a principle that I believe has some value	This is a principle that I have experimented with in my own practice	This is a principle that I regularly enact in my own practice
1 ORAL INTERACTION: Target language input is essential for learning but it can be made more effective if learners are encouraged to check the understanding of it by asking questions of what the teacher is saying or asking the teacher to repeat.	☐	☐	☐
2 ORAL INTERACTION: Learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things that they are not sure are correct	☐	☐	☐
3 ORAL INTERACTION: Less spontaneous oral interaction should nevertheless be of high quality. By high quality we mean including substantial student turns; adequate wait time; cognitive challenge [e.g. by requiring a verb phrase or subordinate clause]; appropriate teacher feedback; nominating students rather than waiting for volunteers.	☐	☐	☐
4 ORAL INTERACTION: Students should be explicitly taught strategies to use when faced with communication difficulties. These should be used alongside techniques for developing their oral fluency, such as repetition of tasks and chunking of pre-learnt words into whole phrases.	☐	☐	☐
5 READING AND LISTENING: Learners need to be taught how to access a greater range of more challenging spoken and written texts, through explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and in the relationship between the written and spoken forms.	☐	☐	☐
6 FEEDBACK: Learners need to develop their self- confidence and see the link between the strategies they use and how successful they are on a task.	☐	☐	☐
7 WRITING: Writing should be developed as a skill in its own right not just as a consolidation of other language skills. For this to happen students should frequently write using the language and strategies they already know rather than resources provided by the teacher (e.g. textbooks, writing frames, dictionaries, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
8 UNDERPINS ALL OTHERS: The principal focus of pedagogy should be on developing language skills and therefore the teaching of linguistic knowledge (knowledge of grammar and vocabulary) should act in the service of skill development not as an end in itself.	☐	☐	☐

28. If there are any principles in Question 28 that you value, but have not yet experimented with in your own practice, please could you comment below on why that might be?

* 29. Which, if any, of the 8 principles in Question 28 would you most like to further explore in your own teaching?

- ◯ None
- ◯ 1 - Oral Interaction (input)
- ◯ 2 - Oral Interaction (learner spontaneity and risk taking)
- ◯ 3 - Oral Interaction (high quality with substantial student turns)
- ◯ 4 - Oral Interaction (explicit teaching of communication strategies)
- ◯ 5 - Reading and Listening (strategic approaches to challenging texts)
- ◯ 6 - Feedback (learner self-confidence and strategy awareness)
- ◯ 7 - Writing (developed as a skill)
- ◯ 8 - Underpins all others

Please give a reason for your answer

30. Is there anything that would facilitate or impede your exploration of your chosen principle in your teaching?

Facilitators

Barriers

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

8. About your sense of self-efficacy in the languages classroom

* 31. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below

	1. Nothing / Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9. A great deal
1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4. How much can you do to help your students value learning?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
6. How much can you do to get students to follow classroom rules?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
7. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	1. Nothing / Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9. A great deal
8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. How much can you do to introduce a variety of assessment strategies?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. How much can you do to respond to the demands of the National Curriculum?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. How much can you do to increase your students' use of the target language?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. How much can you do to increase the uptake of your subject at GCSE?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. How much can you do to increase the uptake of your subject at A Level?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

* 32. How far do you agree with each of the statements below?

	1. Strongly disagree	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9. Strongly agree
1. I regularly plan for my professional future	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. My skills and expertise are valued by my department	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Planning for my professional future is a waste of time	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. I set myself short term goals to develop my teaching (less than a year)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I set myself long-term goals to develop my teaching (more than a year)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. The school's performance management system is used to support my professional learning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Survey 1: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

9. About your MFL department's Professional Learning needs and priorities

33. How far do you agree that teachers in your department work well as a team?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

34. Please choose three adjectives to describe your MFL team

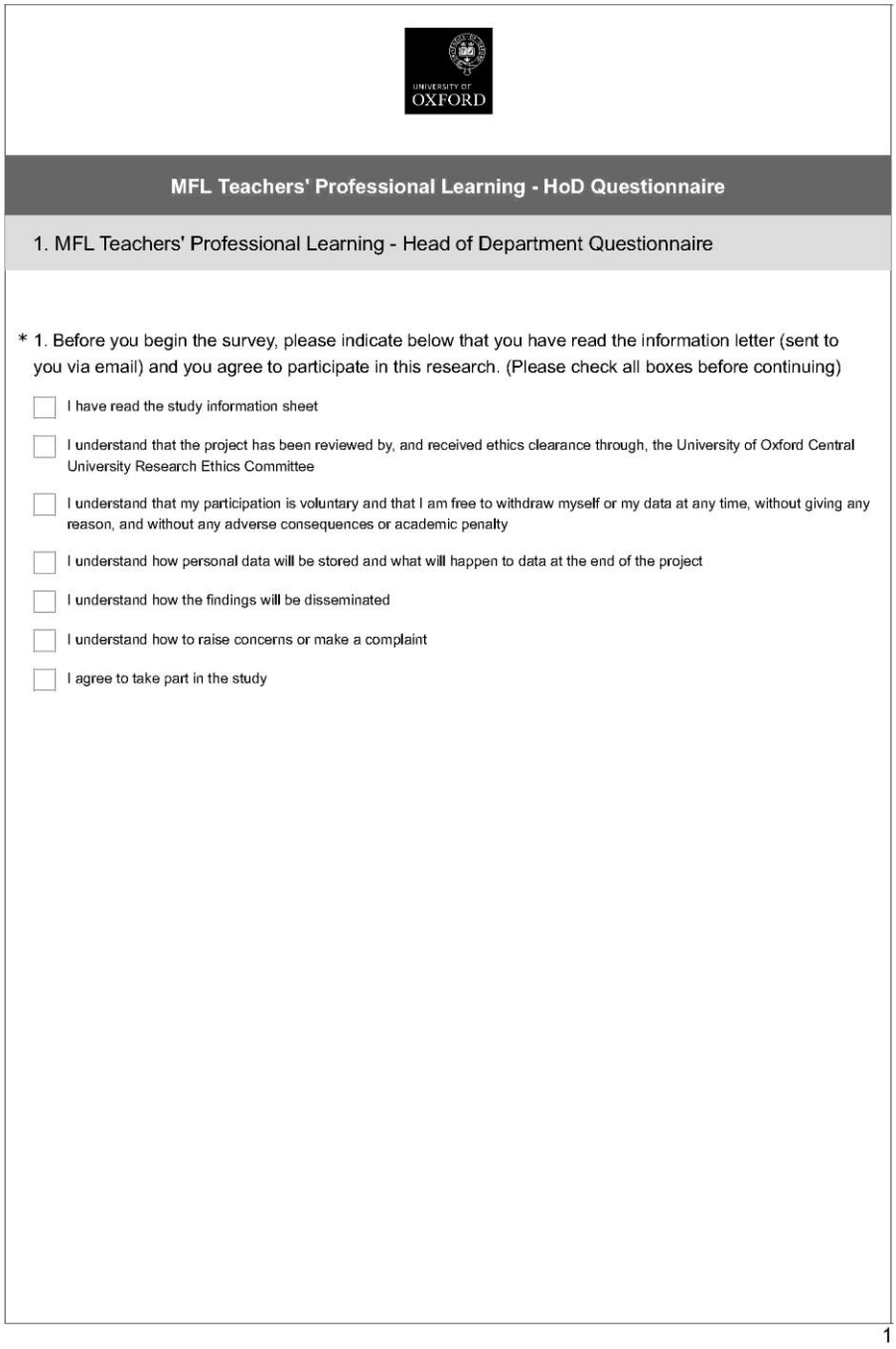
1
2
3

* 35. Now please continue to think about your MFL department as a team and indicate the strength of your agreement with each of the statements below.

	1. Strongly disagree	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9. Strongly agree
1. If a child doesn't learn something the first time teachers in this department will try another way.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
2. Teachers in this department are skilled in various methods of teaching.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3. Teachers in this department are well-prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4. Teachers in this department really believe every child can learn languages.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5. If a child doesn't want to learn teachers in this department give up.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
6.Teachers in this department fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
7. Teachers in this department don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
8. Teachers in this department have what it takes to get the children to learn languages.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	1. Strongly disagree	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9. Strongly agree
9. Teachers in this department are able to get through to difficult students.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. Teachers in this department are confident they will be able to motivate their students.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. The lack of teaching materials and resources makes teaching here very difficult.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. Teachers in this department do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. Teachers in this department think there are some students that no one can reach.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. The quality of school facilities available to this department really facilitates the teaching and learning process.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. The home life of many students at this school provides so many advantages that the students are bound to learn.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. Most students come to school ready to learn languages.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. External factors in the community make language learning difficult for many students here.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
18. The opportunities in the local community help ensure that most of these students will learn languages.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
19. Many students here are just not motivated to learn languages.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
20. Language learning is more difficult at this school because many students do not feel secure.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
21. Teachers in this department need more training to know how to deal with many of these students.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

10.3 Appendix C: Head of Department Questionnaire 1



MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

1. MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - Head of Department Questionnaire

* 1. Before you begin the survey, please indicate below that you have read the information letter (sent to you via email) and you agree to participate in this research. (Please check all boxes before continuing)

- ☐ I have read the study information sheet
- ☐ I understand that the project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw myself or my data at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or academic penalty
- ☐ I understand how personal data will be stored and what will happen to data at the end of the project
- ☐ I understand how the findings will be disseminated
- ☐ I understand how to raise concerns or make a complaint
- ☐ I agree to take part in the study

1



MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

2. About the MFL department as a Professional Learning Community

* 2. Including the current academic year (2015-16), how many years have you been employed as Head of Department in this school?

* 3. Taking into account the full range of your responsibilities as Head of Department, please rate the levels of priority that you currently give to the following things:

	This is not currently a priority for me	This is currently a priority for me	This is currently a high priority for me	This is currently a very high priority for me
The professional learning overall of the members of your department	○	○	○	○
The professional learning of the less experienced members of your department	○	○	○	○
The professional learning of the more experienced members of your department	○	○	○	○
Your own professional learning	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

2

* 4. Please estimate what proportion of the time spent on carrying out your overall responsibility as an HoD includes the professional learning of colleagues.

- ◯ Up to 5%
- ◯ Between 6 and 10%
- ◯ Between 11 and 15%
- ◯ Between 16 and 30%
- ◯ Between 31 and 50%
- ◯ Between 51 and 70%
- ◯ Between 71 and 85%
- ◯ More than 85%

Optional Comments

The following question is about the MFL department as an Effective Professional Learning Community (EPLC). please read this study's definition of an EPLC below:

'An EPLC has the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals and other staff in the community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning.'

* 5. What is your overall assessment of the MFL department's current position in relation to the above working definition? Overall this department is : (please read all categories before ticking one box)

- ◯ a mature/established professional learning community
- ◯ a developing professional learning community
- ◯ starting the journey to becoming a professional learning community
- ◯ working to re-establish what we had previously achieved as a professional learning community
- ◯ not yet started on becoming a professional learning community

Optional Comments

3

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

3. Some details about the languages timetable and the system for GCSE uptake

The questions on this page ask for some contextual information. This is in order to gather some useful details about the context in which the MFL department at the school operates.

6. Which modern foreign languages are taught at your school?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

7. How many hours per week are timetabled for the teaching of the languages that you specified in Question 6 at your school? (if you have a fortnightly timetable please report the average number of hours per week)

	language number 1	language number 2	language number 3
in year 7			
in year 8			
in year 9			
in year 10			
in year 11			
in year 12			
in year 13			

8. Please add any comments that you may have about the timetabling of languages classes

The following questions ask you to give a few details about the system at your school for choosing GCSE options this year.

9. How many times did the languages that you mention in question 5 appear in the GCSE option blocks this year?

	0	1	2	3	4 or more
language number 1	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
language number 2	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
language number 3	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

10. In which school year are students at your school asked to make their decisions about which subjects to study at GCSE?

- ◯ Year 8
- ◯ Year 9

Optional Comments

11. When during the current academic year were students asked to finalise their decisions about which subjects they will study at GCSE?

- ◯ Before the end of December
- ◯ January
- ◯ February
- ◯ March
- ◯ April
- ◯ May
- ◯ June

Optional Comments

* 12. Was it possible for individual students to choose to study for two or more MFL GCSEs?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. If you answeed 'yes' to Question 11 above, how many languages could individual students choose to study at GCSE?

6



MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

4. About the MFL Department's networks

14. During the current academic year (2015-16) have any MFL staff in your department been involved in the following activities/collaborations? (please select as many as apply)

- [ ] a foreign language exchange trip
- [ ] a languages-related day trip
- [ ] a languages-related club in school
- [ ] a languages-related partnership with an overseas school
- [ ] a languages-related partnership with a UK employer
- [ ] a languages-related partnership with an overseas employer
- [ ] a languages-related partnership with a UK primary school
- [ ] a languages-related partnership with a UK secondary school
- [ ] a languages-related partnership with a UK university (not including Initial Teacher Education partnerships)
- [ ] a languages-related initial teacher education partnership with a UK university (i.e. mentoring for PGCE students)
- [ ] Other (please specify) or Optional Additional Comments

MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

5. About the School and MFL Department's facilities

15. How many sites does this school operate on?

- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3
- ◯ 4 or more

16. How many general staff rooms exist in this school?

- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3
- ◯ 4 or more

* 17. How would you rate the quality of the MFL departments' teaching spaces?

The teaching spaces are in severe need of improvement	The teaching spaces are in need of improvement	The teaching spaces are adequate	The teaching spaces are very good	The teaching spaces are excellent
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please give a few details to explain your answer

8

* 18. How many staff/work rooms exist for MFL teachers in this school?

- ◯ 0 - the MFL department does not have its own team room
- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3 or more
- ◯ Optional comments

9



MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

6. About the MFL Department's Facilities (cont.)

19. Roughly how far away is the most used MFL team room from the nearest main staffroom?

- ◯ Less than 2 mins walk
- ◯ Less than 5 mins walk
- ◯ Less than 10 mins walk
- ◯ More than 10 mins walk

20. Please indicate the degree of your agreement with the following statements in relation to your most used MFL team room

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The MFL team room is a pleasant space	○	○	○	○
There is adequate space for MFL colleagues to work	○	○	○	○
There is adequate space for MFL colleagues to use as storage	○	○	○	○
The seating is comfortable	○	○	○	○
The heating/cooling systems in the room are sufficient	○	○	○	○
The lighting/shading in the room is sufficient	○	○	○	○
There are sufficient computers for MFL colleagues to use	○	○	○	○
There are adequate facilities for tea/coffee making	○	○	○	○
At break times the room is reserved solely for the use of MFL colleagues	○	○	○	○
At lunch times the room is reserved solely for the use of MFL colleagues	○	○	○	○
During lessons the room is reserved solely for the use of MFL colleagues	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

11



MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

7. About Departmental Meetings

* 21. How many departmental meetings do you have per academic year?

* 22. On a scale of 1 - 5, how much control do you feel that you have over the content of your departmental meetings?

1. Very little	2.	3.	4.	5. A great deal
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

23. Who receives the minutes of the departmental meetings? (please tick as many as apply)

- ☐ No-one: We do not take minutes at our departmental meetings
- ☐ MFL teachers
- ☐ Linked Teaching Assistants
- ☐ Linked member of the Senior Leadership Team
- ☐ Trainee MFL teachers
- ☐ Head Teacher
- ☐ Other (please specify) or Optional Comments

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* 24. Across all of the departmental meetings in the year, please rank the following activities from 1 - 6 to indicate how much time is devoted to each one, with number 1 representing the most time.
* Please note that you may only choose one option per column!

	1. The most time is spent on this activity	2	3	4	5.	6. The least amount of time is spent on this activity
Sharing examples of good or innovative classroom practice	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing directives from the Senior Leadership Team (i.e. new whole-school policies)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing departmental development priorities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Collaborative planning/revising of schemes of work	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing practical arrangements (i.e. for examinations / parents evening etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing the implications of recent research in relation to the teaching of modern languages	○	○	○	○	○	○

25. If there are any other activities that you engage in during departmental meetings, please give some examples here

13



MFL Teachers' Professional Learning - HoD Questionnaire

8. About your plans for the MFL department's future and the support of the school leadership team

* 26. What priorities were identified in your Departmental Development or Improvement Plan for the current academic year (2015-16)?

Priority 1

Priority 2

Priority 3

Priority 4

* 27. Were any of the priorities identified in the previous question linked to priorities on the whole-school Development or Improvement Plan?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Unsure

28. If you answered 'yes' to the question above, please indicate which priorities detailed in Q26 are linked to whole-school priorities

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ Optional Comments

14

29. What have been the main challenges for the development of the MFL department over the last academic year (2015-16) ?

* 30. Please indicate the strength of your agreement with this statement: I feel well supported in my work as Head of the MFL Department by my Senior Management/Leadership Team

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

31. Can you give any specific examples of the way that your Senior Management/Leadership Team have supported the work of the languages department this year?

32. What priorities, if any, have you identified for the development of the MFL department in the coming academic year (2016-17)?

Priority 1

Priority 2

Priority 3

Priority 4

33. What do you see as the main challenges for the development of the MFL department in the coming academic year?

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey!

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10.4 Appendix D: CSPS_MFL Instrument

Year 8 French
Student Perception Survey

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Class: _____ Name of Your French Teacher: _____

Circle the statement that describes you: I am a boy I am a girl

	Never	Some of the time	Most of the time	Always
1. In this class, we learn a lot every lesson.	O	O	O	O
2. In this class I am learning how to be independent (For example I know how to use a dictionary and my notes to help me)	O	O	O	O
3. My French teacher teaches things that are important to me.	O	O	O	O
4. In this class I feel safe to practise speaking in French.	O	O	O	O
5. My French teacher makes learning enjoyable.	O	O	O	O
6. In this class, it is more important to understand and communicate in French than to memorise all of the grammar and vocabulary.	O	O	O	O
7. When the work is very difficult, my French teacher encourages me to keep trying.	O	O	O	O
8. When we are speaking in French, our teacher expects us to try to use whole sentences.	O	O	O	O
9. My French teacher knows when we understand the lesson and when we do not.	O	O	O	O
10. If I don't understand something, my French teacher explains it a different way.	O	O	O	O
11. In this class we learn strategies to help us when we are having a conversation in French. (For example, asking someone in French to repeat their question or to explain what something means)	O	O	O	O
12. What I learn in this class is useful to me in my real life.	O	O	O	O
13. Students feel comfortable sharing their ideas in this class.	O	O	O	O
14. My French teacher respects my opinions and suggestions.	O	O	O	O
15. My French teacher encourages me to have a go and write down things I am not sure are correct.	O	O	O	O
16. Sometimes in French lessons the teacher asks me an unexpected question and I have to think on my feet to try to answer in French.	O	O	O	O
17. My French teacher gives feedback on my work to help me to improve.	O	O	O	O
18. When we study a topic in French, my teacher makes connections to other subjects or classes.	O	O	O	O

1

	Never	Some of the time	Most of the time	Always
19. My French teacher cares about me.	O	O	O	O
20. In this class we learn to recognise patterns in how French sounds are written down.	O	O	O	O
21. My French teacher would notice if something was bothering me.	O	O	O	O
22. My class gets on with the work and does not waste time.	O	O	O	O
23. Students in this class treat the French teacher with respect.	O	O	O	O
24. My French teacher explains difficult things clearly.	O	O	O	O
25. Our classroom materials (books, articles, videos, art, music, posters, etc.) show that French is spoken by people from all over the world.	O	O	O	O
26. My French teacher talks to me about my work to help me to understand my mistakes.	O	O	O	O
27. My French teacher respects me as an individual.	O	O	O	O
28. Students in this class respect each other's differences.	O	O	O	O
29. In this class, I feel like I fit in.	O	O	O	O
30. I feel like an important part of this classroom community.	O	O	O	O
31. My French teacher knows what my life is like outside of school.	O	O	O	O
32. My French teacher knows what is important to me.	O	O	O	O
33. I ask for help when I need it.	O	O	O	O
34. My French classroom is organized and I know where to find what I need.	O	O	O	O
35. My French teacher expects us to understand instructions in French.	O	O	O	O
36. In this class, we have a say in what we learn and do.	O	O	O	O
37. When writing in French in this class it is more important that your teacher can understand what you mean than to get your spellings perfectly correct.	O	O	O	O
38. I feel like I can stop my French teacher and ask a question if I don't understand something.	O	O	O	O
39. My French teacher encourages me to have a go and say things I am not sure are correct.	O	O	O	O
40. My French teacher expects us to speak some French in every lesson.	O	O	O	O

	Never	Some of the time	Most of the time	Always
41. In this class we learn how to cope when we have difficulty finding the right words to say.	O	O	O	O
42. In this class we read and listen to real French songs, poems, books and videos.	O	O	O	O
43. My French teacher pays attention to what all students are thinking and feeling.	O	O	O	O
44. The students behave the way my French teacher wants them to.	O	O	O	O
45. In this class my teacher helps me to learn how to say what I want to say, even if it is different to what the whole class has to learn.	O	O	O	O
46. The things I learn in my French class would help me to speak to a real French person in the future.	O	O	O	O
47. Sometimes the teacher gives us things to read or listen to that I find challenging.	O	O	O	O
48. When we are reading or listening to French that is challenging, the teacher shows us strategies to help us understand.	O	O	O	O
49. Usually if I need to say something to the teacher, the teacher encourages me to say it in French.	O	O	O	O
50. My teacher helps me to think about the different strategies that I can use to tackle different tasks.	O	O	O	O
51. My French teacher accepts nothing less than my best effort.	O	O	O	O
52. My French teacher knows the things that make me excited about learning.	O	O	O	O
53. When the teacher asks me a question in French they always give me enough time to think about my answer.	O	O	O	O
54. Sometimes the teacher asks us to try writing in French without using our books and dictionaries for help.	O	O	O	O
55. My French teacher respects my cultural background.	O	O	O	O
56. I feel like I work well in this class.	O	O	O	O

10.5 Appendix E: Head of Department Follow-up Interview Questions

The HoDs in schools Douglas-Fir, Fig, Ginkgo, Ivy, Katsura and Nutmeg indicated that they would be open to a follow-up interview. Many of the questions used in the semi-structured interviews responded to teachers' questionnaire responses. Beneath each main question in bold are some additional question prompts used if teachers did not spontaneously cover these areas.

The interviews were intended to last 20-30 minutes.

Opening Script:

The date today is XYZ. This is an interview with teacher number XYZ.
Please could you confirm that you are happy to take part in this audio recorded interview?

Questions:

1. Thank you very much for taking part in my study and for administering the student questionnaires last July. **First of all I'm interested in what you made of the student perception survey results that I sent to you over the summer.**
   - was there anything that surprised you about your students' results?
   - have you discussed your students' results with anyone else? If so, who and why?
   - have the students' responses helped you to identify any areas for professional learning this year?

2. In your responses to the questionnaire in June, you identified 3-4 development targets that you intended to pursue with your MFL team during this academic year. **Are these still your priorities?**
   - Can you talk me through your most important targets for this year?
   - How do you intend to build in development towards these targets?
   - What resources will you draw on to support you in working towards these targets? (literature, collab with other schools, opportunities beyond your school etc.?)
   - In an ideal world, what would your team's development time consist of?

	Priority 1	**Priority 2**	**Priority 3**	**Priority 4**
Douglas-Fir	Skill development/learner strategies	Peer and self assessment - a more rigorous approach	Literary texts in all Key Stages	Teaching lower ability students
Fig	develop expertise in new specs	raise profile of languages in the school	continue to increase uptake at A-level	
Ginkgo	KS3 assessment plan	Continued good practice of new GCSE and A level teaching	Engagement of priority students in KS3	
Ivy	Robust and consistent feedback system	Familiarise ourselves with new GCSE exams	Familiarise with new A level exams	Develop an effective tracking of students' progress system
Katsura	New Schemes of Work	Decrease gender gap in progress	Launch Language Leaders Programme	Increase A-Level uptake and reduce dropouts
Nutmeg	All students to access	Make learning explicit	Ensure students	Behaviour for Learning

	learning		act on feedback	

3. **IF not previously covered … what problems, if any, have you encountered in accessing professional learning opportunities for yourself or members of your team?**
   - ➢How have you tackled these problems?

4. **Do you consider yourself and your department to be a part of any networks?**
   - ➢Within the school?
   - ➢Within the wider MFL teaching community?
   - ➢What do you think you gain from your participation in the networks you have mentioned?
   - ➢If not mentioned, … CCT? PDC? ALL? Social media (MFL twitterati / GILT etc.?)

5. You were [very satisfied/ somewhat satisfied/ not very satisfied/ not at all satisfied] with the investment that your school makes in teachers' professional learning. **Could you explain your answer a little further?**
   - ➢how might you improve the current system to better support teacher learning?

6. **Is there anything that the school leadership team does to support the languages department in their work and development?**
   - ➢Is there anything that the school could do differently to improve conditions for effective teaching and learning of MFL?
   - ➢How much freedom do you have to implement changes to improve the teaching and learning in your department?

7. You felt that the school's performance management system here was [very effective/ somewhat effective/ not very effective] at supporting your professional learning. **Could you explain a little further how the performance management system here works?**
   - ➢How might you improve the current system to better support teacher learning?

	The school's performance management system is used to support my professional learning	I am satisfied with the investment my school makes in teachers' professional learning
Douglas-Fir	5 (somewhat)	5 (somewhat)
Fig	9 (very)	9 (very)
Ginkgo	5 (somewhat)	1 (not at all)
Ivy	3 (not very)	3 (not very)
Katsura	5 (somewhat)	8 (very)
Nutmeg	6 (somewhat)	5 (somewhat)

8. **Can you talk me through the main things you will be spending your MFL budget on this year?**
   - ➢What will you be investing in and how did you choose?
   - ➢Is there anything that you know you won't be able to access due to budget constraints that you feel would be beneficial for teaching and learning MFL?

9. Thinking about your own development now, you mentioned that you would like to focus on [x] this year. **Could you tell me a little bit more about your plans for your own learning?**
   - ➢How do you plan to develop this area of your teaching? (time-scale?, resources?, implementation with which classes?)
   - ➢Do you speak to anyone else in school about your own development plans?

	What aspect of your professional practice as an MFL teacher (if any) would you most value the opportunity to develop?	**Please give a reason for your answer**	**Is there anything that you envisage will facilitate your development of this aspect of your teaching?**	**Is there anything that you envisage will impede your development of this aspect of your teaching?**
Douglas-Fir	Skill development/learner strategies *	The pupils need to have a clearer understanding of the skills they need to develop to succeed in the exams	Time will be provided for faculty-based twilight INSET	Having the team in agreement
Fig	expertise in new specs *	this is key to good outcomes for students	collaboration with other schools	workload
Ginkgo	none really, I think there are plenty of ideas it's just having some time to select what could be best to focus on and then try to achieve consistency in the dept.		being able to control what I teach and when, being experienced enough to be prepared to try out new ideas	coming up with an idea that works well but then unable to achieve it at dept. wide level
Ivy	Moving away from a knowledge based SOL to a skill based one	I believe we are too obsessed with acquisition of language and do not work enough on skills		Time
Katsura	Teaching speaking and listening skills	I feel these skills are widely under-emphasised, in my teaching too	Access to research and Personal Learning Network (PLN)	Time, money
Nutmeg	Use of TL	Could use more and more effectively.		

* = this is also an area identified in the whole department priorities (question 2)

10. **Is there anything else that you would like to add in relation to professional development and practices in your department?**

Thank you very much for your time.

10.6 Appendix F: Interview Schedule for case-study school teachers

Script:

The date today is XYZ. This is an interview with teacher number XYZ.

Please could you confirm that you are happy to take part in this audio recorded interview?

Pre-amble: I'm aware that some of these questions are building on questions I have already asked you in the questionnaires. I hope you won't feel that they are too repetitious but I'm interested to see how things might have changed over time and to get a deeper understanding of some of the issues.

Questions:

1. If you had to sum up your most important beliefs about how languages are best learned, what would they be? What do you base this on?
2. In relation to teaching languages, which areas of your practice do you feel most confident about? Why is that do you think?
3. In relation to teaching languages, are there any areas of your practice that you would like to develop? Why these areas? What professional learning opportunities would you most value to support this aspect of your teaching?
4. Where do you usually get new ideas for your teaching?

Pre-amble: Obviously I've been in a couple of your department meetings but only one or two. These next few questions are to help me to get a bit more of a sense of what is typical practice.

5. Can you describe what happens in a typical department meeting? How do you usually feel during department meetings? (if not covered: do you feel you are able to participate in the meetings?)
6. How would you describe your own role/identity within the department?
7. What role do your colleagues play (if any) in your professional learning?*
8. What do you see as being the important goals for your department to work towards in the next year?
9. Did the focus of this research project affect your thinking about working/learning in this department? If so, how exactly?

OK. That is the end of my questions. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

* Omit this question if colleagues have been discussed as part of the answer to Q3

10.7 Appendix G: Interview Schedule for case-study SLT members

Script:

The date today is XYZ. This is an interview with teacher number XYZ.

Please could you confirm that you are happy to take part in this audio recorded interview?

Questions:

1. Can you describe your school's approach to staff development? What is this based on?
    1.1. how might you improve the current system to better support teacher learning?
2. How effective is the school's performance management system at supporting professional learning?
3. How would you describe your own role in relation to teacher development at this school?
    3.1. And the role of the Head of each Department?
4. What do you see as the languages department's current strengths?
5. Are you aware of any current development needs in the languages team?
    5.1. If yes, how might the school support teachers to work on these?
6. What kind of professional learning opportunities do you think are most effective?
7. Do you have any thoughts about how best to balance subject-specific development needs with more generic ones?
8. In relation to professional learning, what do you see as being the important goals for your school to work towards in the next year?
9. Thank you. Is there anything else that you would like to add in relation to professional learning and practices in your school?

10.8 Appendix H: Observation Framework for case-study department meetings

Department Observation Schedule: MFL Teachers' Professional Learning

Case Study: What are the key factors which influence the cultures of these departments to make them more or less effective sites for teacher professional learning?

Date & time:	Who is present?:	Location:	What is happening in location?:

What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish? How long is spent on each activity / topic? (use the letter codes if relevant)

Timings

A. Sharing examples of good or innovative classroom practice
B. Discussing directives from the Senior Leadership Team (i.e. new whole-school policies)
C. Discussing departmental development priorities
D. Collaborative planning/revising of schemes of work
E. Discussing practical arrangements (i.e. for examinations / parents evening etc.)
F. Discussing the implications of recent research in relation to the teaching of MFL
G. Other (note)

In the box above, add numbers to indicate the aspects teachers are focusing on at each point (Lee and Luft (2008). Note teacher initials if teachers are adopting different focus points (object motives):

☐ 1. subject matter ☐ 2. teaching strategies ☐ 3. resources ☐ 4. purpose / aims ☐ 5. learners ☐ 6. curriculum ☐ 7. assessment ☐ 8. other (note)

Notes on the distribution of **power / leadership.** Does anyone dominate speech? How do others respond? Is there evidence of Hargreaves' (1994, p.161) different forms of teacher culture: individualism, collaboration, contrived collegiality and balkanization? (see notes pages for definitions)
Is there "joint work"? : "encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching (interdependence), collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers' initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work" (Little 1990, p. 519).

Any references to **theory or methodological principles?** (Borg and Burns (2008) found that MFL teachers rarely explain their views with ref. to this)

CONTINUED NOTES:

Timings

H. Sharing examples of good or innovative classroom practice
I. Discussing directives from the Senior Leadership Team (i.e. new whole-school policies)
J. Discussing departmental development priorities
K. Collaborative planning/revising of schemes of work
L. Discussing practical arrangements (i.e. for examinations / parents evening etc.)
M. Discussing the implications of recent research in relation to the teaching of MFL
N. Other (note)

In the box above, add numbers to indicate the aspects teachers are focusing on at each point (Lee and Luft (2008). Note teacher initials if teachers are adopting different focus points (object motives):

☐ 1. subject matter ☐ 2. teaching strategies ☐ 3. resources ☐ 4. purpose / aims ☐ 5. learners ☐ 6. curriculum ☐ 7. assessment ☐ 8. other (note)

Post observation:
What did I learn from these notes? Why did I include them? What else is happening in this site that is relevant to my research question(s)?
How do I feel collecting this data and how will this affect the data (reflexivity)?

	Eight characteristics of effective CPDL taken from Cordingley (2015, p.240-241)	Any evidence of these teacher activities? (jot down the teachers' initials and any brief comments)
1	Making use of **specialist expertise**, including expertise in the form of research evidence; using **evidence and expertise to support planning** in particular	
2	Giving and receiving **structured peer support using collaboration**, especially **reciprocal risk taking** and **professional dialogue**, as core learning strategies	
3	Undertaking **sustained, enquiry-oriented learning** over (usually) two terms or more supported by **use of tools and protocols** to discipline learning and secure coherence and progression	
4	Learning to learn from looking through **exploration of evidence about pupil outcomes** and from **observing teaching and learning exchanges** especially those involving **experiments with new approaches**	
5	Using **aspirations for specific pupils and evidence about their learning** as a driver for development	
6	**Focusing on why things do and don't work in different contexts** to develop an underpinning rationale or practical theory alongside practice	
7	**Seeking out leadership support**—time/encouragement/modelling—including specialist coaching and engaging in enquiry-oriented approaches to development	
8	Actively seeking out specialist and peer support and **taking responsibility for creating and taking opportunities for professional learning** within day to day school life	

Seating plan (& notes on physical setting, atmosphere & body language)

Initiates new topic
Offers a new idea in same topic
Elaborates someone else's idea
Explains something
Agrees
Disagrees
gives a Reason / justification
asks a Clarification question

Teacher initials	Code	Additional info

10.9 Appendix I: NVivo Codebook

Name	Additional Description
Accountability and Performance Management System	
Ability to pursue own development agenda	
Clarity	
EBacc	
Fairness & equality	
Frequency of meetings	
GCSE or A Level Results	
C-D or 4-5 borderline	
HoD 'protection' of colleagues	
Observations, learning walks & book checks	
Performance related pay	
Power relationships	
Practicalities of the performance management system	
Stress	
Support	
Unrealistic targets	
Usefulness for Professional Learning	
Professional Learning - Nature, Quality, Affordances & Constraints	
Access to external expertise & PL courses	
Access to internal support ('experts')	
Access to Research	
Access to subject specific CPDL	
Degree of HoD Freedom & Autonomy	
Degree of Teacher freedom allowed by HoD	
Department collaboration and discussion	
Engagement with ITE	
INSET	
Language trips and exchanges	
Monetary Investment	
Motivation	
Networks	References to local, national or international networks
Issues with networks	
Language Exchanges	
Local networks	Any reference to networking with others in the local area - for example, academy chain networks or local language associations
Academy groups	
Oxford German Network	
Primary Schools	
Secondary schools	
OTSA	
Universities	
National networks	Any reference to national networking via organisations such as the Association for Language Learning or the Chartered College of Teachers
Association For Language Learning	
Goethe Institut	
GTC	
Networks in school	Any reference to networking with colleagues in school
Provision of Cover	

Provision of Time	
Workload	
Social Media or other online resources	Any reference to use of social media as a source of PL (for example, the MFL twitterati or facebook group G.I.L.T)
Teachmeets	
Webinars	Any reference to accessing web-based training via webinars
Department Change & Response to New Curriculum	
Change in response to new AS and A2 languages	
Change in response to new GCSE	
KS3 change in response to new GCSE	
Uncertainty in assessing student levels	
Changing staff numbers	
Recruitment	
Changing student numbers	
Changing Timetables	
Negative factors associated with change	
Positive factors associated with change	
Taking Account of Primary Language Learning	
Technology	
Development Priorities 2017-18	
Department Development Priorities	
HoD mapping & coordination of departments' learning	
Priorities Linked to a Whole School Focus	
Behaviour for Learning	
Differentiation	
Feedback	
Pupil Premium or 'priority' Students	
Subject Specific CPD Priorities	
A Level Uptake	
Assessment	
Curriculum Development	
Literary texts	
Move to a focus on skills over content ('mastery')	
GCSE Speaking Exams	
Gender gap	
New Specifications at GCSE and A Level	
Oral Interaction	
Stretch and challenge	
Teaching 'low ability' groups	
Uniqueness of MFL issues in whole school context	
HoD Personal Development Priorities	
Implementation intentions	
MFL Budget Priorities & Constraints	
Constraints	
Current budget status	
Key Stage Five	
Key Stage Four	
Key Stage Three	
Languages Assistants	
Online Resources	
Physical Resources	
Technology	
Perceptions of SLT	
Supportive SLT	
Wish list for better SLT support	

Student Perception Survey Results	HoDs' responses to the Y8 French student perception survey results they received in September 2017
Area identified for development	Any development priorities arising from the SPS data
Assessment	
Classroom displays	
GCSE Grades	
Motivation	
Speaking	
Comments on CSPS_MFL design	Any feedback on the quality and fitness-for-purpose of the CSPS_MFL instrument
Negative response	Any negative reactions to the CSPS_MFL data
Positive response	Any positive reactions to the CSPS_MFL data
Shared with others	Any people with whom the HoD indicates they shared the CSPS_MFL results
Subject Specific Items	
Surprised response	Any features of the CSPS_MFL data that HoDs found surprising
Theories & explanations for scores	
Valuable PL experiences identified in questionnaires	
Curriculum development	
Exam board training	
External course	
External speaker	
Internal course	
ITE related	
Language trips and exchanges	
Learning a language - new subject knowledge	
Lesson Study	
Linked school meetings	
Masters course	
MFL Specific	
Observation	
Online research	
Social Media	
Participating in research projects	
Reading books or articles	
School-based whole-staff INSET	
Sharing ideas with colleagues	
SLT discussions	
Subject Association Meetings	
Teaching	
Training colleagues	

10.10 Appendix J: CSPS_MFL Factor Loadings

Summary of SPSS factor analysis results for the MFL-specific items on the SPS (N = 1336)

Item		Supportive L2-classroom community	High frequency and quality L2 interaction	Strategic approaches to challenging language tasks
53	When the teacher asks me a question in French they always give me enough time to think about my answer	**.71**	-.08	-.09
38	I feel like I can stop my French teacher and ask a question if I don't understand something	**.70**	-.07	-.02
39	My French teacher encourages me to have a go and say things I am not sure are correct	**.68**	.06	.00
26	My French teacher talks to me about my work to help me to understand my mistakes.	**.67**	-.04	-.14
41	In this class we learn how to cope when we have difficulty finding the right words to say	**.65**	.06	-.14
15	My French teacher encourages me to have a go and write down things I am not sure are correct	**.65**	.00	.08
11	In this class we learn strategies to help us when we are having a conversation in French. (For example, asking someone in French to repeat their question or to explain what something means)	**.61**	-.07	.16
17	My French teacher gives feedback on my work to help me to improve.	**.60**	.01	.00
2	In this class I am learning how to be independent (For example I know how to use a dictionary and my notes to help me)	**.52**	.05	.16
37	When writing in French in this class it is more important that my teacher can understand what I mean than to get my spellings perfectly correct	**.50**	.03	-.04
35	My French teacher expects us to understand instructions in French.	-.11	**.55**	.06
16	Sometimes in French lessons the teacher asks me an unexpected question and I have to think on my feet to try to answer in French	-.02	**.42**	-.05
40	My French teacher expects us to speak some French in every lesson	.20	**.37**	.06
8	When we are speaking in French, our teacher expects us to try to use whole sentences	.27	**.35**	.25
49	Usually if I need to say something to the teacher, the teacher encourages me to say it in French	.30	**.25**	-.27
50	My teacher helps me to think about the different strategies that I can use to tackle different tasks	.58	.02	**-.38**
48	When we are reading or listening to French that is challenging, the teacher shows us strategies to help us understand	.63	-.05	**-.35**
47	Sometimes the teacher gives us things to read or listen to that I find challenging	.11	.35	**-.25**
42	In this class we read and listen to real French songs, poems, books and videos.	.25	.18	**-.24**

10.11 Appendix K: Example CSPS_MFL report with study averages

MFL French teachers' Professional Learning Research Project

Student Perception Survey Report

Dear Head of Department,

This report summarizes responses to items in the Student Perception Survey that was administered to your Year 8 students. X of your Year 8 students responded. I have reported the average scores from your students alongside the average scores for the 14 local schools who participated in the study in the hope that you may find these results of interest.

Results are presented as a percent of students that "responded favourably". This is the percentage of students who responded in the top two categories for each question ("most of the time" or "always").

The first 32 items on the survey were taken from the Colorado Student Perception Survey (which draws on items made available for non-commercial use through the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation). For more information about this and for resources to help you to make use of your results to inform practice, visit http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/toolkit/teacher/

The final 23 items on the survey were designed to relate to the 8 research-informed principles of MFL teaching and learning made available via the webpage http://www.pdcinmfl.com. This webpage also provides links to videos and resources that may be useful starting points for an exploration of your practice in relation to each principle.

I hope that this document will serve as a useful basis for discussions about teaching and learning in your department.

Thank you once again for your time and support for my study into MFL teachers' professional development.

With best wishes,



Laura Molway

laura.molway@education.ox.ac.uk

Student Learning	**Responded Favorably** (Percentage of responses in top two categories)
	The Study Average
My French teacher makes learning enjoyable.	55.1%
What I learn in this class is useful to me in my real life.	37.4%
My French teacher teaches things that are important to me.	58.1%
My French teacher knows the things that make me excited about learning.	32.4%
In this class, we learn a lot every lesson.	69.8%
When the work is very difficult, my French teacher encourages me to keep trying.	66.9%
My French teacher accepts nothing less than my best effort.	71.3%
My French teacher knows when we understand the lesson and when we do not.	55.8%
If I don't understand something, my French teacher explains it a different way.	56.3%
My French teacher explains difficult things clearly.	64.8%
In this class, we have a say in what we learn and do.	29.9%
My French teacher gives feedback on my work to help me to improve.	69.3%
When we study a topic, my French teacher makes connections to other subjects or classes.	34.1%

Student-Centered Environment	**Responded Favorably** **(Percentage of responses in top two categories)**
	The Study Average
My classroom is organized and I know where to find what I need.	71.6%
Students feel comfortable sharing their ideas in this class.	60.6%
My French teacher respects my opinions and suggestions.	73.4%
My French teacher cares about me.	58.2%
My French teacher pays attention to what all students are thinking and feeling.	45.9%
My French teacher respects my cultural background.	64.8%
My French teacher respects me as an individual.	67.4%

Classroom Community	**Responded Favorably** (Percentage of responses in top two categories)
	The Study Average
My French teacher would notice if something was bothering me.	43%
Our classroom materials (*books, articles, videos, art, music, posters, etc.*) show that French is spoken by people from all over the world.	50.5%
In this class, I feel like I fit in.	63.8%
I feel like an important part of this classroom community.	47.8%
My French teacher knows what my life is like outside of school.	9.8%
My French teacher knows what is important to me.	22.4%
I ask for help when I need it.	67.2%
I feel like I work well in this class.	71.2%

Classroom Management	**Responded Favorably** (Percentage of responses in top two categories)
	The Study Average
My class gets on with the work and does not waste time.	39.5%
Students in this class treat the French teacher with respect.	64.5%
The students behave the way my French teacher wants them to.	47.2%
Students in this class respect each other's differences.	64.4%

MFL Teaching Principles www.pdcinmfl.com	Responded Favorably (Percentage of responses in top two categories) The Study Average
Principle 1: Target language input is essential for learning but it can be made more effective if learners are encouraged to check the understanding of it by asking questions of what the teacher is saying or asking the teacher to repeat.	
My French teacher expects us to understand instructions in French.	66.8%
I feel like I can stop my French teacher and ask a question if I don't understand something	49.9%
Principle 2: Learners need to be encouraged to speak spontaneously and to say things that they are not sure are correct	
In this class I feel safe to practise speaking in French.	65.7%
My French teacher encourages me to have a go and say things I am not sure are correct	68.4%
My French teacher expects us to speak some French in every lesson	78.6%
If I need to say something to the teacher, the teacher encourages me to say it in French	39.2%
Principle 3: Less spontaneous oral interaction should nevertheless be of high quality. By high quality we mean including substantial student turns; adequate wait time; cognitive challenge [e.g. by requiring a verb phrase or subordinate clause]; appropriate teacher feedback; nominating students rather than waiting for volunteers.	
Sometimes in French lessons the teacher asks me an unexpected question and I have to think on my feet to try to answer in French	48.4%
When we are speaking in French, our teacher expects us to try to use whole sentences	81%
When the teacher asks me a question in French they always give me enough time to think about my answer	60.3%
Principle 4: Students should be explicitly taught strategies to use when faced with communication difficulties. These should be used alongside techniques for developing their oral fluency, such as repetition of tasks and chunking of pre-learnt words into whole phrases.	
In this class we learn how to cope when we have difficulty finding the right words to say	53.1%
In this class we learn strategies to help us when we are having a conversation in French. (*For example, asking someone in French to repeat their question or to explain what something means*)	46%
Principle 5: Learners need to be taught how to access a greater range of more challenging spoken and written texts, through explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and in the relationship between the written and spoken forms.	
In this class we read and listen to real French songs, poems, books and videos.	40.3%

In this class we learn to recognise patterns in how French sounds are written down	57.8%
The teacher gives us things to read or listen to that I find challenging	52.9%
When we are reading or listening to French that is challenging, the teacher shows us strategies to help us understand	54.3%
Principle 6: Learners need to develop their self-confidence and see the link between the strategies they use and how successful they are on a task.	
My French teacher talks to me about my work to help me to understand my mistakes.	53.1%
In this class I am learning how to be independent (For example I know how to use a dictionary and my notes to help me)	71.2%
My teacher helps me to think about the different strategies that I can use to tackle different tasks	45.3%
Principle 7: Writing should be developed as a skill in its own right not just as a consolidation of other language skills. For this to happen students should frequently write using the language and strategies they already know rather than resources provided by the teacher (e.g. textbooks, writing frames, dictionaries, etc.)	
When writing in French in this class it is more important that my teacher can understand what I mean than to get my spellings perfectly correct	63.3%
Sometimes the teacher asks us to try writing in French **without** using our books and dictionaries for help	53.7%
My French teacher encourages me to have a go and write down things I am not sure are correct	71.8%
Principle 8: The principal focus of pedagogy should be on developing language skills and therefore the teaching of linguistic knowledge (knowledge of grammar and vocabulary) should act in the service of skill development not as an end in itself.	
In this class, it is more important to understand and communicate in French than to memorise all of the grammar and vocabulary.	51.9%
The things I learn in my French class would help me to speak to a real French person in the future	58.8%

10.12 Appendix L: Risk Assessment / Protocol for engaging with PGCE mentors and student teachers in case-study schools

Key principle: Trainee teachers and mentors should not at any point feel that their engagement in their normal working practices is compromised by my presence in case study schools.

Risks	**Researcher action to mitigate risk**
Trainee teachers/mentors could feel that they are being evaluated	Trainee teachers in case-study schools receive an additional information letter outlining my role in the school and emphasising that there will be no link whatsoever between the research work conducted in school and any evaluation of the trainee teacher's progress.
The Curriculum Tutors linked to case study schools could ask me for my impressions of the trainee teacher / mentor there, which, if given could be viewed as a betrayal of the trust of my research participants.	If colleagues ask directly about the trainee teacher/mentor in a case study school, I politely decline to comment (unless sharing of information is key to a trainee teacher/mentor's safety).
One of the other curriculum tutors on the MFL PGCE programme is also my supervisor. His dual role could create a situation where data that I discuss with him relates to a trainee teacher or mentor that he is linked with in his roles as Curriculum Tutor and Course Director.	I discussed the possibility of this situation arising with my supervisors. I asked the colleague in question to exercise caution and to ensure a separation between his roles, prioritising my participants' anonymity and confidentiality. If at any point I need to discuss data that could put a trainee teacher or mentor in a potentially compromising position in relation to my colleague, I request a meeting with only my other supervisor and seek her advice.
Trainee teachers or mentors may initiate questions about the PGCE course that draw me into a more participant role than intended and alter the discourse in school social spaces	I avoid initiating conversations about the day to day running of the PGCE course. If these questions are directly asked of me, a short and polite answer should be given. Where possible, I refer trainee teachers / mentors to the linked university Curriculum Tutor and emphasise my separation from that role when in school on research business.
In interviews I may probe to what extent the trainee teacher's presence may be facilitating the departments' PL, which may lead to trainee teachers/mentors having a heightened awareness of my other role in the PGCE programme and therefore exacerbating any anxieties about my evaluation of their performance.	Before any interview with a mentor/trainee teacher commences, I re-outline the separation of my roles as tutor and as researcher. I emphasise my guarantee of confidentiality for participants and reiterate that any comments relating to the PGCE course have no impact on the trainee teacher's/mentor's role or esteem within the programme or their relationship with any university based PGCE staff.

10.13 Appendix M: CUREC Approval

Gmail Laura Molway <laura.molway@gmail.com>

CUREC
1 message

Liam Gearon <liam.gearon@education.ox.ac.uk> 23 March 2016 at 11:29
To: Laura Molway <laura.molway@education.ox.ac.uk>
Cc: Trevor Mutton <trevor.mutton@education.ox.ac.uk>, Katharine Burn <katharine.burn@education.ox.ac.uk>, Education Research Office <research.office@education.ox.ac.uk>

Dear Laura,

Language Teachers' Professional Learning: in search of impact

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

10.14 Appendix N: Fieldwork Approval

Screening of your risk assessment form

Jackie Bridges

Thu 03/03/2016 12:44

To:Laura Molway <laura.molway@education.ox.ac.uk>;

Dear Laura

Your form has been approved. Please note that you are not insured for travel insurance as you are not leaving Oxford.

BW

Jackie
Jackie Bridges – Higher Degrees Administrative Assistant University of Oxford | Department of Education
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
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